



OBJECT ID	2011.7.195
OBJECT NAME	Spoon
OBJECT COLLECTION	Alex's Candy Shop (is part of)
DATE CREATED	1920 – 1940
MATERIAL	Wood
OBJECT ENTITIES	Rassogianis/Franks families, By (owned by) Franks, Rassogianis; (is related to)

OBJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a large, flat wooden spoon. The entire object has been made from one solid piece of wood and seems well worn--as if it had been used a lot. The curves of the edges are asymmetrical as if this was made by hand. It is not readily apparent what this object was used for.

ORIGIN

Paulina Franks' grandfather, John Rassogianis, came to Chicago in the 1890s. He began his life in the new city by peddling fruits and later, with the help of his sons Alex and George, would open a candy store. In the 1920s Paulina Franks' father Constantine became a part of the family business and the store was able to prosper. When the second business closed Paulina Rassogianis chose to hold as many of the candy store's items as possible and, later, donate them to the National Hellenic Museum.

The Rassogianis family began their candy business in Chicago proper, working out of their own shop named "St. Louis Ice Cream Parlor." Eventually, the shop was closed and the Rassogianis' chose to continue their candy store venture in Berwyn, Illinois. The new shop they chose to open was named Alex's Sweet Shop.

Paulina Franks' father was a key contributor to the success of the Rassogianis candy stores. While Constantine Rassogianis was a noteworthy entrepreneur, he also had many other accomplishments. Among these was his four years of involvement in the Greek national military during World War I wherein he obtained the rank of sergeant. Also, he was a published author and poet, an experienced mandolin player, a church officer and had extensive knowledge of psalti.

The word spoon derives from an ancient word meaning a chip of wood or horn carved from a larger piece. Wooden spoons were easy to carve and thus inexpensive, making them common throughout history. Nobody knows when first spoon was used, but archeological findings can place some of the ornamental and religious spoons in the area of 1000 years BC. Those ancient spoons made from wood, flint, slate and ivory were in possessions of Egyptian priests and Pharaohs, and were made in very exotic and strange designs, often describing important religious events on their hilts and bowls with the use of hieroglyphs and elaborate drawings.

The Iron Age Celts (C. 250BC) of Britain used them. Roman period spoons have been recovered from excavations in the City of London, produced from bronze and silver, they were more commonplace among wealthy class of people. The Anglo Saxons were great workers of wood, as were the Vikings, and both these groups of settlers to the British Isles produced wooden spoons for domestic uses. By the time of Medieval Europe, spoons made from cow horns, wood, brass and pewter were often used as a means of easy transport of eating ingredients for both people and animals. In those medieval times, spoons were used not only as a means of eating but as a mark of wealth and power. During the following periods of Renaissance, Baroque and Victorian times,

spoon received many design changes, finally receiving its current modern look sometimes by the end of 18th century.

Today, wooden spoons in western cultures are generally medium to large spoons used for mixing ingredients for cooking or baking. They may be flat or have a small dip in the middle. Before electric mixers became common, wooden spoons were often used to cream together butter and sugar in recipes such as shortbread or Victoria sponge cake. Wooden spoons are generally preferred for cooking because of their versatility.

Unlike metal spoons, they can be safely used without scratching the bottom of the saucepan. This is useful when making dishes such as scrambled eggs. Wooden spoons have been made in virtually every nation on earth and (compared to silver or pewter or gold spoons) represent the ordinary artisan and reflect the life of ordinary folk. Long after the introduction of metal implements for eating, wooden spoons continued to be favored as kitchen tools. Currently, spoons dominate our modern way of preparing and serving food. Over 50 variations of spoons are used for many specific tasks in eating, preparing and other activities, and many more types were used in the past.

CITATION

Spoon, 1920 – 1940, Alex's Candy Shop, *National Hellenic Museum*, <https://collections.nationalhellenicmuseum.org/Detail/objects/>. Accessed 05/01/24.
