

## About the Author



ROSENBERG LIBRARY  
MUSEUM BOOK CLUB

### ERIC J. DOLIN

Eric Dolin grew up near the New England coast and has had a lifelong fascination with the sea.

He holds an M.A. in Environmental Management from Yale University and a Ph.D. in Environmental Policy and Planning from MIT.



Dolin has published numerous articles in magazines and professional journals and has written several bestselling books related to maritime and environmental history.

He lives with his family in Marblehead, Massachusetts.

#### **Other award-winning books by Dolin:**

*Fur, Fortune, and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in America*

*Leviathan: A History of Whaling in America*

#### **Upcoming book:**

*Brilliant Beacons: A History of the American Lighthouse*

#### **Author website:**

[www.ericjaydolin.com/](http://www.ericjaydolin.com/)

## PROGRAM AGENDA

Spring 2016

March 30 · May 12

**12:00 noon**

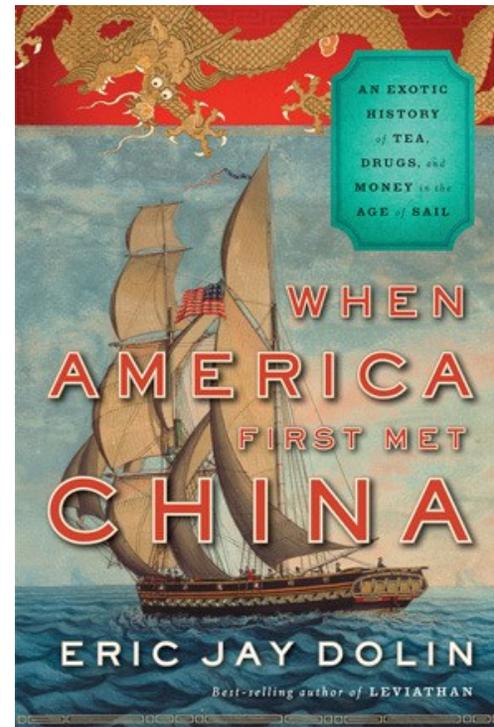
Welcome & Introductions

**12:00-12:15**

Historical Presentation

**12:15-1:00**

Book Discussion



Rosenberg Library's Museum Book Club provides a forum for discovery and discussion, linking literary selections with artworks and historical objects from the permanent collection.



**TEA BOX**

Gift of the Estate of Mildred Robertson  
2000.05

“Coffeehouses and tea gardens pattered after the British model sprang up in many cities, and thousands of newspaper advertisements trumpeted the availability of high-quality imported tea at local shops. Initially a habit of the well-to-do, tea drinking filtered down to the rest of the society as tea imports increased and prices fell.”

-p.57

**Discussion...**

Historian T.H. Breen observed that by the late 18th century, tea had become “the master symbol of the new consumer economy in America.”

On page 71, Dolin states that “because it was such a powerful, universally appreciated symbol, the rebellion against British tea and the East India Company became a shared experience, and a patriotic cause around which Americans could rally.”

Can you think of a good or product today that evokes the same sense of patriotism among all Americans?

“And if Americans couldn't get the real thing, imitation Chinese goods were available. Starting in the 17th century, artisans in Europe had begun creating a wide selection of chinoiserie, decorative and functional objects patterned after Chinese motifs, which ranged from bowls and vases to tapestries and wallpaper.”

-p. 59



**SANDALWOOD FAN**

Gift of the Morgan Family  
82.025.2f

**Discussion...**

“Given its [the East India Company's] financial ambitions, the company cared little about Chinese prohibitions or the damage opium might be causing the Chinese people; instead it focused on the bottom line: As long as the silver kept flowing out, the British were happy to keep sending opium in.” p. 122

Do you see any parallels with today's drug addiction epidemic? Did the British have any moral obligations to honor China's drug regulations?

“From the sailing of the *Empress of China* through the late 1830s, the American China trade flooded the United States with goods that became woven into the fabric of American life.”

-p. 192



**DRESSING CASE**

Gift of the Morgan Family  
85.017

**Discussion...**

“On paper, coolies were contract laborers, volunteers who agreed to work for a certain number of years at a specified rate of pay before being released from their contract, free to return to their homeland. In reality, however, they were not much more than slaves by another name.” p. 291

Did it surprise you that Chinese people were forced into slave labor much like Africans had been for centuries?

Can you think of a modern-day counterpart to the “crimps” who recruited marginalized Chinese citizens to work abroad?