

# 23

## *Chocolate Production and Uses in 17th and 18th Century North America*

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### *Introduction*

Legends when told by historians become history. The success and longevity of Baker's Chocolate® has spawned an enduring folklore repeated again and again by historians, food writers, and marketing departments. Namely, that the first chocolate in North America was produced in Dorchester, Massachusetts, by John Hannon and Dr. James Baker in 1765 (even though the current Baker's Chocolate logo seems to refute this date by printing the year "1780" on every box). As we shall see, Americans had been making chocolate for at least a century prior to 1765. But, because of the dominance of the Walter Baker Chocolate Company throughout the 19th century, and the iconic nature of Baker's Chocolate brand today, this claim has gone largely unchallenged. The 17th and 18th century North American chocolate experience has been ignored by historians who have focused their attention almost exclusively on Latin America and Europe. And, the other North American chocolate manufacturers (Table 23.1) besides Baker and Hannon, have remained anonymous to historians—until now.

The history of cocoa beans and chocolate in North America is more than 300 years old. The oldest record of North Americans trading in cocoa beans is found in the diary of Massachusetts Bay's mint-master John Hull. In the winter of 1667–1668, he noted the loss of "our ship *Providence* . . . cast away on the French shore . . . [carrying] . . . cocoa" [1]. One of the earliest records of chocolate in North America (New England region) dates to 1670 when Dorothy Jones and Jane Barnard were given approval to serve "Coffee and Chucaletto" in houses of "publique Entertainment" by the selectmen of Boston [2]. Did Jones and Barnard

manufacture the chocolate themselves or did they import it? The answer is unclear. The oldest British customs record showing cocoa arriving in America reads: "1682 . . . Jamaica . . . to . . . Boston" [3]. Was this the first shipment? Perhaps. There may be earlier examples yet to be discovered. Shipping records from the Colonial period are filled with gaps measured in years. Surviving Boston import records, for example, only begin in 1686 [4]. Was the first parcel of cocoa grown in Jamaica or was it pirated from the Spanish Main? Was the first cocoa even delivered on a British ship? The probability is that we will never know.

What is known, however, is the following.

Chocolate is more American than apple pie. It was created in the New World after the Spanish conquest of Mexico. While it combined ingredients from

*Table 23.1* Eighteenth Century North American Chocolate Makers

Location	Name	Religion	Date	Source
New Haven, CT	Nathaniel Jocelin		October 26, 1770	<i>Connecticut Journal</i>
Danvers, MA	Amos Trask		September 18, 1771	Walter Baker, <i>Cocoa and Chocolate</i> , 1917, p. 35
Boston, MA	Jonas Welch		January 1, 1770	Crooked & Narrow St. of Boston
Boston, MA	Caleb Davis		January 1, 1776	John W. Tyler, <i>Smugglers and Patriots</i> , p. 263
Boston, MA	Edward Romney		January 1, 1789	Crooked & Narrow St. of Boston
Boston, MA	John Brown/Browne		1702–1771	Crooked & Narrow St. of Boston
Boston, MA	John Goldsmith		1751–1781	Crooked & Narrow St. of Boston
Milton, MA	John Hannon		1768–1777	James Baker Business Records
Boston, MA	Joseph Palmer and Richard Cranch		March 12, 1751	<i>Boston Gazette</i>
Boston, MA	James Lubbock		April 25, 1728	Crooked & Narrow St. of Boston
Boston, MA	Joseph Mann		March 6, 1769	<i>Boston Post Boy</i>
Dorchester, MA	Dr. James Baker		May 17, 1771	James Baker Business Records
Boston, MA	Newark Jackson		February 26, 1740	<i>New England Weekly Journal</i>
Boston, MA	John Merrett		February 9, 1736	<i>Boston Evening Post</i>
Boston, MA	Samuel Watts		April 23, 1751	<i>Boston Gazette</i>
Boston, MA	Israel Eaton		December 20, 1750	<i>Boston News-Letter</i>
Boston, MA	Sam		June 2, 1763	<i>Boston News-Letter</i>
Charlestown, MA	Samuel Dowse		October 10, 1763	<i>Boston Gazette, and Country Journal</i>
Boston, MA	Richard Floyd		April 7, 1763	<i>Boston News-Letter and New-England Chronicle</i>
Boston, MA	Henry Snow		November 30, 1767	<i>Boston Gazette, and Country Journal</i>
Boston, MA	Richard Catton		March 27, 1769	<i>Boston Evening Post</i>
Boston, MA	James Cooke		April 79, 1770	<i>Boston Gazette, and Country Journal</i>
Boston, MA	Mr. Feacham		March 25, 1771	<i>Boston Evening Post</i>
Boston, MA	George Leonard		March 11, 1771	<i>Boston Gazette, and Country Journal</i>
Boston, MA	Benjamin Leigh		May 20, 1771	<i>Boston Post Boy</i>
Boston, MA	Deacon Davis		December 21, 1772	<i>Boston Evening Post</i>
Boston, MA	George Fechem		September 2, 1776	<i>Boston Gazette, and Country Journal</i>
Boston, MA	John Brewster		February 20, 1749	<i>Boston Evening Post</i>
Salem, MA	A Gentleman		September 5, 1737	<i>Boston Gazette</i>
Annapolis, MD	Issac Narvarro	Jewish	1748–1749	J. R. Marcus, <i>The American Colonial Jew</i> , 1970, p. 538
New York, NY	Moses Gomez	Jewish	January 1, 1702	J. R. Marcus, <i>The American Colonial Jew</i> , 1970, p. 673
New York, NY	Peter Low		November 23, 1769	<i>New York Gazette and Weekly Post Boy</i>
New York, NY	Abraham Wagg	Jewish	January 1, 1770	J. R. Marcus, <i>The American Colonial Jew</i> , 1970, p. 1296
New York, NY	Peter Swigart		November 18, 1758	<i>New York Gazette</i>
New York, NY	Jacob Louzada	Jewish	1710–1729	myohiovoyager.net/~wfkfisher/Luzadder.html
New York, NY	Joseph Pinto	Jewish	1750–1760	J. R. Marcus, <i>The American Colonial Jew</i> , 1970, p. 673
New York, NY	Aaron Louzada	Jewish	1710–1764	J. R. Marcus, <i>The American Colonial Jew</i> , 1970, p. 673
Philadelphia, PA	John Dorsey	Quaker	January 1, 1765	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette/Quaker Encyclopedia</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Edward Loudon		January 1, 1785	<i>Philadelphia City Directory</i>
Philadelphia, PA	William Young	Quaker?	January 7, 1762	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette/Quaker Encyclopedia</i>
Philadelphia, PA	William Smith	Quaker	November 17, 1763	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette/Quaker Encyclopedia</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Dr. John Bard		1743–1745	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	James Humphreys	Quaker?	1748–1750	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette/Quaker Encyclopedia</i>

*Table 23.1 Continued*

Location	Name	Religion	Date	Source
Philadelphia, PA	Glover Hunt		1752–1760	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Benjamin Jackson		1756–1769	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Capt Jonathon Crathorne		1760–1767	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	George Rankin		1763–1764	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Mary Crathorn		1767–1769	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	William Norton	Quaker	1769–1776	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette/Quaker Encyclopedia</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Thomas White	Quaker?	February 12, 1752	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette/Quaker Encyclopedia</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Thomas Roker		February 14, 1776	<i>February 14, Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Thomas Hart	Quaker	February 19, 1745	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette/Quaker Encyclopedia</i>
Philadelphia, PA	A likely Negro		February 19, 1752	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Samuel Garrigues	Quaker	February 8, 1775	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette/Quaker Encyclopedia</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Roger Hiffernan		March 25, 1755	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Robert Iberson	Quaker	March 26, 1754	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette/Quaker Encyclopedia</i>
Philadelphia, PA	George Justice	Quaker	March 3, 1768	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette/Quaker Encyclopedia</i>
Philadelphia, PA	John Browne		March 8, 1764	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Dick		April 2, 1752	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	John Maes		April 28, 1743	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	Jacob Cox		June 9, 1763	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Philadelphia, PA	William Richards		August 29, 1771	<i>Pennsylvania Gazette</i>
Newport, RI	Casey Family/Aaron Lopez		1750–1782	J. R. Marcus, <i>The American Colonial Jew</i> , 1970, p. 673
Newport, RI	Prince Updike/Aaron Lopez	Jewish	1750–1782	J. R. Marcus, <i>The American Colonial Jew</i> , 1970, p. 673
Providence, RI	Tillinghast and Holroyd		April 8, 1775	<i>Providence Gazette and Country Journal</i>
Providence, RI	Daniel Torres	Jewish	January 1, 1750	J. R. Marcus, <i>The American Colonial Jew</i> , 1970, p. 673
Providence, RI	Humphrey Palmer and William Wheat		July 9, 1774	<i>Providence Gazette and Country Journal</i>
Providence, RI	Obadiah Brown		January 1, 1752	M. Thompson, <i>Moses Brown</i> , 1962, p. 11–12
Charleston, SC	Angelo Santi		February 4, 1795	<i>City Gazette and Daily Advertiser</i>

the Old World and the New, it was new to both. Neither exclusively Spanish nor Aztec, chocolate was a Creole (i.e., American, in the larger sense) invention. It was available to a greater variety of people and at cheaper prices than in Europe. This was because the raw ingredient, cocoa, was available without the high transportation costs or import duties experienced by the Europeans. Furthermore, most chocolate in North America was mass produced for an American market on machines that were invented and built in America. There were no monopolies or exclusive manufacturing agreements in North America as there were in Europe. American chocolate manufacturers were concentrated in four major production centers: Boston, Newport

(Rhode Island), New York City, and Philadelphia. Chocolate makers in these cities were the exclusive suppliers of the North American market. Practically no chocolate came from Britain or anywhere else. We also know that chocolate was accepted along with coffee and tea as a staple and was considered a necessity. While the recipes were ostensibly European, American chocolate practices reflected a different experience. After the American Revolution, the surviving Boston chocolate makers consolidated their dominance of the infant industry. Their surnames became iconic and these icons evolved into brands. Likewise, chocolate as a confection became more available as the confectioners trade was established in the cities.

## *Food of the Gods and Turmoil in the Caribbean*

Everything chocolate begins with the seeds of cacao. Historical literature is expansive on the origins of cacao and its Mesoamerican roots. Humans have been exploiting the cacao fruit and its seeds for food for at least 3000 years. Carl Linnaeus, the 18th century scientist labeled it *Theobroma cacao*—*food of the gods*. Once fermented and dried, the seeds from the fruit are referred to as *cocoa*. Eighteenth century scientists called it the “chocolate nut tree” [5]. Cocoa beans were called “chocolate nuts” or “cocoa nuts” or simply “cocoa” until the 19th century.

Eighteenth century cocoa was typically referred to by its port of origin. Maricel Presilla has written:

*European and Latin [and North] American connoisseurs knew a lot about the origin of the chocolate. They did not generally use the names criollo or foretero, but they identified most cacao by the name of the area in which it was grown. Soconusco and Caracas beans were considered the cream de la cream. The Soconusco came from an area of Chiapas that used to send tribute to Aztec emperors; Caracas came from Venezuelan regions that sent cacao to the port of La Guaira, near the city of Caracas. Equally valued was Maracaibo cacao brought from the foothills of the Venezuelan Andes and the southern environs of Lake Maracaibo and shipped from Maracaibo port. [6]*

American consumers were probably savvier about their chocolate in the 18th century than they are in the modern world. Colonial chocolate makers routinely advertised the geographic sources of their cocoa, much like modern coffee vendors do for their coffee beans. The physician R. Brookes wrote in 1730:

*The Kernels that come to us from the Coast of Caragua, are more oily, and less bitter, than those of the French Islands, and in France and Spain they prefer them to these latter: But in Germany, and the North they have a quite opposite Taste. Several People mix that of Caragua with that of the Islands, half in half, and pretend by this Mixture to make Chocolate better. I believe in the bottom, the difference of Chocolates is not considerable, since they are only obliged to increase or diminish the Proportion of Sugar, according as the Bitterness of the Kernels require it. [7]*

Brookes continued:

*The Kernels of Caragua are flattish, and for Bulk and Figure not unlike our large Beans [probably fava]. Those of St. Domingo, Jamaica, and Cuba are generally larger than those of the Antilloes. The more bulky the Kernal is, and better they have been nourished, the less Waste there is after they have been roasted and cleaned. [8]*

Since most cacao was grown in the Spanish colonies, smuggling by the Americans, Dutch, English, and French was a major component of the supply

network. With Curaçao, a mere 30 miles off the coast of Venezuela, the Dutch were so successful that Caracas cocoa was cheaper in Amsterdam than in Madrid [9]. Throughout the Colonial period, the French supplied their cocoa needs from the islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, also augmented by smuggling Venezuelan cocoa [10]. Dutch interests were not confined to the West Indies. In 1625, to supplement their fur trading activities in the Hudson Valley, they established the colony of New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island with settlers from Curaçao and Surinam. This planted a seed for what became a flourishing trade between New York and the West Indies and the Spanish Main (see Appendix 1) even after the British took New Amsterdam and renamed it New York.

One circular from the British Council of Trade and Plantations concerning Curaçao states the following:

*From the English Plantations upon the mainland the inhabitants of Curaçao have all sort of provisions, as bread, flower, butter cheese pease [sic], rice, beef, pork and corn; from Pennsylvania and New York strong and small beer; from Carolina and New England pitch and tarr [sic]; from the Charibbee Islands [sic] and Jamaica rum, sugar, cotton, ginger, indigo, and tobacco; in return of which our plantations have chiefly cocoa, linens, muslins, silks and other goods for wearing apparel, with great quantity of riggings, sail, canvas, anchors, and other sorts of iron-work, powder and shott, which is never taken notice of by our men at war, when they meet with any sloop from thence. [11]*

*Curaçao loads home for Holland in one year about 50 sail of ships, and most of them are richly laden, and a great part of their loading comes out of the English Plantations, chiefly sugar, cotton, tobacco, indigo and ginger; of their own produce by trade with the Spaniards, cocoa, hides, tobacco, logwood, stockfish wood and mony [sic]. [12]*

Beginning in 1651, the English passed a series of “Navigation Acts” requiring that goods brought to England had to be transported aboard English ships, manned by English sailors, and no foreign (i.e., Dutch) vessels were to conduct coastal trade with England. The effect was to triple English shipping in the last half of the 17th century. The English intended to monopolize the shipping of the major bulk cargoes, such as tobacco, sugar, molasses, and cocoa. Marcus Rediker has written:

*With the passage of the Navigation Act of 1696 and the Board of Trade it established, the English state enlarged its role in the direction of commerce, seeking to tighten imperial controls by regulating and rationalizing trade. These efforts simultaneously helped to defeat the Dutch and to launch England’s “Commercial Revolution.” [13]*

Ranking second only to London in shipbuilding, Boston produced ships at half the cost of London shipyards due to the abundance of high quality wood, and

“built more ships than the rest of the British colonies combined.” By the 1680s, New England vessels represented about half the ships that served the English Caribbean [14]. This New England dominance continued throughout the 18th century with significant impact on where cocoa was delivered and where chocolate was produced. In 1760, a Virginia merchant seeking to export wheat could not find a single Chesapeake sea captain familiar with the New England coast in the winter [15].

Beginning in 1689 and continuing for eight decades, the British and French fought over control of the sea lanes, colonial territory, and predominance in Europe. The British built a navy equal to the size of both the French and Spanish navies combined [16]. The end of the Seven Years War in 1763 resulted in British control of Quebec, the Ohio Valley, and Spanish Florida and acquisition of frontier islands in the Lesser Antilles. The cocoa growing islands of Granada, St. Vincent, Tobago, and Dominica were now in British hands. These islands gave the British new colonies nearly as close to the coast of Venezuela as Dutch Curaçao. As a result, the American chocolate experience changed as cocoa became available from a variety of sources, both legal and illegal.

Because of high transportation costs and excessive import duties on cocoa, European chocolate was both expensive and exclusive. It was a beverage for the elite and demand was relatively low. In 1776, there was only one British chocolate maker [17]. In order to recapture some of the costs of the war, Parliament passed the 1767 Townsend Duties. While most students of American history might be familiar with this law because of an annoying tax on tea, the Act also included “drawbacks” of importation duties for cocoa if re-exported [18]. Parliament also hoped to stimulate production of West Indian cocoa for export to Britain. If that cocoa were re-exported from Britain, then the heavy import duties would be returned (i.e., a “drawback”) thus making it more profitable for both importer and exporter. The British export target was Spain, the main market for cocoa in Europe [19]. In 1728, a London court sentenced John Moor (alias Holland) to transportation to America instead of hanging, for the theft of one pound of chocolate (see Chapter 20) [20].

In North America, by contrast, chocolate was more available at cheaper prices and consumed by a wider variety of people. The quantity of domestically produced chocolate was sufficient enough to give it away to the poor. The Almshouses of Philadelphia and New York regularly provided chocolate and sugar to its needy residents, something that did not happen in England for the fear of indulging the poor [21]. Like any commodity, however, its quality was reflected by price. In 1744, Dr. Alexander Hamilton, traveling in Maryland, noted in his diary:

*I breakfasted upon some dirty chocolate, but the best that the house could afford. [22]*

When discussing the breakfasts of the “lower and middling classes,” the writer of *Smyth’s Travels in Virginia*, In 1773, noted:

*A man . . . breakfasts about ten o’clock, on cold turkey, cold meat, fried homminy, toast and cider, ham, bread and butter, tea, coffee, or chocolate, which last, however, is seldom tasted but by the women. [23]*

American chocolate makers routinely advertised chocolate for sale in newspapers throughout the 18th century. Approximately 70 commercial chocolate makers have been identified from these sources (see Table 23.1). Additionally, probate inventories and purchasing accounts listed chocolate making equipment and quantities of chocolate nuts for personal use in some elite households. In 1776, Joseph Fry was the only British chocolate manufacturer with 56 agents throughout the island [24]. Not so in North America.

## *American Production and Manufacturing*

American chocolate manufacturers were concentrated in four major production centers: Boston, Philadelphia, New York City, and Newport (Rhode Island). Since these locations regularly were engaged in the trade with the West Indies, it is logical that the domestic chocolate production also occurred here. British customs records for the five year period from January 1768 to January 1773 are the most complete accounting of the American import and export activity for 40 ports along the Atlantic coast. Called “Ledger of Imports and Exports (America); January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1768 to January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1773,” or “PRO/Customs 16/1,” these records also include Newfoundland, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and Florida (Tables 23.2 and 23.3).

From these data, it is clear that there were four distinct import commodities. Cocoa was differentiated by its origin whether “British,” “Foreign,” or “Coastwise.” Since Great Britain was not listed as a source for the cocoa, the “British” designation refers to cocoa from the British possessions in the West Indies. Likewise, the “Foreign” designation refers to cocoa from any other West Indian or mainland source. “Coastwise” obviously refers to Atlantic ports. The other distinct commodity is the chocolate itself, which was exclusively North American. Examination of Tables 23.2 and 23.3 reveals that Americans relied heavily on “Foreign” cocoa to sustain their chocolate production. Nearly 70 percent of the imported cocoa was from these sources, whereas only 21 percent was British. American “Coastwise” traffic comprised the remaining 10 percent of imports. However, since this cocoa was actually trans-shipped as opposed to domestically produced, the actual percentage of Foreign and British



Pocomoke	0	3,562	0	0	0	210	0	0	0	0
Patuxent	0	22,624	0	0	100	1,010	0	0	0	0
Chester	0	970	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Potomack	0	14,420	0	0	0	606	0	0	0	0
Accomack	0	3,556	0	0	0	180	0	0	0	0
Southern Potomack	0	6,130	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rappahannock	0	8,303	0	0	0	395	0	0	0	0
York River	201	7,905	0	0	0	350	0	0	0	0
Lower James River	22,730	26,037	173	0	0	270	12,000	0	0	0
Upper James River	0	11,978	0	0	0	4,000	0	0	200	0
Currituck	0	1,390	0	0	0	0	1,800	0	0	0
Roanoke	647	18,423	0	0	0	750	0	0	0	0
Bathtown	0	4,995	530	0	0	250	0	0	0	0
Beaufort	4,000	3,104	100	0	400	225	2,695	0	0	0
Brunswick	600	4,885	2,344	0	0	0	1,200	0	0	0
Wynyaw	0	4,326	0	0	0	601	0	0	0	0
Port Royal	0	253	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charlestown	10,751	9,237	50	0	0	1,023	7,150	6,743	0	0
Sanburg	0	230	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Savannah	300	8,215	0	0	0	0	3,200	0	0	150
St. Augustine	0	810	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	0
Pensacola	0	860	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bahamas	0	1,153	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bermuda	250	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 23.3 Ledger of Cocoa and Chocolate Imports and Exports (American): January 5, 1768 to January 5, 1773

Port	Total Imports				Total Exports					
	British Foreign			Coastwise	To Southern Parts of Europe and the Wine Islands			To Foreign and British West Indies		
	Cocoa (lb)	Cocoa (lb)	Chocolate (lb)	Cocoa (lb)	Chocolate (lb)	Cocoa (lb)	Cocoa (lb)	Chocolate (lb)	Chocolate (lb)	Foreign Cocoa (lb)
Canada	330	0	176,595	400	0	3,400	130	0	0	0
New England	289,763	1,604,992	62,353	61,842	4,862	342,181	196,749	10,651	3,690	0
New York/East New Jersey	87,809	220,022	3,230	121,159	12,856	32,318	5,612	2,650	900	1,000
Delaware Valley	243,229	242,996	3,926	113,716	0	74,878	26,676	400	0	0
Chesapeake	22,931	173	105,485	100	0	7,021	12,000	0	200	0
Carolinas	15,998	3,024	46,613	400	0	2,849	12,845	6,743	0	0
Georgia/Florida	300	0	10,115	0	0	100	3,200	0	0	0
Bermuda/Bahamas	250	0	1,253	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total all ports	660,610	2,071,207	409,570	297,617	17,718	462,747	257,212	20,444	1,950	1,000



cocoa imports was 76 and 24 percent, respectively. New England, the greatest producing area, imported over 81 percent of the cocoa from non-British sources; a little over half of the cocoa used in New York was from these sources; and 40 percent was imported into Philadelphia. Both New York and Philadelphia imported 28 and 20 percent, respectively, from "Coastwise" sources, presumably from New England. The southern colonies were almost exclusively importers of North American chocolate with only a minor role in the cocoa trade. It is interesting that the cocoa that found its way to the Chesapeake, the Carolinas, and Georgia was almost exclusively from British sources.

## NEW ENGLAND

New England imported nearly two million of the three million pounds of British and "Foreign" cocoa, and exported 74 percent of the chocolate produced in North America to its North American neighbors (Table 23.2). During the five year period covered in the tables, commercial chocolate makers advertised in Boston, New Haven, and Newport, Rhode Island, newspapers. Additionally, there was a rich tradition of commercial chocolate making in New England that covered the entire 18th century. At least 36 18th century New England chocolate makers may be identified (see Table 23.1). While most worked in and around Boston, there also was chocolate manufacturing activity in Newport and Providence (Rhode Island) and New Haven, Connecticut.

On November 3, 1718, Samuel Payton from New York guided the *Royal Prince* into Boston Harbor carrying "eighteen bags of cocoa and chocolate, one bag of cotton, twenty small casks of molasses along with four casks of pork, salt and skins" [25]. The Boston customs official who recorded this routine entry transcribed information into the log that may be the oldest surviving record of "Coastwise" chocolate exchanged between North American colonies. Colonial shipping records were not contiguous and have gaping holes in coverage. Boston coffeehouse owners had been banking their survival on cocoa imports and satisfying chocolate consumers for half a century before Payton's arrival. Colonial North American chocolate history has "New England" stamped all over the industry.

Rhode Island, because of its trading relationships with the West Indies, was also important in the cocoa trade and chocolate production. Two traders were prominent in the 18th century: Obadiah Brown from Providence and Aaron Lopez from Newport. Obadiah Brown, of the Rhode Island merchant family, had a variety of interests including the African slave trade, West Indian trade (legal and illegal), and spermaceti candlemaking. Brown University is named after the family, of which Obadiah was the patriarch. He owned a watermill that made chocolate [26]. This watermill might have been the first of its kind in North

America although there were others. Aaron Lopez arrived in Newport in 1750 to join a Jewish community that had been present for almost a century. Lopez became the "merchant prince" of New England, owning 30 of the 130 Newport ships engaged in the West Indies trade [27]. His interests included African slave trading, whaling, West Indian and European trading, and chocolate manufacture. Jacob Marcus has written of Aaron Lopez:

*[He] saw food-processing as ancillary to his involvement in the coastal and West Indian traffic. Since provisions were the prime staples sent by the New Englanders to the West Indies, it was with the islands in mind that Lopez contracted with various processors for thousands of pounds of cheese, while the chocolate he secured through outwork was destined for local and North American consumption. . . . In Newport relatively large quantities of chocolate were prepared for Lopez by Negroes whose Jewish masters may have taught them the art of making the confection. Prince Updike, one of Lopez' Negro workers, ground thousands of pounds for the Newport merchant. He received five shillings for every pound he prepared, and one batch of cocoa which he turned into chocolate weighed over 5000 pounds. Another of the Negro craftsmen, a member of the cocoa-grinding Casey family, was so useful that when the man was thrown in jail for drunkenness, Lopez paid his fine and put him to work. [28]*

## PHILADELPHIA

After Boston, Philadelphia was the second-largest chocolate manufacturing center for North America. Examination of Table 23.1 reveals the names of 24 chocolate makers, and most of these advertised in Benjamin Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette*. Franklin himself advertised chocolate for sale in his print shop [29]. From 1768 to 1773, the Delaware Valley imported nearly 600,000 pounds of cocoa, but only shipped a little less than 75,000 pounds of chocolate by sea to other colonies in the flourishing "coastwise" traffic. In the same period, the region received only 3926 pounds of chocolate in the intercolonial trade, either from New England or New York (see Table 23.3). Clearly, Philadelphia chocolate makers produced most of their chocolate for the local population and sent the rest overland.

One of the pitfalls in suggesting that coastwise shipping was the only means of conveyance between colonies is that it disregards overland and river traffic. Arthur Middleton has written:

*There was considerable trade at the head of the Chesapeake Bay between Maryland and Pennsylvania, and at the southern end of the Bay between Virginia and North Carolina. The trade between Pennsylvania which sprang up late in the 17th century consisted of foodstuffs (flour and bread), West Indian commodities, and horses in return for cash, bills of exchange, and European goods. Overland transportation, which accounted for most of this trade, took place across eight*

*different portages ranging from five to thirteen miles in length between the headwaters of the Eastern Shore tributaries of Chesapeake and Delaware Bays. [30]*

Likewise, New York overland and river traffic could reach New Jersey and Connecticut and vice versa. In 1772, New London, Connecticut, received the most cocoa of any seaport in North America. In that year, colonial customs officials recorded 103,367 pounds of “foreign cocoa” coming off the decks of arriving ships. This amount was more than the quantity received by New York and Rhode Island combined [31]. Exporting very little chocolate or cocoa, New London probably was a trading port for larger cities whose goods were delivered overland or by small watercraft. Likewise, New Haven, Connecticut, was also an active cocoa trading port. From January 1768 to January 1773, New Haven imported 182,537 pounds of cocoa and exported 59,599 pounds of cocoa, but only 200 pounds of chocolate. Boston, Salem, Providence, and Newport were all within a relatively easy distance overland. Records from one Massachusetts chocolate maker show expenses paid for cocoa carted overland from Providence and Newport, and other carting fees [32].

## NEW YORK

When the British took New Amsterdam from the Dutch in 1664, they found the most ethnically diverse, religiously tolerant colony in North America. Besides the Dutch, there were English Puritans, Portuguese Jews from Brazil and the West Indies, French Huguenots, Germans, Flemings and Walloons from Belgium, Native Americans, and African slaves. Nearly half the white colonists were not Dutch [33]. Twenty years earlier, a French priest claimed to have heard 18 different languages spoken in New Amsterdam. By 1686, New York both imported and exported Venezuelan cocoa. Commercial chocolate making developed to a scale to allow chocolate exports by the early 18th century. New York’s chocolate makers were heavily concentrated in the Jewish community. Jacob Marcus has written:

*Among the industries in which colonial Jewish businessmen interested themselves was food processing. Jewish shopkeepers specialized in cocoa and chocolate which they secured in large quantities from their coreligionists in Curaçao. [34]*

The surviving records show New York shipped chocolate by water in 1718 [35]. Active in the cocoa and chocolate trade throughout the period, New York imported nearly 430,000 pounds of cocoa from 1768 to 1773. Only 20 percent came from the British West Indies. In that period, New York shipped 32,318 pounds of chocolate to other North American ports along with 900 pounds to Africa.<sup>1</sup> It imported only 3230 pounds of chocolate, an indication that

New York manufacturers were able to satisfy local demand.

## CHOCOLATE EXPORTS

It is clear that both British and “foreign” cocoa shipments were routinely received and made into chocolate, then primarily exported to other American ports in the “coastwise” traffic. There were only modest transfers of cocoa to Britain and no shipments of chocolate to Britain. By contrast, chocolate was exported to Africa and southern Europe, presumably for use in the slave and wine trades. The most curious data from these records are the extensive chocolate shipments to Newfoundland. Not much is written about New England’s trade with Newfoundland, so other reasons why there would have been so much chocolate exported there remains a mystery. A New England merchant’s interest in Newfoundland primarily concerned whaling and cod fishing. There was a small British garrison on St. Johns to protect British fishing interests and Newfoundland’s administration fell under the British Admiralty [36]. A hot cup of chocolate might have been the stimulant of choice among the fishermen and British sailors on the Grand Banks. But the British Admiralty was not known for concerning themselves with the creature comforts of their sailors until later in history. One possibility was that the chocolate was smuggled to Europe, with Newfoundland being a place of exchange. British writers complained of illegal transactions between Americans and the French along the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador. In 1765, British Commodore Palliser was dispatched with a squadron of small “ships of war” to Newfoundland to disrupt smuggling between the Americans and the French [37]. Did Americans trade chocolate for French brandy? Was some of the chocolate consumed in Europe made in America? In 1776, Joseph Fry, England’s only commercial chocolate maker, complained to British customs authorities about “trading vessels from Ireland” bringing “very large quantities of Chocolate, which is a quality equal to much that is made in England.” He also noted that for “about two Years past, Smuggling is vastly increased . . . by a desperate gang of Villains” [38].

Where was the chocolate smuggled by these “villains” manufactured? Who besides the Dutch and the Spanish had excesses of cocoa and chocolate? American chocolate illegally smuggled to England with Newfoundland as the place of exchange is an intriguing possibility, although this idea remains to be confirmed. Smugglers who were captured ultimately wound up in the Admiralty courts and eventually in the history books. So who knows? Nevertheless, in the five year period from 1768 to 1773, Newfoundland imported more chocolate by sea than the Chesapeake (see Table 23.2).

## THE CHESAPEAKE, CAROLINAS, AND GEORGIA

Whereas the mid-Atlantic and New England colonies were producers and exporters of chocolate, Virginia, Maryland, and the other southern colonies were primarily consumers. One of the earliest accounts of chocolate consumed in Virginia comes from Governor Francis Nicholson. Nicholson, the city planner for two colonial capitals, Annapolis and Williamsburg, was never popular with his early 18th century contemporaries. Although in Williamsburg today two streets are named for him (Francis Street and Nicholson Street), in his time he had to confront his opponents in person and in writing. Among other things, Nicholson was accused of not being a gentleman: the accusation was that he only served one meat for dinner. In 1705, Nicholson, complaining about his chief rival Reverend James Blair, who founded the College of William and Mary, wrote:

*Mr. President Blair used . . . to invite . . . the Burgesses . . . to his lodgings in the Colledge [sic] to drink chocolate in the morning, and maybe sometimes in the afternoon a glass of wine; and this I think he used [to] for about 2 years. [39]*

Bottom line: Blair served chocolate for political purposes while Nicholson did not serve enough meat . . . match point to Blair.

A few years later on February 16, 1709, Councillor William Byrd wrote:

*I rose at 6 o'clock this morning and read a chapter in Hebrew and 200 verses in Homer's Odyssey. I said my [prayers] and ate chocolate for breakfast with Mr. Isham Randolph, who went away immediately after. [40]*

Certainly not every woman or man who could afford chocolate for breakfast chose to drink it. Some wanted the stimulating effects of theobromine, cocoa's main alkaloid, but not the weighty feeling from the fat. Their alternative was a hot beverage made from steeping cocoa shells (the membrane from the roasted cocoa beans) in hot water. The result is an infusion similar in color, flavor, and bitterness to coffee. When sweetened, more chocolate flavors emerge. Advertisements for chocolate makers routinely offered cocoa shells for sale. While this might seem like a chocolate substitute for the poor or "lower sort," this was not the case, as it was a known product to the very wealthy. Martha Washington apparently enjoyed this beverage. In 1789, President George Washington noted in a letter to his agent:

*She will . . . thank you to get 20lb. of the shells of Cocoa nuts, if they can be had of the Chocolate makers. [41]*

In 1794, George Washington received a letter from his cousin that also referred to chocolate shells:

*I wd. [sic] take the liberty of requesting you'll be so good as to procure and send me 2 or 3 Bush[els]: of the Chocolate Shells such as we're [sic] frequently drank Chocolate of at Mt.*

*Vernon, as my Wife thinks it agreed with her better than any other Breakfast. [42]*

Chocolate was also eaten in puddings, creams, and as ice cream among the very wealthy. The first cookbook printed in North America was a copy of Eliza Smith's *The Compleat Housewife*. The printer, William Parks of Williamsburg, Virginia, culled Smith's 1732 British cookbook and in 1742 published the recipes that he felt suitable for Virginia dining tables [43]. The only chocolate recipe that Parks printed was one called "chocolate almonds." The recipe called for scraped chocolate, sugar, gum tragacanth as a binder, and orange flower water. These would be shaped "into what form you please" and allowed to dry [44]. Served as dessert, chocolate almonds were part of Virginia cuisine from the beginning of the 18th century. Published cookbooks were too expensive to be in a smoky 18th century kitchen. Grease smudges were the enemies of paper. Instead, housewives copied their special recipes into what became known as "commonplace" books. The common, everyday recipes were not transcribed, as a housewife knew them by memory. Her "commonplace" book was a gift passed to a daughter and on to a future granddaughter that she might not ever see, given that it was not uncommon for women to die during childbirth. Commonplace books were a "compilation of recipes from family and friends."

One of the earliest manuscript cookbooks—or commonplace book—in North America that included a chocolate recipe was handwritten by an anonymous Virginia mistress dated to ca. 1700. Katherine Harbury has described this text in detail and offered insights into the writer's person and social status:

*Anonymous (1700) appears to have been a well-educated woman of respectable standing who interacted with various members of the Randolph family, among others. She may well have been a Randolph or connected to them by marriage or social network. [45]*

Although the manuscript binding dates to the late 17th century, most of the recipes were copied from British cookbooks that appeared in 1705–1714 [46]. Anonymous wrote:

*To Make Chocolate Almonds: Take your Sugar & beat it & Serch [sift] it then: great youre [sic] Chocolatt [sic]: take to 1 lb Sugar: 5 oz. of Chocolatt mix well together put in 2 Spoonfull Gumdragon [sic] Soaked in rosewater & a grn musk & ambergrease & beat all well together in mortar rowl [sic] out and mark wt: ye molds & lay on tin plats [sic] to dry turn everyday. [47]*

Another unsigned Virginia manuscript dated to 1744 described "Almonds in Chocolat," a recipe that might be the 18th century ancestor of the red, yellow, blue, and green M&M™:

*Almonds in Chocolat: Take 3 quarters of a pound of Sugar and half a pound of Chocolat and make it a high Candy then put in two pound of right Jordan Almonds and keep them*

*Sturing tell they are almost Cold then lay them out to dry on  
Sives and coulier [color] them thus for the couller Red  
Scutcheneel [cochineal] for Yallow Termermick o[r] Saffron  
for blew Stone blew for Green the Juice of Spinage and steep  
your Gum in ye Juice of your Green. [48]*

Thirty-one percent of 325 Chesapeake probate inventories compiled by Gunston Hall Plantation yielded chocolate-related items including chocolate pots, cups, bowls, graders, mullers, and stones [49]. In pre-Revolutionary Williamsburg, chocolate imported from New England, Philadelphia, and New York retailed for 2 shillings 6 pence per pound (Virginia currency). Coffee was less expensive at 1s.6d. per pound. Tea, by comparison cost 12–15s per pound. A free unskilled laborer or a sailor earning approximately 2 shillings a day might not have tasted chocolate very often, if at all. Likewise, the amount of money spent for a pound of chocolate could have also purchased 15 pounds of salted fish, so a slave's chance of tasting it was even less [50].

While Williamsburg merchants sold chocolate in their stores, there were no commercial chocolate makers who advertised in *The Virginia Gazette*. Commercial chocolate making required an economic infrastructure, including cocoa merchants, experienced chocolate makers in the labor supply, skilled metal workers to make or repair equipment, printers, paper makers who made wrapping paper, coffeehouses and other outlets, and a steady flow of retail and wholesale consumers such as in large cities. Warm weather would have made chocolate manufacturing difficult on a commercial scale. In 1766, *The Virginia Gazette* reported that manufacturing had begun in Savannah, Georgia, to export chocolate “from cocoa of their own produce” [51]. This venture was probably an experiment that failed. In the five year period from 1768 to 1773, only 150 pounds of chocolate was exported from Savannah (see Table 23.2 and Chapter 52).

South Carolina, on the other hand, imported cocoa but very little chocolate throughout the Colonial period. While it is tempting to imagine a commercial chocolate maker using a large mill in wealthy Charleston, the tropical weather would have made this a heroic effort at best. Another hurdle was lack of free customers to purchase the chocolate. The 1790 Federal Census shows Charleston County with a population of nearly 67,000 people. Of these, 50,000 were enslaved [52]. However, the possibility exists that a confectioner might have made chocolate on consignment but if so, it was probably hand-ground. However, even with stones, chocolate could be produced in excess of local needs. In 1764, a quantity of 700 pounds of chocolate was exported from South Carolina to Gosport, England (in Hampshire opposite Portsmouth) [53]. In 1772, only two of 19 seaports south of the Mason–Dixon Line imported any cocoa: one in Virginia (Lower James River) and the other in Charleston, South Carolina.

Their combined total was slightly over 10,400 pounds of cocoa. Those same 19 seaports imported nearly 52,000 pounds of chocolate from New England, New York, and Philadelphia. In the same year, 200 pounds of chocolate was (re)exported from the Lower James River to West Africa for barter in the slave trade [54]. The chocolate that was made in Virginia and perhaps other southern provinces was made by black hands on chocolate stones or mortars and pestles.

## MAKING OF AMERICAN CHOCOLATE

While there is debate about the religious motivations of American colonists, the founding of both Pennsylvania and New England was distinctively religious in character. Likewise, Jewish chocolate makers and traders in New York and Newport, Rhode Island, were refugees from the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition. Many of the American chocolate makers and cocoa traders were tied by family and religion. Religious affiliations of those involved in the chocolate trade also can be identified (see Table 23.1). It is no surprise that the Quakers in Philadelphia and Jews in New York were prominent. Likewise, it would be logical that most New England chocolate makers were Protestant. Chocolate, like coffee and tea, was synonymous with middling sort industriousness in Protestant Europe and North America. Like all nonalcoholic stimulants, all three were consumed at the beginning of the day to energize the inner spirits for the world of work. In Catholic Europe, by contrast, chocolate was associated with aristocratic decadence. Portraiture from the period often showed half-clad aristocratic women sitting in bed being served chocolate for breakfast or prior to a late-night seduction [55]. In 1774, Pope Clement XIV was murdered. The turmoil in the Catholic countries was because of the dissolution of the Jesuit Order, a major player in the cocoa trade. The initial rumor in Britain was that he was poisoned with a cup of chocolate, although the *Virginia Gazette* reported that he was poisoned with the sacrament [56].

Since New England was the leading chocolate-producing area in the Colonial period, one of the earliest reports of chocolate actually consumed in North America was from a Massachusetts minister. On October 20, 1697, Reverend Samuel Sewall wrote:

*I wait on the Lieut. Governor at Dorchester, and there meet  
with Mr. Torry, breakfast together on Venison and  
Chockalatte: I said Massachuset [sic] and Mexico met at his  
Honour's Table. [57]*

Reverend Sewall also made the rounds distributing chocolate to a sick Samuel Whiting: “I gave him 2 Balls of Chockalet [sic] and a pound of figs” [58]. His chocolate also came with a price. On March 31, 1707, Sewall wrote: “Visited Mr. Gibbs, presented him with a pound a Chockalet [sic], and 3 of Cousin Moody's



sermons, gave one to Mrs. Bond, who came in while I was there" [59]. From this last entry, one cannot tell if Mrs. Bond received "chocokalett" or a sermon. On another visit, Sewall gave "two half pounds of Chocka-lat [sic], instead of Commencement Cake; and a Thesis" [60]. He does not mention the chocolate maker or how much it cost, but clearly, he thought of it as special, at least as special as sermons and a thesis.

Reverend Sewall also noted on one occasion that he drank "warm chockelat [sic] and no Beer; find my self much refresh'd by it after great Sweating to day, and yesterday" [61]. He might have also meant that his spirit was stimulated to do more good work . . . a Protestant ethic. The reverend would have found agreement with his Quaker and Jewish counterparts. Chocolate was nonalcoholic, stimulating, wholesome, nourishing, and even medicinal. All three religions stressed moderation of spirits. While neither the Quakers nor the Puritans were teetotalers, they punished drunkenness, the Quakers even more severely than the Puritans [62]. Quaker and Jewish traditions have purity as one of their tenets while Protestantism stressed doing good deeds with the emphasis on the "doing."

When it came to ready-made foodstuffs, 18th century consumers were naturally suspicious about adulteration (see Chapter 47). There were no laws regulating purity of foodstuffs so it was buyer beware when it came to putting something into your mouth. Trust was the coin of the realm when it came to chocolate or other purchased foods. Once sick, a doctor's cure might have killed faster than the disease. Jewish butchers were renowned for their care taken in slaughter and cleanliness [63]. Quakers were known for their integrity. Philadelphia chocolate makers were Friends, friendly, or just plain neighbors as much as manufacturers. Many chocolate makers stamped or printed their names on the wrapped packages of chocolate, emphasized purity in their advertisements, and offered money back guarantees. Sometimes shopkeepers like Boston merchant Joseph Barrell would do the same thing. In February 1773, his advertisement read that his chocolate was not "*Hannon's much approv'd*," "*Palmer's superior*," nor "*made by Deacon Davis*," nevertheless it was "warranted pure, and at least, equal to either" [64]. The significance of this advertisement is that the chocolate maker's name is associated with the product. "Hannon" referred to John Hannon and "Palmer" referred to Joseph Palmer. Of the two, Joseph Palmer had advertised chocolate for at least 20 years prior to Barrell's notice [65]. John Hannon's name is famous in American chocolate lore because of his association with Dr. James Baker. Baker was the patriarch who began dabbling in chocolate in the 1770s and whose son and grandson greatly expanded the chocolate company and the Baker brand in the 19th century [66]. Baker's Chocolate remains one of the oldest brand names on American grocery shelves

to this day. Whether or not "Deacon Davis" was really a deacon is unknown. But the name itself certainly denotes images of trust and faith in the manufacturer.

Another feature of American chocolate was that it was primarily machine-made and purchased in stores. Chocolate histories written from a European perspective generally ignore American manufacturing methods. American newspaper advertisements, however, provide insight regarding chocolate-making equipment and the chocolate makers themselves. Since there were no monopolies or manufacturing guilds, there were no barriers to entry into the chocolate trade other than capital formation and access to cocoa. American manufacturing equipment was generally homemade and varied from foot-powered mills capable of producing small quantities to watermills capable of producing several thousand pounds a day. Likewise, there were no patent restrictions or monopolies on the types of mills, so there were many different methods of production. Manufacturers used some sort of rotary machine, powered by horse, water, or human feet. Some chocolate makers also produced other commodities at the same time. The cocoa trade was tenuous, at best, especially during wartime. Chocolate makers could ill afford disruption in a steady supply of cocoa unless they were diversified into other commodities. Besides chocolate, chocolate makers commonly ground coffee, oats, spices, mustard, and even tobacco [67]. One chocolate maker advertised a horse-powered mill that could grind chocolate and tobacco at the same time [68].

Chocolate making was hard work. The labor was at times intense and at other times tedious. Often it was both. Whether roasting and shelling hundreds of pounds of cocoa at a time, or walking on a treadmill for hours, or hand-grinding ten pounds of chocolate a day for the Master, the work was mind numbing. And those working in large watermills also had their trials. If the order was for a ton of chocolate for a ship sailing on the next high tide, then well over a ton of cocoa would have had to have been manhandled onto carts, roasted, shelled, winnowed, taken to the hopper, ground up, mixed and molded, wrapped in paper, packaged into perhaps 50 pound boxes, and loaded onto carts. This in an age where most of that labor would have been by hand, sun up to sun down. Chocolate generally was not manufactured in the summer because higher temperatures did not allow the chocolate to harden. It could stay "wet" for days. Therefore, chocolate-making activities started in the fall and ended in late spring. New England chocolate workers also had to contend with freezing temperatures inside the mill as well as the difficulties of moving heavy wooden containers over ice or snow.

To my knowledge, American 18th century chocolate has not been identified in archeological excavations: it is anyone's guess what it tasted like. We may

surmise, however, that with the variety of manufacturing methods, the different locations in which it was made, and the year-to-year variations in the quality, the cocoa yielded results that were highly variable and all over the map. Water mills, because of complex and multiple gearing systems, simultaneously could grind chocolate, pound rags to make paper, full or finish wool, and grind tobacco into snuff, and wheat or mustard into flour. Some chocolate mills were horse powered. In other words, the environment in which chocolate makers performed their work probably affected the flavors of their product.<sup>2</sup> We also can surmise that 18th century chocolate was not wrapped in cellophane or tin foil. Lacking a vapor barrier, the chocolate, therefore, would eventually absorb and incorporate flavors or odors from whatever items were stored near it (perhaps even dried fish!). This explains why consumers might have preferred locally made chocolate over that imported from another colony. Like other food purchases in the face-to-face society of the 18th century, trusting the chocolate meant knowing the producer. Simply stated, the product might have tasted better than the one packed in pine boxes made of green wood shipped over water in leaking vessels that also carried salted cod. This might explain why some recipes used chocolate sparingly while greatly increasing the quantity of sugar. This also could explain why some of the colonial elite had their chocolate ground and prepared by hand.

The spices added are a feature of hand-ground chocolate. The degree of spiciness was purely a matter of personal preference of whoever wanted the chocolate ground in the first place. It distinguished hand-ground from machine-manufactured chocolate that was more likely than not unsweetened and unspiced. The vast majority of 18th century chocolate recipes called for sugar to be added. Once the whole mass was spiced and sweetened, the chocolate was removed from the stone, put into tin molds, and left to dry. Brooks wrote of the process:

*Now the Kernels being sufficiently rubb'd and ground upon the Stone . . . if you would compleat [sic] the Composition in the Mass, there is nothing more to be done, than to add to this Paste a Powder sifted thro [sic] a fine Searce [sieve], composed of Sugar, Cinnamon, and, if it be desired, of Vanillas . . . mix it well upon the Stone, the better to blend it and incorporate it together, and then fashion it in Moulds made of Tin in the form of Lozenges of about 4 ounces each, of desired, half a pound. [69]*

*The Spaniards taught by the Mexicans, and convinced by their own Experience, that this Drink, as rustick [sic] as it appeared to them, nevertheless yielded very wholesome Nourishment; try'd to make it more agreeable by the Addition of Sugar, some Oriental Spices, and Things. . . . Because there are an infinite Variety of Tastes, and everyone expects that we should have regard to his, and one Person is for*

*adding what the other rejects. Besides, when it is agreed upon what things to put in, it not possible to hit upon Proportions that will be universally approved. [70]*

Some of the African or Oriental spices called for in 18th century recipes include anise, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg. Additionally, some recipes called for ambergris, ground almonds or pistachios, musk, or orange-flower (blossom) water. The New World additions found in published recipes include achiote, chili peppers, and vanilla (see Chapter 8). British cookbooks were sold in stores and most of these ingredients were available during the Colonial period, with vanilla being the possible exception. Various authors made comments, derogatory or complimentary, about the preferences of the English, French, and Spanish [71]. As usual, North American preferences were ignored, so researchers can only speculate what might have been preferred by the colonists. Some clues, however, exist, as at least one Boston chocolate maker offered "Italian Chocolate" for sale [72].

## REVOLUTION

The effect of the Townshend Duties of 1767 on American food practices was electric. The Act made tea politically incorrect while stimulating American demand for coffee and chocolate. In 1767, consumption of chocolate became a patriotic act. Between 1737 and 1775, *The Virginia Gazette* announced chocolate-laden ships arriving in Virginia 54 times. Of those, 41 arrived between 1767 and 1775. In this same period, four shipments of cocoa also arrived [73]. Clearly, the duties on tea got the colonists' attention and probably stimulated chocolate production over what it had been previously. So it was that coffee and chocolate replaced tea in the parlors and coffeehouses of North America. One can imagine the women of North America happier, too, since both coffee and chocolate were cheaper than tea and household food budgets were given some relief. One shudders to think of the pain inflicted by the women on the men of Boston had they instead thrown 342 boxes of chocolate into the harbor instead of tea on that night in December 1773!

If women determined the degree of chocolate consumption in peacetime, soldiers and sailors were the major determinants in war. Since the time of the Aztecs up to present day, warriors from the New World have carried chocolate in their pockets or on their backs. Light, nutritious, and highly caloric, chocolate was and has remained the perfect travel food. Whether Spanish conquistador, French Canadian, British, or American, soldiers of different nations and times made room for chocolate. Benjamin Franklin organized shipments of provisions, including chocolate, to a Pennsylvania regiment with General Braddock's army during the French and Indian War [74]. One war earlier, in 1747, an American officer at

Saratoga captured chocolate among the provisions carried by a French and Indian war party [75]. In 1776, Virginia rifleman Charles Portfield recorded in his diary that American prisoners at Quebec complained to a British officer that they were having trouble getting “necessities,” including chocolate [76]. In that same year, Ethan Allen, while a prisoner of the British, received “a hamper of wine, sugar, fruit, chocolate, &c.” [77]. At the beginning of the Revolution, the State of Virginia included chocolate among the provisions for its Continental troops [78].

While chocolate might have been readily available and considered a necessity in the early years of the Revolutionary War, commissary officers and eventually civilians began to find it scarce as the war progressed. This might be discounted as effects of rampant inflation, but there were some other reasons as well: (1) British occupation of cocoa distribution and chocolate making centers, (2) cocoa shortages due to declining imports, and (3) trade embargoes imposed by the states themselves on each other.

Boston, Newport, New York, and Philadelphia all fell under British occupation at least for a time during the Revolutionary War. The only city that would survive the war as a center of chocolate production was Boston. While cocoa and chocolate trading might have occurred between ports in New England, the British control of New York and Newport effectively disrupted the New England and West Indian cocoa trade, the coastwise flow of cocoa between Philadelphia and Boston, and chocolate between Massachusetts and the southern colonies. Only when the British left Newport in 1779 and focused their attention on the South did Massachusetts begin to see cocoa again and then at greatly inflated prices.

Cocoa imports were reduced from prewar levels by loss of American shipping because of capture or diversion to wartime purposes. Almost from the beginning of the war, ships that might have carried cocoa in peacetime now carried military equipment, gunpowder, and saltpeter to make more gunpowder. Also, many of these vessels, particularly schooners, were converted into privateers used to disrupt British shipping in the Atlantic and Caribbean [79].

In the previous colonial wars, New York was the “privateering capitol of the American colonies” [80]. With its harbor being a British lake, New York now supported loyalist privateers. With the British contesting Long Island Sound, loyalist privateers were able to cruise from Newport and New York, further isolating New England chocolate makers from their cocoa and their customers. Likewise, loyalist privateers cruised up and down the entire coast of North America and the West Indies. With the advent of war, French, Dutch, and Spanish cocoa would have been at least legal for the Americans to import, if ships and sailors were available to carry on the trade. However, there were sporadic entries of cocoa from the French

and Dutch West Indies and captures of cocoa from British vessels. Bottom line: Cocoa became expensive in real terms. It was paid for with money that was becoming worthless on land and with blood from sailors at sea.

In February 1777, the Massachusetts Assembly passed an embargo on exports beyond the boundaries of the state for “Rum, Molasses and sundry other Articles” including “salt, coffee, cocoa, chocolate” [81]. In Williamsburg, the last advertisement in *The Virginia Gazette* for the sale of chocolate—for the duration of the war—appeared the following November [82].

The economies of the mid-Atlantic states also were in shambles. With British occupation and battles in 1777 and 1778 occurring in the Pennsylvania and New Jersey countryside, by June 1779 a pound of chocolate cost the Philadelphia consumer 30 times more than three years earlier [83]. To put it in perspective, butter was not considered worthy of mentioning in price-control schemes in dairy-rich Pennsylvania in 1776. By 1779, complaints about the price of butter were what drove the Pennsylvania Legislature to set new fixed prices [84]. In the fall of 1779, the inflationary spiral caused the Massachusetts Assembly to put another embargo on exports from the state of various foodstuffs including salt, coffee, cocoa, chocolate, and rum “either by land or water” [85].

When the hostilities shifted southward in 1779, Virginia towns set fixed prices on commodities. Chocolate was not included, perhaps because of its scarcity. Looking north from the Chesapeake, the outlook for chocolate was bleak: New York and Newport were completely isolated; Massachusetts embargoed chocolate from exportation; and two years of warfare in the Pennsylvania and New Jersey countryside had decimated the economy. Chocolate would have been rare beyond a day’s cart-ride from the manufacturer . . . if he or she could obtain cocoa. Additionally, every “chocolate nut” had to compete for cargo space with gunpowder, rum, and salt on every north-bound ship running the gauntlet from the West Indies. Furthermore, the value of Virginia currency had inflated enormously. Prior to the war, a Virginia pound traded at about one and a half times the value of a British pound sterling. By July 31, 1779, Dixon’s *Virginia Gazette* noted that the Virginia pound was valued at 50 to one [86]. By 1780, a Virginia commissary officer applied to Governor Jefferson for “Rum, Tea, Sugar, Coffee, Chocolate &c of which there was none except the first mentioned article” [87].

## THE FEDERAL PERIOD

Massachusetts never heard a shot fired in anger on its soil after March 1776, so the few North American chocolate makers remaining at war’s end were in and around Boston. Previously, for at least a century, quality had been assured by knowing and trusting the

local manufacturer and the origin of the cocoa. After the Revolution, it was more important to know that the chocolate was “Boston-made.” Chocolate makers from surrounding cities advertised that their product was as “low as in Boston” [88]. Additionally, consumers in New York or Providence (places where chocolate had been locally produced before the war) extended their trust to Boston chocolate makers they never met. The chocolate maker’s surnames like Baker or Welsh became protobrands or icons of the product itself. For the distant chocolate consumer, knowing the cocoa’s origin was less important than knowing that the origin of the chocolate was Boston . . . and the name of the chocolate maker. The chocolate maker’s name had always been important to local customers. However, after the war, this name recognition extended to other cities as well.

In the late 18th century, the surnames of the Boston chocolate makers themselves started appearing in advertisements in other cities. In 1794, New York newspaper advertisements referred to “Welsh’s first quality chocolate” [89] or “Welsh’s Boston Chocolate” [90]. Likewise, Welsh’s chocolate was advertised in Philadelphia [91] and Charleston, South Carolina [92]. An 1806 abstract of the goods entered into the Baltimore Custom-House listed Boston as the only source for the chocolate on hand [93].

Those Boston manufacturers who had survived the war had directed their business activities away from chocolate making and focused instead on producing other goods. When the time came to start making chocolate again, the people who had not diversified were wiped out. Take the case of Jonas Welsh of Boston. Between 1770 and 1798, Welsh was referred to as a “miller,” “merchant,” and a “chocolate grinder” [94]. His watermill was capable of producing 2500 pounds of chocolate a day [95]. However, close reading of his dealings reveal that he was a speculator, buying, selling, or renting interests in mills, wharfs, houses, buildings, stores, and even part of a tomb. The Suffolk County records list 34 real estate transactions where Welsh owned or mortgaged mills in partnership with others, plus surrounding land and passages or right-of-way to ponds and the sea [96]. Welsh was similar to other tradesmen and entrepreneurs of the period: either diversify or be history. Chocolate grinders could not rely on just chocolate to make a living because of the uncertainties of the cocoa trade. It would not have been unreasonable for a “chocolate maker” to consider himself a “miller” or a miller to think of his or herself as “merchant.” Dr. James Baker owned a dry goods store and made chocolate and finished woolens in a fulling mill, but called himself “Doctor,” although he never practiced medicine.

Another feature of chocolate in the late 18th century is that expressions of quality became rational. Beginning in late 18th century and continuing into the 19th century, manufacturers sold chocolate

categorized by numeric grades of quality. Words like “superior” or “much approved” became “No. 1,” “No. 2,” or “No. 3.” An 1817 Boston newspaper advertised “Baker’s Chocolate and Shells of the first quality . . . No. 1 Chocolate and Shells are warranted to be of as good a quality as any manufactured in the United States” and that “No. 3 Chocolate, much approved of for the Southern Markets.” This same advertisement listed No. 1 chocolate for family use sold at 25 cts. per pound. Likewise, No. 3 chocolate sold for 16 cts. per pound [97]. The last reference alluded to a growing regional preference that was distinctly related to chocolate. We can only surmise from a distance of the 21st century what the real differences were. What were the particular qualities of the chocolate called “No. 1” that made it better than “No. 2”? Why was “No. 3” the inferior grade, preferred in the southern markets? Were shipping costs the reason? Grittiness? Sweetness (more or less)? Roasting techniques? Packaging? Who knows?

Another change in the American chocolate experience was the introduction of vanilla. Whereas vanilla was generally associated with chocolate in Europe, hardly any was imported into North America until the 19th century. Searching for “vanilla” in Colonial advertisements yields few results. As late as 1792, newspaper advertisements referring to vanilla discuss it as being rare and “scarcely known” to American consumers [98]. But it was actually advertisements from confectioners that began appearing in the mid-1790s that introduced “vanilla chocolate” to the American palette. By the turn of the century, vanilla beans were generally available but the chocolate made with the flavoring still carried the titles “vanilla chocolate,” “chocolate a la Vanille,” or “No. 1 with vanilla” and being available from confectioners rather than chocolate makers [99]. These same confectioners also offered other spices in their chocolate and would use labels like “with cinnamon” or “plain prepared” [100, 101].

## Conclusion

One might make a general assumption that chocolate making in North America was a trade learned in England or the West Indies and that the technology was imported. As we have seen, however, the European labor supply of commercial chocolate makers was quite small. Those who emigrated to America would have joined a native-born labor pool using machines and techniques that were cutting edge for their day. More akin to the milling trades than confectionary, American chocolate makers were diversified businessmen who had to withstand cocoa shortages, wars, and the ups and downs of overseas or “coastwise” markets. Large producers had the advantage of waterfalls near the coast to site their mills along with access to large



amounts of cocoa at an affordable price. They also had the advantage of having a “Plan B” if the cocoa market was disrupted or their mill burned down, which happened frequently. But, they were the most successful when they expanded their selling horizons and received the trust of customers beyond their own city limits or state borders.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the following persons whose cumulative guidance and support have been instrumental in the writing of this chapter. From the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation: Barbera Scherer, Historic Foodways; Robert Brantley, Historic Foodways; Dennis Cotner, Historic Foodways; Susan Holler, Historic Foodways; Frank Clark, Historic Foodways; Jay Gaynor, Director of Trades; Gayle Greve, Curator of Special Collections Library; Juleigh Clarke, Rockefeller Library; Pat Gibbs, Research; Martha Katz-Hyman, Research; Donna Seale, Historic Foodways; Nicole Henning, Historic Foodways; and Kristi Engle, Historic Foodways. From the University of California, Davis: Deanna Pucciarelli. From Fort Ticonderoga, New York: Nick Westbrook and Virginia Westbrook. From Masterfoods USA/Mars, Incorporated: Deborah Mars, Eric Whitacre, Judy Whitacre, Rodney Synder, Doug Valkenburg, and Mary Myers. From Oxford University: Pamela Richardson. And I wish to thank the following members of my family: Jan Gay, Andrea West, and Bill Gay for their support and encouragement.

## Endnotes

1. This chocolate was for use as food and as an exchange item during slave-trade dealings.
2. Imagine chocolate today in the 21st century having minute particles of mustard seed, wool lint, pieces of cotton rags, tobacco, even traces of horse manure!

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