ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: SPINNING SUGAR, REFINING AMERICA: CONSUMERS AND CREATORS OF DESSERT IN THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

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Dessert presentations in America shifted in the eighteenth century from simple desserts with few ingredients to elaborate confections of sugar. As a luxurious end to the meal, dessert increasingly reflected class and race. After the Revolution, as dessert presentations modeled on those of European aristocracy became popular, the elite turned to confectioners to create towering displays of dessert. The scarcity of skilled confectioners pushed elites to recruit and train confectioners, including those they enslaved. The genteel movement towards refinement and the consumer revolution fueled middle-class aspirations to emulate elite dessert displays, leading them to purchase specialized material goods like serving pieces and recipe books. They also continued to use simple recipes but elevated dessert as a measure of refinement. The use of enslaved labor to produce some of these confections indicates the extent to which post-revolutionary hierarchies embedded slavery, even as enslaved confectioners had potentially more room to negotiate.

SPINNING SUGAR, REFINING AMERICA: CONSUMERS AND CREATORS OF DESSERT IN THE LONG EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

by

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Introduction

Imagine a massive edible temple with guards, trumpeters and drummers on horseback, the scene surrounded by carts pulled by lions, elephants, camels, and horses. Do you imagine this whimsical scene presented to a king? This impressive display of dessert was in fact a marketing tactic by a confectioner in Philadelphia to gain new clients and create lasting memories of the artistry for viewers. The advertisement for this display appeared in *The Pennsylvania Gazette* in 1765 and began, "TO BE SEEN…at one shilling each person, a very fine and elaborate piece of SUGAR WORK or DESERT, done by a German Confectioner, being such as never before was exhibited in this part of the world."[1] The confectioner's previous resume included "the Imperial, the Royal Prussian, and other princely tables."[2] The price of one shilling to view this sugar masterpiece gave the middle class an affordable opportunity to peek into the lives of royalty and whet their appetite to come back as customers for more affordable confections.

Americans of all class levels had a desire to elevate their status in life. Dessert presentations offered an opportunity to showcase skill, creativity, and the personal connections required to purchase the finest ingredients and material objects for these displays. Dessert in eighteenth-century America reflected class and shifted from simplistic presentations to more elaborate ones as the eighteenth century progressed.

[1] "To Be Seen in Kensington, at Andrew Hook's," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 20, 1765, Number 1904 edition, America's Historical Newspapers.
[2] "To Be Seen in Kensington, at Andrew Hook's."

Dessert presentations reveal the true intentions of elite Americans to prove their standing in society. They emulated the European elite by way of confectionary displays in early eighteenth-century America. Middle-class Americans followed suit later in the eighteenth century, but they focused on purchasing material goods to display the dessert rather than bother with the complicated recipes showcased by the elite. The high demand for confectioners created an unusual space for immigrant and enslaved confectioners to leverage these coveted skills to influence their standing in life.

As an add-on to the main meal, dessert represents luxury. Analyzing the objects used to present the dessert, the ingredients, and the people who created the dessert sheds light on the status of the person serving the dessert. Dessert presentations impacted class in America to a greater extent than they did overseas; class was not as predetermined in America. The elite class in America included not only the wealthy, but also the political elite. Class encompasses social standing, economic level, political influence, and personal relationships. Families on the upper end of the middle class, like merchants, could buy their way into a higher class by purchasing objects like dessert serving trays and glasses. The impression of having wealth and knowledge of how to use these objects was enough to elevate some families in the eyes of their peers.

The middle class is notoriously difficult to define and members of the middle class fall within a spectrum of income levels. Several defining characteristics apply to all members of the middle class. They had to work for their living and did not rely on large inheritances, they had disposable income, they were self-aware of their standing

in society, and they believed that they could improve their status. This definition of the middle class becomes applicable in the mid-eighteenth century and more so after the Revolution.

In the American South, creators themselves were often enslaved confectioners. A careful study of their work reveals the unusual status they held as makers of detailed pastry to the elite. Confectioners in America were so valuable that their skills gave them the opportunity to improve their status. Enslaved confectioners were in an unusual position, holding valuable confectionary skills that were coveted. They trained closely with immigrant confectioners to learn these skills and presented some of the most complicated and refined centerpieces. They were trusted with the most expensive equipment and ingredients. This gave enslaved confectioners more power to negotiate status. Their confectionary skills were in demand and could keep them employed as opposed to enslaved individuals without such valuable skills. An enslaved confectioner had a different power dynamic with their owner than another enslaved individual.

The American elite used dessert presentations to strengthen their position at the top of society. Even after the Revolution, those who argued against the monarchy and a strict hierarchical class structure were quite concerned with how their peers judged the dessert at their dining table. Dessert exemplifies the spread of refined culture across the Atlantic, and then from the elite down to the middle class. The importance of dessert as a signifier of status increased steadily across the eighteenth century, beginning first with elite Americans and moving to the tables of the middle class towards the end of the century.

Middle class access to confections in America increased towards the end of the eighteenth century as the era of refinement and the consumer revolution sold the dream of social mobility through dessert presentations. This timing coincides partially with the Revolution, which did impact access to sugar and material goods for serving dessert. Following the Revolution, there were new opportunities to create trade agreements with foreign countries and import the fine ingredients and objects this new group of American consumers desired. The middle class leveraged material purchases in lieu of replicating the complicated confectionary recipes presented by the elite.

Confectioners were difficult to find in America so middle-class Americans looked to alternative options to elevate dessert. Purchasable goods like specialized glasses and salvers (similar to cake stands) for dessert like syllabub were a more accessible option. Syllabub was a traditional and familiar dessert of cream, white wine, sugar, and lemon juice that was whipped up and originally served in a single bowl. In the early eighteenth century, elite Americans transformed syllabub from a humble one-bowl dessert to an elaborate pyramid of syllabub glasses stacked on top of multiple salvers. As the eighteenth century progressed, syllabub glasses were easier to find in American shops, and middle-class consumers were able to buy their way into genteel life.

The progression of the eighteenth century also saw a change in recipe book marketing. Recipe books were marketed to elite women in the early eighteenth century, but progressively became more affordable for middle-class consumers by the mid to late eighteenth century. The marketing targeted housewives and sold the

aspirational dream of presenting an elaborate table of dessert to impress peers. Access to these recipe books was delayed for middle-class consumers in America, since the books were initially published in England. Elite Americans had earlier access to the techniques and recipes presented in these books. By the time the middle class was able to make their own versions of dessert presentations, the elite moved forward to more complicated forms of dessert displays.

While confectioners were hard to come by in some American cities, the truly wealthy hired confectioners from overseas or trained enslaved people in the art of pastry. In the South, enslaved cooks with pastry and confectionary experience held valuable skills that were coveted by many wealthy Americans. These unusual skills complicated the power dynamic between some slave owners and enslaved people. The relationship between Thomas Jefferson and his enslaved cook and pastry chef James Hemings was impacted by his specialized training.

Class, race, and gender permeate the study of dessert presentations in America. The confectioners were a combination of trained enslaved people and European immigrants who worked to create artful sugar sculptures for the elite. Women were the targets of recipe book marketing and as the hostess, the woman of the house was responsible for the resulting display of dessert, even if her cook was the one making the actual creation. The middle class was able to present simplified versions of dessert displays, but without the money and access to the latest dessert trends, they could only emulate the elite in moderated ways.

Historiography

Secondary sources for dessert displays in eighteenth-century America span a wide range of topics including consumer habits and trade in America, the age of gentility, the history of sugar and chocolate, and material culture. The transatlantic nature of trade and especially the techniques for confections allows for a broader study of these topics in order to analyze the impact in America. This project links these sources and narrows the focus to the eighteenth century.

Sidney Mintz's *Sweetness and Power* addresses issues of the politics and meaning surrounding sugar, with a focus on England as the source of power. He provides a detailed background for the process of growing and producing sugar. Once sugar hit its peak as a luxury good and became increasingly more accessible in 1650s, it only gained popularity and entrenched the English in a dependence on the plantation system and slavery.[3] Mintz addresses the connections between production and consumption. He argues that meaning arises out of use and he makes connections to the social behaviors associated with sugar consumption.[4] The politics and economies of an empire were determined by an interest in sugar, and power was strongly associated with sugar in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[5] Sugar influenced the politics involved in colonization for the purpose of establishing sugar plantations. The ability of European empires to create a sustainable supply of sugar gave way to lower prices and greater accessibility to non-elites, making sugar a

[3] Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 1985), xxix.
[4] Mintz, xxix.
[5] Mintz, 31.

popular commodity and solidifying English attachment to slavery and sugar plantations.[6]

Mintz carefully constructs an argument focused on politics, power, and the economics associated with sugar. His work lays the foundation for this thesis which pivots to focus on social class and mobility. This thesis has parallels between the rise and fall of sugar as purely a luxury good, to become one of broad popularity. Methods for displaying dessert, like stacking glasses in a pyramid, began at the elite level and were eventually so popular at the middle-class level that they lost their symbol of status.

Mintz's larger questions about the power dynamic between producer and consumer inform this study of confectioners in America. He discusses larger questions of empire and the power dynamics between sugar-producing slave plantations and the English consumers creating a high demand for the product. This thesis looks at the power dynamic between American slave owners and enslaved people who have been trained in the art of confection. The typical slave owner and enslaved person power dynamic becomes blurry in these cases. The demand for confection in America was so high that enslaved confectioners were in an unusual position as the producer of confections. Mintz's discussion of power dynamics in relation to sugar plantations also informs the analysis of a dessert plate print depicting a black confectioner working in front of a painting of enslaved people working on a sugar plantation.

[6] Mintz, 45.

Annette Gordon-Reed's *The Hemingses of Monticello* provides a detailed analysis of the life of James Hemings, the enslaved confectioner to Thomas Jefferson.[7] Gordon-Reed, like Mintz, addresses power dynamics, but rather than powers of empire, she focuses on the relationship between James Hemings and Jefferson. Gordon-Reed's analysis of power dynamics highlights Jefferson's need for Hemings as a chef and pastrycook. Jefferson relied on Hemings to present impressive meals and dessert. Their relationship as slave owner and enslaved person was not typical. Gordon-Reed's analysis of legal documents and detailed information about the timeline of Hemings' life were a starting point for the analysis of enslaved confectioners in America. Her scope is focused on the Hemings family and this thesis looks beyond Monticello to find other examples of enslaved confectioners.

Kelley Fanto Deetz analyzes enslaved cooks in Virginia and discusses similar themes to Gordon-Reed in *Bound to the Fire*. Like Gordon-Reed, Deetz approaches the topic of enslaved individuals from the perspective of the enslaved workers themselves, even though many of the records come from the perspective of owners. Deetz argues that enslaved cooks were in unusual positions of trust with owners, while keeping strong ties to the enslaved community. These enslaved cooks were in the best position to manipulate their enslavers.[8] Deetz successfully addresses the complex nature of enslaved kitchen workers living between two worlds and using their unusual position to influence their situation in life.

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[7] Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008).
[8] Kelly Fanto Deetz, *Bound to the Fire: How Virginia's Enslaved Cooks Helped Invent American Cuisine* (The University of Kentucky Press, 2017), 3.

Thaviola Glymph also addresses the unusual position held by an enslaved individual working within the household in *Out of the House of Bondage*. Glymph narrows her focus to women in plantation homes and the violence white females used against black females.[9] Glymph also calls attention to the image of the pristine domestic home run by the woman of the house. She reminds readers that this image of excellent housewife was only possible with the domestic work done by enslaved individuals.[10] Her focus on the control exerted by female owners informs the analysis in this thesis of the power dynamics between enslaved confectioners and their owners.

Marcy Norton takes a revisionist approach in her article "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics" and her larger work, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World*. Norton's work places a heavy emphasis on the spiritual associations with chocolate and tobacco. She argues that consumption of both tobacco and chocolate were "sensory experiences" that "concretized notions about relationships between humans and between humans and the spirit world."[11] This notion of chocolate as a link between people is reflected in this thesis with both dessert presentations and the social nature of chocolate houses and coffee houses.

Norton argues that chocolate was transmitted from the colonized to the colonizer.[12] Norton's emphasis on the spiritual, ceremonial, and behavioral nature of

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[9] Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2.
[10] Glymph, 6.
[11] Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2010), 9.
[12] Marcy Norton, "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics," *The American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (June 2006): 670.

chocolate in pre-Columbian America and her argument that this informed European behaviors and meanings towards chocolate is reflected in this work. Her work adds context to an elaborate chocolate drinking ceremony witnessed by John Adams. The special care taken to prepare the body for the chocolate drink in Spain draws parallels to the ceremonial nature of drinking chocolate in pre-Columbian America.

This thesis picks up where Norton leaves off, as her focus is on chocolate in pre-Columbian America and early uses of chocolate in Europe. This work address the movement of chocolate-drinking from an elaborate ceremony in Spain to the chocolate houses of England where it was diluted with additives. The chocolate-drinking social culture of London was firmly entrenched in the social behaviors introduced by Norton, but the culture strayed from the original spiritual meanings. Where Norton stops, other authors pick up with the introduction of the consumer revolution in the early eighteenth century.

The consumer revolution paralleled the move towards refinement in eighteenth-century America, both of which progressed across the timespan of the eighteenth century. In *The Refinement of America*, Richard Bushman tracks the spread of refinement from European courts to the upper middle class, eventually spreading to America as early as 1690.[13] A new awareness of speech, dress, and manners and their contribution to one's appearance peaked in the eighteenth century. The idea spread through modes of emulation. Bushman illustrates the idea of emulation when he notes the distinguished look of sipping wine out of a crystal

[13] Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*, 1st ed. (New York: Knopf :, 1992), xii.

wineglass as opposed to a redware mug.[14] Consumption became a reflection of oneself. Appearance and interpretation of manners mattered more so than ever before. Bushman's work is broad and only briefly discusses dinnerware, ceramics, and glassware.

Bushman neglects the issue of slavery in his work, however, and misses the opportunity to highlight the work of enslaved individuals to keep these genteel lives running smoothly. This thesis complicates Bushman's early scholarship on refined lifestyles. This thesis places a heavy focus on the south, another area overlooked by Bushman, and looks at the influence of enslaved confectioners on the presentations of dessert in America. Without the skills of enslaved confectioners, the wealthy elite in the south would not have had tables full of edible dessert displays. This analysis of dessert presentations uses Bushman's theory of refinement, but adds new scholarship to ideas of purchased objects to display dessert and to the enslaved confectioners who created these pastries.

Bushman also provides useful insights into the definition of gentry and the middle class in America. He makes the distinction of gentlemen in America before and after the Revolution. Prior to the Revolution, the term gentleman applied to "great merchants and planters, the clergy and professionals, the officers of courts and government."[15] At that point, gentility "flecked lives without coloring them," but after the Revolution a larger group of the middle class believed they too should live a genteel life.[16] Bushman argues that middling Americans bought into some forms of

[14] Bushman, xviii.
[15] Bushman, xiii.
[16] Bushman, xii.

gentility, such as purchasing a single silver spoon or owning a book or two, as seen in their eighteenth-century inventories. Bushman delineates the emergence of the middle class in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. He argues that the middle class included "smaller merchants and professionals, ordinary well-off farmers, successful artisans, school teachers, minor government officials, clerks, shopkeepers, industrial entrepreneurs, and managers."

The middle class as defined by Bushman could not afford to construct mansions or dress in silk, but they could manage to maintain a house with a parlor or purchase cheaper printed fabrics. Bushman equates this group with "vernacular gentility."[17] This work builds on Bushman's ideas of the meaning behind middle-class purchasing habits. The middle class in America emulated dessert presentations from the elite in an effort to elevate their status.

In the volume *Class Matters*, edited by Simon Middleton and Billy Smith, scholars argue that analyzing class is necessary to understand the Atlantic world. They argue that social class reveals the relationships between groups with different access to valued resources.[18] It also allows for comparison of social relationships between members of these different groups and signifies power relations.[19] Class addresses new identities formed in the eighteenth century related to the consumer revolution, and the authors argue that class, race, and gender all played a role in identifying the new emergence of the middle class.[20]

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[17] Bushman, xiii.
[18] Simon Middleton and Billy Smith, eds., *Class Matters: Early North America and the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 10.
[19] Middleton and Smith, 11.
[20] Middleton and Smith, 13.

The authors of *Class Matters* explicitly address the same topics in this thesis, and more specifically, conduct books for the "new middling sort" to pursue genteel lives.[21] This connects directly to the recipe books addressed in this thesis, which acted as more specific conduct books within the sphere of the kitchen and the dining room. The power dynamic between enslaved confectioner and owner are also better understood with a focus on class. This analysis of confection in America hinges on its relation to class. Shifts in dessert presentations reflect larger transitions in the realm of social class in America with the formation of a new middle class. The term class is vital to the analysis of social relations by way of dessert in this thesis. Class provides the most comprehensive analysis of the newly self-aware society in eighteenth-century America. This thesis goes beyond just class and incorporates race as well. Enslaved confectioners were vital to the impressive dessert presentations that upheld the status of their owners.

The age of refinement stemmed from an earlier movement toward self-awareness described by Norbert Elias in *The Civilizing Process*. Elias examines the concept of civilization and defines it as "the self-consciousness of the West."[22] The idea hinges on the sense of progress and superiority to earlier centuries. Elias argues that pride in technology, manners, and scientific knowledge played key roles in the sense of civilized society. He connects these ideas that took form to changes in dining practices. Communal consumption of food from a shared dish or plate gave way to the use of individual spoons and plates or bowls in the sixteenth and seventeenth

[21] Middleton and Smith, 14.
[22] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000), 5.

centuries.[23] This work applies his theory to the syllabub glass which was a result of the movement towards refinement. Syllabub was served in a single bowl prior to the focus on genteel society, but the presentation was elevated by preparing the dessert in individual glasses. An even more impressive next step was stacking these glasses to form a pyramid. The idea of refinement in the eighteenth century stems from these earlier notions of civilized society. This new idea of polite society infiltrated not just elites, but also the middle class who craved cheap ways to appear more genteel themselves.

In *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, Neil McKendrick expands on the material aspect of gentility and argues that a consumer revolution took place in England in the eighteenth century.[24] He argues that this was the first point in time that a new class of consumers was created as a result of the affordability of material goods. Objects that were once handed down through inheritance by the elite were now available for purchase, and at a price that allowed for additional purchases as fashions changed. Circulated fashion prints, for instance, provided options for dressing and updating outfits. Prior to the eighteenth century, fashion was limited to the elite minority.

McKendrick argues that desire to consume has always existed, but the ability to do so came to fruition in the eighteenth century. Advertisements extended beyond fashion to dining wares. As popularity for certain objects associated with dining increased, so too did the variety and availability of these objects. McKendrick writes specifically about England, but the analysis of syllabub glasses in this thesis serves as

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[23] Elias, 91.
[24] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J.H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: Commercialization of Eighteenth Century England* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1985), 1–6.

a case study in America for McKendrick's theory. The discussion of the increasing availability of recipe books in this thesis also ties in to his discussion of the proliferation of purchasable goods.

Linda Young argues that gentility was solely a culture of the middle class in *Middle-Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century*. Gentility involved acceptance of peers through participation in a set of beliefs and rituals.[25] Young defined the middle class as those who had to work to earn their living, though occupations varied greatly.[26] Young defines gentility as spanning the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. The path towards gentility and refinement began with a consumer purchasing material goods, but the more significant next step was knowledge of how to properly use these objects. Young notes the combination of knowledge plus goods, underwritten by a certain level of income propelled one into genteel life.[27] This new demand for consumer goods to demonstrate the elements of polite society can be seen in material objects purchased.

Young and Bushman both discuss peer judgement as an essential aspect of genteel society. Young's argument about the middle class move towards gentility is correct in the aspirational sense and knowledge of object use, but true acceptance into this upper class hinged on a high income. Purchasing some objects that elevated dining allowed the middle class to rank themselves within their own sphere. In a sense, they may have increased their social mobility through their consumer

[25] Linda Young, *Middle Class Culture in the Nineteenth Century: America, Australia and Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 15.
[26] Young, 5.
[27] Young, 5.

purchases, but only the truly wealthy members of the upper middle class, such as wealthy merchants, gained access to elite society.

In *Town House*, Bernard L. Herman takes a close look at one of these families interested in social mobility and joins Bushman and Young in providing his own definition of the elite class. He discusses consumer purchases and dining practice of the Moses Myers family in Norfolk, Virginia. Herman defines the Myers family as members of Norfolk's elite society.[28] According to Herman, their peers in this elite group included "merchants, planters, government officials, international delegates, and visiting dignitaries."[29] Herman also notes the inherent difficulty in defining the class of merchant families and other groups based solely on occupation. The occupation of merchant encompassed a spectrum of individuals including poor traders all the way up to the wealthiest merchants. Herman notes acquisition and competition as the common denominator among such a diverse income group of merchants.

Herman's idea of a spectrum of financial success among certain occupational groups can be applied to the middle class. While all members of the middle class were striving towards gentility, in reality only a small portion on the upper end of the spectrum were truly accepted as genteel. The middle class included individuals with enough disposable income to purchase objects that were not necessities. They had the luxury of making purchases based on aesthetic appeal. While there was a range of middle-class members, the common thread among all members of the middle class

[28] Bernard Herman, *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830* (Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 37.
[29] Herman, 37.

was a consciousness of their status in relation to their peers. They strived to elevate their status based on manners and consumer purchases.

Gilly Lehmann illustrates the influence of the move towards gentility through recipe books in Britain in *The British Housewife*. Lehmann argues that recipe books were aimed towards the elite in the early eighteenth century and later towards the middle class and servants by the end of the century.[30] Lehmann also links femininity and the increasing importance of accomplishments for young women to this shift in the target audience for recipe books. The audience became women who needed guidance to learn the cooking skills necessary to impress their peers. Recipe book marketing capitalized on this class-consciousness. She cites Richard Bradley who stated that recipe books were marketed to the lesser gentry who had "incomes of £300-400 a year and aspired to live as well as the gentlemen who had more than twice that amount."[31] While the audience for recipe books expanded over the eighteenth century, it was not practical for a member of the middle class to construct an edible masterpiece worthy of an elite dinner table. The techniques involved in these recipe books were explained to the reader, but in practice were complicated and time-consuming for an average cook.

Chapters

Chapter One analyzes the dessert experience of elite Americans visiting Europe and their desire back in America to emulate these presentations. Their goal in

[30] Gilly Lehmann, *The British Housewife: Cookery Books, Cooking and Society in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Totnes, Devon: Prospect Books, 2002), 61–66.
[31] Lehmann, 162–63.

presenting impressive displays was to prove their status to their peers by being able to afford a confectioner, gain access to the same material goods found in the European market, and keep up with dessert trends overseas. Dessert consumption was a social experience that was elevated in Europe. The chapter introduces the origins of towering dessert displays in European courts.

Royalty had early access to the best trained confectioners and set the standard for attempts by European elite to emulate these displays. American visitors in the eighteenth century were awed by the presentations and quality ingredients used in these confections. Americans had a strong desire to replicate their European experiences with dessert back home, but this was difficult and sometimes impossible. The fine quality ingredients like chocolate and refined sugar were more accessible overseas. Serving dishes and glasses were also difficult to purchase in America. Confectioners were not as prevalent in America as they were in Europe, making it difficult to present a display as refined as ones they observed overseas.

Americans with connections to Europe via family or friends had an advantage when presenting dessert displays. They could order ingredients and serving pieces with the help of these friends overseas. Social status in America was not as stringent as it was in Europe; in America there was no aristocracy, and the political elite dined with the wealthy elite. The potential for social mobility was real in America and impressing peers through dessert displays was one indicator of elevated status. The issue Americans faced once they left Europe was finding ways to replicate their full experience with confections overseas once they were back home.

Chapter Two tracks the purchasing habits of the middle class and elite consumers who shaped new modes of gentility and refinement. The shift in presentation of syllabub from a shared bowl to a towering pyramid of dessert represents this movement towards refinement in the eighteenth century, aided by new goods available with the consumer revolution. Middle-class Americans believed that presenting impressive dessert centerpieces would elevate their social standing based on peer judgement. On the other side of the consumer revolution were the advertisers who marketed recipe books specifically to women. Advertisements spoke directly to good wives who were expected to present impressive dinner tables. Analysis of recipe book prices and comparable consumer goods sheds light on the affordability of these books and their value as guides.

Glassware for presenting syllabub serves as a case study for the elevation of dessert that followed the refinement movement. The evolution from syllabub served in a large bowl to syllabub served in numerous glasses stacked into a pyramid illustrates the genteel nature of the dessert in the eighteenth century. Both recipe books and syllabub glasses acted as purchasable stepping stones for a family interested in social mobility. While Chapter One and Chapter Three place an emphasis on elite consumers, Chapter Two looks at the tier just below the elite. Not all members of the middle class had the means to purchase goods available from the consumer revolution, but many bought into the dream of presenting impressive displays of dessert.

Chapter Three highlights confectioners in America, in particular, enslaved people who were trained specially in the art of confection and pastry in the South.

This unusual position at the top of the hierarchy in the kitchen, while remaining an enslaved worker complicated relationships between enslaved confectioners and slave owners. Enslaved confectioners were also working with some of the most expensive ingredients and serving objects, meaning that they were closely watched. While the position of confectioner gave enslaved individuals valuable skills, it also placed them in a more visible position for scrutiny.

While some professionally trained confectioners immigrated to America from Europe, they could not keep up with demand in most cities. Some slaveowners invested in training enslaved people in the art of pastry and confections. These valuable skills remained popular as the desire to present towers of treats increased throughout the eighteenth century.

Advertisements for enslaved people specifically call out sugar and pastry experience, indicating the demand for these skills. Thomas Jefferson sent James Hemings to train in France to acquire this knowledge. Hemings' work as a chef has been addressed by historians, but his knowledge of pastry is not often discussed. Hemings had valuable confectionary skills, making his status as an enslaved person and confectioner a complicated combination of forced laborer and creative director of meals. Enslaved people were also trained in America. Hired pastry chefs worked alongside enslaved cooks and were directed by the head of the household to teach them advanced confectionary skills.

Methodology

The research process for this thesis began first with primary research and then followed with analysis of secondary sources. Written letters, diaries, newspaper

advertisements, published and hand-written recipe books, and inventories provide primary source evidence for this analysis. These personal papers also add unique perspectives and draw attention to the wonders of dessert. A thorough analysis of period-appropriate diaries and correspondence proves what is still true today, that some people obsess over food and others have no interest at all. This work utilizes sources from individuals with a great interest in the flavor and presentation of dessert.

In conducting research for this thesis, I cast a wide net. The initial spark for this research came from a confectioner's advertisement in a newspaper. The list of desserts available for sale was intriguing and led to questions about dessert in eighteenth-century America. To understand what people ate, I then explored recipe books, both manuscript and in print, that colonists either created or used. I focused especially on twenty digitized recipe books, and then tracked who had access to these books and also who followed these recipes. I then consulted digitized newspapers with a specific focus on dessert preparation and advertisements, discovering and tracing patterns of requests for confectioners and pastry cooks, both enslaved and free. I then turned to diaries and personal correspondence to build evidence for what people recorded about the desserts they served and consumed.

Published records including recipe books and newspapers provided a more general representation of what the educated public had access to in relation to dessert. Recipe books complicate questions of whether the average cook could in fact make a tower of confections. They were marketed as how-to manuals, though sugar work and pastry are more complicated in reality. This thesis pairs analysis of personal papers with a careful study of recipe books to consider the lengths to which the average cook

would go to complete these impressive recipes. Newspaper advertisements on the other hand, confirmed supply and demand of consumer goods related to dessert displays.

Most of the recipe books consulted for this research were published in England, though several American hand-written recipe books were also consulted. This brings up the question of American access to recipe books, and especially middle-class American access. Newspaper advertisements for recipe books appear in America at least a decade, and sometimes several decades, after the initial publication of the recipe books in England. Americans did have access to these books, but it was delayed. Recipe books also appear in several library catalogs in different cities in America, but most do not appear until the late eighteenth century. This proves that middle-class Americans did have access to recipe books, but not as quickly as elite Americans.

The newspapers, personal correspondence, and diaries consulted for this work each have regional origins by nature of the digital repositories that collected them. I used the *America's Historical Newspapers* database (collections 1-4), which the University of Maryland purchased, which has a larger collection of newspapers from the north. This database provided the advertisements for confectionary shops and advertisements for the sale of enslaved workers with pastry skills. The higher percentage of northern newspapers included in this database may have skewed the appearance of confectionary shops predominantly in the north; further research might indicate a broader Southern presence as well.

Personal correspondence related to confectioners came largely from well-known Founding Fathers and their wives from the digitized papers in the *Rotunda* database. Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, and John Adams were particularly interested in food and dessert in their writing, so they make up a large portion of the information cited in this thesis. Both Washington and Jefferson had established homes in Virginia, skewing some of the information to a southern experience with confections and enslaved workers. John Adams brings in a northern perspective and a particular interest in chocolate, both at home in America and during his time overseas.

The focus on digitized sources from Founding Fathers does skew the perspective of dessert presentations to the perspective of elite consumers. The enslaved confectioners who created these works of art are mentioned in these records, but not from their own point of view. Secondary scholarship on enslaved cooks and enslaved individuals working in the household in close proximity to their owners provided valuable insight into alternative perspectives. The focus of this work is weighted heavily on dessert presentations and class in America, but an effort was made to incorporate real people who made and consumed these desserts. By nature of the sources consulted, the personal narratives came largely from wealthy Americans with well-documented correspondence and diaries.

Elite Americans who discussed dessert the most were those who had either traveled overseas, or who were connect to Europe by either marriage or personal family connects. Wealthy elite diarists, like William Byrd II earlier in the eighteenth century, provided me with examples of Americans who were educated overseas.

Dessert displays were more important to people who had experienced them in the highest form in Europe. Other diarists included women like Rosalie Calvert and Martha Ogle Foreman, both living in Maryland. All of the diaries consulted were from southern diarists, which weighted personal accounts in the direction of a society dependent on enslaved labor.

The inventories consulted for this work came from the Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library.[32] Again, these primary sources are from the south, a region dependent on enslaved labor, and also from Virginia, the wealthiest colony. The inventories provide examples of some of America's wealthiest families with an interest in the finest display pieces for dessert.

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[32] "Inventory of Estate of Francis Fauquier 1771, July 20 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library," July 20, 1771, http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=Probates\PB00008.xml&highlight=syllabub; "Inventory of Estate of Henry Wetherburn 1761, March 16 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library," March 16, 1761, http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=Probates\PB00150.xml&highlight=syllabub; "Inventory of Estate of James Wray 1750 March 18 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library," June 6, 1750, https://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=Probates\PB00340.xml&highlight=1750; "Inventory of Estate of Richard Hunt Singleton 1774, May 16 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library," May 16, 1774, http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=Probates\PB00047.xml&highlight=syllabub; "Inventory of Estate of Thomas Collier, 19 June 1705 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library," June 1705, http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=Probates\PB00770.xml&highlight=syllabub; "Inventory of Estate of William Bryan | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library," February 14, 1751, https://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=Probates\PB00631.xml&highlight=1750; "Inventory of Estate of William Dudley 1771, May 20 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library," May 20, 1771, http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=Probates\PB00011.xml&highlight=syllabub; "Inventory of Estate of William Hunter 1761, November 16 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library," November 16, 1761, http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=Probates\PB00162.xml&highlight=syllabub; "Inventory of the Estate of Thomas Bennet Decd. | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library," November 23, 1750, https://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=Probates\PB00507.xml&highlight=1750.

Personal experience as an intern with the Foodways Department of Colonial Williamsburg informs my understanding of reading recipe books, practical applications, measurement conversions, and the tools and experience required to make the recipes. Brick ovens, for instance take hours to preheat, which adds a greater appreciation for desserts that required baking. Using sugar was also more complicated historically and involved using a large mortar and pestle to grind it into the desired consistency. Finally, as a baker and cake decorator, my personal attempts with sugar work in the past and have failed more times than succeeded. These personal trials helped me understand the difficulty required to spin sugar or boil it to the correct consistency.

Historical Background on Sugar and Chocolate

The growing desire to present a variety of confections at the table grew partly out of the development of the sugar industry, a crop which would eventually become an economic powerhouse. In *Sweetness and Power*, Sidney Mintz traces the history of sugar to its earliest origins and discusses how eating habits and tastes changed as sugar became a dominant crop. Mintz connects the earliest sugar production by the Spanish in Santo Domingo to their importation of enslaved Africans to work those sugar plantations.[33] From the beginning of its mass production, sugar and slavery were intertwined. By 1516, the Spanish transported their first shipment of sugar from Santo Domingo.[34]

[33] Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 32.
[34] Mintz, 32.

Mintz notes the lucrative nature of sugar by comparing it to tobacco. By 1700, the value of sugar shipped to England was double that of tobacco, the major cash crop in Virginia.[35] As early as 1619, just over a decade after the founding of Jamestown, the English attempted to grow sugar cane there. This recognition of the potential profit of sugar prompted the attempt, though it was unable to grow in Jamestown. By 1625, Portugal was supplying most of Europe with sugar from Brazil.[36] By the 1640s, England began cultivating sugar on plantations in Barbados, and later Jamaica.[37] French competition against British sugar also existed until 1740 when the French won the European markets. The cultivation of sugar by multiple European countries across the ocean speaks to the globalization of the crop. In the seventeenth century, growing sugar and its export were less dependable and more expensive. This scarcity elevated the status of sugary confections.

One of the barriers to utilizing sugar for technical work such as molding and spinning it, was the quality of the sugar. The refining process was exhaustive and even after it was processed enough for sale, some recipe books with advanced techniques included additional steps to refine it further at home. In *The Sugar Barons*, Matthew Parker details the complicated job of processing cane into sugar, prior to shipment overseas.[38] Sugar cane was fed into vertical rollers, powered in the early days by work animals or men, then the green juice was collected for boiling. The boiling process was the most complicated step, involving several successive rounds of

[35] Mintz, 36.
[36] Mintz, 38.
[37] Mintz, 38.
[38] Matthew Parker, *The Sugar Barons: Family, Corruption, Empire, and War in the West Indies* (New York: Walker & Company, 2011), 33.

boiling the juice and skimming impurities off the top. Quicklime was added at a precise moment to aid the granulation process and the mixture was cooled. This mixture was placed in earthenware pots to allow the molasses to drain from the golden-brown sugar for a month. Finally, the golden-brown sugar was spread out in the sun to dry before being packed into hogsheads for shipment.

The production of sugar in the British Empire doubled between 1700 and 1800 while annual consumption more than quadrupled from four pounds per capita in the first decade of 1700 to eighteen pounds in the first decade of 1800.[39] As consumers increased consumption they also changed the way they used and treated sugar as a commodity. At first, sugar was categorized in the same group as spices. In an early personal recipe book from 1669 the author, Ann Charlotte Frescheville, noted in her instructions to "mingle the sugar and spice."[40] This combination of sugar and spice reflects its early use as a flavor additive, on par with spices. This use of sugar evolved in recipe books from a seasoning to a major component throughout the eighteenth century. The upper class could afford larger quantities of sugar during the early years of its production in the seventeenth century while the emerging middle class could only afford to use it sparingly in recipes.

During the early years of sugar production, there was no guarantee of sugar availability or standardized pricing. In 1645, war between the Portuguese and Dutch broke out in Brazil, resulting in the destruction of sugar cane and an escaped enslaved workforce.[41] This rebellion affected sugar prices, which increased dramatically. This

[39] Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*. Mintz, 67.
[40] Ann Charlotte Frescheville, *My Lady Freschevilles Receipt Booke* (England, 1669), 14, http://content.winterthur.org:2011/cdm/ref/collection/Recipes/id/394.
[41] Parker, *The Sugar Barons: Family, Corruption, Empire, and War in the West Indies*, 34.

early example of unreliable access to sugar exemplifies the difference between the truly elite who could afford the necessary ingredients for an impressive banquet, no matter the cost, and the middle class. Less sugar for the middle class meant fewer options for dessert. Access and affordability illustrate the early contrast between elite and middle-class consumers of sugar. As the eighteenth century progressed and sugar became increasingly available, less affected by local disruptions, and affordable, the middle class had greater access to the ingredient required for confections. At the same time, the elite favored complicated sugar techniques to differentiate themselves and commissioned more intricate structures of sugar.

The quality of sugar was a significant variable if a home cook attempted complicated sugar work. The best sugar in the mid-eighteenth century was thought to come from Lisbon and lesser quality sugar from Cuba and Jamaica.[42] There were several levels when it came to the quality of sugar, each required more refining than the next, including: molasses, muscovado, and clayed sugar (known as refined and double-refined). The first level of sugar refinement involved draining molasses, and the remains were known as muscovado.[43] This was a coarse, brown sugar and was the cheapest and lowest quality available.

Clayed sugar was sold as single or double-refined loaf sugar and involved additional steps. Figure 1 shows the refinement process which involved boiling the mixture and then required evaporation in "earthenware cones sealed with fine white porous clay and stored upside down."[44] This process was repeated for each level of

[42] Louise Conway Belden, *The Festive Tradition* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983), 104.
[43] Belden, 104.
[44] Belden, 104–5.

sugar, with the double-refined sugar standing out as the highest quality sugar, and the type that was used for fine sugar work.

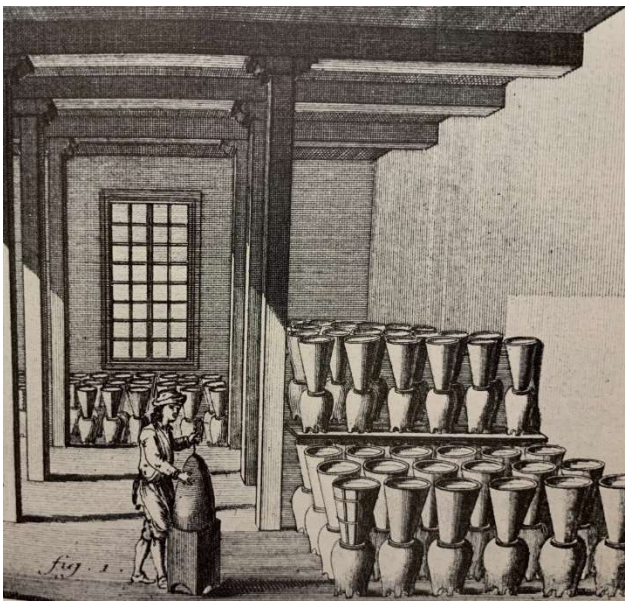

Figure 1 Sugar cones draining.

Early recipe books from the seventeenth century incorporated sugar into recipes, but in smaller quantities than recipe books in the eighteenth century. Food during the seventeenth and even early eighteenth centuries was tied closely to medicine. Early recipe books listed the virtues of certain ingredients, included multiple recipes for "waters" which acted as medicine, and gave directions on the ways to use these medicines. Toad lozenges, for instance, were made with equal parts sugar and powder of toads plus gum dragon and sack (wine).[45] While the ailment for the toad lozenges is not described, the physically taxing process of eating the lozenges and sweating for multiple hours across multiple days was the result of this sugary medicinal remedy.

This recipe involving toad powder may seem archaic, but other recipes listed in the same book include liquorice, "sillibub", cakes, and jams. Many medicinal recipes used sugar, which serves as a reminder that while sugar can be used to create gravity-defying centerpieces, at its core it improves the taste of most food and acts as a preservative.[46] As sugar became more accessible, it was seen less as a luxury good;

[45] Frescheville, *My Lady Freschevilles Receipt Booke*, 92.
[46] Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 78.

nevertheless, recipes for dessert and confections increased over time. New additions to recipe books came in the form of displayable desserts. The variety of ingredients in desserts including the incorporation of citrus, chocolate, coffee, and nuts also increased.

The incorporation of chocolate into recipes like chocolate creams came long after the initial introduction of chocolate to Europe. Chocolate was originally a strong Aztec drink. Early marriages between European colonists and Maya women exposed them to the chocolate drink.[47] The Spanish repurposed the Aztec drink and made the temperature hotter, sweetened it with sugar cane, and replaced the chili pepper with more familiar spices like cinnamon, anise seed, and black pepper.[48] The Spanish viewed chocolate as a medicinal drink that could "cure physical maladies, assuage emotional discomfort, bind people with social ties, proclaim honor, or allow catharsis."[49] These beliefs stemmed from the pre-Columbian American spiritual uses of chocolate.

Chocolate solidified its popularity in Spain by the early seventeenth century. Chocolate "had a significant presence in Iberia by the 1590s, and had spread northward by the 1620s."[50] Chocolate became popular before coffee, which did not gain solid popularity until the 1650s, and before tea, which was popular by the end of the seventeenth century.[51] The Spanish had access to the finest chocolate as opposed

[47] Norton, "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics," 677.
[48] Norton, 668.
[49] Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World*, 12.
[50] Norton, "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics," 666.
[51] Norton, 666.

to American colonists in the eighteenth century who had difficulty acquiring good-quality chocolate. The difficulty Americans faced was a result of the long journey processed chocolate took across the Atlantic. Making chocolate in small quantities was not complicated, but did require special knowledge and tools.

The chocolate-making process begins with the cacao tree, which grows in rainforests, and grows large pods with hard husks that encase seeds.[52] The pods are cut open and seeds are spread out to ferment. After several weeks of drying, the seeds can then be shipped or processed into chocolate.[53] The next step involves roasting the cacao seeds, removing the light shell, and then crushing and grinding the cacao nibs (small pieces of cacao seeds) over heat into a smooth liquified state. The final step of crushing the nibs is done on a stone *metate.*[54] Milk, sugar, and spices were then added to taste. The chocolate was then allowed to cool in small boxes or formed into tablets.[55] Figure 2 is a sketch from the journal of the Earl of Sandwich in the 1660s, depicting the process of crushing the "cacao" nuts.[56]

The chocolate-making process was labor-intensive and time-consuming, plus a cold climate was favorable for allowing chocolate to harden. Early American chocolate manufacturers were concentrated in the north and used millstones to grind the chocolate in larger portions than the handmade version pictured above.[57] Millers supplemented their regular business grinding coffee, wheat, and mustard with the

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[52] Amanda Lange, "Sweet Concoctions: Ceramics for Chocolate Drinking In Early America," *American Ceramic Circle Journal* 17 (2013): 4.
[53] Lange, 4.
[54] Lange, 4.
[55] Kate Loveman, "The Introduction of Chocolate into England: Retailers, Researchers, and Consumers, 1640-1730," *Journal of Social History, Oxford University Press* 47, no. 1 (Fall 2013): 30.
[56] Loveman, 34.
[57] Lange, "Sweet Concoctions: Ceramics for Chocolate Drinking In Early America," 6.

production of chocolate.[58] Early references to chocolate in colonial America come from the late seventeenth century, but became more popular and accessible by the late eighteenth century.[59] Though chocolate was consumed in a more popular fashion by the end of the eighteenth century, the quality was not up to the standards of Americans who had tasted Spanish chocolate overseas. The differentiating factor when considering the consumption and presentation of chocolate was the quality of ingredients and the material objects used to make and drink it.

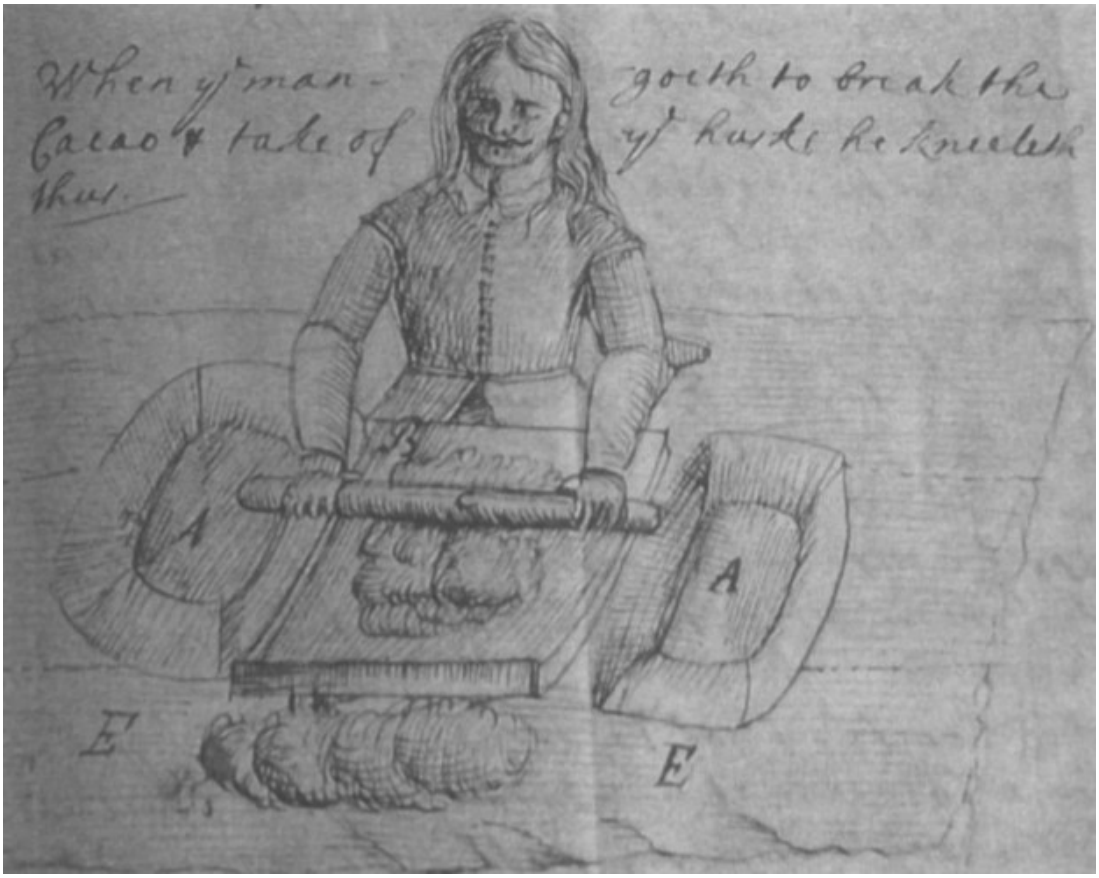

Figure 2 Chocolate-making sketch, 1660s.

[58] Lange, 6.
[59] Lange, 6.

Chapter 1: Observations Overseas

In 1797 a "magnificent display of sugar" with dazzling edible golden columns and sugar roses was presented to a crowd of over 300 guests.[60] The host was given the highest compliments for elegance and taste that have "never been equalled in this city."[61] This elaborate display of sugar was not presented in a European court, but in New York City for the honored guest, President John Adams. This showstopper represents the culmination of American attempts to replicate desserts presented in Europe. Americans had long-desired to emulate sugar displays and their positive social impact that they observed overseas, but they were challenged by access to fine ingredients and decorative serving pieces.

Dessert served a social function. It was a luxurious addition to the meal and allowed the host to prove how much money and access to confectionary talent they had. Confectioners were commissioned to create towers of desserts or intricate scenes with elaborate sugar artwork. For instance, sugar paste could be molded into shapes. Sugar could also be boiled to a specific point and spun to create webs to adorn other desserts. Using sugar in such intricate ways, first required a trained professional confectioner, second it required fine quality sugar which needed multiple steps of refinement, and finally it required the appropriate serving trays and objects to display the dessert.

[60] "The Entertainment Given by the Citizens of New-York to John Adams President of the United States," *Commercial Advertiser*, October 19, 1797, no. 16 edition, America's Historical Newspapers.
[61] "The Entertainment Given by the Citizens of New-York to John Adams President of the United States."

While Americans were awed by the displays of dessert in Europe and wanted to bring this dessert culture back to America, they were limited by several obstacles. There were few trained confectioners in America and the quality of the sugar was poor in comparison to the kind used in Europe. Finally, the beautiful serving dishes were difficult to buy in America. Only wealthy Americans with connections overseas could purchase such objects through a friend or family member and have them shipped. The quality of ingredients, like sugar and chocolate, also remained an issue in America until after the Revolution when new trade agreements were drawn up.

The earliest examples of impressive displays of dessert come from royal banquets and events attended by the elite in Europe. Showstopping displays of dessert were status symbols of royalty in Europe. Dessert was a social event, first presented at large formal events, then becoming more intimate in private homes with a host's own take on dessert presentations. Besides sugar, chocolate was another experiential food that was first introduced to royalty. This form of chocolate that was served to royals and their court was similar to the early Aztec drink and was not diluted by additives. Similar to confectionary displays, as the elite class took an interest, the drink recipe was altered, but the social gathering and experience of drinking the chocolate held the same meaning. This process of diluting the chocolate with cheaper ingredients like milk and sugar reflects a larger trend that continued in America involving the repurposing of fine dessert to suit the needs of a lower level of society.

Displays of dessert and chocolate-drinking ceremonies represented the height of leisure for royalty, which the elite class soon emulated. Americans observed and participated in elite events in the home and in public at chocolate houses. This dessert

consumption influenced their future purchasing habits and interest in trade across the Atlantic.

Chocolate has a long history and before it appeared in a diluted form in English chocolate houses, the tradition of drinking chocolate was passed from the pre-Columbian American to the Spanish, as argued by Marcy Norton in *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures* and "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics". Thousands of pounds of chocolate were shipped to Spain each year by the 1620s.[62] The material objects used to prepare frothy chocolate and serve it to guests were adopted by the Spanish. The confluence of global trade and the significance of material objects in the consumption of chocolate can be seen in Figure 3.[63]

Norton elaborates on the purpose of each object in the preparation of chocolate. While all three cups in the image range in size and design, they are all chocolate cups. She points out that two are made of Iberian ceramics and the other imported from Asia.[64] This still life relays the elevated presentation of the chocolate in Europe. The 1652 date indicates how early chocolate arrived and became popular in Spain. The painting also reflects the global market associated with elite consumers.

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[62] Norton, "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics," 670.

[63] Antonio Pereda, *Still Life with an Ebony Chest*, 1652, The State Hermitage Museum, https://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/01.%20Paintings/32672/!ut/p/z1/jZBNT8MwDIb_Cjv0SOKmTVt2i4LEGBuZJj5CLqibujaoTao0rBK_noC4gKDMN0uPXz82VlhiZcqjrkuvrSnb0D-p7FkwlsUJh6Xg9BKY2G7olt9eQZzix08A_igGWJ0yPwGo6fjlfwvCBcSt-brGqi99c67NwWIJMTrblNp4beoBy4RkOQku6kfa9U0e0u7oQogHTnj6BUz76F2Hxn2HAFFCIU4uAIqc5GmRfcgws0uKIOOqQ-Uqh15d-HLjfT_MI4hgHEdUW1u3FdrbLoLfRho7eCy_k7jv7uXbagEvtD2u2Gz2DoS0oCE!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?lng=en&lng=.

[64] Norton, "Tasting Empire: Chocolate and the European Internalization of Mesoamerican Aesthetics," 685.

Figure 3 Antonio de Pereda, Still Life with an Ebony Chest, 1652.

In contrast to the intimate chocolate imagery, a presentation by Cardinal Wolsey at Hampton Court in the early sixteenth century represents an early example of elaborate sugar work. He commissioned intricate displays of edible figures and buildings along with a chess set to impress French guests. The second course included "subtleties and curious devices, which were above a hundred in number…there were castles…Paul's church and steeple."[65] The description goes on to include figurines of animals and people. Subtleties is an early term used for figures or scenes made of sugar and served between courses of a meal.[66] The subtleties invoked a sense of

[65] George Cavendish, *The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1905), 64.
[66] "Subtlety, n.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed May 14, 2018, http://www.oed.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/view/Entry/193191.

wonder and art required by professionals to create the many pieces involved in the display.

An engraving of a party table at Versailles depicts the towering spreads that were presented by royals in Europe in the seventeenth century. Figure 4 shows numerous pyramids of fruit presented by Louis XIV for guests.[67] The towering displays highlight the importance of fruit in seventeenth and eighteenth-century dessert. The height and shape of these pyramids was replicated in later dessert displays. While complex sugar work is not the star in this figure, the engraving is a reminder that fruit was a delectable treat for the wealthy and could be served by itself in an elevated manner. This engraving showcases the importance of height and quantity when considering the impact of a dessert display.

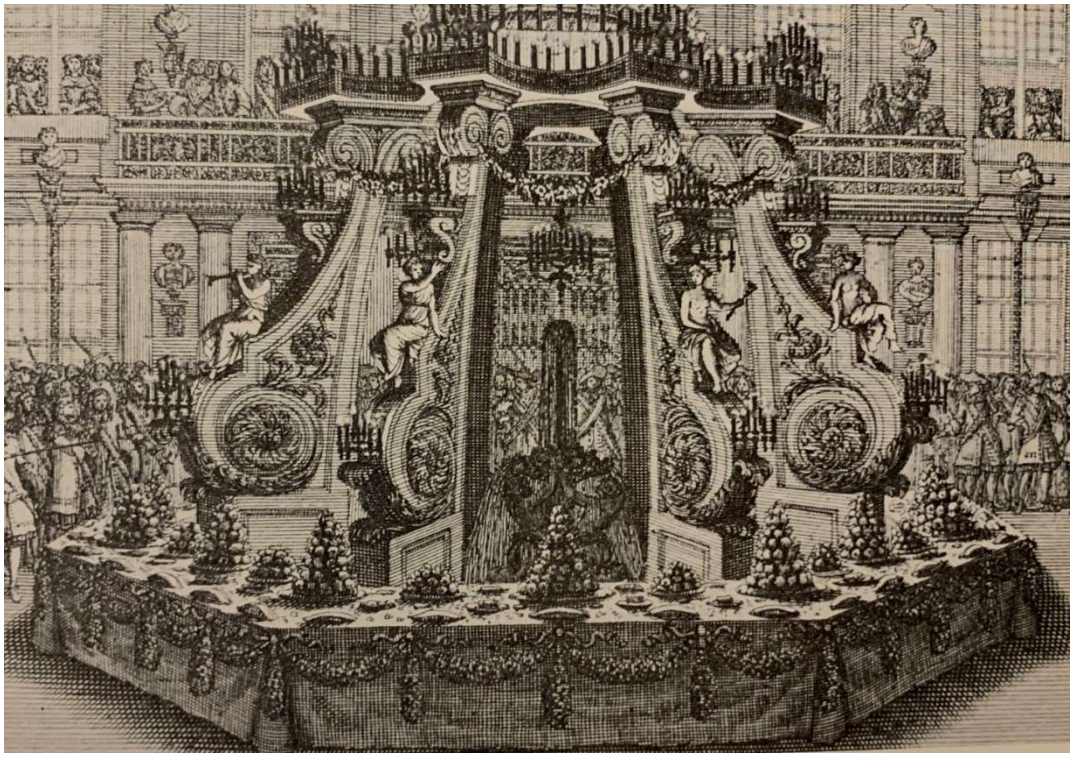

Figure 4 Party table in the courtyard at Versailles, 1676.

[67] Belden, *The Festive Tradition*, 229.

A magnificent display of marzipan figurines was presented for Anna Ivanovna, empress of Russia, for her forty-third birthday in 1735. *The Daily Courant* published a full account of the festivities including a description of the elaborate display of "marchpane".[68] The marchpane, known as marzipan, display "covered the whole table, and was made in the form of a parterre, composed of 43 statues, indicating her Czarian majesty's years."[69] The formal parterre garden theme evokes images of grandeur, symmetry, and impressive patterns forming interlocking shapes. The garden display may have looked something like Figure 5.[70] It depicts a sketch for a sugar display from Joseph Gilliers, from his publication Le Cannameliste Francais first printed in 1751 and later printed in 1768.[71]

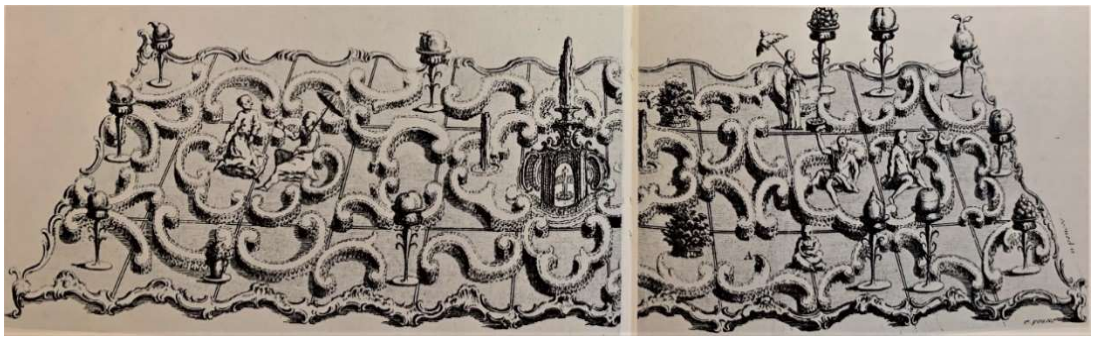

Figure 5 Sketch from Le Cannameliste Francais, 1768.

At the empress of Russia's birthday event, the dinner was described, "as much delicacy as profusion," which was no doubt similar to the impression of the dessert.[72] A ball then followed the dessert presentation. Creativity and drama were musts when it came to presenting a dessert display, as evidenced in the sketch of a dessert garden,

[68] "Warsaw, Feb. 10 N.S.," *Daily Courant*, February 27, 1735, Issue 5899 edition, 17th-18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers.
[69] "Warsaw, Feb. 10 N.S."; "Anna | Empress of Russia," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed September 2, 2019, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Anna-empress-of-Russia.
[70] Belden, *The Festive Tradition*, 72.
[71] Belden, 72.
[72] "Warsaw, Feb. 10 N.S."

presumably similar to the one presented to Anna Ivanovna. The scene combines expertise in sugar work, pastry, and an eye for detail. The garden seen in Figure 5 is presented on a mirrored plateau, which reflected light in the room and added drama to the scene.[73] Plateaus became a coveted item that was purchased for dessert presentations.

While always eye-catching, not all royal dessert displays were as tasteful as they were tasty. The power of shock and awe come to mind when considering the christening cake for the grandson of Louis XIV. The cake was formed into a vagina, which hid movable mechanized parts to simulate birth.[74] This creative endeavor certainly caught the guests' attention and was a conversation starter. Legendary dessert presentations lingered in a guest's mind and any reaction, whether positive or negative created a strong impression of the event.

Elaborate and time-consuming edible works of art were a special treat for the elite who were lucky enough to be invited to such a momentous event. The average consumption of dessert by an elite member of European society often involved a visit to a chocolate house or a coffee house to drink chocolate and socialize. This thread of dessert as a social experience in the chocolate house parallels the use of dessert as a conversation starter at royal events.

While chocolate had a strong presence early on in Spain, the chocolate house first appeared in England in the 1650s and became firmly established by the 1690s.[75]

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[73] Belden, *The Festive Tradition*, 73; "Plateau, n.1 and Adj.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed September 2, 2019, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/145352.
[74] Catherine Slessor, "Let Them Eat Cake," *Architectural Review* 244, no. 1455 (October 2018): 116–19.
[75] Loveman, "The Introduction of Chocolate into England: Retailers, Researchers, and Consumers, 1640-1730," 8, 30.

The emergence of chocolate in coffee houses and chocolate houses brought on new recipes with additives like milk and eggs.[76] This transformed the flavor of the original drink which was prepared with spices and a higher concentration of chocolate for King Charles II and courtiers who followed his lead.[77] The drink became more affordable as the amount of chocolate was diluted by additives, but the social space of the chocolate house was visited by the elite as a gathering place for men to socialize.

The London diary of William Byrd II reveals his experience as an American chocolate-lover in London and as a man interested in frequent socialization. Byrd is just one man, but much can be gleaned from his detailed diary, and some of his habits represent norms for the elite in London. Born in Virginia, and a member of the planter elite, he spent much of his youth in England for his education.[78] After spending a decade back in Virginia, he returned to England in 1715 and remained there until 1720.[79] His London diary tracks his daily meals, socializing, and numerous sexual encounters. He was someone who appreciated and enjoyed dessert, making him an ideal diarist to track the consumption of sweets in London.

Byrd frequented several chocolate and coffee houses over the years, including St. James Coffeehouse, Will's Coffeehouse, the Cocoa Tree, Ozinda's Chocolate House, Virginia's Coffeehouse, and White's Chocolate House.[80] He went out to drink chocolate almost every day. On May 3, 1718 he had such a craving for chocolate that

[76] Loveman, 39.
[77] Loveman, 39.
[78] Thomas L. Long and Martin H. Quitt, "Byrd, William (1674–1744)," Encyclopedia Virginia, accessed September 2, 2019, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Byrd_William_1674-1744.
[79] Long and Quitt.
[80] Marion Tinling, *The London Diary 1717-1721 and Other Writings : William Byrd of Virginia*, 1958, 55, 59, 90, 98, 104, 135.

he visited three of his frequent spots in one night.[81] He describes the consumption of chocolate as drinking "dishes" of chocolate and even noted when he had multiple servings and drank two dishes.[82] Figure 6 shows an example of a chocolate pot made in England, an object that Byrd would have been quite familiar with.[83]

His visits to the chocolate and coffee houses were so frequent that it became routine, suggesting that drinking chocolate was as habitual as it was social. As his chocolate consumption became more regular, he also began consuming a variety of other desserts in addition to his chocolate habit. He had glasses of jelly, milk and cake, cheesecake, and apple pasties in the chocolate and coffee houses.[84] In the private setting of acquaintances' homes the dessert was more simplistic in presentation, but equally delicious. He noted the apple pie, cake, and raspberries and cream he consumed in the homes of friends.[85] Finally, in the most private space of his own home, one morning he ate both chocolate and cake for breakfast on December 23, 1719.[86]

Figure 6 Chocolate pot, England, 1708-1709.

[81] Tinling, 115.
[82] Tinling, 61.
[83] "Chocolate Pot," Colonial Williamsburg Online Collections, 1709 1708, http://emuseum.history.org/view/objects/asitem/search@/2/title-asc?t:state:flow=6e536f52-dd21-4606-b28d-e47b153da304.
[84] Tinling, *The London Diary 1717-1721 and Other Writings : William Byrd of Virginia*, 76, 188, 265, 303.
[85] Tinling, 79, 91, 137.
[86] Tinling, 355.

Based on the consistent style of his diary entries, which notes his daily food consumption and his whereabouts morning, afternoon, and evening, Byrd paints a picture of a man incorporating daily dessert into his routine. Most days he partook in the social setting of the coffee or chocolate house in the evening, though changed up his orders occasionally. When visiting friends and acquaintances in their homes, larger sharable desserts like cake were often noted.

The public consumption of dessert was often more individualized. A "dish" of chocolate and a "glass" of jelly were presented to the customer in their own serving size. In the public sphere, consumption of dessert involved more refined ingredients, like chocolate, while dessert consumed with a few friends or in the private home involved less impressive ingredients and fewer serving-specific objects. A friend might serve dessert to guests on plates, easily acquired by anyone, in the private home. Dishes for chocolate and glasses for jelly are meant for the consumption of a specific dessert, making these material goods less necessary in the home, but more impressive if one could afford them. Cakes and pies could easily be served on dinnerware already owned in the private home.

While Byrd did not describe any impressive towers of sugar work, his constant consumption of dessert is a reminder that dessert displays were meant for special occasions. His everyday dessert experience was quite rich in terms of sugar consumed, time spent socializing over dessert, and a daily monetary expenditure. As a wealthy man in London, he no doubt socialized with his peers in the public space of the chocolate and coffee house. Byrd's dessert consumption habits in London highlight an elite male's experience in the early eighteenth century. Towards the end

of the eighteenth century, women had a new opportunity to experience a similar social space to delight in their dessert.

An innovative space called a lactarium was established outside of London as a space where "ladies and gentlemen may be supplied with new milk from the cow" and syllabub was offered "any time, if her customers bring their own wine."[87] The owner, Elizabeth Hannever, used this 1772 newspaper advertisement as a way to introduce readers to the newly opened lactarium near the obelisk in St. George's Fields. The lactarium was marketed as a social space that offered fresh milk and customers had the option to make it more delicious by bringing their own alcohol to mix in the milk. The social atmosphere puts it in a similar category as a coffee or chocolate house. Hannever notes that a daily paper was available to her customers, which also draws similarities to coffee and chocolate houses.

It seems likely that the lactarium was a response to the male-dominated coffee and chocolate houses. A newspaper advertisement published one year later notes the same lactarium in in St. George's Field, but the author's moniker was dramatized to now be Lactaria. Lactaria, AKA Elizabeth Hannever, cleverly cultivated her persona and called herself the "inventress" of the lactarium.[88] Always the entrepreneur, she asks the reader to recommend the lactarium to people in town for the holidays and boarding school ladies. She offers up the lactarium as a safe space during lightning storms and announces that disorderly people will not be tolerated. This theme of a safe space for women is reiterated in another advertisement in 1774 which begins

[87] "The New Lactarium," *Middlesex Journal or Universal Evening Post*, July 30, 1772, Issue 508 edition, 17th-18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers.
[88] "Lactaria, the Inventress of the Lactarium," *Public Advertiser*, December 18, 1773, Issue 12063 edition, 17th-18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers.

"Ladies may go by themselves" to the lactarium.[89] The advertisement also highlights the syllabub, fresh air, and newspapers available. She uses language like "dignified" and "no disorderly persons", to build trust that this is was a space meant for the peaceful consumption of dessert and polite conversation.

Yet another creative and witty advertisement by the owner from 1774 plays with the word "bub" and directly addresses the coffee house competition. Her lactarium defines the term as, "West India syllabub, viz. made from rum instead of wine."[90] She jokingly hopes that this will be added to the dictionary definition of bub. She elevates her establishment by stating that bub "is better than a doctor at the coffee-house."[91] This direct jab at the coffee house insinuates the competition between the two spaces, one as a social space for men and the other as a safe space for ladies and gentlemen. Like Byrd used chocolate and coffee houses to get his fill of sugar and socializing, the lactarium offered the same for ladies.

The target audience of this very specific space was ladies and gentlemen interested in the country air, social company, and some light newspaper reading. While disorderly patrons were not welcome, there was no specific barrier to entry, making access to this fresh syllabub quite open to anyone interested in mingling with others. Women had fewer public spaces to socialize and drink than men did and the lactarium filled a void. It is likely that the lactarium catered to wealthy guests, like the

[89] "Ladies May Go by Themselves to the Lactarium," *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, July 27, 1774, Issue 1615 edition, 17th-18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers.
[90] "Bub, (a Cant Word) Strong Malt Liquor," *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, July 14, 1774, Issue 1604 edition, 17th-18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers.
[91] "Bub, (a Cant Word) Strong Malt Liquor."

chocolate houses did for Byrd, but the lactarium may have been an everyday space for enjoying beautiful and tasty dessert.

The lactarium is a mysterious entity that does not appear outside these newspaper advertisements. Depending on the clientele, it could have served well-off ladies who were familiar with syllabub. It is also possible that middle-class women might have visited in the hopes of emulating the elite. Maybe this space was a confluence of several classes who could partake in the fresh milk served, or elevate their drink by bringing fine wine or rum. The quality of the drink depended on whether the customer could afford to bring their own alcohol.

One final mystery associated with the lactarium is the owner. While the newspaper advertisements call out the owner as Elizabeth Hannever, a remembrance of Samuel Crisp, written decades after his death, notes his involvement in the lactarium. It states that "He was the institutor of the Lactarium in St. George's Fields, and selected the Latin mottoes for the facetious Mrs. Henniver, who got a little fortune there."[92] It is unclear if Crisp was writing under the guise of being the woman who claimed to invent the lactarium or if he was a business partner. Either way, the popularity of dessert was growing in the late eighteenth century and the owner of the lactarium found multiple years of success in the syllabub business. This growing popularity for dessert in the late eighteenth century coincided with numerous American visitors to Europe who experienced the wonder of fine confection and desired to bring it home with them.

[92] William Hone, *The Every-Day Book; or Everlasting Calendar of Popular Amusements*, vol. 1 (London, England: Hunt and Clarke, 1826), 102–3, https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433000983399.

During John Adams' visit to Spain in 1779 he observed the height of dessert consumption in an elaborate chocolate ceremony. Adams saw the "ladies drink chocolate in the Spanish fashion," which involved multiple serving trays and cups. First, glasses of cold water were served by a servant on a salver along with a plate of sugar pieces.[93] The ladies each took a glass and dipped their sugar into the water, ate the sugar and then drank the water. Next, the servant brought another salver with cups of hot chocolate. Each lady drank her cup of chocolate and then cakes, bread, and butter were served. Finally, each lady drank a second cup of cold water.[94]

Adams observed this impressive show of chocolate consumption amongst the wives of diplomats and elite businessmen. Their status was elevated further by their knowledge of drinking chocolate, which was more sophisticated than it was in America. The process of drinking the chocolate was a shared knowledge amongst the ladies and Adams' interest in the dining performance reveals the difference between his basic knowledge of chocolate and their elevated experiences.

The salvers, used as serving trays in this instance, added elegance, especially for the basic water that sat atop the tray. Objects like salvers and glasses called attention to the host's knowledge of refined chocolate consumption. Outsiders, such as Adams, only gained this knowledge through observation. With this new understanding of dessert consumption, he translated this knowledge into action and could implement the use of serving objects as presentation pieces. The stark contrast between a small cup of chocolate and multiple salvers of not just chocolate, but clean

[93] John Adams, "Autobiography of John Adams, December 22, 1779" (December 22, 1779), The Adams Papers Digital Edition, ed. Sara Martin. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/ADMS-01-04-02-0002-0020.
[94] Adams.

water, sugar, cakes, and bread differentiates the presentation between America and Europe. When Adams arrived in Spain he was shocked at the difference in the taste of the chocolate as well.

Two weeks prior to his observance of the chocolate ceremony, Adams gushed about his first experience tasting Spanish chocolate, which he notes lived up to all the worldwide hype. He described it as "so delicious and salubrious" and put it in a class of its own when compared to other chocolate.[95] Gouverneur Morris provides another example of an American who noted the high-quality ingredients overseas. He wrote in his diary in 1795, while in France, that "we have as fine a desert after dinner as I have seen peaches apricots plumbs grapes pears melons and pines."[96] At first glance, this description of the dessert appears simple, but given the earlier engraving of the fruit display at Versailles, this was an impressive dessert. The variety and quantity of fruit stand out as indicators of wealth.

As a wealthy statesman, Morris was familiar with desserts displayed at the homes of friends and colleagues. In France he had greater access to sugar displays and delicious pastries. His interest in the fruit is a reminder that while outstanding displays were memorable, simple and delicious desserts are always enjoyable. Fruit as dessert did not require complicated skills from a cook or confectioner, but money and access to the ripe fruit would prove ones' elite status. This reference shows that the scarcity of ingredients themselves contributed to the elevated status of dessert.

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[95] John Adams, "John Adams Diary 10 December 1779," The Adams Papers Digital Edition, ed. Sara Martin. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018., accessed October 13, 2018, http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/ADMS-01-04-02-0002-0009.

[96] Gouverneur Morris, "The Diaries of Gouverneur Morris" (September 26, 1795), The Diaries of Gouverneur Morris Digital Edition, ed. Melanie Randolph Miller. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2015., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GRMS-01-01-02-0002-0009-0026.

While America did have access to many of the same ingredients required for the confections seen overseas, the Europeans had a sophisticated style of presenting dessert and higher quality ingredients. The flavors, presentation objects, and technically trained confectioners the Europeans had at their disposal, put them in a different class of elite status. While some Americans may have been wealthy or had political clout, they yearned for access to the impressive displays they observed overseas. The ability to incorporate some of the European refinement into their American dining rooms signaled a heightened level of elite status. Even without the finest ingredients, Americans also used dessert as a social space to continue the conversation and engage their guests.

During a visit to Thomas Jefferson's Monticello in 1809, Margaret Bayard Smith wrote that after dinner, "the dessert is not removed; the wine freely, but not rapidly circulated round the table, and the ladies do not withdraw."[97] She notes the special time after dinner where sweets and conversation were shared amongst the guests. She suggests that Jefferson was most social during these hours. Jefferson used dessert as an incentive to keep the conversation going and encourage guests to indulge. Jefferson's obsession with presenting impressive dessert is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three. An earlier social gathering attended by John Adams confirms that efforts to impress guests with dessert were noticed by the guests themselves.

[97] Margaret Bayard Smith, "Margaret Bayard Smith's Account of a Visit to Monticello" (August 29, 1809), n. 8, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition*, ed. James P. McClure and J. Jefferson Looney. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/TSJN-03-01-02-0315.

In September 1774, Adams noted one particularly bountiful dessert display served in Philadelphia by Mr. Benjamin Chew, the Chief Justice of the province as:

> Turttle, and every other Thing—Flummery, Jellies, Sweetmeats of 20 sorts, Trifles, Whip'd Syllabubbs, floating Islands, fools—&c., and then a Desert of Fruits, Raisins, Almonds, Pears, Peaches—Wines most excellent and admirable.[98]

While there is a long list of sweet options, Adams makes the distinction that the "desert" refers to the fruit and nuts. This suggests that savory dishes were served alongside the list of sweet treats that would be referred to as dessert today. Based on his description, the jellies, sweetmeats, syllabubs, and other sugary foods may have been served alongside the savory meal.

The word "turttle" likely refers to a sea turtle which was probably part of the meal and signifies the height of luxury at the time. The eighteenth century saw a rise in the status of the turtle from a necessary food for seafarers to a delicacy and a symbol of refinement.[99] The image displayed on a pastry cook's trade card from 1765 provides additional evidence for the idea that turtle and other savory dishes were served alongside sweet treats like syllabub.[100] Figure 7 shows a table with a turtle, a tureen of soup, and a centerpiece of stacked salvers with syllabub.[101] This image presented a similar picture that Adams described at his meal as a guest in Philadelphia.

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[98] John Adams, "John Adams Diary 22 September 1774" (September 22, 1774), The Adams Papers Digital Edition, ed. Sara Martin. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/ADMS-01-02-02-0004-0006-0023.
[99] India Mandelkern, "The Politics of the Turtle Feast in 18th-Century England," January 31, 2019, https://brewminate.com/the-politics-of-the-turtle-feast-in-18th-century-england/.
[100] Belden, *The Festive Tradition*, 163.
[101] Belden, 163.

The flummery (a type of whipped, creamy jelly), jellies, trifles, and syllabub served at the event all required serving dishes specific to those desserts.[102] Mary Randolph's 1824 recipe for flummery noted that it should be cooled in a mold, turned onto a dish, and had cream poured around it.[103] According to Randolph, the ideal serving dish for trifle was a deep dish and a bowl was the proper dish for floating island.[104] An example of a trifle dish, with sparkling decoration can be seen in Figure 8.[105] Cone-shaped glasses would have been used for the syllabub and jelly, similar to those seen in Figure 7. This long list of unique glassware and ceramics was a clue to guests of the purchasing power Benjamin Chew had at his disposal. Access to purchase these wares, not all of which were easy to come by, and the

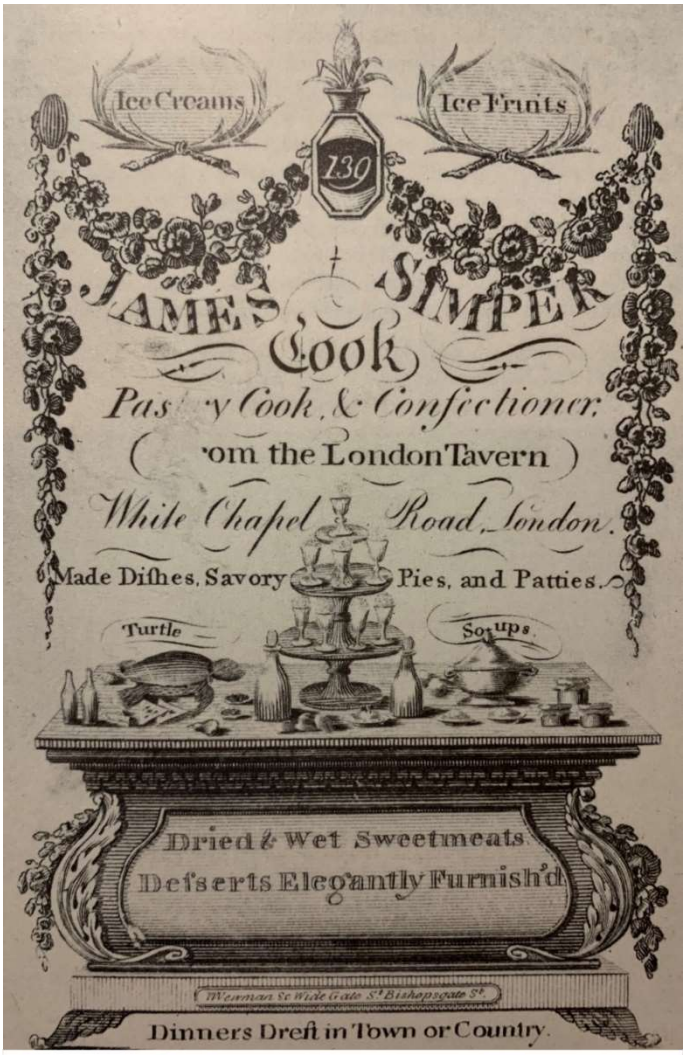

Figure 7 Pastry cook trade card with turtle, syllabub, and soup, circa 1765.

[102] "Flummery, n.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed September 9, 2019, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/72119.
[103] Mary Randolph, *The Virginia Housewife or, Methodical Cook* (New York, N.Y.: Dover Publications, Inc., n.d.), 119.
[104] Randolph, 147.
[105] Belden, *The Festive Tradition*, 141.

money to purchase them elevated his status. Not only was the variety impressive, but the number of glittering glasses on the table would have been visually stunning as well.

While Adams was always attuned to dessert presentations, there were times that sugar was not readily accessible. In a letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams in September 1777, she references her worries associated with the war and also shares everyday struggles. She notes the local progress in grinding corn and boiling the "liquor into molasses" and considers whether it could be further "boild down to sugar."[106] She notes the purpose of these attempts to make sweetener in order to avoid borrowing foreign luxuries. She also stated that she only used sugar "as a rarity."[107] The Revolutionary War years impacted the creation and consumption of dessert.

Figure 8 Trifle dish, England, 1790-1820.

These attempts to refine molasses into sugar speak to American dependence on foreign trade for not only sugar, but also molasses. Displays of dessert were dependent on the economic situation of the day. Sugar work depends on fine quality sugar that has been refined multiple times. The objects used to display dessert, as noted in the Philadelphia dinner above, were purchased goods that were impacted by

[106] Abigail Adams, "Abigail Adams to John Adams 24 September 1777," The Adams Papers Digital Edition, ed. Sara Martin. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018., accessed October 13, 2018, http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/ADMS-04-02-02-0279.
[107] Adams.

the economy of the time or they were inherited. Americans had less access to the ingredients and objects needed to replicate dessert displays.

Purchasing decisions in the Adams household were informed by their experience dining with peers in America, but more importantly, by John Adams' experience overseas. The chocolate drinking ceremony he witnessed in Spain in 1779 involved multiple trays and serving pieces. The serving objects used in Europe left an impression on Adams, as evidenced six years later in 1785 when Thomas Jefferson made a purchase in Paris on behalf of Abigail Adams. He purchased for the Adams family, "three plateau de dessert with a silvered ballustrade round them."[108] While this plateau was likely smaller in size than the one used for the Empress of Russia's dessert garden scene, it had ties to refined presentations in Europe. Plateaus were often mirrored surfaces and were admired in America following the Revolution.[109] Plateaus not only served as presentation pieces for desserts, but some also held figures from classical mythology.[110] The plateau purchased for the Adams family could transform a simple dessert made by a home cook into an impressive showpiece. The consumer interests of the Adams family were influenced by John Adams' earlier travels to Europe and the strong impression dessert presentations had on him.

Adams' enthrallment with the Spanish chocolate translated not only into his material purchasing habits, but also economic opportunities to bring high-quality ingredients to America. Correspondence between Adams and Jefferson points to the

[108] Thomas Jefferson, "From Thomas Jefferson to Abigail Adams, 25 September 1785," Founders Online, National Archives, accessed August 31, 2019, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-08-02-0428.
[109] Belden, *The Festive Tradition*, 63.
[110] Belden, 63.

complicated process of obtaining fine chocolate in America. Jefferson notes that the chocolate turned rancid quickly, making it difficult to come by fresh chocolate in America.[111] Jefferson's solution was to find a way to receive one shipment of the chocolate from the country of agricultural origin, rather than receive it from Europe, which took longer. Jefferson includes fine chocolate among other ingredients like coffee, sugar, ginger, and ginseng in his discussion of streamlining trade to America from countries like Brazil.

This economic correspondence between Jefferson and Adams appears tactical when considered out of context of dessert, but it is a reminder that America was far behind Europe in terms of receiving shipments of food and material goods. A French visitor to Rhode Island in 1780 confirmed a similar state of low-quality sugar. The visitor noted that "the kind of sugar they use marks generally poverty of richness."[112] This eye-witness account confirms that the issues Abigail Adams described attempting to refine sugar were persistent. The desire to have quality ingredients and objects related to dessert was strong at the elite level. Elite Americans were envious of Europeans who could buy finer quality items if they could afford it. In America, access to these goods was an issue. A rich man in America could not obtain fine chocolate, even if he could afford it. Those who did find a way to obtain chocolate and superior serving trays in America revealed their connections overseas and ensured high standing in American society.

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[111] Thomas Jefferson, "From Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, 27 November 1785," November 27, 1785, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition*, ed. James P. McClure and J. Jefferson Looney. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/TSJN-01-09-02-0051.
[112] Belden, *The Festive Tradition*, 104.

Though chocolate in America was not as rich and fine in quality as Spanish chocolate, it was nevertheless a desirable drink. George Washington's affinity for chocolate is evident based on numerous shipments of chocolate and how often it was served at Mount Vernon. In 1779, Juan de Miralles, a Spanish agent to the U.S., gave Washington several "trifles" including a box with "20 cakes of chocolate without sugar for their better preservation in the hot season, and that every body might sweeten them according to his own taste."[113] The shipment of the chocolate without sugar reiterates the point Jefferson and Adams made about the difficulty retaining the quality of the chocolate during the long journey across the Atlantic.

This gift of chocolate was a special treat for Washington, but he later made an effort to bring larger quantities of chocolate to Mount Vernon. A decade after this chocolate gift, Tobias Lear ordered 25 pounds of "chocolate shells" sent to Mount Vernon, to be charged to the account of the president.[114] More correspondence related to this large shipment identified the "shells" as "cocoa nut shels."[115] By ordering "cocoa nut" shells directly, Washington was possibly experimenting with chocolate-making at Mount Vernon. The question of whether chocolate was made at Mount Vernon is debatable, and chocolate scholars argue instead that Martha Washington used the shells to make a steeped tea-like drink.[116] In general, chocolate

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[113] Juan de Miralles, "From Juan de Miralles to George Washington 22 May 1779," May 22, 1779, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-03-20-02-0523.
[114] Tobias Lear, "From Tobias Lear to Clement Biddle 14 September 1789," September 14, 1789, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-05-04-02-0018.
[115] Lear, n. 4.
[116] Lange, "Sweet Concoctions: Ceramics for Chocolate Drinking In Early America," 17; "The Washingtons and Chocolate," George Washington's Mount Vernon, accessed October 6, 2019, https://www.mountvernon.org/inn/recipes/the-washingtons-and-chocolate/.

manufacturers were located in the north and ran larger operations.[117] However, Washington liked to experiment with drink and constructed a distillery in 1798.[118] He did have a gristmill on site and mills were used by chocolate makers. While large-scale production of chocolate does not appear in the historical record, his interest in tinkering with food and drink may have led to attempts to make chocolate.

The issue of rancid or poor-quality chocolate was an obstacle Washington may have worked around in order to present guests with the finest drinkable chocolate option. By ordering the "cocoa nut" shells directly and making chocolate locally, he could circumvent the issue of rancid chocolate after months at sea. Chocolate production is possible on a small scale with the correct tools, but the hot weather of Virginia would also be a detriment to long-term production. While other scholars argue that the shells were steeped and used as tea, it is a possibility that chocolate was made on site, at least experimentally.

As the president, his status was the highest in the U.S., at least in terms of politics, power, and elite society, which gave him more access to goods overseas. Washington may not have been the wealthiest person in America, but his connections overseas to Spain gave him access to the knowledge required to make fine chocolate. His power as the president allowed him to investigate new ways to serve chocolate in America, and the expectations of guests at Mount Vernon were high because of his elevated status as president.

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[117] Lange, "Sweet Concoctions: Ceramics for Chocolate Drinking In Early America," 6.
[118] "Washington's Distillery," George Washington's Mount Vernon, accessed October 6, 2019, https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/washingtons-distillery/.

Washington did not disappoint guests staying overnight at Mount Vernon. Burgess Ball was so impressed with the breakfast chocolate served at Mount Vernon that he wrote to Washington asking for the "chocolate shells."[119] He notes that they frequently drank this for breakfast at Mount Vernon and that it was "better than any other breakfast."[120] Washington's unique access to these chocolate shells is confirmed when Ball wrote "I hope you'll excuse my thus troubling you, as I know not how else we can procure it."[121] Ball's request confirms that chocolate was considered a special treat for most elite peers of Washington, but at Mount Vernon they were given plenty of it.

Like the early Spanish drinkers of chocolate, serving the chocolate in the proper vessel was also important to Washington. He purchased "12 chocolate cups and saucers" in 1790.[122] He purchased these chocolate cups, along with a long list of other fine furniture and porcelain from Comte de Moustier, the French minister.[123] This purchase reiterates the fact that desirable serving objects originated overseas and were difficult to come by in America. The chocolate cups and saucers were fine pieces of china that would impress guests beyond their initial taste of the fine chocolate. An example of a chocolate cup used at Mount Vernon (though not

[119] Burgess Ball, "From Burgess Ball to George Washington 13 February 1794," February 13, 1794, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-05-15-02-0169.
[120] Ball.
[121] Ball.
[122] Alexander Macomb, "From Alexander Macomb to Tobias Lear 31 January 1790," January 31, 1790, n. 2, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-05-05-02-0040.
[123] Macomb, "From Alexander Macomb to Tobias Lear 31 January 1790," January 31, 1790.

necessarily one of the twelve mentioned above) is pictured in Figure 9.[124] The large cup is a coffee mug and the smaller cup is for chocolate.

The ability to serve chocolate was a marker of elite status. The more impressive mark made at Mount Vernon was the excellent taste of the chocolate, proving its fine quality. The addition of the chocolate cups and saucers, made specifically for the consumption of chocolate, solidified the experience of drinking chocolate with Washington as a special treat. These specialty items were made specifically for chocolate, making them unnecessary for most Americans who had difficulty even finding quality chocolate. Their use for one purpose puts these material objects in the upper sphere of refinement.

Figure 9 Mug and chocolate cup, England, circa 1790.

Most elite Americans were unable to replicate the dessert displays on the same scale as those in Europe, but for a select group in America, they managed to impress guests in a uniquely American way. The sugar display presented in New York City for President Adams with the sugar columns and roses was more than just molded and shaped sugar, the symbolism presented in edible form was representative of a new America. Inscribed on the golden column was the word "constitution" and on the

[124] *The Mount Vernon China : An Illustrated Catalogue with Historical Notes* (Mount Vernon, Virginia: The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association), 43, accessed September 10, 2019, https://catalog.mountvernon.org/digital/collection/p16829coll2/id/23362.

column was a figure of Wisdom. The figure had the bust of Adams in one hand and a garland of roses in the other. The garland was made up of sixteen columns, each representing the states of America. An inscription read "may these roses which unite you, be always without thorns."[125]

This festive and patriotic event involved numerous toasts, resounding cheers, and even a spontaneous breakout in song to Yankee Doodle.[126] The complicated sugar techniques used for such a display were European in nature, but the event was purely American. The aspirational sense of celebration for a young nation was combined with a sense of refinement found in European-style sugar displays. Adams, as a man who loved sweets and experienced formal dessert presentations overseas, would appreciate such a presentation. The real impact was experienced by the guests who were awed by the scene, and for the readers of the newspaper article who could not attend the event themselves.

The description of the dessert is extensive, rivaled only by the lengthy list of toasts given that night. This memorable display of sugar columns and roses was fit for a king, or in this case, an American president. Members of the assembly called out in the article only included politicians. There were likely non-politicians in an audience of over 300, but the callouts make a statement about the purpose of the sugar display. The most influential in people in the room, those important enough to be called out, had access to grand displays of sugar, so grand that they were fine enough for a president.

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[125] "The Entertainment Given by the Citizens of New-York to John Adams President of the United States."
[126] "The Entertainment Given by the Citizens of New-York to John Adams President of the United States."

In America, the elite were not always the wealthiest people in the room, but sometimes they were the most influential. American politicians were socially connected to, if not part of, the wealthy elite. A desire to present impressive displays of sugar and confection grew within the elite in America. Washington, D.C. became a new space for a concentrated group of political figures emerging in America and for ambassadors from foreign countries. As the next chapter discusses, class distinctions associated with refined dessert presentations became apparent. European ambassadors and spouses had access to more refined objects to present displays and better connections to classically trained confectioners.

Chapter 2: Purchasing Refinement

"It is incredible how fortunes are exaggerated in this country. They say so-and-so has so much, another that much, etc., and when they die, one discovers they don't leave enough to pay their debts."[127] The frenzy of purchasing consumer goods to demonstrate wealth is captured in this 1805 letter from Rosalie Calvert, a wealthy woman living on a plantation in Maryland. The next year she targeted purchases related to dessert presentations when she asked, "how much a service of French porcelain for dinner and dessert would cost."[128] The consumer revolution progressed alongside the eighteenth century. Items associated with dessert presentations and recipe books are among those that were coveted by the elite and the middle class in America. While the elite class had access to these goods in the early eighteenth century, by the late eighteenth century the middle class was an active member of this consumer revolution, though they could only become moderately genteel in comparison to the elite class.

Material goods played just as much a role in dessert presentations as the confections did during this era of gentility which saw the rise of peer-to-peer judgement. This new abundance of material goods for purchase at a more affordable price, gave middle-class Americans new opportunities to show off their refined lifestyles. Rather than attempt complicated techniques used by confectioners, the middle class purchased goods that visually elevated their dessert or purchased more

[127] Margaret Law Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale: The Plantation Letters of Rosalie Stier Calvert, 1795-1821*, 1st edition (Baltimore Md.; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 120.
[128] Callcott, 142.

affordable smaller confections from a shop. They also turned to recipe books which revealed knowledge of dessert presentations, the proper organization of food on a table, and reminded female readers that the meal presentation was a reflection of the family's status in society. The move towards gentility encouraged this desire to present an impressive outward appearance to the world as a signifier of one's wealth.

While the middle class aspired to emulate the dessert of the elite, serving dishes and recipe books were imported goods and were not readily accessible to the middle class in America until the mid to late eighteenth century. The American elite, however, had connections to European goods and published recipe books, allowing them to gain access earlier than the American middle class. In the early eighteenth century, wealthy Americans with strong networks overseas acquired impressive objects to display their dessert and elevate themselves in comparison to peers without the same access.

The middle class in the eighteenth century was part of a new consumer society, driven by a desire to present their lives in a refined manner. This chapter highlights two popular consumer goods that were key to the elevation of dessert in eighteenth century America: syllabub glasses and recipe books. Consumers repurposed syllabub from a simple one-bowl dessert to a tower of stacked glasses, purchased thanks to greater access to consumer goods. The recipe for syllabub remained the same, but the presentation shifted and aligned with the larger movement towards refinement. Syllabub was ubiquitous in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the notable shift in presentation style serves as a case study for the impact of the consumer revolution on dessert presentations.

At the same time as the shift in syllabub presentation, recipe books became more popular and affordable. Recipe books decoded the dining portion of the rules on gentility and were written by confectioners with experience making dessert for royals. The secrets behind complicated sugar techniques were available to home cooks and housewives. Women were the targets for recipe book marketing. The authors of these books preyed on societal pressure to be good wives and present a meal and dessert worthy of social mobility. Recipe books guided readers through the knowledge required to become more genteel. Recipe book authors highlighted their experience with royalty and aristocracy to entice readers to purchase their works and learn the secrets to living a wealthy lifestyle. Consumers were not only buying recipes, but access to knowledge that could teach them to become more genteel.

Gilly Lehmann connects the use of recipe books as guides to the focus on accomplished women in *The British Housewife*.[129] Lehmann argues that recipe books played into the larger trend of class-consciousness in the eighteenth century. She notes that in the early eighteenth century, recipe books were marketed towards the elite, but as the century came to a close, the middle class became the target.[130] As the middle class became more aware of notions of refinement, they sought guidance through recipe books and began purchasing material goods specifically used for displaying dessert.

Consumer purchasing habits associated with dessert in the eighteenth century illustrate the larger movement towards refinement. This move was facilitated by a

[129] Lehmann, *The British Housewife: Cookery Books, Cooking and Society in Eighteenth Century Britain*, 61–66.
[130] Lehmann, 61–66.

consumer revolution which allowed greater and more affordable access to recipe books and serving pieces for dessert like glassware and trays. Cary Carson looks at the question of whether supply or demand initiated this revolution in "The Consumer Revolution in Colonial America: Why Demand?" Carson argues that the timing and impact of the shift in supply and demand is more significant that the reason, noting that consumer demand after 1690 rose dramatically.[131] This consumer revolution exposed a larger portion of the population to the communicative relationship of objects as markers of social status. Carson argues that America was uniquely situated as a nation of "haves and not-yets" as opposed to other countries with "haves and have-nots."[132] Like Bushman, Carson discusses the role of gentility in this move towards a focus on fashionable consumer purchases. As consumers sought refined lifestyles, they paid more attention not only to dress and manners, but also to the refinement of dessert. Recipe book advertisements illustrate the desire of housewives to elevate their status through presentations of dessert.

The material culture of the serving objects and the recipes themselves prove the shifting relationship between Americans and dessert. In the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, dessert-eating Americans were focused on delicious flavors. As the eighteenth century progressed, a consumer revolution and focus on gentility elevated desserts physically and metaphorically. Confection took on new meaning. Outward appearance of the dessert became more meaningful as dessert served a new social function.

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[131] Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 487.
[132] Carson, Hoffman, and Albert, 489–90.

This new notion of self-consciousness of appearance is discussed by Richard Bushman in *The Refinement of America*. Bushman illustrates a changing world in the eighteenth century, one that moved towards "self-aware performances" that came about as more people participated in genteel society.[133] Criticism took on new importance as participants judged their peers, while appearing outwardly harmonious.[134] He also notes the standard for exclusion that came about as peers critiqued each other. The nonconforming "rude" peers had to be separated from the "refined and polite."[135] He argues that gentility confused the American class system, convincing people that they could become middle-class by adopting certain attributes of genteel society.[136]

Bushman's analysis of gentility focuses on manners and dress, plus spaces including homes, cities, and churches. However, he does not discuss the impact of enslaved labor on the consumer revolution and the ability of slave-owning families to live lavish genteel lifestyles. He ignores both slavery and the south in his work. He briefly touches on the connection between refinement and capitalism but admits that this topic gets less attention than it deserves in his book. Bushman does utilize inventories to argue that the proliferation of "tools" such as chairs, utensils, and serving dishes follow the rise of gentility.[137] He also argues that refinement created demand, and capitalism manufactured the supply.[138]

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[133] Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, xiv.
[134] Bushman, xiv.
[135] Bushman, xv.
[136] Bushman, xvi.
[137] Bushman, 76.
[138] Bushman, 407.

This new proliferation of tools included glassware, which was used by the elite in the early eighteenth century to make towering pyramids of syllabub in America. These pyramids of syllabub glasses stacked on salvers emulated the tall sugar displays from European courts. Syllabub was a simple recipe with accessible ingredients and was originally served in a single bowl. New meaning was given to syllabub as it transformed into an elevated centerpiece thanks to the consumer revolution.

Housewives placed a similar sense of elevated meaning into a recipe book purchase. The rise of gentility convinced consumers that they could present impressive edible works of art with a single purchase of a book. Americans used British recipe books which became available years after their initial publication overseas. In 1772 an advertisement appears in Boston for *The Frugal Housewife or Complete Woman Cook*, which included recipes for pies, tarts, cakes, syllabubs, flummery, jellies, and custards among others.[139] The popular work by Hannah Glasses, titled *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*, was noted as published and available in a New York newspaper in 1782, over thirty years after its first printing.[140] Baltimore also advertised recipe books available for purchase in 1786 with the inclusion of *Carter's Cookery* among a list of books for sale.[141] The availability of these recipe books in America following the Revolution align with middle-class

[139] "This Day Published...The Frugal Housewife," *Boston Gazette*, March 2, 1772, no. 882 edition, America's Historical Newspapers.
[140] "Cookery, the Best Book Published of the Kind," *The Royal Gazette*, November 27, 1782, no. 644 edition, America's Historical Newspapers.
[141] "School-Book Just Published," *Maryland Journal*, August 18, 1786, XIII, no. 66 edition, America's Historical Newspapers.

attempts in the late eighteenth century to present dessert displays printed in these books.

American library catalogs do not begin to show books of cookery until the mid-eighteenth century and books on confection, specifically, came even later. An early appearance of a recipe book titled *The Complete Family Piece*, was available at the Library Company of Philadelphia in 1741.[142] By the late eighteenth century, other libraries in America had at least one recipe book on hand. In 1786, the Annapolis Circulating Library held a copy of *Dalrymple's Practice of Modern Cookery* and in 1789, Benjamin Guild's circulating library in Boston held a copy of *Carter's Cookery*.[143] Recipe books in libraries and newspaper advertisements for the books confirm that recipe books were available in America, but in a delayed timeframe for middle-class Americans without easy access to overseas purchases.

Authors took advantage of the desire of this new middle class to emulate the aristocracy. Some recipe books latched on to the height of confection and included complicated sugar work, while other authors included elevated, yet simplified desserts. Though their writing strategies differed, all authors targeted readers with dreams of social mobility.

Recipe book authors were chefs and confectioners who gained greater credibility amongst the noise in the recipe book market by calling attention to their highest-ranking clients. Authors differentiated themselves by naming their royal or

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[142] *A Catalogue of Books Belonging to the Library Company of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Library Company of Philadelphia., 1741), 52.
[143] Annapolis Circulating Library, *A Catalogue of the Annapolis Circulating Library* (Annapolis, Maryland: Printed by Frederick Green, 1786), 23; Benjamin Guild, *New Select Catalogue of Benjamin Guild's Circulating Library* (Boston, Massachusetts: Printed for Benjamin Guild, 1789), 7.

titled employers. This experience proved to consumers that they were buying a book that presented innovative recipes, which were increasingly confection and pastry as the eighteenth century progressed. The reality was that most recipe books copied earlier publications; verbatim. Most of the basic recipes were the same, which truly evened the playing field from a marketing perspective. Given the similar content, the marketing techniques focused less on the recipes themselves and more on social mobility. The marketing highlights the fears and desires of eighteenth-century consumers, namely the ability to purchase books, ingredients, and serving objects that would elevate their status.

Recipe books were marketed to the elite in the early eighteenth century, and this marketing expanded to include the middle-class in the late eighteenth century as a means to elevate their status at the dining table. Newspaper advertisements were sales pitches for an aspirational life, one that royalty and nobility experienced on a daily basis. The authors of recipe books became a link between the royalty they cooked for and the purchasers of recipe books. Both elite and middle-class consumers saw the recipe book as their access point to the food and confection of royalty. While these recipe books themselves were affordable, the towering sugar sculptures were not accessible to untrained pastry chefs. Elite consumers with greater access to trained chefs had the potential to replicate some of the large dessert displays, but the middle class could only buy their way into simplified forms of dessert displays.

Recipe books targeted middle-class housewives and many were written by female cooks. The dream of gentility was sold in the form of a recipe book and marketed directly to housewives. Male and female authors competed for their

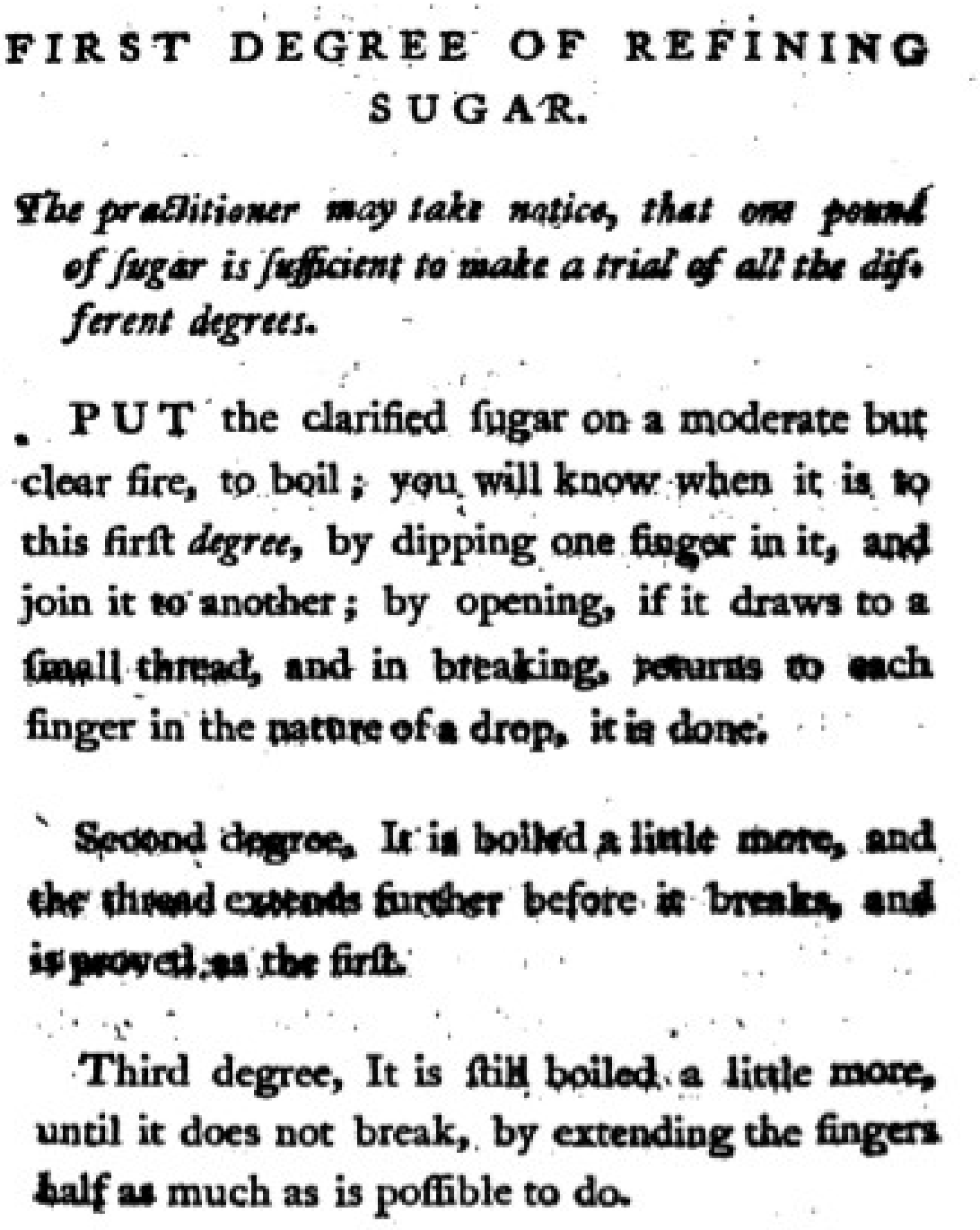
attention and money in the advertisement section of newspapers. Social class was a factor in marketing these recipe books as well.

Recipe books in the eighteenth century were guides for cooks and housewives who already had some general knowledge of cooking techniques. The recipes themselves differed from modern cookbooks in the format of the directions, where there was no numbered list of steps. Rather, a long paragraph of explanation acted as a reminder of ingredients and general techniques for an experienced cook who had likely made the recipe before. This use of recipe books as guides is an important factor when considering the increasing inclusion of confectionary recipes in recipe books over the eighteenth century. While many cooks had experience with meats, sauces, and simple desserts, like syllabub, advanced sugar work was not something they had much experience with. The addition of detailed sugar work filled a void in the recipe book market, but the techniques were advanced and the instructions were complicated.

The use of sugar in recipe books shifted in the eighteenth century, quantities of sugar in recipes increased. In its earliest uses in recipe books, sugar was merely a component of larger mixtures and appeared simply by weight or measurement in recipes. Complicated sugar work which required heating and further refinement of the sugar was not common in these early recipe books. Figure 10 shows a page from a 1770 recipe book by a "Mr. Borella" describing the twelve degrees of refined sugar.[144] The first few degrees are described and involve dipping bare fingers into boiling sugar. The process was even more complicated given the necessity of first

[144] Borella, *The Court and Country Confectioner* (G. Riley and A. Cooke, 1770), 42.

clarifying the sugar which involved mixing an egg white and water with sugar, boiling, and skimming impurities off the top. Sugar in more technical forms, such as spun sugar or sugar paste, became symbols of elite social status. All of these forms of sugar required mastering the art of deciphering the different degrees of sugar.



FIRST DEGREE OF REFINING SUGAR.

The practitioner may take notice, that one pound of sugar is sufficient to make a trial of all the different degrees.

PUT the clarified sugar on a moderate but clear fire, to boil; you will know when it is to this first *degree*, by dipping one finger in it, and join it to another; by opening, if it draws to a small thread, and in breaking, returns to each finger in the nature of a drop, it is done.

Second degree, It is boiled a little more, and the thread extends further before it breaks, and is proved as the first.

Third degree, It is ſtill boiled a little more, until it does not break, by extending the fingers half as much as is poſſible to do.

Figure 10 Degrees of refining sugar, 1770.

While included in recipe books, sugar work would have been very difficult for the average untrained chef, technical skills were required for these recipes. The ability to form sugar into gravity-defying sculptures and figurines involved a multitude of difficult techniques. The process of clarifying or refining sugar at home was an extra step that involved boiling and skimming impurities out of the sugar to ensure a more perfect form of the sugar.[145] This step was required prior to advanced sugar work, complicating the process further. The time and skill required to create the sugar masterpieces was above and beyond the average housewife. The middle class reached for gentry status, but the truly elite were the ones showcasing the impressive forms of sugar art created by trained professionals.

The marketing techniques of authors ignored the difficulty of these recipes and led the reader to believe they could be part of the upper class by serving the same dishes as the rich. Newspaper advertisements instead focused on an author's resume as a chef or confectioner with the goal of establishing their credibility as an expert in the subject. A 1724 newspaper advertisement in London for the second edition of *The Cooks and Confectioners Dictionary* calls direct attention to the cooking experience of the author John Nott. The advertisement states that he was the "late cook to the dukes of Somerset, Ormonde, and Bolton; Lord Lansdown and Ashburnham."[146] The advertisement also describes the meat and sauce recipes as prepared "according to the English, French, and Italian Courts."[147] The introduction of the book notes the

[145] Borella, 41.
[146] "This Day Is Publish'd...The Cooks and Confectioners Dictionary," *Evening Post*, March 19, 1724, Issue 2286 edition, 17th-18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers.
[147] "This Day Is Publish'd...The Cooks and Confectioners Dictionary."

inclusion of "confectionary of France, Italy, Spain, Germany, and other Countries."[148] The frequent mention of royalty and courts provides direct evidence of the aspirational dream sold to consumers. By replicating these recipes, a family could theoretically eat the same food as kings and queens.

Nott's introduction is addressed to "all good housewives" and later, he more specifically addresses in large lettering, the "British Housewives."[149] Nott markets this work as an educational tool to keep these housewives at the top of their game. He suggests that these recipes could be served to nobility as well as at their common tables. He focuses on a female audience, more specifically on the woman of the house. Women interested in gaining the knowledge required to present an impressive table looked to recipe books for guidance. Some included mapped diagrams of the dining table to show exactly how each dessert should be served.

An inexperienced housewife learned the correct placement of desserts at the dining table through recipe books. This knowledge allowed her to judge her peers' knowledge of table setting and prove her own knowledge when hosting guests. Figure 11 shows a diagram of a dessert course involving twenty-three dishes of confections surrounding a centerpiece in the middle of the table.[150]

This diagram was published in 1730 in *The Compleat Practical Cook* and included key details about the type of dishes the dessert should be served in.[151] The

[148] John Nott, *The Cook's and Confecioner's Dictionary* (London, England: For C. Rivington at Bible and Crown, 1723), 11, https://books.google.com/books?id=P38EAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.
[149] Nott, 10–12.
[150] Belden, *The Festive Tradition*, 52.
[151] Belden, 52.

diagram notes if specific desserts should be served in porcelain or glassware, giving the reader valuable knowledge of dessert displays. The diagram illustrates the complexity of planning a meal for guests that went beyond making the desserts themselves. A pyramid of syllabub was in good company amongst other refined

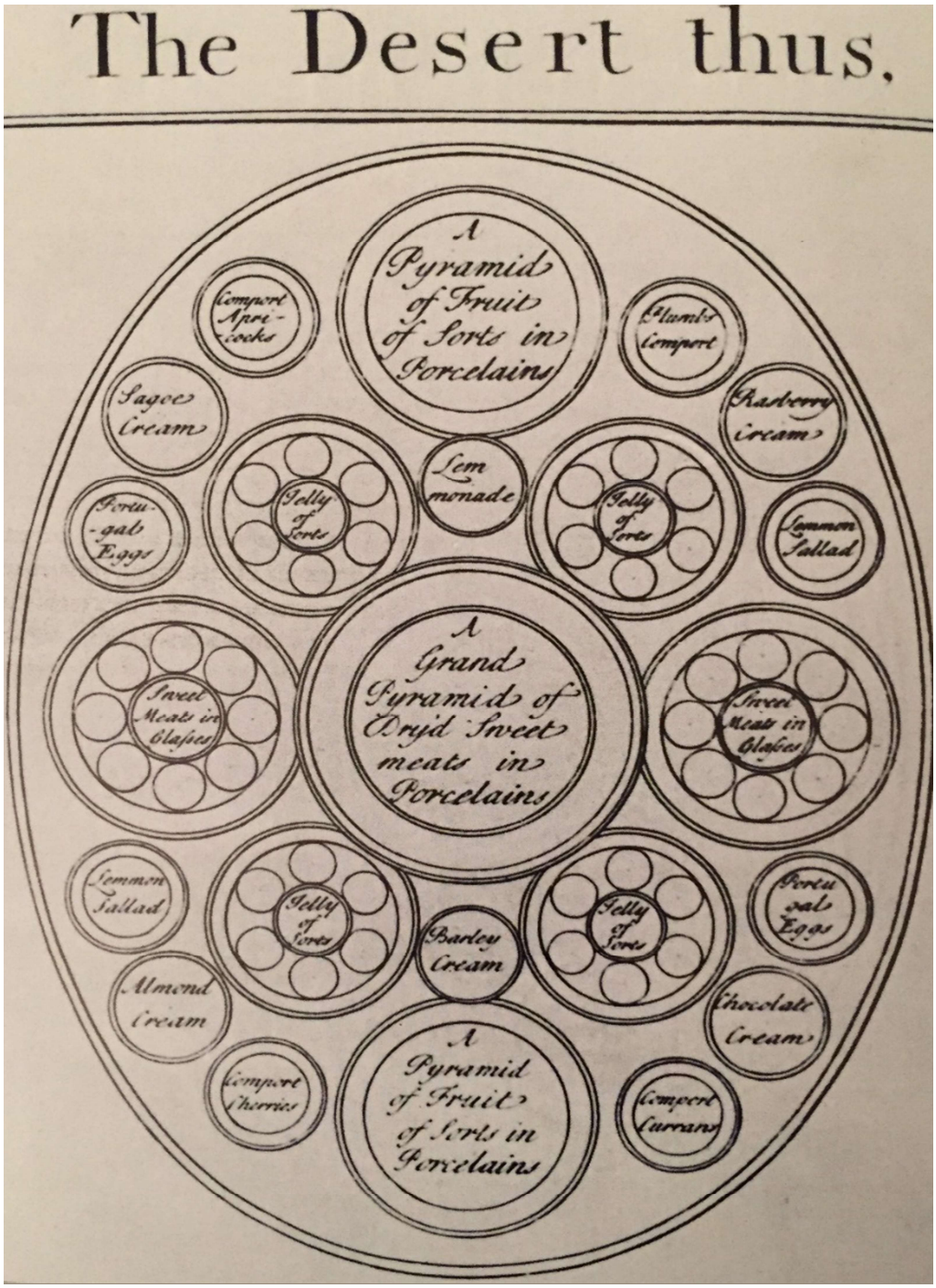


Figure 11 Diagram for dessert, 1730.

desserts displayed in the diagram. The diagram does not label any of the pyramids of glassware as syllabub, but jellies and creams are noted.

Syllabub was a treat with cultural significance in the eighteenth century, though its origins date back hundreds of years earlier. Syllabub appears in popular culture in myriad forms, from a tender poem mourning the loss of a beloved cow, to an insult used during the debate surrounding the constitutional amendments. Syllabub was simple enough that it could be made with cream and wine, though more impressive additions included lemon juice, sugar, nutmeg, and even a hint of red wine for a bright color. It was whipped until it was frothy and left to separate into a foamy topping floating above the lemonade-like liquid below.

Syllabub transformed from a dessert that was originally shared from a single large bowl in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century to a stacked tower of syllabub glasses by the mid-eighteenth century. The transition of syllabub to individual glasses follows the increasing availability of consumer goods and the rise of gentility. An upper middle-class family could manage to make a syllabub recipe, purchase glasses, and create a dessert display that emulated the elite dessert presentations. English recipe books from the seventeenth and eighteenth century shed light on other attempts by the middle class to elevate their presentations of dessert to match those served at elite dining tables.

The earliest form of syllabub was made and presented easily by anyone with access to a cow. An early recipe book published in London in 1694 listed several variations on syllabub. One recipe used a “syllabub pot” filled with cider, sugar, nutmeg, and cream. Once the mixture was stirred, it sat for two hours to allow the

frothy "curd" to separate from the mixture below in the bowl. Alternatively, the recipe instructed that "if in the field, only milk the cow into your sider, nutmeg, sugar, and so drink it warm."[152] This early form of syllabub consumption involved a single pot, from which many people shared the syllabub. An inventory of Thomas Collier in York County, Virginia from 1705 lists an "earthen syllabub pot" which aligns with the timing of this syllabub recipe.[153] The recipe directions were easy to follow and required equipment and ingredients that were easily accessible.

The homemade feel and simplicity of syllabub is captured in an English poem from 1733, mourning the loss of a beloved cow. The poem lists numerous products that were only possible with the cow's milk. The lengthy poem includes the lines:

> Happy's the Table then partakes
>
> Of tender Custards, frail Cheese-Cakes
>
> Or Syllabub, by Artists beat
>
> To an obliging empty Cheat.[154]

The strong connection between a cow and owner comes across in this poem. The bond was physical, the owner consumed desserts and other dairy products from his

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[152] T.P. J.P. R.C. N.B., *The Compleat Cook: Or, the Whole Art of Cookery Describing the Best and Newest Ways of Ordering and Dressing All Sorts of Flesh, Fish, and Fowl*, Early English Books, 1641-1700 / 2401:01 (London : printed, and sold by G. Conyers at the Golden Ring in Little-Britain, over against Bartholomew's-Close-Gate, 1694., 1694), 136–37.

[153] "Inventory of Estate of Thomas Collier, 19 June 1705 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library."

[154] "A Letter to a Friend, on the Death of His Cow," *Weekly Miscellany*, September 29, 1733, Issue XLII edition, http://find.gale.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/bncn/retrieve.do?sgHitCountType=None&sort=DateAscend&prodId=BBCN&tabID=T012&subjectParam=Locale%2528en%252C%252C%2529%253AFQE%253D%2528tx%252CNone%252C8%2529syllabub%2524&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchId=R1&displaySubject=&searchType=BasicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&qrySerId=Locale%28en%2C%2C%29%3AFQE%3D%28tx%2CNone%2C8%29syllabub%24&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&subjectAction=DISPLAY_SUBJECTS&inPS=true&userGroupName=umd_um&sgCurrentPosition=0&contentSet=LTO&&docId=&docLevel=FASCIMILE&workId=&relevancePageBatch=Z2001599768&contentSet=UBER2&callistoContentSet=UBER2&docPage=article&hilite=y.

cow's milk. The poem is also a reminder that anyone with access to a cow and some variety of alcohol could make syllabub as they milked the cow into their bowl of prepared ingredients.

By the mid-eighteenth century, a growing American middle class with disposable income coveted the awe-inspiring spun sugar showpieces that the elite commissioned, but adopted a more accessible option. The simplistic presentation of syllabub transitioned from bowl to pyramid alongside the larger refinement movement. While the elite in America had earlier access to glassware, the middle class dreamed of owning these display pieces. Figure 12 illustrates a fine example of salvers stacked from largest on the bottom to smallest on top.[155] Syllabub glasses and flower holders are placed on each level and create an aesthetically appealing centerpiece, which was relatively simple to construct. This tower of treats was a centerpiece that dazzled in candlelight at the center of the table.

Figure 12 Pyramid salvers, 1720-1770.

Elite Americans had early access to glassware and other material goods used to display dessert like syllabub. The wealthy elite with connections to friends or family overseas asserted their standing in society by purchasing the most impressive

[155] Arlene Palmer, *Glass in Early America: Selections from the Henry Francis Du Pont Winterthur Museum* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 219.

material goods from Europe. Not all elite Americans had such connections to Europe and they had to rely on imported shipments of these material goods that were not consistently available. It was not until the mid to late eighteenth century that the middle class gained access to purchase such goods.

Records for jelly glasses, often used interchangeably with syllabub glasses, occur as early as 1716 in America, when they were sold in the shop of Anne Cheetam in Philadelphia.[156] Newspapers in America began to advertise individual glasses for syllabub as early as 1732. *The New England Weekly Journal*, published in Boston, included an advertisement for glassware, sugar, punch bowls, candlesticks, and "whip syllabub, jelly & double flint wine glasses" that were just imported from England.[157] Numerous advertisements for imported "jelly and syllabub glasses" appeared in the *Boston Evening Post* between May and July of 1751.[158] Both advertisements noted the importation of the syllabub glasses, making them more exclusive than wares made in America. This also meant that their availability was not always guaranteed.

This limited supply of desirable goods, like salvers, can be seen in a wanted advertisement from 1770 in the *Boston Post-Boy*. The exact same wanted advertisement asking for a "large glass salver, to compleat a pyramid" was repeated seven times between December 1770 and February 1771.[159] The fact that someone

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[156] Palmer, 225.
[157] "Just Imported from England," *New England Weekly Journal*, January 3, 1732.
[158] "Just Imported, and to Be Sold by Henry Barnes," *Boston Evening Post*, May 27, 1751; "A Large Assortment of Glass and Earthenware," *Boston Evening Post*, July 8, 1751.
[159] "Wanted," *The Massachusetts Gazette*, December 10, 1770, http://infoweb.newsbank.com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p_product=EANX&p_theme=ahnp&p_nbid=S5BF54WOMTUyNjE3MjAwMC40MDg2Njc6MToxMjoxMjkuMi4xOS4xMDI&p_action=doc&s_lastnonissuequeryname=2&d_viewref=search&p_queryname=2&p_docnum=127&p_docref=v2:1089C7C672FD2D48@EANX-108D82738D2C40E0@2367897-108D8273EA8BBD28@3-108D82748D303498@; "Wanted," *The Massachusetts Gazette*, February 18, 1771, http://infoweb.newsbank.com.proxy-

was unable to purchase a large salver from a shop over the course of three months reiterates the uncertain availability of refined material goods.

Inventories from York County and Williamsburg illustrate the proliferation of syllabub glasses among wealthy members of society prior to the Revolution. Several inventories from 1761 to 1774 reveal numerous syllabub glasses, differentiated from other types of glassware. Henry Wetherburn had nineteen syllabub glasses, William Hunter had twenty-two jelly and syllabub glasses, William Dudley had eight syllabub glasses, Francis Fauquier had fifty-nine syllabub glasses and sixteen unsorted syllabub glasses, Richard Hunt Singleton had fourteen syllabub and twenty-three jelly glasses.[160] Fauquier had an additional twenty-three salvers, enough for numerous pyramids of syllabub and jelly glasses.

These inventories of the elite show a distinction between their access to goods compared to the middle class. Fauquier, a wealthy Englishman who served as lieutenant governor of Virginia, had twenty-three salvers at his disposal while the wanted advertisement that ran seven times had difficulty finding just one salver.[161] Fauquier resided in Williamsburg from 1757 until his death in 1768.[162] He had greater access to fine glassware, given his personal connections to England and wealth. The

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um.researchport.umd.edu/iw-search/we/HistArchive/?p_product=EANX&p_theme=ahnp&p_nbid=S5BF54WOMTUyNjE3MjAwMC40MDg2Njc6MToxMjoxMjkuMi4xOS4xMDI&p_action=doc&s_lastnonissuequeryname=2&d_viewref=search&p_queryname=2&p_docnum=132&p_docref=v2:1089C7C672FD2D48@EANX-108D82810303C250@2367953-108D82817494A5C8@3-108D82826BDDB898@.

[160] "Inventory of Estate of Henry Wetherburn 1761, March 16 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library"; "Inventory of Estate of William Hunter 1761, November 16 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library"; "Inventory of Estate of William Dudley 1771, May 20 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library"; "Inventory of Estate of Francis Fauquier 1771, July 20 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library"; "Inventory of Estate of Richard Hunt Singleton 1774, May 16 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library."

[161] "Meet the People: People of Williamsburg: Francis Fauquier," Colonial Williamsburg, accessed October 5, 2019, http://www.history.org/almanack/people/bios/biofaq.cfm.

[162] "Meet the People: People of Williamsburg: Francis Fauquier."

sampling of inventories confirm the differentiation of consumer goods that follow the move towards refinement in a genteel society. Similar to elite access to confectioners, access to consumer goods increased with connections overseas. The imported glassware was not readily available to all. Attempts to make glassware in America were not successful in the eighteenth century due to "technical difficulties, labor problems, and consumer resistance conditioned to high quality imports."[163] An elite person with family or friendly connections to Europe had a greater chance of requesting unique pieces for serving dessert than a middle-class American who relied on the goods available in a store.

In the years leading up to the Revolution, goods like chinaware and glassware became more accessible to groups just below the wealthy. In *Unbecoming British*, Kariann Akemi Yokota looks at American desire to own goods like chinaware and their competing guilt surrounding the ownership of imported British goods.[164] Yokota argues that Americans placed value on the civility and refinement associated with imported objects.[165] The fluidity of social relations allowed Americans to buy goods associated with high culture, which were increasingly available at more affordable prices.[166]

Yokota argues that gentility could not be gained through purchasing power alone, knowledge of how to use objects accordingly and present oneself in dress and manner played an important role. In the household, women were tasked with the

[163] Palmer, *Glass in Early America: Selections from the Henry Francis Du Pont Winterthur Museum*, 9.
[164] Kariann Akemi Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 63.
[165] Yokota, 75.
[166] Yokota, 96.

responsibility for presenting an appropriately refined dining table. The proper serving dishes for each type of food and correct placement of dishes around the table alerted guests to the family's knowledge of refinement. Recipe books included instructions and diagrams for the ideal dessert table. In this way a host could gain respect from her guests who also understood the rules of refinement. Yokota's argument about judgement as a key aspect to a genteel society echoes Bushman's observations.[167]

The host herself needed to understand the proper uses for objects associated with dessert in order to present a refined dessert course. She also used this knowledge as a way to gauge her peers and rank them as more or less genteel. This rise in self-consciousness, awareness of mannerisms, and purchasing patterns of others reflected the move towards refinement. To increase one's status, going above and beyond was key. The role as host and woman of the house meant working with the cook and other servants or enslaved people to plan a menu and monitor the progress of cooking throughout the day. The host was the face of the planning and was ultimately responsible for the product that came to the table, whether the host contributed to the cooking or not.[168]

Recipe book authors spoke directly to the hostess, and similar to Nott's early advertisement in 1724, Elizabeth Raffald followed the same marketing tactics decades later. The London advertisement for Raffald's *The Experienced English Housekeeper* appeared in 1769.[169] Like Nott, the advertisement first establishes Raffald's credibility by calling out her previous employer, the "Hon. Lady Elizabeth

[167] Yokota, 98.
[168] Herman, *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830*, 35.
[169] "This Day Was Published...The Experienced English Housekeeper by Elizabeth Raffald," *London Chronicle*, December 12, 1769, Issue 2028 edition, 17th-18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers.

Warburton."[170] The advertisement then cultivates a fear of missing out by noting that nearly 800 original recipes are included. The advertisement then added a detailed description of the dessert section of the book.

The advertisement attracted buyers by describing the confectionary section that included "gold and silver web for covering of sweetmeats and a desert of spun sugar."[171] The webs of gold and silver spun sugar evoke visions of a sparkling table and a delicate touch to the presentation of dessert. The advertisement also notes the directions for a "modern" setting including "floating islands, fish ponds, transparent puddings, trifles, whips, &c."[172] Raffald's advertisement lured housewives dreaming of a more refined life. In the book's introduction she calls out other authors who merely repeat recipes while she notes that this book is written from her personal experience. She adds another personal touch by noting that the confections listed in the recipe book are also available for purchase at her shop.[173] This mention of purchasable confection is confirmation that while the goal may have been to create the confections at home, the reality may have been different.

Raffald's confectionary shop was an alternative for middle-class families to purchase confections on a smaller scale than hiring a professional confectioner. It also negated the need to attempt complicated recipes if that family lived near the shop. Wealthier families who lived in proximity to a shop could commission larger orders for parties without the cost of hiring a professional confectioner to work full-time in

[170] "This Day Was Published...The Experienced English Housekeeper by Elizabeth Raffald."
[171] "This Day Was Published...The Experienced English Housekeeper by Elizabeth Raffald."
[172] "This Day Was Published...The Experienced English Housekeeper by Elizabeth Raffald."
[173] Raffald, Elizabeth, *The Experienced English House-Keeper*, 1st ed. (Manchester: By J. Harrep, 1769), ii, https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=lY4EAAAAYAAJ&hl=en.

the kitchen. Confectionary shops were not options for everyone in America and some attempted these complicated sugar displays at home.

Confectionary shops in America were most prevalent in cities, but middle-class Americans did not have consistent access to confectioners until the 1760s in larger cities, and even later in other parts of America. The confections sold in these shops were not at the high-quality professional level seen overseas either. Newspaper advertisements for these shops do not appear regularly until the 1760s. These shops were spaces for middle-class Americans to purchase refined dessert on a smaller scale than what an elite American might commission.

The confectioners who sold desserts in their shops often had the ability to create more impressive dessert displays if an elite American needed to hire their help for the day. An advertisement by William Keen from New York, New York in 1760 states his occupation as a grocer and confectioner, but for the most part he only sold ingredients used in confections.[174] He lists double refined sugar, almonds, and chocolate among other ingredients, but does not list prepared confections. Even this early reference to a confectioner's shop in America does not come close to the confections made overseas.

American access to confections and dessert was delayed in comparison to access in Europe. An advertisement in 1767, also from New York, New York announces the arrival of "Daniel Dushmain, Confectioner, and Pastry-Cook."[175] Dushmain explicitly states his additional services as a caterer when he states "He will

[174] "To Be Sold By William Keen," *The New-York Gazette*, September 29, 1760, no. 86 edition, America's Historical Newspapers.
[175] "Daniel Dushmain, Confectioner and Pastry-Cook," *The New-York Gazette*, November 23, 1767, no. 450 edition, America's Historical Newspapers.

likewise go and dress Dinners and Suppers for any Lady or Gentleman in the neatest Manner."[176] A middle-class family with a desire to impress their peers could potentially hire a confectioner like Daniel Dushmain. The cost for such a catered dinner is not listed, but if the full service was unaffordable a small purchase of simple dessert would elevate a dinner table. Families seeking to present more impressive displays without access to the hired help of these confectioners turned instead to the recipe books.

While not everyone was capable of making sugar displays, Elizabeth Myers, the wife of the Norfolk, Virginia merchant, Moses Myers, attempted Elizabeth Raffald's recipe for spun sugar. She is an example of a hostess using a recipe book with a complicated spun sugar recipe to delight guests following a meal and elevate her position amongst her peers. The Myers family papers include a copy of Raffald's book, which had a dog-eared page on the recipe for "a Desert of Spun Sugar."[177] This complex recipe, the same one that was mentioned in the advertisement, involved spinning half-spheres of sugar, placing flowers inside, then joining the two halves together to form a sugar globe. This was only the first step, the process was repeated to create multiple globes of various sizes, plus spun sugar baskets to hold more flowers.

In Bernard Herman's article "Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830", he highlights the elite Myers family and

[176] "Daniel Dushmain, Confectioner and Pastry-Cook."
[177] Herman, *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830*, 33–34; Elizabeth Raffald, *The Experienced English Housekeeper: For the Use and Ease of Ladies, Housekeepers, Cooks, &c. ...* (R. Baldwin, 1786).

situates them within his larger discussion of architecture and material culture.[178] Herman notes that "wealth did not determine status, it purchased opportunity."[179] For many, the opportunity began with a purchase of a recipe book. The confectionary centerpiece used by the Myers family demonstrates their eagerness to show the amount of wealth and knowledge needed to create such an intricate centerpiece.

Herman categorized the multitude of dog-eared recipe books in the personal collection as "exceptional, ephemeral, and labor-intensive."[180] He connects the elaborate sugar masterpieces, commissioned by Elizabeth Myers and carried out by her servants, to her mastery of the domain that was the dining table.[181] Elizabeth Myers' responsibility as household manager and creator of dining entertainment full of whimsical sugar centerpieces reveal the true purpose of all the hours of preparation. This role discussed by Herman is echoed in numerous recipe book introductions. The recipe books directly call out the expectations of a housewife to present the family's best self at the dinner table.

Herman argues that dining was a performance, with her guests as the audience. The dessert centerpiece was a performative representation of the family's overall gentility. This opportunity to elevate status encouraged middle-class families to purchase recipe books and glassware. As argued by Bushman and Yokota, the social atmosphere of a genteel household involved judgement from guests, which also created an opportunity for upward mobility for the host family. Elizabeth Myers characterized the audience of recipe books. As wife of a merchant, she had access to

[178] Herman, *Town House: Architecture and Material Life in the Early American City, 1780-1830*, 38.
[179] Herman, 38.
[180] Herman, 34.
[181] Herman, 35.

imported goods plus enough disposable income to purchase the material objects and ingredients necessary to make and present confections. While not all consumers had the same access to material goods that the Myers did, most could afford a recipe book.

Questions of recipe book access and affordability must be considered when analyzing American middle-class exposure to these recipes. Recipe books were published, advertised, and sold in England. Americans experienced delayed access to these recipe books, for instance, Raffald's *The Experienced English House-Keeper* was originally published in 1769 and advertised in London that year.[182] An American advertisement for her work does not appear until 1793, when her work was listed amongst other books for sale in Boston.[183] Americans had access to the ideas about gentility professed in the introductions of these recipe books, but usually not until a decade or two after their initial publication overseas.

Middle-class Americans had the financial means to afford recipe books. They were attainable purchases if social mobility was of value to a middle-class family. The tables below illustrate the value of a recipe book in the mid to late-1700s.[184] In order to determine the affordability of a recipe book from the eighteenth century, the

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[182] Raffald, Elizabeth, *The Experienced English House-Keeper*; "This Day Was Published...The Experienced English Housekeeper by Elizabeth Raffald."

[183] David West, *David West's Catalogue of Books, for Sale, Wholesale and Retail, at His Book and Stationary Store, No. 36, Marlborough Street, Boston* (Boston, Massachusetts, 1793), https://infoweb-newsbank-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/iw-search/we/Evans/?p_product=EAIX&p_theme=eai&p_nbid=G51D57TMMTU3MDIyNDQzMy43MTc2NDoxOjEyOjEyOS4yLjE5LjEwMg&p_action=doc&p_docnum=1&p_queryname=2&p_docref=v2:0F2B1FCB879B099B@EAIX-0F2FD40A51C03468@26468-@1.

[184] When interpreting the tables below several factors should be considered. These newspaper advertisements all came from London newspapers and there may have been slight differences in exchange rates between London and America. The date range is also a factor that should be considered when interpreting this data. This information is difficult to come by, so a range of dates was considered. Finally, some sources used shillings while others used cents, the exchange rate used for conversion is two cents per shilling.

price of other items, like food and everyday objects, help to contextualize the purchase. Additional context by way of salary also create a stronger understanding of a recipe book's cost. The price of six shillings (s.) is used in the tables below to calculate the comparison. This price is an average from four newspaper advertisements for recipe books spanning 1723-1788.[185]

Table 1 shows the price of a recipe book in comparison to ingredients used in desserts. One weighted pound of butter was slightly more expensive than one recipe book, likewise with sugar, coffee, and chocolate. If a middle-class family could afford a weighted pound of butter or sugar, they could afford a recipe book. If a family consumed tea, they certainly could afford a recipe book, as the price of one weighted pound of tea was equivalent to six recipe books.

Table 2 includes a wide range of items found in inventories in an effort to contextualize the price of a recipe book alongside a variety of goods. While these inventory items are valued at the time they were inventoried and not at the market value of a new product, they do shed light on comparable purchases.

The data in the tables proves that recipe books were within reach for a middle-class family. As might be expected, the value of a mare and colt were much higher than a recipe book. The large collection of fourteen syllabub and twenty-three jelly glasses reveals the value of one recipe book as equivalent to nine glasses. In analyzing these equivalent values, along with the other objects listed in the table, it is

[185] "This Day Is Publish'd...The Cooks and Confectioners Dictionary"; "This Day Was Published...The Experienced English Housekeeper by Elizabeth Raffald"; "This Day Was Published...The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy," *Lloyd's Evening Post*, April 11, 1770, Issue 1993 edition, 17th-18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers; "This Day Is Published...The English Art of Cookery," *General Evening Post*, November 18, 1788, Issue 8584 edition, 17th-18th Century Burney Collection Newspapers.

apparent that a recipe book was affordable. If buying into a more genteel lifestyle was a major financial goal for a family, they could start gaining knowledge through a recipe book purchase. Eventually, they might save for more refined serving objects to use at the table.

Additional evidence for the affordability of a recipe book can be seen in Table 3. The daily wages for a number of jobs in the eighteenth century are listed. The next column shows a recipe book as a percent of that daily income. This percent alone reveals information about the affordability of a recipe book and allows for comparison across multiple salary tiers. To contextualize these percentages further, consider the median American household income in 2018 was $61,937 or about $170 per day.[186] By looking at the price of a $25 book as a percent of this modern daily income, the result is 14.7%. While every household values a book differently based on their lifestyle and financial goals, this percentage helps to understand the value of a recipe book in the eighteenth century.

The value of a recipe book as a percentage of daily income in the eighteenth century can be compared to the modern average American equivalent of 14.7%. This percentage is similar to those for millwrights, ship builders, blacksmiths, and masons. These families could afford a recipe book without putting much strain on their finances. Less lucrative jobs like carpenter, butcher, and agricultural laborer could have theoretically purchased a recipe book, but the cost was a much larger percent of their income. Nonetheless, if this was a meaningful guide, a recipe book was an attainable purchase for them.

[186] Gloria Guzman, "Household Income: 2018," U.S. Census Bureau, September 30, 2019, 8, https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2019/acs/acsbr18-01.html.

Table 1 Comparative Cost of Food and Recipe Books

Item	Cost	Equivalent Value of Recipe Books (approximate)	Year	Location
Butter (1 lb. in weight)[187]	8s.	1 recipe book plus 2s.	1749	New England colonies
Sugar (1 lb. in weight)[188]	7.5s.	1 recipe book plus 1.5s.	1753	N/A
Coffee (1 lb. in weight)[189]	8s.	1 recipe book plus 2s.	1756	Deerfield, Massachusetts
Chocolate (1 lb. in weight)[190]	10s.	1 recipe book plus 4s.	1756	Deerfield, Massachusetts
Tea (1 lb. in weight)[191]	37s.	6 recipe books	1756	Deerfield, Massachusetts

Table 2 Comparative Cost of Inventory Items and Recipe Books

Inventory Item(s)	Value	Equivalent Value of Recipe Books (approximate)	Year, Location
"1 mare and colt" [192]	£4	13 recipe books	1750, Williamsburg, VA
"11 knives and 11 forks"[193]	8 s.	1 recipe book plus 2 s.	1750, Williamsburg, VA
"1 gun 1 pair pistols and holsters"[194]	£1	3 recipe books	1751, York County, VA
"1 tea kettle 2 coffee pots 1 choclate do."[195]	£1 15s.	6 recipe books	1760, Williamsburg, VA

[187] United States, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *History of Wages in the United States from Colonial Times to 1928*, Bulletin, No. 604 (Washington: United States Govt. Print. Off., 1934), 20, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008319974.
[188] Massachusetts, Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Carroll Davidson Wright, *Comparative Wages, Prices, and Cost of Living: (From the Sixteenth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, for 1885)* (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1889), 117, https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005856297.
[189] Lange, "Sweet Concoctions: Ceramics for Chocolate Drinking In Early America," 7.
[190] Lange, 7.
[191] Lange, 7.
[192] "Inventory of the Estate of Thomas Bennet Decd. | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library."
[193] "Inventory of Estate of James Wray 1750 March 18 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library."
[194] "Inventory of Estate of William Bryan | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library."
[195] "Inventory of Estate of Henry Wetherburn 1761, March 16 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library."

"14 syllabub and 23 jelly glasses"[196]	£1 6s.	4 recipe books, or 1 recipe book for every 9 glasses	1774, Williamsburg, VA

Table 3 Cost of Recipe Book as a Percent of Daily Earnings

Job	**Earnings per day**[197]	**Recipe Book Cost as a Percent of Daily Income**	**Year**
Agricultural Laborer[198]	16.5s.	36%	1752
Butcher[199]	16.5s.	36%	1771
Blacksmith[200]	33s.	18%	1771
Carpenter[201]	22s.	27%	1772
Mason[202]	33s.	18%	1774
Ship Builder[203]	44s.	13%	1789
Millwright[204]	55s.	10%	1799

The tables above suggest that most members of the middle class could purchase a recipe book, though affordability ranged depending on the salary of the family. The appeal of the recipe book as a guide for middle-class families was a motivating factor when considering a purchase. Select recipe books released in the eighteenth century were marketed as training manuals by professional confectioners for individuals hoping to emulate European sugar sculptures while other authors published more realistic recipes for the average cook. Both examples of recipe books target the same audience though. They marketed these books to the middle class who

[196] "Inventory of Estate of Richard Hunt Singleton 1774, May 16 | Colonial Williamsburg Digital Library."
[197] Earnings were presented in American cents. They have been converted into shillings at the exchange rate of two cents per shilling.
[198] Massachusetts, Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Wright, *Comparative Wages, Prices, and Cost of Living*, 46.
[199] Massachusetts, Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Wright, 48.
[200] Massachusetts, Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Wright, 47.
[201] Massachusetts, Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Wright, 48.
[202] Massachusetts, Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Wright, 55.
[203] Massachusetts, Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Wright, 57.
[204] Massachusetts, Bureau of Statistics of Labor and Wright, 57.

were seeking the knowledge required to judge their peers and understand how to present their own dessert creations.

A popular and purposefully accessible recipe book was *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* by Hannah Glasse. This book was a more practical guide to creating centerpieces for a middle-class family or a cook without specialized training. *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* was first published in 1747 and is a compilation of recipes for meats, side dishes, desserts, and a few for medicinal purposes.[205] Many later editions were published throughout the eighteenth century. Glasse followed earlier texts with the same recipes, but her 1775 introduction claimed that her methods were a stark contrast to the unnecessarily complicated ones published by others. For example, her introduction ridiculed a French recipe that required six pounds of butter to fry a dozen eggs. Glasse contended that half a pound of butter was sufficient. She included directions for centerpieces that looked beautiful and creative while keeping the construction process as simplified as possible.

Glasse's recipe for an edible hedgehog centerpiece exemplifies the simple steps. The hedgehog body was made of an almond dough pierced with sliced almonds for the spines and two plump currants for the eyes. She suggested serving it as the second course or as a grand dessert on a plate with a cream sauce or jelly.[206] The hedgehog centerpiece was accessible to a cook who had general training. Time and

[205] Hannah Glasse, *The Art Of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* (London, England, 1747), http://archive.org/details/TheArtOfCookery.
[206] Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* (London, England: W. Strahan, J. and F. Rivington, J. Hinton, 1774), 207, https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Art_of_Cookery_Made_Plain_and_Easy.html?id=xJdAAAAAIAAJ.

effort were involved, but complicated sugar work was not. Glasse advanced the presentation artistically in ways that the average cook could copy at home.

Glasse also established herself as a credible female cook by calling attention to the French gentlemen whose cooking style she felt was pretentious for most housewives. She flattered the female reader by writing that she would be happy "to gain the good opinion of my own sex, I desire no more."[207] She also differentiates herself from male authors and establishes a female bond with the reader by calling out her understanding of the family finances. She credits the woman of the house with the knowledge of family finances and implies that male authors talk down to their female readers throughout the recipe book. Glasse uses her sex as part of the recipe book appeal, she claims to understand the true nature of a woman and her role in the house, a role she argues male authors do not understand.

A prime example of a male author with pretentions was "Mr. Borella" who published *The Court and the Country Confectioner* published in 1770.[208] Borella gave specific instructions for the twelve degrees of sugar and used these numbered degrees in recipes. The first degree was boiled for the shortest amount of time, while the twelfth degree was boiled to the point of crumbling.[209] This system went against the type of cooking that Glasse compiled for readers.

Borella's introduction automatically makes the reader feel as if they are important by noting that his recipes were "bills of fare of deserts for private gentlemen's families."[210] Borella used his role as head confectioner to the Spanish

[207] Glasse, v.
[208] Borella, *The Court and Country Confectioner*.
[209] Borella, 42–45.
[210] Borella, 8.

ambassador in England as a selling point for his work. He also added intrigue by sharing with his readers that this information about sugar work was often not shared outside the professional world. Glasse may have been referring directly to Borella as an author in her introduction which notes that she purposefully altered complex words so that they could be understood by servants.

Both authors were speaking to a middle-class audience hoping to impress their peers, but Glasse wrote in a realistic manner. Borella preyed on the middle-class desire to create works of sugar art worthy of elite status. Sugar is temperamental; it can be the perfect golden color one minute and burn then next. Factors such as humidity also affect spun sugar. Borella used difficult sugar techniques in his recipes while Glasse chose to use other methods that were easier for a home cook to construct a centerpiece.

Glasse was an established author with multiple editions published, proving her value to the purchaser of the book. Borella, on the other hand, copied verbatim an earlier recipe for sugar paste as well as a recipe for orange-drops (which he called orange pastils) from Mary Eales. In her early work from 1718 titled, *Mrs. Mary Eales's receipts. Confectioner to her late Majesty Queen Anne*, Eales did not include any preface or introduction. Unlike Glasse and Borella who published their works decades later, her recipes merely began with the table of contents and jumped from there into the first recipe.[211] There was no initial sales pitch to the reader for why they should purchase her book rather than a competing recipe book. The market for recipe

[211] Mary Eales, *Mrs. Mary Eales's Receipts. Confectioner to Her Late Majesty Queen Anne* (London, England: H. Meere, 1718), https://www.loc.gov/item/44030607/.

books was still young in 1718 with fewer recipe books on the market. With less competition for readers, a persuasive introduction was not as necessary.

The early publication date of Eales' work aligns with the early years of the move towards gentility which suggests that this book was meant for an elite audience. The middle-class push towards refinement was in its earliest stages during the first publication of Eales' work in 1718. It is more likely that purchasers of her work were elite, while Borella was able to capitalize on the middle-class desire to own a piece of the aristocracy later in the eighteenth century. By the time Borella published his work in 1770, his message played into the new modes of gentility. His work was directed towards the families of gentlemen seeking to build prestige by incorporating more unique techniques and ingredients into the pages of his book. Borella's focus on extremely complicated sugar work speaks to the focus on bigger and better displays. With the rise of complex sugar work and more complicated recipe books, came the fall of syllabub as a refined dessert. While it was still popular, its prestige was waning by the late eighteenth century.

Syllabub became so accessible that it was compared with frugality in a 1796 painting.[212] Figure 13, titled *Frugality*, features a glass of syllabub on the right side. The title proves the ubiquity of syllabub by the end of the eighteenth century.[213] The elegant vision of syllabub is marred by the carrots scattered on the plate. Syllabub in a refined glass was relegated to this plain table. This shows the nature of trends, what

[212] Barbara G. Carson, *Ambitious Appetites*, First Edition edition (The American Institute of Architects Press, 1990), 37.
[213] Carson, 37.

was once a sign of gentility was by the middle class and seen as frugal by the elite by the end of the eighteenth century.

Figure 13 Frugality by Peter Pasquin after J.M. DeLattre, 1796.

A final nod to the cultural significance of syllabub comes from a debate surrounding amendments to the Constitution on August 15, 1789. An insult from Aedanus Burke of South Carolina included a reference to syllabub. He scorned the proposed amendment as "little better than whip-syllabub, frothy and full of wind, formed only to please the palate."[214] In this instance, he used the term syllabub as a

[214] "Amendments to the Constitution, [15 August] 1789," *Founders Online,* National Archives, last modified February 1, 2018, http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-12-02-0224. [Original source: *The Papers of James Madison*, vol. 12, *2 March 1789–20 January 1790 and supplement 24 October 1775–24 January 1789*, ed. Charles F. Hobson and Robert A. Rutland. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979, pp. 339–342.]; "BURKE, Aedanus - Biographical Information,"

metaphor for the amendment that had no real weight to it. The popularity of syllabub, seen in this insult, is a reminder that this was an accessible dessert, but it became too accessible for the wealthy to continue displaying it if they wanted to keep up with the latest trends.

By the early nineteenth century, recipe books went even further to include confectionary masterpieces and had moved well-beyond syllabub. The most famous was authored by M. A. Carême. Carême is often cited as the founder of French gastronomy and even presented sugar masterpieces to Napoleon.[215] He represents the highest, most unattainable form of sugar presentations from France. *The Royal Parisian Pastrycook and Confectioner* was published in London in 1834 and listed Carême's credentials as a former cook to the Marquis Camden.[216] Like most recipe book authors, Carême's worth as an author was linked to his work for the English elite. The Marquis Camden was a title created in 1812 for John Jeffreys Pratt of Kent, England who held significant positions prior to that, including viceroy of Ireland, secretary of state for war and the colonies, and lord president of the council.[217] His elite position allowed him to hire an experience confectioner like Carême.

While Londoners had access to Carême's published work in the early nineteenth century, only elite Americans with an interest in confectionary recipe

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Biographical Description of the United States Congress, accessed May 13, 2018, http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=B001086.

[215] "Marie-Antoine Carême," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed June 6, 2018, https://academic-eb-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/levels/collegiate/article/Marie-Antoine-Car%C3%AAme/20312.

[216] M. A. Carême, *The Royal Parisian Pastrycook and Confectioner from the Original of M. A. Carême* (London, England: F. J. Mason, 1834), 12, https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Royal_Parisian_Pastrycook_and_Confec.html?id=hK7-ltOfXwEC.

[217] "John Jeffreys Pratt, 1st Marquess Camden, British Politician," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed June 6, 2018, https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Jeffreys-Pratt-1st-Marquess-Camden.

books could have ordered it. Americans with access to London booksellers or English publications like *The Spectator* would have seen early advertisements for Carême's work.[218] Carême's recipe book does not appear as a newly acquired book at the Boston Public Library until 1888, decades after its initial publication.[219] Only the wealthiest Americans with connections overseas could have utilized this book. Carême's work was inaccessible to the American middle-class, but his work exemplifies the pinnacle of pastry work. His was the gold standard in early nineteenth-century France and serves as a comparison to more simplistic desserts presented in America. His work also showcases how dessert displays grew in complexity as the nineteenth century began.

Carême took the art of sugar work to the extreme, listing extensive instructions for each edible work of art and including printed images of the end product for some of the many sugar construction projects. This work presented new recipes not found in most English recipe books, traditional French confections were the main focus. He included confections of varying degrees of difficulty, though some were accessible to the average cook.

An example of an accessible pastry included vols-au-vent, which was puff pastry cut with a scalloped cutter, dusted with sugar, and filled with preserves.[220] Simply purchasing a scalloped cutter would elevate the puff pastry, a well-known and regularly referenced recipe in early recipe books. Another improvement on the

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[218] Westley, *The Spectator*, vol. 7, No. 288 (London, England: Gustavus Arabin, 1834), 283.
[219] Boston Public Library Barton Collection, *Catalogue of the Barton Collection, Boston Public Library: Catalogue of the Miscellaneous Portion of the Barton Collection, Boston Public Library* (The Trustees, 1888), 87.
[220] Carême, *The Royal Parisian Pastrycook and Confectioner from the Original of M. A. Carême*, 132.

traditional puff pastry were small rosettes.[221] They were easily cut into round shapes and formed together, then dusted with sugar and baked. They looked elegant and did not require extensive knowledge beyond that of an average cook. Even simpler was flavoring sugar with orange peel or lemon peel.[222] While this was an extra step beyond plain sugar, it was not complicated to grate a lemon or orange, as long as one could afford the fruit. These recipes go beyond the average dessert, but they are simple enough for a general cook to master. In stark contrast to these recipes came the elaborate scenes of sugar and pastry.

Carême's most complicated works of sugar art included a harp, a terrestrial globe, a French helmet, a military trophy, a large basket with fruit, a cup filled with oranges, a rustic rotunda, a grotto ornamented with moss, a cascade with palm trees, a Turkish fountain, a Chinese summer house, ruins of Athens, and numerous additional variations of these structures.[223] These structures evoke exotic lands and historically significant scenes. A host presenting such a display was broadcasting their knowledge of these sites and adding intelligent conversation to the table. Only the truly elite could afford to commission such a centerpiece given the complicated directions the quantity of pieces involved. The various forms of sugar in these works of art included sugar boiled to a "crack", white spun sugar, golden spun sugar, yellow spun sugar, and caramel. Additional confections included almond paste, confectioner's paste, nougat, croques en bouche, meringues, jelly, and cake.

[221] Carême, 144.
[222] Carême, 154.
[223] Carême, 210–28.

The complex masterpieces constructed by Carême were time-consuming, technically difficult, and not easily attempted by an untrained professional. An example is illustrated in Figure 14.[224] While the sculpture is simply named a cup filled with oranges, the multitude of elements and techniques involved can be seen clearly. This structure would take hours, even days depending on how many cooks were contributing to the work of art. An edible sculpture of this caliber was not an attainable goal for the average middle-class family hoping to elevate their status.

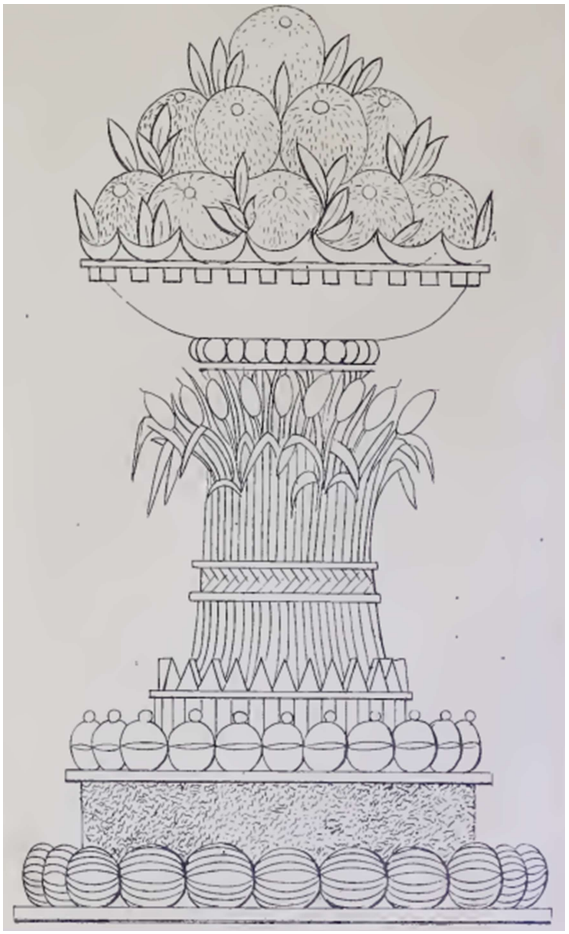

Figure 14 A cup filled with oranges, 1834.

Carême's work was published later than Glasse and Borella and illustrates even grander themes of aspiration that arose as time progressed. The transatlantic nature of recipe books also brings up questions of accessibility in America. Naturally, recipe books published in London were accessible to the English before they were to Americans. The French published their own recipe books in French in the eighteenth century as well. Many confectioners were trained in France, which was the heart of elaborate confectionary work. The increased publication of recipe books in the

[224] Carême, 215.

eighteenth and early nineteenth century reflect the desire in America to gain the knowledge necessary to understand and create impressive edible treats.[225] Practical applications of these published recipe books can be seen in personal American recipe books.

An anonymous recipe book from the 1820s, likely from Pennsylvania, provides a contrast to published recipe books. Noteworthy in the list of recipes provided by the anonymous author, was the simplicity of the desserts. There is no inclusion of complicated sugar work, which suggests that other forms of confections were preferred in actual practice versus what some published recipe books pushed onto consumers. Measurements were simplified in an early recipe for "cup cakes" and "New York cup cakes".[226] The main ingredients, including butter, sugar, and flour were all measured by full tea cups. Simplifying recipes was a trend started by Hannah Glasse, who openly stated her displeasure in complicated French recipes. This example illustrates the practical use of confection in America, which was closer to Glasse's recipes than Carême's detailed instructions.

The dreams of housewives presenting their own towers of spun sugar was not the case for most in reality. Personal recipe books included simplified desserts and the middle class instead purchased serving glasses to present familiar recipes of syllabub in a more refined way. Talented cooks and housewives had the ability to make simplified versions dessert displays, but the true masterpieces were constructed by professional confectioners for wealthy families.

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[225] McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: Commercialization of Eighteenth Century England*, 271.
[226] Anonymous, *Recipe Book 1820-1829 Anon.* (Pennsylvania, 1820), 16, http://content.winterthur.org:2011/cdm/ref/collection/Recipes/id/34.

The consumer revolution fueled the middle class and the wealthy to heighten their awareness of dessert presentations. Rosalie Calvert's earlier comments related to debt in America speak to this need to present the finest possible table, one that was full of beautiful objects and dessert. The glassware, silver, and ceramics used to display confection were coveted just as much as a taste of the sweet treat. Calvert's description of the "dessert that far surpassed anything" she'd ever seen did not include details about the types of dessert served, but rather the display pieces on the table.[227] She described the dessert display at the home of the English Ambassador as an "elegant plateau with handsome groupings of white marble and bouquets of flowers, interspersed with beautiful silver candelabra."[228] For Calvert, the lasting impression of the meal focused on the material goods used to accompany and elevate the dessert.

[227] Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, 138.
[228] Callcott, 138.

Chapter 3: Confectioners

The true masters of confection in the eighteenth century utilized highly specialized skills to create edible masterpieces and awe guests at social gatherings. Many of the best confectioners trained in France and went on to work for wealthy families and royals in Europe. Immigrant confectioners from overseas arrived in American cities and opened confectionary shops or hired their services out to families for special events. Not all cities had the same access to immigrant confectioners. Enslaved confectioners were trained in the art of pastry in the South. The ability of an elite American to gain access to a professional confectioner proved their high standing in society in early to mid-eighteenth century. Following the Revolution, professional confectioners increased their advertisements and began to fill regional gaps in access to fine dessert.

The face of confectionary work in the American South was more diverse, specifically the Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. region. Enslaved people were included in this elite category of confectioners alongside working professionals who were trained in France. The need in America for trained confectioners allowed enslaved people working in southern kitchens to have new opportunities to gain valuable skills and serve as apprentices to confectioners. At the same time, they were closely scrutinized as they worked with some of the most expensive equipment and ingredients in the kitchen. The power dynamic between enslaver and enslaved confectioner was unusual. These enslaved people had greater influence and closer ties to their owners by way of impressive dessert displays and enticing flavors, but with this proximity came a more watchful eye from the master of the house.

The scarcity of existing confectioners for hire affected hiring decisions and purchases of enslaved people in America. The demand in America outweighed the supply of trained confectioners, most of whom were trained and worked overseas in Europe. The desire to present impressive displays of dessert in America led to investment in the pastry-making and confectionary skills of enslaved people. Individuals with skills in confection were highly sought-after by the elite, whether they were enslaved people or confectioners for hire.

Enslaved individuals with cooking experience and especially pastry skills were in demand throughout the eighteenth century. Enslaved people also apprenticed to learn the technical pastry work. Some even traveled to France specifically to learn these skills for their slave owner's tables back in America. The most skilled confectioners worked in large households of wealthy individuals who valued extravagant displays of sugar and pastry work. Some non-enslaved confectioners also ran businesses in addition to their employment in a large household or started a business after employment ended with a family.

Enslaved individuals working within the household were faced with challenges and opportunities not experienced by enslaved workers with less exposure to owners. In *Bound to the Fire*, Kelley Fanto Deetz analyzes eighteenth and nineteenth-century enslaved cooks in Virginia and their impact on American memory today. Deetz addresses the liminal space occupied by enslaved cooks as they moved between the enslavers' household and the larger enslaved community. Deetz argues that enslaved cooks used their knowledge to "manipulate their existence in the brutal

culture of chattel slavery."[229] They were in a better position take action against enslavers than enslaved individuals who worked outside the main house.[230] Deetz also calls attention to the "domestic performance" of Virginian hospitality which hinged on enslaved workers.[231] The picture-perfect refined lifestyle of southern hosts relied on enslaved workers.

Deetz calls attention to the trust given by owners to enslaved cooks. She notes several examples of enslaved cooks poisoning their masters. They worked in close proximity to the family and had advanced medicinal knowledge since food and medicine had close ties in the eighteenth century. Enslaved confectioners had even more specialized training than cooks, giving them more access to valuable kitchen equipment and ingredients. This also came with more responsibility to deliver perfect dessert presentations which were the centerpiece of the meal and even the entire event. The attention given to their creations put pressure on enslaved confectioners to live up to high expectations of towering dessert displays. The watchful eye of the owner was tuned in to their work at all times.

Thavolia Glymph also addresses power dynamics, but looks specifically at female owners and enslaved women in *Out of the House of Bondage*. Glymph focuses on the violence perpetrated by white woman against black women, proving the danger of working in close proximity to the female owner.[232] These assertions of power stemmed from the need to maintain control and order within the female

[229] Deetz, *Bound to the Fire: How Virginia's Enslaved Cooks Helped Invent American Cuisine*, 2.
[230] Deetz, 3–4.
[231] Deetz, 3–4.
[232] Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household*, 70.

domain of the household. Like Deetz, Glymph argues that the household depended on enslaved labor to accomplish the goal of keeping a domestic home.[233]

The pressure to maintain a beautiful home and more specifically dessert presentations, influenced the power dynamics between owners and enslaved confectioners. Enslaved confectioners were in close communication with the owner in ways that other enslaved workers were not. They discussed the dessert options and presentation plan, the required ingredients, and the material goods needed to display the dessert. This close proximity and ear of the owner gave an enslaved confectioner influence while also bringing a watchful eye to their work from the owner. They worked in a space of heightened surveillance while maintaining an unusual sense of creativity and control when working with dessert.

Notable and wealthy Americans who had traveled overseas or who were in a political office of great importance were more likely to value the presence of elaborate dessert displays. As discussed in previous chapters, people like Thomas Jefferson and John Adams observed confectionary displays in Europe and were particularly interested in bringing the same splendor to America. George Washington's inauguration was a momentous occasion worthy of impressive displays of dessert, but outside help was necessary to bring the vision to fruition.

Tobias Lear's 1789 correspondence, related to Washington's inauguration, included the desire to find, "a sett of those waiters, salvers, or whatever they are called, which are set in the middle of a dining table to ornament it."[234] Lear stated that

[233] Glymph, 3.
[234] Tobias Lear, "President Washington in New York, 1789," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 32, no. 4 (1908): 499.

salvers were particularly difficult to find, noting that only foreign ministers and one other person had them. Refined material goods like salvers were more difficult to find in American than they were in Europe. Washington used a French confectioner to prepare dessert for the inauguration and create beautiful ornaments to place on the salvers. Figure 15 shows stacked salvers to form a pyramid upon which confections and glasses of jellies and syllabub could be displayed.[235]

This search for salvers and a confectioner to fill them with fine dessert reveals the complicated process of procuring objects and trained talent in America. Even Washington's status as president did not alleviate the difficulty in presenting an impressive table of dessert. This is a recurring theme among the political and economic elite in America. Foreign ministers or spouses from overseas had greater access to trained pastry chefs and objects used to display confections. Their desire to emulate fine dining in Europe and impress their peers in America is evident in their continuous search for pastry chefs, as evidenced in Washington's continued search for talent in the kitchen.

Figure 15 Pyramid of salvers, 1740-1780.

Washington used both hired and enslaved labor in the kitchen for cooking and making desserts. In May 1789, Samuel Fraunces was working as Washington's paid

[235] Palmer, *Glass in Early America: Selections from the Henry Francis Du Pont Winterthur Museum*, 220.

steward of the household.[236] He was previously the owner of a tavern in New York City after arriving from the West Indies.[237] The earliest record of Fraunces in America comes from 1755 when he was registered as an innholder.[238] He was later the owner of Queen's Head Tavern in Philadelphia and was experienced in making desserts such as cakes, tarts, jellies, syllabub, and sweet meats.[239] A newspaper advertisement in Philadelphia from 1766 notes his confectioner's shop "where Ladies and Gentlemen may be supplied with Cakes and Pastries of all Sorts."[240] Washington described Fraunces as, "an excellent Cook, knowing how to provide genteel Dinners, and giving aid in dressing them, prepared the Desert, made the Cake."[241] His skill in making dessert is evidenced further by a guest's description of the many courses of sweets following the main meal.

A meal at the president's in August 1789 included a description of the dessert noting that, "the dessert was, first apple-pies, puddings, etc; then iced creams, jellies, etc; then water-melons, musk-melons, apples, peaches, nuts."[242] The variety of dessert presented shows Fraunces' skill in pasty, custard and jelly-making, and acquiring an assortment of fruit and nuts for the end of the meal. The combination of cook and dessert-maker added value to Fraunces as an employee. His knowledge of pastry

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[236] Stephen Decatur, *Private Affairs of George Washington* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1933), 16.
[237] Decatur, 15; Samuel Fraunces to George Washington, March 1, 1784, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-04-01-02-0125.
[238] Fraunces Tavern Museum, "Samuel Fraunces," accessed December 3, 2018, http://www.frauncestavernmuseum.org/samuel-fraunces/.
[239] Fraunces Tavern Museum.
[240] "Samuel Frauncis," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 12, 1766, no. 1955 edition, America's Historical Newspapers.
[241] George Washington to Tobias Lear, September 20, 1790, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-05-06-02-0222.
[242] Decatur, *Private Affairs of George Washington*, 53.

work elevated his status as a business owner and personal cook to the elite. Washington's next steward, James Hyde, was a disappointment in comparison to Fraunces.[243]

Washington valued a steward and cook who could keep costs down while presenting a fine dinner. A steward was responsible for the cost of dinners and menu planning. Washington compared the appropriate cost of dinners by Fraunces to expensive ones which James Hyde planned.[244] Fraunces was in fact more of an asset since he both cooked and had the ability to bake and make dessert. James Hyde could cook but could not produce desserts, a task which was undertaken by his wife.[245] Washington's financial issue with Mr. Hyde extended to his wife. Mrs. Hyde expressed the need for assistance in making dessert on entertaining days and was told that the chef, John Vicar, might be able to help, but this was not his main role as chef.[246] Washington's issue with the Hydes stemmed from their inability to keep costs down in the kitchen. Not just with meal planning, but also the fact that James Hyde could only cook and required the help of others for dessert, costing the kitchen more money to employ additional workers.

John Vicar was employed as a cook for Washington for a year from May 1790 to May 1791, but he did not have strong baking skills, forcing the kitchen to

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[243] George Washington to Tobias Lear, September 5, 1790, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-05-06-02-0190.
[244] Washington to Lear, September 20, 1790.
[245] Tobias Lear to George Washington, September 26, 1790, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-05-06-02-0234.
[246] Tobias Lear to Daniel Grant, February 28, 1790, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-05-05-02-0113.

outsource the work.[247] His pastry and baking skills were likely low due to the employment of Mrs. Hyde to bake cakes and make additional purchases of dessert. An account from April 1791 notes a payment to Mrs. Palmer for cake, confirming that some dessert-making was out of Vicar's realm of expertise.[248] The next month Vicar was replaced by Fraunces who returned to work for Washington.[249] The regular turnover of hired help in the kitchen highlights the difficulty in both finding a chef and finding one with knowledge of baking and pastry skills. Once hired, budgeting meals appropriately was another obstacle the employer had to overcome. The chef also had to manage a kitchen of enslaved people and hired help.

Washington's celebrated chef, Hercules, who was enslaved until after Martha Washington's death in 1802, began working in Washington's kitchen sometime before 1790.[250] Hercules left Mount Vernon and traveled to Philadelphia with Washington to cook in September 1790.[251] Washington advocated for Hercules and his talents in the kitchen when he rehired Fraunces in 1791 as steward to oversee the kitchen, manage spending on food, and run events. Washington's written agreement with Fraunces at the time of hire included language related to Hercules. The formal agreement signed by Fraunces noted Hercules as the main cook and suggested

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[247] Decatur, *Private Affairs of George Washington*, 121, 234.
[248] Decatur, 221.
[249] Decatur, 234.
[250] Chelsea Lenhart, "Hercules," George Washington's Mount Vernon, accessed November 13, 2018, https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/hercules/; George Washington to Tobias Lear, September 9, 1790, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-05-06-02-0195.
[251] George Washington to Tobias Lear, September 17, 1790, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-05-06-02-0216.

Fraunces should rely on him for that role.[252] Fraunces edited the agreement with the caveat that he would first need to observe Hercules in the kitchen before deciding whether or not a professional should be hired.

Based on Washington's interest in keeping Hercules as the main chef and recollections of his cooking, there was little cause for Fraunces' concern. A glowing description of Hercules' talents came from Martha Washington's grandson, George Washington Parke Custis who described him as, "highly accomplished a proficient in the culinary art as could be found in the United States."[253] Custis placed Hercules on a pedestal with this compliment and implied that his peer group included some of the most sought-after confectioners. In Hercules' case, his standing as a confectioner and chef overshadowed his status as an enslaved person. Having valuable confectionary skills as an enslaved person allowed those individuals more flexibility and creativity in their working lives. While enslaved people with specialized skills were not free, they held more power with the in-demand skill of dessert-making. Like Washington, Jefferson was also concerned with finding and keeping a chef in the kitchen with specialized confectionary skills.

Jefferson was particularly obsessed with dining. The significance of the dessert course can be seen in his decision to bring James Hemings with him to France

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[252] Tobias Lear to George Washington, May 15, 1791, *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-05-08-02-0148.

[253] George Washington, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington by His Adopted Son George Washington with a Memoir of the Author by His Daughter; and Illustrative and Explanatory Notes by Benson J. Loosing: With Illustrations* (Derby & Jackson, 1860), 422, https://books.google.com/books?id=PkE6AAAAcAAJ&dq=%22was,+at+the+period+of+the+first+presidency,+as+highly+accomplished+a+proficient+in+the+culinary+art+as+could+be+found+in+the%22&source=gbs_navlinks_s.

for five years, from 1784 to 1789.[254] Hemings joined Jefferson for the explicit purpose of training to become a chef and utilize his skills at Monticello upon their return.[255] Annette Gordon-Reed provides a comprehensive understanding of James Hemings' life, along with other members of the Hemings family in *The Hemingses of Monticello*. Gordon-Reed calls out the unusual circumstances of the Hemings as being remembered, unlike many nameless enslaved people who were merely numbers on a page. Gordon-Reed dives deep into the members of this family to prove that they were exceptional not just because Jefferson owned them, but because of their work at Monticello and beyond.[256]

Gordon-Reed's work goes beyond the relationship of Sally Hemings and Jefferson. Her extensive research paints a full picture of the Hemings family and highlights James Hemings' relationship with Jefferson and as an enslaved, but highly-skilled confectioner. While is it widely known that Hemings trained as a chef in France, his training in French pastry is often overlooked. Gordon-Reed expands on this scholarship and notes that after an apprenticeship learning French cuisine, he moved on to work with several instructors to learn pastry skills. One of these instructors was the cook for Louis Joseph, Prince of Condé, who lived on a lavish country estate called Chantilly. Hemings worked one day each week in Paris and five days in the country at this estate for a time while training.[257]

Jefferson paid for Hemings' training, and later during their discussion of manumission, it was a sticking point. Jefferson saw this as an investment in Hemings'

[254] Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello*, 26, 160.
[255] Gordon-Reed, 156.
[256] Gordon-Reed, 23.
[257] Gordon-Reed, 166.

skills and he anticipated bringing Hemings back to Monticello to use those skills learned in France to impress guests dining at Monticello. Jefferson also paid Hemings a wage of 288 livres per year while in France, while the range for a cook of his standing in France was between 200 and 250 livres.[258] By 1788, Hemings became the official chef de cuisine at the Hôtel de Langeac.[259] In this role, he had the right to sell renderings of animals prepared in the kitchen to earn additional money.[260] Hemings had responsibility and independence in France in addition to highly specialized and sought-after skills in pastry.

Jefferson valued the fine dining and pastry skills that could only be learned by an apprenticeship in France. In a formal agreement signed between Hemings and Jefferson, his freedom was contingent upon training another enslaved person at Monticello to replace himself.[261] Gordon-Reed analyzes the impact of this agreement, one that did not have legal force, and argues that Jefferson wrote the agreement for the benefit of showing goodwill to Hemings.[262] She addresses the language of the agreement, noting that Jefferson was "desiring to befriend" Hemings.[263] Gordon-Reed recognizes the close relationship of the two and contrasts that with Jefferson's need for a pastry chef. Hemings trained his younger brother Peter to take over at Monticello and in 1796 James Hemings fulfilled the requirement for his freedom.[264]

[258] Gordon-Reed, 180.
[259] Gordon-Reed, 209, 226.
[260] Gordon-Reed, 209.
[261] Gordon-Reed, 489.
[262] Gordon-Reed, 490–91.
[263] Gordon-Reed, 492.
[264] Gordon-Reed, 521.

After Jefferson freed Hemings, he went through stages of searching for temporary confectioners while he ultimately sought another permanent pastry chef. Jefferson temporarily hired Etienne Simonet, a pastry cook and confectioner in Philadelphia, in 1797.[265] Simonet later advertised his pasty skills in the Aurora General Advertiser of Philadelphia in 1798. He advertised his ability to make dinners and carry them to any part of the city. He also kept on hand, "different articles of pastry and deserts."[266]

By 1801, Jefferson was actively seeking out a maitre d'hotel and recognized the "impossibility of finding one among the natives of our country."[267] Jefferson noted in his request for a good chef that dessert-making skills were indispensable qualifications. In the hopes of helping Jefferson find a qualified chef, Josef Yznardy, U.S. Consul in Cadiz, wrote in Spanish that he was willing to loan his chef to Jefferson and described him as, "French, honorable, without vice, and a good pastry maker."[268] Yznardy's attention to the chef's pastry skills and French origin is a reminder that confectioners were difficult to hire in America. Jefferson did not hire Yznardy's choice, but instead hired Philippe de Létombe's recommendation, Honoré

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[265] Thomas Jefferson, "1797 Memorandum Book," June 16, 1797, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition*, ed. James P. McClure and J. Jefferson Looney. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018.
[266] "Simonet, Pastry Cook & Confectioner," *Aurora General Advertiser*, November 15, 1798.
[267] Thomas Jefferson to Philippe de Létombe, February 22, 1801, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition*, ed. James P. McClure and J. Jefferson Looney. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/TSJN-01-33-02-0041.
[268] Josef Yznardy to Thomas Jefferson, March 27, 1801, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition*, ed. James P. McClure and J. Jefferson Looney. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018; *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 8, 6 (Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1896), 579, https://books.google.com/books?id=Aas0AQAAMAAJ&source=gbs_navlinks_s.

Julien, who served as his chef throughout Jefferson's presidency.[269] Julien arrived in America in 1791 and was a native of France.[270] Julien later opened a confectionary in Washington in 1810 following the end of his employment with Jefferson.[271]

Jefferson sent several enslaved people from Monticello to train with Julien before he left. Julien trained Ursula Granger, an enslaved woman owned by Jefferson, for a short time in 1802 before training two enslaved women, Edith Fosset and Frances Hern, leaving the role of head of kitchen to Fosset in 1809.[272] Ursula Granger's grandmother was the head cook before James Hemings.[273] Jefferson utilized both confectioners and enslaved people with specialized pastry training to guarantee continual access to confections at his dinner table.

As the nineteenth century began, confectioners were becoming more accessible to the wealthy. Those who established shops were able to provide much needed dessert services to families who could afford a cook but needed extra help for special social events. Rosalie Calvert exemplified the novelty of hiring a confectioner in the early nineteenth century. Rosalie Calvert was married to George Calvert and lived in the Riversdale mansion outside of Washington, D.C. She was originally from Belgium and her European upbringing gave her an atypical perspective of an outsider

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[269] Philippe de Létombe to Thomas Jefferson, March 26, 1801, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition*, ed. James P. McClure and J. Jefferson Looney. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018.
[270] Honoré Julien to Washington, George, January 1, 1810, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition*, ed. James P. McClure and J. Jefferson Looney. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/TSJN-03-02-02-0084 [accessed 23 Oct 2018].
[271] "Advertisement by Honoré Julien," *National Intelligener*, January 8, 1810.
[272] "Dining with Congress," Thomas Jefferson Encyclopedia, accessed November 4, 2018, https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/dining-congress; Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello*, 569–70; "Agreement with John H. Craven" (*The Papers of Thomas Jefferson Digital Edition*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018, September 20, 1803), http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/TSJN-01-41-02-0298.
[273] Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello*, 569.

among the American political elite in the early nineteenth century.[274] She socialized with the Washingtons, other American politicians, and ambassadors living in the area. Calvert's correspondence highlights the desires of the D.C. elite to gain access to confectioners.

Calvert noted in a letter from 1805 that cooks were particularly difficult to find, but she wrote that a recent trend in cities involved French confectioners who could be hired by the day to make dessert.[275] Calvert had an enslaved cook, Sam, and also noted a 14-year-old, "negress who is invaluable," who also likely worked in the kitchen.[276] Enslaved people trained as cooks were sought-after as expressed by Calvert.

The dearth of access to confectioners in the Washington, D.C. and surrounding areas is tracked by Barbara G. Carson in *Ambitious Appetites*. Carson explores early nineteenth-century food, table settings, and social rituals.[277] Her deep dive into Washington, D.C. society looks at the influence of dining on the social order of the capital city full of elected officials and foreign ministers. While Carson presents an impressive number of references to dessert displays and tracks access to confectioners in Washington, D.C., the scope of her work is largely contextual for an exhibition at the Octagon House. Her research ties into larger themes of American desire to emulate Europeans, which played out quite literally in Washington, D.C. Foreign ministers had greater access to confectioners and knowledge of how to display theses desserts than Americans did.

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[274] Callcott, *Mistress of Riversdale*, x.
[275] Callcott, 125.
[276] Callcott, 125.
[277] Carson, *Ambitious Appetites*, vi.

Carson paints a picture of Washington, D.C. as a city with hostesses who desired to impress, but with few options of confectioners to help. Carson quotes the 1804-1805 memoirs of Louisa Catherine Adams, wife of John Quincy Adams, who wrote that "luxury was unknown except in the Houses of the Foreign Ministers."[278] As the daughter-in-law to a past president, socially, she was part of the elite in Washington. Adams went on to confirm that there were "no confections &c or French Cooks" and that ladies labored over their own confections.[279] Wealthy plantation owners living just outside the Washington, D.C. area had even less access to professional help and valued enslaved people with pastry skills.

The Forman family in Maryland relied on help from skilled enslaved labor in the kitchen to fill their dinner table with confections. Martha Ogle Forman kept a diary from 1814 through 1845, which she began after her wedding to General Thomas Marsh Forman, the rural plantation owner of Rose Hill in Cecil County, Maryland.[280] Forman owned 800 acres of land and about fifty enslaved people.[281] Martha Ogle Forman was also left with an "ample stipend" at the time of her husband's death. Their ownership of land and enslaved people reveals their wealth, and signifies the family as part of the upper middle class. Two enslaved people owned by Forman worked as dairymaids, and in her diary she noted all the "pastries, Cake and biscuits" were made by an enslaved person.[282] Forman provides written proof that she might

[278] Carson, 2, 110.
[279] Carson, 111.
[280] Martha Ogle Forman, *Plantation Life at Rose Hill: The Diaries of Martha Ogle Forman, 1814-1845* (Historical Society of Delaware, 1976), v.
[281] Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850* (Yale University Press, 1988), 84; Forman, *Plantation Life at Rose Hill*, vi.
[282] Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds*, 91.

have run the household, but she was not solely responsible herself for the creation of magnificent desserts at the dining table.

A detailed description of an impressive dessert centerpiece at the Forman table comes from an 1819 diary entry that described the centerpiece as, "a large silver goblet of Ice cream ornamented with a half blown moss rose, on each side of the goblet was a silver bowl of floating island" with two decorated floating islands in silver bowls flanking the centerpiece.[283] Floating island was a dessert placed in a large soup dish with cream, then thin layers of French rolls were sandwiched between different types of jellies. As much whipped cream as possible was heaped on top and decorated with fruit.[284] The Forman family had an ice house on their property, allowing for convenience when making the ice cream.[285]

Forman's presentation followed diagrams of the day. She also laid out multiple options of preserves, custards, jellies in glasses, oranges and other sweetmeats. The extensive labor, time, and technique involved with a dessert presentation of this magnitude calls attention to the enslaved people who labored in the Forman kitchen. This impressive presentation of dessert was not a regular occurrence in the Forman household though. References in her diary are made a few times each year for making more simplistic desserts including pound cake and pies.[286] Jams and preserves of cherries, raspberries, apples, oranges, and lemons were also made a few times each year.[287] By the early nineteenth century, confectioners in

[283] Carson, *Ambitious Appetites*, 83.
[284] Glasse, *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy*, 333.
[285] Forman, *Plantation Life at Rose Hill*, 264.
[286] Forman, 4, 8, 17.
[287] Forman, 26, 27, 107, 138.

Washington, D.C. were still notoriously hard to find and other cities also had difficulty hiring for confection work.

In 1790, Abigail Adams wrote to Mary Smith Cranch about the difficulty in Boston of hiring a servant "who understands Pastry &c."[288] Elite desire for confection led to high demand for enslaved people with pastry skills. The search for experienced pastry help in the kitchen began even earlier in the eighteenth century when advertisements for enslaved people noted these valued skills.

An early advertisement from 1733 in Philadelphia described an enslaved man for sale as, "a very likely Mulatto Man Slave, he is a very good Cook, and fit for House work. Also very good Clay'd and Muscovado Sugar, reasonably."[289] The term muscovado refers to unrefined sugar made by evaporating sugar cane juice and draining off the molasses while the term "clay'd" refers to sugar that has been further refined with clay to become a whiter and finer quality sugar.[290] This distinction between different types of sugar indicates the complexity of working with sugar and the highly specialized skills of this enslaved person.

Throughout the eighteenth century, more advertisements for enslaved workers note their coveted experience in the kitchen. A 1783 advertisement for an enslaved twenty-one-year-old female to be sold described her as "an excellent cook, makes the

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[288] Abigail Adams to Mary Smith Cranch, "Abigail Adams to Mary Smith Cranch 28 April 1790," April 28, 1790, The Adams Papers Digital Edition, ed. Sara Martin. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2008–2018., http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/ADMS-04-09-02-0028.

[289] "To Be Sold by Captain Stafford Somerfell," *The American Weekly Mercury*, October 18, 1733.

[290] "Muscovado, n.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed August 24, 2019, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/124033; "Clayed, Adj.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed August 24, 2019, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/34031.

best pastry."[291] A 1784 advertisement for the sale of twenty-five enslaved people noted a select few with specialized skills including one cook and one pastry cook.[292] The skills of cooking and pastry were desirable enough to note in the advertisements, confirming the interest across the eighteenth century to own enslaved people with these skills. The role of enslaved people in the presentation of dessert at fine tables has been addressed by scholars in their work on sugar plantations, but these advertisements along with the personal accounts of wealthy slave owners reveal another level of involvement.

In *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, Sidney Mintz traces the history of sugar to its earliest origins and discusses how eating habits and tastes changed as sugar became a dominant crop. He compares the power of the producers and consumers of sugar by looking at demand in Europe. He argues that sugar took on new social meanings and became a symbol of luxury which eventually transitioned into a more commonplace staple. He connects the importation of enslaved Africans to the Caribbean to the increasing competition between European nations to dominate sugar production in the early sixteenth-century.[293]

The scope of Mintz's work focuses heavily on the relationship between consumers in the United Kingdom and the producers in the Caribbean. The role of the American colonies is largely ignored, since it is beyond the scope of his work. This leaves a space in the scholarship to explore Mintz's ideas about sugar and power in

[291] "A Negro Wench to Be Sold," *The Independent Gazetter*, August 16, 1783, America's Historical Newspapers.
[292] "By Colcock & Gibbons," *South Carolina Gazette and General Advertiser*, February 31, 1784, America's Historical Newspapers.
[293] Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 31–36.

the context of America. There is also room to explore the consumption of sugar in the form of fine confections and the power dynamics at play between creator and consumer.

The enslaved people who created dessert and confections for the wealthy in eighteenth-century America were producers of a valuable product, but not consumers themselves. A stark contrast comes into play when comparing enslaved people with pastry skills to enslaved people on sugar plantations. Enslaved people in the finest kitchens in American held valuable skills. Pastry skills were hard to teach and there were few professional confectioners in America for hire. This upset the typical power dynamic between slave owner and enslaved person. The contrast of the unbalanced power dynamic of enslaved confectioners and their owners compared to enslaved sugar plantation workers and their owners can be seen in Figure 16.[294] This dessert service plate design from the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory in France is dated 1819-1820.[295]

The plate, intended for use during the dessert course, shows a black man cutting pieces of sugar from a cone (the form in which sugar was sold) while showing two children an image of the hard labor and violence involved in sugar cane production. The other dessert service plate designs within the same collection show the lighter side of dessert including ice cream shops and bakeries. This antislavery

[294] Jean Charles Develly, "Design for a Painted Porcelain Plate, Sucre de Canne (Sugar Cane) from the Service Des Objets de Dessert (Dessert Service)," Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, 1820 1819, http://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:chndm_1989-13-8?date.slider=1600s%2C1830s&q=dessert&dsort=&record=19&hlterm=dessert&inline=true.
[295] Develly.

dessert plate design stands out amongst all the others in that it calls direct attention to the cruel methods used on plantations to procure the sugar.

The image visually represents the stark contrast between the roles of the confectioner and the enslaved people working on the sugar plantation. The enslaved

Figure 16 Sèvres porcelain dessert plate design, 1819-1920.

or free status of the black man working on confections in the kitchen is not apparent. However, his relationship to the family is clear. The children show him respect. His position as a knowledgeable individual comes across as he points informatively to the image of enslaved people working on a sugar plantation. His elevated status as a staff

member in the family household is evident in the body language of the children who carefully listen to his explanation of sugar plantation work. This image quite literally illustrates the elevated status of a skilled enslaved confectioner. A family that was able to afford such a skilled enslaved person or hire a talented confectioner, such as the man represented in the image, was not the norm.

References to the lack of available help illustrate the continued desire in America to seek out help with confectionary skills. The European ambassadors were noted over a decade earlier by Tobias Lear as the lucky few who had access to salvers for displaying dessert.[296] It is evident that professionals who were trained in the art of confection were extremely difficult to hire solely for one family unless there was a direct connection to France or the ability to send a servant or enslaved person overseas for the training. Washington, D.C. directories from 1822 to 1830 confirm the lack of growth by the number of confectioner shops. While the quantity of grocers and bakers increased, the number of confectioners remained steady at seven total.[297] The early nineteenth century marked the appearance of confectioners for hire in D.C., but confectionary shops in more established cities such as New York and Philadelphia had been advertising their services decades earlier.

Advertisements for new confectionary shops often noted the new arrival of the confectioner to America from Europe. In this sense, Americans were at the mercy of their own connections to pastry chefs overseas. An elite American with wealth was at a disadvantage to a well-connected European visitor. A true confectionary was not advertised in Washington until 1815 and the chef was marketed as previously

[296] Lear, "President Washington in New York, 1789," 499.
[297] Carson, *Ambitious Appetites*, 7.

employed in Europe.[298] The dearth of confectionary shops and pastry professionals in D.C. may be attributed to new establishment of D.C. as the nation's capital at that time. Older, established cities had greater access to confection by way of immigrants from Europe.

In contrast to the late arrival of confectionary shops to Washington, advertisements for confections came as early as 1731 in Boston from the *New England Weekly Journal*. The list of items sold by the Widow Bonyot included fruit preserves, jellies, syrups, egg cakes, macaroons, marchpane, crisp almonds, and meat jellies for sick people.[299] Confectionary shops began advertising with greater frequency just after the Revolution. An advertisement for the newly arrived confectioners James and Patrick Wright from Edinburgh to Philadelphia appeared in March 1775 in the *Pennsylvania Packet*.[300] They listed an assortment of delectable confections including comfits, sugar candies, almond biscuits, cake, lemon tablets, jellies, and preserves. A later advertisement released in August 1775 by Patrick Wright in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* noted the additional service of making "all kinds of pastry done in the best manner, and upon the shortest notice."[301] The advertisement also revealed occasions for special confections by listing wedding and christening cakes.

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[298] "New Establishment," *Daily National Intelligencer*, May 16, 1815.
[299] The term marchpane refers to marzipan. "To Be Sold at the Widow Bonyot's," *New England Weekly Journal*, July 5, 1731, America's Historical Newspapers; "Marchpane, n. and Adj.," in *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed August 26, 2019, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/233612.
[300] "James and Patrick Wright, Confectioners from Edinburgh," *Pennsylvania Packet*, March 20, 1775, America's Historical Newspapers.
[301] "Patrick Wright, Confectioner," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 16, 1775, America's Historical Newspapers.

Another advertisement noted the immigration status of the confectioner Philip Lenzi from London who listed desserts available for purchase in 1777 in the *New York Loyal Gazette*.[302] His status as a confectioner from overseas is not surprising and may have elevated his status by including his London origins in the advertisement. His advertisement listed sweetmeats, an assortment of fruit preserves, jellies, marmalades, sugar almonds, cakes, syrups, fine honey, and Italian cordials soon to be in stock. He also included ice cream "of what sort they will please order" with the other desserts.[303]

The confectioners with shops in cities catered to elite families looking to impress guests with their dessert displays. While some larger cities did have confectionaries, many families in other cities, like Washington, D.C., lacked access to trained chefs with pastry experience. Trained confectioners gained their technical knowledge in France and only some were available for hire in America. The limited access to chefs with training in dessert-making led some wealthy slaveholders to place certain enslaved cooks under apprenticeships with confectioners for hire or send them overseas for specialized training.

The desire for displays of dessert by the elite in America influenced purchasing practices of buying enslaved people. Other families would hire a confectioner for the day or if they had connections to Europe, they might hire a confectioner for permanent placement within the household staff. Hiring and training practices show how important professional-looking displays of dessert were to the elite in America. This unique situation of limited access in America to trained

[302] "Philip Lenzi Confectioner from London," *New York Loyal Gazette*, November 8, 1777.
[303] "Philip Lenzi Confectioner from London."

confectioners and a high demand for dessert displays created an environment where an enslaved person with pastry skills had greater access to more elevated positions in the kitchen, and if freed, numerous families sought their talents.

Conclusion

Dessert presentations reflect class in America. Class in America was more fluid than it was overseas, but the hierarchical levels of social status reveal that the elite in America were just as concerned as the elite in Europe with keeping their place on top. Elite Americans used dessert to solidify their status and went to the extreme with towering displays. The ability to find and hire a confectioner in a city like Washington, D.C. was proof enough of one's status. The middle class merely emulated these presentations with simplified recipes and objects they could purchase that would literally elevate and add height to their simplified dessert recipes. Enslaved confectioners leveraged pastry skills to work their way up within the kitchen and improve their earning potential if freed.

Elite Americans were focused on the desire to create beautiful dessert displays in the early eighteenth century. Some struggled to gain access to the specific material goods used for these displays, like salvers, trays, and glasses. Confectioners were also difficult to come by in these early years. An elite American needed connections overseas to purchase the material goods and ingredients for these displays. They also needed these connections to hire professional confectioners, since not all cities in America had equal access to them. Elite Americans ranked themselves amongst their peers. Those with connections to Europe were in a stronger position to present the most fashionable dessert displays.

The middle class used dessert to establish gentility in moderated ways later in the eighteenth century. They were sold the dream of keeping a refined home in the hopes of elevating their standing amongst their peers. Recipe books reveal marketing

techniques used to entice middle-class Americans to serve more refined desserts. The delayed access to these recipe books, however, put the American middle class behind English consumers as well as elite Americans with connections to these publishers overseas.

The elevation of syllabub from a one-bowl dessert to a beautifully presented one illustrates this movement towards a more genteel lifestyle that inspired the middle class to reach for elite status. The simplicity of the recipe for syllabub is additional evidence that confectioners were difficult to come by in some cities. The recipe remained the same, while the vessel for presenting the dessert became more refined. Middle-class desire to elevate status through consumer purchases and dessert presentations noticeably increased following the Revolution.

The pivotal timing of the Revolution and the height of interest in dessert displays is no coincidence. In the midst of the movement towards refinement, the Revolution disrupted life, but also exposed a new elite class of American politicians to travels overseas for diplomatic work. This exposure to European aristocracy and their dessert displays influenced their dining tables back home in America.

The Revolution also led to new trading opportunities associated with dessert, including fine ingredients and consumer goods for displaying dessert. Jefferson and Adams' desires to import higher quality chocolate became a possibility as they wrote new trade agreements with other countries following the Revolution. Though the Revolution was a backlash against the British monarchy and strict hierarchical ideas, displays of dessert in America following the Revolution show that Americans were still concerned with their own social standing and hierarchy.

Showcasing elaborate displays of confection allowed judging peers to rank the host among the group. Recipe books played into this desire and marketed both simplistic and complicated books for making dessert centerpieces. While the middle class had the ability to attempt some of these centerpieces, the more complicated ones were better left to professional pastry chefs. Middle-class hostesses could only elevate their status to match the top level of their peers, but to break into the truly elite class, they needed access to a professional confectioner. This access was limited by money and connections, which go against the democratic ideals touted by the Revolution. Without wealth and influence, a person had to rely on their own confectionary skills to elevate their dessert. While some middle-class hosts may have been able to hone simple skills, enslaved confectioners gained more flexibility in their lives by acquiring these talents.

Recipe books nonetheless revealed the knowledge necessary to create a tablescape worthy of a genteel family. Readers of these books were now equipped to for peer judgement of other host's tables. The middle class became swept up in the movement towards refinement. Whether or not they were able to elevate their status beyond the middle class, these new ideas of gentility and self-awareness infiltrated their lives. The elevation of dessert presentations and the importance of a dessert centerpiece reflect this larger movement.

The rise of confections had the most drastic influence on the status of enslaved kitchen workers who were able to learn pastry skills. Enslaved confectioners worked with the finest ingredients and equipment; they had access to some of the most refined consumer goods. Not only were they exposed to the highest form of elite

dining, but they mastered complicated technical skills. Math and science are part of pastry. Weighed and measured ingredients required this knowledge and strong attention to detail was necessary. The ability to cultivate confectionary skills gave an enslaved person a chance to financially support themselves if freed, or make money on the side, like James Hemings did.

While race was tied to class in eighteenth-century America, an enslaved confectioner could leverage their coveted skills to improve their standing in life. The status as confectioner was an impressive position. As recipe book authors proved in their introductions, they were proud to be confectioners. Their work brought them close to royalty and experience with dessert in particular put them on a higher pedestal than a cook without pastry skills. Enslaved confectioners gained the trust of their owners and worked closely with them to discuss the vision for the dessert. This proximity to the owner did bring more scrutiny, but at the same time gave these confectioners opportunities to influence their position in life. Each relationship between enslaved confectioner and owner was unique, there were certainly complicated power dynamics. Their knowledge of the inner workings of the household meant that they could wield this knowledge to their advantage.

At the same time, the desires of elites such as Thomas Jefferson to serve and present such desserts may have increased their dependence on slavery. This interaction between class and race suggests that desires for gentility reinforced slavery instead of undermining it. A genteel lifestyle and the pristine image of a refined home depended on enslaved workers, and especially the specialized pastry skills of enslaved confectioners.

The elite nature of confectionary work and limited access to confectioners in America fueled the demand for their work. While some cities, like Boston and Philadelphia had confectioners at their disposal, cities like Washington, D.C. struggled. The irony of this lack of confectioners in Washington, D.C. is that it placed foreign ambassadors in even higher standing because of their access. The concentration of foreign dignitaries in Washington, D.C. amongst the political and social elite fueled American desire for confections further. Americans coveted serving trays, ceramics, and glassware from overseas. As the nineteenth century began, the demand for confectioners continued to increase, as discussed in *Refined Tastes* by Wendy Woloson.

Woloson shows that the popularity of confection rose in America as time went on. By the late-nineteenth century technological advances aided in the process of refining sugar and allowed the price to drop.[304] She looks to the increased prevalence of refined sugar in the home and advertisements for candy as a way of explaining the rising role of sugar in the middle-class American diet. Woloson quantifies the growing popularity of confection in Philadelphia in the nineteenth century by comparing the access to confectioners between in 1820 and 1860. Only one confectioner for every 6,854 people was available in 1820 versus one for every 867 in 1860.[305] Though slightly out of scope, this increase in the popularity of confectioners reveals the continued trend towards aspirational presentation of confections beyond the eighteenth century.

[304] Wendy Woloson, *Refined Tastes: Sugar, Confectionery, and Consumers in Nineteenth-Century America* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 5.
[305] Woloson, 7.

My research into confections in America has led to some surprising finds. The analysis of confectioners in America was enlightening, the majority were either immigrants from overseas or enslaved people who were trained by these immigrant confectioners. While it was not a surprise to find out that James Hemings was trained in France as an enslaved chef, it was more surprising once I began looking for other enslaved confectioners and their experience as pastrycooks. Advertisements for enslaved people specifically called out pastry experience. This research gave more insight into enslaved workers in kitchens. The dynamic between an immigrant pastry chef training an enslaved person, both of whom had to work together in the kitchen, was an unusual kitchen dynamic. The apprentice nature of training as a cook was familiar, but the addition of a professionally trained confectioner working with an apprentice that was an enslaved person was an new realization.

The question of chocolate-making at Mount Vernon remains a mystery and more scholarship should be conducted specifically looking at Washington and chocolate. While Martha Washington enjoyed a steeped tea-like drink involving cocoa nut shells, a shipment of twenty-five pounds of chocolate shells seems very large just for steeping it. Further analysis of the equipment available in his kitchen could be helpful to determine the answer.

The digital availability of early recipe books means there are exciting opportunities for larger studies on recipe books alone. Over twenty recipe books from the seventeenth and eighteenth century were consulted for this work, but the focus of this thesis fell heavier on the recipe book advertisements than the books themselves. Tracking the quantity of sugar used in dessert and the number of dessert recipes in the

books over time would provide more evidence for the increasing affordability of sugar. While several recipe book introductions were compared, there is more work to be done when considering the marketing of recipe books.

The inclusion of more expensive and exotic ingredients like spices, chocolate, and citrus was noticeable in recipe books as time progressed, but this was not the focus of this thesis and there is room for more scholarship on the topic. An entire book could be written on ingredients themselves and the value of each ingredient. It is difficult to immediately contextualize the rarity of ingredients. An in-depth study of ingredients of a single recipe might lead the author to different parts of the world.

My personal favorite find was the recipe for cupcakes and the fact that the "cup" part of the cakes came from the measurements, rather than the shape. Larger ideas about the transition in America to new methods of measurement have potential for greater exploration. There were several recipes that also included teaspoons and tablespoons that could be explored by future scholars.

I cited most of the diaries I consulted for this work, but the amount of information related to sweets and food in general was too extensive for me to fully include. Byrd's diary alone mentioned chocolate nearly every day, plus other forms of dessert in addition to the chocolate. At a certain point there were too many chocolate and cake mentions to keep track. Only his diary from 1717-1720 was consulted, but research following his habits over the rest of his life could show trends in dessert consumption. Many of the diaries written by women mention the different kinds of fruits used in desserts or grown on their farms. Analysis of fruit consumption and a

spectrum of fruit from common to rare would add to the scholarship around fruit as dessert.

Visual analysis of paintings and print culture was touched on in this thesis, but there is an opportunity to look at paintings and prints of tables as well as confectionary shops to glean more information about the methods of presenting dessert. While one dessert plate print is included in this work, there is room to explore more prints and use this method of analysis. Looking at images printed on dessert plate sets specifically, has the potential to shed new light on themes discussed during the dessert course. Material culture associated with the dessert plates is an avenue that requires more attention. There is detailed scholarship around glassware and ceramics related to dessert, but not as much work on the images printed on dessert plates.

The decorative arts world has a strong grasp of the shape and design of serving objects related to dessert, but there is a gap between this visual understanding and other historical scholarship focused on similar questions of consumption in the Atlantic world. Material culture is often touched on in secondary scholarship, but not to the extent that it should be considered. While a few sources did incorporate images, objects, and documentary sources, this methodology is not popular among most historians. To fully understand the documents, the images and objects must be considered to further understand the eighteenth century.

The interdisciplinary nature of historic foodways lends itself well to future historical research and comparative analysis. Foodways is studied by anthropologists, archaeologists, economists, environmentalists, and historians. There is room for collaboration and movement beyond one's main field of study. Conferences and

edited works involving foodways have a fascinating collection of scholars across disciplines and eras of study. Historians are currently underrepresented in this field. While innovative online journals are working towards our representation in this field, the broader study of foodways lacks the perspective of historians.

The field of foodways poses a new avenue for historians to add to their current field of study and gain a new audience with scholars in other fields. Food is one of the few areas of study that links so many disparate disciplines and connects historians studying different geographical regions and time periods. While the scope of foodways is broad, it is an open and welcoming space for scholars interested in expanding their perspective and sharing their work with like-minded scholars in other fields.

The study of dessert presentations in relation to class has not been addressed by many historians. Historians of material culture focus on the objects themselves used for the dessert presentation. Historians have taken deep dives into the topics of specific ingredients like sugar and chocolate. The economic and social implications of the consumer revolution and class have also been carefully studied by historians. The study of foodways is an entirely different field of study for many of these historians. Given the dearth of historians incorporating this field of study in their work, this thesis is a valuable addition to historical scholarship.

Dessert is an exciting topic to research and analyze. Many of the techniques presented in the recipe books are still used today. Sugar can be complicated to work with, even with a thermometer, which makes towering displays of sugar just as impressive today as they were in the eighteenth century. Even with advanced

technology, there is still a feeling of awe when seeing an impressive display of dessert, whether that is at a party, in the lobby of a nice hotel, or on a baking show. Dessert displays continue to impress audiences today, as they did in the eighteenth century. In addition to the delectable taste of dessert, they remain markers of gentility. While mass production makes a wide variety of confections available, there is still something special about a trip to a patisserie to purchase a hand-made confectionary work of art.

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