

The Edenton Tea Party

Overview

Through images, reading, and class discussion, students will learn about the Edenton Tea Party, one of the earliest organized women’s political actions in United States history that occurred in 1774 in Edenton, North Carolina. Students will then exhibit their understanding of the event by creating an invitation that combines artistic and creative measures with learned facts of the protest.

Grades

4-8

Essential Questions

- In what ways did American Patriots show their resentment of British taxes?
- What were the events of the Boston Tea Party and how did Britain respond?
- What is a boycott and why is it an effective form of protest?
- Who participated in the Edenton Tea Party and why?
- What was the purpose of the Edenton Tea Party and why was it monumental?

Materials

- Images of the Boston Tea Party and Edenton Tea Party, attached
- Reading on the Edenton Tea Party, such as <https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/edenton-tea-party>
- Edenton Tea Party Worksheet and KEY, attached

Duration

45 minutes

Procedure

Let’s Talk Tea!

1. As a warm-up, project the attached image of the Boston Tea Party. Ask students to comment on what they see in the image, encouraging them to point out various objects, people, actions, etc. Then, ask students to comment on what they think the image represents and why. Finally, ensure the class arrives at the understanding that the image represents the **Boston Tea Party**.
2. Review the Boston Tea Party by asking students to share what they already know.
 - When and where did it take place? (*Boston Harbor, December 16, 1773*)
 - What were the events of the Boston Tea Party? (*There was no party and no drinking of tea. In actuality, a group of Boston **Patriots** disguised themselves as Native Americans and dumped more than 300 chests of tea into the water.*)
 - What was the purpose of the Boston Tea Party? (*The Patriots did this in protest of the **Tea Act**, which warranted that a tax be placed on tea.*)
 - What happened after the Boston Tea Party? (*Parliament sealed off the harbor until colonists paid for the damage and loss of tea; King George III appointed a new royal governor and placed the colony under military control; the colonists called these new actions the “**Intolerable Acts.**”*)
3. Next, project the attached image of the **Edenton Tea Party**, and again ask students to comment on what they see in the image (encourage them to describe the various objects, actions, people, clothing and hair styles, etc.) Ask students what they think is happening in this image. Probe thinking by asking:

- What do you notice about this group’s characteristics? (i.e. *they are all women*)
- How does this group’s characteristics and their actions compare and contrast to the group in the last image we viewed? (*the last group was all men; the men were performing violent actions, busting up crates of tea and throwing them into the water, where as this group appears to be discussing and are gathered around a paper*)
- Why might this group be gathered together? (*if needed, draw students attention to the scroll in the middle of the women and the quill pens that several are holding to help lead them to the possibilities of protest, writing a declaration, etc.*)

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4. Explain to students that this image represents “The Edenton Tea Party,” an event that took place in Edenton, North Carolina in 1774. Give students an overview of the Edenton Tea Party, such as:
 - One year after the famous Boston Tea Party, a group of North Carolina women held a different kind of Tea Party. Under the leadership of 51-year-old Penelope Barker, a “patriotic” group of women met in Edenton to show their support for the Patriot cause.
 - Ask students to again refer back to the picture and infer what the women did to support the Patriots. (*they drafted and signed a petition*)

5. Project or handout the following text from the petition signed by the participants in the Edenton Tea Party, then discuss:
 - “The Provincial Deputies of North Carolina, having resolved not to drink any more tea, nor wear any more British cloth, many ladies of this province have determined to give memorable proof of their patriotism, and have accordingly entered into the following honourable and spirited association. I send it to you to shew your fair countrywomen, how zealously and faithfully, American ladies follow the laudable example of their husbands, and what opposition your matchless Ministers may expect to receive from a people thus firmly united against them...We cannot be indifferent on any occasion that appears nearly to affect the peace and happiness of our country, and . . . it is a duty which we owe, not only to our near and dear connections, . . . *but to ourselves. . .*”
 - Discuss:
 - What is the purpose of this petition? What do the women state they will do (or not do) as proof of their patriotism?
 - What message are the women sending to their “fair countrywomen?”
 - For what reason do the women say they are performing this duty?
 - How would you characterize this action? (*This is a good opportunity to discuss responsible citizenship with students, and how petitions and boycotts can be effective measures of change when many individual citizens participate.*)

6. Provide students with a reading on the Edenton Tea Party, such as <https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/edenton-tea-party>. Give students the attached response worksheet to fill out while reading. Once students have finished, discuss the reading and go over the worksheet as a class. Further discuss:
 - Consider the role of women in the late 1700s. How do you think the Edenton Tea Party was perceived in North Carolina? In the other colonies? In Britain?
 - Allow students to discuss, then again show them the image they viewed as a warm-up and let them know that it is actually a British cartoon from 1775 mocking the women. Provide a close up look at three satirical aspects of the cartoon at <https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/political-cartoon-society>.
 - Let students know that while some may have mocked the women of Edenton for taking a stand, others celebrated them and even followed suit. Share with students:
 - “Not to be outdone, the patriotic ladies of Wilmington held their own “party” in the spring of 1775 and actually burned their tea. Janet Schaw, a visitor from Scotland who had no

sympathy for the colonial rebellion, reported the event in her journals, and noted that not everyone in Wilmington approved of the protest:

‘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. The people in town live decently, and tho’ their houses are not spacious, they are in general very commodious and well furnished. All the Merchants of any note are British and Irish, and many of them very genteel people. 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.’

You’re Invited! Create an Invitation to the Edenton Tea Party

7. Tell students that they will exhibit their understanding of the Edenton Tea Party in a creative way. Project or handout and explain the following assignment:

You’re Invited!

To exhibit your understanding of the Edenton Tea Party, you will create an invitation to this historical event. Your invitation must contain accurate information about the Edenton Tea Party presented in a creative, artistic way. Your invitation must include:

- The name of the event
- Who is hosting the event
- The date, time and location of the event
- A detailed description of the event
- Creative, time-appropriate decoration

8. Teachers may want to have examples of various invitations for students to view and assist them with brainstorming. (For example, some invitations contain velum paper, bows, pop-out artistic designs, etc.; some invitations are folded or contain flaps that must be lifted for viewing text; invitations may be in paragraph form, written in poetry, or described in simple Who, What, When, Where, style; any types of actual invitations may help in getting students to expand their creativity on this assignment. Make sure to remind them however that images or artistic decoration should be time appropriate. (For example, an antique tea cup drawing would be acceptable, where as a coffee pot drawing would not have existed in 1774 and thus would not be acceptable.)
9. Choose an appropriate due date and if time permits allow students to start brainstorming in class. Once the invitations are completed and turned in, display them in the classroom or hall.
10. As an optional culminating activity, hold a tea party in class (with snacks!) where the class reviews the various causes of the Revolutionary War. Prior to the day of the tea party, give students the assignment of making/decorating a hat with information on a particular revolutionary topic. Students can then wear their hat to the tea party and share the information on their assigned topic with classmates.

Political Cartoon Image - The Edenton Tea Party



<https://www.ncpedia.org/anchor/political-cartoon-society>

The Boston Tea Party



Source: http://etc.usf.edu/clipart/5600/5624/boston_tea_party_1_lg.gif

Name: _____

The Edenton Tea Party



1. What is a boycott? Why did colonial Patriots resolve to boycott British tea and cloth?

2. What was the purpose of the Edenton Tea Party?

3. What was uncommon about the Edenton Tea Party?

4. How did Britain respond to the Edenton Tea Party? How did the colonies respond?

5. Do you feel the Edenton Tea Party was an effective method of protest? Why or why not?

6. Penelope Barker is credited as being the woman who organized the Edenton Tea Party. How would you characterize her?

The Edenton Tea Party KEY

1. What is a boycott? Why did colonial Patriots resolve to boycott British tea and cloth?

to abstain from using or buying a product in protest; colonial Patriots boycotted British tea and cloth to show their anger at Britain's taxes – the boycott also results in less profit for Britain due to less sales of boycotted goods in America

2. What was the purpose of the Edenton Tea Party?

Edenton women wanted to show their support for the Patriot cause and formally gathered to declare their intention to boycott tea and cloth

3. What was uncommon about the Edenton Tea Party?

Those involved were all women, which was uncommon in the 1700s and a "political first"

4. How did Britain respond to the Edenton Tea Party? How did the colonies respond?

Many in Britain were shocked and many also mocked the women; the Patriots were more supportive since they wanted everyone possible to support the various protests and boycotts

5. Do you feel the Edenton Tea Party was an effective method of protest? Why or why not?

Answers will vary

6. Penelope Barker is credited as being the woman who organized the Edenton Tea Party. How would you characterize her?

An engaged, responsible citizen; patriotic; a woman before her time; politically active; etc. (answers will vary)