# Chocolate Preparation and Serving Vessels in Early North America

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#### Introduction

The introduction of tea, coffee, and chocolate into the western European diet during the mid-17th century revolutionized drinking habits. Chocolate and its fellow stimulating beverages gradually replaced traditional ale, beer, and hard cider as the breakfast beverages of choice in early America. Chocolate was first introduced into colonial regions of northeastern North America in the late 17th century; having been introduced earlier in southeastern Spanish Florida (see Chapter 33). Chocolate often was used as an exotic and expensive medicine to nourish the sick, cure hangovers, or aid digestion. According to John Worlidge:

Chocolate is a very great Restorative, comforting and cherishing the inward parts, and reviving natural strength, and hath a wonderful effect upon Consumptive and antient [sic] people, being drank hot in a morning. [1]

Even later authors continued to preach the virtues of chocolate for health. Rees's *The Cyclopaedia*, published in Philadelphia between 1810 and 1824, described chocolate as a drink:

Esteemed not only as an excellent food, as being very nourishing, but also as a good medicine; at least a diet, for keeping up the warmth of the stomach, and assisting digestion. [2]

The preparation of chocolate was a complicated and time-consuming process, quite unlike today's ready-

mix of nonfat powdered milk, sugar, and cocoa. In addition to the expense, preparation of chocolate beverages required space, time, equipment, and patience. Period recipes from cookbooks or medical manuals of the day underscore the many ingredients needed:

Chocolate is made with Chocolate, Milk, Eggs, White-wine, Rose-water, and Mace or Cinnamon, which the party fancies, they being all boiled together over a gentle fire, two ounces of Chocolate, eight Eggs, half pound of Sugar, a pint of White-wine, an ounce of Mace or Cinnamon, and half a pound of Sugar answering in this case a Gallon of Milk. [3]

Other writers focused on the complexity of preparation and equipment needed to produce outstanding chocolate:

A portion of one of the cakes must be scraped fine, added to a sufficient quantity of water, and simmered for a quarter of an hour; but milling is necessary to make it completely smooth. For this purposes [chocolate pots have] a circular wheel of

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wood or metal within, fixed to a stem that passes through the lid, and which, being whirled about rapidly by the palms of the hand, bruises and mixes the chocolate with the water. The chocolate must be milled off the fire, then put on again to simmer some time, then milled again until it is quite smooth. From the fineness there should be no sediment, and the whole should be drunk; cream is generally used with it . . . Sugar may be put in with the scraped chocolate, or added afterward. [4]

Because of the amount of time needed to prepare chocolate as a breakfast beverage, some cookbook authors advised starting the process the evening before:

To make chocolate. Scrape four ounces of chocolate and pour a quart of boiling water upon it; mill it well and sweeten it to your taste; give it a boil and let it stand all night; then mill it again very well; boil it in two minutes, then mill it till it will leave the froth upon the tops of your cups. [5]

Early recipes start with the chocolate itself. The manufacture of chocolate from imported cacao nibs may have occurred soon after its introduction into the American colonies. Most chocolate consumed by Americans during the Colonial era was purchased ready-made for use, with roasting and grinding of the beans already completed. Commercial chocolate makers manufactured their product using a variety of milling methods. Due to the uncertainty and expense of the cocoa trade, many chocolate makers also manufactured other commodities besides chocolate—often grinding mustard and tobacco too [6, 7].

One of the earliest references to Boston chocolate mills appears in a 1751 newspaper advertisement for Joseph Palmer and Richard Cranch who "make very good chocolate at 12 shillings per pound, and the superfine sort for 14 shillings per pound" [8]. Although cheaper than tea on a per-pound basis, on a per-cup basis, chocolate was more expensive than tea or coffee (see Chapter 18), and was a luxury only the wealthy and aspiring middle classes could afford. Easy access to shipping, water mills, and large amounts of cacao imports combined to make New England manufacturers the major source of chocolate in eastern North America throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

Very few cooks purchased cacao nibs for roasting and grinding on their own.<sup>2</sup> Most chocolate available to consumers in early America was in the form of ground lozenges or cakes of chocolate, varying in weight from two to four ounces. In April 1687, for example, Samuel Sewall of Boston, Massachusetts, bought "21 balls of chokolatto"—also called rowls, lumps, lozenges, cakes, or tablets in the contemporary literature [9, 10]. These purchased cakes were often already combined with white sugar and flavored with spices such as nutmeg, cinnamon, red peppers, cloves, or orange flower water.

Chocolate cakes were most commonly sold and stored in linen bags or boxes. According to Henry

Stubbe, "enclosed in boxes" was one method of selling the material [11]. Although boxes specifically used for storing chocolate have yet to be identified, a 1710 English broadside reported that "to preserve it a good long time from its great Enemy moisture, keep it close in Tin-Boxes, or in old thick Oaken Chests in a dry place" [12]. Through time, chocolate develops a white haze or gray streaks on the surface called bloom, due to exposure to humidity, changes in temperature, or improper storage. Bloom does not adversely affect the taste, but it is unsightly.

Boxes kept the chocolate safe from vermin in addition to protecting it from losing its flavor or absorbing odors. Cocoa butter does not become rancid as quickly as other fats, so properly stored chocolate kept for up to a year. Yet in 1785, Thomas Jefferson complained that chocolate had little favor in the American diet because of an impression that it went rancid quickly. In a letter to John Adams, he wrote:

Chocolate. This article when ready made, and also the Cacao becomes so soon rancid, and the difficulties of getting it fresh have been so great in America that its use has spread little. [13]

## Preparing Chocolate

Cakes of chocolate needed to be scraped or grated in preparation for the addition of liquid, which often could be a combination of water, wine, or milk. According to period recipes, chocolate cakes could be cut, sliced, scraped, or grated before adding to a mixture of hot liquid and white sugar (see Chapters 8 and 23). Evidence of the equipment used to prepare chocolate appears in probate inventories such as that of Samuel Hanson of Charles County, Maryland, who owned "1 old chocolate grater" valued at 3 pence in 1741 [14, 15]. Maria Eliza Rundell's *A New System of Domestic Cookery*, included in Thomas Jefferson's library, instructed:

Cut a cake of chocolate into very small bits; put a pint of water into the pot, and, when it boils put in the above. . . . When wanted, put a spoonful or two of milk, boil it with the sugar, and mill it well. [16]

Eggs were commonly added to chocolate to increase nutrition as well as encourage frothing. James Lightbody's recipe advocated the following:

Take a small quantity of the Liquor out, and beat with six Eggs; and when it is well beat, pour it into the whole quantity of Liquor. [17]

The high percentage of cocoa butter or fat present in the cakes added to the complexity of chocolate's preparation. With at least 50 percent of the beverage being cocoa butter, chocolate was extremely nourishing, but the fat content also became one of its detracting characteristics. Rees's *The Cyclopaedia* referred to chocolate as "of a dusky color, soft and oily"

[18]. To counteract this thick layer of cocoa butter, one could either skim off the fat or add starches—bread, flour, toast, or wafer³—to absorb excess fat and to make the drink more palatable [19]. John Nott in *The Cook's and Confectioner's Dictionary* added "fine flour or starch half a quarter of an ounce" as part of his recipe for chocolate [20].

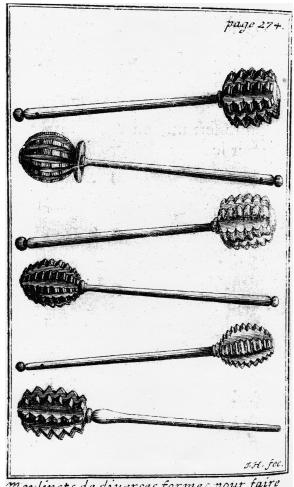
Being thick with cocoa butter, the chocolate must also be mixed with a stirring rod, "chocolate mill," or *molinet*, prior to pouring.<sup>4</sup> According to John Worlidge's 1675 description:

The mill is only a knop [sic] at the end of a slender handle or stick, turned in a turner's lathe, and cut in notches, or rough at the end. They are sold at turners for that purpose. This being whirled between your hands, whilst the pot is over the fire, and the rough end in the liquor causes an equal mixture of the liquor with the chocolate and raises a head of froth over it. [21]

Commonly called chocolate mills, these stirring rods sometimes cause confusion today since the word "mill" is more identified with a type of grinder or "hand mill" used to pulverize the chocolate [22, 23]. The chocolate mill, typically made of wood and measuring 10-12 inches in length, was the product of wood turners in the 18th century. When immersed in chocolate and whirled between the hands, the notched or roughened knop (i.e., knob) at its lower end produced a uniform consistency in the chocolate and raised the desired froth. An early image of these essential stirring rods occurs in Nicolas de Blégny's Le Bon Usage du Thé, du Caffé, et Chocolat Pour la Preservation & Pour la Guerison des Maladies (Lyon: Thomas Amaulry, 1687) with the caption "Moulinets de diverses formes: pour faire moussior le chocolat," which roughly translates as "Stirring rods of various forms, for the frothing of chocolate" (Fig. 10.1). No one has adequately explained the many variations on the notched ends of the stirring rods, but this same diversity continues in both antique and modern Mexican molinillos.

Few chocolate pots survive with their original mills, as this part easily was lost or became separated over time. The Farrer Collection of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University, contains a rare example of an English silver chocolate pot made by London silversmith Paul Crespin (1694–1770) in 1738–1739 that retains its original silver and wood mill [24]. The most frequently encountered mills are those found with miniature English silver chocolate pots; in such instances they are made entirely of silver.

Chocolate mills served a variety of culinary purposes. When Mrs. Elizabeth Raffald wrote her *Experienced English Housekeeper* in 1769, she recommended using a chocolate mill to make frothy desserts such as syllabubs and whips, and encouraged cooks to "raise your Froth with a Chocolate Mill" [25]. As the 19th century progressed, chocolate mills remained in use even as the formulation for drinking chocolate



Moulinets de diverses formes pour faire mousser le Chocolat.

FIGURE 10.1. Moulinets de diverses formes (chocolate mills of diverse forms). Source: Blégny, N. de. Le Bon Usage du Thé, du Caffé, et Chocolat Pour la Preservation & Pour la Guerison des Maladies. Lyon, France: Thomas Amaulry, 1687; p. 274. Courtesy of the Peter J. Shields Library, University of California, Davis. (Used with permission.)

changed. Isabella Beeton's *The Book of Household Management* [26] illustrated a conventional chocolate mill with a turned handle and pierced flanges and instructed:

Chocolate, prepared with a mill as shown in the engraving, is made by putting in the scraped chocolate, pouring over it the boiling milk and water, and milling it over the fire until hot and frothy. [26]

## Chocolate Pots SILVER CHOCOLATE POTS

French silversmiths are credited with the invention of the chocolate pot or *chocolatière* in the late 17th century (see Chapters 12 and 42), which English silversmiths quickly imitated [27]. A chocolate pot's most distinctive feature is an opening in the lid that allows for the

insertion of the stirring rod or chocolate mill. This was achieved by a removable cap or finial, or a small hole with a swinging or hinged cover. Otherwise, chocolate pots and coffeepots are virtually indistinguishable.

One of the earliest references to the ownership of silver chocolate pots is found in the New York probate inventory of William Pleay, who owned a silver "jocolato pot" in 1690 [28, 29]. In 1701, William Fitzhugh of Virginia wrote a codicil to his will that bequeathed "to my son Thomas Fitzhugh my Silver Chocolate Pott which I brought out of England" [30].

Some of the most exquisite objects for the consumption of chocolate in early America were created in silver. Some of these silver chocolate pots were made by American craftsmen, while others were imports from England. A Maryland family owned a pear-shaped chocolate jug made in London during 1733–1734 by the Huguenot silversmith Peter Archambo I (d. 1767) that now resides in the collection of the Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts [31]. Samuel Chew (1704-1737) of Annapolis, Maryland, and his wife, Henrietta Maria (Lloyd) Chew, commissioned a chocolate jug designed with a beakshaped spout and ornamented with their engraved coat of arms. This form of chocolate jug was fashionable in English silver in the 1730s and 1740s. Typically, the aperture for a chocolate mill was concealed by a sliding disk onto which the finial was soldered. A small clasp that hooked around a pin or rivet located beside the hole secured the disk [32, 33].

Silver chocolate pots are extremely rare forms in American silver, with only eight known Boston examples. Despite the paucity of survivors, American manufactured silver chocolate pots provide a glimpse of the importance and status of chocolate in early American life. Extraordinarily stylish and costly, the pots were faddish in their response to the elite's adoption of this new beverage.

While few chocolate pots survive, those by Boston silversmiths Zachariah Brigden, John Coney, Peter Oliver, Edward Webb, and Edward Winslow show an impressive array of styles (see Chapter 11). Even though these forms were manufactured in the same city, and in some cases by the same artisan, this group exhibits diversity in shapes from vase forms to pear-shaped examples. Some have their handles opposite their spouts; others have handles at a right angle to their spout. Some of the pots have pierced, interior strainers, while others have none. §

Historic Deerfield owns an extraordinary and rare object, an elegant chocolate pot made by the Boston silversmith Zachariah Brigden (1734–1787), crafted ca. 1760 (Fig. 10.2). Like many an aspiring craftsman, Brigden apprenticed with the prominent Boston silversmith Thomas Edwards and later married his master's daughter, Sarah Edwards (often a convenient pathway to prosperity). Designed like a coffeepot, his chocolate pot's tall, cylindrical form has a

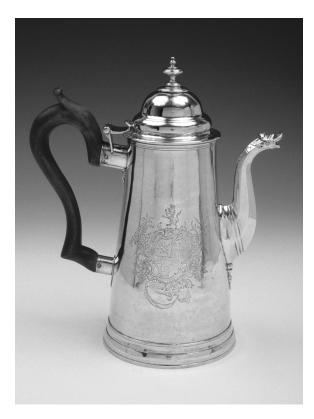


FIGURE 10.2. Chocolate pot, manufactured ca. 1760 by Zachariah Brigden (1734–1787), Boston, Massachusetts. Courtesy of the Historic Deerfield, Deerfield, MA. (Used with permission.) (See color insert.)

domed lid with a removable finial for the insertion of a chocolate mill or stirring rod. The attachment of the spout to the body of the pot appears to be slightly higher than in a corresponding coffeepot, possibly to prevent the heavy chocolate solids from pouring out. Brigden's piece is a late example of the form: Most of the other surviving Boston silver pots were created in the first two decades of the 18th century.

The arms engraved on the Brigden pot's body are those of the Thompson family impaling the arms of De(e)ring (Fig. 10.3). This type of heraldic device commemorated a marriage—the merger of two families. A similar Brigden chocolate pot, owned by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is engraved with the arms of the Storer family and was owned by Ebenezer Storer. Brigden and Storer were brothers-in-law: Brigden married Sarah Edwards, while Storer married her sister, Mary Edwards [34].

#### NEW YORK SILVER CHOCOLATE POTS

New York-made examples of chocolate pots are also rare. The Mead Art Museum of Amherst College owns an example marked by the New York silversmith Ephraim Brasher (1744–1810), but unfortunately it does not retain any provenance [35]. The most notable New York silver chocolate pot was commissioned by



FIGURE 10.3. Chocolate pot, Manufactured ca. 1760 by Zachariah Brigden. Object shows detail of the Thompson family arms impaling the De(e)ring family. Courtesy of Historic Deerfield, Deerfield, MA. (Used with permission.)

Robert Livingston, Jr. (1708-1790), third and last Lord of Livingston Manor, and his wife, Mary Thong Livingston (1711–1765), whom he married in 1731. Robert Livingston was a member of the New York House of Assembly from 1737 to 1759. In 1749, he succeeded his father as lord of Livingston Manor, a grant of 160,000 acres in the area of Dutchess and Columbia counties, New York, along the east bank of the Hudson River. The Livingstons moved in the most elite circles in colonial New York society. Robert's brother William served as Governor of New Jersey, and his brother Philip was a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Made around 1760 by Thomas Hammersley (active 1756-1769) of New York, the piece features a tucked-in base, a more conservative and old-fashioned design than that of contemporaneous examples made by Zachariah Brigden. Hammersley's chocolate pot was lavishly engraved with the arms, crest, and motto of the Livingston family, Spero Meliora (I Hope for Better Things) [36].

In the early 19th century, silver pear-shaped jugs—now commonly referred to as hot-water jugs may have served double duty as chocolate pots. The earlier form of chocolate pots with an aperture for the insertion of a chocolate mill disappeared from manufacture in American silver. Frederick Marquand (1799-1882), a silversmith actively working in New York from 1824 to 1838, produced a pear-shaped chocolate pot or jug for Dr. Valentine Mott, a prominent New York surgeon known for his bold and original surgical procedures (Fig. 10.4) [37]. In appreciation for the surgeon's skills, the piece is engraved, "Presented to/ Dr Valentine Mott/ by Mary Williams at/ the request of her late sister / Jane, as a token of their / mutual regard/ 1827." Fashioned as a large and elegant jug on three claw and ball feet, the pot is decorated with elegant chased and floral repoussé work on the body, lid, and spout. In 1827, Mott successfully tied the common iliac artery for an aneurism of the external iliac, and the patient survived [38].

#### FOREIGN VISITORS, THOMAS JEFFERSON, AND CHOCOLATE

While Boston and New York silver chocolate pots are known, examples made in other regional centers have received less attention. Chocolate drinking in the American South proved extremely popular, as evidenced by comments from visitors. The journal of William Byrd (1674–1744) of Westover, Virginia, is filled with numerous references to drinking chocolate; he recorded that he drank chocolate for breakfast about once every three weeks from February 1709 through September 1712 [39]. London traveler John F. D. Smyth Stuart (1745–1814) visited Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1770 and recorded what passed for a popular Virginia breakfast. He observed that:

cold turkey, cold meat, fried hominy, toast and cyder, ham, bread, and butter, tea, coffee, or chocolate, which last, however, is seldom tasted but by the Woman [sic]. [40]

Thomas Jefferson, who was a strong proponent of the beverage in America, owned an extraordinary example of a chocolate pot. Jefferson preached the virtues of chocolate in a letter to his rival John Adams, writing that:

The superiority of chocolate, both for health and nourishment, will soon give it the preference over tea and coffee in America, which it has in Spain. [41]

Jefferson probably experienced chocolate first in his native Virginia, but his tenure as American minister to France undoubtedly shaped his culinary tastes.

While in France, Thomas Jefferson traveled south examining the architecture, vineyards, and agricultural methods of the local region. Jefferson was taken with the Maison Carrée, a Roman temple, as well as an excavated antiquity from the site—a bronze ewer or askos on view in the Cabinet of Antiquities at Nîmes (Nismes). The vessel had been found at the Maison Carrée site and was inspired by wine jugs or wine skins created from animal bladders. Jefferson so admired the form that he had a mahogany model created in 1787. After returning to the United States,



FIGURE 10.4. Chocolate pot in the form of a Roman askos, manufactured in 1801 by Anthony Simmons and Samuel Alexander, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Source: Courtesy of Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Charlottesville, VA. (Used with permission.) (See color insert.)

Jefferson commissioned Philadelphia silversmiths Anthony Simmons (d. 1808) and Samuel Alexander (d. 1847) to create a silver version of the *askos* in 1801 (Fig. 10.4) [42–44]. But instead of using it to serve wine, Jefferson's silver *askos* was used by the family for serving chocolate. A family letter suggests that they called this unusually shaped vessel "the duck," and that it functioned as the family's "silver chocolate-pot" [45, 46].

Usually chocolate was stirred up until the point of serving into cups. Because Jefferson's chocolate pot did not permit the insertion of a chocolate mill for stirring, that process was probably done in the kitchen immediately before pouring into the *askos*. The unusual shape of the *askos*, while fashionable and exotic, may have meant that the chocolate served at Monticello was cool and oily from separation that occurred on the long trip from the kitchen to the Tea Room.

#### BASE METAL CHOCOLATE POTS

The majority of Americans prepared and served their morning draught of chocolate in a pot composed of a more humble material. In 1675, John Worlidge advised that chocolate must be "mixed in a deep pot of Tin, copper, or stone, with a cover with a hole in the middle of it, for the handle of the mill to come out at, or without a cover" [47]. Specialized forms for the preparation of chocolate often appear in early American documents throughout the 18th century. For example, the 1775 probate inventory of architect Peter Harrison listed "1 Copper chocolate pot" valued at 16 shillings in his estate [48, 49]. Copper, brass, and tinned sheet iron chocolate pots appear far more frequently than their silver counterparts, although marked examples or ones with American histories of owner-



FIGURE 10.5. Chocolate pot, manufacturer unknown, made in either the Netherlands or possibly New York in 1703. Courtesy of the Winterthur Library and Museum, Winterthur, DE. (Used with permission.)

ship are still extremely rare. Unlike silver, copper and brass objects are often unmarked and anonymous (see Chapter 54).

The Winterthur Museum owns an initialed and dated "VR/ 1703" copper pot, which probably hails from Holland but may also have been made in New York (Fig. 10.5) [50]. The cylindrical, straightsided form with its folded foot has a removable stepped lid with a swinging cover hiding the hole for the chocolate mill. The handle of wrought iron and turned wood is attached to the copper pot by means of several brass rivets. Historic Deerfield recently acquired a later, unmarked copper example with its original lid and attached iron handle. All of these pots are lined with a layer of molten tin, intended to reduce any metallic taste to the chocolate and to prevent toxins leaching from the copper (Fig. 10.6). Without family histories or makers' marks, these copper and brass chocolate pots are difficult to date; but according to Christopher Fox, Curator of Fort Ticonderoga, most of these pear-shaped or bellied examples with flared bases date to the third quarter of the 18th century.<sup>10</sup> In addition, determining the country of manufacture for these pieces presents challenges as many of them could be Dutch, English, or French imports.

One known American manufacturer of chocolate pots was Benjamin Harbeson (d. 1809), a Philadelphia coppersmith. Evidence from his 1764 broadside indicates that he made a wide variety of copper wares "at the Golden Tea Kettle in Market Street," including tea kettles, coffee pots, stills, saucepans, and chocolate pots (Fig. 10.7). His elaborately engraved broadside features a chocolate pot on the upper left-hand side above a still, but no marked examples of chocolate pots are known to survive from his shop.



FIGURE 10.6. Chocolate pot, manufacturer unknown, made possibly in the Netherlands ca. 1750-1775. Courtesy of Historic Deerfield, Deerfield, MA. (Used with permission.) (See color insert.)



FIGURE 10.7. Broadside engraved by Henry Dawkins (ca. 1764) for Benjamin Harbeson, coppersmith of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Courtesy of the Winterthur Library and Museum, Winterthur, DE. (Used with permission.)

Unlike their silver counterparts, base metal chocolate pots intended for use with chocolate mills continued to be produced well into the 19th century. F. A. Walker and Company's Illustrated Catalogue of Useful and Ornamental Goods, published in Boston, ca. 1872–1873, depicts tinned sheet iron "Chocolate Pots, to use with a Muddler" in six different sizes. The catalogue also sold similar chocolate pots without an aperture [51].

The ability to purchase chocolate did not necessarily signify that the purchaser used specialized equipment to prepare it. Several historical references document the use of other kitchenware for making chocolate. An article in the Pennsylvania Gazette about an attempted murder case (see Chapter 21) revealed that a "skillet" was used to prepare chocolate. In 1735, Mr. Humphrey Scarlet, his wife, and two children of Boston accused their two slaves, "a Man named Yaw, and a Boy named Caesar," of poisoning them. Arsenic or "ratsbane" had been placed in their "Skillet of Chocolate which they eat for Breakfast" [52]. Additionally, a 1755 French cookery manual refers to chocolate made in a coffeepot:

Vous mettez autant tablettes de chocolat que de tasses d'eau dans une caffetiere . . . [Put as many tablets of chocolate as cups of water in a coffeepot]. [53]

Skillets and coffee pots for preparing chocolate were both mentioned in Lydia Childs's The American Frugal Housewife, published in Boston in 1832:

Many people boil chocolate in a coffee-pot; but I think it is better to boil it in a skillet, or something open. [54]

#### CERAMIC CHOCOLATE VESSELS

Ceramic chocolate pots are not as easily identifiable or as frequently encountered as their metalware counterparts. These ceramic vessels may have been less successful than metal ones for a variety of reasons. The ceramic body did not keep the chocolate from cooling and thickening; the chocolate pot might have been too big for it to be kept over a spirit lamp; and pottery or porcelain bodies may not have been sturdy enough for vigorous stirring and frothing of the chocolate [55]. Very few ceramic examples are fitted with a hole for the insertion of a chocolate mill, stirring rod, or molinet [56, 57]. Undoubtedly ceramic coffeepots served double duty for chocolate, although without a lid, stirring the chocolate must have made a mess.

One possible American-owned ceramic chocolate pot is located at Montpelier, the reconstructed home of General Henry Knox (1750-1806), built in Thomaston, Maine. Knox—like several of his military comrades—received gifts of Chinese export porcelain from Samuel Shaw (1754–1794). During the American Revolution, Shaw had been the aide-de-camp to Knox and was a close friend of the family. In 1789, Shaw, then American Consul to Canton, purchased sets of china for fellow members of the Society of the Cincinnati, a fraternal organization of French and American Revolutionary War officers. Each piece was decorated with an insignia of the Society and the entwined initials of the recipient. Knox and his wife, Lucy, received porcelain complete for the service of tea, coffee, and chocolate. An inventory of the contents of the box that accompanied Shaw's letter to Knox includes a listing for a "chocolate pot [and stand]" as well as "6 chocolate bowls covers and dishes" [58]. Of the entire service only two serving vessels—the chocolate pot and the coffeepot-along with two double-handled cups survive [59]. 11 The chocolate pot at Montpelier is cylindrical in form with a domed lid and a pistol grip handle perpendicular to its spout. This pot does not possess a large hole in the center of its lid, but instead has two sets of paired holes. One set is drilled along the edge of the lid and another at the neck of the pot. These holes may have enabled a hinged metal mount to be added to lift the lid [60].<sup>12</sup>

#### CERAMIC CHOCOLATE CUPS AND SAUCERS

When tea, coffee, and chocolate were introduced into Europe, there were no serving vessels specifically associated with their use. European earthenware and metal jugs, tankards, and mugs proved unsuitable for sipping these hot and costly beverages brewed in small quantities [61]. Given that metals conduct heat efficiently and often taint the taste of beverages, ceramic vessels were the preferred forms for drinking tea, coffee, and chocolate. Porcelain vessels, and eventually their less expensive pottery counterparts, soon filled the void. Porcelain had the advantage of being lightweight, thinly potted, translucent, and heat resistant, making it the perfect material for brewing and serving these exotic beverages [62].

In the early 18th century, teacups were usually small, broad forms without handles. By the 1730s teacups began to have the option of added handles, although handleless cups continued to be popular well into the 19th century. Coffee cups, on the other hand, developed as U-shaped beaker forms and by the 1730s most had handles [63]. 13 As tea and coffee became cheaper in the early 19th century, both forms became larger in size.

Identifying a specific ceramic vessel for drinking chocolate is difficult, since new fashions for drinking the beverage continually evolved over time. Chocolate was first served in tall, handless beakers with slightly flared lips. 14 Chocolate was supposed to be served with a frothy, foamy head: this may explain why these ceramic cups were taller. Early 18th century chocolate cups also had the option of a saucer and lid, used to keep the beverage warm [64]. English sale records of private trade goods from 1706 mention "12 Japan chocolat [sic] cups, covers and saucers" [65]. These early chocolate cups did not have handles.

Beyond fashion, handleless cups benefited merchants who would profit from compact packing and less breakage. But as early as 1712, the shipping documents of the English East India Company record the addition of chocolate cups with handles. The supercargo or business agent of the ship Loyal Blisse was instructed to purchase "Handle Chocolatetts [sic], upright of these two sorts Twenty Thousand Vizt. of the biggest blue and white of different Flowers Ten thousand, Ditto the smaller Sort with brown edges Ten Thousand" [66]. In 1729, the Dutch East India Company archives indicate that a full tea set should consist of a teapot and stand, milk jug and stand, slop bowl, sugar bowl with lid and stand, twelve tea bowls and saucers, six chocolate cups with handles and six without. In the China trade, chocolate cups and saucers were sold as parts of tea services-never separately [67]. The Dutch East India Company sent drawings to Canton, China, in 1758, to instruct the Chinese potters on how to design a chocolate cup. These rough sketches depict four different versions of chocolate cups with single handles. All have a basic U-shaped outline with variations in the style of handles featuring either a loop or scallop design [68].15

While it was acceptable to drink chocolate from cups both with and without handles until the mid-18th century, Christiaan Jörg's research has shown that after the 1760s, Chinese export porcelain chocolate cups were more likely to have handles [69]. By the late 18th and early 19th centuries, British pottery manufacturers used pattern books to sell their range of wares to an international clientele of merchants. The pattern books of the Castleford Pottery (1796), James and Charles Whitehead Pottery (1798), the Don Pottery (1807), and the Leeds Pottery (1814) all record the availability of chocolate cups.  $^{1\dot{6}}$  These forms consistently have a single handle attached to a cylindrical can-shaped cup or a U-shaped cup. Strangely, none of these pattern books identify a separate coffee cup. Despite the existence of a specific chocolate cup, certainly tea and coffee cups could have served chocolate as well.

References to sale of chocolate-related ceramics abound in early American newspapers and account books. Josiah Blakeley of Hartford, Connecticut, advertised a wide range of ceramics including "cream color'd Coffee and Chocolate, Do [cups and saucers]" in the September 1, 1778, issue of the Connecticut Courant [70]. "Cream color'd" referred to English leadglazed creamware, a type of durable pottery popular in the late 18th century. These chocolate cups may have resembled an example in the Historic Deerfield collection (Fig. 10.8). Connecticut River Valley merchants' invoice books of the 1770s and 1780s include numerous references to "chocolate bowls," and "chocolate bowls and saucers" [71]. The range of pottery types being sold to Connecticut River Valley residents included creamware, agate ware, and blackware examples.



FIGURE 10.8. Chocolate cup and saucer. Staffordshire or possibly Yorkshire, England, ca. 1770. Courtesy of Historic Deerfield, Deerfield, MA. (Used with permission.) (See color insert.)

George and Martha Washington were welldocumented lovers of chocolate. Martha Washington apparently enjoyed chocolate, but also drank an infusion of cocoa shells in water similar in color and flavor to coffee. In 1789, President Washington wrote to his agent, Clement Biddle: "She will . . . thank you to get 20 lb. of the shells of Cocoa nuts, if they can be had of the Chocolate makers" [72]. The use of cocoa shells at Mount Vernon further appears in a letter by Burges Ball, who wrote: "I wd. take the liberty of requesting you'll be so good as to procure & send me 2 or 3 Bush: of the Chocolate Shell, such as we're frequently drank Chocolate of at Mt. Vernon, as my Wife thinks it agreed with her better than any other Breakfast" [73].

The Washingtons enjoyed tea, coffee, and chocolate in an imported gold and white "Save" (Sèvres) service purchased for them by the Count de Moustier in France in 1778 and 1790 (Fig. 10.9). All of the china was white with gold rims, though not all of the pieces were made at the Sèvres Factory. Surviving examples reveal that Moustier supplemented a basic Sèvres dinner and dessert service with pieces from other French factories. The invoice from the 1790 bill of sale survives and lists "12 Chocolate cups & saucers" [74]. The chocolate cups are barely different from the coffee cups—just slightly taller and larger in capacity.

Mount Vernon also retains a set of Chinese export porcelain teaware, a gift from the Dutch merchant Andreas Everardus van Braam Houckgeest (1739-1801) in 1796. Van Braam (as he was called) created a mercantile fortune as an agent in the Dutch East India Company. Intending to make America his new home, Van Braam brought with him a variety of Chinese objects including "A Box of China for Lady Washington." The porcelain service was designed especially for Martha Washington, ornamented with her initials within a central gold sunburst design. A border of a chain of unbroken links containing the names of all of the then 15 states decorates the outside rim, and the motto DECUS ET TUTAMEN AB ILLO (Our



FIGURE 10.9. Chocolate cup (not mug), hard-paste porcelain with gilding. Possibly Sèvres Factory, Sèvres, France, ca. 1775. Source: Mount Vernon Porcelain Collection. Courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, Mount Vernon, VA. (Used with permission.)



FIGURE 10.10. Chocolate cup with cover and saucer, manufacturer unknown, made in Jingdezhen, China, ca. 1795. Source: Mount Vernon Porcelain Collection. Courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, Mount Vernon, VA. (Used with permission.) (See color insert.)

Union is our Glory, and our Defense against Him) is emblazoned on a ribbon [75]. Very few pieces of this service survive to the present day; those that do include two-handled covered cups with saucers, plates, and a sugar bowl (Fig. 10.10). It has long been debated whether this vessel served tea, hot caudle (a drink made with "ale" or "wine" thickened with bread),

or chocolate [76, 77]. Given the reference to Henry Knox receiving "six chocolate bowls covers and dishes" as a gift from Samuel Shaw, it is entirely possible that Martha Washington's example represents that form.

From documented sources we know that the British and their American colonists were far less rigid and specialized when serving chocolate, using everything from porringers to mugs. The same 1735 Pennsylvania Gazette article about the attempted poisoning of Humphrey Scarlet and his family included a reference on how the chocolate containing the poison was served. Another slave in the family also fell ill when she "lick'd her Master's Porringer after he had been to Breakfast" [78]. Porringers were multipurpose serving vessels, usually composed of pewter, silver, or pottery and fashioned as a small bowl with a tab handle. While porringers quickly went out of style in England, Americans retained the useful form to eat soups, stews, and pottages well into the 19th century. The Reverend Thomas Prince (1687-1758), minister of Old South Church in Boston, also once mentioned drinking chocolate using a porringer. He wrote: "At  $6\frac{1}{2}$  go to Family Prayer & only the porringer of Chocolate for Breakfast" [79].

Ceramic vessels may have been the most common, but they were not the only way to serve chocolate. Peter Faniel (1700–1742/3), reputed to be the wealthiest man in Boston at the time of his death in 1742/3, served the beverage in "6 lignum vitae chocolate cups lin'd with silver" [80].

An undated Carrington Bowles print illustrates another alternative way to consume chocolate. Kitty is a young, beautiful woman—perhaps a prostitute—who has managed to find a wealthy Jewish man to support her in style. Dressed in her loose robe and he in his banyan and cap, they receive an early morning visit from a jeweler. Kitty points toward her new earrings and her lover reaches into his pocket to pay for them. A servant completes the scene of early morning wealth and luxury by bearing a tray with a chocolate pot with a mill and a pair of pottery mugs. The mugs look like they are painted English delftware or tin-glazed earthenware.

#### **CHOCOLATE STANDS**

The chocolate or trembleuse stand, also called a *mancerina* in Mexico, is shaped in the form of a large shell or leaf with an attached cup holder that prevents trembling hands from spilling the contents (Fig. 10.11). This form related to the use of chocolate as nourishment for the aged or the ill, and provided an additional surface for holding a roll or wafer. Although available in silver and porcelain, chocolate stands appear frequently in English pottery pattern books of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The form seems to be rare or nonexistent in the American market and may not have been imported, as no examples have appeared



FIGURE 10.11. Chocolate stand (trembluese), manufacturer unknown, hard-paste porcelain with overglaze enamels and gilding, made in Jingdezhen, China, ca. 1740–1750. Courtesy of Historic Deerfield, Deerfield, MA. (Used with permission.) (See color insert.)

with American histories of ownership or within documented shipments of ceramics to the North American continent.

Chocolate stands achieved greatest popularity in the predominantly Roman Catholic countries of Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Mexico—all of which indulged in the consumption of chocolate, especially during religious fasts. The term *mancerina* derives from the 23rd viceroy of Mexico, Antonio Sebastian de Toledo, the Marqués de Mancera (served in office 1664–1673), who reportedly had palsy and popularized the all-in-one shape. The earliest known chocolate stands were manufactured in Spain at the Alcora faience (tin-glazed earthenware) factory in the second quarter of the 18th century [81].<sup>17</sup>

## Chocolate Drinking in the 19th century

The year 1828 marked the beginning of the modern era of chocolate making. The Dutch chemist Coenraad van Houten patented the process to manufacture a new kind of powdered chocolate with a low fat content. He had been experimenting in his factory to find a better way to make chocolate rather than boiling and skimming off the cocoa butter. His machine reduced the cocoa fat content from 53 percent to 28 percent fat; the resulting cake could be ground into a powder. He also added alkaline salts to make the chocolate darker and milder-often called Dutched chocolate. Van Houten's invention of the defatting process made drinking chocolate lighter and easier to mix with liquids. The full effect of Van Houten's innovations took many years to be fully utilized, one problem being the lack of a market for the resulting cocoa butter [82]. Eventually this commodity found great use in confectionery chocolate as well as in the cosmetics industry (see Chapter 46).

In the first half of the 19th century, American consumers bypassed chocolate in favor of cheaper teas and coffee for their morning beverage. Chocolate was often relegated to children or as a nutritional supplement for the infirm. But in the late 19th century, chocolate experienced a resurgence in popularity. As sales of lighter and easy to mix chocolate powders expanded, the demand for fashionable ceramics also increased. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, imported and domestic-made chocolate pots were frequently designed as tall, cylindrical forms with a short spout or snip. Given the new formulation for chocolate, no longer was there any need for a stirring rod or chocolate mill. Trade catalogues testify to the large numbers of porcelain chocolate pots and cups and saucers for sale; often companies marketed chocolate sets as gifts. Higgins & Seiter of New York sold chocolate sets of Austrian china for \$23.45. Each piece was decorated with a "celebrated court beauty," and the set included one tray, one chocolate jug, and six chocolate cups and saucers, all displayed in a white leatherette, satin-lined case [83]. Although the price of chocolate plummeted, making it affordable to a mass audience, drinking chocolate still remained a fashionable and elite social custom well into the 20th century.

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### Endnotes

- In this period a day's wage in Massachusetts currency varied from two shillings (lawful currency) to three shillings, nine pence (new tenor); therefore making a pound of chocolate slightly less than one week's wages for a laborer.
- A notable exception was the kitchen staff of the Royal Governor Lord Botetourt in Williamsburg, Virginia, who roasted and ground cacao.

- A wafer can be seen in the chocolate cups pictured in William Hogarth's Marriage à la Mode IV: The Countess's Levée, ca. 1743/44, The National Gallery, London.
- 4. Various terms are given to this form. They include chocolate mill, stirring rod, muddler, whisk, molinet, moulinet, moussoir, and molinillo.
- 5. A variety of chocolate mills are illustrated in Pinto [23], p. 294, plate 312. Although G. Bernard Hughes in his article "Silver Pots for Chocolate," refers to green bottle glass chocolate mills, Jane Spillman, Curator of American Glass at the Corning Museum of Glass, has never encountered one. Correspondence with the author, February 12, 2007.
- 6. Virtually no French examples of chocolatiéres before 1700 have survived, but the form appears in drawings of Louis XIV's silver commissioned by the King of Sweden at the beginning of the 18th century.
- 7. The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston currently owns four examples of Boston-made, silver chocolate pots: one by Edward Webb (museum number 1993.61), two by John Coney (museum numbers 29.1091 and 1976.771), and one by Zachariah Brigden (museum number 56.676). Yale University Art Gallery owns one example by Edward Winslow (1944.71). Historic Deerfield, Incorporated owns one example by Zachariah Brigden (museum number 75.463). The Metropolitan Museum in New York owns one example by Edward Winslow (museum number 33.120.221). An example by Peter Oliver owned by Mr. and Mrs. Walter M. Jeffords was sold at Sotheby's New York on October 29, 2004 and is now in a private collection.
- 8. The lack of interior strainers and handles perpendicular to their spouts do not distinguish coffeepots from chocolate pots.
- 9. Now in a private collection.
- Correspondence with Christopher Fox, September 15, 2005.
- 11. The coffeepot is located in the Yale University Art Gallery. The two-handled cups are more likely remnants of the "24 coffee [cups], 2 handles, do [saucers]" listed on the inventory.
- 12. Another similarly shaped chocolate pot exists at the New York Historical Society and was part of a service that Samuel Shaw ordered for himself (1972.11a). This pot also shares the same unexplained two sets of paired holes as Knox's example.
- 13. According to a lecture by Carl Crossman, "Taste for the Exotic: Tea, Coffee, and Chocolate Wares," New York Ceramics Fair, January 19, 2007, coffee was also served in handleless shallow bowls in the first half of the 18th century.
- 14. Tall, handleless beakers are shown in Robert Bonnard's Un Cavelier et une Dame Beuvant du Chocolat (Cavalier and Lady Drinking Chocolate), ca. 1690–1710; Still Life of Chocolate Service by Luis Melendez (1716–1780),

- Spanish, oil on canvas, collection of the Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain.
- 15. The seven sheets of drawings are located in the State Archives of The Hague.
- 16. For more information, see The Castleford Pottery Pattern Book (Wakefield, England: EP Publishing, 1973); James & Chas. Whitehead Manufacturers, Designs of Sundry Articles of Earthenware (Bletchley, England: D. B. Drakard, 1971); Don Pottery Pattern Book, reprint of 1807 edition (Doncaster, England: Doncaster Library, 1983); and Donald C. Towner, The Leeds Pottery (London, England: Cory, Adams & Mackay, 1963).
- 17. A silver chocolate stand in the shape of a leaf is in the collection of Isaac Backal, Mexico City, Mexico.

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