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## Commercial Foods, 1740–1820

### ABSTRACT

Commercial food packaging, in both bulk and unit sizes, can be found in archaeological assemblages. Newspaper advertisements from the ca. 1740 to 1820 period provide information on the shape, size, and contents of wood, metal, glass, ceramic, and fiber containers. The advertisements also show that elements of consumerism, in the form of brand names, distinctive packaging, unit packaging, international markets, fixed prices, ready-made items, and targeted markets, were practiced in the food industry by the early years of the 19th century.

### Introduction

Scholarly investigations into the development of consumerism have quite rightly pushed many of its manifestations back into the 18th century, and even earlier (McKendrick et al. 1982; McCracken 1988:11–16). Standard evidence for consumerism—brand name or proprietary products, ready-made items, unit packaging, fixed prices, advertising, credit and cash sales, targeted markets, price-setting by the supplier, frequent changes in style—can be found before the end of the 18th century in considerable quantities and in many different places (Mui and Mui 1989; Palmer 1989: 374–375).

An integral part of the developing consumerism was a complex, carefully structured, worldwide distribution network. Monopolistic companies—like the East India Company, wholesalers, middlemen, city and country merchants, and traders—worked in distribution centers of decreasing size and influence. They were able to bring goods not just to London, New York, and Quebec but also to small towns, settlements, and remote fur trade posts in the interior of North America. The goods could be costly when they reached their final destination but get there they did (Figure 1; Cruikshank 1929:153–155). The trade in foodstuffs was

no exception. The completely self-sufficient household, in Britain or in North America, in terms of food production probably did not exist in the 18th century, at any level of society, in either rural or urban settings. If the capacity existed for nutritional self-sufficiency, the cultural demands of what constituted a meal, or what food should taste like, placed everyone in the position of buying at least some foodstuffs that they had not produced themselves. Through foods such as sugar and salt they became participants in the marketplace.

Evidence for commercial foods can be found on archaeological sites. Unfortunately archaeologists have not really looked for it. Too often glass and ceramic containers are dismissed as storage containers while metal, wood, and fiber artifacts may not even be recognized as containers. Too often serving vessels are simply accepted as tea cups or salts or cruets or dessert glasses without questioning their implications for food consumption practices. Too often the floral and faunal remains are accepted as the only evidence for food choice, food procurement, and food preparation. What can be found?

A great deal of evidence for commercial foodstuffs can be found in the containers discarded at a site. Containers of wood, vegetable and animal fiber, bladders, metal, ceramic, and glass can be used to track goods consumed two hundred years ago. Part of the evidence also lies in historical documents, such as newspaper advertisements, which contain descriptions of foods and their containers. The challenge for the archaeologist is to identify the food/package link by comparing the objects found in the ground with the physical descriptions in the documents.

Newspapers, themselves a product of the growing consumerism, also helped promote the sale of goods. Advertisements make up the bulk of 18th-century newspapers. In the papers examined, two and a half to three of the four pages were devoted to advertisements of various types (cf. Clark and Wetherell 1989:299–303). Advertisements in English, Canadian, and American newspapers attest to the vigorous worldwide trade in food and to the commercialism of that trade. Foreign foods, con-

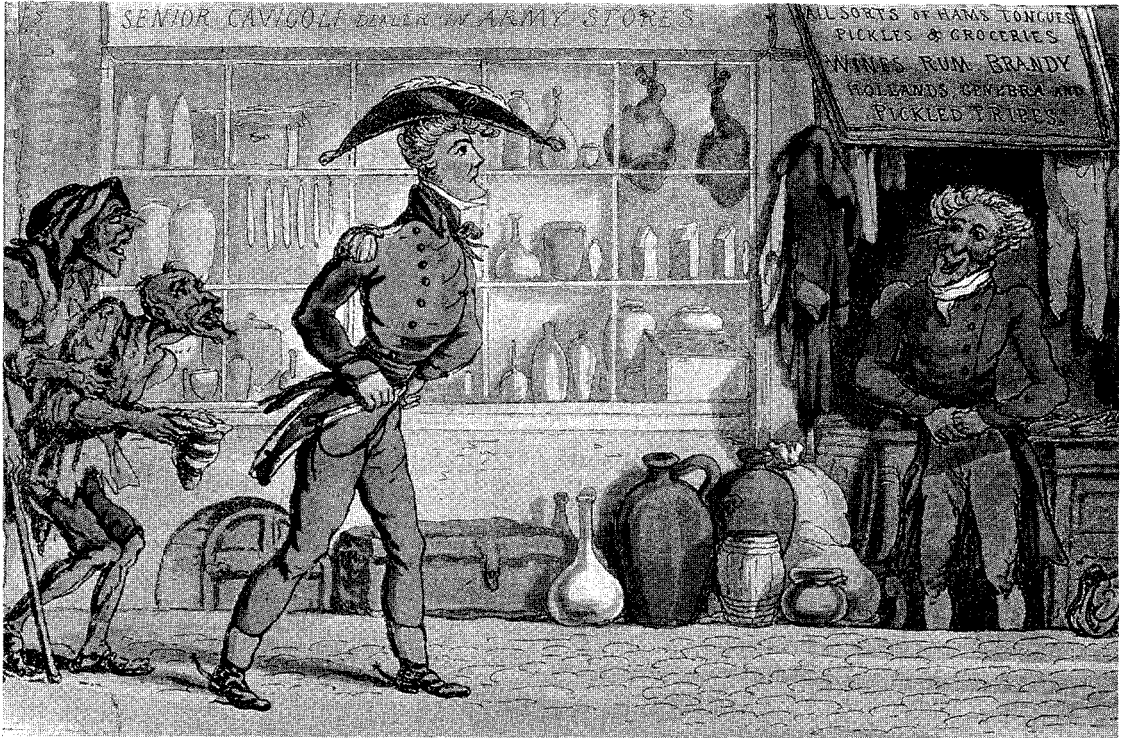


FIGURE 1. Military and naval officers were sometimes addressed in the newspaper advertisements as potential customers. Their nomadic life-style made army and navy personnel prime consumers of prepared foods. *The Military Adventures of Johnny Newcome*, Thomas Rowlandson, 1815. (Courtesy of Library, Royal Military College, Kingston, Ontario.)

venience foods, unit packaging, retail food outlets, targeted markets, fixed prices, cash and short-term credit sales can all be found in 18th- and early 19th-century newspapers.

The advertisements provide information on food products available in urban areas and, by implication, the hinterlands being serviced by these trading centers—spices of all kinds, fresh, dried and candied fruits, rice, grains, vermicelli and macaroni, scented waters, seeds for garden vegetables, condiments, hams, butter, cheeses, dried beans, potatoes, salt pork and beef, fishes, flour. The lists contain processed foods of many types, staples, and baking and cooking supplies. Modifier terms used to describe foods, such as origin, quality, quantity, and the type of container, provide con-

crete evidence of packaging customs and of the desirable qualities associated with specific foods. Beaudry (1988:43–50) provides an analysis of modifier terms in inventories. A discussion on the newspapers and data bases used for this article is included in Appendix A. Many foods were described by their geographical origins—Yorkshire hams, Cheshire cheese, Durham mustard, Gorgona Anchovies, French olives, Florence oil, Irish pork, beef, and butter—which seem to have acted as a certificate of genuineness and quality. There was no guarantee, of course, that the products actually came from these places. However, their presence in the North American papers indicates that even foods produced here were superseded in desirability by European ones. They also imply

that specialized food production in Europe was already scaled to supply more than the local market.

For some foods the traditional containers of the exporting country were used until the product reached its final destination. Olive oil sold in flasks and jars is an example of this product/package link. Other goods were repackaged. For example, the British government controlled the movement of alcoholic beverages through Customs and Excise regulations to protect the revenue it derived from this source. Britain prohibited the large-scale importation of European wines in small packages, the theory being that they were easier to smuggle than larger ones (Francis 1972:146–147.) Consequently European wines were sold in both England and its North American colonies in English bottles, not European ones, as the bulk of archaeological data demonstrates. Sometimes the transfer to bottles took place in England, sometimes in North America (Jones and Smith 1985:9). On the other hand, some of the newspaper advertisements and scattered archaeological evidence suggests that alcoholic beverages such as Florence wine, gin, and brandy may very well have been sold in European-made bottles, such as flasks and square case bottles, to be discussed below (cf. Jones 1989). Containers for other types of products, such as snuff, have been mentioned when the packaging seemed similar to food packaging.

Another common group of modifiers was the container name. The product association could be so strong that phrases such as “jar raisins,” “basket salt,” or “firkin butter” obviously referred to very specific varieties of these goods. Advertisements also mentioned capacities and types of packaging—mustard in quarter-pound bottles, pickles in quart bottles, olive oil by the jar or chest—indicating a variety of packaging and sizes for any given food. Close relationships between size and package also suggest that many foods were regularly shipped in a variety of unit packages, not just in bulk. Standardized terminology for containers and capacities, specialized container shapes, combined with the diversity of package size, material, and shape are evidence of the growing commercialization of the trade in foodstuffs. Consumers had always been able to buy goods in any quantity

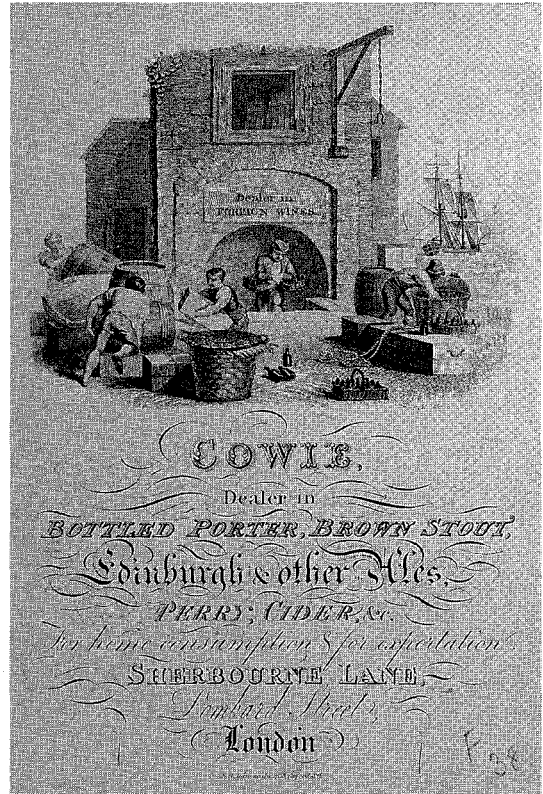


FIGURE 2. Cases, baskets, barrels, and bags appear in this engraving for the Cowie firm. Cowie sold bottled porter, brown stout, Edinburgh and other ale, perry and cider for home consumption and for export. The printer, Edward Gullan, appeared in the *London Directories* at the address on the card between the years 1826 and 1831. (Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of Bella C. Landauer, 1958.58.544.)

they needed or could afford. Mustard could always have been bought by the  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound. What was new was mustard sold in bottles of a specific size and style (Figures 9, 11).

### Wooden Containers

Staved wooden containers (Figure 2)—tierces, kegs, casks, barrels, tubs, drums, puncheons, and hogsheads—contained a host of products, not just

foodstuffs. Those for dry goods tended to be made of softer woods, like spruce, and to have metal hoops which were sometimes fastened through the wood. Those for wet goods were made of oak or beech, and had alder hoops. For those designed to be reused, as in the liquor trade, the staves were made flatter, making them easier to ship disassembled. Those used standing on their ends had thicker, sturdier chimes, the part of the stave extending beyond the head (Bradley 1990, pers. comm.).

Staved wooden containers were generally used for shipping and storing large quantities of a specific product. Capacity terms, such as firkin or keg, were well-understood at the time but are now hard to sort out. Sometimes the terms were used comparatively; kegs were always smaller than puncheons, for example. At other times the capacity term was specific to a particular product. Dozens of references to butter in firkins, often with modifiers such as "Irish," "Cork," or "rose," imply that the size was clearly understood. Zupko (1968: 61-62) cites a 1673 statute that required the butter firkin to weigh 8 lbs. and the butter 56 lbs., for a total weight of 64 lbs. One advertisement offered "a choice Parcel of fine Dublin Butter made up in full bound Firkins of about 56 lb. each, after the Cambridge Manner, and equal to it in Quality" (*Daily Advertiser [DA]* 6 Aug. 1760:Butter Warehouse). It is not clear if the tallow, lard, tongues, herring, salmon, white bread, and barley also sold in firkins were sold in the same-sized container, or if the term referred to a specific weight. Kegs were used for dried goods such as split peas, barley, crackers, oatmeal, raisins, and rice; for butter, lard, or paint oils; for pickled meats and other pickles; sometimes for alcohol and sometimes for other packaging:

a large Assortment of Kegs, from one Gallon bigness to Fifteen Do (*Nova-Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle [NSG&WC]* 9 Dec. 1783:John Thomson).

Vinegar in Hogsheads and 10 Gallon Kegs (*NSG&WC* 15 June 1784:Piers and Hill).

Also Vinegar in 5 gallon Kegs very convenient for House-keepers (*Quebec Gazette [QG]* 20 Sept. 1779:T. Cary).

Hogs Lard in small kegs from 20 to 28 lbs. each (*QG* 26 May 1785:Richard Dalton).

Barley in 50 and 25 lb cags (*New-York Mercury [NYM]* 26 Jan. 1761:John Alexander and Company).

best Nantz Brandy in 8 and 4 Gallon Kegs (*NYM* 3 Aug. 1761:Dirck Brinckerhoff).

Choice French Brandy in Kegs of 5 and 6 Gallons, at five Shillings Halifax per Gallon (*QG* 20 Dec. 1770:John Lees).

linseed oyl in 10 gallon cags (*NYM* 12 Jan. 1761:Isaac Man).

7 Kegs Mustard in 1-4 lb. bottles (*Montreal Herald [MH]* 22 Jan. 1820:Macnider, Aird, & Whyte).

It will be difficult to identify the specific contents of staved containers from archaeological sites beyond their use for wet or dry goods.

Boxes of different types (Figure 2)—cases, chests, crates, and boxes—generally held smaller packages or complete objects. They probably had compartments and came in many sizes depending on the commodity. Some terms tended to be used more often with certain types of goods. Crates, for example, were filled with ceramic and glass. Some chests and cases were decorative; made of good woods, with locks and fine fittings, they were used to store tea, medicines, and liquor.

The commercial boxes often held glass and ceramic wares, soap, candles, pipes, medicines, pickles, cordials, toiletry items, or fruits such as lemons, citron, prunellos, plums, and raisins:

Chocolate by the Box or Dozen (*NYM* 1 June 1761:John Morton).

A few boxes fresh Durham flour mustard, ¼ lb. bottles (*NSG&WC* 30 June 1789:S. Hart).

A very fresh, excellent Kind of Poland Starch and Hair Powder in Boxes of ½ Cwt. each in Pound papers (*NSG&WC* 24 May 1785:David Fergusson).

fine Genoa Vermacelli, at 1s. a Pound, or 14s. a Box, containing seventeen Pounds (*DA* 14 Dec. 1739:Joseph Carbon).

Lemmons by the Box, Hundred or Dozen (*Boston Gazette & Country Journal [BG&CJ]* 14 March 1774:Joseph Hall).

bohea tea by the box, dozen or single pound (*NYM* 23 June 1755:Matheus Sleight).

Chests, also in half and quarter sizes, were used primarily for tea, olive oils, and other Mediterranean goods:

Plain green, superfine, and best Heyson Tea, by the Chest, or Dozen of Pounds (*NYM* 9 July 1759:Wm. Gilliland).

Fine green and hyson teas, by the chest or single pound at 40s., 32s., 28s., and 24s. (*NYM* 4 Oct. 1762:Richard Curson).

Chests containing Bottles of Anchovies, Capers and Olives; also Chests of Florence Oyl, or by the single Bettee (*NYM* 1 Sept. 1760:Gerardus Duyckinck).

Florence Oyl by the Chest, 30 Bottles in a Chest (*QG* 4 July 1765:Daniel Malcom).

Florence Wine in Flasks by the half Chest (*QG* 15 Aug. 1765:Jenkins & Allsopp).

Turky Figs in chests (*QG* 11 April 1782: . . . Shoolbred and Barclay).

Cesalonia Moscatel Wine, at 31.10s. a chest, or 35s. the Half-Chest (*DA* 18 Dec. 1739:Angelo Massa).

Cases were used most often for alcohol—gin, brandy, wines, porter—holding anywhere from one to 10 dozen bottles, for pickles and condiments, and for empty bottles:

Claret of the best quality in hogsheads, tierces, and bottles in cases of four doz . . . best Holland's Gin in cases of twelve bottles (*QG* 11 Oct. 1781:Louis Marchand).

anchovies, olives, capers, mangoes, wall-nuts and gerkins in cases and kegs (*QG* 19 May 1785:Phebe David).

Cases of Pickles 6 Bottles each Case, containing Anchovies, Capers, Mangoes, Walnuts, Girkins and French Olives (*NSG&WC* 14 Dec. 1779:Edward Nichols).

A Small Case Durham Mustard in  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$  Bottles (*NSG&WC* 23 May 1786:Piers & Hill).

a few 12 Bottle Cases of Capers (*NYM* 9 July 1759:John Waddell).

Cases of 12 and 21 Flasks (*NYM* 19 Jan. 1767:Samuel Verplanck).

cases with bottles, each bottle containing from two to four gallons (*NYM* 6 Jan. 1755:Philip Livingston).

## Fiber, Basketry, Bladders

These organic materials have little chance of surviving in most archaeological contexts, aside from their fittings, but they too carried foods of various types. Bags held dry products such as bottle corks, biscuit, flour, coffee, and sometimes ginger, pepper, snuff, and cocoa nuts. The weight of the product was not mentioned. Canvas was rarely mentioned and only in connection with ham. Bales were generally for pepper.

Baskets were used exclusively for salt and cheese. "Basket salt" was such a common phrase that it obviously represented a type of salt; occasionally the phrase was reversed to "salt in baskets," indicating that it was indeed sold in baskets: "Basket Salt is made by boiling away the Water of Salt Springs over the Fire . . . As to the various Kinds of common Salt, the Basket Salt is the mildest and weakest of all; the Sea Salt is of a middle Nature, and the Bay Salt is roughest of all" (Bradley [1770]:120). Examples include:

Cheshire Cheese by the Basket or Single Cheese (*NSG&WC* 14 June 1785:Edward Oxnard).

Gloucester Cheese by the Basket or smaller quantity (*NSG&WC* 23 Feb. 1779:Andrew Thomson).

Hampers mentioned in the *NYM* and *BG&CJ* generally held empty bottles but they also held bottles of beer/porter, cheeses, and once or twice potatoes, wine, or stoneware:

London Bottled Porter in 4 Doz. Hampers,/Ditto bottled Porter in Casks,/Ditto bottled Port Wine in 2, 3, and 4 Doz. Hampers (*NSG&WC* 25 May 1784:Wm. Nixon and Co.).

quart bottles in hampers (*NYM* 7 Sept. 1767:Philip Livingston).

Bladders were often used for snuff and once in a while for hogs' lard, putty, or mustard:

Plain snuff in bladders of 28, 56, and 84 lb. each (*NYM* 24 Dec. 1753:Rip Van Dam).

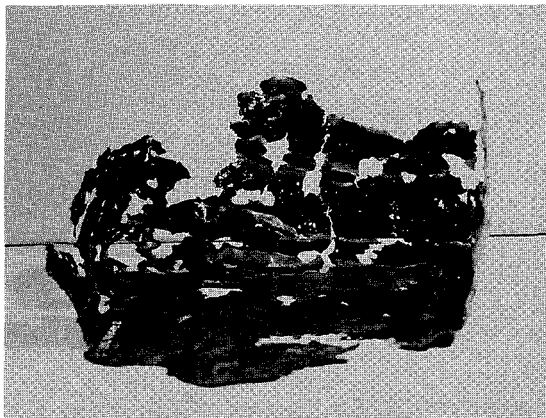


FIGURE 3. Metal box made of thin, unidentified metal. Extant dimensions are  $4 \times 4 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  in., minimum of 33 in. (Courtesy of Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Park [NHP], Nova Scotia.)

fine hogs lard in small bladders (*QG* 9 June 1785:M. Macnider).

Dan French begs Leave to acquaint his Friends and Customers, that he has from the North lately receiv'd a fresh Quantity of Flour of Mustard Seed in Colour, Fineness, and Flavour, as good as any in England, to be sold wholesale or retail at his Warehouse . . . the superfine at 1s.6d. the second sort at 1s. and the third sort at 6d. per Pound, ready made up, and put into Bladders cleaned and scalded for the Purpose, to be paid for, and if return'd sound the Money again . . . (*DA* 22 Dec. 1752:Dan French).

## Metal

Metal containers can be found in archaeological assemblages but they may not be recognized as such (Figure 3). Cannisters were used primarily for snuff but the *NYM* regularly advertised tea sold in this container. On the few occasions when the material was noted in the advertisements tin or lead were listed; however, Johnson (1979[1775]) defined cannisters as small baskets or small vessels for holding anything, such as tea or coffee. Later the term was used for preserved meat containers:

Scouchong, Hyson, and Peckoe tea, in pound, half and quarter pound cannisters (*NYM* 14 Aug. 1758:Gerardus Duyckinck).

bohea and congo teas, pound, half and quarter pound tin cannisters (*NYM* 4 Oct. 1762:Richard Curson).

He has likewise a parcel of fine green tea, in pound cannisters, at 14s. a canister (*NYM* 29 Dec. 1766:Edward Agar).

Rappee Snuff, in Pound Leaden Cannisters (*NYM* 27 March 1758:Lott and Low).

The meats are prepared in canisters of 4 lb. to 20 lb. weight each . . . Apply to the patentees, Messrs. Donkin, Hall, and Gamble . . . (*The Times [Times]* 21 Jan. 1817:Preservation of Meat).

sago round and in cannisters, a large quantity portable soup in canisters 25 lbs each, or pr pound at less than stlg. cost (*Acadian Recorder* 19 Oct. 1816:Samuel Head).

Several times in the 1780s Halifax and Quebec papers lead was noted as a packaging material for cheese; it was also used for snuff:

The best of old Cheshire Cheese cased in lead (*NSG&WC* 2 May 1780:Edward Nichols).

Tin was infrequently mentioned as a packaging material.

Portable Soup, of the best Sorts, made separately from Beef, Veal, Mutton, and Chicken, is sold at 4s. a Dozen in Tin Boxes, which is about equal to 8s. a Pound, excepting the Chicken. Also an inferior Sort made into square Cakes from Beef, is sold by Weight at 5s. a Pound, very handy for Sauces as well as Soups. . . . This Commodity has been made, ever since the late Rebellion, by Mrs. Bennet (whose Name was then Du Bois) and it was at that Time, and ever since, greatly valued by Gentlemen in the Army (*DA* 11 Sept. 1762:Portable Soup . . .).

## Ceramics

As a material, ceramics survives well in archaeological contexts, and was made in many different forms (Figures 4–7.) It has, therefore, good potential for identifying commercial food products used at sites. Pots were clearly used both for storage (inks, paints, medicines) and as commercial shipping containers for blacking, pomatum, soap, conserved fruits, honey, and butter. The term obviously covers a wide capacity range and shape:

Gally-pots from 4 lb. to  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb./Ditto, from 8 oz. to  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. (*NYM* 26 Oct. 1767:George Ball).

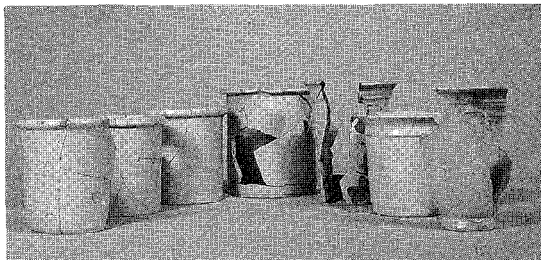


FIGURE 4. Tin-glazed earthenware pots for "confiture," and for pomade (*far right*). Capacity of pot on left is 425 ml; of the center 700 ml. (Courtesy of Fortress of Louisbourg NHP, Nova Scotia.)



FIGURE 5. Coarse earthenware containers. All interiors are glazed. *Left to right*: (a) Anglo-American, height: ca. 215 mm, capacity: 3,300 ml; (b) French, height: 192 mm, capacity: 830 ml; (c) Anglo-American, height: 265 mm, capacity: 7,700 ml; (d) Anglo-American, height: ca. 195 mm, capacity: 2,700 ml; (e) French, height: ca. 245 mm, capacity: 3,000 ml; (f) Anglo-American, height: ca. 275 mm, capacity: 8,200 ml. (Courtesy of Fortress of Louisbourg NHP, Nova Scotia.)

Stone Butter Potts from 2 gallons to one Quart, in large or Small quantities (*NSG&WC* 14 June 1785:Edward Oxnard).

Potts from 2 to 5 Gallons (*NSG&WC* 5 July 1785:William Kidston).

[stone] pickling and Butter Potts (*QG* 28 Sept. 1769:Woolseys & Bryan).

A few potts and firkins of choice butter for family use (*NYM* 6 Dec. 1762:John Abeel).

damsons, put up in potts without sugar for tarts (*NYM* 6 Dec. 1762:Ann Ramsey).



FIGURE 6. Coarse stoneware, Normandy, reddish-brown body, unglazed, considered a butter pot. Height: ca. 285 mm, estimated capacity: 5,650 ml. (Courtesy of Fortress of Louisbourg NHP, Nova Scotia.)

Naples Soap, at 5s. a Pot, containing eight Ounces (*DA* 31 Jan. 1740:Joseph Carbon).

A Fine Parcel of New Honey, of this Year's collecting, in glazed Pots, leather'd on the Top, and in Pots from 15 lb. to 35 lb. and to be sold as follows: Single Pots at Fourpence Halfpenny per Pound, and at Forty Shillings per Hundred; and some Allowance to those who take a larger Quantity (*DA* 17 Sept. 1762:To be Sold at the Windmill . . .).

Potted Venison in small Pots at Six-pence per Pot (*DA* 29 July 1760:To be Sold, Fine true Grass fed Venison . . .).

6 [barrels] Pots preserved Peaches of the first quality (*MH* 21 Dec. 1816:Nichols & Sanford).

60 Pots Pickled Oysters (*MH* 5 April 1817:Nichols & Sanford . . . Evening Sale).

Hickson's Prepared Gorgona Anchovies, or Anchovy Paste for Sandwiches, Toast, &c. . . . that all the genuine have Hickson, 170, Strand, printed on the side of every pot, price 2s. each (*Times* 4 Dec. 1818:A Caution . . .).



FIGURE 7. Spanish coarse earthenware containers were made either glazed or unglazed. They were used for a variety of solids and liquids, such as raisins, olive oil, olives, cider, wine, figs, and anchovies, even soap and pitch (James 1988; Gusset 1989, pers. comm.). They were closed with a flat coarse earthenware disc that did not reseal once the jar had been opened, or with cork. The three complete carrot-shaped jars from the Fortress of Louisbourg NHP hold 3,300–4,250 ml and are 403–440 mm in height. The three globular examples are (a) height: 273 mm, capacity: 6,600 ml; (b) height: 272 mm, capacity: 5,000 ml; (c) height: 263 mm, est. capacity: 4,700 ml. (Courtesy of Fortress of Louisbourg NHP, Nova Scotia.)

Some also pickle anchovies in small delf, or earthen pots made on purpose, of two or three pounds weight, more or less, which they cover with plaster, to keep them the better (Rees 1819, 2). [Same information can be found in Savary des Bruslons (1759) and in Postlethwayt (1771[1774])].

Anchovy Butter—This new and excellent Composition is particularly recommended to the admirers of Anchovy Sandwiches, possessing all the genuine flavour of the fish, without the trouble of preparing it, being fit for immediate use, and will spread like butter: officers of the army and navy will find the above a most useful and convenient article, as it will make a most superior fish sauce without the use of flour or butter: it is warranted to keep good in any climate, in pots 1s.6d., 2s.6d., and 4s.6d. each: superior Norfolk pickled eels, a most excellent substitute for pickled salmon, in pots 1s.6d. and 3s. (*Times* 28 March 1817:Anchovy Butter).

The Subscriber has just received a supply of West India Sweetmeats, consisting of Tamarinds, preserved Ginger, Pine Apple Jam. Preserved green Sweetmeats, Currant Jelly, Gooseberry & Raspberry Jam, richly preserved in stone Pots (*MH* 4 Jan. 1817:Sweetmeats . . .).

Jars were used primarily for raisins, oils, pickles, and occasionally honey. Unless the material

was specified, it is unlikely that jars in the 18th century were of glass. Although wide-mouthed glass containers were available, they were not called jars (Jones and Smith 1985:61; Jones 1989). In the 19th century jars became used more and more for linseed oil. The term “jar raisins” occurred dozens of times between 1740 and 1790 without any other description for size, shape, or material, indicating that it was a well-known package. However, in the early 19th-century papers looked at, including a complete run of the *Montreal Herald* (1814–1820), jar raisins were never listed. Frails—a kind of basket made of rushes—appeared and were added to the boxes, barrels, kegs, and casks mentioned earlier for raisins:

jarr, box and common raisins (*QG* 29 May 1777:Isaac Roberts).

Bloom Raisins in Jars (*QG* 31 Aug. 1780:E. Watts).

Lately landed a curious Parcel of Bloom Sun Raisins, much finer than any in the Jars, in small Boxes about 12 lb. each, to be sold by the Importer . . . at 7s. a Pound. No less Quantity than a Box (*DA* 4 Jan. 1762:Lately landed . . .).

The raisins of the sun, or jar-raisins, so called, because they are imported in jars, are all dried by the heat of the sun . . . (Rees 1819, 29).

Twenty Jars of very fine Lucca Oil, each Jar containing about thirty Gallons, one Jar in each lot (*DA* 21 Nov. 1739:To be sold by Auction . . .).

Fine Lucca Sallad Oil, neat as imported, in whole Jars, Half-Jars, and Quarter-Jars (*DA* 23 May 1740:To be Sold . . .).

Five 40 Gallon Jars of the finest Lucca Oil, [original packages] (*MH* 29 Nov. 1818:Robert Main).

Jar . . . an earthen pot or pitcher, with a big belly, and two handles.

Jar is used for a sort of measure, or fixed quantity of divers things—The jar of oil is from 18 to 26 gallons: the jar of green-ginger is about 100 pounds weight, of wheat 52 pounds. Jar, a measure of Lucca oil is 25 wine-gallons = 5775 cubic inches . . . (Rees 1819, 18).

He has also for Sale a few Jars Pickled Walnuts and Onions (*NSG&WC* 10 Jan. 1786:Law. Hartshorne).



Anchovies, Girkins, Walnuts in Jars and Bottles (*NSG&WC* 4 May 1784:Andrew Thomson).

Fine green French olives, in kegs, jars and bottles; by sending packages they are sold at 7s6 per gallon measured out of the original casks—Any quantity not less than a quart, at the same rate (*QG* 16 Sept. 1784:Lindsay & Macnider).

Linseed oil in 1, 2 or 3 gallon jars (*Halifax Journal [HJ]* 28 Oct. 1785:William Lyon & Co.).

white wine vinegar, in jars from 3 ½ to 6 ½ gallons (*Quebec Mercury [QM]* 16 Sept. 1811:George Browne).

white wine vinegar in jars containing five and six gallons each (*QG* 6 June 1811:George Browne).

## Glass

Like ceramics, glass survives well in the ground, was made in many different shapes, and contained many different types of products (Figures 8–11). Flasks or betties held various types of olive oil, wines, spa waters, and occasionally capers. They often came in chests. Two body shapes were covered by this term—a thin flat-sided body in horizontal cross-section and round in vertical cross-section, or a globular shape without a base. Both were likely covered with osier or leather. Although the term was used frequently in the newspaper advertisements and other documents in North America, flasks of this type are not often found in archaeological excavations. Size was generally not mentioned but extant examples usually hold about a quart, although they can be bigger: “five Quart and two Quart Flasks” (*NYM* 30 March 1761: George Ball). The quart flasks containing wine were likely not of English manufacture.

Bottles were mentioned hundreds of times directly. Their presence was implied by the terms chests, cases, quart, and dozen, particularly when the product was habitually sold in bottles. Most seem to have been of glass as material was rarely mentioned. One exception was “Stone Bottles from 1 Pint to 3 Gallons” (*QG* 28 Sept. 1769:Woolseys & Bryan). Sizes noted were small and large, quart, pint, and half-pint. Products sold by weight, such as snuff and mustard, were sold by the pound,

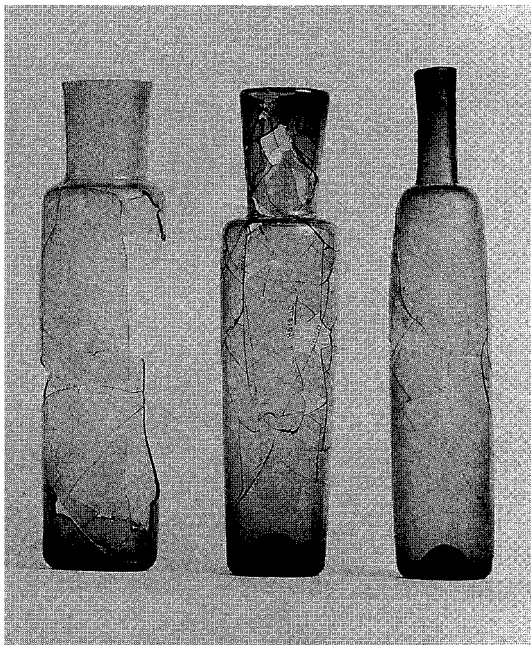


FIGURE 8. French bottles in blue-green glass (Harris 1978). The shape on the left appears in Chardin paintings with olives in it. The center style continued in production into the middle of the 19th century and may have held capers. The bottle on the right may have held olive oil. (Courtesy of Fortress of Louisbourg NHP, Nova Scotia.)

half-pound, and quarter-pound. In the English glass industry dark green glass was usually used to make bottles holding 6 oz. or more, while a light green or colourless glass was used for the smaller bottles. Glass bottles are found in large numbers on sites in North America. Their capacities, generally a quart or smaller, suggest unit purchases rather than bulk buying. Empty bottles were also sold for home packaging and frequent references to money given for returned bottles indicate that many were reused. Different shapes of bodies, length of neck, and size of mouth on existing bottles, as well as glass manufacturers' records, indicate that 18th-century bottle manufacturers in both Britain and France made specialized glass containers for different products (McKearin and Wilson 1978:246–278; Harris 1979; Jones 1986:11–15, 1989).

Innumerable references to bottled porter/ale/beer and wine echo the quantities of English



FIGURE 9. Flat octagonal bottles with short, wide necks are found regularly in mid- to late 18th-century archaeological contexts. The style was used for mustard (McKearin and Wilson 1978:263) but may also have been used for snuff. (a) Height: 169 mm, est. capacity: 355 ml; (b) height: 160 mm; (c) height: 155 mm. (Courtesy of Fortress of Louisbourg NHP, Nova Scotia.)

“wine” bottles found on North American sites (Jones 1986:17–26, 73–83). Brandy and gin, cider, punch ingredients such as shrub, lemon or orange juice, perfumed waters (used primarily as medicines but also as flavorings), patent and proprietary medicines, olive oil, snuff, mustard, pickles, and sauces were all sold in bottles. Noticeably absent were bottled inks, blacking, and rum.

Mustard and snuff were sold primarily in bottles holding a half or quarter pound, although sometimes a pound size was mentioned for mustard. In the 1780s one English factory that made dark green bottle glass produced mustard and snuff bottles in 7-, 8-, 14-, and 16-oz. sizes (Jones 1986:12). One bottle style recognized as being for mustard is the flat octagonal bottle with short, wide mouth; one for snuff has a square body (Figures 9, 10; McKearin and Wilson 1978:259–263). However, square quart bottles also appear to have been used for pickles of different types (Jones and Smith 1985:65, 108). By the early years of the 19th century, a style for London Mustard had appeared (Figure 11; Jones 1983:77–79). Examples include:

At the same Places are sold, Kirby's new Flower of Mustard-Seed, seal'd up in Six-penny and Three-penny Bottles (DA 28 May 1740: To be Sold, Wholesale and Retail).

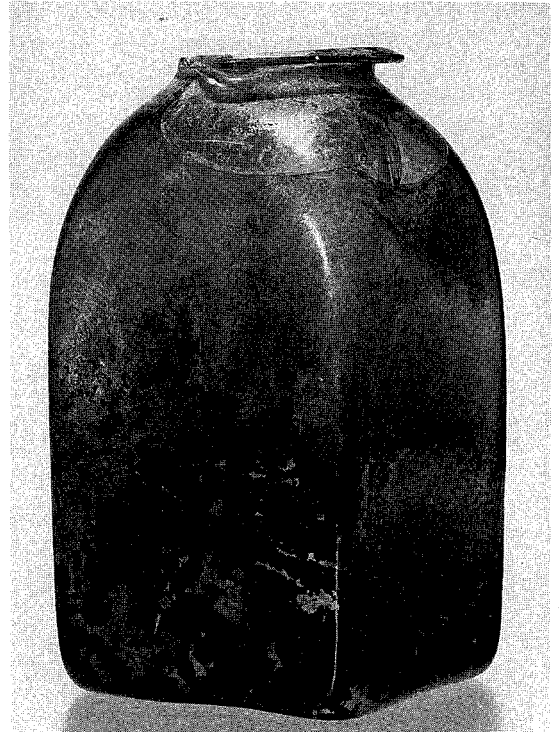


FIGURE 10. Square bottles with straight and tapered bodies are found in pint and quart sizes. In the 19th century the style was strongly identified with snuff but several references in 18th-century documents to square quart bottles for various types of pickles suggest the style had more than one use. Height: 130 mm, est. capacity: 410 ml (Jones and Smith 1985:65, 108). (Courtesy of Artillery Park NHP, Quebec.)

Thomas Johnson, The only Preparer of the Flour of Mustard . . . where is continu'd to be sold, for the better Accommodation of his Customers, Johnson's original and much-approv'd Flour of Mustard, which has been sold by the Family upwards of forty Years with Approbation, in Sixpenny and Threepenny Bottles, with great Allowances to those that buy Quantities. Each Bottle has Directions pasted thereon. Note, He sells a finer Sort, which far exceeds any yet made, for Colour, Beauty, and Taste, a Tea-Spoonful of which, stirr'd up in the Gravy of Beef, Mutton, Lamb, or Pork, makes the most agreeable Sauce that can be imagin'd; and is most excellent mix'd with Oil and Vinegar in Sallads. . . . Sold in Sixpenny Bottles, or by the Pound. N.B. Mustard ready made, to be had at any time, in any Quantities (DA 3 Nov. 1742: Thomas Johnson).

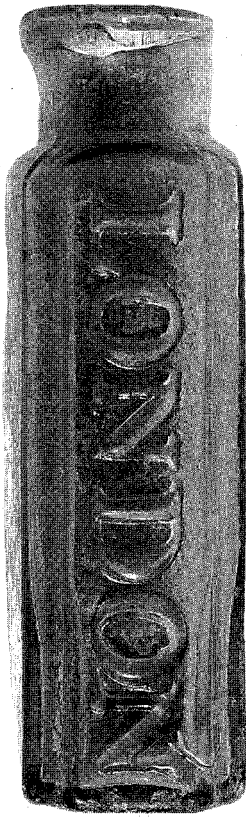


FIGURE 11. London mustard bottle, a small square bottle with chamfered corners embossed LONDON/MUSTARD; the style was introduced in the early 19th century. Height: 135 mm, capacity 120 ml, approximately 2 oz. of dry mustard. (Courtesy of Artillery Park NHP, Quebec.)

Kyan pepper and mustard in  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb bottles (*Royal Gazette and the Nova-Scotia Advertiser [RG&NSA]* 1 Nov. 1791:Mark Mullen).

a few gross of choice quart bottles, and square snuff bottles (*NYM* 30 Nov. 1767:George Traile).

Also a few Bottles of Weston's best Snuff (*NYM* 14 Dec. 1761:John Ernest).

Prepared sauces, fruits, and pickles, made partly as flavorings or condiments, and partly to preserve

foods being shipped over long distances or kept for long-term storage, were also sold in bottles. These are traditionally thought to have been prepared at home and no doubt many were. As the advertisements show, however, pickled and preserved goods were also made commercially. In keeping with other types of consumables—medicines, toiletries, porter, snuff—proprietary food products were in production at least as early as the 1780s; by 1820 there were a number of named sauces—Quins, Sauce Royal, Cherokee, Harvey's, and Burgess' Essence of Anchovies (*Kingston Gazette* 25 Sept. 1810:Romeo Wadsworth; *QG* 6 June 1811:Fras. Durette; *QM* 11 June 1816:George Arnold).

The Cook will have Occasion to recollect what those Things are which serve to give them Flavour, or to eat with them as Additions in Sauce, or such as supply the Place of it. Under this Head come Pickles, and other preserved Things of that Kind. Of these there is a vast Number, but the greater Part of them are prepared at Home. Some we receive from other Countries. . . . These are principally six, Anchovies, Capers, Caviar, Cayan Pepper, Mangoes, and Soy (*Bradley* [1770]:6).

The best French Olives, at 2s.3d. a large Bottle, or 2s. a Quart Bottle; Lucca Olives, at 1s.6d. a Bottle, or 5s. a Gallon (*DA* 21 March 1740:Joseph Carbon).

Fine French Olives, in large long bottles, at 2s. a bottle (*DA* 24 March 1742:Berto Valle).

French olives in quart at 3s.9d. per bottle/Capers, ditto, per ditto (*Halifax Weekly Chronicle [HWC]* 4 June 1791:S. Hart).

French Olives, just imported, of the best quality, at 1s.6d. per pint, or 17s. per dozen; finest Lucca Oils, 5s. per quart; and New Flask Oil, 2s.6d.; the above are all of the best quality, and, if not approved of, the money shall be immediately returned: orders per post duly attended to (*Times* 23 May 1817:French Olives, and New Salad Oil . . .).

Pickled Cucumbers or Girkins in Quart Bottles very cheap (*QG* 15 Aug. 1765:Jenkins & Allsopp).

Pickles, in Quart and Pint Bottles, viz./Capers, Mushrooms, Anchovies, and Melon Mangoes,/Onions, Walnuts, Girkins, Olives, &c. (*HWC* 5 March 1791:Thomas Russell).

Olives, capers, India soy, girkins, walnuts and ketchup in quart, pint and half-pint bottles (*NSG&WC* 2 May 1780:Schwartz and Emerson).

Quin's Fish Sauce (*QG* 13 Oct. 1785:Aylwin & Co).

English pickles, in cases containing 6 bottles (*QM* 16 Sept. 1811:George Browne).

Just landed from the North of England, a fresh Parcel of pickled Mushrooms and Ketchup in Quart Bottles, both exceeding good and fine flavour'd; the Mushrooms at 3s.6d. the Bottle, and the Ketchup at 2s. Bottles included (*DA* 10 Nov. 1750:Sold at the Durham Mustard Warehouse).

the vegetable soups in quart and pint bottles, milk in pints, &c.; also concentrated gravy soup prepared in small bottles, for making quarts, pints, and two-thirds of a pint . . . Donkin, Hall, and Gamble (*Times* 21 Jan. 1817:Preservation of Meat).

About eighteen Dozen Bottles of Fruit, as Gooseberries, Currants, Cherries and Plumbs, fit for a Pastry-Cook (*DA* 23 Jan. 1750:To be Sold cheap . . .).

just landed from New York . . . A Parcel of fine Cranberries, a Fruit greatly esteemed at this Season of the Year, for the Richness of its Flavour in Tarts; to be sold by the Gallon or in single Quart (*DA* 22 Dec. 1750:To be Sold . . .).

Confectionary, consisting of Wet Fruits in bottles (*HJ* 28 Oct. 1785:S. Sparrow).

Excellent for making Punch, A fresh Parcel of Howe's Genuine Acid, Prepared from the Juice of Lemons and Oranges only, A large Tea Spoonful of which is sufficient for a Quart of Punch.

This Acid is the fittest that can be used for the making of Lemonade, Jellies, and for all other Purposes to which Acid is necessary, upon Trial much Cheaper and more wholesome than the fresh Fruits, as by the process, the Watery and Earthly Particles [*sic*] are taken away and receives no Injury from keeping. . . .

Sold at Robert Fletcher's at 2s.6d. per Bottle by the Dozen and 3s. each, by the Single Bottle (*NSG&WC* 11 May 1779:Excellent for making Punch . . .).

A few dozen London made Jellies & Preserves (*MH* 18 June 1814:James Fraser).

Olive oil also came in bottles in pint and quart sizes, in shapes other than a flask:

oil in square bottles (*BG&CJ* 3 Jan. 1774:Archibald Cunningham).

Florence oil, in cases containing 12 quart bottles (*QM* 16 Sept. 1811:George Browne).

8 Boxes Sallad Oil in French bottles (*MH* 15 Jan. 1820:John Torrance).

7 cases best sallad Oil in Pint Bottles (*MH* 31 May 1820:Shaw Armour).

## Convenience Foods

Packaged prepared foods, such as sauces and bottled fruits, were not the only convenience foods available. In urban centers a host of specialists offered cooked, often hot, "fast" foods to all levels of society. Among their customers were the urban poor. Cooking required money, time for shopping and preparation, utensils, knowledge, and fuel. Hot food could be bought from bakers and street vendors, in taverns and other public places, faster and cheaper than it was to make. Ironically, bread, the modern symbol for home and hearth and for nutritional self-sufficiency, was one of the first foods to be made consistently outside the home. Authorities regarded bread as so crucial to the subsistence of the poor that they set detailed regulations governing its price, weight, and quality (Drummond and Wilbraham 1959:41, 218–219; Wheaton 1983:71–77; Mui and Mui 1988:155–156; Porter in Camporesi 1989:10, 13–14.) Assizes of bread were regularly published in the Canadian papers; sometimes the bakers were required to bake their initials in the bread; if the weight and price were not correct, the offending baker could be found easily:

It is Ordered, That the Six-penny brown Loaf do weigh Four Pounds Eight Ounces, and the Six-penny white Loaf do weigh Three Pounds Six Ounces, and that the Bakers mark the first Letters of their Name distinctly on each Loaf (*QG* 15 May 1777:District of Quebec).

Nor were the poor the only customers for "fast" foods. In the 18th century many meals or parts of meals were prepared or consumed outside the home, particularly by men and always by travellers (Figure 12). Baked goods, foods requiring specialized equipment or unusual ingredients, such as the elaborate desserts required for formal entertaining (Beldon 1983:168), were ordered from commercial establishments. Meals could be delivered:

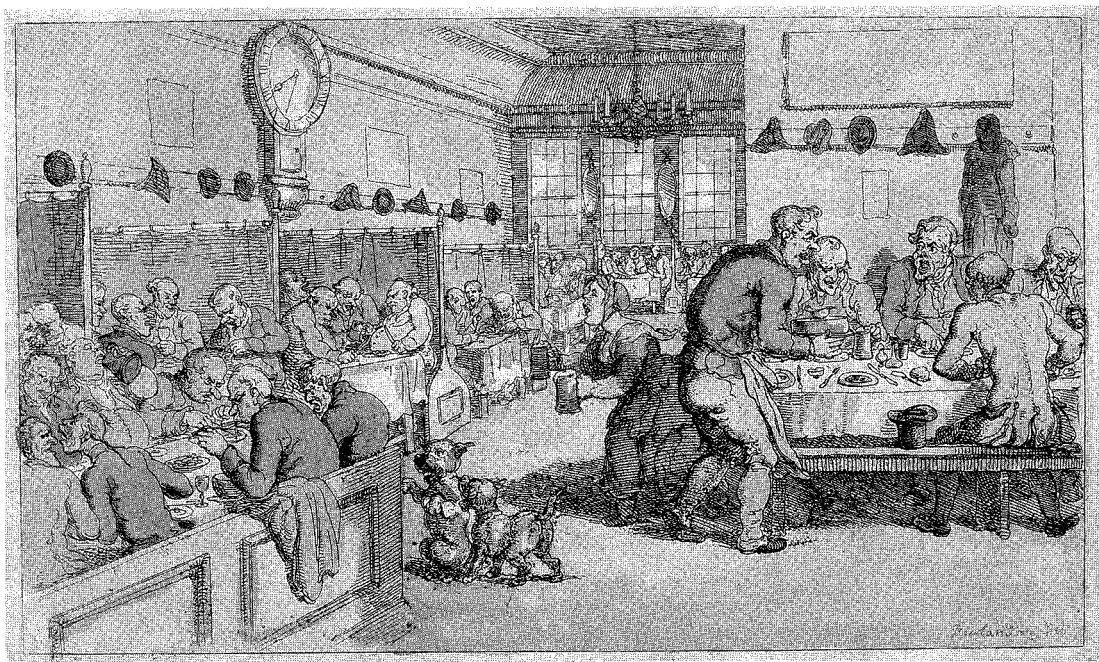


FIGURE 12. The Rainbow Tavern, Thomas Rowlandson, London, 1788. (Private collection.)

He begs leave to inform the Ladies, that he has a good Convenience for Baking, in which they may depend on having their Commands duly performed to the greatest Nicety; and hot Mutton Byes every Day (*Nova-Scotia Gazette & Weekly Advertiser* 3 Oct. 1769:John Wills . . . Great Pontac).

where he carries on the Baking business in all its branches, viz: Soft and hard Bread of the best quality, Butter biscuits, and other Cakes. He flatters himself to give universal Satisfaction to all who will favour him with their Custom (*NSG&WC* 25 Nov. 1788:John Fousel).

Will have a good Bill of Fare to furnish every Day on the shortest Notice. Plain Dishes from 1s.6d. to 2s.—Breakfast 1s.—Tea in the Evening 9d.—Supper 1s. . . . Beef Soup or Mutton Broth every Day at 12 o'Clock, from the first of next Month till the Weather grows warm (*NSG&WC* 22 Sept. 1789:Golden Ball).

Renelagh Gardens, For breakfasting, as well as the evening entertainment of Ladies and Gentlemen, are laid out, at a great expense, in a very genteel, pleasing manner, and judged (without exception) to be far the most rural retreat near this city . . . the very best of wine and other liquors,

mead, silabubs, &c. with gammon, tongues, alamode beef, tarts, cakes, &c. and on notice given dinners, or other large entertainments, elegantly provided as usual . . . (*NYM* 30 June 1766:Renelagh Gardens).

Mr. Sills, at the London Tavern . . . Dinners drest, and all Sorts of Pastry made, and sent hot to any Part of the Town, on the shortest Notice (*QG* 8 Oct 1767:Sills).

Green Turtle, Dressed In the most perfect Manner every Day this Week at the Pontac. Private Family by sending their Turine's and Dishes between One and Four o'Clock, may be supplied with it during that Time, in any Quantity (*NSG&WC* 18 July 1786:Green Turtle . . .).

Hartshorn Seville Orange Jellies, fresh every Day, at 3s. a Dozen; Hartshorn and Calves-Foot, at 2s. a Dozen; and Blamanger, at 4s. a Dozen. Four Shillings to be left in Hand till the Glasses are return'd (*DA* 30 Jan. 1752:To be Sold . . .).

The very best Hartshorn Jellies may be had fresh every Day, at Two Shillings a Dozen. Note, Four Shillings per Dozen to be left in Hand for the Glasses til return'd (*DA* 15 Feb. 1751:Tom's Coffee-House).

Physical evidence for the trade in local convenience foods will be difficult to find archaeologically. Bread, the staple food, leaves no traces except in architectural features such as bake ovens. Commercial serving dishes would be the same as those used in ordinary households. One could expect to find an unusually large number of serving dishes, such as dessert glasses, or specialized equipment in establishments offering cooked food for sale.

### Conclusion

This sample from newspaper advertisements and of containers from archaeological sites shows that many elements of consumerism were in evidence in the food trade in the 18th century and were firmly established by 1820—proprietary or brand-named products, unit packages often of distinctive character, international trade, stated prices, targeted markets, and prepared foods. The advertisements show that manufacturers addressed the specific needs of certain groups such as cooks and travellers by developing prepared foods for them. Commercial sauces and pickles were designed to save the cook hours of preparation time. Travellers on the road needed food that was quick and easy to prepare and that was compatible with their social position, such as portable soup and the pots of anchovy butter offered to officers in the army and navy.

Both the objects and the advertisements show that many specialized centers of food production, some traditional and some new, supplied the North American market. Spain, France, and Italy supplied olives and olive oils, for example. Ireland specialized in the production of butter and salt beef and pork for the provisioning trade. English manufacturers took the traditional Mediterranean anchovy (or at least a fish which they called anchovy) and reprocessed it into anchovy paste. The West Indies produced not just rum and sugar but also spices and sweetmeats which were originally products grown in the East Indies.

Among the requirements for the successful expansion of food production to serve a wider market

were containers to distribute that food. The containers needed to be relatively consistent in size, to be available in a variety of sizes and material, to be made of materials suitable for the product, and to be available in large numbers. Both the documentary and archaeological evidence suggest that by the end of the 18th century the makers of containers were able to meet the bulk of these demands. English dark green glass bottle manufacturers, for example, expanded both the quantity and variety of their production in response to increasing demands. By 1800 glass had become a principal material used in unit packaging.

Prepared commercial foods were also made and distributed locally. The preparation and consumption of food in this period was not confined to the family kitchen or the family dinner table. The reality was far more diverse in terms of location, type of meal, and type of food. Public eating establishments served travelers and people without cooking facilities. Many offered convivial meeting places where men could eat alone or with friends. Even street vendors sold food (Marc LaFrance 1990, pers. comm.) Households used the services of professionals for baked goods and for foods requiring specialized skills, supplies, and equipment.

A romantic stereotyped view of the past, in which each household is thought of as self-sufficient and free from the "taint" of consumerism, does not serve archaeologists well when they are faced with interpreting the foodways of the 18th and early 19th centuries. The evidence from both the documentary and archaeological record points to the determination of the European-derived populations in North America to belong to the "civilized" world at the table. It is time to include food in the growing list of consumer products available to the 18th-century consumer and to study how the commercial foods fit into the daily food choices made by those consumers.

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OLIVE R. JONES  
 CANADIAN PARKS SERVICE  
 1600 LIVERPOOL COURT  
 OTTAWA, ONTARIO K1A 0H4  
 CANADA

## Appendix A: The Newspapers and Their Advertisements

The advertisements were collected partly for other projects, partly for this one. The method of gathering them varied. For some papers every issue was looked at; for others a rigid sampling procedure was used (e.g., every second issue or every second week). Because the Canadian newspapers customarily placed new advertisements on the third page, only this page was scanned, not the whole paper. The first and last pages had repeat advertisements. For some papers only a few issues were used, generally because the original search was part of another project. The technique used depended on the time available, the type of paper, and the amount of packaging detail appearing in the advertisements. Consequently, no statistical analysis could be done on the relationships between package type and product. The comparative frequencies of types of package given in the text are based on a private computer data base of 1,200 records from the *Daily Advertiser* (1739–1742), *New-York Mercury* (1753–1767), *Quebec Gazette* (1764–1785), *Nova-Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle* (1773–1789), *Boston Gazette & Country Journal* (1774), covering the period from late

1739 to 1789. Other newspapers searched in detail were the *Daily Advertiser* (1739–1740, 1742, 1750–1753, 1760, and 1762), *The Times* (1817–1818), and the *Montreal Herald* (1814–1820).

Useful individual advertisements were selected from two independent data bases and then the original advertisement was used. The first data base is a card file of advertisements found in 19th-century Quebec papers assembled in the early 1970s by the History Division of the Canadian Parks Service (“Newspaper Advertisements in the Province of Quebec” 1971–1972), and the second is the Atlantic Canada Newspaper Survey (1989–present), a national on-line computer data base of newspaper advertisements from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland.

Differences in terminology and in references to certain types of containers occurred in different newspapers. For example, the *New-York Mercury* had far more empty glass and ceramic containers for sale, sold olive oil in betties rather than flasks, and listed tea in cannisters. Cheese cased in lead came from the Nova Scotia and Quebec papers in the early 1780s. The sample is too small to tell if these differences reflect regional or temporal variations. Package details changed from paper to paper and through time in the same paper. For example, the *Daily Advertiser* in the ca. 1740 and ca. 1750 issues contained a great deal of packaging information, but the 1760 and 1762 papers merely listed products. Advertisements in the *Nova-Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle* in the early 1780s, after the influx of United Empire Loyalists from the United States, were long and informative. By 1788, however, commodity advertisements had almost disappeared, replaced by signs of recession—land sales and sales by the sheriff. The 1817–1820 issues of the *Montreal Herald* generally just listed bulk packages although many of these contained smaller packages.

Newspaper searches of this type are never-ending; every new paper lures the optimist into believing that *this* is the paper which will answer all packaging questions. It never is, of course, but the gradual accumulation of information does help to build a picture of the complexities of commercial packaging in the 18th and early 19th centuries.