

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Activity 1: An Introduction to the Keeler Tavern**

**Directions:** Read the following introduction to the Keeler Tavern and answer the questions at the end of the worksheet.

Over three hundred years ago, Benjamin Hoyt moved from Norwalk, CT to Ridgefield. He built a small home on a farm in 1713. The farm was similar to most other homes in Ridgefield. Over the years, Benjamin and his wife Sarah expanded the house to fit their six children.

In 1769 Benjamin and Sarah's grandson, Timothy Keeler, bought the house from his uncle, David Hoyt. Timothy was only 21 years old. Timothy and his wife, Esther Kellogg Keeler, realized that their home was perfectly located to open a **tavern**. It was on Ridgefield's main road between Danbury and Norwalk. It was also on the **post road** connecting New York and Boston. In 1772, they opened T. Keeler's Inn, also known as Keeler Tavern.

A tavern was an important place in early America. It was often the first public building to be built in a town after the church. The tavern was a gathering place for both local people and travelers. A simple tavern offered beer, cider, and food for sale. A nicer one might also sell other types of **liquor**. Timothy received his own license to sell liquor in 1794. While at a tavern, guests could talk with friends and play games like cards or skittles. Dances were also held at taverns in the large upper rooms.

Travelers could also stop at taverns for a night's **lodging**. Taverns were especially important in this role because travel by horse was very slow and a person did not need to travel far before needing to stop for the night. A ten-mile trip required an overnight stay - and a trip from New York to Boston took 4 days!

The tavern was also where people could catch up on news and receive their mail. Because mail in early America was delivered by the same **stagecoaches** that carried travelers, the first post offices were also in taverns. The newspaper in a small town would also be for sale at the tavern where people would go to read it and catch up with news from the travelers coming from other towns.

Taverns were also important in the political life of early America. The tavern often had the largest rooms in town where community members could hold meetings. Keeler Tavern's Assembly Room may have been the place where the town voted to join the American Revolution!

When you come and visit Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center you can step back in time and experience Timothy and Esther Keeler's tavern!

## Questions for Review

1. Who built the first home where the Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center is today?
2. What year did the Keeler Tavern open?
3. Why did Timothy and Esther turn their home into a tavern?
4. What are three reasons why taverns were important public places in Early America?

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## Activity 2: Artifact Interpretation

**Directions:** An **artifact** is an object that was made, modified, or used by humans in the past. When you visit Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center you will see many artifacts. You will also see **reproductions** of artifacts. A reproduction is a present-day copy of an original artifact. Look closely at the artifacts below and answer the following “5W” questions for each.

Remember your predictions about these objects. When you visit Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center, you can see them in person and learn more about them! On your tour you can ask yourself, “Were my predictions correct?”

**WHO:** Who might have used this object? (Was it used by a man or woman? Was it used by an adult or child? What was their profession?)

**WHAT:** What material is the object made of? What might it have been used for?

**WHEN:** When might this artifact have been used? (On a specific day? During a certain season of the year? Or in a certain time period?)

**WHERE:** Where would the object have been used? (What was the setting? The city or country? At home? Work? School?)

**WHY:** Why was the object used? (What purpose did it serve?)

*What else would you like to know about this artifact?*

### Artifact 1



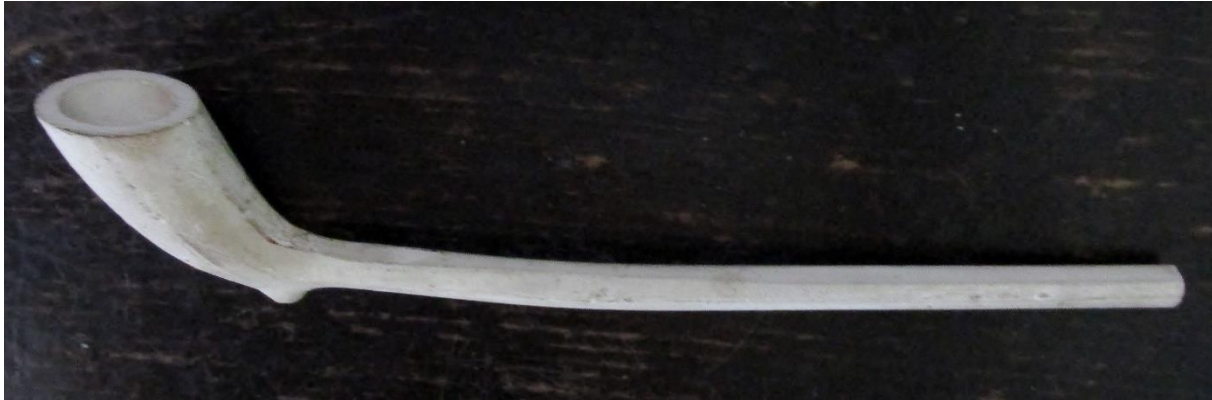
<b>WHO?</b>	
<b>WHAT?</b>	
<b>WHEN?</b>	
<b>WHERE?</b>	
<b>WHY?</b>	
<i>What else?</i>	

## Artifact 2



<b>WHO?</b>	
<b>WHAT?</b>	
<b>WHEN?</b>	
<b>WHERE?</b>	
<b>WHY?</b>	
<i>What else?</i>	

### Artifact 3



<b>WHO?</b>	
<b>WHAT?</b>	
<b>WHEN?</b>	
<b>WHERE?</b>	
<b>WHY?</b>	
<i>What else?</i>	

**Artifact 4**



<b>WHO?</b>	
<b>WHAT?</b>	
<b>WHEN?</b>	
<b>WHERE?</b>	
<b>WHY?</b>	
<i>What else?</i>	

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### **Activity 3: Historical Documents**

**Directions: Historical documents** are documents that contain important information about a person, place, or event. The most famous historical documents are either laws, accounts of battles, or the activities of the people in power. Though these documents are interesting, they do not detail the daily lives of ordinary people. Historians are often more interested in documents that describe the day-to-day lives of ordinary people, describing what they ate, their interactions with their family and community, and their ideas or opinions. It is this information that helps historians understand and describe what life was like in the past.

After closely reading and examining the document on the next page from the Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center's archive answer the following questions:

1. What type of document is this? What kind of information does it record?
2. What is the date of this document? When was it made?
3. What costs the most? Why do you think it was so expensive?
4. Can you tell what time they arrived by the things they purchased?
5. How many days did they stay?
6. What other information can you discover from this document?

Willsfield July 12, 1819 332DK  
Dr Thompson Jr

to 2 Lodgings	2
2 Breakfasts	5
2 Dinners	3
2 Lodgings	2
2 Glasses Brandy	1
	<hr/>
	£ 0.13.0
Spirits	0.0
Bitters	1.0
2 Breakfasts	5
	<hr/>
	£ 0-19.6

A transcription, or typed copy of a handwritten document, is available in the teacher's instructions pages.



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### **Activity 4: Write A Letter Home**

**Directions:** You are travelling from your home in New York City to Boston when you stop and spend the night at the Keeler Tavern. Write a letter to your family at home to tell them about your trip and your stay at the tavern.

In your letter, make sure to:

1. Describe your visit,
2. Describe the tavern and the people you met there,
3. Describe the activities you may have participate in,
4. Describe the food and drink you would have eaten and drank,
5. Close your letter by summarizing your experience.

When you have finished writing your letter, fold it up to make an envelope.

1. Fold along the black lines,
2. Fold back along the red lines, starting at the bottom of the sheet and working up.
3. This should leave a rectangle with a space for the address on one side and a small flap on the reverse.
4. Seal the envelope by cutting out and gluing the wax seal.



P.S. Have you studied the American Revolution? If you have, maybe you remember a famous historical document called the Stamp Act. This included a tax on paper goods – like a letter! The stamp was proof you paid your tax.

SEAL HERE

## Activity 5: Make Your Own Butter

Even if you don't have a butter churn you can make home-made butter - just like Esther did! Many things have changed between the days of Keeler Tavern and today, but many things have also stayed the same. Read all the instructions before starting this hands-on activity.

### **Ingredients & Materials:**

Jar with screw on lid (baby food jars or mason jars are great)

Heavy Whipping Cream (any amount, 6 cups makes about 1 pound of butter)

Salt, ½ teaspoon per pound of butter (optional, used for preserving butter)

### **Directions:**

1. Pour cream into the jar, no more than 1/2 of the way full. It can help to chill the jar ahead of time so that the butter does not melt as you make it.
2. **Begin shaking!** And Shake and shake and shake... It takes about 2-5 minutes before you notice a thickening forming in the jar. This heaviness is the beginning of the milk fat changing and sticking together. At this point you have a thick whip cream in the jar.
3. **Keep shaking.** As another 5-10 minutes pass you will notice the jar filling with foamy cream. It feels as if there is no room in the jar as the thick cream is aerated – filled with bubbles - with the shaking but **keep shaking**.
4. Before you know it, you will see the **foam separate** and a **thin liquid forms** in the jar. That thin liquid is buttermilk! The butter is in the last few moments of shaking. Keep shaking until the butter, or joined mass of milk fat, inside is a consistent size.
5. **Separate the buttermilk** by carefully draining it into another container and save it for biscuits or pancakes and other fun recipes.
6. **Scoop out the butter** from the jar and put it into a small container for refrigeration and ease of use. If adding salt, mix it into the butter as you scoop it out of the jar.
7. Congratulations, you have just made your own butter! Enjoy your work!

*Note: As the butter sits in your refrigerator you may see drips of buttermilk on the butter. This is not a problem! As the butter sets, or firms into one mass, just let it drip off and drain.*

## **Glossary**

**Antiviral Medication:** medication used for treating a disease caused by a virus.

**Artifact:** an object made, modified, or used by humans in the past.

**Herb:** a seed-bearing plant that does not have a woody stem and dies after flowering.

**Herb Lore:** the study of the use of medicinal herbs around the world.

**Historical Document:** documents that contain important information about a person, place or event.

**Indigenous:** occurring naturally in a particular place.

**Liquor:** alcoholic drink.

**Medicinal:** having healing properties.

**Post Road:** a road designated for the transportation of postal mail, same as a highway.

**Poultice:** a soft, moist mass of material applied to the body to relieve soreness and inflammation.

**Reproduction:** a present-day copy of an original artifact.

**Spice:** an aromatic vegetable used to flavor food.

**Stagecoach:** a large, closed, horse-drawn vehicle formerly used to carry passengers and mail along a regular route between two places.

**Tavern:** a place that sold beer and other drinks to be consumed there, sometimes also serving food.

**Transcription:** a written or printed representation of something such as a letter or receipt that makes it easier to read.

## **Recommended Reading**

**Picture Books:** Our Colonial Year by Cheryl Harness, From Path to Highway: The Story of the Boston Post Road by Gail Gibbons

**Non-Fiction:** Exploring Colonial Williamsburg from A to Z by Chris Kinsley, Early American Trades Coloring Book by Peter F. Copeland, Colonial America by Mary Kay Carson

**Fiction:** Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare, Emma's Journal: The Story of a Colonial Girl by Marissa Moss