



## **NEW, EXPANDED EXHIBIT FEATURING TEA FROM THE BOSTON TEA PARTY (1773) OPENS ON FEBRUARY 12, 2018, AT THE BOSTON TEA PARTY SHIPS<sup>SM</sup> & MUSEUM**

BOSTON (February 12, 2018) - **The Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum**, a floating museum dedicated to accurately reliving and representing a key time in history (1773-1775) through actors, tea throwing reenactments, high-tech interactive exhibits, authentic replica ships and award-winning multisensory film, officially opens a newly expanded exhibit on February 12, 2018 displaying a vial of tea believed to be from The Boston Tea Party which took place on December 16, 1773. This new exhibit incorporating the tea, in conjunction with the last known surviving tea chest from The Boston Tea Party, further supplements the museum's mission to tell the story of the single most important event leading up to the American Revolution.

The vial of tea is on loan for 10 years from Old North Foundation of Boston, responsible for the operation of the Old North Church & Historic Site, home to the famous Old North Church, Boston's oldest surviving church building. Old North Church became famous on the evening of April 18, 1775 when church sexton Robert Newman and vestryman Captain John Pulling, Jr. climbed the church steeple and hung two lanterns (one if by land, and two if by sea) as a signal from Paul Revere (followed then by his famous midnight ride) that the British were invading by sea and not land, launching the American Revolution.

The tea, believed to be from The Boston Tea Party, has a couple of provenances. One allegedly stems from the family of Reverend Thaddeus Mason Harris (1768-1842), a Unitarian clergyman who lived in Dorchester, Mass., who, as legend has it, gathered tea as a five-year-old boy when the tea thrown overboard at Griffin's Wharf in Boston Harbor on December 16, 1773 and was carried by the tide to the beaches of Dorchester Neck Flats. The family purportedly bottled tea in numerous glass vials. Years later, Reverend Harris' mother, Rebecca Harris (1745-1801), passed a vial of the tea to her daughter Hannah Waite (1780-1845). Since then, the tea (curiously in liquid form) has been passed on numerous times ultimately landing with Old North Church. Other such similar vials of tea are on display at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Mass. and Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston, Mass. Another provenance of the tea, also stemming from the Harris family, was, as legend has it, shaken out of the boot of a participant of The Boston Tea Party on his return home.

"Over the years, we have acquired a number of historic items and artifacts that are not directly associated with the history of Old North Church," says Old North Foundation of Boston Executive Director, Steve Ayers. "We loan items to the appropriate places, like the vial of tea believed to be from The Boston Tea Party to The Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, where the stories of the cultural artifacts can be better told and used to help educate the public on our nation's history."

The vial of tea is now on display at The Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum in conjunction with the Robinson Half Chest, the only known surviving tea chest from The Boston Tea Party. This is not the first time that the Robinson Half Chest and Old North Church have been connected in some way. Coincidentally, one of the former owners of the Robinson Half Chest assisted in raising funds for the restoration of the Old North Church steeple in the 1950s.

## *Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum Newly Expanded Boston Tea Party Tea Exhibit 2018/2*

The new immersive exhibit brings guests on a journey through lights, sounds and cinema of how tea during the Colonial era came from as far away as the mountains of China to London to landing in Boston's historic waters on the infamous night of December 16, 1773.

"We are grateful to the Old North Foundation of Boston to loan us this significant artifact believed to be from The Boston Tea Party," says Shawn P. Ford, Executive Director of the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum. "Every day, the entire team at the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum is passionate about telling and teaching the story of The Boston Tea Party and celebrating and recognizing its significance in American History. What better way to expand the experience than with a vial of actual tea believed to be from that historic and fateful night that changed and shaped the course of American history."

The Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, which opened in June 2012 and is owned and operated by Historic Tours of America, is situated over the same body of water where The Boston Tea Party took place 244 years ago. The museum tells the story of the events leading up to The Boston Tea Party and immediate aftermath that led to the start of the American Revolution. The museum provides a unique immersion experience in history by representing key events in from 1773 to 1775, through live actors, throwing tea [chests] off authentically replicated tea ships (the Brig Beaver and Eleanor), high-tech interactive exhibits, and an award-winning multisensory film, *Let it Begin Here*.

The Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum is open 7 days/week from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (summer/spring) and from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (fall/winter). Tours run every 30 minutes in the fall/winter and every 15 minutes in the spring/summer and last 1 hour.

### **ABOUT OLD NORTH CHURCH & HISTORIC SITE:**

300 Years of History. 2 Lanterns. 1 Revolution. Known for Paul Revere's midnight ride and the site that launched the American Revolution, Old North Church & Historic Site is one of the most visited tourist attractions in Boston and along the Freedom Trail. Run by the Old North Foundation of Boston, a secular 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, the site is composed of the famous 18<sup>th</sup> century church, five gardens, the Old North Gift Shop, the Printing Office of Edes & Gill and Captain Jackson's Historic Chocolate Shop. For more information visit: [www.oldnorth.com](http://www.oldnorth.com) or call 617-523-6676.

### **ABOUT BOSTON TEA PARTY SHIPS & MUSEUM:**

The Boston Tea Party, "the single most important event leading up to the American Revolution," occurred the night of Dec. 16, 1773. Opened in June 2012, The Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, owned and operated by Historic Tours of America, is dedicated to accurately reliving and representing a key time in history (1773-1775). Through actors, tea throwing reenactments, high-tech interactive exhibits, authentic replica ships: the Beaver and the Eleanor, and an award-winning multisensory film, *Let it Begin Here*. The Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum is open 7 days/week from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Summer/Spring) and from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Fall/Winter). Tours run every 30 minutes in fall/winter and every 15 minutes in spring/summer and last 1 hr. Closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. The Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum was voted 'Best Historical Experience' in *Yankee* '2017 Best of New England', #1 'Best Patriotic Attraction' in *USA Today's* 10Best Readers' Choice Awards 2016, 'Best New Museum' by *Yankee* in 2012 and 'Best of the New 2012' by *Boston Globe Magazine*. To learn more visit [www.bostonteatpartyship.com](http://www.bostonteatpartyship.com) or call 1-855-(TEA)-1773. The Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum is located at on the Congress Street Bridge at 306 Congress St., Boston, MA.

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