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THOUSANDS RING IN BOSTON TEA PARTY'S 250TH BIRTHDAY



STAFF PHOTO BY STUART CAHILL — BOSTON HERALD

The Red Coats arrive as Boston celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party on Saturday.

By Lance Reynolds
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A grand spectacle unfolded on the Boston Harbor Saturday night.

Hundreds of reenactors from around the country, dressed up in colonist garb, boarded a tall ship and destroyed more than 2,000 pounds of British tea into the waters. The thousands gathered to watch the theatrical scene went crazy in applause.

Exactly 250 years to the date, the Boston Tea Party came back to life for one afternoon into the night.

Matthew Solander, of Quincy, dressed up in a gray colonial garb as one of the reenactors to board the chilly ship. He called the role an honor and said that these kinds of events are essential to the public's understanding of the country.

"We should remember our history as a nation. Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it," Solander told the Herald outside the Old South Meeting House. "Doing stuff like this helps the public remember how we were born with privilege."

Though life is a lot different than it was back then when colonists protested taxation without representation, organizers say aspects from the historic rally are as applicable as ever before.

"The biggest thing is the impact an ordinary citizen can make on the grand

scale," said Evan O'Brien, creative manager at Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum. "It was ordinary people supposedly, not necessarily of the upper class; but people that had ordinary trades that did an extraordinary thing, and they're worthy of that recognition."

Shawn Ford, executive director of the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, echoed that point.

"Who of us today would be willing to throw our livelihood, our families, our fortunes at property out the window, based on an idea that had a 100% chance of failure," Ford told the Herald last month. "People today don't always understand the significance of what happened 250 years ago."

The Old South Meeting House, Downtown Crossing, Harborwalk and Faneuil Hall were flooded Saturday with Bostonians and those visiting to commemorate the occasion. Presentations, retrospectives and a rolling rally all took place prior to the reenactment on at the waterfront.

Organizers received 250 pounds of loose tea from London's East India Company — the same company that supplied to the Sons of Liberty on Dec. 16, 1773 — and 2,000 pounds from 7,000 individual submissions that came in from around the world.

The Boston Tea Party had nothing to do with taxation or tea, but rather



STAFF PHOTO BY STUART CAHILL — BOSTON HERALD

Rebels dump tea into the harbor as Boston celebrates the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party on Saturday.

had everything to do with representation, Ford said. Without the Tea Party occurring and ordinary citizens making their opposition towards the British known, he said, who knows what present-day "America" would look like?

"It's a reminder for all of us, not just here in the United States but all over the world, that democracy is in action: Doing what's right, no matter the odds, for our friends, our families, our homes, our future," Mayor Michelle Wu said Friday at a news conference previewing the anniversary.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars had already been invested into marking the grand occasion by early October, said Jonathan Lane, executive director of Revolution 250, a consortium of more than 70 Bay State organizations working together on the commemoration.

"This is the kind of event when all is said and done, if you tabulate it out, all the work that has been done all year long to promote this, it's going to be



STAFF PHOTO BY STUART CAHILL — BOSTON HERALD

Drum and fife players outside the Old South Meeting House as Boston celebrated the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party Saturday.

well over \$1 million to do just this one event," Lane told the Herald.