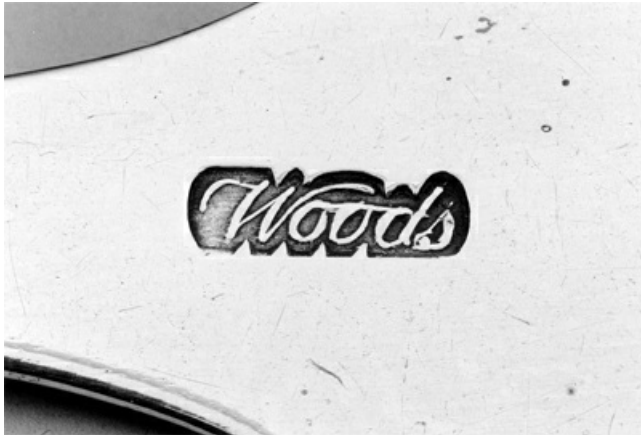


Woods, Freeman ^[1]

Woods, Freeman

by Mary R. B. Peacock, 1996

ca. 1766–20 Nov. 1834



Photograph of silver spoon by Freeman Woods showing maker's mark, circa 1794-1833. Item H.1966.1.7 from the collections of the North Carolina Museum of History.

^[2]Freeman Woods, [silversmith](#) ^[3], was a native of New Jersey and worked in New York before moving to New Bern around 1794. For the three years prior to his departure he was listed in the New York directories, but by 27 Dec. 1794 he had established himself in New Bern as a goldsmith and silversmith. In his advertisements Woods professed to be able to execute almost any item in the newest fashion and on short notice. Flatware and holloware that bear his identifying mark support his claim, as they demonstrate his obvious familiarity with current styles in London and in the more affluent American cities.

A highly successful craftsman, Woods made silver unexcelled by pieces found in any other state. His work is especially notable for its simplicity, graceful lines, perfect proportion, and artful embellishment. As a skilled engraver, he employed bright-cut extensively on a number of pieces found. One of his apprentices was David Murdock.



Photograph of silver teapot made by Freeman Woods, circa 1791-1810. Item P.TP.2005.002.001, from Tryon Palace, New Bern, NC.

^[4]Although Woods was a man of some prominence and well respected, there is little indication that he was active in politics or civic matters. However, when [Andrew Jackson](#) ^[5] and [John Quincy Adams](#) ^[6] were presidential candidates in 1827, Freeman Woods was a member of a [committee of correspondence](#) ^[7] selected by supporters of Andrew Jackson.

Woods died and was buried in New Bern. Both the *Raleigh Register* and the *Raleigh Minerva* published on 1 Nov. 1811 carried notices of the death of "Mrs. Hannah Woods, wife of Mr. Freeman Woods" on 17 October, but nothing else could be learned of Mrs. Woods or of any surviving children.

References:

Ernest M. Currier, *Marks of Early American Silversmiths . . . Lists of New York Silversmiths, 1815–1841* (1938).

George B. Cutten and Mary Reynolds Peacock, *Silversmiths of North Carolina, 1696–1850* (1973).

Lois Smathers Neal, comp., *Abstracts of Vital Records from Raleigh, North Carolina, Newspapers, 1799–1819* vol. 1 (1979).

New Bern *North Carolina Gazette*, 21 Feb. 1795.

New Bern *Carolina Sentinel*, 18 July 1795, 18 July 1818, 7 Sept. 1822, 2 Oct. 1824, 14 Oct. 1826, 25 Aug., 24 Sept. 1827.

Additional Resources:

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Halsey, R. T. Haines (Richard Townley Haines). *American silver, the work of seventeenth and eighteenth century silversmiths, exhibited at the Museum of fine arts, June to November, 1906*. Boston. 1906.
<https://archive.org/details/americansilverw00buckgoog> [8] (accessed February 24, 2014).

Image Credits:

"Tablespoon, Accession #: [H.1966.1.7](#) [2]." 1794-1833. North Carolina Museum of History. (accessed February 24, 2014).

"Teapot, Accession #: [P.TP.2005.002.001](#) [4]." 1791-1810. North Carolina Tryon Palace. (accessed February 24, 2014).

Subjects:

[Artisans](#) [9]

[Biographies](#) [10]

Authors:

[Peacock, Mary R. B.](#) [11]

Origin - location:

[Craven County](#) [12]

[New Bern](#) [13]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#) [14]

1 January 1996 | Peacock, Mary R. B.

Source URL: <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/woods-freeman>

Links

[1] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/woods-freeman> [2] <http://collections.ncdcr.gov/RediscoveryProficioPublicSearch/ShowItem.aspx?18028+> [3] <https://www.ncpedia.org/silversmithing> [4] <http://collections.ncdcr.gov/RediscoveryProficioPublicSearch/ShowItem.aspx?214209+> [5] <https://www.ncpedia.org/jackson-andrew> [6] <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/johnquincyadams> [7] <https://www.ncpedia.org/committees-correspondence> [8] <https://archive.org/details/americansilverw00buckgoog> [9] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/artisans> [10] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/biography-term> [11] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/authors/peacock-mary-r-b> [12] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-16> [13] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-41> [14] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/dictionary-no>