Analyzing the Boston Tea Party

Directions: Read the following secondary source selection from *Analyzing the Boston Tea Party.* Annotate the text as you read. After each paragraph, summarize in your own words. Use what you learned to answer the question.

Analyzing the Boston Tea Party, Chapter 4:

Text by Greg Roza

Boiling Point

In the end, the passing of the Tea Act was the event that steered the colonies down the inevitable course to revolution. According to the Tea Act, the tax on tea needed to be collected within twenty days of the ships arriving at port. This made December 16 the tax deadline for the tea that had arrived in Boston Harbor on November 27. Patriot Samuel Adams kept colonial anger high by staging frequent speeches at a nearby meetinghouse. At times, more than 5,000 colonists crowded into the port area to join the protest.

On December 16, both sides were still arguing about what to do with the tea. The owner of the *Dartmouth* agreed to take his ship back to England. However, British warships had been positioned just outside of Boston Harbor, prohibiting the *Dartmouth* from leaving port. British officials announced that the next day, December 17, they would seize the ships for nonpayment of the tea tax. The tea would then be made available *for sale. The owner of the Dartmouth explained his* predicament to a group of Patriots at the Old South Meeting House. Samuel Adams and the Sons of Liberty knew they had to act now or bow to the will of the British Parliament.

My thoughts: The Tea Act changed everything.

Analyzing the Boston Tea Party *(continued)*

The Boston Tea Party

Samuel Adams knew this was the time for action. On his signal, about 150 members of the Sons of Liberty, dressed as Mohawk Indians, left the meetinghouse. Quietly and determinedly, they marched to the docks two by two. They boarded the three ships while the citizens of Boston watched silently from the piers. They demanded the keys to the holds of the ships from the crew members on watch and received them without a fight. The men brought the cargo of tea onto the deck. For the next three hours, the men broke open 342 chests with hatchets and threw the tea into Boston Harbor. They worked hastily, fearing that British officials would attempt to stop them. Some colonists tried to stuff their pockets with the coveted tea. When caught, these few men were stripped of their coats, which were then thrown into the harbor. The men were kicked and struck as they fled through the crowd watching on the docks. When they were done, the Sons of Liberty members removed their shoes and shook them over the water to make sure they did not have any evidence on them when they left the ship. The colonists marched off the ship just as they had marched onto it, their "party" having ended.

Aftermath

News of the Boston Tea Party quickly spread throughout the colonies and worked to strengthen the convictions of many colonists. Loyalists, colonists who remained loyal to British rule, decried the Boston Tea Party as the act of criminals and called for legal action against the Sons of Liberty. Colonists who were against British taxation, now called Patriots, applauded the Boston Tea Party as a necessary step to the road to independence. Patriots staged similar acts of rebellion in other ports along the Atlantic coast. Tensions ran higher than ever before in the colonies as the actions of both Loyalists and Patriots became more impassioned and at times violent.

Analyzing the Boston Tea Party *(continued)*

The British response to the Boston Tea Party was swift and decisive. Parliament declared that Boston was in a state of rebellion and immediately sent British troops to secure the city. King George III and Parliament were furious. They wanted to make an example of Boston for the rest of the colonies. They were hoping to quash similar outbreaks and warn the colonists against questioning the authority of British laws.

The Intolerable Acts

To punish the citizens of Boston and to warn all colonists about the repercussions of challenging British authority, the British Parliament passed five acts in 1774. The colonists called these acts the Intolerable or Coercive Acts. The Boston Port Act closed the port of Boston until the tea the Patriots had dumped into the harbor was paid for, thus showing the British respect they believed they deserved. The Massachusetts Government Act gave the governor full power to appoint all government officials and judges, taking those powers away from the people of Boston. The Administration of Justice Act declared that any British soldier or officer accused of murder would be sent to England for trial.

A new Quartering Act was passed, requiring colonial citizens to clothe, feed, and house British soldiers and officers. The Quebec Act extended the border of Canada south of the Ohio River, where many French citizens still lived. This angered British colonists who believed that land was theirs to settle.

Boston struggled financially under the Intolerable Acts but received aid from nearby cities. Boston leaders called for a meeting of colonial delegates to discuss the boycott of British goods. In the end, the Intolerable Acts helped unite the colonies in their fight against British control.