

## Document Section 2

### *The Demand Curve in the Boston Tea Party: When all else fails, shift the Demand, ye Patriots.*

**BACKGROUND:** Students should have prior knowledge of the economic models describing supply and demand. Students should have working knowledge of shifting and movement along the demand and supply curves. Knowledge of marginal utility analysis is also assumed. Application of the theory of indifference curves in the creation of the demand curve could be helpful but not necessary for this exercise.

**GOAL:** Students will apply their knowledge of supply and demand analysis to the events leading up to the Boston Tea Party. They will evaluate the effectiveness of their models in describing the consumer behavior of tea.

**CONCEPT REVIEW:** Using regular demand/supply analysis, describe

1. What factors cause a shift in demand?
2. What factors cause a movement along the demand curve?

**DOCUMENT ANALYSIS:** Read the following set of documents pertaining to the background of the Boston Tea Party.

1. On a separate piece of paper answer the “Consider” question that corresponds with each document.
2. Discuss your answers with your group and come to some consensus over the meaning of the documents.
3. GRAPH—Using your best demand/supply analysis, show how the Patriots were shaping and influencing the market for tea in the years leading up to the Boston Tea Party.

**TASK:** Based on the documents and your knowledge of 18<sup>th</sup> century American history, do you think the Patriots were able to change demand for tea? Why or why not? Would you recommend it as sound policy to continue to try to change demand? If so, how would you go about it? If not, what might you do instead to keep up with the demand? Be able to provide a coherent explanation to your fellow Patriots.

## *The Demand Curve: Documents*

### **Document #1**

**“Address to the Ladies” *Boston Post-Boy*, 16 November 1767.**

View a digital image of this document at: [http://www.masshist.org/database/onview\\_full.cfm?queryID=413](http://www.masshist.org/database/onview_full.cfm?queryID=413)

*CONSIDER:* As you read the following document, consider the audience of this message. How does this “audience” correspond to the Tea Market? What tactics are used to try to change demand? How effective do you think they might be?

### **Address to the LADIES**

Young ladies in town, and those that live round,  
Let a friend at this season advise you:  
Since money’s so scarce, and times growing worse  
Strange things may soon hap and surprize you:  
First then, throw aside your high top knots of pride  
Wear none but your own country linnen;  
Of Economy boast, let your pride be the most  
To show cloaths of your own make and spinning.  
What, if homespun they say is not quite so gay  
As brocades, yet be not in a passion,  
For when once it is known this is much wore in town,  
One and all will cry out, ’tis the fashion!  
And as one, all agree that you’ll not married be  
To such as will wear London Fact’ry  
But at first sight refuse, tell ’em such you do chuse  
As encourage our own Manufact’ry.  
No more Ribbons wear, nor in rich dress appear,  
Love your country much better than fine things,  
Begin without passion, ’twill soon be the fashion  
To grace your smooth locks with a twine string.  
Throw aside your Bohea, and your Green Hyson Tea,<sup>1</sup>  
And all things with a new fashion duty;  
Procure a good store of the choice Labradore,<sup>2</sup>  
For there’ll soon be enough here to suit ye:  
These do without fear and to all you’ll appear  
Fair, charming, true, lovely and cleaver;  
Tho’ the times remain darkish, young men may be sparkish.  
And love you much stronger than ever.

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<sup>1</sup> Bohea was one of the most popular teas among American tea drinkers. Bostonians imported most of this tea via England. (Benjamin Woods Labaree, *The Boston Tea Party*, New York, 1964: 8).

<sup>2</sup> Labradore tea was gathered from the banks of New England’s rivers. Labaree claims that its taste was very questionable. (Labaree, 27).

**Document #2**

**Letter from Robert Harris to Caleb Davis, August 1768**

*CONSIDER – The Non-Importation agreements are signed in August 1768 to stop the import of certain English goods – like tea. Do you think Bostonians are willing to give up their favorite drink so easily? Are Merchants willing to give up a source of revenue? Why or why not?*

Sr,

I don't know but I shall tire yr. patience  
but I intend to make you easy as soon as I can  
leave home. But must ask the [favor] of yr send[ing]  
me 1 [barrel] best & 1 [barrel] midling sugar & 2 case  
raisons and make up the rest of their loads in  
Rock Salt. I have sent down 2 load cyder you  
may have if you please at the comm. price. If I  
cant gett 3 [barrels] for it, beg you'd store it for me.  
Desire to know the extent of price for flax seed and  
the lowest I can have tea by the chest and you'll  
oblige yr. obliged Friend and Humble Servant,  
Rob.t Harris

Robert Harris to Caleb Davis, August 1768, Caleb Davis Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

**Document #3**  
**Receipts and Accounts of Tea Purchases, 1768**

**Needs transcriptions and links to images? Work with Nancy on digital images – embed into page.**

Receipts and accounts of tea purchases, 1768, Caleb Davis Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

#### Document #4

#### John Adams, *Autobiography* [excerpt]

The Physicians told me that close Application to a School and to Studies by night and by Day had [thickened?] and corrupted the whole Mass of my blood and juices, and that I must have recourse to a Milk Diet according to the Theory and Practice of Dr. Cheyne, at that time the height of the Fassion in Medicine. I had read the Writings of Dr. Cheyne and now read them again, renounced all Meat and Spirits and lived upon Bread and milk, Vegetables and Water. I found my head more at Ease and thought I pursued my Studies to more Advantage: but was tormented with a heart burn every afternoon, which nothing but large potions of Tea at Evening could extinguish. I pursued this course for Eighteen months, six or seven of which passed at my fathers house, with the Advice of Dr. Savil and Dr. Hearsey [Hersey], who were both unqualified Admirers of Cheyne's in Theory, though not in their own practice. My excellent Father at last by his tender Advice at sometimes and a little good humoured ridicule at others converted me again to the Use of a little meat and more comforting Drink, but in both of these I was extreamly sparing for many Years after, and indeed untill I became a Member of Congress and a Traveller, when long journeys and Voyages made a more generous Regimen essential to my being[...]

John Adams, *autobiography*, part 1, "John Adams," through 1776, sheet 5 of 53 [electronic edition]. *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*, Massachusetts Historical Society, <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams>

**Document #5**

**John Adams, Diary, 29 June 1770**

**JUNE 29. 1770. FRYDAY.**

~~Sat out on~~ Began my journey to Falmouth in Casco Bay. Baited my Horse at Martins in Lynn, where I saw T. Fletcher and his Wife, Mr. French &c. Dined at Goodhues in Salem, where I fell in Company with a Stranger, his Name I know not. He made a Genteell Appearance, was in a Chair himself with a Negro Servant. Seemed to have a general Knowledge of American Affairs, said he had been a Merchant in London, had been at Maryland, Phyladelphia, New York &c. One Year more he said would make Americans as quiet as Lambs. They could not do without Great Britain, they could not conquer their Luxury &c.

Oated my Horse and drank baume Tea at Treadwells in Ipswich, where I found Brother Porter and chatted with him 1/2 Hour, then rode to Rowley and lodged at Captn. Jewitts. -  
- Jewitt had rather the House should sit all the Year round, than give up an Atom of Right or Priviledge. -- The Governor cant frighten the People, with &c.

John Adams, Diary, 29 June 1770 [electronic edition], *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*, Massachusetts Historical Society, <http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/>

**Document #6**

**Letter from Thomas Hutchinson to William Palmer, 28 April 1768**

*CONSIDER* – Thomas Hutchinson, acting governor of Massachusetts from 1769-1774, writes to William Palmer about his business order. What role do you think tea has for him and his family? What sense of value of tea do you get from this document?

To: Palmer

Boston, 28 April 1768

Sir

I shall inclose Captain Bretts receipt for 350 Ounces Bullion and 2[ ] half Joannes which you will dispose of at the best prices and carry the proceeds to my Credit also Frances Lecams draft on Richard Forman for 13£ sterling. I am going out of Town and expect to be absent three or four weeks shall desire my sons to ship more by Scott unless they can procure bills. I design before the Fall to make 1500 £ more over and above the 1000£ last winter so that when Tea is at the lowest you will secure to the amount of 3000£ more on the joint account to be shipped between this and winter more or less on every Vessel. The profits of these adventures will depend on your buying on the best terms for then they will have a quick sale and you will have a quick return. About a third part of the smooth Tea if not inferior to what you have now shipped may go off, but the best customers know the difference. The half Chests if they are not dearer it will be well to have a few of. I am

Sir Your very humble Servant

Thomas Hutchinson to William Palmer, 28 April 1768, Thomas Hutchinson Letterbooks, Massachusetts Historical Society.

**Document #7**  
**Bromfield Family accounts, undated**

*CONSIDER* – What role did tea play in the family budget? What in the budget would be considered “complements” to tea? What bearing would the price of tea have on the complements?

What are the expences of an ordinary family composed of six persons by the year?

	£	S	D
House rent	20	0	0
25 Cords of Wood at 12s a Cord	15	0	0
Six Barrells of Cyder at 10s	3	0	0
Seven Barrells of Flower at 31s	10	17	0
Three Bushells of Malt at 6s	0	13	6
Twelve Gallons of Molasses at 2s 6d	1	10	0
Ten Gallons of Spirit at 46	2	5	0
Ten Gallons of Wine at 6s 8d	3	6	8
25 lbs. Loaf Sugar 1s 6d	1	17	6
150 lbs. Brown Sugar	4	10	0
Half a hundred of Rice at 1s 6d	0	12	6
1 lb. Green Tea	0	12	0
4 lb. of sochong at 5s	1	0	0
6 lbs. of Chocolat	0	16	0
15 lbs. of Coffee at	0	18	0
50 lbs. of Candles at 8d per lb.	1	13	4
Ten Gallons of Vinigar at 1/	0	10	0
Two bushels of Salt	0	6	0
1 lb. pound of Pepper	0	3	9
Spices at 9/	0	9	0
12 bushells of sand at	0	6	0
Brooms brushes and mats at 12/	0	12	0
Repair of furniture	20	0	0
For cow and horse keeping	10	0	0
For Fruit	1	10	0
4 lbs. of Honey at 9d	0	3	0
150 lbs. of Butter 8d	5	0	0
50 lbs. of Cheese 2s	1	1	0
110 hundred lbs. of meat	15	12	0
Vegitables	1	10	0
Maids wages	6	10	0
A Mans [ditto]	6	0	0
Medicine and attendance	3	0	0
Travelling expnditures	6	0	0