What’s In Your Cup?

Coffee: A Wyoming History of Serving, and Advertising, a Favorite Drink

Silver Coffee and Tea Service
G-2001.72.117-120
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>575-850</td>
<td>Coffee was eaten as a food by nomadic mountain warriors in Ethiopia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1000-1300</td>
<td>Coffee was made into a hot beverage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>Coffee was first described in writings by Avicenna of Bukhara.  He noted the medicinal qualities of coffee, which he called bunchum.</td>
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<td>1400s</td>
<td>Coffee use spread from Ethiopia to Egypt and Yemen.</td>
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<td>1554</td>
<td>The first coffee houses opened in Constantinople.</td>
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<td>1650</td>
<td>The first coffee house opened in England, at Oxford.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1668</td>
<td>Coffee was introduced to North America.</td>
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<td>1773</td>
<td>Coffee became more popular in America as a result of the Boston Tea Party.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>The first American patent for a coffee percolator was issued to James Mason of Massachusetts.</td>
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<td>1873</td>
<td>The first successful national brand of packaged, roasted, and ground coffee was offered on the American market by John Arbuckle.</td>
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<td>1908</td>
<td>The first paper coffee filters were invented in Germany by Melitta Bentz.</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>The French press coffee maker was patented by Italian designer, Attilio Calimani.</td>
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<td>1938-1945</td>
<td>The first commercially successful instant coffee, Nescafe, was introduced. American troops during WWII popularized this drink.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>Drip brew coffee makers replaced the coffee percolator as the most popular tool for brewing coffee at home.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>The first Starbucks opened in Seattle, Washington.  The company expanded rapidly in the 1990s and become an international corporation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>Organic coffee became the fastest growing segment of the specialty coffee industry.</td>
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</table>
Can you imagine being served coffee from this sterling silver coffee urn? You would have been, if you were an officer on the Battleship *USS Wyoming* between the years, 1911-1947. When the battleship was commissioned, the Wyoming State Legislature appropriate $7,500 for the purchase of a silver service to be used by the officers of the vessel. The service was designed by the Gorham Company of New York with assistance from Hugo Buechner, a Cheyenne jeweler.

*USS Wyoming* Coffee Urn
G-1967.65.1 a, b
This type of coffee pot was used to make “cowboy coffee.” Roasted and ground coffee beans were placed in the pot with water and boiled on a stove or open fire. The grounds could be gathered in a strainer while pouring, or they just ended up in the drinker’s cup.

Coffee Pot
G-1968.152.3

This ceramic coffee cup features an interesting poem about the merits of coffee drinking. It was brought to Cheyenne from Iowa in 1894. The family also lived for many years at Bonanza, Wyoming in Big Horn County.

“Indeed it’s true
I am playing no tricks:
Always take coffee instead of beer
And You’ll never be stiff
Like a bundle of sticks”

Coffee Cup
G-1939.20.1
People have ground coffee beans to prepare cups of coffee for thousands of years. Mortars and pestles were the first tools used for this task. The first American patent for manual coffee grinders was registered in 1798. This grinder from the Wyoming State Museum’s collection has a bowl at the top into which whole coffee beans are placed. The user grinds them by turning the hand crank. The coffee grounds are then collected in the drawer below, ready for brewing.

According to museum records, this grinder was in use at the TA Ranch during the infamous Johnson County War, where a battle between small and large ranchers culminated in a lengthy shootout between local ranchers, a band of hired gunmen, and a sheriff’s posse.
There is an ancient tradition of reading coffee grounds or tea leaves that are left in a cup after the liquid has been consumed. Coffee grounds reading is known as cafeomancy. It has been practiced throughout history in many countries, usually by women, often during gatherings of family and friends. The patterns left by the tea or coffee grounds at the bottom of an empty cup are “read” to find symbols which indicate various possible future events for the drinker. Some examples of these symbols are:

- An ant = perseverance
- A dustpan = strange news about a friend
- An owl = gossip, scandal, failure
- A unicorn = a secret wedding

This postcard was created in 1907 and donated to the Wyoming State Museum in 1975.
This vacuum style coffee maker belonged to Mary E. and Samuel L. Asher, who owned the Asher Wyoming Company, a wholesale grocery distribution warehouse in southeast Wyoming.

Vacuum Style Coffee Maker
G-2011.33.1 a-f

A vacuum coffee maker brews coffee using two chambers where vapor pressure and vacuum produce coffee. Water is heated in the lower vessel of the brewer until pressure forces the contents through a narrow tube into an upper vessel containing coffee grounds. When the lower vessel has emptied itself, the heat is removed and the resulting vacuum will draw the brewed coffee through a strainer back into the lower chamber from which it is served.

The original vacuum coffee maker was patented in Berlin. However, vacuum brewers did not become popular until the early part of the 20th century.
This silver coffee pot was part of a full silver service which was used by Mrs. Grace Marquis to entertain ladies groups in Kemmerer, Wyoming in the 1920s-30s. Her husband, Dr. John Ralph Marquis, was Kemmerer’s first independent physician. All previous physicians had worked for a local mining company. He also served as mayor in the 1930s.

This set was acquired before 1929 from the Fitzpatrick Store in Kemmerer, WY. Teas to benefit the Methodist Church in Kemmerer were an annual event in the Marquis household, with all the fine china and silver being used. A special dish was placed on a small table by the living room doorway, and it was customary for the guests to drop coins (usually ten cents) into the dish before partaking of refreshments.
Sambo’s Coffee Token
G-1989.53.1

When cigarette smoking was more popular, matchbooks with advertising such as this were commonly available to restaurant customers. The Coffee Cup Café was located in Lusk, Wyoming.

Sambo’s restaurant chain began in 1957. Controversy over the restaurant’s name (associated with *The Story of Little Black Sambo,* which some considered racist, led to the company’s demise in the early 1980s. The Sambo’s restaurant in Cheyenne was located at 2300 Carey Avenue from 1973 to 1983. This token was made in 1975 and the other side features the Cheyenne Frontier Days logo.

Matchbook
G-1991.23.3
Coffee Cup
G-1969.91.3

This cup was hand painted by Wyoming resident, Nell Martin McInerney. It is believed that porcelain painting was first introduced in America in the 1860s. A group of women, including Marie Eggers, investigated the art form further and entered their creations in the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876. They are credited with exposing millions of Americans to this new art form which, in turn, became a popular pastime for American women in that late 1800s and early 1900s.

Demitasse Cup and Saucer
G-1962.35.45 d, k

A small cup such as this is used to serve strong coffee, such as espresso. A demitasse cup is at least half the size of a regular coffee cup. This one is only two inches tall. The Wyoming State Museum has several small demitasse cups and saucers in its artifact collections.