

ROASTED SWEET POTATOE

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First rehearsal, then grand reenactment of a Tea Party

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Shouts of “Huzzah!” rose into the night air Saturday as Colonial reenactors tossed hundreds of pounds of tea over the side of replica British ships and into the salty waters of Boston Harbor.

The mock rebellion marked the 250th anniversary of The Boston Tea Party, an event carried out in secrecy on Dec. 16, 1773, that put the country on the road to revolution.

“Dump it!” reenactors implored from the deck of the *Beaver*, as thousands of spectators looked on from the Harborwalk at Atlantic Wharf behind the InterContinental Boston hotel. Diners, guests, and hotel employees were seen peering through the windows of the Evelyn Moakley Bridge nearby.

“This only happens once every 50 years, so it’s really good to come down here and ... bear witness to the events that occurred way back when,” said Caleb McCarthy of Salem.

The reenactment, which ended with fireworks set against the backdrop city’s shiny skyline. The show, which drew long and loud cheers from the large crowd, followed a series of events in downtown Boston to mark the 250th anniversary.

At Faneuil Hall and the Old South Meeting House, spectators watched as reenactors brought to life the stories of



TANNER PEARSON FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

The Sons of Liberty poured a chest of tea into Boston Harbor during their reenactment.

fierce local debates Boston residents, merchants, local leaders, and city and state officials over how the British taxed their tea.

Preparations for reenactment, which concluded at shortly before 9 p.m., began hours earlier at historic sites throughout Boston.

On a normal workday at the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum, 23-year-old Ricky McNamara plays the role of a Colonial-era barber named William Pierce, who stormed the ships in the harbor and threw tea overboard in 1773.

But for the 250th anniversary, McNamara played a part on the other side and donned a tricorne hat, gray wig, and ruffled shirt to play the role of John Timmins, a representative from the brig *Beaver*, which entered Boston Harbor on Dec. 15, 1773, the last of the three Tea Party ships to arrive.

On Saturday morning, some 30 historical reenactors immersed themselves in their Colonial characters inside Faneuil Hall ahead of the events commemorating the Tea Party that evening, according to the Bos-

ton Tea Party Ships and Museum.

“Everyone is in their costumes and looking amazing, and we are running through without stopping,” Evan O’Brien, the museum’s creative director, said in a phone interview.

Late Saturday afternoon the actors practiced in order to reenact 1773 meetings discussing the foreboding “tea crisis,” which took place leading up to the Boston Tea Party, O’Brien said.

In addition to his role in the



NATHAN KLIMA FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

A pipe and drums corps led a crowd to Atlantic Wharf in downtown Boston ahead of the reenactment Saturday night that marked the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party.

Faneuil Hall portion of the evening, McNamara was on the ships in the harbor for the tea dumping, he said.

His character, Timmins, was kicked off the *Beaver*, McNamara said.

“If you see somebody get hit in the head with a tea chest and carried off the ship, that’s actually me,” McNamara said, chuckling.

Nathan Richardson, 63, of Suffolk, Va., took on the role of Frederick Douglass in the 1873 retrospective portion of the Faneuil Hall program. The reenactment was Richardson’s 86th portrayal of Douglass this year.

In his 1873 speech, Douglass spoke about women’s suffrage, he said.

“I was aware he had been to Faneuil Hall in 1846, but not in ’73. So when [the museum] sent me that speech, I was like,

‘Wow, this is really, really interesting,’” Richardson said. “And so I just went ahead and put it to memory, and I’m excited to be doing it here.”

Richardson, who has played the role of Douglass in historical societies for the past 10 years, said he plans to stay in character after Saturday’s performance and answer visitors’ questions.

“It’s what I normally do at events like this — just talk to the citizens and give them Frederick Douglass’s history here in Boston and with Faneuil Hall, and I love doing that,” he said.

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