Elizabeth Bull Wedding Dress
Miss Elizabeth Bull began work on her own China silk wedding gown while still in school. An ambitious project undertaken to learn and master the advanced needle arts, the dress was designed, stitched, and beautifully embroidered without any particular husband in mind. She had been working on the gown several years when Reverend Roger Price spotted her attending service at Trinity Church and was so taken with her beauty that he gave up plans to return to England to stay and court her. The gown was still not completed when Miss Bull wore it to her wedding in 1735.

The Bloody Massacre in King Street
Paul Revere deliberately got the details of the infamous event wrong. A skilled engraver, Revere created this calculated and highly successful piece of political propaganda, meant to galvanize popular opposition to London.

Tea from the Boston Tea Party
Tea reputed to have been shaken from the boots of patriot Thomas Melvill, grandfather of author Herman Melville. A participant in the Boston Tea Party protest, he likely would have felt a bit guilty to find the tea in his boots, as leaders were said to have instructed protestors not to steal any of the valuable tea.

John Hancock's Inaugural Coat
This exquisite “suit of crimson velvet” was worn by John Hancock for his inauguration as the first democratically elected governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1780. Not only did the rich fabric hint at Hancock’s wealth, but the construction of the coat subtly illustrates how the “details made the man” or at least helped with his image. The shoulder seams are low and toward the back, causing the wearer’s chest to protrude forward. Also the sleeves are stitched with a bend in them, so that Hancock’s arms would inevitably be held at an elegant curve while wearing the coat. This seemingly effortless but really quite deliberate posture was supposed to be indicative of a man of grace and stature.

“If these walls could talk. . . .” They do, in a sense. The Old State House is filled with what we at the Bostonian Society call “hidden history.” Each object in our collection tells a unique tale, woven together to recount in a most captivating way the story of the American Revolution. Here are a few of our favorites.
Inkstand
This inkstand was used in Representatives Hall. The quill pens it once held were used by many prominent figures from Boston’s Revolutionary leadership, including John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and James Otis, Jr.

Lantern
This lantern was one of 45 that illuminated the Liberty Tree on the night of the arrival of news that the Stamp Act had been repealed. Dated May 20, 1766, the inscription on the bottom reads: “This lantern was on the northwest bough (opposite Frog Lane) of the Liberty Tree illuminated last night with several hundred lanterns on the arrival of the news of the repeal of the infamous George Grenville Stamp Act.”

Liberty Tree Flag
The Stamp Act riot, as the first popular protest against British taxation was known, began under the boughs of a large elm tree located not far from the Old State House. When the Stamp Act was repealed in March 1766, the Sons of Liberty celebrated their victory by decking the elm with colorful banners. Among these was a large flag of nine red and white stripes representing the nine colonies that had joined in protest of the hated tax. Bostonians named the elm the Liberty Tree, and it remained a focal point for popular protest throughout the Revolutionary period.

Speaker’s Desk
After the devastating 1747 fire at the Old State House, the House of Representatives is said to have commissioned Charlestown cabinetmaker Benjamin Frothingham to construct this Speaker’s Desk.

When the British destroyed much of Charlestown in 1775, Frothingham lost his house, barn, and workshop. His work is recognized as important for the study of American craft history not only because he was one of the few early American cabinetmakers to label his furniture but also for his fine craftsmanship.

Lydia Hutchinson Sampler
Stitched by Lydia Hutchinson, the sister of Royal Governor Thomas Hutchinson, this embroidered sampler reads: “Lydia Hutchinson is my name, and with this needle I wrought the same, if my skill it had been better, I should have mended every letter, in the year 1730.”