Edenton Tea Party [1]

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https://www.dncr.nc.gov/about-us/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program [2]

Women in this town led by Penelope Barker in 1774 resolved to boycott British imports. It is an example of early and influential activism by women.



Mrs. Penelope Barker/President of the Edenton Tea Party of 1774 [3]On October 25, 1774, 51 women in Edenton resolved to stop buying English imports in support of the actions and resolutions of the First Provincial Congress. The women drew up resolves, declaring their intention to boycott English tea and English cloth, a momentous step for colonists, who relied on tea and other British goods. The women signed and mailed the document to England and the action has since became known as the Edenton Tea Party. It was indeed a bold demonstration of patriotism from the ladies of Edenton.

An account of the event appeared in the Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser on January 16, 1775, along with a drawing portraying the women in a less than flattering light. There has been much confusion about the Edenton Tea Party, primarily because the event went unrecorded in North Carolina. It remained unknown until 1827, when a North Carolina native naval officer purchased a rendering of the cartoon in a shop abroad. Following his discovery citizens tried to piece together what they believed must have happened in Edenton in 1774.

One of the primary errors is the belief that there was, in fact, a party of 51 women gathered at the home of Mrs. Elizabeth King, a prominent member of the Edenton community. The King home was too small for such an assembly. The wording of the resolution, too, does not indicate a gathering, but rather an agreement. There is no doubt, however, that the ladies of Edenton sent the document to England in 1774, making the resolution among the first public political acts by women in America. Penelope Barker, wife of Thomas Barker, treasurer of the Province of North Carolina played a key role in organizing the resolution.

A teapot mounted on a Revolutionary era cannon just off the green in front of the 1767 Chowan County Courthouse commemorates the Edenton Tea Party and the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution is named for it.

Educator Resources:

Powerful Words [4] Lesson Plans, State Archives of North Carolina

Grade 8: Edenton Tea Party. North Carolina Civic Education Consortium.https://k12database.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2012/05/EdentonT... [5]

Grade 8: Timeless Tea in Celebration of North Carolina Women. North Carolina Civic Education Consortium. https://k12database.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2012/05/Timeless... [6]

References and additional resources:

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Moore, Elizabeth Vann. 1989. *Guide book, historic Edenton and Chowan County: Edenton, North Carolina, incoporated 1722.* [8] [Edenton, N.C.]: Edenton's Woman's Club.

Powell, William Stevens, and Jay Mazzocchi. 2006. *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* [9]. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Dillard, Richard. [from old catalog]. 1906. *The historic tea-party of Edenton, October 25th, 1774* [10].

“Tempest in a Teapot,” Tar Heel Junior Historian [11] (September 1971): 2-4

Daughters of the American Revolutions website: https://www.ncdar.org/EdentonTeaParty_files/ [12]

Image Credit

"Mrs. Penelope Barker/President of the Edenton Tea Party of 1774." From the North Carolina Museum of History [13], Raleigh, NC.

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