

Bg 20





Fig. 1. "Chuckatuck" pewter spoon fragment, marked at top of trifid handle JOSEPH COPELAND 1675 *Chuckatuck* [Virginia]; unearthed at Jamestown, Virginia, in the 1930's. The date probably refers to the year in which Copeland started in business (see ANTIQUES, April 1938, p. 188). Length of fragment, 5½ inches. National Park Service.

Fig. 2. Bowl of a pewter spoon, one of several unearthed at Jamestown and probably from the same mold as the Chuckatuck spoon. National Park Service.

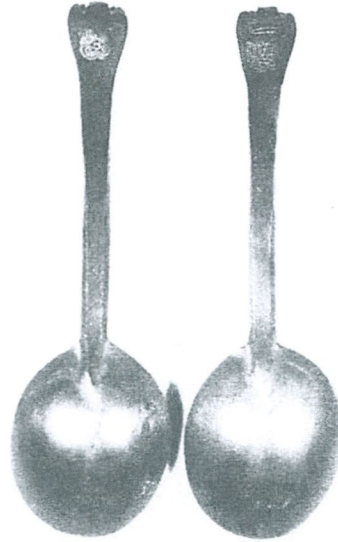
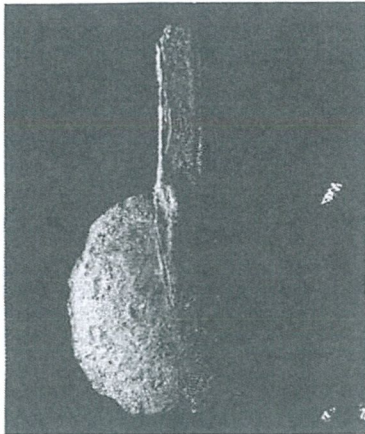
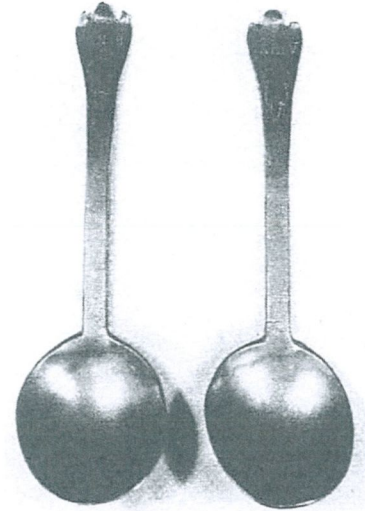


Fig. 3. Reverse of trifid-end pewter spoons bearing the marks of (left) M. B. UVEN and (right) J. M. UFEN, both with crown above and rose below and partially framed in baroque scrollwork; c. 1700. Length 7 inches. Adam C. Breckenridge.

Fig. 4. Obverse of the Uven (left) and Ufen (right) spoons, inscribed respectively *H B* and *K H v* [?] *V* with a leaf below. The significance of these initials is unknown; they probably refer to owners who may or may not have been original purchasers.



### "Real rarities"

"ALTHOUGH SPOONS were made in the colonies by the hundred thousand, marked specimens which antedate the britannia period [from 1825 on] are among the real rarities of American pewter," says Ledlie I. Laughlin in introducing the "Spoons, ladles, and dippers" section of his monumental two-volume *Pewter in America* (Cambridge, 1940). The truth of this statement being virtually self-evident, we feel sure that collectors of American pewter will be much interested in this note on two early pewter spoons owned by Adam C. Breckenridge:

Ever since it was unearthed at Jamestown, Virginia, in the 1930's, the "Chuckatuck" trifid-end spoon made by Joseph Copeland in the last quarter of the seventeenth century (Fig. 1) has been accepted as the earliest known marked piece of American pewter (it was first published in ANTIQUES for April 1938, p. 188). Laughlin so recorded it (Vol. 1, Pl. xxiv), adding that a slip-top spoon by John Bassett (New York, 1720-1761) was the only other "marked American spoon antedating 1760, the maker of which has been identified." I think it can be demonstrated that the trifid-end pewter spoons shown here in Figures 3 and 4 also belong in this limited category.

Spoons by M. B. Uven and J. M. Ufen have been recorded before this. A brochure published by the Brooklyn Museum in 1949 lists J. M. Ufen as an unidentified American maker and shows a trifid-end, seven-inch spoon bearing his mark; the spoon is listed as "early eighteenth century." M. B. Uven and J. M. Ufen are listed in Carl Jacobs' *Guide to American Pewter* (New York, 1957) as the makers of two seven-inch trifid-end spoons from one mold (he thought that these makers were probably from Pennsylvania). V. J. Morse showed a spoon by M. B. Uven in the *Bulletin* of the Pewter

Collectors' Club (Vol. 3, p. 153), and concluded that it was American of the late seventeenth century.

My spoons, which were held by one owner for some thirty years before I acquired them, are identical to each other except for the makers' names and the inscribed initials. Each bears a touch showing the crown and rose with the name centered between them on the upper back of the handle, partly framed by baroque scrollwork. The spoons are finely hammered, the bowls slightly scoop shape (Laughlin thought the similar bowl shown here in Fig. 2 showed Dutch influence). The metal, which has a soft sheen, probably contains copper—as does the Chuckatuck spoon.

Robert M. Vetter was kind enough to give me his opinion on these spoons "on the understanding that it should not be considered apodictic." He feels that they are definitely not German or Continental and that they are, in fact, American. "The recurrence of the type on the American market," he writes, "makes importation unlikely. The crown and the rose are features of Dutch pewter marks, but in the Uven-Ufen touch they are loosely arranged where in Holland they would have been contained in a compact design. Moreover, the Dutch pewterer added only his initials to the touch; the use of the full name seems to me a concession to American practice. The baroque scrollwork dates the spoons, as you rightly suppose, about 1700 or a little later; one never knows how long these costly molds were used.

"The name Uven sounds Dutch, and the Dutch pronunciation would be Ufen. Assuming that Uven was an immigrant from Holland or Flanders, it seems quite possible that J. M. Ufen was the son of M. B. Uven and that he adapted the spelling of his name to the local pronunciation. It seems obvious, too, that he would have made use of molds inherited from his father."

—Adam C. Breckenridge