



# Revolutionary Times



*Containing the Latest News from the Sons of the American Revolution*

## Empress of China

In the aftermath of the Revolutionary War, the new and nearly bankrupt US viewed the China trade as a way to settle war debts.

February 22, 1784, “the Empress of China cleared the wharf ... launching America’s trade with China.” (Dolins)

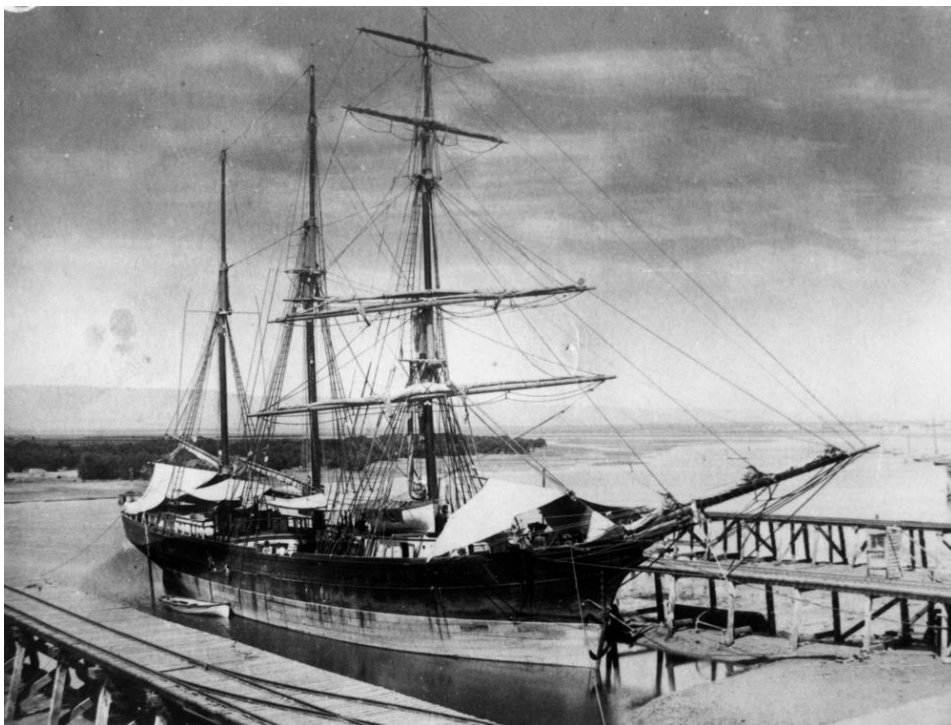
She carried the hopes of a newly independent nation. Backers “of the Empress of China were all the signatories of the Independence agreement ... This was a private enterprise but a national priority.” (Libby Chan Lai-pik)

The Empress of China carried 30-tons of ginseng and other trading goods. Ginseng was the most important herb of the Chinese.

In the 18th century ginseng was also popular in America. It is estimated that American colonists discovered it in the mid-1700s in New England.

“The history of human interaction with ginseng lurks in the language of the land ... on the north-facing, ‘wet’ sides of depressions”. Look at a detailed map of almost any portion around the Colonies and ginseng is registered somewhere, often in association with the deeper, moister places, named ‘Hollows’. (LOC)

After trading, the Empress of China arrived in New York, May 11, 1785.



She carried 800 chests of tea, 20,000 pairs of nankeen trousers and a huge quantity of porcelain.

Stores up and down the East Coast sold her cargo. The voyage earned a 25% return on investment - enough to spawn a new era of commerce with China.

The Americans learned how to make real money in the China trade: sale of Chinese goods to Americans.

John Jay, the US foreign minister, shared the success with Congress.

Congress responded with ‘a peculiar satisfaction in the successful issue of this first effort of the citizens of America to establish a direct trade with China.’

The Empress of China proved that trade with China could enrich backers, funnel customs duties into the national treasury and make the US a competitor on the world stage. (NY Historical Society)

For the next 60 years, the China trade would make New England merchants very, very wealthy. (NE Historical Society)

This broadsheet is dedicated to the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Declaration of Independence for more information visit the National Society Sons of the American Revolution website at: [www.sar.org](http://www.sar.org)

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