

Western Massachusetts participant in Boston Tea Party honored more than 200 years after his death

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David Lyons, participant in Boston Tea Party, honored in Colrain, Mass. more than 200 years after his death

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COLRAIN — A marker on a centuries-old grave at Chandler Hill Cemetery seeks to remind future generations of David Lyons' contribution to the birth of the United States of America.

The Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, in partnership with the town of Colrain and Revolution 250, a consortium of organizations working to commemorate the 250th anniversaries of the events that led to the American Revolution, dedicated the marker on the Boston Tea Party participant's grave on Tuesday morning.

Lyons was born in Roxbury in 1737 and served as a tax collector and town constable there when colonists sought to sever ties with Great Britain. In 1784, a year after the close of the war for independence, Lyons moved his family to the Franklin County town of Colrain, where he became the keeper of the village tavern and remained until his death in 1803.

<https://www.masslive.com/news/2022/05/western-mass-participant-in-boston-tea-party-honored-more-than-200-year-after-his-death.html>

Dignitaries and costumed reenactors gathered at Lyons' grave for the dedication of the commemorative marker, which includes an image inspired by Nathaniel Currier's 1846 lithograph "The Destruction of the Tea at Boston Harbor."

"It's a great opportunity to remind local towns and citizens that the Tea Party story doesn't just belong to Boston, it belongs to Massachusetts, and frankly belongs to the nation," Evan O'Brien, creative director of Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum, said at the ceremony. "It's our hope by the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party, we will be placing markers at the hedge stone of every known Boston Tea Party participant across the continent."

The Boston Tea Party took place on the night of Dec. 16, 1773, when Lyons and others, some disguised as Native Americans, boarded ships in Boston Harbor and destroyed an entire shipment of tea belonging to the East India Co. The participants opposed the Tea Act, a tax passed by the British Parliament in 1773.

The Boston Tea Party is one of the key events that led to the Revolutionary War.

Colrain Select Board member Thom Griffin noted the Boston Tea Party drew widespread attention to the grievances that colonists had with Great Britain.

"It got enough publicity, I would say, that it got other people thinking," Griffin said. "I don't know how much people in the countryside were thinking about" taxation without representation until the Boston Tea Party.

To date, 88 commemorative markers have been placed at graves of known Boston Tea Party participants including those in Worcester, Gardner and Sturbridge.

Other markers have been erected in places as far north as the Canadian border in Maine; as far south is Alexandria, Virginia; and as far west as Cincinnati, Ohio, O'Brien said.

"So Colrain is one of many stops across Massachusetts and greater New England that we're trying to accomplish this year with the hope of completing all the other states by 2023 in time for the big 250th anniversary taking place on Dec. 16, 2023," O'Brien said.