

2-B Silver of the 18th, 19th, and 20th Centuries

Various Artists



2-B.1 Paul Revere Jr. (1734–1818), Teapot, 1796. Silver, overall 6 1/16 x 11 5/8 in., 668.7 grams (15.4 x 29.5 cm., 21.499 troy ounces); base 5 11/16 x 3 3/4 in. (14.4 x 9.5 cm.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Alphonso T. Clearwater, 1933 (33.120.543). Image © 1986 The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



2-B.2 Thomas William Brown (Wilmington, North Carolina), tea service. Silver, c. 1840–1850. © North Carolina Museum of History. Courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, N.C.



2-B.3 Gene Theobald (active 1920s–1930s), “Diament” teapot, 1928. Wilcox Silver Plate Company, American, (active 1867–1961), division of International Silver Company, American, founded 1898. Silverplate and plastic, overall 7 1/2 x 6 5/8 x 3 5/8 in. (19.05 x 16.828 x 9.208 cm.). Location: Meriden, Connecticut. Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Tex., The Jewel Stern American Silver Collection, Gift of Jewel Stern.

The Art

These silver teapots by three different artists all have different styles. Paul Revere’s teapot is oval and has looping garlands etched into the top and bottom of the pot. The handle is made of wood. Thomas William Brown’s teapot and matching pieces are rounded and stately. Their lids are attached and the scrolled handles have ivory in them. Gene Theobald and Virginia Hamill created a tea set that fit closely together in a carrying tray. The pieces have a smooth sheen caused by the light that is reflected from them. The compact tea set looks like an ocean liner steaming across the table or a miniature version of the skyline seen from an apartment window.

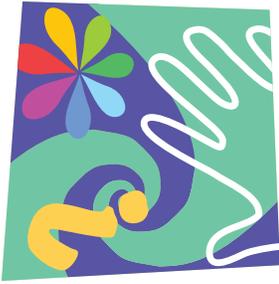
The Artist

Paul Revere, Jr. was born in 1734 and died in 1818. He was a leading silversmith in Boston, Massachusetts, before and after the American Revolution. He made silver pieces for rich people as well as for people who did not have a lot of money. The oval pot in the photo was made by Revere in 1796.

Between 1840 and 1850, Thomas William Brown designed the tea service in the picture for a businessman in Wilmington, North Carolina, where Brown also lived.

The Historical Perspective

Tea was expensive and drinking it was often a social occasion. During the 17th century, tea that came from East Asia changed the drinking habits of Europe and, before long, the American colonies. Teapots made of silver were the choice of people with money. The metal kept the tea hot and could be formed to make beautiful pots. The silver’s smooth surface was ideal for etching designs. Silver production changed from a small-shop operation to a large business. The opening of silver mines in the American West and the creation of new ways to make silver, such as putting a layer of it over a cheaper metal, made it available to more people in the form of utensils and containers.



Conversations and Teaching Activities

Head Start Children ages 3 to 5

Encourage children to look closely at the artwork. Introduce new vocabulary and find books that relate to the artwork.

Describing



✓ Introducing this silver artwork might best be done in a small group setting so the children have a chance to be very close to the pictures as they discuss them. If the children don't immediately begin commenting on the teapots, ask "What do you notice?" or "What do you see?" Write down responses, comments, and questions.

✓ Help children describe the different pots using shape and geometry vocabulary: angular, tall, straight, rounded, curved, flat, etc.

✓ Draw the children's attention to the wooden handle on Revere's teapot. Ask them why they think the teapot has a wooden handle. The silver became hot when filled with boiling water. A wooden handle would keep the users from burning their hands as they poured tea.

Analyzing and Interpreting



Ask the following questions to stimulate thinking and discussion:

- The title of this artwork is *Silver of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries*. Do you know why?
- Revere's teapot is a single item, but Brown and Theobald produced tea sets. Ask children what they think about the additional containers. Talk about the other containers in Brown and Theobald's sets and what they are used for.
- Have the children compare the teapots. Ask them how they are alike and how they are different. Chart the children's responses on a flip chart. Group responses into two categories: alike and different.
- If children do not make personal connections to the tea sets, ask them if they have a teapot at home or have seen their parents, grandparents, or family members use one. They also may have experienced tea at a restaurant or during a special occasion.
- Ask the children which of the teapots they would rather use and why.
- Ask the children if there are other things they would like to say about the artwork.



Connecting and Extending

Introducing Vocabulary

angled	melt	shiny
engrave	oval	silver
flatten	pound	spout
handle	shape	teapot



Connecting and Extending continued...

Related Family Literacy Experiences

Parents and children can:

- ✓ taste different flavored teas and make a chart of ones they like and dislike.
- ✓ read the book *Miss Spider's Tea Party* by David Kirk.
- ✓ go on a scavenger hunt to find silver-colored items in their home.



Books

A Day in the Life of a Colonial Silversmith by Kathy Wilmore
(PowerKids Press, 2000)

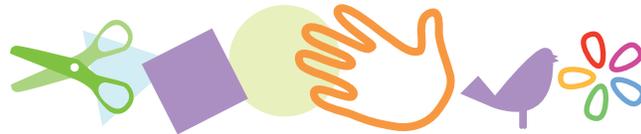
A typical day in the life of a silversmith is depicted, including the items he made and the people he encountered.

Miss Spider's Tea Party by David Kirk (Scholastic, 2006)

When lonely Miss Spider tries to host a tea party, the other bugs refuse to come for fear of being eaten.

The Silversmiths (Colonial Craftsmen) by Leonard Everett Fisher
(Benchmark Books, 1997)

The works that colonial silversmiths created are examined.



Related Educational Experiences

- ✓ Visit a school or university with a metalsmithing program or invite a guest to Head Start who can give children a first-hand experience with silver or metalsmithing.
- ✓ Visit a museum and look at tea sets, ceramics, other household goods from the 18th to the 20th centuries, rocks, metals, minerals, and gems.
- ✓ Serve children's everyday drinks from teapots. Include teapots, cups and saucers, sugar bowls, and cream containers in the dramatic play center. Have children drink tea.
- ✓ Have a display table with a variety of teas. Discuss where tea comes from (plants) and what how it is served (bags, loose leaf, etc).

The ideas listed are just a few of the many activities that could be used to introduce or extend children's learning. Your knowledge of your children and families supports your ability to ensure positive learning experiences and outcomes for students. As an educator, you probably have ideas for books, songs, finger plays, and activities that you have thought of when introducing or extending children's learning related to the "A Head Start on Picturing America" artworks. We encourage you to confer with your colleagues, visit the local library or bookstore, and share your ideas with others.