

Spring 2012

The Palace

The Magazine of Tryon Palace



From Teapot to Tempest
The Beverage that Sparked a Revolution

It was, to say the least, a teachable moment. Last year, when the data became available for the 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress – often referred to as the nation’s report card – the results for history education were sobering. Of the students tested, only 20% of 4th graders, 17% of 8th graders and 12% of high school seniors were rated “proficient” or higher in their knowledge of American history. More than 50% of high school seniors scored below the “basic” level. Of all the subjects tested, history had the smallest proportion of students considered competent in the subject. Too many young people – the future leaders of our state and our country – are leaving high school without the knowledge and skills in history that are considered fundamental.



At Tryon Palace and the North Carolina History Center, we are committed to making a difference in how history is perceived and learned. Our programs, interactive exhibits and living history demonstrations, our historic buildings, collections and gardens are all teaching tools that make learning about history both accessible and enjoyable. We aim to take history out of the textbooks and incorporate it into the lives of young people using the tools and techniques they respond to. Through efforts like our history and crafts programming for pre-schoolers, *The Living History Classroom* newsletter that goes out to schools across North Carolina, and the state-of-the-art technology that engages students at our Pepsi Family Center, we work hard to encourage history learning through exploration and participation; we want to spark the curiosity that can make a student – of any age – a lifelong learner of history.

Our work would not be possible without the financial support we receive from both public and private donors. As you know, the support of members of the Tryon Palace Council of Friends is at the forefront of many of the educational programs and activities we offer now and hope to offer in the future. If you have not renewed your Council of Friends membership, please take a moment to do so. Encourage your friends and family to join. If you have time and talents you’d like to volunteer, let us know. As we continue to find ways to support our teachers and schools in educating young citizens to participate fully and intelligently in civic life, we need your help more than ever. Keep working with us; we’ve got an important job to do.

Kay P. Williams, Director

CORRECTION: The Annual Report of the Council of Friends inadvertently failed to acknowledge Mr. & Mrs. William Kemp’s generous contribution to the Tryon Palace Collections Society in 2010. The Kemps have been Charter Members of the Collections Society since its founding, and we are deeply grateful for their continued support of the collection. We offer our apologies to the Kemps for the oversight.

The Palace



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COVER PHOTO

Eric N. Blevins
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Color Him Purple..

Tryon Tales for Tots, our educational program for parents and pre-schoolers, combines history exploration and crafts to create a fun learning environment for even the youngest historian. This young scholar's choice of the color purple for George Washington is perfect: in 1782 as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, Washington established the original Purple Heart (then called the Badge of Military Merit). For a complete list of all **Tryon Tales for Tots** sessions, check our events calendar at www.tryonpalace.org.



History Through a Lens

We are always intrigued by the work of photographers – professional and amateur – who visit Tryon Palace. The images they capture often feature a unique take on our buildings and gardens. We especially like this view of the back of Tryon Palace taken by Ohio photographer Tom Bower, both for its unusual perspective of this beautiful building and for its reminder of what Tryon Palace represents. “One of my signature architectural shots is standing as close to a tall building as possible and shooting up using a wide-angle lens,” explains Bower. “This adds a level of drama and tends to give an imposing appearance to the structure. The governor’s mansion seemed well-suited to this technique as it was meant to remind the colonists of who resided there, I’d imagine.”

If we take the time to look, a building is a reflection of those who live with it, past and present. Tryon Palace today remains a testament of who we were as North Carolinians and who we chose to become.

On the eve of revolution, the last royal occupant of the Palace, Josiah Martin, was sent running for his life by North Carolinians who had acquired a taste for independence and would not easily relinquish it. North Carolina and the other colonies would face years of bloody conflict against the full might and military power of the British crown. After it was all over, Tryon Palace remained a symbol of the formidable royal authority North Carolinians fought against, and a witness to all they were able to overcome. Tryon Palace stood then, as it does today, as a beacon of their hard-won independence.

“I firmly believe that while people should not live in the past, they should never totally forget the past. That’s why much of my photographic work revolves around historical places, buildings and museums,” says Bower. “There are many sad stories of places of historical note that fell victim to the developer’s bulldozer....mainly because no one cared.”

Thanks to Tom Bower for this great shot. Sometimes a picture is indeed worth a thousand words.

Do you have an interesting or unusual photo of the buildings or grounds throughout Tryon Palace and the North Carolina History Center? We’d love to see it; perhaps it may be featured in a future issue of *The Palace*. Please write to us at editor@tryonpalace.org.



A Devilish Encounter

A visit to the Pepsi Family Center means a trip back in time to an 1835 coastal town and a first-hand encounter with history. But did you know that the visit also includes a date with the “Devil”? “One particularly engaging activity when you travel back to 1835 is stepping into the Print Shop and being greeted by the Printer’s Devil,” says Curator of Interpretation Brandon J. Anderson. But have no fear; as Anderson explains, “‘Printer’s Devil’ was a nickname for an apprentice working in a print shop.” At the Pepsi Family Center, the “Devil” is actually a virtual apprentice who works with visitors and entertains them with tales of the period. And this “Devil” is really into the details – he makes you work. “In the Print Shop, you will be able to experience what printing a newspaper in 1835 was like by creating your own story and reading and editing newspaper articles of 1835 from the *New Bern Spectator*,” says Anderson. “Part of the fun is that the options for final articles are endless and you can let your creativity flow. At the end, your story is printed electronically for you to view and show your friends and family.”



New Bern has a long history of printing “firsts” dating back to colonial times. The first printing press in North Carolina was established in New Bern in 1749 by James Davis, the first state printer, and the first book and pamphlet in the province were published in New Bern. In 1751 in New Bern, Davis also began the first newspaper in North Carolina, the *North Carolina Gazette*.

Today, visitors of all ages can try their hand at the newspaper trade at the **Pepsi Family Center** in the **North Carolina History Center**. As curator Anderson says, “Nothing compares to learning about history better than experiencing it for yourself.” Come on down – the “Devil’s” waiting!

Of Strings and Spring

What’s the hottest concert venue in town? From blues to classical, some of today’s finest musicians are finding their way to the Cullman Performance Hall in the North Carolina History Center. Coming up on **April 28**, the focus is on strings as we partner with the Four Seasons Chamber Music Festival to present **“Springtime Masterpieces.”**

This New Bern performance features festival founder and artistic director Ara Gregorian, viola; Soovin Kim, violin; Axel Strauss, violin; Hsin-Yun Huang, viola; Ani Aznavoorian, cello; and Michael Kannen, cello performing works by Elgar, Schoenberg and Brahms.

“I am excited to be able to bring Four Seasons to New Bern again and to work with Tryon Palace to make this possible,” said Gregorian. “The program will be thrilling and the guest artists are among the world’s finest.”



The program features some of the masterpieces of the string sextet repertoire. “These pieces work very well together,” says Gregorian, “and each shows off the sextet in a different light. Schoenberg’s romantic epic *Verklarte Nacht* (Transfigured Night), based on the redemptive poem by Richard Dehmel, and Brahms’ famous B Flat String Sextet highlight a program that is not-to-be-missed.”

In residence at the East Carolina University School of Music, the Four Seasons Chamber Music Festival brings internationally renowned musicians to eastern North Carolina and beyond for concerts, master classes and interactive community outreach.

“Building strong community relationships is important to us,” says Gregorian. “We hope to continue the partnership with Tryon Palace that allows us to bring beautiful music and amazing artists to New Bern.”

“Springtime Masterpieces” will take place on **Saturday, April 28, at 8:00 p.m.**, at the **Cullman Performance Hall, North Carolina History Center**. For ticket information on this performance and the Tryon Palace Performing Arts Series, check the events calendar on our website at www.tryonpalace.org.

From the Cabinet of Curiosities

By any measure, 18th-century Americans drank copious amounts of alcohol – quantities that would be considered unhealthy and excessive by modern standards. Tavern-going was an important part of the social fabric of even the smallest communities; in the mid-18th century, cities like Boston and Philadelphia had more taverns per capita than Paris or Amsterdam. At a time when water was considered more dangerous to consume than alcohol (a not unreasonable assumption given the diseases we now know are spread through tainted water), alcohol consumption was not confined to taverns, inns or public houses. Many Americans brewed their own concoctions at home. Benjamin Franklin developed his own version of “a passable spruce beer,” and Patrick Henry (who was a bartender), Thomas Jefferson and George Washington also drank home brews. Colonial Americans concocted their alcoholic beverages from, among other things, carrots, tomatoes, onions, beets, celery, squash, corn silk, dandelions and goldenrod. Alcohol was served and drunk at every occasion, at celebrations and social gatherings, at work and during meals at home.

Even wine-loving Europeans were sometimes taken aback by the Americans’ preference for alcoholic beverages. Italian physician Filippo Mazzei, a close friend of Thomas Jefferson and a secret agent for Virginia during the Revolutionary War, told the story of attending a dinner party in Norfolk, Virginia where he asked for a glass of water. “I perceived some confusion among the servants, and the water did not arrive,” he wrote. “The host, next whom I sat, whispered in my ear, asking with a smile if I could not drink something else, because the unexpected request for a glass of water had upset the entire household and they did not know what they were about.” According to Mazzei, he met a gentleman who even inquired how much water cost: “He had thought it a most expensive beverage because he had not been able to obtain a glass of it without the greatest difficulty, whilst those who ordered wine, cider, beer, grog or toddy were served at once.”

In the January 6, 1737 issue of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Benjamin Franklin published a list of different synonyms for drunkenness. Franklin said he collected these phrases at – where else – a tavern. Among the many possibilities, colonials who had imbibed a bit too much were said to be *Addled*, *Biggy*, *Cherry Merry*, *Fuddled*, *Juicy*, *Lappy*, *Fuzl’d*, *Hiddey*, *Moon-Ey’d*, *Nimptopsical*, *Dizzy as a Goose* or *Like a Rat in Trouble*.

By the 1790s, an average American over fifteen was consuming approximately 34 gallons of beer and cider, just over five gallons of distilled liquors and about a gallon of wine per year. Harvard College even had its own brewery to supply the needs of the students in its dining halls. One set of architect John Hawks’ plans for the Palace show a brewhouse in the Kitchen Office.



This detail from an 18th-century print, “A Midnight Modern Conversation” by English satirist William Hogarth, pokes fun at some unruly gentlemen overindulging at a rowdy Georgian drinking fest. The gentlemen are, as Franklin would no doubt assert, somewhat “Stew’d.” Tryon Palace collection.



The drinking motif was a popular one, as can be seen in this late 18th-century English stoneware jug from the Butler's Cage in the Tryon Palace cellar. "The Punch Party" – a slightly tamer version of Hogarth's rowdy scene – has been used to decorate the surface of the jug. Tryon Palace collection.

Not surprisingly, our 18th-century ancestors were not above having a little fun with their ale. This pretty blue and white pitcher with its cut-out floral decorations is in reality a tricky little object meant for a humorous drinking challenge.

Intended for use primarily in inns and public houses, the puzzle jug, says Tryon Palace Director of Collections Nancy Packer, "is the dribble spoon of the 18th century."

With its signature pierced neck, the puzzle jug presents a challenge to the user: how to drink or pour from it, without spilling the contents. The secret lies in its hollow handle and a hollow ring around the neck, typically fitted with two or three spouts. Beer or wine is sucked up through the handle and drunk through one of the spouts, while the remaining spouts must be covered with the fingers to keep the beverage from spilling out. For an even bigger challenge, another small hole was typically located just underneath the handle, which also had to be covered while drinking, causing much contortion and a great deal of merriment for drinker and spectator alike. (And a few wet waistcoats, we would imagine.)

The puzzle jug tradition goes back centuries; its origins can be traced to 13th-century France. By the 1500s, the jugs had appeared in England where they were to remain popular through the 18th century.



The puzzle jug in the Tryon Palace collection is a delftware (tin-glazed earthenware) jug in standard form, of British manufacture (probably from Bristol, England), ca. 1760.



I Spy Art Around the Grounds...

Got a case of cabin fever? Grab some paper and crayons and bring your little ones for a walk around the North Carolina History Center to make some art. Look for the ten metal rubbing plates featuring impressions of animals, buildings and objects. Just gently rub crayons over a sheet of paper placed on top of a plate and, voilà – instant art to take home. It's a wonderful way to explore the beautiful grounds of the North Carolina History Center and the streets surrounding Tryon Palace.

"The images of the rubbing plates represent an element or a detail that is part of the history being told throughout Tryon Palace," says Deputy Director, Philippe Lafargue. "The plates add a three-dimensional element that provides a souvenir for kids and helps them connect to important stories by physically participating in the experience." And, he adds, "It's also great fun for adults, and it's free!"

A list of all the images with a wall map and instructions are located in the Gateway Gallery of the North Carolina History Center.



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Yankee Gentlemen:



Daniel R. Larned, Henry A. Clapp, and New Bern's Federal Occupation

By: Penne S. Sandbeck
Programs Researcher and Editor, Tryon Palace

Editor's note: This article is based upon historic documents, specifically private letters reflecting attitudes prevalent before and during the Civil War among white Northerners and Southerners alike. While some of what is expressed in these letters now offends us, it is important to remember that the writers were speaking from their respective 19th-century bounds of class and race. As we commemorate the Civil War's Sesquicentennial, articles such as these will hopefully further constructive dialogue and our own "truth and reconciliation."

The Battle of New Bern was of short duration, but the problems it engendered were longer lasting. The increasing influx of African Americans seeking a safe harbor in the Union occupied town taxed the ability of the Federal forces to feed, clothe and shelter them. Image: Currier & Ives print of the Battle of New Bern. Tryon Palace collection.

Of the thousands of Northern soldiers stationed in New Bern, North Carolina, between 1862 and 1865, two particular men whose letters have survived offer an interesting contrast in their observations of occupied New Bern and its people. Daniel Read Larned (1828-1911) and Henry Austin Clapp (1838-1904) were not in town at the same time, and it is not certain they ever met; nevertheless, given their cultured Yankee backgrounds and keen observations, they traveled similar paths during their respective times in New Bern as they interacted with officials and townspeople. Their accounts of African American citizens, particularly household servants, reveal a world of difference in their outlook and mirror the ambivalence and curiosity with which Northerners frequently viewed the African Americans in the south.

The otherwise kindly and intelligent Daniel Larned often showed irritability and a bias typical of his class; Henry Clapp demonstrated an empathetic curiosity toward his African American acquaintances that was very atypical of Yankee gentlemen of that time. This empathy is further underscored by Clapp's two tintype images of two black women from New Bern – a boarding house cook and a seamstress – that were in his possession until the day he died.

Daniel Read Larned

The story begins with an invasion:

Our boat was filled with Soldiers taken from one of the large Steamers, and as we neared the shore, our boat touched ground within about ten yards. No sooner did She touch, than the color bearer of the 51st N.Y. leaped overboard waist deep, rushed to the Shore & was the first to plant the Star Spangled Banner on the Soil of North Carolina—if the Enemy was within six miles they heard the rousing cheers of our men, among the loudest of them was General B. who was on the upper deck, & enjoyed it amazingly. So soon as this man jumped overboard thousands followed & the river was full of them—wading waist deep to shore—it was terribly exciting: we knew not how near the enemy might be; all was woods & underbrush, but the gunboats were standing guard for a mile up the river, occasionally sending in a shell to remind any lurking foe that we were near.

Eleven thousand soldiers, commanded by General Ambrose Burnside and his brigadier-generals, were on the move from the mouth of Slocum's Creek to the city of New Bern, North Carolina, one of the Confederacy's eastern strategic ports and commercial centers. The Battle of New Bern, which barely lasted four hours, was fought on March 14, 1862, and the Confederates, overwhelmed, fled west, burning warehouses, residences and ammunition rather than let them fall into Northern hands. However, Union soldiers quickly overtook the town, put out the fires and established a network of hospitals, barracks and forts along the Neuse and Trent Rivers and surrounding the city. They would remain until after Lee surrendered at Appomattox in April 1865.

General Ambrose Burnside, the hero of the battle and chief commanding officer, oversaw the takeover of New Bern and its institution of military rule. Burnside and his staff – including private secretary Daniel Read Larned – initially lodged in a “*large two Story white house Square*” built for 18th-century privateer and merchant John Wright Stanly. Larned described the house in great detail in letters, including the spring garden currently in bloom and the “*eight black servants*” waiting upon the officers:

The man who occupied the house we now occupy—was an officer in the rebel Army, and a prominent man in the City—It is a large two Story white house Square, with flat roof—large yard in the front & rear; Hall 10 foot wide runs through the house—large parlors on Either Side to correspond. . . wide Staircase, with real old style banister [!]. . . we found plenty of table furniture, tables, chairs, mirrors, bedsteads, bureaus & c. to make ourselves perfectly comfortable.



As a Yankee in an occupied Southern town, Daniel Larned must have felt like a stranger in a strange land. The Yankee soldiers were as much an object of wary curiosity to the Southerners as the local population was to Larned. He wrote to his brother-in-law, “A general feeling of Surprise seems to pervade the whole Southern people so far as we have been able to see it manifested, at the good order and quiet behavior of the Yankees.” Larned's portrait was taken by the great Civil War photographer, Matthew Brady. Image: Library of Congress collection.

Dealing With the Problems of Freedom

As private secretary to General Ambrose Burnside, Daniel Larned had a bird's-eye view of the challenges posed by a large number of African Americans suddenly pouring into New Bern. The rapidly increasing population of slaves escaping to the occupied town was straining the military government's ability to feed, clothe and house them as quickly as possible before the situation spun out of control. Burnside wrote Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton that:

They are now a source of very great anxiety and to us. The city is being overrun with fugitives from the surrounding towns and plantations. Two have reported themselves who have been in the swamps for five years. It would be utterly impossible, if we were so disposed, to keep them outside of our lines, as they find their way to us through woods and swamps from every side.

On March 30, Daniel Larned visited Vincent Colyer, newly arrived to New Bern from the Young Mens Christian Association (YMCA) of New York. Colyer had been given responsibility of all the "Contrabands," white and black, but also oversaw "a large number of Negroes – and they are organized into gangs, to work on Shipboard and on earth fortifications which are being thrown up for the defence of the city on the Southwest part." Larned described these contrabands' uniforms as consisting of "a strip of white cloth around their hats, with the words 'United States Service' printed on it."

By the time military governor Edward Stanly arrived at the end of May 1862, Colyer had also organized schools for the African American contraband; Larned wrote his brother-in-law Henry Howe on May 24 asking if he could find a group to donate "spelling books Primers Slates & c" toward the cause.

When Stanly arrived, Burnside and his circle moved to the nearby Slover House as a courtesy, leaving Stanly his childhood home for his own headquarters. However, in spite of the disagreeable business of moving from one handsome house to another equally fine dwelling less than four blocks away, Burnside and his circle initially felt relieved to cede responsibility to Stanly, given their opinion of his being "a pleasant, agreeable man." But the situation quickly curdled, as Stanly, a man caught between his support of the Union and his understanding of slaveholding North Carolinians, headed toward conflict with Vincent Colyer. Larned writes of an attempted visit to one of the new schools:

I went round last evening to see the negro School that has been Started under the care of Mr. Colyer. . .which numbered 700, old and young but I was much surprised and quizzed to find that the school had been Suspended, by order of Gov. Stanly—the laws of N. Carolina forbid the education of the Negro and as he is here to execute the laws as they stood before the rebellion broke out this must be submitted to; but it is very hard—the poor creatures are so eager to learn, and many of them evinced a surprising facility for acquiring knowledge—I am told that when they were told the School was disbanded, they all cried as if their hearts would break.

Larned was further dismayed by Stanly's returning contraband to prior "owners," observing to Burnside's wife, "It is not easy to predict what the result of such a course will be—what the effects of this will be on the blacks themselves."



Vincent Colyer established the first public school for African Americans in New Bern; this image is from his "Report of the Services Rendered by the Freed People to the United States Army in North Carolina, in the Spring of 1862, After the Battle of Newbern." Image: Tryon Palace collection.

In the end, Vincent Colyer fell out of favor with Burnside for reporting Stanly's actions to authorities and the press during a visit to Washington, D.C. Larned, newly-laden with suddenly superfluous "books, Stationery, ink &c" sent from his family to serve the then-disbanded school, summarized feelings within Headquarters that "Colyer has misrepresented the case—and told some things that are not true. . . He did a good work while he was here, but his Abolitionism carried him too far." Once back in New Bern, a tense meeting between Colyer and Burnside on June 21 likely hastened Colyer's departure.

Edward Stanly later, and somewhat disingenuously, noted that Colyer's schools were not the first African American schools in New Bern and that longtime New Bern slaveholders had a practice of choosing to educate certain slaves. There were indeed antebellum schools for free blacks in town, including one run by the military governor's own first cousin, mulatto schoolteacher and landowner John Stewart Stanly, who moved his family to Cleveland, Ohio, before war broke out.

Daniel Read Larned traced his ancestry back to Englishman Isaac Learned who had arrived in Massachusetts by the 1640s. After fighting in King Philip's War against the Narragansett Indians, Isaac Learned, Jr., settled in northeastern Connecticut where his direct descendant Daniel Read Larned was born. Between his birth in 1828 and December 1861, little is known about Larned other than he came from a comfortably established family and had some level of education beyond grammar school. But through the machinations of his brother-in-law, businessman Henry A. Howe, Larned went from being a scrivener for a New York City bank to a military attaché working as Burnside's private secretary.

Larned's frank and engaging letters from his four-month stay in New Bern portray a town in upheaval – he paints a portrait of the angry “Secesh” whose army had lost, exuberant “contraband” African Americans, vacated elegant homes, and the Northern soldiers, teachers and missionaries beginning to establish military rule, schools, churches and a settlement for African Americans. His audience included his brother-in-law Howe and his older sister, Helen; his younger sister, Amelia; and Burnside's wife, indicating that Larned had quickly gained the General's confidence and friendship.

Once the Union army arrived in New Bern on March 14, Larned was one of several officials put in charge of making sure stolen goods were retrieved and returned to their owners. On one such call, he met a fiercely “Secesh” lady:

She said she and her Sister had decided to remain and throw themselves upon our protection; when I spoke of “the oath of allegiance” she drew herself up with all the dignity, and Sternness she could command, and fixed her Eyes on the ground—but not a word could I get from her. The people generally are unwilling to take “the Oath” but talk of “honor” and “Self respect” in Keeping Secret from the rebels any information they may possess in regards to our movements.

Larned was taken aback by his encounter in the street with another vehement female Confederate sympathizer:

She said since we landed the Slaves had been so impudent & lazy that they could do nothing with them, they considered themselves free & were not under the least control; she finished by vowing if any of her slaves were impudent again She “would knock them flat.” I told how it sounded very strange to a Northerner to hear such language from a lady.

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General Ambrose E. Burnside and his staff, ca. 1862-1863. Daniel Larned is either the gentleman to Burnside's right, or the man sitting on the ground. In a letter to his sister Amelia, Larned wrote of Burnside: “Don't ever breathe what I say about the opinions or policy of the General—I don't know as I have said anything I shouldn't but I “sweat like rain” when I hear the General blow—He can do it so as to make a fellow wilt in no time—” Image: National Archives.



Daniel Larned found slaveholders' anger and invective repellent; yet, as was typical of his class and of the time, he himself shared a less-than-flattering view of blacks. Like many whites from the northeastern United States, he likely had little contact with blacks before the war. Larned was more familiar with the recently-arrived Irish and Scots servants of his brother-in-law's household; to

had an opportunity to get to know African Americans who worked as servants for Burnside and his staff. One of these was Mary, a free black who tended to Larned during a bout of sickness. Until Mary's professional care and delicate "*gruels and wheys*" soothed Larned's malaise, the only African American his letters referred to in a complimentary way had been Burnside's valet Robert

Holloway. Shortly after his illness, Larned wrote to one of his sisters asking for help obtaining mourning dresses for Mary and her sister Caroline as "*it is impossible to get any ladies wearing apparel here.*" His description indicates that material and dress patterns were to be sent along with straw bonnets, shoes and "*four pairs Corsetts.*" He added, "*The goods should be of medium quality—They are free negroes & a very respectable and worthy family.*"

In another letter, Larned described Mary to his brother-in-law:

We have a female here at headquarters, about 20 or 22 years old—who is desirous of going North, as a maid—She is a Capital hand as nurse, or seamstress, and would make a first rate ladies maid—she took the entire charge of me during the time I was ill, and was a capital nurse—[She is a free black] and her father lives here in town; but her sister will probably go out to serve as maid for Mrs. Captain Goodrich and Mary will go too, if she can get a good place.

Both Mary and Caroline held Daniel Larned in high regard, so much so that when the spring flies became "*awful thick and can't be shook off;*" the two women impulsively constructed a mosquito canopy in Larned's room.

I went up to my room this afternoon for something and found Mary and Caroline our chamber maids in my room with a huge pile of rose colored tarleton; they had made me a mosquito [sic.] nett to cover the whole bed (high post) and have it hang in folds on the floor; the color & material were their own taste—but as it is a gift I can not find fault...

In a letter to his sisters, Larned joked, "*The whole staff are down on me, like a thousand of brick, telling them that I am a married [!] man & my wife is very jealous. . . . Mary says if I have a wife, She will be glad to have me more comfortable.*"



After the Battle of New Bern, the John Wright Stanly house served as the headquarters and residence of commanding General Ambrose Burnside and his staff, including Daniel Larned. The house appears in reverse in this 1864 image. Image: Tryon Palace collection.

New Englander Larned, they must have stood in sharp contrast to the sight of a young African American girl pacing the streets of New Bern with a "*pail, a pitcher, and a small box*" balanced on her head. Larned was respectful of Burnside's longtime valet, Robert Holloway, who had recently returned from Confederate imprisonment after Bull Run, but African Americans were otherwise alien curiosities to him. In one of his gentler comments he remarked: "*[T]hey are the laziest, and the most degraded set of beings I ever Saw. Our Streets are filled with them, and yet they Come in Every day,*" adding, "*Many have been set to work in the Hospitals and on Shipboard.*"

While living in the Stanly House, and afterwards in the Slover House near the Neuse River, Daniel Larned

The town is charmingly laid out but seems strange to our eyes. The streets are lined with Southern trees, cypress, and others which are now very green. The houses for whites are shabby genteel, the houses for negroes are low and dark - both are picturesque. The railroad runs right through the principal street.

Whether Mary or Caroline received their apparel before or after Larned left New Bern in July 1862 is not known. Shortly before leaving town, Larned hurriedly wrote his sister Amelia regarding the clothes, “*Don’t worry about the [women’s] bill, get what you think best—goods that will answer for medium, or between seasons—I am impatient [sic] to get the things and have the affair off my mind.*”

Henry Clapp

Private Henry Austin Clapp of Company F, 44th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia (M.V.M.) arrived three months after Daniel Larned’s departure. In addition to periodic expeditions and battles with his company, Clapp served as a census taker of New Bern’s black community for the Rev. James Means, who was Superintendent of the Contrabands. When Means died of typhoid, Clapp and two other soldiers continued taking the census until the end of his enlistment in June 1862.

Like Daniel Larned, Henry Clapp was a cultured New Englander whose pedigree extended to the early 17th century when his ancestor Nicholas Clap settled in Dorchester, Massachusetts. Clapp graduated from Harvard College in 1860 and returned the following year to study law. He enlisted in the army, along with seven other classmates, two days after a fellow classmate was killed in battle at Cedar Mountain, Virginia.

Clapp’s mother later described Clapp and his fellow enlistees as “*large numbers of the educated, the refined, and the pious.*” Quartered at the Camp Stevenson barracks outside of New Bern, the men of Company F were cultured, jolly and, according to some, supercilious. From Clapp’s letters, it is evident that these soldiers found New Bern both familiar and unusual:

The town is charmingly laid out but seems strange to our eyes. The streets are lined with Southern trees, cypress, and others which are now very green. The houses for whites are shabby genteel, the houses for negroes are low and dark—both are picturesque. The railroad runs right through the principal street.

Although very much a man of his time, Henry Clapp’s embrace of circumstance and his keen interest in people made him a very different Yankee from Daniel Larned, who never quite overcame his uneasiness of blacks.

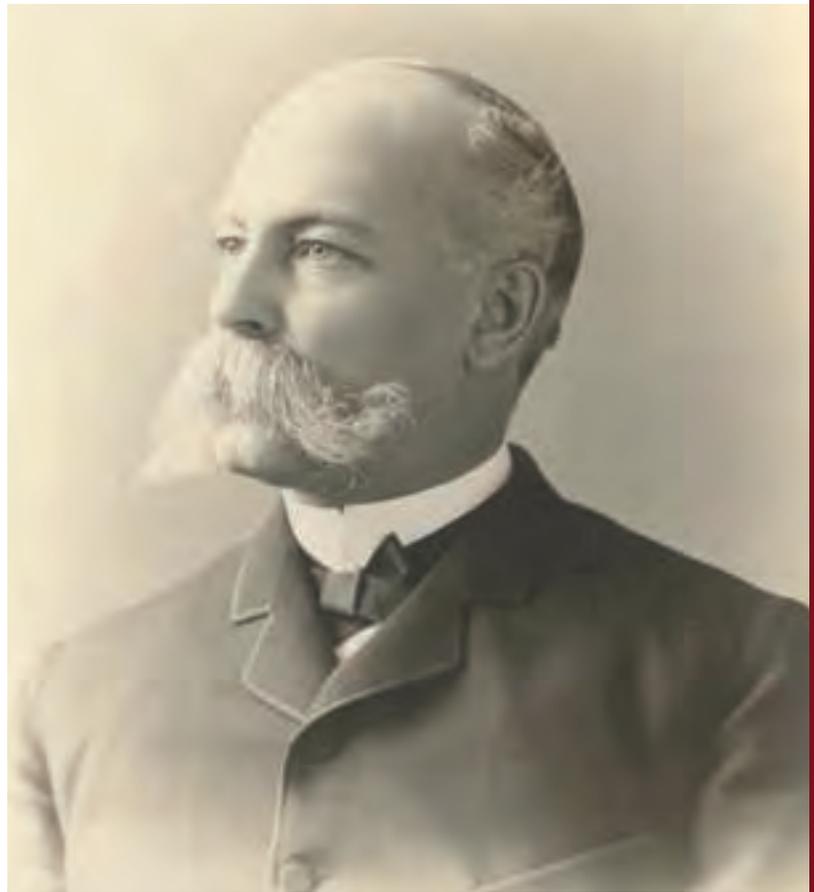
Where Daniel Larned might have raised an eyebrow, Henry Clapp was inspired by how Superintendent Means approached his work:

[Means] was an enthusiast with regard to the negro race and treated the blacks as if they were all honest and faithful. At the same time he was perfectly just and firm in his dealings with all of them and one result at any rate of the method he pursued was to inspire them with the greatest love and confidence toward himself. When we first began to take the census (to illustrate) the blacks seemed really afraid some harm would come to them from giving their names, in any such case, all our boys had to say

was that “Mr. Means wanted to know how many of his colored children there were,” and they were perfectly satisfied.

While Larned focused upon what he found comical or grotesque among the African American population, Clapp offered a warmer and more sympathetic viewpoint:

...thirteen of us slipped outside the lines. . .and had a supper at the little low house of a negro woman, famous for her skill in cookery. It was a curious scene for me as I waited with the others for the things to be made ready (at least an hour) on her little piazza, or verandah. The moon was bright and the air cool, and the house like Uncle Tom’s cabin (the picture I mean in the book) so that I felt it was quite a romantic affair. When things were ready we were all seated round her small table and with no elbow room, but much appetite partook of a stunning ham, boiled sweet potatoes, tea, coffee, and oysters and tripe. The oysters were cooked without milk, but were very good. The affair was very enjoyable.



While Henry Clapp demonstrated a warmth and intellectual curiosity about the African Americans he met, his disdain for those he called “the poor white trash” was palpable. He wrote to his mother that they all “look inferior to the negroes, in intelligence, energy, and every thing else that makes up a noble character. They are horribly sallow, pale, and all have the shakes. The women are frightful and are chewers of clay and snuff-dippers. . . I should prefer the darkest Ethiop [sic] that ever made midnight blacker, rather than one of these wretched, forlorn, poor white women.” Image: Tryon Palace collection.

In contrast to Daniel Larned's elegant quarters, Clapp and two other soldiers lodged at Superintendent Means' downtown "cottage" near the corner of Metcalf and Broad streets, and the census takers took their meals first at Mrs. Tripp's, where Clapp had partaken of the "stunning ham," and then later at Mary Jane Conner's house.

Clapp's friendships with Mary Jane Conner and her sister-in-law Sylvia Conner make for some of the most fascinating reading of his letters home. He described Mary Jane, also known as Mary Ann, as...

...about the most remarkable colored woman I ever saw. She is thirty-five or thereabouts, of medium [color] and of a very intelligent expression. She had been a slave for years (all her life) before our troops took Newbern and been hired out as cook at the great Hotel here the Washington House—and which was burnt by the rebs when we came into Newbern. She supports an aged and infirm mother. She has told me once or twice in answer to my questions, that if it were not that she felt as if she ought to stay and take care of her mother she would go to New York at once. She could earn a handsome living anywhere, for she is thoroughly capable.

But it was Mary Jane's sister-in-law Sylvia Conner with whom Henry Clapp was most impressed. Formerly a slave to New Bern's affluent Smallwood family, Sylvia, a "superb seamstress," was possessed of a bearing and

manner that Clapp found "agreeable and really of unusual refinement. I've seen the wives of millionaires who were much her inferiors in urbanity and polish of manner." One wonders what Daniel Larned would have made of Sylvia Conner, hailed by Clapp as "a woman of very good sense & well developed reflective faculties."

In gratitude to both women for their kindness at the dining table and with the sewing needle, Clapp and his mother formed a plan to send them clothing. In contrast to the back-and-forth complaining between Larned and his sisters, Mrs. Clapp assembled a box of clothes within three weeks. The Conners' resulting pleasure was obvious but appropriately measured:

It was really delightful to look at Mary's countenance... they did not go into fits of delight but showed their satisfaction very much as cultivated people do at the North. Sylvia remarked that mother "seemed to have guessed her taste exactly" and Mary reechoed the sentiments. Sylvia commented two or three times on its being so thoughtful in Mrs. Clapp" and I think they were really, really very much touched at the attention.

Before Henry Clapp left New Bern in June 1863, he commented that Mary Jane and Sylvia Conner, along with their beautiful cousin Eunice, were "bound to me forever," a sentiment apparently reinforced by the Conner

This image from "Harper's Weekly" shows the cottage serving as the office of Vincent Colyer, the Superintendent of the Poor in occupied New Bern; his successor James Means lived and worked there as well, and Henry Clapp lived there while he was taking the census. Tryon Palace collection.



ladies presenting him with tintypes of their images shortly before his departure. The seamstress and boarding house cook are dignified in these portraits, apparently displaying their new dresses from the Clapps.

Postscripts

There is no record that Henry Clapp ever returned to New Bern after the war or saw his friends again. He returned to Harvard, was admitted to the bar, and practiced law for nearly ten years, after which time he clerked for Suffolk County, Massachusetts' Supreme Judicial Court. Clapp's theatrical and literary interests found an outlet in writing reviews for the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, and later as the *Boston Herald's* chief dramatic critic. Married with one son, Henry Clapp died in February 1904.

Daniel Read Larned remained Burnside's secretary throughout the war, becoming a Captain Assistant Adjutant-General in 1863 and a Major in August 1864 *"for gallant services in east Tennessee, at the siege of Knoxville, and in battles from the Rapidan to Petersburg."* By the end of the war, the man who once said he never wished for a title left the Army as a Lieutenant Colonel. Although he had privately expressed his wish to return to Rhode Island and farm, Larned was back in the Army by June 1879 as a Paymaster General in Oregon, and was stationed in California before he retired in 1892. Instead of returning to New England, Larned chose to stay in Washington, D.C. There are no records that Larned participated in any Civil War commemorative events, but he was a staunch member of the Society of Colonial Wars' District of Columbia chapter, apparently preferring to remember his ancestor Isaac Larned, Jr.'s combat with the Narragansett Indians rather than his own with Confederates. Daniel Larned died on June 26, 1911 at his apartments in the Westmoreland Building, and was buried in National Cemetery two days later.

As for Mary, Caroline, Mary Jane and Sylvia Conner – African American women caught in the Civil War's events and its aftermath – for the most part, their names might as well have been "writ in water." Mary, Larned's attentive nurse, and her sister Caroline had hoped to secure employment in Captain Edwin R. Goodrich's household; due to incomplete census records, it is not known if this ever occurred. Mary Jane Conner's husband Shedrick was working in Wilmington, North Carolina, as a cooper in 1873, but a black 62-year-old servant named "Mary Connor" is listed in Isaac Patterson's New Bern household in 1880. Sylvia Conner returned to the Smallwoods as a servant, albeit for Annie M. Smallwood Hughes, whose husband Isaac Hughes was a prominent town physician. "Sylvia Connor" is listed as living in their household in 1870, with a three-year-old daughter named Eva. There are no other known records of these women.



Henry Clapp's admiration and affection for Sylvia [top] and Mary Jane Conner [bottom] was evident in his letters and in the fact that he kept the portraits the women gave him until his death. In these tintypes, Sylvia and Mary Jane are wearing new dresses, a gift from the Clapp family. Tryon Palace collection.



For sources/further reading, go to www.tryonpalace.org/pdfs/yankee.pdf.

From T



Life around the tea table was the frequent subject of a genre of 18th-century portraiture called the “conversation piece.” These paintings, which nearly always depicted members of the same family or intimate acquaintances, were meant to reflect the social standing the sitters either had, or to which they aspired. This example, ca. 1730, which hangs in the John Wright Stanly house drawing room, features a large group gathered around the mistress of the house who is presiding over a well-equipped and elegant tea table. The grand surroundings, the elegant attire, the expensive tea equipage and the servant are all indications of this family’s wealth and high status. Tryon Palace collection.

By: Maria L. Muniz

The Beverage that Sparked a Revolution

Teapot to Tempest:



“It is about 100 years since this herb, worse than Pandora’s Box, was introduced into Europe. In which time mankind have lost some inches of their stature, many degrees of their strength.”

*– David Ramsay
A Sermon on Tea, 1774*

The Chinese called it “liquid jade.” First used as a medicinal brew in ancient Southeast Asia, it became a commodity that fueled the British colonial empire and brewed a revolution in its American colonies. Decried by some 18th-century moralists for its detrimental effects on the delicate female constitution, in North Carolina it would prove to be the catalyst for one of the first organized political actions by women in our nation’s history.

Tea is an ancient commodity. According to Chinese lore, tea was discovered in 2737 B.C. by the Chinese Emperor Shen-Nung, who was known as the “Divine Healer.” Shen-Nung’s edicts required that all drinking water be boiled as a hygienic measure. One day while his servants were boiling water for the court to drink, some dried leaves from a nearby tea bush fell into the water and infused it. The curious Emperor drank some and found it refreshing. Many thousands of years later, tea remains the most consumed beverage on the planet, second only to water.

Until coffee, chocolate and tea were introduced to Europe in the early 17th century, beer, ale, hard cider or sometimes wine made for an intoxicating start to the day. (And a safer one, given the dangers of drinking potentially unsafe water.) Although tea has become identified as the quintessential English beverage, it was the Dutch who introduced tea to Europe and Dutch colonists who brought the pleasures of tea to the New World. And the pleasures were considerable.

In *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, author Washington Irving extolled “the ample charms of a genuine Dutch country tea-table” in the colony of Nieuw Amsterdam (later, New York) groaning with “crisp and crumbling cruller; sweet cakes and short cakes, ginger-cakes and honey-cakes” as well as pies, ham and beef, preserved fruits, boiled fish and roasted chickens all “mingled higgledy-piggledy” with “the motherly teapot sending up its cloud of vapor from the midst – Heaven bless the mark!”

At first, tea was touted for its health benefits (it was claimed as a cure for everything from headaches to fevers, giddiness, scurvy and infection), but by the late 17th century, it had become the fashionable beverage. For the first half of the 18th century, its scarcity and relatively high cost meant that tea drinking was confined to wealthier households. But burgeoning trade and commerce assured that, by the mid-18th century, tea was the favored beverage for social gatherings for both middle- and upper-class

Americans. While living in Delaware in the mid-18th century, Lutheran missionary and clergyman Israel Acrelius noted, “Tea is a drink very generally used. No one is so high as to despise it, nor any one so low as not to think himself worthy of it.” He also remarked that tea, coffee and chocolate were so prevalent that they were to be found “in the most remote cabins, if not for daily use, yet for visitors...”

The Social Niceties

“[Americans] are also very fastidious about cups and saucers for tea...”

– Claude Blanchard, Commissary of the French auxiliary army during the American Revolution

By some accounts, Americans were even more passionate tea drinkers than their English counterparts. From Boston to Charleston, the ritual of tea drinking had become an indispensable part of American cultural life.

Tea was served as a matter of hospitality and as part of the rituals of courtship, entertainment and social gatherings. In American homes, tea was ubiquitous; one Frenchman traveling in America wrote to his wife, “My health continues excellent, despite the quantity of tea one must drink with the ladies out of gallantry.” During the summer months, tea could be taken alfresco. In the colder months, visitors to the sometimes rigidly formal American parlors would find



Asia was the birthplace of tea, a beverage that became a central focus of cultural and spiritual life in China and Japan. In the 17th century, burgeoning trade ensured that the “liquid jade” made its way to Europe and America where it would have an equally important impact on social customs and politics. Image donated by Corbis/Bettman Archives.



the ladies sitting stiffly in a row against a wall or arranged in an elegant and precise semicircle while tea and refreshments were handed around. One 18th-century observer described the scene: *“On the right of the mistress of the house are ranged in a half circle all the women, as well attired as possible. A profound silence follows the arrival of each guest, and all the ladies maintain the gravity of judges sitting on the bench.”*

Beautifully decorated tea china was an essential element of a genteel home and delicate, imported teaware was proudly displayed in elegant china cupboards or buffets, or sometimes kept prominently on display on fashionable tea tables. The tea ritual required a bewildering array of equipment: tablecloths, trays, slop bowls for the used tea leaves, sugar tongs, containers to hold cream or milk, silverware and, of course, fine porcelain cups and saucers. (These accoutrements were expensive by 18th-century standards – and they remain so today. A French Sèvres porcelain tea service commissioned in 1764 by the renowned English actor, David Garrick, recently sold at auction for over \$95,000.)

Lit by candles and beautifully appointed, an 18th-century American tea table would most certainly have been an elegant sight to behold, set with its gleaming collection of silver and colorfully decorated ceramics. The tea table served as a stage for tea fashions that changed almost as often as dress fashions, altering the size and shapes of teapots, the decoration of porcelain, and even the design of sugar tongs and teaspoons. Of course, keeping up with fashionable taste was the privilege of the well-to-do. The inventory of the Fort George fire at Governor Tryon’s New York home reveals that the Tryons owned eight complete tea services and a mahogany tea board with Chinese rails, reflecting their station in life.

High-quality tea was expensive and kept in a locked wooden tea caddy, the key in careful possession of the mistress of the house. For those with means, the tea table would be set up by servants; the lady of the house would select the tea to be served, and sometimes blend her own special variety. She would personally serve her invited guests. Child-size tea sets were also manufactured for young hostesses to play

Silver tea pots were prized and admired, but very costly; porcelain and earthenware were considered to produce the best tasting tea. Before the 18th century, most porcelain was imported from China and often the cargoes of porcelain were used as ships’ ballast. During the early 18th century, European manufacturers learned how to manufacture their own china. This tea table in the John Wright Stanly house is set with a beautiful Chinese export porcelain tea service called “penciled ware” which features a design hand-painted with a very fine hair brush. The Stanlys did not own this tea service, but they did own the silver covered sugar bowl with the inverted pear shape and pineapple finial. Tryon Palace collection.

with and practice the important rituals associated with the correct etiquette of presiding over the tea table.

The tea table itself was among the most important items required for fashionable tea drinking. Tea tables could be rectangular or square, but the most popular shape was a round table with a tripod base, usually made of walnut and mahogany. The tops would often tilt and when not in use, these tables would be generally placed against the wall of a room until tea time when they would be pulled out into the room, often near the fireplace during the colder seasons. Tablecloths were used according to personal taste and preference, and decorative trays were often used to hold the teaware or for passing along the refreshments.

To set a proper tea table, the necessary equipment had to be set in the proper manner. If the tea table was round, the cups would be placed in a semicircle; if the table was square or rectangular, they would be arranged in a straight line.

Tea could be served to both male and female guests at any time of the day, but it was also common for ladies to drink tea together after the main meal, when they withdrew to their parlors and drawing rooms, leaving the gentlemen to their port and pipes.

With all of the paraphernalia attendant with tea drinking, tea drinkers sometimes found themselves juggling cups, saucers and plates of food with varying degrees of success. According to one observer, it all proved to be too much for an elderly American gentleman who *“after having taken a cup in one hand and tartlets in the other, opened his mouth and told the servant to fill it for him with smoked venison!”*

For the upper classes, tea drinking carried with it a ritualized etiquette that made it an 18th-century equivalent

of performance art. There were rules for the preparation, serving and even consumption of tea; it could prove to be a slippery slope for those unfamiliar with the rules. French jurist Moreau de Saint-Méry, who traveled in America for a number of years in the late 18th century, observed that it was the custom for a visitor to return a cup to the hostess with the spoon on top or reversed on the saucer to indicate that no more tea was desired. Returning the cup the wrong way could result in a bottomless cup of tea. Saint-Méry recounted the story of one unfortunate Frenchman who, not knowing the language and unfamiliar with tea etiquette, was so *“distressed”* to find a sixth and unwanted cup of tea coming his way, that he emptied it and put the cup in his pocket to prevent any possibility of being served more. If you did not know the proper signal, wrote another traveler, *“You would be overwhelmed with tea!”*

Tea-drinking became a favorite subject for artists of the day. “Conversation pieces,” paintings depicting groups of individuals engaged in domestic or artistic pursuits, often featured a tea party as the subject. The painters of conversation pieces paid careful attention to the material culture of tea, rendering in meticulous detail the shimmer of a silver teakettle, the elaborate decoration of a porcelain teacup or the elegantly turned leg of a prized tea table. These paintings were meant to highlight the social standing of those portrayed and underscore their wealth and gentility.

The genteel rituals of tea drinking helped preserve the distinction of classes in America. The upper classes could afford to keep up with the latest fashions in teaware and furniture and had the time and leisure to indulge in the latest tea-drinking fashions. The lower classes drank their



Left photo: The breakfast table in the Tryon Palace master bedchamber is ready for the Tryons' morning tea. The table is set with an English tea service; the beautifully decorated hot water kettle is Chinese enamel, and the plates are Wedgwood creamware. (Josiah Wedgwood was potter to Queen Charlotte.) Tryon Palace collection. Right photo: The tea table in young Margaret Tryon's bedchamber is set with a ca. 1740 miniature Chinese export tea service and a miniature painted tin tea caddy. These child-sized sets were not only playthings, but teaching tools to help a young lady to master the art and social grace of serving tea. Tryon Palace collection.



tea, but had neither the time nor the money to engage in its more refined rituals. The tea they drank was of inferior quality, their utensils of cheaper metals, their teaware of less expensive, glazed earthenware.

In the 18th century, the rapid advance of tea-drinking excited the attention and condemnation of the moralists and alarmists of the day. In sermons and pamphlets that warned against the evils of tea consumption, the beverage was said to produce fatal effects on the health and was accused of being injurious to the mind. Tea was blamed for increasing the drinker's susceptibility to colds and for the loss of Americans' teeth. Tea was said to have a corrupting influence on women, inciting them to idleness, gossip and neglect of their domestic duties. *"That tea-table chat is a synonyme for tattling,"* wrote one physician, *"none can deny."*

Yet in spite of the dire warnings, for most Americans tea was no longer a luxury, but a necessity. No amount of moralizing was going to change that, but politics soon would. Beyond the refined parlors of American households, trouble was brewing, and tea was one of the culprits.



Top photo: These beautiful drum-shaped teapots belonged to the Stanly family and were made in Philadelphia by silversmith Edmund Milne. These were very expensive pieces, even for a wealthy family like the Stanlys. Tryon Palace collection.

Bottom photo: Tea was an expensive commodity, kept under lock and key in fashionable tea chests such as this one from the Tryon Palace drawing room. The tea chest is covered in shagreen, a type of leather made from sharkskin or the skin of a rayfish and usually dyed green with a vegetable dye. This example has been dyed black and features an interior lined in red velvet with silver tape edging. Inside are three beautifully-worked silver containers made in 1752 by English silversmith Samuel Taylor, who specialized in crafting tea-caddies and sugar bowls. The two caddies shown here would have held green and black tea. Not shown is a matching sugar bowl. Tryon Palace collection.

Stirring the Political Pot

"[I] blush that I belong to that rank of beings which would sell their country for Tea."

– David Ramsay
A Sermon on Tea

By the mid-18th century, Americans' love affair for tea was firmly established, but their love for the British mother country was being sorely tested. Facing a large public debt resulting from the French and Indian War, King George III and his government looked to taxing the American colonies and more strictly enforcing trade regulations as a means of replenishing the British coffers – and of reestablishing control over American colonials who were becoming increasingly restive and independent-minded. (As early as 1760, North Carolina royal governor Arthur Dobbs was warning about a *"rising spirit of independency stealing into this province."*)

A series of taxes followed, including the Townshend Acts in 1767 which placed a tax on a number of commodities imported into the colonies, including glass, sugar, paper, lead, paint and tea. The British hoped to raise revenues, but also to use the funds to pay the salaries of the royal governors and other British civil servants, placing them further out of any American influence or control by local legislatures. Americans, however, balked at paying taxes imposed by a Parliament in which they had no representation.

Even before the 1767 taxes were imposed, North Carolinians were already experiencing a spirit of unrest and ambivalence about British rule. The colony had proven itself to be feisty and troublesome. Relations with its royal governors were often strained. One royal governor asked to be recalled after, among other complaints, accusing the Chief Justice and the Secretary of the Colony of trying to murder him with pistols. Another royal governor complained that the assembly wasn't paying him enough salary to live *"with common decency."* In succession, royal governors in North Carolina dealt with lingering disputes about quitrents (a small annual payment to the colonial governor as agent of the Crown), unpaid taxes and laws that were not always obeyed.

From its beginnings, North Carolina showed a penchant for defying royal prerogative in favor of a strong tradition of self-governance. Royal governor Arthur Dobbs had observed that the North Carolina General Assembly fancied itself as a mini British House of Commons, routinely ignoring the King's instructions to his royal governors.

In 1765, public demonstrations had broken out in Edenton, New Bern and Wilmington in response to the British enactment of the Stamp Act, another attempt to extract revenue from the American colonies. In defiance of the tax, several hundred North Carolinians organized as the "Sons of Liberty" (as they were known all along the Atlantic coast) and escorted the Stamp Master to the courthouse in Wilmington where they forced him to sign his own resignation. They also openly confronted



In this 1771 engraving, a pretty young woman is daintily stirring a cup of tea with a silver spoon. On the table in front of her is some tatted or handwork. When tea was served, women ruled the drawing room, but politics would soon encourage them to take a stand against their favorite beverage. Tryon Palace collection.

Governor William Tryon, threatening to forcibly remove the Comptroller of the Port of Brunswick unless he resigned. A contemptuous Tryon was forced to give in. (A few years later in 1771, royal governor William Tryon would have to use military force to subdue an armed rebellion by residents of the western regions who were unhappy with the exorbitant fees and taxes being exacted by county officials.) North Carolina was no stranger to rebellion.

In response to the Townshend Acts, Virginia led the way by instituting a non-importation agreement (essentially a boycott, though the term would not come in use until the late 19th century) against British merchandise, including the very popular beverage, tea. By the fall of 1769, North Carolina had joined the other colonies in the effort. When they met on November 2, the North Carolina Assembly adopted the Virginia non-importation resolutions without a dissenting voice, prompting royal governor William Tryon to reprimand the Assembly, declaring that it had *"sapped the foundations of confidence and gratitude"* and *"torn up by the roots every sanguine hope I entertained to render this Province further service..."* The Governor promptly called for the Assembly to dissolve. (Tryon also wrote to Britain complaining that the Assembly *"wounded my sensibility"* and asked for a new job in New York, or a year's

leave of absence.) The members ignored him, called for an illegal meeting of the Assembly and proceeded to draw up its own non-importation agreement which was widely distributed throughout the colony. Merchants of the Cape Fear region also met and agreed to keep to the boycott and cooperate with the other colonies. It was a promise that they would keep.

A dispatch from New Bern published in *The Virginia Gazette* on October 4, 1770, hastened to reassure members of the northern colonies that while New Bern, unlike her neighboring colonies and other towns in North Carolina, “has been quite silent on the important subject, which, to our neighbours, might seem a tacit confession of our lukewarmness in this momentary business, wherein, we may now clearly perceive, entirely hinges American liberty,” the town’s support of the boycott of British goods was solid: “[S]uch has been the patriotick spirit prevailing in this town that at this day all the merchants here cannot produce, for sale, a single yard of osnaburghs [a coarse fabric woven from jute or flax], negro cloth [a coarse unbleached or brown-colored cotton used for slave clothing], coarse linen, or scarcely any European goods at all; and we do not know any thing that would now more embarrass a Gentleman than to be able to furnish himself with a suit of clothes, complete, from all the stores in town.” As for imported British tea, “the whole town cannot now furnish a single pound of bohea tea, that useless and destructive plant, which has so universally spread its baneful influence throughout all America.”



Hearing of measures being taken to enforce the non-importation agreements up north, North Carolinians were well aware which way the wind was blowing. A dispatch from New Bern published in the October 2, 1770 issue of “The South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal” noted that New Bernians were informed that in New York, “Supporters and Violators [of the boycotts] keep the City in such a constant Fever, that nothing but Tar and Feathers is able to remove” a remedy that was “always kept in readiness by the Sons of Liberty” along with the “Ducking Stool.” In this 1774 English print, a mob pours tea into the mouth of a Loyalist who has been tarred and feathered. The “Liberty Tree” on the right holds a noose; in the background on the left, revolutionaries are pouring tea into the water. Library of Congress collection.



The increasing violence of Americans’ reactions to “taxation without representation” was reflected in imagery from newspapers, books and pamphlets. This very popular engraving was copied by Paul Revere (a participant in the Boston Tea Party) and printed in the “Royal American Magazine’s” June 1774 edition. Images like this were meant to incite public opinion against British economic policies. This cartoon shows British Prime Minister Lord North, the Boston Port Bill in his pocket, forcing tea down the throat of America, as represented by an American Indian woman. Lord Sandwich restrains her legs, while lewdly peering under her skirt. Britannia, standing behind America, turns away and covers her eyes in shame. Bystanders France and Spain on the left consider whether to go to America’s aid. Library of Congress collection.

What Happens in Boston, Doesn't Stay in Boston

"The tea that bainfull weed is arrived. Great and effectual opposition has been made to the landing of it...the proceedings of our citizens have been united, spirited and firm. The flame is kindled and like lightening it catches from soul to soul..."

– Abigail Adams writing to her friend
Mercy Otis Warren, 1773

Faced with protests and boycotts – and the ire of British merchants whose businesses were being hurt by the boycott of British goods – the British repealed most of the taxes, except for the one on tea. It was kept as a reminder that Parliament maintained both the ability and right to tax its rebellious American colonies.

North Carolinian James Iredell, a British émigré and a successful lawyer who would become a leader in the struggle for American independence, noted that after the repeal of the Townshend Acts, Americans remained sensitive and *"seeds of much ill humor"* remained but were *"little shewn."*

Tea, the center of American social ritual, had become both a symbol of colonial rebellion and of British control. But in spite of the boycotts, Americans kept drinking tea – all the while evading the tax as often as possible. Some colonists resorted to tea substitutes made from native plants. In North Carolina, both Indian and white settlers made tea from the yaupon, a small evergreen holly common on the coastal plain; they also drank Labrador tea, made from the leaves of various rhododendron species, and Hyperion tea, made from dried raspberry leaves. In the July 22, 1768 issue of the *New Hampshire Gazette*, a writer from Newbern extolled the virtues of Hyperion and "Yeopann" teas as a substitute for "that most pernicious and destructive plant Bohea, which annually drains America of thousands." Some colonists also tried to cultivate Chinese tea bushes in their own gardens, without great success.

But it was the lucrative and flourishing smuggling business stretching from Charleston to Boston that continued to fuel America's tea habit. Men like wealthy shipping magnate John Hancock were making their fortunes by illegally smuggling Dutch tea into the colonies along with glass, paper, lead and other goods. One estimate is that tax was paid on only one-tenth of all tea imported into the colonies after 1770. Royal



This 1846 Currier & Ives print of the Boston Tea Party shows a crowd cheering on the patriots. In reality, according to contemporary accounts, the crowd was surprisingly silent and the men on board the ship worked as quietly as possible. Library of Congress collection.

governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts estimated that more than 75 percent of the “*prodigious consumption*” of tea in America was smuggled.

In North Carolina, James Iredell observed that the remaining duty on tea continued to “*preserve some ground of contention.*” Nevertheless, from 1770 to 1773, wrote Iredell, “*a kind of stagnating quiet prevailed.*”

The quiet was not to last. In May 1773, Parliament came up with what it thought was a clever plan to increase its hold on the colonies, while at the same time helping its financially struggling East India Company.

The East India Company was a British trading giant. From its humble origins as an importer of spices from the East Indies, the company had seen a massive expansion of its trade routes and influence, and its transformation from a trading company to a ruling enterprise. During its heyday, the East India Company had its own military and administrative departments and had ruthlessly conquered and become the de facto ruler of a number of territories.

But by the late 18th century, a combination of mismanagement, corruption and crippling competition from smugglers had left the East India Company with a huge oversupply of tea. Parliament decided on what amounted to a kind of corporate bailout – it granted the mercantile behemoth a monopoly on the importation of tea to America. At the same time, they also reduced the tax the colonists would pay on imported tea. Americans would get their tea at a cheaper price than ever before – cheaper than their English counterparts across the pond – and even cheaper than the smuggled Dutch tea. With the Tea Act, Parliament hoped to increase the profitability of the East India Company while, at the same time, uphold the important principle of parliamentary taxation. Parliament gambled that tea-loving Americans would jump at the chance of buying even cheaper tea, despite the tax.

It was a gamble Parliament would lose. “Taxation without representation” continued to be seen as a serious infringement on colonial rights and there were widespread, grave concerns about the extent of Parliament’s authority over the colonies. The Tea Act not only threatened to drive both American smugglers and legitimate merchants out of business, but there were fears that the monopoly granted on tea would spread to other commodities and seriously undermine the colonial economy. The Tea Act, wrote North Carolina lawyer James Iredell, “*had every air of a governmental manoeuvre to give this taxation life.*”

When British East India Company ships arrived in Philadelphia and New York loaded with tea, they were not permitted to land. In Charleston, South Carolina, tea-laden ships were allowed to dock, but their cargo was seized and warehoused. In Boston, the arrival of three ships laden with tea touched off a storm of fury. On December 16, 1773, a cold evening in Boston, a crowd of several thousand spectators watched as 60 men – young and old, merchants, craftsmen



The impact of the Boston Tea Party was felt well beyond American shores. This 1784 German print of the destruction of the tea is one of a series of twelve scenes depicting events of the American Revolution. Library of Congress collection.

and ordinary workers, some of them dressed as Mohawk Indians, their hands and faces covered with soot or grease – boarded three British ships docked at Griffin’s Wharf. They dragged 342 chests of prime Bohea tea on deck, methodically smashed them open and then proceeded to dump an estimated one million dollars (in today’s money) worth of tea into Boston Harbor. It took them three hours.

There was so much tea in the harbor that the next morning, some of it was still seen floating on the surface. According to one of the participants, 31-year-old shoemaker George Hewes, “*to prevent the possibility of any of its being saved for use, a number of small boats were manned by sailors and citizens, who rowed them into those parts of the harbor wherever the tea was visible and by beating it with oars and paddles so thoroughly drenched it as to render its entire destruction inevitable.*”

Tea and Sympathy

"...their resentment got the ascendant of their moderation, and hurried them into actions contrary to law, which in their cooler hours, they would have thought on with horror: for I sincerely believe the destroying of the tea was the effect of despair."

– William Pitt, Earl of Chatham
addressing Parliament, May 26, 1774

Parliament reacted harshly to the news of the tea's destruction. They closed the port of Boston, deprived the people of Massachusetts of most of their chartered rights, and imposed other restrictions.



This elegant teakettle on stand with its finely engraved crest is an important item in the Tryon Palace collection. It was made by London goldsmith Peter Archambo in 1727 and is believed to have been part of the furnishings of the original Palace. While Archambo, the son of a Huguenot, is credited with helping to introduce the Rococo style in England, this piece is robustly Baroque. This teakettle was for fashionable drawing room use; the spirit lamp underneath the belly of the kettle kept the water hot until it was needed for the teapot. Tryon Palace collection.

Reactions in North Carolina (as elsewhere in the colonies) were mixed. Many people in the colonies disapproved of the destruction of private property. One Moravian observer remarked that the act little affected North Carolina *"and most of the people considered the acts of the other Colonies as madness, though there were some who approved of what had been done."*

But many others viewed it as a heroic defense of colonial independence. In Wilmington, importer William Hill, who had been awaiting a delayed shipment of tea from his London supplier, Messrs. Kelly & Co., wrote on August 14, 1774 informing them that British tea was no longer welcome:

"The tea I am as much surprised to see now as I have been disappointed in the want of it these eleven months past. Had it come agreeably to my request, in July 1773 it would have afforded a profitable sale; but it is now too late to be received in America. If I were ever so willing to take it, the people would not suffer it to be landed. Poison would be as acceptable. I hope you will not be surprised, therefore, to receive it again by the same ship. By this you will easily perceive how vastly mistaken your correspondents have been, in their opinion of disunion among the American provinces..."

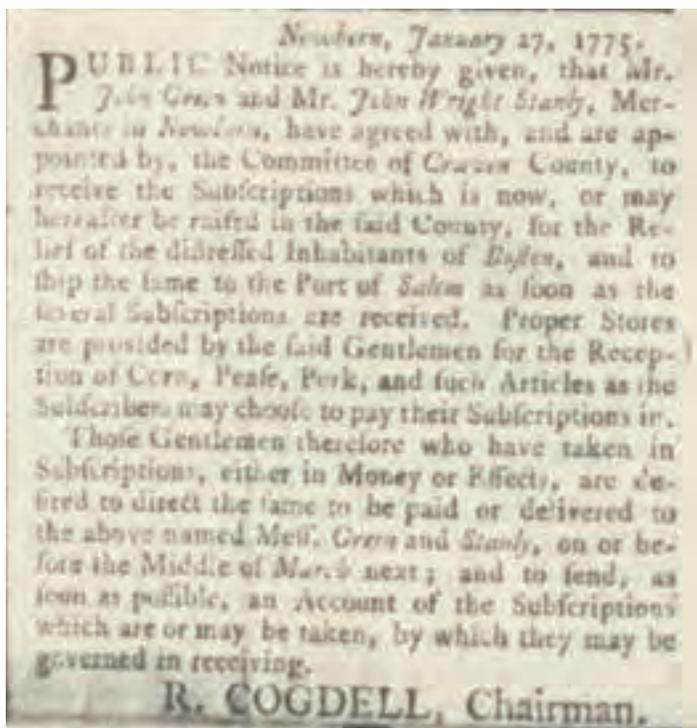
Hill went on to assure the London merchants *"that North Carolina will not be behind any of her sister colonies in virtue and a steady adherence"* to any resolves adopted by a Continental Congress.

Revolution was in the air in North Carolina. After the Boston incident, the Massachusetts legislature issued a call for each colony to send delegates to a continental congress that would meet in Philadelphia. Josiah Martin, then royal governor of North Carolina, tried to prevent the colony from sending a delegation by refusing to summon the assembly in time to elect delegates.

The members of the assembly, however, were undeterred; they called for *"a convention independent of the governor,"* an act of overt defiance of British authority and law. In August of 1774 the First Provincial Congress, the first of its kind held in any of the colonies, met in New Bern for three days, denouncing the actions of Parliament in persecuting Massachusetts and electing members to attend the proposed congress in Philadelphia. They also resolved that after September, they would not suffer any East India tea to be used by their families and would consider all persons not complying with the resolves to be enemies of the country.

Privately, even royal governor Josiah Martin seemed to recognize that the tea tax was probably not worth the price that Britain would pay in light of American rebellion; he wrote to Lord Dartmouth that the tax *"will never yield any Revenue to the State and must be a perpetual source of division among the friends of Government while it exists..."*

North Carolinians provided both moral and material support to the beleaguered Boston. In Anson County, Pitt County and in Wilmington, subscriptions were opened to collect money and goods for relief of Bostonians. From Edenton, the sloop "Penelope," laden with 2,096 bushels of corn, 22 barrels of



Published in New Bern, the February 25, 1775 issue of the “North Carolina Gazette” included a request for money and goods to help Massachusetts after Parliament instituted punitive measures against the colony in response to the Boston Tea Party. Image courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives.

flour and 17 barrels of pork, was dispatched to aid the city. In an advertisement appearing in the *Newbern Gazette*, merchants John Green and John Wright Stanly gave notice that they would be collecting money and supplies “for the Relief of the distressed Inhabitants of Boston, and to ship the same to the Port of Salem [.]” Donations of currency or corn, peas, pork or other goods were accepted.

Tea, the all-fashionable beverage, had become something to shun. Throughout the colonies, pamphlets and newspapers warned Americans about the political and physical dangers of continuing their tea obsession. In 1774, Charleston physician David Ramsay published “A Sermon on Tea” warning that drinking tea was “a political absurdity” and that tea taxes weakened the American colonies and left them enslaved to Parliament. “This baneful herb is the match by which an artful wicked ministry intended to blow up the liberties of America,” warned Ramsay; tea, he asserted, was a “badge of slavery.”

Ramsay didn’t stop there. He also blamed tea-drinking women for leading America into temptation: “Here and there a silly Eve, regardless of her country’s call, stretches forth her unthinking hand and receives the accursed herb with all its baneful attendants,” he scolded. Even worse, Ramsay argued, tea had made American men less...manly. “[Tea] has rendered the robust masculine habits of men, to a feminine softness,” he wrote. “In short, it has turned the men into women, and the women into – God knows what.”

What Ramsay did not know was that in Edenton, North Carolina, tea had turned a group of women into political activists.

The Distaff Side

“Well-behaved women seldom make history.”

– Laurel Ulrich, *Harvard University*

The tea in Boston was gone, but the spark of revolution had been ignited. Over the following months, lesser-known tea parties would be staged in Connecticut, New Jersey, Philadelphia and Charleston, among others. But the patriotic fervor was not to be the sole province of men. At a time when women had no political standing – they lacked the right to vote, hold public office and, in most cases, own property – tea gave some North Carolina women an opportunity to assert their own brand of patriotism.

In October of 1774, a group of women from Edenton, North Carolina, gathered in the home of Mrs. Elizabeth King, the wife of a local merchant, to endorse the resolutions of the Provincial Congress that had met in New Bern. They also drew up formal resolves of their own, declaring they would boycott English tea and cloth: “We, the Ladies of Edenton, do hereby solemnly engage



Penelope Barker did not let her husband’s position as a government official keep her from encouraging the women of Edenton to take political action. It is said that she traveled from door to door asking her friends and neighbors to support a boycott of British tea and goods. She is credited as the organizer behind the Edenton Tea Party. Image courtesy of the North Carolina State Archives.



Top photo: This teapot mounted atop a Revolutionary War cannon stands in Edenton, NC as a tribute to the women of the Edenton Tea Party.

Bottom photo: When the Edenton ladies made their debut in a satirical London print, they were not alone. In 18th-century imagery, women were portrayed both as the subject of political satire and as national symbols. In this anonymous 1776 print titled, “The Female Combatants,” Britain, in the form of an English woman with an elaborate hairdo, goes hand to hand against America, an Indian woman. The Englishwoman cries, “I’ll force you to Obedience, you Rebellious Slut,” while America nobly replies, “Liberty, Liberty forever, Mother, while I exist.” On the left, the British oak is dying, while on the right, the Liberty Tree thrives. The image of an American Indian woman was often used as a national symbol by colonists protesting British taxes such as the one on tea. Image courtesy of John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.



not to conform to the Pernicious custom of drinking Tea, or that the aforesead Ladys would not promote ye wear of any manufacture from England” until the tea tax was repealed. The women boldly asserted that they could not remain indifferent to the peace and prosperity of their country and that they were ready to stand with the men of the colonies in defiance of royal authority. “It is a duty that we owe, not only to our near and dear connections,” they wrote, “but to ourselves.” Fifty-one women put their signatures to the resolutions.

Tea may have ruled the drawing room, but patriotism trumped it. For the women of Edenton, boycotting tea meant not only standing against an unjust law, but standing together with American men and women throughout all the colonies. If women could not carry a gun in the fight, they could be consumer-soldiers; by boycotting British goods, they would inflict economic damage on America’s oppressors. The Edenton Tea Party, as it became known, is considered by historians as the first organized act of political protest by women in America.

The Edenton ladies’ petition made its way across the Atlantic, eventually appearing in the London newspapers; their resolves were the subject of much commentary, some of it satirical.

Arthur Iredell, a London clergyman and brother of James Iredell, wrote to him disparaging the “female artillery” of Edenton, asking sarcastically, “Is there a female Congress at Edenton too? I hope not for we Englishmen are afraid of the male Congress, but if the ladies, who have ever since the Amazonian Era, been esteemed the most formidable enemies, if they, I say should attack us, the

Repainting History

The political ladies of Edenton raised eyebrows both here and abroad. In this 1775 cartoon from an English newspaper, they were mercilessly lampooned. One of the ladies is depicted shamelessly flirting in the middle of more serious matters. The lady with the gavel and very exuberant hair is actually a man, Lord Bute. Bute was a former tutor of the King and had served as prime minister. His influence over George III was blamed for many of the king's unpopular policies. The neglected child on the floor is meant as an indictment of the women's disregard of their maternal duties. The little dog is making his own political statement: he is urinating on a chest of valuable tea.

This scornful image of the patriotic women of Edenton was too much for one North Carolina artist who decided that the women deserved better. Two years ago, Ian Lowry, a young illustrator from Perquimans County, came up with his own unique and imaginative version of the Edenton events. In his painting, the ladies of Edenton are fully in charge, and they mean business.

"I have always enjoyed history," says Lowry, and *"being a native, North Carolina's history is particularly fascinating to me. I chose to illustrate the Edenton Tea Party partially because of this interest, but also because I have always intensely hated the only other illustration of it."* Lowry has nothing but disdain for the "propagandized" 18th-century version. *"Why we still use such an insulting, ribald depiction of our founding mothers in our history books baffles me."*

Although he has taken some artistic license, Lowry modeled the background on the Barker home which is still standing in Edenton. The artist is also on the scene – he's the young man holding the tea tray on the right; the teapot is undoubtedly filled with herbal tea.

"I hoped," says Lowry, *"that I could paint a more respectful version."*



Top image: North Carolina State Archives. Bottom image: Ian Lowry

most fatal consequence is to be dreaded.” The Reverend Iredell, a loyal Tory, perhaps did not realize that his brother James was already well on his way to becoming an American patriot.

The patriotic ladies of Wilmington followed with their own tea party, in 1775. Though no account remains of this tea party, Janet Schaw, the sister of a North Carolina Loyalist, Alexander Schaw, and an acquaintance of the family of royal governor Josiah Martin, noted in her journal with some disdain: “*The Ladies have burnt their tea in a solemn procession, but they had delayed however till the sacrifice was not very considerable, as I do not think any one offered above a quarter of a pound.*” She also noted that the merchants of the town, “*very genteel people,*” were primarily British and Irish and “*they all disapprove of the present proceedings. Many of them intend quitting the country as fast as their affairs will permit them, but are yet uncertain what steps to take.*”

The destruction of the tea at Boston Harbor had put the American colonies firmly on the road to revolution; there would be no going back.

Echoes

“This destruction of the tea is so bold, so daring, so intrepid and so inflexible, and it must have so important consequences and so lasting that I can’t but consider it an epoch in history.”

— John Adams writing in his journal the day after the Boston Tea Party

Perhaps not until Prohibition would a beverage have such a powerful influence upon American manners and politics. Tea did not cause the American Revolution, but it lay at the heart of Americans’ grievances with Great Britain. Tea-loving Americans could not guess that one of the consequences of drinking their favorite beverage would be a complete break from their mother country and the creation of an independent nation. And no one could have foreseen in 1773 how the destruction of tea in Boston Harbor would continue to reverberate and be appropriated long after the birth of a new country.

In 1854, nine temperance-minded women in Marion, Illinois, were arrested for destroying a saloon keeper’s stock of 10 gallons of whiskey, after the owner refused to close his business. They were defended by a lawyer, Abraham Lincoln, who argued that the ladies were righteous women who had been inspired by the spirit and conviction of those who had destroyed the tea during the Boston Tea Party. In the late 19th century, suffragists would use the Bostonians’ fight against taxation without representation to urge women not to pay their taxes unless they were granted the right to vote. During Prohibition, when another class of beverage was occupying the minds and politics of Americans, the Boston Tea Party was cited as a model for rebellion against temperance laws. In his famous “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” Martin Luther King, Jr. cited the Boston Tea Party as an instance of “*massive civil disobedience*” in the face of unjust laws. And today, the phrase “tea party” has once again found a place in the lexicon of contemporary American politics.

Americans never deserted tea, but war and boycotts led to a large decrease in consumption. Americans turned to other substitutes like coffee and herbal teas to quench their thirst. American tea culture would continue to change after the 18th century. We still drink our tea – in 2010, Americans consumed over 65 billion servings of tea – but approximately 85 percent of it is iced. According to the Tea Association of the U.S.A., on any given day about half of the American population drinks tea; the South and Northeast have the greatest concentrations of tea drinkers. Tea is no longer kept under lock and key, and we rarely drink it with the ceremonial grandeur of our 18th-century ancestors. Yet, more than two centuries after that fateful night in Boston, “*that bainfull weed*” – and its history – continues to captivate Americans’ imagination and their tastebuds.

For sources/further reading, go to www.tryonpalace.org/pdfs/tea.pdf.



The Boston Tea Party continued to inspire Americans long after the event. In this 1874 cartoon from Harper’s Weekly, artist Thomas Nast satirizes the suffrage movement for equating the actions of Boston revolutionaries with women’s struggle for the vote. The lady pouring from the teapot resembles a rather stern Susan B. Anthony; the other tea pourer appears to be a man dressed as a woman, a not-too-subtle dig at women and their political activism. The attitude of the cartoon echoes the scorn shown towards the women of the Edenton Tea Party a hundred years earlier. Image courtesy of the Government and Heritage Library, State Library of North Carolina.

A Tryon Palace Sampler

Calling All Hands

Got time? That (and a little enthusiasm) is all you need to **volunteer at Tryon Palace**. On our website, you can indicate your area of interest and submit your contact information; our Volunteer Coordinator will connect you with the Tryon Palace staff in charge of your area of interest. Not sure what you'd like to do? We will help you figure it out! For more information, check our website www.tryonpalace.org or contact Volunteer Coordinator, Laurie Bowles, at 252-639-3615; e-mail: laurie.bowles@ncdcr.gov.

Already volunteering? Join us for this year's **Volunteer Recognition** on Friday, **April 20, 2012** at 5:30 PM in Cullman Performance Hall in the North Carolina History Center. We look forward to seeing you and to thanking you for all you do!



Aw Shucks...

The air was cool, the music was hot and the mighty mollusk ruled at the January 28 **Oyster Roast fundraiser** organized by the Council of Friends to benefit educational programming at Tryon Palace. The Bate Commons at the North Carolina History Center played host to a crowd of over 350 friends and supporters as they enjoyed a gorgeous Trent River sunset and a traditional downeast feast of all-you-could-eat oysters, plus soups, sandwiches and libations. Regional favorite *Refried Beans* provided music to dine and dance to, and a lucky raffle winner went home with a new Apple iPad. "The oyster roast was a fun evening and a great success; we're going to make it an annual New Bern tradition," said Council of Friends President Patricia L. Naumann. "We raised much needed funds for the Palace and made many new friends for the Council of Friends. At the end of the evening, a lot of people said they were really looking forward to the next one!" A huge "Thank You!" to the fundraising committee, chaired by Mary Silver, and all of our wonderful sponsors and friends who made the event such a success. See you next year!

Go Green

Don't forget that your **Council of Friends membership** entitles you to free year-round admission to the 16 acres of beautiful gardens throughout our sites. From the bounty of a fall vegetable garden, to the serenity of a winter garden and the explosion of colors in spring and summer, the gardens are a four-season feast for the senses. Check our website for a complete schedule of garden events and lectures and mark your calendars for this year's **Garden Lover's Weekend (April 13 & 14)** when Tryon Palace and Craven County will be celebrating 300 years of gardens.



A Most Uncivil Time

2012 marks the sesquicentennial of the Civil War and the Battle of New Bern. Throughout the year, Tryon Palace, along with a number of local organizations, will be hosting events and programs commemorating and exploring this divisive and profoundly impacting time in our nation's history. This summer, the **Tryon Palace History Summer Day Camp (July 23-July 27)** will focus on experiencing life in North Carolina during the Civil War. Activities will include crafts, games, demonstrations and reenactments. For more information on this and all Civil War commemorative events at Tryon Palace and throughout New Bern, please check our website at www.tryonpalace.org.



IN FOCUS

American artist Vincent Colyer was known for his paintings of the American southwest and Alaska. But Colyer was also a humanitarian who served with the U.S. Christian Commission during the Civil War. In Union-occupied New Bern, Colyer was appointed Superintendent of the Poor by General Burnside. His job was to find employment, disburse wages, and feed, clothe and find shelter for the poor, black or white.

In his job, Colyer heard first-hand the stories of many African Americans who had escaped to New Bern and to freedom. These former slaves, many of them arriving in rags and suffering from a variety of illnesses, told Colyer their tales of bondage and despair. For Colyer, the stories of these African Americans gave slavery a very human and shocking face and “*made an impression on my mind not easily effaced.*”

Some African American men were employed as spies for the Union army, going deep within enemy lines, often barely escaping with their lives. “*They were invaluable and almost indispensable,*” said Colyer, who documented their stories; one of them was William Kinney.

Kinney was born into slavery in Jones County, although he never knew the year of his birth. After his owner’s death, he was sent to Richmond, Virginia, to be sold. Before the sale, he and the other slaves were put in a pen, where potential owners could assess their desirability:

“They made us (there was a number from different parts of the country, all strangers to me,) strip stark naked; the women in one part of the room, the men in another; a rough cotton screen separating the two sexes. We were stood off at a short distance from our purchasers, and our physical condition fully considered and remarked upon, holding up our hands, turning round, and then we were sold



“Wm. Kinney Returning to the Union Army with his Family,”
Tryon Palace collection.

accordingly. They did not call us ‘people,’ but ‘stock.’”

Kinney was sold for \$700 and along with other slaves – including children – placed on a train to Wilmington. As the train was passing Goldsboro, “[k]nowing that I was then as near to the residence of my wife and children as I ever should be,” Kinney took his chance – he jumped. Bruised and aching from the fall, Kinney spent four nights hiding in the woods and swamps before a slave gave him some food. He finally reached his wife and after “*having had a word of good cheer from her,*” Kinney kissed his three children, took a little food, and hid in the woods five miles away.

For five long years, Kinney remained in hiding “*in a close*

jungle, so thick that you could not penetrate it, except with the axe.” He visited his family at night “*never staying more than a few minutes at a time...*”

When a man hunted Kinney with a pack of eight dogs, Kinney used an old scythe to kill and maim several of the animals, then fled to the swamp, “*wading up to my middle in water and mud.*”

Kinney’s wife bore him two children while he was in hiding, a dangerous proposition since “*their resemblance to the others is so striking, that their master troubled my wife very much to get her to betray my whereabouts.*”

Soon after Union forces took New Bern, Kinney made his way there and secured a job. When he had saved eight dollars of his wages, and hearing that his wife’s owner had run away, he sought permission to go and bring his family to New Bern. Colyer gave him a pass, three days’ ration, a little money and promised to pay him “*handsomely*” if he would also spy on the rebel encampments around Kinston.

Two weeks later, Kinney returned with his family and “*very valuable information.*” The tall, proud man stood before Colyer and declared: “*Sir, this is the first time in five years I have dared to stand before a white man, and call my wife and children my own.*”