



MASSACHUSETTS CULTURAL COUNCIL
FOLK ARTS & HERITAGE PROGRAM

FIELDNOTES

Fieldworker(s) [(Initials) Name]: (MH) Maggie Holtzberg, ()

Accession Numbers:

MH-10-12-FN

Fieldnotes

MH-10-12-D

Audio recordings

MH-10-12-D

Photographic documentation

- - -M

Additional materials

Initial Contact: 10/22/2010 Contact Date: 11/17/2010

Related Accession Numbers: - - - - -

Individual/Group/Event: Alex Whitmore, cofounder of Taza Chocolate

Address: [REDACTED]

City: Somerville Zip: 02143 County: _____

Phone: Daytime: [REDACTED] Evening: _____

E-mail: [REDACTED] Website: [REDACTED]

Contact person: [REDACTED]

Title: _____

Location of Interview: Factory tour

Street Address: see above

City: _____ Zip: _____ County: _____

Special Needs (including translation): _____

Traditions documented on visit (traditional art/skills, occupational experience, ethnic or religious community): _____

Traditions noted for follow-up: _____

Other Possible Contacts: _____

Summary Description: We initially contacted Taza for a public program we are planning at the Park featuring chocolate manufacturers in Massachusetts.

Summary for MH-10-12-FN Taza Chocolate, Somerville, MA

November 17, 2010

Met with Alex Whitmore, co-founder of Taza Chocolate on Wednesday morning, November 17. Taza is one of several businesses in a factory building at 561 Windsor Street, near the Cambridge/Somerville border. Walking into the main entrance, I was immediately hit with the pleasant aroma of chocolate. If only one could record smells . . .

Taza Chocolate is fairly new – established in 2006 and is dedicated to fair trade organic sourcing of cacao beans and socially responsible manufacturing. Most of the employers are young with the exception of the women who do the packaging of chocolate bars.

I interviewed Alex about their “beans to bar” chocolate business. They are one of only 18 companies in the United States that make chocolate starting with the raw cacao beans. The majority of businesses selling chocolate are “chocolatiers” – who don’t grind and roast their own cacao beans. Alex told me about his time in Oaxaca, Mexico, where he studied under several molineros – (Spanish for stone ground millers.) From what he describe, being a molinero is a family tradition which is passed down from father to son and kept rather secretive. Although Alex learned a good bit about dressing the grinding stones, he was never allowed to see the actual patterns.

After our interview, Alex led me through the factory to see various stages of production – winnowing, grinding, roasting, tempering, molding, packagin. Taza also runs a retail store, and offers factory tours to the public three times a week.

We spoke about the public program we are planning for Feb 12th and he seemed interested in participating. I will follow up with Stephanie.