



Defiance of the Patriots

Benjamin L. Carp

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On the evening of December 16, 1773, a group of disguised Bostonians boarded three merchant ships and dumped more than forty-six tons of tea into Boston Harbor. The Boston Tea Party, as it later came to be known, was an audacious and revolutionary act. It set the stage for war and cemented certain values in the American psyche that many still cherish today. But why did the Tea Party happen? Whom did it involve? What did it mean? The answers to these questions are far from straightforward.

In this thrilling new book, Benjamin L. Carp tells the full story of the Tea Party—exploding myths, exploring the unique city life of Boston, and setting this extraordinary event in a global context for the first time. Bringing vividly to life the diverse array of people and places that the Tea Party brought together—from Chinese tea-pickers to English businessmen, Native American tribes, sugar plantation slaves, and Boston’s ladies of leisure—Carp illuminates how a determined group shook the foundations of a mighty empire, and what this has meant for Americans since. As he reveals many little-known historical facts and considers the Tea Party’s uncertain legacy, he presents a compelling and expansive history of an iconic event in America’s tempestuous past.

Defiance of the Patriots Details

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From Reader Review Defiance of the Patriots for online ebook

Katy M says

Kind of boring. The last chapter before the conclusion is the only really interesting one.

A. says

This was a great read that really helped provide an overview of the Boston Tea Party. I'll most likely get a hold of my own copy for research purposes.

Buddy says

I learned a tremendous amount in this book, but it was a bit hard to get through.

Alec Rogers says

The Boston Tea Party remains one of the iconic events of American history 250 years later. It is one of the few events that nearly every American recognizes and for which she can provide at least a summary description. Benjamin Carp's *Defiance of the Patriots* provides a detailed rendering of not only the events of the "tea party" itself, but a comprehensive look at the state of the British Empire, the city of Boston, and the American colonies in general to give us a better understanding of why the Tea Party came about when and where it did and what it meant in the grand scheme of events leading to the American Revolution and what it still means today.

Carp devotes an intriguing chapter on the history of the British East India Company (EIC) and the important role it played in helping a not quite mature system of government maintain its empire for many years prior to the Revolution. EIC's antics will remind American readers of companies such as Halliburton, Enron, and others whose escapades have made headlines and been the subject of intense political controversy. The economic power the EIC enjoyed as a chartered company with certain monopoly rights intensified the attention paid to it by the American colonists and in Parliament.

Defiance of the Patriots also does a good job explaining why Bostonians felt so strongly opposed to legislation that gave the EIC a monopoly on the American tea trade, the Tea Act, which actually LOWERED the price of tea even with the attachment of taxes dedicated towards general revenue (distinguished in colonists' minds from those used for purposes of regulating trade). The reduction in price came with strings that could, in a less benign setting, lead to London's dominance over the colonial legislatures and the loss of liberties enjoyed by the colonists. Carp details England's reprisals and the events that followed the Tea Party, demonstrating how it set off events that led directly to Lexington and Concord less than two years later.

While detailing the events before and after the Tea Party, Carp also explains the tea trade itself and tea's important role in colonial society. Put simply, Americans were tea crazy, and the ritual of tea service and drinking permeated colonial life from top to bottom. It was not a coincidence that tea was at the center of the controversy. Americans relationship with tea and their determination to wean themselves from it as a matter

of principle is another major theme as tea became synonymous with British tyranny and abstention with determined resistance. Other topics Carp explores are less fruitful, such as the symbolic importance of the choice of Indian disguises and the gender issues that arose resulting from the determination made by men to boycott something central to the lives of women, who had little say in the matter. In fact, the entire final chapter detailing the limits of the Revolution and the Founders' conceptions of freedom has the feeling of being tacked on solely for the purposes of allowing Carp to avoid charges that he's just interested in "dead white men" because he wrote a book about events concerning, well, mostly dead white men.

In a few places the writing can be dry and academic (mostly those pertaining to issues of race and gender). Happily, though, these parts are short and the reader's attention never flags even if it might falter from time to time. If you're looking for a more narrative driven "story" focused on famous individuals, you might be a little disappointed in Defiance of the Patriots. Readers seeking a better understanding of the Tea Party's causes and importance and a robust discussion of the many related issues involved will enjoy Defiance of the Patriots.

Dennis Gillingham says

Reads like a history book which is what it is. Glad I read it, but it was a slow go.

Christina says

Read this book following T. H. Breen's The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence - these two books were great compliments to each other to help further one's understanding of consumerism and the market's influence (especially tea) in the decades prior to the Revolution.

Emily says

Fun fact: A good 20% of this book is plagiarized from "The Boston Tea Party" by Benjamin Labaree. Read pages 85-122 along side pages 109-145 of Labaree's book to see for yourself. Intellectual laziness and academic dishonesty for the win!

Pat Bennett says

Background of the Boston Tea Party. He went in directions I didn't expect including slave trade and sugar for the tea. It was interesting.

Bryn Dunham says

Defiance of the Patriots is an authoritative and well researched account of the Boston Tea Party on December

16, 1773. To keep this review pithy I enjoyed the majority of this book despite some content of the final half of the book.

The first half is a very interesting account of the events and economy of colonial New England, the role of tea in society, and the nature of the East India Company and their relationship with importers and exporters of Boston. In addition we get an appraisal of the political environment of that era and the composition of local groups, factions that collectively became known as the Sons of Liberty and their influence on society, the merchants who conducted business with England, and the key events that caused the (im)famous tea party.

It is obvious that the author conducted thorough research and his descriptions of the night of December 16, 1773 and the aftermath is excellent, but after that the author seems to let his objectivity slip when discussing the legacy of the tea party.

For some reason the author dedicates a chapter and more to the issue of slavery in the colonies and the founding fathers which oddly seemed out of place in this book. It is an interesting subject, no doubt, but its relevance didn't seem to work in this book. Rather than writing a separate book about the role of slaves, women, and Indian minorities, a good portion of this book goes into examining these issues and it was awkward at best. Likewise, his analysis of how people and groups invoked the Boston Tea Party in later ages was pretty biased. The author, I felt, wanted readers to think that the Sons of Liberty were anarchist bullies or even domestic terrorists who used violence, force, and other forms of coercion to achieve their political ends. Though they have used heavy handed tactics at times, I felt the author wanted to paint a disfavorable picture of the Sons of Liberty and their cause.

Overall I really enjoyed the book and the historical narrative of the events but was a little put off by his analysis of its legacy. Still a very good read, though slow at times, for anybody wanting to learn about the famous Boston Tea Party and details rarely covered in modern text books.

Thomas Kidd says

<http://www.booksandculture.com/articl...>

The Tea Party movement has been much in the news in the past year, as has the appropriation of America's Founding by Sarah Palin and other politicians. In light of the government's expansion under Barack Obama, Palin says we should "party like it's 1773." Tufts University historian Benjamin Carp is no Tea Party sympathizer, but his timely *Defiance of the Patriots* is the place to start for understanding the actual Boston Tea Party, one of the chief catalysts of the American Revolution.

Carp shows that the Tea Party was one spectacular event in a longer story of British imperial growth and colonial resistance. The Tea Act of 1773, which gave the British East India Company a monopoly on the American tea trade, exacerbated colonists' resentment against British policies, but it also reflected Americans' relatively new entanglement in a global network that stretched from China, which grew the tea, to the Caribbean slave colonies, which produced the sugar stirred into it. Although the Tea Act would have reduced the cost of tea, Massachusetts Patriots saw the monopoly as a "master-piece of policy for accomplishing the purpose of enslaving us."

The Party itself destroyed 46 tons of the "accursed leaf." Americans look back on that night as a "gauzy, harmless tale of American origins," Carp writes, but as with so many aspects of the Revolution, it is not clear that modern Americans—especially Christians—would approve of similar actions today. Restrained though

they were, committing little violence against people, the Tea Partiers still brazenly ruined private property. "The Devil is in this people," a disgusted British admiral subsequently concluded.

The Tea Party, to Carp, "exemplifies an ongoing struggle in America between law and order and democratic protest." The Bostonians' radical act elicited a harsh response from the British government, leading to the clash at Lexington and Concord—and, ultimately, American independence.

Thomas S. Kidd is Senior Fellow at the Institute for Studies of Religion, Baylor University, and the author of *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution* and the forthcoming *Patrick Henry: First Among Patriots*.

Mills College Library says

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TJ says

During a visit to the Boston Party Tea Museum I was really moved by the patriotic spirit that had captured Boston so long ago. I bought this book as a souvenir of our day and to read more of these courageous and interesting sons of liberty. I enjoyed the tale of the events leading up to the Boston Tea party and of the after effect. I especially loved the tale of the Tea Party and I was happy to know that although no women participated on the ships, they did help the men by blackening faces and providing costumes.

Julie says

Carp does an incredibly difficult thing in making a group of individuals out of the mob that participated in the Boston Tea Party. It is a history that encompasses race, gender, and class, yet still manages to tell a large story on a small scale. Well done.

Randy says

This book is very insightful and truly puts the significance of the Boston Tea Party into its proper context. Although the author is a bit meticulous when it comes to describing the importance of the tea trade in the 18th century, I learned a great deal from this book. The final two chapters are a little awkwardly written and seem to not quite fit with the rest of the text; but again, the information and insight provided in these chapters provide important, historically relevant ideas that I found very interesting.

Joshua says

Shorter read than the 328 pages suggests. Only a little over 200 pages, rests are notes and work cited material. Also, contains a chapter completely off topic and unnecessary to the story. All and all, a great detailed account of the Boston Tea Party. Provides context of the political and economic climate of the British Empire leading up to the event in Boston as well as the atmosphere in the colonies at the time. Details on the planning, execution, and post-Tea Party sentiments. It wasn't nearly as celebrated of an act as it is today, back then the perpetrators lived in secret as it wasn't a popular act and took 50 years for more details to emerge. Overall, a good read about one of the footnotes of our history.
