

ART MUSEUMS *of Colonial Williamsburg*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media contacts: Robyn Liverant for the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg
212.472.6947 or robyn@robynliverant.com
Ellen Peltz for The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
757.220.7287 or epeltz@cwf.org

THE COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION ACQUIRES ITS EARLIEST PIECE OF AMERICAN SILVER



Williamsburg, Va. (Oct. 17, 2022)—A 17th-century caudle cup that belonged to the Puritan congregation of the First Church of Christ, Congregational, 1652 in Farmington, Connecticut, and was used there as a vessel for sacramental wine, was recently acquired by The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation making it the earliest piece of American silver in its famed collection. The cup, wrought around 1670 in Boston, Massachusetts, was fashioned by the first silversmiths making goods in what is now the United States.

“Colonial Williamsburg’s curators have worked diligently and with notable successes over the last decade to assemble a collection of American-made silver worthy of the institution’s other decorative arts holdings,” said Ronald L. Hurst, senior vice president for education and historic resources. “The acquisition of this particularly early and well-preserved cup provides us with an excellent starting point for the story of American silversmithing over the next century and half.”

Although perfectly shaped to serve caudle—a hot, sweet, often alcoholic porridge—this so-called “caudle cup” was used as a treasured part of the church’s ecclesiastical service. The cup’s stable, low body with its two handles (or “ears”) made it easy to pass from one congregant to another. Clearly popular, five others that are nearly identical to this earliest example, were acquired by the church before 1720.

Adding to the distinctiveness of this cup, struck into one side of it near the rim is the mark of Robert Sanderson, Sr. (ca. 1608-1693), a London-trained goldsmith who emigrated to America in 1639. On the bottom is the mark of his partner John Hull (1624-1683), a British-born tradesman who arrived in Boston in 1635. Also stamped into the cup is the mark of Jeremiah Dummer (1645-1718), the first native-born American silversmith, apprenticed to Hull in 1659. Interestingly, Dummer's mark was struck over Sanderson's, while Hull's mark was struck over Dummer's. Exactly what this means is unclear, but it likely has to do with Dummer's transition from journeyman to master, and the opening of his own silversmithing business. The caudle cup is the only known piece to carry the marks of all three artisans. Sometime after the marks of Hull over Dummer were made, the church's initials "F" and "C" (the ownership mark of 'Farmington Church') were engraved on the bottom of the cup flanking the center point.

The trio of Hull, Sanderson and Dummer are also important in the world of numismatics as they were responsible for the birth of American money. John Hull was appointed Mintmaster of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1652 and was assisted by his partner Sanderson as well as his apprentice/journeyman Dummer. Operating from 1652 until 1682, Hull & Sanderson's mint produced the famed Oak Tree and Pine Tree coinage, among other types, in their shop in Boston's North End. Furthermore, when Massachusetts authorized the first issue of American paper money in 1690, it was Jeremiah Dummer who engraved the printing plates.

"Considering the rarity and significance of Hull & Sanderson's work, I'd long wanted to see an example of their hollowware come to Colonial Williamsburg, but wasn't sure it would be possible," said Erik Goldstein, the Foundation's senior curator of mechanical arts and numismatics and interim curator of metals. "This caudle cup, which ties the silversmithing partners to their famed apprentice Jeremiah Dummer and has an impeccable provenance back to the time it was wrought, is almost too much to ask for. It will be in very good company with our comprehensive, 94-piece collection of Hull & Sanderson's silver coins, gifted to the Foundation by the Lasser Family."

Around 1907, Farmington Church (as it is also known) decided their centuries-old silver should be housed elsewhere for safe keeping. Stored in a bank vault until 1964, the caudle cups were loaned to the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, approximately 10 miles from Farmington. In the early 2000s, the congregation decided to sell the group in order to advance the church's mission; the proceeds from the 2005 sale went to structural renovation and the construction of a new building.

The caudle cup was purchased with funds from The Joseph H. and June S. Hennage Fund. American silver aficionados, Mr. and Mrs. Hennage would have been delighted to know that funds from their bequest to The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation were used for this important acquisition.

Additional information about the Art Museums and Colonial Williamsburg as well as tickets are available online at colonialwilliamsburg.org, by calling (855) 296-6627 and by following Colonial Williamsburg on [Facebook](#) and [@colonialwmsburg](#) on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

About the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg

The Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg include the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum and the DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum, both of which are housed in their newly expanded building that offers an additional 65,000-square-feet of space, 25-percent more gallery space and numerous enhancements to the visitor experience. The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum is home to the nation's premier collection of American folk art, with more than 7,000 folk art objects made up to the present day. The DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum exhibits the best in British and American fine and decorative arts from 1670–1840. The Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg are located at 301 South Nassau Street in Williamsburg, Va. Open daily from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

About The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Colonial Williamsburg operates the world's largest American history museum, preserving Virginia's 18th-century capital as a fully functioning city. Fun, engaging experiences transport guests back in time and highlight the relevance of America's founding era to contemporary life. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed buildings, historic trade shops, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 45 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr. and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center managed by Trilogy Spa, pools, retail stores and gardens. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization; philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and operations sustain its educational programs and preservation initiatives.

#

Image: Caudle Cup, John Hull (1624-1683) & Robert Sanderson (ca. 1608-1693) and marked by Jeremiah Dummer (1645-1718), silver, Boston, Massachusetts, ca. 1670, broad, baluster-shaped body with a lightly everted rim, a low base and a pair of cast handles applied to opposite sides, Museum Purchase, The Joseph H. and June S. Hennage Fund, 2022-74.