

Ian Titterton's chocolate version of a beaded basket is among the items up for auction at a museum fundraiser.



## Artifacts of county's past reproduced to sweeten museum's coffers



Chocolate replicas of centuries-old sculptures and a housewife's iron represent people who have lived in this area over the span of 800 years.



Photos by STEVEN LANE/The Columbian

Clark College instructor Ian Titterton uses chocolate to recreate a "magic lantern," an 1880s slide projector.

# It's history ... it's art ... it's dessert

By TOM VOGT  
Columbian staff writer

Pieces of local history have been showing up in Ian Titterton's classroom at Clark College.

Titterton doesn't teach history, however.

The 130-year-old magic lantern on his work table provides a model as Titterton expertly crafts a copy of the wood-and-metal artifact. It's just one of the muse-

um pieces Titterton has been re-creating this month.

While some of the artifacts have survived for centuries, Titterton expects his reproductions to begin disappearing on May 22 — one nibble at a time.

They're chocolate. Titterton is a culinary professor.

The master chocolatier is lending his talents to a fundraising event for the Clark County Historical Museum.

The museum loaned Titterton several artifacts that represent life in this region over the last 800 years or so.

His reproductions will go to the highest bidders at a May 22 dinner and auction at Gaiser Hall on the Clark campus.

"I've never done anything quite like this," said Titterton, who has been a pastry chef for 43 years. "I've learned a



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# Chocolate:

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lot about a medium I've worked with for years."

Titterton came to Clark College from Portland's Moonstruck Chocolate Co. He was with the upscale candymaker for seven years, and was executive chocolatier when he left Moonstruck to come to Clark.

Some of Titterton's museum-inspired creations are three-dimensional replicas. A literal box of chocolate — complete with simulated wood grain — substitutes for the wooden frame of the magic lantern, an 1800s version of a slide projector.

The magic lantern came with a glass slide, a painted scene of people in a storm-tossed boat. Titterton said he will replicate the glass slide in sugar, then another artist will use food colors

## If you go

■ **What:** Chocolate Extravaganza dinner and auction.

■ **When:** 5 p.m. May 22.

■ **Where:** Clark College's Gaiser Hall.

■ **Tickets:** \$75 (\$65 for Clark County Historical Society members).

■ **Call:** 360-993-5679 by May 15.

to copy the image painted on the original slide.

## Ancient shapes

Other artifacts are represented by chocolate sculptures, including a copy of a beaded bag made in the 1860s by a woman from a Columbia Plateau tribe.

"It's dark chocolate and white choco-

late. I laid it on a cloth to get the right texture, and used a paring knife for a few hours to get the cross-hatching," Titterton said.

Some of the museum's most treasured possessions are art objects created by people who lived along the Columbia River centuries ago. They include a statue of a human figure, about 20 inches long, carved from basalt.

"It was found in the 1940s in the Columbia Slough," said Susan Tissot, executive director of the Clark County Historical Museum. "It's dated around 1200 AD.

"It's similar to petroglyphs and pictographs in the Gorge in representing the ancestors of the Chinook folks," she said.

"That was the funnest one to do," Titterton said.

He cast a big block of chocolate, then carved an image to match the 800-year-old human figure. Titterton did some of the finish work by using the warmth of his gloved hands to heat the

chocolate and smooth its contours.

"The original was 20 pounds. This is eight pounds of chocolate," he said. To replicate the basalt finish, "I diluted white chocolate with cocoa butter so it would go through a sprayer, and I sprayed it on."

Another chocolate creation will represent a basket of prunes, symbolizing the county's agricultural past. It will be accompanied by a photograph from the museum's archives showing Faye Vance, Clark County's 1919 Prune Queen.

All his re-creations will be accompanied by the original museum artifacts. After the auction, the artifacts will go back to the museum. And the chocolate replicas? They'll go well with a glass of wine.

It's part of the job, he said.

"That's one of the masochistic things chefs deal with," Titterton said. "Your creations inevitably get eaten. Like a wedding cake: You spend days and days on it, and it's torn apart in five minutes."