

THE GADROON

Newsletter of the South Carolina Silver Society, Inc.

WINTER 2020

SOUTH CAROLINA SILVER SOCIETY HOLDS ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

Members and guests of the South Carolina Silver Society met Friday, February 9, 2020, at Columbia's Palmetto Club for its annual dinner meeting.

Following a cocktail hour, SCSS President Judy Anderson called the business meeting to order at which time the group heard various committee reports and the following were elected to office for 2020-2021: Henry Brown, president; John LeHeup, vice-president; Judy Anderson, corresponding secretary/treasurer; and Jane Barnhill, recording secretary. Kay Durham, James Brannock, Bart Mullin, and Frank White were elected to the Board of Directors. Henry Brown paid a special thank-you to Judy Anderson who has so ably served the SCSS as both president and secretary/treasurer. He announced a donation to the MESDA Summer Intern program in Ms. Anderson's honor.

Following a delicious dinner, Program Committee Chair, James Brannock introduced Dr. Daniel Ackermann, Curator of the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts at Old Salem, who presented a most interesting program on punch in Early America. He pointed out the use of silver implements in the making and serving of punch was always important. In addition to being a luxury, silver was lightweight, durable, could be made in forms easily stackable, and was evidence of one having the means to afford the luxury of silver.



Officers for 2020-2021

In discussing the history of punch and its importance and popularity as a beverage, he gave the historic formula: One of sour, two of sweet, three of strong, four of weak served with a seasoning of nutmeg or similar spice and perhaps a dash or two of aromatic bitters such as Angostura. As part of his presentation, Dr. Ackermann prepared the recipe for William Byrd's Punch that was sampled and enjoyed as an after-dinner drink. The recipe of which follows:

William Byrd's Punch

2 cups water
1 pound of turbinado or raw sugar (2 cups)
Juice from 12 lemons (about 2 cups)
750 ml brandy (or more to taste)
Nutmeg (to taste)

1. Make a simple syrup by mixing the water and sugar together and bringing to a boil. Allow to cool.
2. Pour into a punch bowl or other container.
3. Add lemon juice and brandy and stir to mix.
4. Grate nutmeg over top to taste. Garnish with lemon peel. Serve.

Members of the SCSS were asked to submit to the newsletter editor recipes for historic punches for publication in subsequent newsletters. To "get the ball rolling," Frank White submitted the following recipe from Mrs. William (Mary Keller) Boyd whose recipe for "Strong Punch" was written on the flyleaf of an old cookbook. Mrs. Boyd, who lived in Columbia at 1708 Greene Street, was originally from Savannah, hence its similarity to the famous Chatham Artillery Punch. Her husband, Dr. William Augustus Boyd, who began practicing medicine in Columbia in 1904, was the first surgeon in South Carolina to specialize solely in orthopaedics. Their daughter, Mary Keller Boyd, lived in her parents' Greene Street residence until her death in 1990. She kept this punch minus the tea in a large earthenware crock stored in her cool basement ready to serve at a moment's notice. Her silver punch bowl, ladle and cups were left to good friends who continue the tradition and use them frequently.

Mrs. Boyd's Strong Punch

1 ½ Pints dark rum
1 Quart brandy or cognac
1 Quart bourbon whiskey
1 Quart strong brewed green tea, chilled
¾ Pound fine sugar
Juice of twenty-four lemons or else one quart of fresh lemon juice

Squeeze lemons and strain juice. Add immediately the rum and brandy. Then add sugar and mix well. Add the cold green tea. If tea is left out until serving time, this punch will keep for a very long time. Serve over ice. (A bottle of champagne added at the very last will make for a sparkling punch.)



Bailey, Banks & Biddle Art Nouveau Sterling Punch Bowl, ca. 1906

Next is Jean Derrick's easy recipe for syllabub, an old Southern favorite that originates from Queen Elizabeth's court and was brought to the colonies by the original English settlers. Its name, in old English, means "silly bubbles." Ms. Derrick notes her "version is simplified and has reduced calories from that of Mrs. Rutledge, of Charleston, which begins 'Take the cream of the first milking of the day . . .'" It's just a question of proportions, and you can make as much or as little as you like. I like to let it sit up a day, to let the flavors meld. Keep it refrigerated of course.

"Just use a two to one ratio of fat free half and half and heavy cream –one quart of half and half to one pint of cream, for example. Using that as a base, add one cup of sugar or Splenda, and two cups of sherry and one cup of brandy. That's it. I usually

don't measure, and I pour the spirits with a heavy hand. Stir well.

"In the old days the mixture was beaten to give it froth (there's even a specific utensil called a syllabub beater, which is an old fashioned hand cranked mixer) but my version doesn't have enough heavy cream to whip up well. The secret in the taste I think is the brandy, which keeps it from being too sweet."

SCSS HOLDS EVENT AT CRICKET NEWMAN DESIGNS

As one of its many service projects, the South Carolina Silver Society, in collaboration with Cricket Newman Designs, held a panel discussion at Cricket Newman's shop in Columbia on Saturday, February 22, 2020. Panelists Al Crabtree, Henry Brown, Kay Durham, and Frank White discussed repairing silver, caring for silver, different uses for antique pieces, as well as answered questions from participants and facilitated discussion on various aspects of owning and caring for fine silver. The event was well attended, and there was much interest in having additional similar programs.

IN CELEBRATION OF THE MINT JULEP



National Mint Julep Day is celebrated each year on May 30. May 30, 2020, falls on a Saturday, a non-work day for many, and that can easily make for a special day to observe this tribute to a drink of Southern legend. A classic mint julep is made with mint leaves, bourbon, sugar and water. In the Southern states, where mint julep is more associated

with the cuisine, spearmint is the mint of choice. Preparation of the drink often varies considerably from one bartender to another.

- It is believed that the mint julep originated in the southern United States sometime during the 18th century.

- The term “julep” is generally defined as a sweet drink, particularly one used as a vehicle for medicine.

- During the 19th century, Americans also enjoyed gin-based juleps.

- Proper preparation of the cocktail is commonly debated, as methods may vary considerably from one bartender to another.

- The mint julep may be considered as one of a loosely associated family of drinks called “smashes” (the brandy smash is another example, as well as the mojito), in which fresh mint and other ingredients are muddled or crushed in preparation for flavoring the finished drink.

- Traditionally, mint juleps were often served in silver cups and held only by the bottom and top edges of the cup. This allows frost to form on the outside of the cup.

- The Mint Julep is the official drink of the Kentucky Derby.

- It takes 7,800 liters of bourbon and 2,250 pounds of locally grown mint to make the 120,000 Mint Juleps sold at Churchill Downs during Kentucky Derby weekend.

- Henry Clay introduced the drink to Washington in 1850. The U.S. senator from Kentucky supposedly made the mint julep popular in Washington, D.C. at the Round Robin Bar. By some accounts, the bar at the Willard Hotel still uses Clay’s recipe to this day.

- In May 2008, Churchill Downs unveiled the world’s largest mint julep glass. Churchill Downs, in conjunction with Brown-Forman, commissioned the Weber Group to fabricate the 6-foot tall glass (7.5-foot if the mint sprig is included). The glass was constructed from FDA food-grade acrylic, heated and molded into the shape of an official 2008 Derby glass. It had a capacity of 206 US gallons, and distributed the Early Times mint juleps at the Derby with an elaborate pumping system concealed within the “stir straw.”

- Woodford Reserve’s master distiller, Chris Morris points out that “centuries ago, there was an Arabic drink called *julab*, made

with water and rose petals. The beverage had a delicate and refreshing scent that people thought would instantly enhance the quality of their lives.” In the Mediterranean, indigenous mint replaced the rose petals and the “mint julep” rose in popularity.

- The mint julep became the official drink of the Kentucky Derby in 1983.

- Scarlett O’Hara approved of the smell. That the mint julep is an icon of Dixie, was not lost upon Margaret Mitchell when she knocked out her blockbuster Civil War novel *Gone With The Wind* in 1936.

- Juleps and similar libations were called antifogmatics and were often consumed in the morning. American author Samuel Goodrich explained that “in the Southern states, where the ague is so common and troublesome a malady, where fogs are frequent and dews heavy, it has grown the custom to fortify the body from attacks of the disease, by means of Juleps, or what are called antifogmatics.”

- When crushed ice was added, the drink became known as the Hailstorm Julep.

That was sometime around 1830, when ice still was hard to procure, often transported from Boston or other Northern climes and protected in icehouses.

INTERESTING ARTICLE ON GEORGE WASHINGTON’S FAMILY SILVER

With George Washington’s birthday being one of the country’s February holidays, it seems appropriate to learn more about Washington’s silver. The link shown below will direct the reader to a series of most interesting articles on the Washington silver, how it was inherited by his wife Martha’s granddaughter (who was married to General Robert E. Lee), and how it was saved during the Civil War.

In her memoirs, Mary Custis Lee wrote, with Federal troops approaching the Lee home, “the family plate so long treasured especially that portion of it which my Father inherited from Mt. Vernon was first secured.” The silver much of which was engraved with the Washington crest was sent to Lexington for safekeeping. The link is as follows:

<https://www.mountvernon.org/preservation/collections-holdings/washingtons-silver/>

MINT MUSEUM CANCELS GORHAM EXHIBIT

The SCSS has learned that due to a lack of funding Charlotte's Mint Museum of Art has canceled the much-anticipated exhibit *Gorham Silver: Designing Brilliance, 1850-1970* scheduled to open this summer. The SCSS had been planning and working with the Mint museum on a special tour of the exhibit.

Members may now want to purchase Rizzoli's book on the exhibit. *Gorham Silver: Designing Brilliance* was released last spring by Rizzoli. Edited by Elizabeth Williams with contributions by Gerald M. Carbone, David L. Barquist, Jeannine Falino, and Amy Miller Dehan, the new book is the latest offering from the publishing house renowned today for high-quality, lavishly illustrated publications.

The Gorham Manufacturing Company from its beginnings in 1831 adeptly coupled art and industry, rising to become an industry leader of stylistic and technological achievement in America and around the world. It produced public presentation pieces and one-of-a-kind showstoppers for important occasions, as well as tableware for everyday use. Its works trace a narrative arc not only of great design but also of American ambitions. In this volume, insightful essays are accompanied by gorgeous new photography of splendid silver pieces along with a wealth of archival images, design drawings, casting patterns, and company records that reveal a rich heritage of a giant in decorative arts and silver manufacturing.

Produced in collaboration with the Rhode Island School of Design Museum, which has the world's most significant collection of Gorham silver, this major new book casts new light on more than 120 years of grand aesthetic styles in silver, innovative industrial practices, and American social and cultural norms. The following gives more information about the book:

Elizabeth A. Williams is the David and Peggy Rockefeller Curator of Decorative Arts and Design, Rhode Island School of Design Museum.

- Publish Date: April 30, 2019
- Format: Hardcover
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**SCSS MEMBERS ASKED TO
SUBMIT IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Members are asked to continue to submit ideas for articles or other information that could be included in future issues of *The Gadroon* to Frank White at frankwhite@bellsouth.net.

TAKE A LOOK AT CHARLESTON SILVER

With many SCSS members visiting Charleston in the spring when there are house tours and the gardens are at their peak, it may be a good time to visit or else revisit the silver collection at the Charleston Museum. There's always something new to see and learn. The Loeblein Gallery (named in honor of Chris Loeblein, long time curator at the museum and charter member of the SCSS who passed away in 2001) has regular exhibits drawn from the museum's collection of more than four hundred pieces of Charleston-made silver, the largest known assemblage of silver made in or with a connection to Charleston.

The Charleston Museum is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM and on Sundays from noon to 5:00 PM. Tickets for adult admission at \$12 each with discounts for children and youth may be purchased at the museum or online at <https://www.charlestonmuseum.org/visit/buy-tickets/>

While at the museum, be sure to visit the museum shop and perhaps pick up a copy of the silver catalog. <https://www.charlestonmuseum.org/store/books/charleston-silver.html>

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