



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Charleston's First Tea Party**

The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of South Carolina (NSCDA-SC) has been awarded an \$8,000 Special Events grant (2023FY) from the South Carolina Sestercentennial Commission to *Commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Charleston's first Revolutionary-era Tea Party.*

#### **CHARLESTON, S.C. (June 26, 2023) ---**

Partnering with the Old Exchange Building, the NSCDA-SC and The Powder Magazine Museum have received a special event grant from the South Carolina American Revolution Sestercentennial Commission (SC250) to commemorate Charleston's first tea party/protest that took place in early December 1773. This protest over a shipment of tea that arrived in Charleston Harbor on December 1<sup>st</sup>, began with the convening of a Mass Meeting in the Great Hall of the Exchange Building on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. This meeting of civic leaders and merchants included Christopher Gadsden and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and resulted in a community-wide pledge to reject the tea and refuse to import it in the future. The protest played out over much of December 1773, with the 257 chests of tea finally offloaded in late December and stored in the basement of the Exchange Building. Later, in 1776, this tea was sold to help finance the Revolutionary War effort by South Carolina patriots. Even though it was a protracted affair, and it did not include a dramatic dumping of tea into the harbor as happened at Boston's famous Tea Party on December 16, 1773, Charleston's tea protest was initiated two weeks prior to its more famous counterpart and laid the groundwork for the Revolution that was to come.

This commemoration of Charleston's first Tea Party likewise sets the stage for a multi-year commemoration of the American Revolution that will happen locally and throughout South Carolina.

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## **Charleston Tea Party**

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The Charleston Tea Party event will begin on Saturday December 2, 2023, at 10:00am in front of the Old Exchange Building & Provost Dungeon, located at 122 East Bay Street. The public is invited to assemble in front of the building as traffic along short sections of Broad and East Bay Streets will be blocked. A theatrical reenactment of the Tea Party Protest will take place on the front portico of the building. The performance, aided by the crowd and costumed “townspeople” will last approximately 15-20 minutes and then attendees will be invited to tour the basement of the Exchange where the tea was stored and to partake of some hot tea provided by Oliver Pluff & Co. Attendees will also be provided a pass for free admission to The Powder Magazine for the weekend (Dec 2-3), where a temporary exhibit on 18<sup>th</sup> century tea will be in place through December. All of this is free to the public. Powder Magazine Museum Director Katherine Pemberton notes, “We are thrilled to partner with the Old Exchange Building to commemorate this important event and so thankful for this grant from the South Carolina Revolution Sestercentennial Commission that makes it possible. Charleston’s tea protest that took place 250 years ago, kicks off a number of anniversaries of the Revolutionary era that will happen over the next several years.”

### **About The NSCDA-SC**

The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of South Carolina was founded in 1893. The headquarters of the South Carolina Society is in Charleston, with six Town Committees located throughout the state. We work to honor our origins, foster a love of country, and educate all citizens on the ideals of liberty. The NSCDA-SC’s 1902 purchase of The Powder Magazine saved the oldest public building in the state from destruction, as it became the first historic building in Charleston to be deliberately preserved and restored. <https://www.powdermagazine.org/>

### **About the South Carolina American Revolution Sestercentennial Commission (SC250)**

Chartered by the SC General Assembly in 2018 ... “which shall have the authority and responsibility to plan and execute, insofar as authorized and funded by the General Assembly, a proper observance of the Sestercentennial of the American Revolution in South Carolina.” The Commission’s mission is to celebrate and promote South Carolina’s role in the American Revolution by educating, engaging, and inspiring South Carolinians and visitors. <https://www.southcarolina250.com/about-us/>