

## **Sons of Liberty: The Masterminds of the Boston Tea Party**

The Sons of Liberty, a well-organized Patriot paramilitary political organization shrouded in secrecy, was established to undermine British rule in colonial America and was influential in organizing and carrying out the Boston Tea Party. The origins and founding of the Sons of Liberty is unclear, but history records the earliest known references to the organization to 1765 in the thriving colonial port cities of Boston and New York. More than likely, the Boston and New York chapters of the Sons of Liberty were deliberately established at the same time and worked as an underground network in conjunction with each other. It is believed the Sons of Liberty was formed out of earlier smaller scale like-minded Patriot organizations such as the "*Boston Caucus Club*" and "*Loyal Nine*." Membership was made up of males from all walks of colonial society but was notorious in recruiting tavern mongers, wharf rats, and other seedy characters looking to cause trouble. Under the cover of darkness, the Boston chapter of the organization held their meetings under the "Liberty Tree," and the New York chapter under the "Liberty Pole." The "Liberty Tree" was located in Hanover Square, "the most public part" of Boston and was a 120-year-old "stately elm" with branches that "seem'd to touch the skies" according to the Boston Gazette. Taverns, with owners sympathetic to the Patriot cause, were also the favorite meeting places of the Sons of Liberty. The Green Dragon Tavern in Boston was the tavern of choice for meetings of the Sons of Liberty. Despite very little documentary evidence as to the origins of the organization, Boston Patriot Samuel Adams is often credited as being the founder and leader of the Sons of Liberty. The Sons of Liberty was most likely organized in the summer of 1765 as a means to protest the passing of the Stamp Act of 1765. Their motto was, "No taxation without representation."

### **The Sons of Liberty and the American Revolution**

As tensions in the American colonies intensified on the eve of the Revolution, chapters of the Sons of Liberty were formed all over the Thirteen Colonies, notably throughout New England, Virginia, and the Carolinas – a far cry from the two original chapters formed in Boston and New York City in the summer of 1765. The Sons of Liberty adopted in 1767 a five red and four white vertical striped flag as their organization's formal standard.

The Sons of Liberty were influential in orchestrating effective resistance movements against British rule in colonial America on the eve of the Revolution, primarily against what they perceived as unfair taxation and financial limitations imposed upon them. Through the use of mob rule, tactics of fear, force, intimidation, and violence such as tar and feathering, and the stockpiling of arms, shot, and gun powder, the Sons of Liberty effectively undermined British rule, paving the way to America's independence. The Sons of Liberty as an organization disbanded at the close of the American Revolution and as a political entity was replaced early in the Revolution by the more formal and qualified Committees of Safety.

The seminal act and lasting legacy of the Sons of Liberty to the history of the American Revolution was the December 16, 1773 orchestrating of the Boston Tea Party which ultimately led to the outbreak of the Revolutionary War with the "shot heard round the world" on April 19, 1775. The Boston Tea Party, carried out by the Sons of Liberty and led by Samuel Adams, was a catalyst for the start of war and a principal reason why the Revolutionary War began in Massachusetts.

From: <http://www.bostontepartyship.com/sons-of-liberty>