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Repast

Quarterly Publication of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

ROOTS

OF AMERICAN FOODWAYS



photo by Marion Post Walcott, via Library of Congress

Milton Puryear, the Georgia farmer seen in this 1939 photo, slaughtered hogs for neighbors as a sideline. Livestock slaughter and meat butchering, curing, and barbecuing are examples of vital skills that African Americans in the South acquired during their enslavement, and then pursued after the Civil War as entrepreneurial opportunities.

IN MEMORIAM

Constance Anne Wilson, one of the first professional food historians in the world, passed away on Jan. 8, 2023, at age 95. Although raised in Wales by parents who were mathematicians, she studied Classics at Cambridge, England, and spent most of her career at the Brotherton Library, Univ. of Leeds (1961-92), where she was the subject librarian for classics, archaeology, art, music, and ancient history. Based largely on the superb collections of historical cookery books there, she wrote the wide-ranging *Food and Drink in Britain from the Stone Age to Recent Times* (1973). Under the name C. Anne Wilson, she would later publish *The Book of Marmalade* (1985) and *Water of Life: A History of Wine-Distilling and Spirits from 500 BC - AD 2000* (2006), and she was the editor of many other works: a facsimile edition of the 1653 *A Book of Fruit and Flowers* (1984); *Waste Not, Want Not: Food Preservation from Early Times to the Present Day* (1991); *Traditional Country House* Cooking (1993); *Eating with the Victorians* (1994, 2004); and several of the Proceedings volumes from the annual Leeds Symposium on Food History and Tradition, which she founded in 1986 and which continues to this day, although now held in York. Tom Jaine, the longtime publisher of Prospect Books in London, recalled: "As a result of her efforts, there arose in Leeds a distinguished group of food historians—Lynette Hunter, Laura Mason, Ivan Day, Peter Brears and many others—whose work has had long-range consequences for the discipline."



Repast

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Editor……..……..……Randy K. Schwartz
CHAA President……Mariam van Deventer Breed
CHAA Program Chair……Glenda Bullock
CHAA Treasurer……..……..…William Walker
CHAA Website Editor…..……..Glenda Bullock

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For submissions or inquiries about *Repast*, contact:

Randy K. Schwartz
1044 Greenhills Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48105-2722
tel. 734-662-5040
rschw45251@aol.com

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Elizabeth M. (Liz) Elling, an environmental educator and activist in Ann Arbor, died on Dec. 16, 2022, at age 76. Longtime members of the CHAA will recall that it was Liz who gave us the very enlightening tour and talk, "Plants and Herbs of the New World", on Oct. 21, 2001 at the Univ. of Michigan's Matthaei Botanical Gardens, where she was Coordinator of Visiting Programs. Years earlier, while earning her master's degree at the UM School of Natural Resources and Environment, she had co-founded Friends of Nichols Arboretum, and later she was instrumental in planning the first annual Peony Garden Party at the Arboretum, as well as moving an historic house there to become the Reader Environmental Education Center. Liz made a number of arduous 100-mile swims to raise funds and public awareness for water quality issues in Michigan. She served on boards and committees for the Washtenaw County Historical Society, the Ecology Center, the Huron River Watershed Council, the Allen Creek Greenway Conservancy, and the Ann Arbor Public Schools Environmental Education Endowment. She is survived by her husband, Gary Elling, and their children and grandchildren. ■



CHAA Winter 2023 Programs

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Reading the Grains and the Tea Leaves

Our Winter 2023 programs investigated bread baking, tea production, and several other aspects of the history and culture of food and drink. The events, organized by CHAA Program Chair Glenda Bullock, each attracted between 75 and 210 participants in person and/or online. In-person talks are held at the downtown branch of our longtime partner, the Ann Arbor District Library. Below, we provide brief summaries of four of the talks; Kelley Fanto Deetz's February talk on the enslaved cooks of Virginia is summarized elsewhere (see page 11) because of its relevance to the theme of this Summer issue. Video recordings of all five programs, and those from earlier years, can be freely accessed via the CHAA website, https://culinaryhistoriansannarbor.org (select the tab "Program Schedule").

Baking Has Been in Great Ferment for 6000 Years

Eric Pallant, describing himself as "a serious amateur baker", mentioned to us on Jan. 15 that he maintains a sourdough starter culture that traces back to the 1893 gold rush in Cripple Creek, Colorado. Dr. Pallant, a professor of Environmental Science and Sustainability at Allegheny College (Meadville, PA), spoke about his book, *Sourdough Culture: The History of Bread Making from Ancient to Modern Bakers* (Agate Surrey, 2021). The wild yeasts and bacteria that are available for sourdough cultures, he said, number about 100 strains of each, but any particular culture has a mix of about a dozen of each. His 1893 starter is a johnny-come-lately compared to those used to leaven the loaves of ancient Egypt around 4000 BCE. Those loaves, the earliest known raised breads, were made from the milled grains of emmer and einkorn wheat and were baked in clay cylinders. Earlier breads had generally been flatbreads made from mashed grains, moistened and salted to form a slurry that was heated on a rock or flat surface.

No one knows which came first, bread loaves or beer: both were consumed in ancient Egypt, and both relied on the same species of yeast for most of their fermentation. Only wheat, barley, and other grains rich in gluten can be leavened that way. It's interesting to note that ancient Rome generally extended its empire boundaries as far as such grains could be grown, stopping where their cultivation gave way to oats, rye, etc. Every Roman citizen received about 75 lbs. of grain and/or bread per year. In feudal times, yeast cultures were routinely maintained for baking bread—at the household level in the Middle East, at communal ovens staffed by professional bakers in Europe.

The basic technique for making loaves of bread remained essentially unchanged from their first appearance until the Industrial Revolution, which brought to baking a scientific understanding of microbes, the development of yeast cultures that rise faster and impart less sourness, and the invention of continuous-baking commercial ovens. In the 1800s, traditional leavening with wild cultures was increasingly abandoned in favor of the new commercial strains of yeast, or chemicals such

continued on next page

New CHAA Program Chair(s) Needed

One or more volunteers are needed to fill an upcoming vacancy as Program Chair of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor. Glenda Bullock, who stepped forward three years ago to fill the post in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, has done a magnificent job. But with the end of the public health emergency, she plans to be doing a lot more travelling now and won't be spending as much time in the area as she was before.

Glenda will continue to be a member of our group and plans to provide a detailed description of the steps involved in working with other CHAA officers and with our partner, the Ann Arbor District Library, to schedule, publicize, and carry out the programs. She is continuing to schedule speakers and to host presentations through the end of this Fall, so her successor(s) will need to organize the January 2024 program and later programs.

If you might be interested or want to learn more about this opportunity, please contact CHAA President Mariam Breed at mariamvandeventer@icloud.com.

"I've really enjoyed being the program chair", Glenda writes, "and finding interesting speakers for our programs. One of the rewards of serving as Program Chair is reaching out to prominent authors, culinary experts and historians and having them respond positively and enthusiastically to your invitation, thanks to the CHAA's great reputation." Indeed, she was able to schedule quite varied and intriguing topics that have attracted attention far and wide. Thanks to her efforts, the CHAA offered its first-ever online programming during the pandemic; in fact, the online component was the key reason why our roster of paid members and subscribers has more than doubled in these three years. During this latest programming year (2022-23), local, in-person presenters were mixed in with the online-only talks, and a total of more than 600 people in Michigan, the U.S., and other countries participated "live" in one or more of the monthly events.

CHAA PROGRAMS *continued from page 3*

as baking powder. As a result, by 1900 sourdough bread had all but disappeared from store shelves. Modern mills and bakeries, essentially assembly-line factories, require the use of alternate strains of grain, as well as adulterants that help stretch, strengthen, and condition the dough, with the side-effect of modifying the nutritiousness, flavor, and texture of the bread. In large part, Pallant said, it was the counter-culture of the 1960s and 1970s that revived the popularity of artisanal sourdough baking.

Not for All of the Tea in Germany

Germany long ago outpaced England as the biggest tea purchaser in the world, and all of the tea there is tested for impurities such as pesticides and heavy metals. This helps explain why the Tea Haus, a retailer of elite-quality teas in Ann Arbor, buys all of its tea from Germany. The store also sells herbal teas, tea-infused beverages (quinine, *prosecco*, etc.), and blends of certain finely-ground tea leaves for use in cooking (*ramen* broths, infused butters, etc.). Tea Haus founder-owner Lisa McDonald and her assistant, Jill Rheinheimer, who had paired up to write *Tea for Dummies* (Wiley, 2023), gave us an overview and tasting of world teas on Mar. 19. Lisa is one of only seven certified tea sommeliers in the U.S.

The leaves and leaf-buds used for brewing true teas are generally harvested from either of two varietals of the plant: *Camelia sinensis sinensis*, native to subtropical China, and *Camelia sinensis assamica*, native to tropical Assam, now a state in far northeastern India. (Herbal teas, which are not true teas, are brewed from other plants— leaves of *yerba mate* or *rooibos*, or other leaves, fruits, flowers, stems, or roots.) Either varietal can be used to make any type of tea (white, green, yellow, oolong, and black), although for certain types one varietal is more suited than the other. The color, we learned, depends mainly on the degree of oxidation, black being the most extreme. To halt oxidation, the leaves are heated and dried via roasting, steaming, smoking, air-drying, or pan-frying. The various characteristics of tea— even the caffeine levels in the plant — depend on their growing environment, shade and weather, cultivation practices, post-harvesting (heating, drying, aging, etc.), packaging, transport, storage, and brewing techniques. Tea made from the earliest-harvested leaves each season, called "first flush", is more acidic than that of later flushes, which tends to be more warm and nutty in flavor.

Tea for Dummies includes discussions of the major tea regions, such as Assam, Sri Lanka, China, and Japan, and the historical trade routes of tea and how these shaped international preferences and customs. Some plantations have benefited from centuries of continuous cultivation to perfect their practices. White teas of high quality are almost always hand-harvested; on the other extreme, some teas— including almost all tea from Japan and almost all tea sold in tea bags—is machine-harvested. Climate change has created harsher instances of drought and flooding; in countries such as Nepal, India, and Kenya, tea growers have responded by trying to find hardier varieties, planting tea at higher altitudes, or using irrigation or chemical fertilizers.

A Treasure Trove of American Culinary History

The Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive (JBLCA) at the Univ. of Michigan encompasses over 20,000 items, the core of them donated by Jan and Dan Longone, renowned food and wine historians and CHAA founders. It represents one of North America's richest repositories in which researchers can investigate the history of foods consumed inside and outside of the home, including their production, distribution, preparation, consumption, and societal impact. On Apr. 16 we were treated to a talk, "What's for Dinner?: Menus and More from The Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive", presented by Juli McLoone, Outreach Librarian & Curator in the UM Special Collections Library, who's in charge of the JBLCA and several other large collections of post-1700 materials. She began her presentation by reviewing the contributions made by Jan Longone (1933-2022) to the collection and to CHAA, to the journal *Gastronomica*, and to broader circles nationally and internationally.

Any member of the public may arrange to use the collection via its website; type "JBLCA" into your browser. Information about 70 of the JBLCA's manuscript cookbooks is now available in the Manuscript Cookbooks Survey (https://www.manuscriptcookbookssurvey.org). The oldest one in the collection, we learned, is *A Receipt Book of Cookery* (England, 1698), a household book with about 130 recipes, such as pickled French beans and pickled "mangoes" (cucumbers). McLoone also mentioned Ella E. Hall, a cook for UM sororities in the 1920s and 1930s, who left behind a manuscript book of recipes for Clifford tea cookies, dandelion wine, and the like. These dishes in manuscripts weren't all frequently made, McLoone noted, but they help outline the universe of culinary possibilities that were available at a given time and place.

Among the 8000 or so printed cookbooks in the JBLCA, those of the 19th Century show that home cooks were relying on experts such as Mary Randolph's *The Virginia House-Wife* (1824), who in turn relied greatly on the cooking experience of African-American servants or enslaved women. Other authoritative texts include *The Frugal Housewife* (Boston, 1829) by abolitionist and writer Lydia Maria Child; *What Mrs. Fisher Knows About Old Southern Cooking* (San Francisco, 1881) by Abby Fisher, formerly enslaved in South Carolina and Alabama; and *Mrs. Rorer's Every Day Menu Book* (Philadelphia, 1905) by Sarah Tyson Rorer, an advocate of the Progressive movement in domestic science. The collection is also very strong in charitable cookbooks, and cookbooks written by or for immigrants. Such materials allow a study of U.S. historical trends related to gender, cultural identity, consumption, work and leisure, technology, publishing, the family, social relations, and intersections between public and private life.

The JBLCA also includes dozens of household recipe boxes (but more are wanted), scores of sets of food-related periodicals, about 2300 menus, and more than 4000 pieces of commercial advertising. Promotional booklets, often gorgeously illustrated, became a major trend after 1900, such as *What Six Famous Cooks Say of Jell-O* (Le Roy, NY, 1912) from

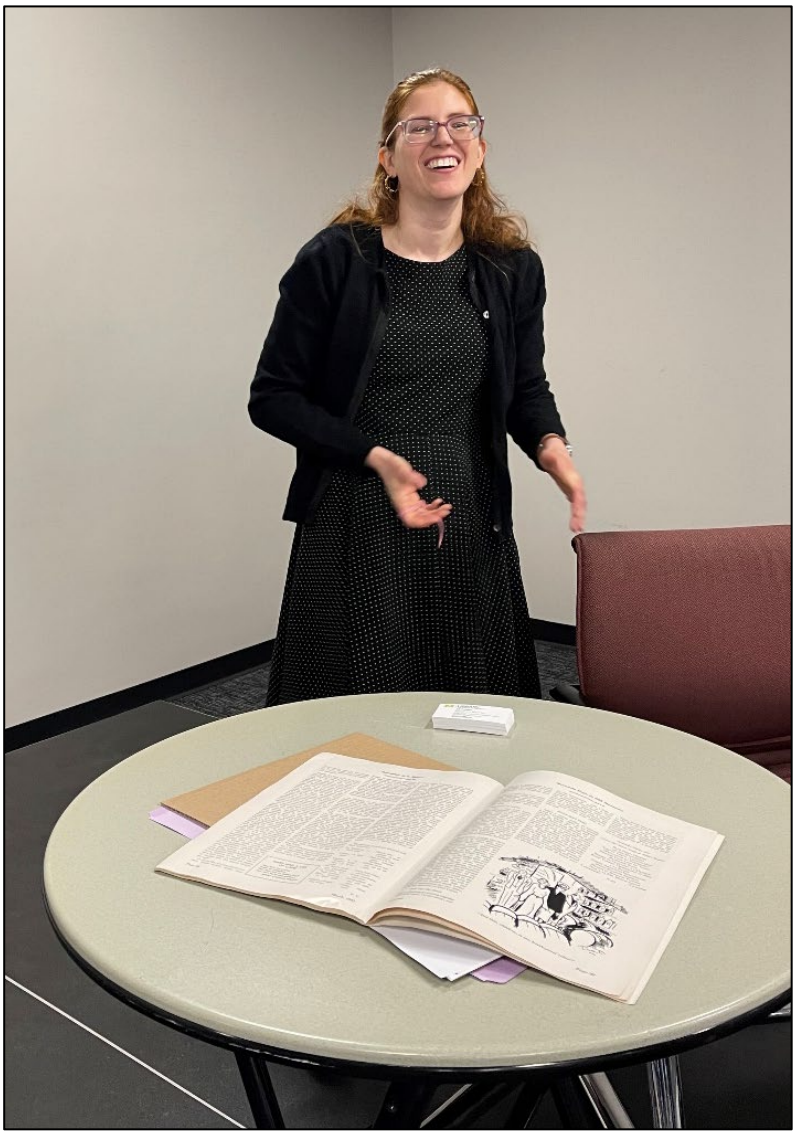


Photo: Mariam Breed

Juli McLoone, after her talk on Apr. 16, shows a very early copy of *Gourmet* (March 1941), which was the final issue needed to complete the set at the Longone archives that she curates. It was generously donated early this year by a person who watched a recording of Jan Longone's Nov. 2014 lecture about the magazine and her plea for two missing issues.

the Genesee Pure Food Co. There is a complete run of the monthly *Gourmet* magazine (1941-2009), whose in-depth, well-written articles highlighted the pleasures that were available to Americans visiting or traveling in the U.S., Europe, and other world regions. It played a key role in stimulating Jan Longone's early interest in cuisine.

Chicago's Ethnic Neighborhoods on Parade

When butchers prepare a nice rack of pork spareribs, they routinely discard the gristly tips of the ribs. Turning those rib tips into a barbecued treat took the ingenuity of African-American pitmasters Myles and Bruce Lemons, two brothers who migrated from the Mississippi Delta to Chicago in the 1940s and opened Lem's Bar-B-Q House in 1954. Their dish is among those featured in *Made in Chicago: Stories Behind 30 Great Hometown Bites* (3 Fields Books, 2023), written by Windy City food journalists Monica Eng and David Hammond. Their book has chapters on deep-dish pizza, the Chicago-style hot dog, and 28 other foods that were first served in that city and that became popular enough to spread to more than one eatery there. Monica, who has some Puerto Rican heritage, and David, who has some Italian heritage, each wrote 15 of the chapters.

When they spoke to us about 12 of those foods on May 21, it was like a parade of Chicago's ethnic neighborhoods. The now-famous Italian Beef Sandwich consists of very thin-sliced roast beef on an opened oblong bread loaf, drenched in *jus* and topped with either Italian sweet peppers or *giardiniera*. This was devised by poor Italian immigrants as wedding fare during the 1930s Great Depression, then was sold at small stands and later at Al's Beef restaurant and at eateries all over the city and beyond. Another Italian-inspired treat is the Pizza Puff, a flour tortilla wrapped around pizza ingredients (cheese, meat, tomato sauce) and deep-fried so it puffs up and goldens. It was invented in 1976 by the Syrian-Christian Shabaz family, longtime food sellers who went on to mass-produce it via their Iltaco Foods, with sales in 38 states. It's available for purchase at Jewel Foods and other retail stores, and at restaurants and fairs.

The Maxwell Street Polish is a Polish pork sausage griddled with onions and served on a hot-dog type of roll with mustard and pickled chili peppers. It was developed after World War 2 by Jimmy Stefanovic, a Macedonian immigrant, at his hot-dog stand in the old Maxwell Street Market district. Also after WW2, Chicago was a major site for the forcible resettlement of interned West Coast Japanese; one of them opened a burger-centric diner where the Akutagawa was invented. It's a type of diner hash made by chopping up a hamburger patty on a sizzling griddle along with onions, green bell peppers, and bean sprouts, then cracking an egg over it. Typical accompaniments are rice with brown gravy, and some Korean pickle, either *danmuji* (radish) or *kimchi* (cabbage).

To invent the Mother-in-Law, someone took a Chicago-style hot dog, removed the sausage and replaced it with a Chicago corn-roll tamale, which is a type of mass-produced, extruded tamale. This is served in a steamed poppyseed bun and topped with pickled peppers, salsa or meat chili, chopped raw onions, and tomato slices. Most likely it was invented at a hot-dog stand; both Mexican and Delta tamales were already common in Chicago. Also of Latin inspiration is the Jibarito ("little yokel"), a sandwich that Puerto Rican immigrant Juan Figueroa introduced in the late 1990s at his Borinquen Restaurant. Instead of bread slices he used a pair of *tostones* (fried, smashed green plantains) to sandwich the griddled ribeye steak, garlic mayo, tomato, and lettuce. Nowadays you can also choose from varieties like *carne asada*, *lechón* (roast pork), fried breaded shrimp or octopus, and vegan. ■

BOOK REVIEW

A SCIENTIST'S TRIBUTE TO PRAIRIE PLANTS AND NATIVE PEOPLES

C. Thomas Shay,
Under Prairie Skies: The Plants and Native Peoples of the Northern Plains
Lincoln, NE: Bison Books (Univ. of Nebraska Press), 2022
312 pp., $29.95 pbk.

by Lisa C. Young

CHAA member Dr. Lisa C. Young is a Lecturer in Anthropology at the Univ. of Michigan and a Research Affiliate at the UM Museum of Anthropological Archaeology. Her focus is on prehistoric indigenous farming communities in the American Southwest; she was co-editor of the book Southwestern Pithouse Communities, AD 200-900 *(Tucson: Univ. of Arizona Press, 2012), and has had many other scholarly publications. Dr. Young earned her bachelor's degree at UM, and her and master's and doctoral degrees at the Univ. of Arizona. She was one of the three speakers at the recent UM program on the Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive (see pages 30-31).*



What plants did the people indigenous to North America use and eat in the past, and how do we know? In *Under Prairie Skies: The Plants and Native Peoples of the Northern Plains*, C. Thomas Shay explores these questions as an ethnobotanist, a scientist who studies the complex relationships between plants and people. Focusing on the prairies of the northern Great Plains in the U.S. and Canada, Shay intertwines his own research with natural and cultural history to create an engaging narrative about the plants and the Native peoples who lived and thrived in this region for over 10,000 years.

This book is Dr. Shay's love story for the prairie landscapes that he and his late wife spent much of their careers studying, as well as relishing for their beauty. Shay, who now lives in Yorkshire, England, is a Senior Scholar and Emeritus Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the Univ. of Manitoba. His research in ethnobotany and paleobotany has focused on the Bronze Age in Greece and the Mediterranean, and more extensively on the pre-Columbian northeastern prairies and plains of Canada and the U.S., in particular Manitoba and Minnesota. He previously wrote *The Itasca Bison Kill Site: An Ecological Analysis* (Minnesota Historical Society, 1971), as well as numerous articles and book chapters.

In the first two chapters of *Under Prairie Skies*, Shay summarizes the ways that the glaciers sculpted the landscape of the Great Plains and how the climate posed challenges for those living there. Descriptions of the land and plants are interspersed with personal reflections and historical accounts, as well as quotes from Native peoples, creating an image of the human connection to nature that permeates life in the prairies.

Chapter 3 describes the diverse environment and heritage via a virtual road trip from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan to Des Moines, Iowa. The tour highlights places that readers can visit to learn about "the shifting kaleidoscope of relations between plants and people since the end of the last ice age" (p. 45). Color photos illustrate the plants, animals, and various environments.

With personal vignettes (Chapter 4), Shay introduces the various lines of evidence that scientists use to learn how the relationship between plants and people changed over time. He shares stories from research projects, including his own work documenting the use of plants at archaeological sites along the upper Souris River (Saskatchewan) before it was inundated by dam construction. He draws on his passion for undergraduate teaching to synthesize scientific information in an accessible and engaging way.

The final four chapters explore the multitude of ways that plants were essential to the lives of people living on the northern Great Plains, focusing on how peoples' relationship with plants changed as they began cultivating some of them. Shay also describes the ways that scientists have documented these changes, including an interesting experiment that he developed to examine the amount of time and energy needed to harvest common wild prairie foods. His results showed, for example, that chokecherries had the largest return for energy expended. Shay also reminds the reader that science, with its emphasis on classification and experimentation, is not the only perspective for learning about plants. He regularly asks the reader to consider the views of the Native peoples who relate to all living things as kin, and to em-

continued on page 8

An Excerpt

Seeds and Fruits Among the Native Peoples of the Northern Plains

Excerpted here is the section "Seeds and Fruits" (pp. 126-129) from Chapter 6 of C. Thomas Shay's Under Prairie Skies: The Plants and Native Peoples of the Northern Plains *(Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 2022). We have omitted the endnotes.*

By early Summer people could begin harvesting the seeds of annual plants along river flats and marshes. Archaeological evidence suggests that harvesters stripped the seeds from the stems by hand, cut the seed heads off with a knife, or uprooted entire plants. Once gathered, the seeds had to be winnowed to remove excess chaff and other unwanted bits. This could be done by flipping a batch into the air from a shallow basket and letting the wind blow away debris. Gently heating the seeds (parching) helped to loosen tough outer hulls and also served to keep the seeds from sprouting or becoming moldy.

Then came the many hours of work to make the raw foods ready for cooking. As food historian Rachel Laudan points out, "grinding and pounding are some of the heaviest tasks humans have ever undertaken." We know that crushing seeds on a stone into coarse meal takes almost twice the effort of harvesting. Seeds, rough cuts of meat, tough inner bark, woody taproots, nuts, and some berries were all arduously processed. Grinding stones were widely used, though some cooks pounded their foods with a stout wooden pestle in a large mortar made from a hollowed-out tree stump.

People have ground and pounded foodstuffs on the plains for nearly nine thousand years.

Summer ushered in the celebrated berry season. Beverly Hungry Wolf (Blackfoot) notes, "I have seen my Elders receive the first saskatoon [juneberry] of the season. This berry is not just gobbled down; it is taken and held in the air, and a prayer is said. It is then put in the ground as an offering, or as an act of communion with the Earth Mother."

In Gilbert Wilson's *Waheenee: An Indian Girl's Story,* Buffalo Bird Woman (Hidatsa) recalled an afternoon when a young woman named Red Blossom returned to the village with a handful of ripe juneberries. The delicious treat sparked a hastily planned gathering trip for the next day. When morning came, a group of women and teenage girls set off to collect berries, along with a few men to guard the party and help out. Buffalo Bird Woman was delighted when the handsome young warrior Sacred Red Eagle Wing came with her. He kindly broke off some fruit-laden branches and laid them on a hide so she could knock the berries free with a stick.

Such harvesting trips were also teaching moments. An elder recalled, "I would say, 'This tree is full, let's pick them all.' My grandparents would say, 'No, we don't do it that way.' ... We would pick some, we would leave some for others, and we would leave some so the tree would come back next year."

Wild strawberries ripened early. These delicious, juicy berries do not dry easily, so most people enjoyed them fresh. By high Summer harvesters could collect bushels of juneberries, raspberries, chokecherries, and blueberries. Paul Buffalo remembered, "When the berries came we were sure of the season. According to our way of reckoning we called that time 'half of the Summer'. That was usually the month of July."

Across the prairies July was called the "chokecherry moon".

For early Native peoples, the chokecherry shrub was the very essence of versatility. Before roasting bison steaks, cooks speared them with chokecherry branches, adding a spicy flavor. Mothers made a medicinal tea with the chokecherry shrub's inner bark to ease stomach ailments, coughs, and fevers; crushed hot bark was used as a poultice to draw infection from wounds. A dye made from the bark yielded hues ranging from brilliant red to dark purple. Stems made sturdy bows and straight arrows, snowshoe frames, and supports for cooking pots. Both the branches and fruit were used in ceremonies.

Chokecherry thrives in forest margins, clearings, and thickets across much of the continent but is especially well known among prairie residents. When ripe, the purple-black garlands of bitter and astringent fruit are easy to gather. To retard spoilage once gathered, berries were dried in the warm sun on hides or frames of slender reeds. Some were pounded and mixed with buffalo meat and fat to produce pemmican, the classic trail food.

Wasná, a type of pemmican traditional to the Lakota people, combines patties of pounded, dried chokecherries with the dried, pounded meat of bison, elk, or deer. The two are held together with tallow or fat.



Abigail Dollins/ *Argus Leader* (Sioux Falls, South Dakota)

UNDER PRAIRIE SKIES *continued from page 6*

phasize the interconnectedness between people and plants. Using this lens, plants are relatives, not resources to be exploited.

In addition to the lovely illustrations and engaging prose, I enjoyed the chapter epigraphs that provide food for thought while reading. Shay concludes each chapter with well-chosen suggestions for further reading. His recommendations are excellent and often highlight Native authors, including chef Sean Sherman and biologist Robin Wall Kimmerer, whose books are essential reading for anyone interested in Native perspectives on food and plants.

Plants are the key ingredients for understanding the changes in, and resilience of, the foodways of the original people who inhabited the land we now call "America". *Under Prairie Skies* illustrates the wealth of information that can be learned from the Native people, past and present, who had a deep and profoundly respectful relationship with the land and their plant relatives. Throughout the book, Shay challenges the assumptions held by many in the 19th Century that the Great Plains was a harsh and barely inhabited wilderness. He concludes with questions about the future of this region and a call to respect and support the Native peoples who made this place their home for thousands of years and continue to be the stewards of their ancestral homelands.

For anyone interested in the roots of American foodways, I recommend that you follow Shay's example and learn about the Native peoples and plants of the land where you live. Think not only about how the plants are used for food, shelter, and medicines, but also how your perspective changes if you view them as relatives rather than mere resources. As this book illustrates, we have so much to learn from Native plants and Indigenous peoples, if only we take the time. ■

Three women of the Apsáalooke (Crow) people gather water in buckets in this group portrait, photographed by Fred E. Miller between 1898 and 1910. They wear mixtures of western and traditional clothing, including bead necklaces.



Richard Pohrt, Jr., Collection of Native American Photography, Clements Library, Univ. of Michigan

IONA MCCLEERY ON FOODS OF PRECOLONIAL WEST AFRICA

What follows is a summary of a webinar presented by Dr. Iona McCleery on Oct. 19, 2022, "Historical Foods in West Africa: European Travel Writings as Problematic Sources for African Foodways". Dr. McCleery, an expert on the history of medicine, food, healing miracles, and Portugal and its early empire, has been at the School of History at the Univ. of Leeds since 2007. The lunchtime webinar was organized by the university's Global Food and Environment Institute, an interdisciplinary research unit. A video recording is available at https://youtu.be/68n_9mX15E4.



In studying the foods of precolonial West Africa, Iona McCleery focuses on the coastal region extending from present-day Guinea to Nigeria, and on nearby Portuguese-held islands. Archaeological sites in that region are, unfortunately, scarce, and written sources in Arabic and African languages at that time are from the African interior, not from the coast. Therefore, she explained, she must rely mainly on accounts by coastal explorers and traders, who were invariably European men. The most important of the travels are those by Gomes Eanes de Zurara (Portuguese, 1430-60s), Alvise da Cadamosto (Venetian, 1450s), Eustache de la Fosse (Low Countries, 1479-80), and an anonymous ship pilot (Portuguese, 1540s). Other travel narratives include those of Diogo Gomes, Duarte Pacheco Pereira, Rui de Pina, and Valentim Fernandes.

These writings must be scrutinized critically, McCleery said. Outsiders are always limited in their access to a society, and their observations are affected by their own preferences, motives, and biases. The prime motivation for most of the European merchant travelers in the region was to procure gold, ivory, and enslaved Africans. Food was an additional important motive for expansion into the continent, a motive that McCleery said scholars have "under-explored". For example, the initial Portuguese expansion into Morocco was to gain access to wheat. The fish trade in coastal West Africa was also very important. The travel narratives mention foodstuffs as diverse as millet, sorghum, yam, palm wine, oysters, even elephant. Studying such accounts gives a sense of what foods were available at the time.

As an illustrative example for her brief presentation, McCleery focused on a single passage from the narrative written by Eustache de la Fosse, a merchant and former slave-trader from Flemish Belgium who sailed with a Spanish ship. From this one example, the audience got a taste of the kind of close reading that scholars need to carry out in order to squeeze any information about Africa from European writings.

About one-third of the way into his account, Eustache described a meal that he and his crew ate on, or about on, Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras) in Feb. 1480 in an area that lies in what is now Liberia or Sierra Leone:

> The Moors (*Mores*) of the place came to us and sold us oysters of such marvelous size that they measured a third of an ell, for from each oyster we got five or six pieces, and we had to boil them, because if we had eaten them raw they would have disgusted us due to their immensity. Therefore, cooked with ground grains of paradise, we found them to be very good for this fine time of Lent. In addition, we had good rice and fine butter made with goat's milk and good honey.

McCleery said that the type of oyster that was mentioned here might have been the West African mangrove oyster (*Crassostrea tulipa*). It is easily harvested, generally by women and children, who pluck them from the exposed roots of mangrove trees growing along the shoreline. But there is a problem, because that oyster typically measures 7-11 cm. (based on both archaeological and modern observations), while one-third of a Flemish ell measured 22 cm. It's possible that Eustache was engaging in hyperbole, influenced by the tradition of Mardi Gras excess or the notion of primeval African bounty (more on this below), or else the piece of seafood might have reminded him of an oyster without actually being one.

Eustache asked the natives with whom he traded where the rice had come from that they sold him. He was told that it had been seized by Portuguese raiders in an area further north, in what is now Guinea or Guinea-Bissau. The rice, McCleery said, was almost certainly West African rice (*Oryza glaberrima*), which was grown in that region using both wet and dry cultivation methods. This species, which has a reddish-colored bran, was domesticated in West Africa two or three millennia ago. Iron tools were used in its cultivation; the production of iron had arisen independently in West Africa thousands of years ago. UCLA geography professor Judith A. Carney, in her book *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in America* (2002), argued that the cultivation of West African rice was introduced to the Carolinas during the colonial period; McCleery noted that the thesis is still controversial.

Melegueta pepper (*Aframomum melegueta*), a plant in the ginger family, is the source of a spice that Europeans called "grains of paradise". The grains, which have a very nice flavor

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A young Jola woman holds some rice harvested in the small village of Jipalom, Senegal, in 1965, five years after independence from France. Starting in ancient times, the Jola people cultivated rice in paddy fields in the swampy coastal areas of the Casamance River basin. They developed the *kajandu*, a long-handled fulcrum shovel made with iron, as a tool to till the soil, form dikes and embankments to control water flow, and construct fish ponds.

Information and photo by Olga F. Linares from her article, "African Rice (*Oryza glaberrima*): History and Future Potential", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 99:25 (December 10, 2002), pp. 16360–65.

WEST AFRICA

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when ground, are borne in a seedcase that Eustache described as a very large red apple. This West African spice had been traded to Europeans, via trans-Sahara caravan, for centuries before 1500. Under colonial rule, its production eventually withered because growing other crops there, such as New World cacao, was more lucrative.

The name "grains of paradise", McCleery said, reflects a European myth that the Garden of Eden is located in Africa; similarly, the banana was viewed as an apple of Eden. Africa was seen at the time as a place very bountiful in foodstuffs compared to Europe— a tropical paradise. It's an old stereotype, but it is, she pointed out, better than how the continent is usually represented today as a land where poverty and famine are endemic. Arguably, such scarcity is not endemic but, instead, a legacy of the centuries of enforced underdevelopment. The Portuguese seizure of a rice harvest, mentioned by Eustache, is a good example: it would have devastated that area, McCleery noted. Later, colonial rule would bring enslavement, plantations churning out crops for Europe, and industrialized monoculture, warping whole economies and societies.

Bee's honey, mentioned in the written passage, was a very important West African forest product that was traded to Europe starting in the 1500s. But Eustache's mention of "fine butter made with goat's milk" presents an interpretation problem. The West African Dwarf goat, a breed of the common domestic goat, has been an important historical source of milk, meat, and fiber in the region. However, McCleery has been unable to find any mention of a pre-European tradition of making goat's butter in West Africa; compared to cheese, butter is a rather inefficient way to preserve milk. It's possible that Eustache and his men tasted a sauce, perhaps a milk-based sauce, and simply assumed that it was goat's butter; or that "butter" was being used as a generic term for sauce; or that he deliberately chose to call the sauce "butter" because of the association of dairy foods with Carnival and Mardi Gras ("Fat Tuesday"), the last burst of indulgence before the long Christian abstinence period of Lent.

In fact, McCleery said, it's possible that this was "a deliberately topsy-turvy Carnival meal with religious connotations, a mixture of elite and low-status foods". Were there codes embedded in Eustache's account that only readers at the time would have truly understood? She acknowledged that such travel narratives often tell us more about European habits and expectations than they do about African foodways. However, if used carefully, they can be revealing about food cultures in West Africa during a period of great change and can enable a reflection on both historical and modern practices and beliefs. ■

KELLEY FANTO DEETZ ON THE ENSLAVED COOKS OF VIRGINIA

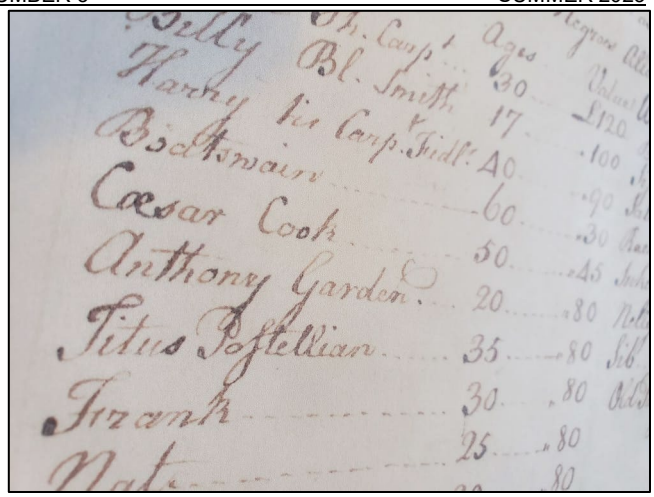
What follows is a summary of a recent talk by Dr. Kelley Fanto Deetz about her book, Bound to the Fire: How Virginia's Enslaved Cooks Helped Invent American Cuisine *(University Press of Kentucky, 2017). Organized as part of CHAA's regular series of monthly meetings, the talk was presented via Zoom last Feb. 19 during Black History Month. Dr. Deetz is Vice President of Collections and Public Engagement at Stratford Hall Plantation in Stratford, Virginia (https://www.stratfordhall.org), and a Visiting Scholar at the University of California-Berkeley. Her writings have appeared widely in books and journals. She was employed as a professional chef for several years, and earned her Ph.D. in African Diaspora Studies/Anthropology at UC-Berkeley. A video recording of the talk is available at* https://aadl.org/node/613273.



At the outset of her presentation, Kelley Fanto Deetz explained that her goals in writing *Bound to the Fire* were to bring attention to surviving plantation kitchens such as that at Stratford, and to give credit to thousands of enslaved African and African-American chefs by bringing their stories to light—doing "culinary justice work", to use a phrase from Michael Twitty. "I want to tether the romance of food", she said, "to the reality of enslavement." After centuries of silence about these early Black cooks who helped create American cuisine, today this willful omission is coming to an end.

Stratford Hall, the plantation home used by four generations of the famous Lee family of Virginia, is an elegant, Georgian-style mansion that was built on a rural estate beside the Potomac River in 1738-42. Thomas Lee was a tobacco planter there, and his workforce included about 200 enslaved West Africans.

Information about the enslaved workers is very difficult to recover centuries later. Using archival and archaeological research and oral history, the personnel at Stratford are reconstructing the lives of the enslaved community, including that of Caesar, a head cook who lived there in the mid-1700s.



stratfordhall.org

This 1782 inventory of property at Stratford Hall includes the chef, Caesar, then age 50, and other enslaved workers.

Dr. Deetz also mentioned some other African American master cooks of Virginia. The chef Hercules Posey, who was born in 1754 on George Washington's Mt. Vernon estate and managed to escape in 1797, is the subject of a historical novel by Ramin Ganeshram, *The General's Cook* (Arcade, 2020). An anonymous enslaved woman at a house in Amherst County, who was written up in the magazine *Harper's* in 1856, is featured on the front cover of *Bound to the Fire.* Sharon O. Lightholder's *Jefferson's Chef: James Hemings from Slavery to Freedom* (Albedo Press, 2020) is an imagined biography of James Hemings (1765-1801), an outstanding chef at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello estate.

Among planter families such as the Lees, Washingtons, and Jeffersons, food was not only enjoyed in itself, but was also used to advertise their wealth and sophistication, to help ensure that their offspring married into comparable wealth, and to assert their growing cultural identity as British Americans and ultimately as independent Americans. The larger plantations, such as Stratford, organized banquets, balls, and other social affairs that sometimes included magnificent feasts of three-course meals, each course featuring many dishes. Foods that helped put American cuisine on the world map included salt-cured, smoked Virginia country ham, roasted suckling pig, leg of lamb, saddle of mutton, roasted pheasant, sweetbreads, roasted vegetables, fish, soups, compotes, pies, sweets, and spiced hot chocolate. The New World pineapple was an important symbol of opulence and exotic luxury, especially in the American South, because the tropical fruit was often included in shipments of goods to wealthy planters. Sharing an edible pineapple with guests at a meal was the ultimate in genteel Southern culinary hospitality; celery had a similar status.

The working conditions in a plantation kitchen were brutal: the cooks toiled for extremely long hours in heat as high as 100 °F. Stratford Hall had a bell system to alert staff when they were needed, even in the middle of the night. Cooks often lived in the kitchen, and one can surmise from the elaborate recipes and huge gatherings that they would sometimes be put to work

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ENSLAVED COOKS *continued from page 11*

around the clock, tending the fire and preparing food. They were expected to use their arms to test a hearth or masonry oven for the right temperature; sometimes they died from burns. There were no real work breaks, because many different dishes were being prepared for the hearth fires more or less simultaneously; in this sense, the enslaved cooks were not only bound to the master but also "bound to the fire".

Characteristics of African foodways, Dr. Deetz said, include the centrality of stews and other one-pot meals, often served with rice; the influence of Islam, the religion of roughly 30% of those taken from West Africa; and large regional variations according to tribal and language groups. These foodways were assimilated into colonial cuisine somewhat more rapidly in Virginia and elsewhere in British



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stratfordhall.org

Views of Stratford Hall Plantation and of the restored dining room inside Stratford Hall.

North America than in other regions where the African population density was higher, such as in the Caribbean and in South America. Classic plantation dishes of the Old South that show West African influence and know-how include oyster stew, distinct versions of which had arisen both in Britain and West Africa; tomato and okra stew, which is sometimes called Virginia Gumbo (from *ngombo*, a West African term for okra) and was included in Mary Randolph's *The Virginia House-Wife* (1824); groundnut stew, integral to cuisine in Virginia, where it

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The cover of *Bound to the Fire* features "The Cook", an engraving of an enslaved woman working in the kitchen at a house in Amherst County, VA. It appeared on p. 177 of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, 12:68 (Jan. 1856), as one of the illustrations accompanying a travelogue by David Hunter Strother, a writer and illustrator who used the pen name Porte Crayon. He described traveling through central Virginia in late 1853 and stopping for a meal at this house. "The cook belongs to the type of a class whose skill is not of books or training," he wrote, "but a gift both rich and rare. . . who has grown sleek and fat on the steam of her own genius, whose children have the first dip in all gravies, the exclusive right to all livers and gizzards, not to mention breasts of fried chickens."



slaveryimages.org



Left to right, historians/ chefs/ interpreters Nicole Moore, Dontavius Williams, and Chaney McKnight in front of the 1738 hearth at the kitchen of Stratford Hall.

stratfordhall.org

BOOK REVIEW

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RECOVERING THE LIVES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CULINARY ENTREPRENEURS

Diane M. Spivey,
At the Table of Power: Food and Cuisine in the African-American Struggle for Freedom, Justice, and Equality
Pittsburgh, PA: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 2022
377 pp., $39.95 hbk.; also available in e-versions

by John Woodford

John Woodford, a CHAA member in Ann Arbor, has had a distinguished career in writing and editing. Raised in Benton Harbor, MI, he earned two degrees at Harvard Univ. and was a journalist at publications including the New York Times, New Haven Register, Chicago Sun-Times, Ann Arbor Observer, *and* Ebony *and* Jet *magazines, and in 1969-72 was Editor-in-Chief of* Muhammad Speaks, *the newspaper of the Nation of Islam. From 1981 to 2004, Mr. Woodford was employed as an Executive Editor at the Univ. of Michigan. He has had leadership roles in the National Alliance of Third World Journalists and in the Association of Black Professionals, Administrators, Faculty and Staff. In recent years, he has written features for publications such as* The Black Scholar *and* Against the Current.



Diane M. Spivey's meticulously researched culinary history *At the Table of Power* contains recipes that can make your mouth water and your stomach growl. But it also documents many historical episodes that will make your blood boil.

In this work, as in her previous book, *The Peppers, Cracklings, and Knots of Wool Cookbook: The Global Migration of African Cuisine* (SUNY Press, 1999), Spivey—an independent scholar who for many years was a Research Associate with the Dept. of History at the Univ. of Miami—is on a mission to expose and redress the ethnic cleansing of Black people from American culinary history:

> The prevailing accounts, or *culinary master narratives*, have not only erased the true contributions of Africans and African Americans to American cuisine, they also represent and reinforce *culinary apartheid*—that is, the theft of African and African American creativity and contributions in American food and cooking by assigning Black culinary achievements to others. These accounts continue to deliberately pigeonhole African American cuisine in the category of soul food, used as a type of cultural and culinary shackle. [Emphases in the original.]

This, then, is a frankly polemical text, a sustained argument with an ideological point of view that is usually illuminating but on occasion merely provocative, and sometimes misleading. At several places, for example, Spivey calls a particularly reactionary 1829 North Carolina Supreme Court ruling, *The State v. John Mann*— which held that African Americans were doomed to inferior status forever—a U.S. Supreme Court opinion, which it definitely was not. Or take her treatment of Samuel Fraunces, who operated a tavern in Manhattan that frequently hosted George Washington and many other leaders of the American Revolution. Fraunces (1722/1723 – 1795) was born in the West Indies and nicknamed "Black Sam", but there is no evidence that he was a Black person or even a so-called "Mulatto", or that he viewed himself as such or that any of his peers viewed or interacted with him as such. But Spivey cites him as an example of colonial Afro-Americans who have not received sufficient credit for their roles in the founding of our country.

On the other hand, she also relates the life story of one Hercules, a slave to whom Washington gave the responsibility of managing his kitchen. She argues convincingly that many of the recipes in one of the seminal early American cookbooks, *The Virginia House-Wife*, published by and credited to Mary Randolph in 1824, are for dishes that Hercules and other Black household servants are known to have prepared. Randolph's recipes, Spivey writes, "include okra soup, catfish soup, gumbo, pepper pot, oyster soup, mock turtle soup of calf's head, boiled turnips with bacon, sweet potato buns, sweet potato pudding" and use "spices such as nutmeg, cloves, mace, and thyme" as well as "cayenne pepper and liquor, the uses of which are standard culinary practices of Black cooks in the Americas."

The Expertise of the African Cook

The lack of acknowledgment of the role of chefs and other kitchen workers, Spivey says, has been compounded by contemporary scholars who have given Martha Washington, Mary Randolph, and other white slave-owning women full credit "for the dinners prepared at their homes", and especially for the recipes.

Spivey writes that when she confronted the editor of the 2011 book *Dining with the Washingtons* to challenge his apparent slight of Hercules, he responded, "We don't know how much cooking he actually did." She continues, "My final remark was, 'Well, we know Martha didn't do it. So who else would it have been?' There was complete silence." The lack of credit to the Black chefs and cooks, Spivey concludes, "has become standard culinary master narrative procedure" whose purpose, whether carried out intentionally or not, "is to define the African cook out of and away from the culinary expertise and creation in the kitchen."

As an example, the following modern recipe from Spivey produces, she says, a dish that is probably similar to one that Hercules prepared for the seafood-loving George Washington. (Some of the recipes that she provides in this book are actually quoted from historical sources, while others, such as the following, are modern recreations inspired by key ingredients known to have been used.)

Barbecued Salmon

4-6 half-lb. salmon fillets
¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
2 Tbsp. ketchup
1 tsp. yellow mustard
1 Tbsp., plus 1 tsp. molasses
⅛ tsp. (or more, to taste) ground cayenne pepper
⅛ tsp. garlic salt with parsley

Bake fillets in a baking pan, one layer deep, in a preheated 375°F. oven for approximately 14 to 17 minutes, depending on thickness of the fillets.

While salmon is baking: Combine remaining ingredient in a saucepan and mix well. Bring to a boil, lower heat, and simmer for 3 minutes. Baste fillets with sauce and serve. Refrigerate remaining sauce in a covered container. Double ingredients for larger jobs, if needed, such as for chicken or ribs.

Early in her book, Spivey shows a tendency to believe that she must detract from other continental and ethnic cuisines if she is to gain proper recognition for the tradition that she is championing. According to her, for example, the French have received undeserved credit for influencing *haute cuisine* in general and early, elite American cuisine in particular. She notes that the French chef Auguste Escoffier, as an army cook in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, took pride in making do with severe food-supply shortages, and that France was so poor in the 1870s that food had to be rationed. Rooted in this history, she says, is a predilection of French chefs to serve skimpy portions. She further knocks French cuisine by documenting that in the late 19th Century, as a result of bad harvests, wars, and social inequality, many people in France were reduced to eating pets and rats. Going back earlier, she notes, 18th-Century France was full of starving peasants, vagabonds, and beggars, and therefore hardly an exemplar of fine food. She ignores, however, the development of French cuisine from the 14th to 17th Centuries — I assume because it does not fit her "France is overrated" narrative.

But once her book gets rolling, Spivey presents in dramatic detail the lives of almost entirely unknown Afro-American culinary entrepreneurs whose careers she has carefully traced in their letters, economic records, legal battles, newspaper accounts, and memoirs, as well as in the works of other scholars. It should be mentioned, incidentally, that her publishers did not do well by her in their omission of illustrations; many fine ones could and should have accompanied this book.

The author's focus is on the East Coast, and her time frame mainly comprises the Revolution through the fleeting Reconstruction era and on to the eve of World War 1. There are also a few glances at the Great Depression. Those with a special interest in that period or in the Catholic church will find her vignette about the wining and dining of Philadelphia's top priests during the Great Depression quite intoxicating. According to accounts from the African-Americans who catered to them at various events, the top priests there ate high off the hog and drank like fish; Spivey even supplies a recipe for a highly alcoholic "Confession Punch".

Successful Catering Against All Odds

During the 1700s, Spivey notes, Rhode Island prospered first directly and then indirectly from the slave trade, which yielded that colony and its neighbors on the Eastern Seaboard "commercial prosperity and infrastructure, including libraries, churches, and schools ... [that were] among the finest in New England." She discloses a pattern that would repeat itself in Philadelphia, Boston, New York City, and Washington, with each city developing socioeconomic and political challenges like those that her Black Rhode Islanders struggled with just to survive, let alone to prosper:

> Restrictive laws and regulations were in effect in every colony, and Rhode Island's codes and discriminatory laws severed any ties to economic stability for free Africans seeking to make a living at their skills as artisans or entrepreneurs. Cooking was one of the most important occupations in which an African could engage, whether as a personal domestic servant or as a self-employed shopkeeper. A French traveler, Brissot de Warville, observed in

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> 1786 that, "Those Negroes who keep shops live moderately, and never augment their business beyond a certain point. . . . [It] is obvious, the Whites . . . like not to give them credit to enable them to undertake any extensive commerce nor even to give them the means of a common education by receiving them into their counting houses."

One plucky former slave, Cuffe (Cuffy) Cockroach, succeeded in becoming the first known caterer in Newport, RI, and after organizing grand picnics for his customers he would "entertain all in attendance by dancing and playing his fiddle", Spivey reports. The following recipe is her approximation of his "legendary" dish.

Fiddler's Clam Chowder

½ qt. of clam meat, diced
⅓ cup lime juice
½-inch slice of salt pork, cut into small chunks
2 large onions, chopped
2 Tbsp. EACH flour and yellow cornmeal
3 cups water
2½ cups diced potatoes
1 large carrot, sliced into thin rounds
2 tomatoes
1 small green pepper, diced
2 Tbsp. finely-chopped dill
1 bay leaf
2 Tbsp. EACH Worcestershire sauce and sugar
1 tsp. EACH white pepper, black pepper, parsley flakes
salt to taste
4 cups milk

Combine clams and lime juice in a covered container and allow to sit for two hours.

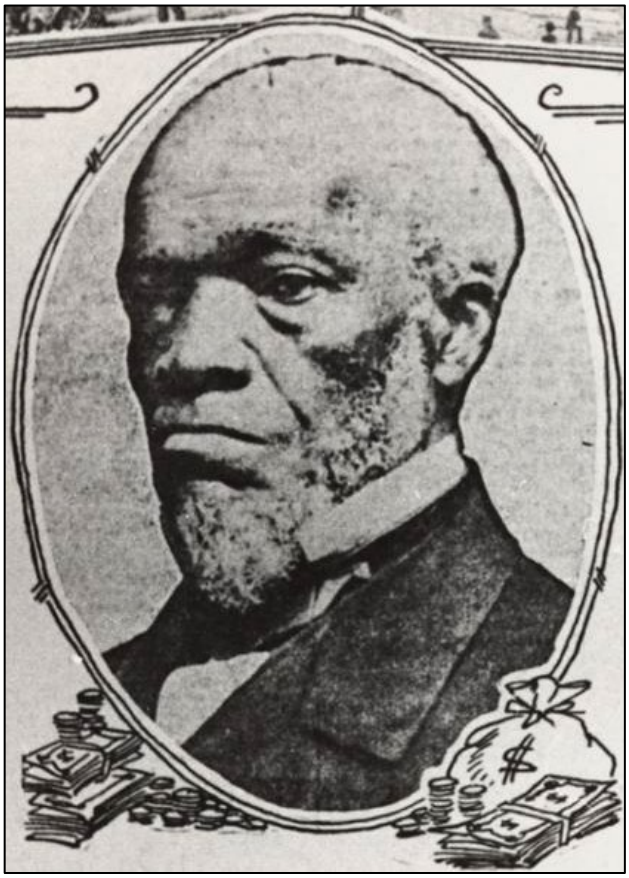
Fry salt pork over medium to medium-low heat in a large pot. Remove fried salt pork and set aside. Add onions to rendered salt pork oil. Cook and stir over low heat about 5 minutes.

Combine flour and cornmeal with water. Stir flour mixture into onions in pot. Add clams, then remaining ingredients, except milk. Bring to boil, lower heat, and simmer, covered, until potatoes are tender. Add salt pork cracklings and milk, and heat just to the boiling point, but do not boil. Taste for needed salt and pepper. Tastes better aged for 24 hours.

Serving the Wealthy, Yet Viciously Beaten

Even highly successful Black caterers— some of whom expanded their enterprises into hotels, restaurants, or firms that supplied produce— were at the mercy of racist competitors, bankers, or unions that wanted to displace Blacks from wage-earning jobs. Every downturn in the national economy, Spivey shows, reenforced the adage: "When white folks catch a cold, Black folks catch pneumonia."

Thomas Downing was born in Chincoteague, VA, in 1791 to Black parents who had been freed by a Capt. John Downing, a Methodist who opposed slavery. Thomas made his way to New York City by 1819, bringing with him a deep knowledge about catching and cooking oysters, turtles, and terrapins. By the mid-1800s he was the proprietor of Thomas Downing's Oyster Bar at 3, 5 and 7 Broad Street at the corner of Wall Street. Bankers, railway tycoons, politicians, and other celebrities clustered at Downing's; Charles Dickens recalled a sumptuous meal there in 1841. Queen Victoria regularly ordered pickled oysters shipped to her from Downing's. Spivey presents the following recipe (at the top of the next page) as it was written in the 19th Century. (Consult experts as to the timing and methods of sealing the jar.)



Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (New York Public Library), Image ID psnypl_scg_527

A newspaper portrait (ca. 1860) of Thomas Downing, proprietor of Thomas Downing's Oyster Bar on Broad Street in Manhattan.

"Receipt" for Pickling Oysters

Take the Oysters from the shell as free from liquor [oyster juice— JW] as possible; put a layer of them into a jar — sprinkle them over with pepper corn and mace — then a layer of Oysters, then pepper [corn] and mace, until the jar is full; pour as much vinegar into it as it will hold — then put the jar in a pot of cold water over a slow fire — when the water boils the Oysters are done. They will keep for any length of time.

Thomas Downing was always a strong supporter of abolition, although as a businessman he had to host foes of Reconstruction such as Samuel Tilden and George Templeton Strong. His deeds as a leading citizen went beyond "Black issues", however. During the Great Fire of 1835, he let exhausted firefighters use his barrels of vinegar and cider after they had run out of water, thus preventing, a news account reads, "the conflagration from extending through to Broad street. A million dollars at least was thus saved from destruction."

Downing also bailed out the owners of the *New York Herald*, a leading newspaper of the day, with a $10,000 loan even though the paper's owner had supported pro-slavers and foes of Reconstruction. Nor had the paper supported him when, in 1841, as Spivey records, he "was beaten by agents of the Harlem Railroad when he attempted to ride on that line." Downing sued the railroad but, Spivey reports, quoting trial coverage in the *Colored American,* "the jury returned a verdict against the plaintiff", thereby upholding vicious segregation on public transport. In her 60 pages of notes, Spivey tells the story of another violent assault in New York City against brave Black railway passengers, the teachers Elizabeth Jennings and Sara E. Adams, in 1854.

Similar assaults did not end after the Civil War. In 1886, Fanny Belkizer, "a well-known African cook for well-to-do families in New York, and wife of the well-known and highly respected African caterer William Belkizer", objected to an insulting remark by Officer McGinley on the corner of 33rd Street and Eighth Avenue. McGinley responded by kicking her in the side and then dislocating her jaw with his club. "He then arrested her and locked her in a cell overnight, where she received no medical attention", Spivey writes. Appearing bloodied before a judge the next day, she was then fined ten dollars plus costs because the judge ruled, "based on the sole testimony of Policeman McGinley", that she had been drunk and disorderly.

The Room Where It Happened

Spivey's book closes with a moment in our nation's political and legal evolution that rhymes with our situation today.

The setting was the Wormley Hotel at the corner of Fifteenth and H Streets in Washington, DC. Known to be one of our nation's finest, the hotel was owned and operated by James Wormley, a Black steward, hotelier, businessman, anti-slavery activist, and confidante of politicians of all political leanings.

Born in 1819, Wormley grew up in the business, thanks to his successful hotelier parents, Lynch and Mary Wormley, who were said to have grown up in Virginia without ever having been enslaved. Uncommon though it was, they were reported to have "lived as free people with a wealthy Virginia family."

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James A. Garfield National Historic Site

James Wormley (1819-1884), proprietor of the Wormley Hotel in Washington, DC.

TABLE OF POWER *continued from page 17*

James Wormley became a friend and political associate of the great foe of slavery Sen. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, leader of the faction known as the Radical Republicans. Sumner introduced and managed the passage of the United States' first Civil Rights Act in 1870. It provided amnesty for Confederates but also, among other provisions, guaranteed all citizens, regardless of color, access to accommodations, theaters, public schools, churches, and cemeteries.

To shore up the bill where it had failed to halt various forms of racist discrimination, Sumner drew up and politicked strongly for what became known as the Sumner's Civil Rights Supplement, but he died in 1874 a year before the Senate passed most of the bill as he'd written it. After his death, however, political forces that linked Northern and Southern reactionary and/or racist elements began whittling away at the legislation.

The climactic event was a February 1877 meeting in Wormley's Hotel, in which Republican presidential hopeful Rutherford B. Hayes struck a bargain with a Southern faction that had supported Democrat Samuel Tilden, winner of the popular vote in the November 1876 election. If given sufficient Electoral College votes, Hayes promised— during a two-day meeting that was variously called the "Wormley Agreement", "Wormley Bargain", or "Wormley Conference" at the time, and only later the "Hayes-Tilden Compromise"— that he would see to it that all of the strongest anti-discriminatory measures that Sumner and his supporters had included would be scrapped.

And that's what happened. Hayes was declared winner of the election, and he proceeded to remove all remaining federal troops from the South. Playing the same sort of shell game of federal vs. state jurisdiction that today's Supreme Court super-majority is using in order to reverse laws that they don't like, the U.S. Supreme Court in 1883 ruled the Sumner legislation unconstitutional on the grounds that the federal government had usurped states' rights.

It was the Wormley Agreement, then, that prompted the reversal of Reconstruction and paved the way for a century of brutal Jim Crow-style oppression of African Americans. Spivey assumes that the hotelier James Wormley would have had no idea about what the politicians were talking about behind closed doors in the proverbial smoke-filled room. "But just imagine!" she exclaims, "The plot to betray Africans is consolidated at a hotel owned by one! And worse: the deed carries the Black man's name— into posterity." ■

Editor's note: Readers may also want to check out Spivey's Dec. 2018 essay, "Transatlantic Food Migration: The African Culinary Influence on the Cuisine of the Americas", by going to https://www.blackpast.org and typing "Diane Spivey" in the search window.

ENSLAVED COOKS *continued from page 13*

was made with the New World peanut instead of the Bambara groundnut; and jambalaya, the famous stew of meat and vegetables mixed with rice. By the 1800s, most Southern recipe collections, although written by white women such as Randolph, included such West African-influenced dishes without acknowledging their origins. As Deetz observed, the Founding Fathers and other American white people were "literally and figuratively eating the fruits of enslaved labor."

The plantation kitchen and laundry were typically situated outside the mansion, but it's a misconception, Deetz explained, that this was in order to protect the mansion from fires, odors, or excessive heat; in fact, for example, the Stratford mansion included 16 fireplaces and 8 chimneys. Instead, the detached kitchens and laundries resulted from racist, segregationist notions that were eventually solidified as Black Code laws. Similarly, the "dumbwaiter", a device introduced from Europe, was used as a way to replace some of the service otherwise supplied by house servants, thereby increasing the social distance between master and slave, and allowing the planter's family and guests to 'converse more freely'. The protected walkways and underground passages that are often found on plantation grounds reflect a similar logic.

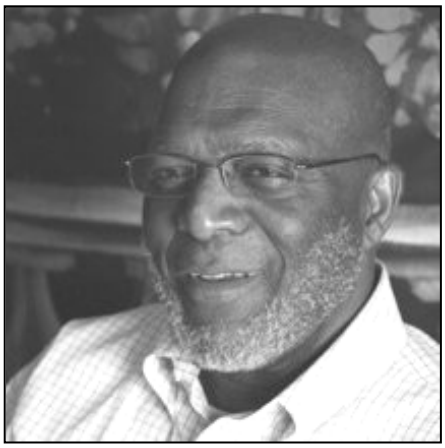
Plantation kitchens were places of creativity and joy as well as struggle and pain. In fact, the master sometimes allowed his enslaved workers to hold wedding receptions or other gatherings there. However, contrary to the history of racist depictions and myths about happy, loyal slaves, African Americans were not happy in their conditions of servitude and they staged countless rebellions. Further, those who lived in 'the big house' were, despite their relative privileges, not necessarily more compliant or loyal than the field hands. Their agency was expressed in different ways. They knew, for instance, that there was some power inherent in the task of providing food and medicines to their masters, including the potential to mis-administer tonics or to apply poisons. In addition, West African religious beliefs involved the conjuring of spirits and the use of magical objects.

Contrasted with the cooks, food servers, maids, and other domestics— who lived and worked in 'the big house' and the other main buildings— were the much more numerous enslaved field workers. They slept and ate in crowded one- or two-bedroom quarters, which were situated in clusters along with some yard space. The yard spaces, now called "kitchen yards", were communal areas in which multiple families from a given cluster congregated to cook (typically one-pot meals), converse, tell stories, make music, sing and dance, etc. Slave provisions consisted mainly of pork fatback and cornmeal or rice; supplementing this with garden produce was a dietary necessity. Gardening, as well as hunting, trapping, and fishing, had to be done during 'free time', generally on Sundays or otherwise outside of the daily sun-up to sun-down regimen of field work. ■

ALLOWED TO HUNT AND COOK RACCOON, BUT NOT TO OWN 10 ACRES

by O. Henderson, Jr.

The following passage is excerpted from a novel by Orzie Douglas Henderson, Jr., Light in Winter (A Mama's Prayer) *(Xlibris, 2013, revised 2014), pp. 29-32. Although written for a novel, the passage skillfully captures the reality of life in the sharecropping South. As the author once commented, "*Light in Winter *is fiction but it was inspired by watching my mother raise us alone…." Dr. Henderson, 81, grew up on a farm in Missouri in a huge family that later moved to New Jersey and then Michigan. He earned both his medical degree and bachelor's degree at the Univ. of Michigan, and spent most of his career as an Emergency Room physician at Mercy Memorial Hospital in Monroe, MI, while living in Ann Arbor.*



The scene below is set in the late 1920s, which were very hard times for American farmers. Colonel Samual Jefferson, a white man, is the widowed owner of an antebellum cotton plantation near the Mississippi River, downstream from St. Louis and about 20 miles from Cape Girardeau, MO. His plantation boss, or head sharecropper, is Jesop Jefferson, an African American who is also widowed. Jesop lives in a shanty on the plantation with his son Caleb, Caleb's wife Babe-Ruth Kitchen, and Babe-Ruth's two sisters. An African American married couple, Missy Sarah and Jim, live in the Colonel's mansion as his cook-servant and manservant, respectively.

It was in the Fall and after supper, and Caleb took down the over and under [double-barreled shotgun— Ed.]; he had been hunting since he could keep up and got a gun when he was 12. He was a good shot and loved hunting.

Jesop was ready, and three dogs pulled him. Tramp was his favorite; the others, Rascal and Tree, were coon dogs, mongrels that knew what they were after. On a dry night, they would bring them back with fresh meat. Jesop had the kerosene lamp in one hand and Tramp's leash on the other. He hadn't trusted Caleb with the lamp when Caleb was young, and carrying it had become a habit. Jesop's shotgun was broken down and hung over his arm, and Tramp pulled him to the action.

Rascal and Tree were off.

"Get that sunovagun!" Caleb was breathing hard. The critter was treed.

"He's up there and he's yourn." Jesop tied up Tramp. The lantern blazed in the creature's eyes.

"There!" Caleb's shot brought him down. Jesop's bag was tied, and they were off.

They treed another, then a third. Another fat one guaranteed they would be eating coon for days. They would catch a few for Missy Sarah. Coon was tasty when cooked properly, and when the yearning came, they were on the hunt. Missy Sarah was the expert at cooking it, and they paid tribute.

Jesop was still a good shot. They bagged six and went home sweating and laughing. If drunken whites thought they wanted to scare some niggers, they thought twice because he and Caleb might shoot back.

They put the dogs away and took the coon to the backyard. The musk glands and fat were removed, and the pelts would be sold. They soaked the pelts in a concoction of saltwater and baking soda, which would be drained and refilled in the morning. The body, minus the entrails, was hung out to drain, then dumped into kettles of saltwater, and the pelts were scraped and stretched. Caleb and Jesop did the cooking. Everybody didn't know how to cook coon, and the women had no interest at first.

"Go ahead, take another piece." Caleb motioned to Babe-Ruth. Papa Kitchen wasn't a hunter, and it was their first taste of coon. Babe-Ruth took a second piece. She nodded; Caleb and Jesop grinned. "Now you been to heaven!"

Caleb brought Missy Sarah's share skinned and soaked.

Coon was cooked outside and kept high to drain away the grease. Carrots and onions were put in the body cavity, and it was turned slowly about three hours. Salt, pepper, and garlic were added, and toward the end, a little molasses. They worked in shifts, and it was a time for sharing and telling stories. "Rabbit is some good eatin', so is squirrel and possum, but you can't beat coon for eatin' in the wild." Jesop licked his fingers and took some scraps to the dogs. Sunday they would have stew that he would cook himself.

The women were tired of all the bragging, and Babe-Ruth thought she could improve upon the recipe. When they went hunting again, she had her chance. She salted and peppered her stuffing, a mix of cornmeal and a little flour, then added celery, peppers, and onions. She started with an open fire, then stuffed the mixture in the large roasting pan with a few onions and garlic, pouring away fat and seasoning with hard cider.

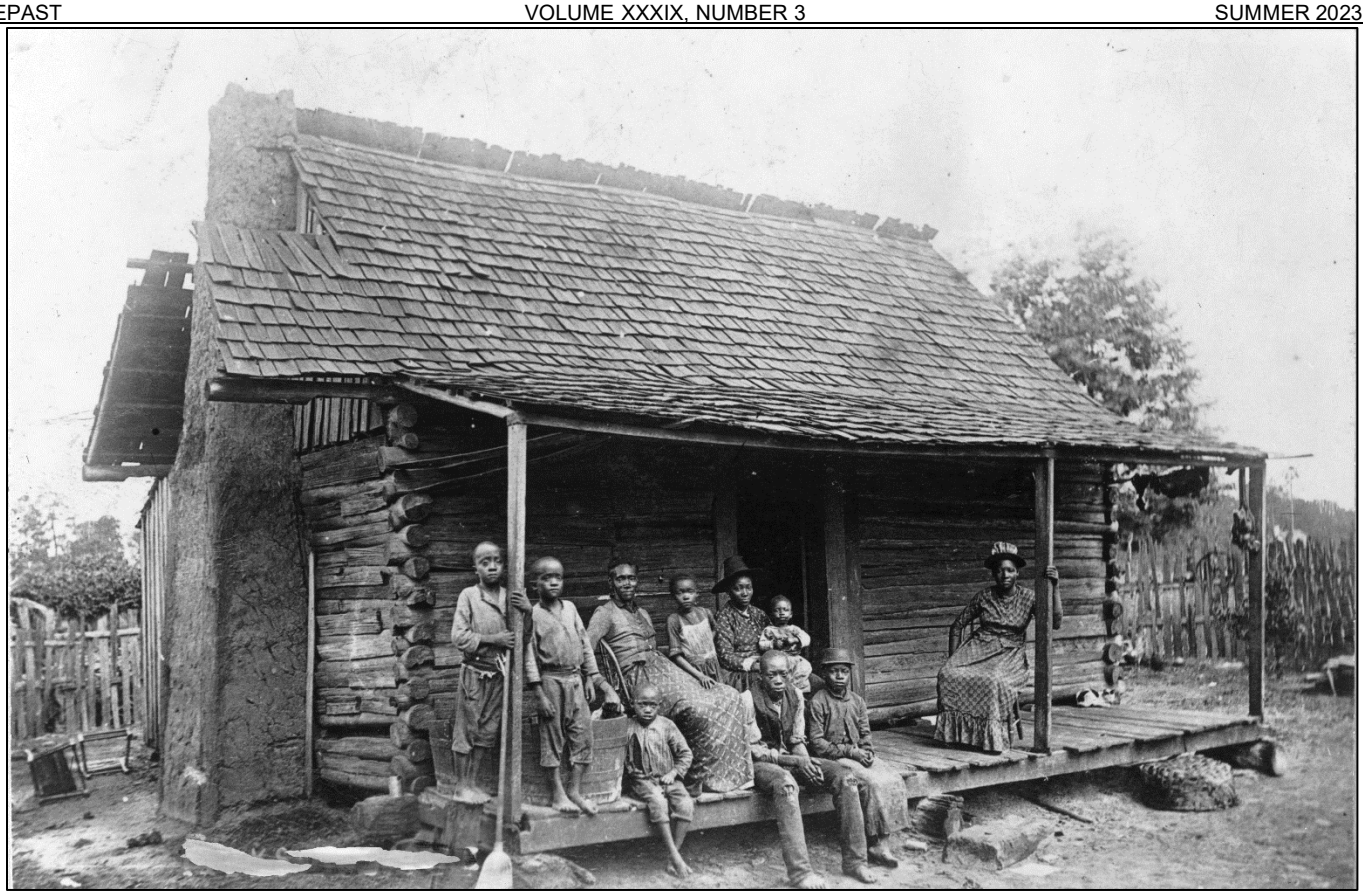
Jesop's eyes sparkled with his first bite. "Caleb, this is the best you done." Caleb looked down as Babe-Ruth chuckled. "I knowed you had Missy Sarah help. This was done by a cook." His eyes sparkled at Babe-Ruth.

That evening, she visited Missy Sarah to learn more.

"You can do anything with the coon you have a mind to. You have to clean it right, drain it good, and if it's big, you gotta scorch it for 10 minutes. You don't have to be so smart if the critter's small. I've seen them weighing 40 pounds— only half of a biggun is meat if you cut the head off and prepare it right.

"You can barbecue it. Cook it outside on a grate with good

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Slave Narrative Project (U.S. Works Progress Administration, Federal Writer's Project), Container A917, vol. 1., via Library of Congress

A sharecroppers' shanty in Barbour County, near Eufaula, AL, between 1936 and 1938.

RACCOON

continued from page 19

dry wood. After a couple of hours it will get tender and you can start puttin' on the garlic and then get your sauce ready. If you pierce it, it'll be tastier. The colonel won't eat no coon— hear me! Shucks, I been feeding him coon for years and he swears it's possum!"

Everyone on the plantation worked too hard to be fat, but they loved eating and talking about food. Missy Sarah told Babe-Ruth about spices, vinegar, and hard cider. Delight flooded from their eyes.

The sun highlighted red and golden-brown leaves and acorns on the grass. Jesop ran the comb through his hair. He couldn't read, but he knew his numbers and make his mark [in lieu of signing his name— Ed.]. He knew how and when to plant and knew seed grade. He grew cotton, supervised others, picked it, and got it to market for top dollar. The colonel left him alone. Jesop thought about the 10 acres of mostly forest. There was a meadow with a stone where he buried Caleb's mother. The colonel hardly knew it was there. Nobody used it but Jesop and his kinsfolk (going in at night and coming out with some coon and rabbits). He had thought about the land for a long time and even dreamed about it.

Jesop shaved and wore his best overalls. He made his way to the back door, knocked, and waited for the servant Jim, who opened, nodded, and fetched the colonel, then led him in to the sunporch. Jesop liked the colonel, a fair man with a fine place who Jesop reasoned wasn't taking his wealth with him to the grave.

"How ya doin', Jesop?"

"Fine, Colonel, fine." Jesop, hat in hand, wiped his forehead; the colonel beckoned him to sit. "Boss, you got the finest place around." Jesop grinned, thinking about Johna's tree.

"Well, boy, you done it again." The colonel took the ledger. "You're maintaining profits in spite of the times. … I'm gonna give you a bonus like last year. I hope your workers get their share?"

"Yes, sir. A lot is kin. I do by them same as you do by me."

The colonel didn't own a store, and his workers could buy wherever they chose. They shared in the orchard and had their own gardens. Sometimes pigs were distributed and shared by families after the main lot was shipped.

The colonel wrote out a note, and Jesop tucked it in his bib (it was unusual for sharecroppers to get a little cash, but the incentive was good for everybody).

"I love working this farm. We made it pay. You know, sir …" Jesop paused with a sigh. "I been savin'. We've never farmed those 10 acres on the north quarter. It's full of woods, we hunts there, and my wife is buried there. I been wantin' to buy 'em from ya."

The colonel stood like he had been slapped. "What? . . . Ever know a nigga to own a piece of a farm like this, boy? Think those bastards woulda given the fair price if I wasn't there? Shit! You can't even read— get the hell out!"

Jesop rose but stood his ground.

"Damn you!" The colonel groped for his cane to strike, then leaned back, clutching his arm. "Damn you!" Sweat filled his brow, and he eased unto the daybed. "Jim!" Jim put a pillow under him and hurried to fetch his medicine. "Can you beat that?" The colonel's color returned as Jim wiped his forehead, and Jim went to the window and watched Jesop disappear into the fields. ■

AN APPALACHIAN INVENTION: SALT RISING BREAD

by Genevieve Bardwell

CHAA member Genevieve Bardwell is co-author, with Susan Ray Brown, of Salt Rising Bread: Recipes and Heartfelt Stories of a Nearly Lost Appalachian Tradition *(St. Lynn's Press, 2016, 2020). Originally from New England, Jenny graduated from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY, and later earned a master's degree in plant pathology at the Univ. of Massachusetts in Amherst. Until earlier this year, when she moved to Fort Collins, CO, she had lived for 35 years near Morgantown, WV, where she was employed as Curriculum Coordinator for West Virginia University's Health Sciences & Technology Academy. In 2010, she and Brown, a baker born and raised in West Virginia, established the Rising Creek Bakery in Mt. Morris, PA, about 10 miles outside of Morgantown. Jenny continues to research wild fermented breads, and teaches classes on salt rising bread.*



photo: Jason and Elizabeth Bartley

In October 1988, my husband and I had just moved into the Appalachian town of Mt. Morris, Pennsylvania. Our new neighbors had invited me to help make soap. I drove up the curvy road to the top of a hill. The other women were laboring around a fire with a huge cauldron of melted hogs' fat and pouring the hot mix into forms. Looking down, my view was of rolling hillsides covered with deciduous trees, ablaze with red, orange, and yellow colors, while leaves swirled around our heads.

We took a break for lunch and entered the old farmhouse. In the frying pan there was a delectable, cheesy smell that I was unfamiliar with. It was grilled cheese sandwiches on salt rising bread. This is when I fell in love with the Appalachian culture, the people, and that distinctive type of bread.

The Origins and Spread of Salt Rising Bread

Salt rising bread is a tradition that has been circulated orally for centuries. It became most deeply rooted in West Virginia, Western Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina. Often, the bread recipes were passed down through generations within a given family.

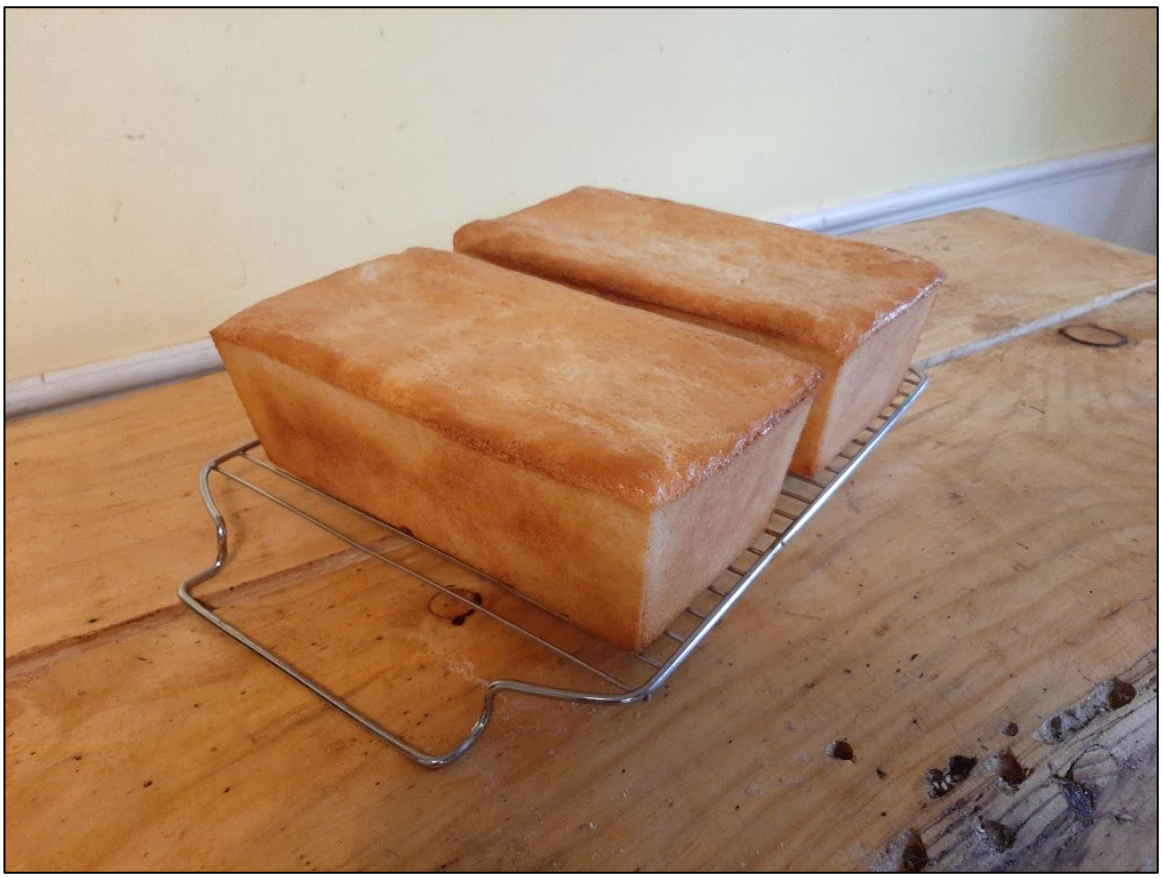
The earliest known written recipe, found by my colleague, Susan Ray Brown, is from an area near what is now the small town of Ronceverte, in the mountainous region that is now West Virginia but was then the western frontier area of Virginia. This handwritten recipe was among the possessions of a woman named Rena Scott who had lived there in the late 1700s; subsequently it had been passed down, generation by generation, to a great-great-granddaughter. It was one of several recipes for salt rising bread, old and new, that were published in a cookbook issued by the P.E.O. Sisterhood in 1978 to commemorate the 200-year history of Greenbrier County, WV.[1]

As with most recipes, the invention of salt rising bread probably predates the earliest surviving recipe by 20 or more years. In fact, the origins of this type of bread are surrounded by a mystery that has never been fully explained: how and why did frontier women invent the salt rising method of making a raised bread?

Bread, of course, is an ancient human invention, going back tens of thousands of years. By the 1600s, when the first white settlers from Europe arrived along the Atlantic coast, they knew very well what a raised bread was. They had brought wheat seed on their western voyages, excited to establish their own fields of grain.[2] They had the knowledge of how to make beer, obtain yeasts, and make raised breads. But it was a difficult struggle to grow wheat in North America. Rye seed was a bit more successful. Corn, native to the Americas, grew best, and so cornbread was often baked and eaten in place of European breads.

Eventually, enough wheat and other Old World grains were imported and/or grown in the American colonies to begin making beer. Once beer was available, so was yeast. Public ovens produced yeasted breads in the urban centers, but as settlers moved further westward away from the towns, their access to yeast was severed. In the meantime, women bakers became proficient at making cornbread, biscuits, and gingerbreads, all chemically raised by potash. Since the Middle Ages, European bakers had been using pot ash, or "potash", to raise their biscuits and gingerbreads and to obtain a nice browning on pretzels. Potash is rich in potassium carbonate, an alkaline chemical that reacts with acids in bread dough to generate carbon dioxide gas, thereby leavening the dough.

continued on next page



Two freshly-baked loaves of salt rising bread.

Eleanor Marshall

SALT RISING BREAD *continued from page 21*

Often isolated in wooded and/or mountainous areas, the men and women who settled on the Appalachian frontier had to be resilient to survive. Families were hard pressed to eke out a life, especially during Winter. My hypothesis is that with no yeast available, frontier bakers tried to adapt the European practice of using potash or other alkaline salts to leaven their breads. But instead of adding the salt to the bread dough itself, they added it to a "starter", which is the first stage in preparing the dough— generally done the day before.

Almost every early recipe for salt rising bread includes some type of salt in the starter. But in a starter, such salts (potash, pearlash[3], saleratus, baking soda) don't act as chemical leaveners as they do in quick breads. In fact, the leavening of salt rising bread is due not to any chemical reaction resulting from the use of salts, but instead is due to a biological action resulting from the abundance of certain bacteria. The salts might act as buffers that promote bacterial growth at the right temperature.

For the pioneer women who invented salt rising bread, there was surely more than one round of trial and error using various ingredients and temperatures. Perhaps it was a mistake gone right! Along with chance, however, the vast experience in baking and the intuition of these women would have guided their adding various substances; in addition, they knew the locations in the hearth where the heat from the fire would either cook a dough or where an offset position would enable a dough to simply stay warm and incubate. At some perfect moment, I imagine, the crock of starter was placed near heat with the perfect combination of ingredients, and it rose well.

Once repeated successfully, word of the technique would have spread orally, across hillsides and down through generations. Even without an awareness of microbes, and how to differentiate between a yeast and a bacterium, early bakers of salt rising bread certainly discerned a preferred temperature for it— which is higher than that preferred for yeast-raised breads— and an alternative handling procedure that resulted in a loaf that looked and tasted marvelous. No doubt they also noticed that the loaves keep relatively well (retain freshness longer) compared to yeasted breads.

Throughout the 1800s and 1900s, various groups in America migrated westward and northward. When Mormons migrated across the Great Plains in the mid-1800s and wrote detailed accounts in their diaries, they helped spread knowledge of salt rising bread. It's a pleasure to read their diary entries describing how they kept their starter warm by burying the crock in barrels of salt that were hung on the outside of the wagon, where the sun heated it all day. Then in the evening, when the wagons circled around the fire, they baked their loaves. Salt rising bread also became popular in Michigan and the Great Lakes region when many Appalachian people moved there between the 1920s and the 1950s, searching for a better life in the urban industrial areas. If anyone knows of early historical accounts of salt rising bread in Michigan, please share them with me (jbardwell@gmail.com).

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Salt Rising Bread Using Potatoes

Yield: 2 loaves

STARTER: Slice 2-3 peeled, raw potatoes (remove any green areas) into a quart mason jar. Add 1 tablespoon of cornmeal, 1 tablespoon of chickpea flour (optional), 1 tablespoon of all-purpose flour, and ¾ teaspoon of baking soda. Pour boiling water over all to cover. Cover jar with plastic wrap and poke a hole in the plastic. Keep starter in a warm place overnight, until stinky and foamy.

The temperature is crucial for the success of this bread. You must use a source of heat that is consistent and keep the temperature of the starter around 104-110°F. for up to 12 hours. Some techniques: 1) Set the starter jar in water with a sous vide thermometer set at 104°F.; 2) Set the starter jar in a Styrofoam ice chest with a 40-watt light on inside; 3) Some bakers also have success when they put their starter in the oven with a light kept on overnight.

SPONGE: 8-11 hours later, if mixture is stinky and foamy, you are successful! Remove the potatoes. Add ½-1 cup of very warm water and enough flour to make a slurry the consistency of pancake batter. Cover, set in a warm place, and leave until doubled in volume, which can take from 30 minutes to 2 hours.

DOUGH: Pour the very light sponge into a large bowl. Add approximately 1 cup of very warm water and 2-3 cups of flour for each loaf of bread that you want to make (up to 10 loaves). Add 1 teaspoon of salt for each loaf. Knead until smooth to form the dough.

Divide dough into sections that would each fill half a pan, about 1½ pounds or more. Form the dough sections with smooth side up and place in greased bread pans. Set the loaves in a warm place until they rise to the top of the pans. Make a diluted egg wash and brush the top of the loaves before they go into the oven.

Bake at 400°F. for 15 minutes, then turn the pans. Bake another 10 minutes. Remove loaves from pans and bake them another 10 minutes or until golden brown and hollow-sounding on the bottom. Remove loaves from the oven to cool.

Salt Rising Bread Using Milk

Yield: 2 loaves

STARTER: In a small bowl or jar, combine 1 tablespoon of cornmeal, 1 tablespoon of chickpea flour (optional), 1 tablespoon of wheat flour, and ¾ teaspoon of baking soda. Heat ⅔ cup of milk to 170°F. (just before boiling), pour it over the flour mixture, and stir. Cover the bowl or jar with plastic wrap and poke a hole in the plastic. Keep this starter in a warm place overnight, until stinky and foamy.

The temperature is crucial for the success of this bread. You must use a source of heat that is consistent and keep the temperature of the starter around 104-110°F. for up to 12 hours. Some techniques: 1) Set the starter jar in water with a sous vide thermometer set at 104°F.; 2) Set the starter jar in a Styrofoam ice chest with a 40-watt light on inside; 3) Some bakers also have success when they put their starter in the oven with a light kept on overnight.

SPONGE: 10-12 hours later, if mixture is stinky and foamy, you are successful! Add ½-1 cup of very warm water and enough flour to make a slurry the consistency of pancake batter. Cover, set in a warm place, and leave until doubled in volume, which can take from 30 minutes to 2 hours.

DOUGH: Pour the very light sponge into a large bowl. Add approximately 1 cup of very warm water and 2-3 cups of flour for each loaf of bread you want to make (up to 10 loaves). Add 1 teaspoon of salt for each loaf. Knead until smooth to form the dough.

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Bake at 400°F. for 15 minutes, then turn the pans. Bake another 10 minutes. Remove loaves from pans and bake them another 10 minutes or until golden brown and hollow-sounding on the bottom. Remove loaves from the oven to cool.

SALT RISING BREAD *continued from page 22*

Preparation Methods and the Role of Bacteria

The baking of salt rising bread is difficult to master. Unlike sourdough starter— which relies primarily on yeasts and can simply be refreshed for each use, even refrigerated between uses— the starter for salt rising bread must be made from scratch for each batch of loaves. Its habits are finicky: generating the right bacteria in the right quantity for strong leavening action requires just the right components to come together, including the right ingredients, temperatures, and times. Working with wild bacteria means that the timing of each batch of bread will vary slightly, and occasionally fail.

The first stage— creating the fermentation starter— involves simple ingredients: water, milk, cornmeal, white flour, potatoes, salt. When allowed to incubate at the perfect temperature (about 104°F.) for a period of up to 12 hours, the bacteria in the grains proliferate. Determining when the fermentation has reached its height is an art. I look for the highest level of foam and smell to develop in the starter as the optimal time to begin preparing the sponge. Once the foam develops, the starter is combined with flour to make the "sponge", and the sponge is allowed to rise. Determining the time when the sponge rises to its peak is also crucial; if the sponge rises and then falls, which can happen in an hour, the bread will not rise. When the sponge is ready, table salt is added for flavor, along with flour, and this mixture is kneaded into a dough. The dough is allowed to rise a third time in the pan, and finally baked.

Because of the lengthy time needed to prepare it, and perhaps because of the smell involved, the tradition of making salt rising bread has become increasingly obscure in recent generations. The smell of the fermenting starter can be offensive to people who are expecting a pleasant, yeasty fragrance. I often wonder whether the smell was not as off-putting in the 1700s as it is today. Pearl Haines, who made salt rising bread for 90 years and who taught me how to make it, said that when it was prepared using warm milk fresh from the cow, it never had the strong acrid smell that it does when made with today's pasteurized milk. Personally, I have come to accept the strong smell of a salt rising bread starter as an essential indicator of successful fermentation. The starter and sponge smell the strongest, while the dough just prior to baking begins to smell sweeter. When the loaves are pulled from the oven, there is a wonderful aroma of freshly baked bread, along with a hint of cheese odor. And when salt rising bread is toasted— well, that is when memories are made.

Susan Ray Brown and I worked together for many decades learning everything that we could about salt rising bread. We spoke with elders who had made this bread throughout the



Eleanor Marshall

Butter and jam on toasted slices of salt rising bread.

1900s to learn about the methods and folklore surrounding it. We felt an urgency to collect their knowledge, as almost all of them are deceased now; Pearl Haines, for example, died in 2016. We also researched historical recipes, diary entries, and newspaper articles from the local archives of cities and state universities within the Appalachian region. After gathering hundreds of recipes for salt rising bread, we concluded that there are two main types (see the recipes on page 23). One uses potatoes, cornmeal, a salt, and water; the other uses cornmeal, a salt, and milk. Both recipes use the same three-stage method (starter, sponge, dough) that the pioneer women used hundreds of years ago. Both recipes rely on the same wild bacteria (*Bacillus*, *Clostridium perfringens*, and *Lactobacillus*). And both use one or two starchy vegetables to "feed" the bacteria, allowing them to flourish and multiply.

When we first learned that salt rising bread is leavened, in part, by the presence of Clostridium bacteria, we were concerned about health and safety. We contacted a scientist, Dr. Bruce McClane at the Univ. of Pittsburgh, who happened to be a world-renowned expert on these bacteria. Dr. McClane invited us to bring samples of starters and bread to his lab for analysis. His research team confirmed the presence of *Clostridium perfringens* and helped us to understand how these bacteria biologically leaven the bread by the production of hydrogen gas. Hydrogen and other gases help give the bread its distinctive cheese-like taste and odor (which some call "stinky"), as well as its dense white "crumb" or structure. Hydrogen gas is lighter than carbon dioxide, and this accounts for another distinguishing feature of salt rising bread: its flat top after baking. McClane's research also showed how the *Clostridium perfringens* in salt rising bread is not pathogenic: there are no toxins produced during fermentation because there is no genetic material present to produce such toxins. To share this valuable knowledge we helped write a scientific article with him, publishing it in the *West Virginia Medical Journal* in 2008.[4]

Learning from the Bakery and from Overseas

In 2010, Susan Ray Brown and I opened the Rising Creek Bakery in Mt. Morris, PA. The bakery continues to make hundreds of loaves of salt rising bread weekly for shipment all over the U.S. Located about 10 miles northwest of Morgantown, WV, Mt. Morris is an Appalachian community where salt rising bread has been a part of life for nearly 200 years.

In the beginning, there were many salt rising failures at the bakery. The starters were not fermenting adequately, even after I had tried adding various kinds of cornmeal in the starters. However, within a couple of years we were able to perfect the recipe by adding an ingredient. I had recently learned about the chickpea bread traditions of Greece and Turkey, and I tried adding chickpea flour to our starter. From that point on, there were no starter failures. Shortly after, we wrote the only book on salt rising bread to document its history, its cultural importance within the Appalachian region, and recipes so that anyone in a home kitchen will have success making it.[5]

To better understand why the early pioneer women chose to make this type of bread, as well as why they developed a method of adding salt to the starter, I have found it helpful to investigate other similarly fermented breads around the world. There are only a few breads that rely mainly on bacteria instead of yeast or other leaveners to raise the dough. I have examined their traditional recipes and spoken with their bakers overseas. For example, the Cypriot *arkatena* and the Greek *eftazymo* breads use ground chickpeas instead of potatoes or cornmeal in their starters. These breads rely on the same bacterial fermentation as salt rising bread[6], and the Cypriot and Greek bakers follow the same three-stage method. Surprisingly, their tradition is to add spices or other ingredients (bay leaf, cinnamon, mahlep, mastic, salt, or baking soda) to the starter and sponge stages, which completely masks the strong smell produced by the bacterial cultures. I have smelled the fermentation in both of these breads just prior to the addition of spices, and it smells exactly like the starter for salt rising bread; yet, due to the ingredients that are then added, the loaves emerge from the oven with an entirely different aroma and flavor.

It is worth noting that the women in Appalachia chose not to minimize the smell of their bread batches by adding spices. The odor of fermentation has been useful to them in gauging whether the bread batch is being prepared successfully. The strong smell and taste of salt rising bread are also central to the family memories and collective social identity— including the resilient, "gritty" character of Appalachian people—that are bound up with this bread tradition.

Across the world, food diversity is on the decline, especially as forces such as mechanization, globalization, and climate change reduce the variety of ways in which foods are produced. More scientific analysis of the bacterial fermentation involved in salt rising bread would be of benefit for several reasons. An in-depth understanding of the fermentation process could yield better success for bakers. Microbiologists could gain a better understanding about how the bacteria interact. Lastly, since *Clostridium perfringens* make up part of our healthy gut microbiome, we might gain insight into how this bacterium benefits the immune system.

The unique flavor, local connection, and rich traditions of salt rising bread, which highlight the creativity of the Appalachian people, have attracted the attention of scholars of Appalachian foodways such as myself. This year, I am working with an apprentice artisan baker in West Virginia, Eleanor Marshall, who received a grant from Central Appalachian Living Traditions to learn about salt rising bread. Together, Ms. Marshall and I are examining the assemblage of historical documents and memories surrounding salt rising bread. We salute the early American women who accomplished the complex task of inventing this bread in the 1700s. ■

Endnotes

1. P.E.O. Sisterhood, Chapter F, West Virginia, *The Greenbrier P.E.O. Cookbook: A Collection of Favorite Recipes Traditional and New* (Lewisburg, WV, 1978), pp. 83-84.
2. See William Rubel, *Bread: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).

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SALT RISING BREAD *continued from page 25*

3. Pearlash is a refined version of potash and was the precursor to later chemical leaveners such as baking soda and baking powders (1830-50). Pearlash made its first appearance in print in the earliest truly American cookbook, that of Amelia Simmons in 1796. See Amelia Simmons, *The First American Cookbook, a Facsimile of "American Cookery", 1796* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958).
4. Gregory Juckett, Genevieve Bardwell, Bruce McClane, and Susan Brown, "The Microbiology of Salt Rising Bread", *West Virginia Medical Journal*, 104 (Jul./Aug. 2008), pp. 26-27.
5. Genevieve Bardwell and Susan Ray Brown, *Salt Rising Bread: Recipes and Heartfelt Stories of a Nearly Lost Appalachian Tradition* (Pittsburgh, PA: St. Lynn's Press, 2016, 2020).
6. M. Hatzikamari, M. Yiangou, N. Tzanetakis, and E. Litopoulou-Tzanetaki, "Changes in numbers and kinds of bacteria during a chickpea submerged fermentation used as a leavening agent for bread production", *International Journal of Food Microbiology*, 116 (2007), pp. 37-43.

More Resources on Appalachian Foodways

In the hills of Southern Appalachia during the formative 18th and 19th Centuries, the majority of the population was descended from Scots-Irish indentured servants, who began to arrive from Ulster in 1718. They brought their foodways— including a fondness for pork and for greens and herbs, such as kale and dandelion— as well as their folk music, based on reels and jigs. This is the sort of intriguing information that one finds in ***Victuals: An Appalachian Journey, with Recipes*** (Clarkson Potter, 2016), which won the James Beard Foundation's Book of the Year Award. The text is by food writer Ronni Lundy of Corbin, KY (she was the editor of *Cornbread Nation 3: Foods of the Mountain South* in 2005), and the lush color photos of the region's foods and landscapes are by Johnny Autry. Lundy writes that German immigrants to Appalachia tended to settle in valleys and towns instead of the mountains, and are responsible for foods such as stack cakes, shuck beans, pickle beans, sauerkraut, and sour corn; their *scheitholt* (zither) evolved into the Appalachian dulcimer. Enslaved or free African Americans in the region contributed foodstuffs such as broom corn (sorghum) and yams; their spirituals and banjo helped shape bluegrass music and the Piedmont blues. The author also notes that *A Domestic Cook Book* (1866) by Malinda Russell, a free Black woman raised in the mountains of East Tennessee, included recipes for regional dishes such as chowchow, green tomato preserves, green cornbread, salt rising bread, and boiled custard.

"Three Sisters Chowder" (so called because of its fresh corn, Winter squash, and "shelly beans") and "Susi's Jack Daniels-Infused Collards" are two of the free-spirited recipes found in Susi Gott Séguret's ***Appalachian Appetite: Recipes from the Heart of America*** (Hatherleigh Press, 2016). Susi is a writer, chef, fiddler, and forager originally from Madison County in far western North Carolina, in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains. She's also a Certified Culinary Professional and Certified Specialist of Wine, with a diploma in Gastronomy and Taste from the Cordon Bleu and the Université de Reims. Before plunging into the ingredients and dishes, her book includes preliminary essays that define Appalachia, clarify the relation between Appalachian and Southern food, and explore the connection between the region's food and music. Séguret also added some directories of regional resources such as farms, butchers, chefs, products, and organizations.

That same just-mentioned Madison County, NC, is the home of Spinning Spider Creamery (https://www.spinningspidercreamery.com), a family-owned goat dairy nestled in a cove on Bailey Mountain. When the owner, Chris Owen, makes her aged white-rind Stackhouse— which has been named the best chèvre in the South by the Southern Foodways Alliance— pouring the cheese curds into their forms to drain, she likes to "add a layer of applewood ash that I prepare from cuttings from an old apple tree outside my bedroom window." She shared these and other details about how she makes and markets her various artisanal cheeses in her article, **"Appalachian Goat Cheeses from a Family Farm"** (*Repast*, Fall 2006).

The online archives of *Repast* also include Mark F. Sohn's article, **"Food Production on the Homeplaces of Appalachia"** (Spring 2007), featuring his finely observed, lyrical descriptions of the typical Southern Appalachian mountain farm, from the house and garden to the various outbuildings and the family cemetery. He also provided recipes for Bacon Potato Soup and Oven-Fried Bacon-Wrapped Chicken Thighs. Dr. Sohn, now retired, was a professor at Pikeville College in Kentucky and is an award-winning food writer and recipe developer.

Four years have passed since the publication of the revised edition of a 1982 classic, ***The Foxfire Book of Appalachian Cookery*** (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2019). It's not so much a recipe collection as a how-to manual, with chapters on the hearth, garden, pasture, smokehouse, gristmill, syrup shed, etc. The Foxfire endeavor, which started in 1966 as a classroom project at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee high school in Northeast Georgia, is today an all-around educational enterprise, including a magazine, podcast, and an **Appalachian Village** museum in Mountain City, GA, boasting two dozen historic log structures and a schedule of hands-on heritage skills classes (https://www.foxfire.org).

—RKS

AND A-WHEY WE GO! LEARNING CHEESEMAKING AT HOME

by Glenda Bullock

The Program Chair for CHAA, Glenda Bullock retired in 2020 from her marketing position at the Univ. of Michigan's School of Information. Originally from Grand Rapids, MI, she has also lived in Wisconsin and upstate New York, working first as a college English teacher and then for many years in public broadcasting. Her most recent previous article for Repast *(Spring 2022) was "Mobilizing the Kitchen Front: How the Ministry of Food Helped Britain Carry On in WW2".*



One of the most popular and fastest-filling cooking classes at the John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC, is Home Cheesemaking, taught by Gary Colles.

Colles, known as The Cheese Guy, began making artisan cheese at home after falling in love with Stilton cheese in pubs across England, Ireland, and Scotland while on vacation many years ago. Trained by experts in Michigan and Canada, he has taught cheesemaking classes for more than 20 years at folk schools, libraries, and community centers. He enjoys showing students how to use common kitchen equipment to turn milk into "cheese magic".

At the JCC Folk School, Gary's students make about a dozen different cheeses during their week-long session in North Carolina. For a week in early February, I was able to take an abbreviated version of the Folk School class from my own home kitchen in Michigan via the online learning platform Lessonface.

About 10 students from across the U.S., including one Alaskan homesteader, joined our instructor at 10 a.m. each morning to learn about cheese cultures, rennet, and the importance of using the right milk. We had received in advance a list of the equipment and supplies that we would need:

1-gallon pot (stainless steel, ceramic, or glass)
Colander with bowl
Regular and fine cheesecloth
Thermometer
Measuring spoons
Large slotted spoon
Large knife.

Although I might have been able to track down the items in Ann Arbor, I took the easy route and ordered directly from one of the suppliers that Gary recommended, New England Cheesemaking Supply. Their basic cheesemaking kit had almost all of the items that I needed, including a cheese-shaping mold and the specialized cultures, rennet, and other ingredients. I already had some other pieces of equipment in my cupboards.

continued on page 29



Equipment ready for the first class.

Lemon Cheese

½ gallon whole milk (not UHT)
6 Tbsp. lemon juice
½-1 tsp. pickling or cheese salt

Heat the milk in a large pot over medium heat to 165° F. Add the lemon juice slowly and stir it in using gentle up-and-down motions, for 1 minute.

Cover the milk and allow it to sit undisturbed for 15 minutes, or until a flat knife inserted at a 45° angle gives you a clean split in the curd. If you have not gotten a clean split after 20 minutes, add a bit more lemon juice and wait another 15 minutes until it does set.

Line a colander with fine-mesh cheesecloth and gently ladle the curds from the pot into the colander. Tie the corners of the cheesecloth together with string to create a draining bag and suspend it for 1½ -2 hours, or until it stops dripping. A cupboard door makes a handy spot to hang the bag, with a drain bowl underneath.

Once the cheese has reached a cream cheese consistency, take it out of the cheesecloth and place it in a large, clean bowl. (The longer it hangs, the firmer it will be.) Mix in the salt. Add additional ingredients such as herbs or spices if desired.

Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Keeps for up to 2 weeks.





At right: lemon cheese ingredients and the finished product; hanging the lemon cheese to drain the whey from the curds.

CHEESEMAKING *continued from page 27*

The first day began with a lecture on the various types of cheeses, and an overview of how each day would proceed. One of the first things we learned was that the type of milk used is key to the success of cheesemaking. Ultra-high temperature (UHT) milk may make for long shelf-life, but it simply won't produce good cheese. Fortunately for me, the milk from our local Calder Dairy is vat-pasteurized at the minimum required temperature, in order to retain its natural enzymes and good bacteria; thus, getting cheese-worthy milk wasn't a problem. In fact, many students had good success with milk from Walmart, as long as it wasn't UHT. Whenever a student complained that their cheese wasn't setting up properly, Gary's comment was almost inevitably that the reason was "probably the milk".

Just as the first thing we learned was the importance of the right milk, the second lesson was the importance of patience. The milk needs to be warmed gradually (some recipes called for it to take an hour!) to a precise temperature. Once that temperature was reached, we would add a starter (a bacterial culture that sours the milk to help curdle it and provide flavor), then wait 25-30 minutes for the milk to ripen. Next came the rennet, which causes the milk to curdle and coagulate. After an hour or so of curdling, it was time to cut the curds and stir very gently for about 20 minutes.

Once the cheese had finally reached the proper firmness, the curds and whey were poured (or just the curds were ladled) into a colander lined with cheesecloth and drained. Depending on the cheese, the curds were either hung to drip for hours or even overnight, or else put into a mold and pressed with a weight to expel more whey.

A Week of Cheeses

Our cheesemaking progressed through the week from the simplest cheese to the most complex. On Monday, we made lemon cheese, which required just three ingredients: milk, lemon juice, and pickling salt (see the recipe and photos on page 28). Acids other than lemon juice would work, Gary explained, including apple cider vinegar. This made a creamy, spreadable, fresh cheese and came together quite quickly. It was also hard to stop nibbling on it.

On Tuesday, we made feta cheese, which was more of a "feta fail" for me. Though edible, it didn't really hold together as it should have. I took Gary's advice, which is not to call your homemade cheese cheddar or feta or mozzarella, "because then people will expect it to taste like what they buy in the store." I named my feta fail "Opa" and put it on a pizza. It was delicious.

On Wednesday we made two cheeses, a cream cheese and a mozzarella. Both are quick cheeses, especially the 30-minute mozzarella. In the past, I've been put off from making mozzarella because recipes have called for wearing rubber gloves to form the balls in whey heated to 175° F. Our recipe used the microwave in short bursts; we kneaded the curds between blasts to distribute the heat, and then stretched the mass like taffy. It seemed to work well for everyone except for the Alaskan homesteader, who didn't own a microwave. Rubber gloves for her!

On Thursday we made our first pressed cheese. Caerphilly is a firm, crumbly, white cheese that originated in Wales. This was our first cheese that required some additional coddling. After being drained, it's pressed in a mold for 15 minutes at 25 pounds, then turned over and pressed for another 6-8 hours. Once out of the mold, it is salted on all surfaces, then set on a mat or board and flipped twice a day for three days, salting each time. Then it goes into the refrigerator or cheese cave, vacuum-sealed and turned every four days. It is ready to eat in three months, although six is better. Sadly, I haven't tried it yet: I'm following advice and waiting until August to sample. Again, patience!

On Friday, our sixth and last cheese was Brasstown Cheese, named for Brasstown, NC. It's a recipe that Gary developed himself and he admits that he changes the name depending on where he's teaching the class. This cheese seemed quite straightforward after we had spent the week mastering curd-cutting, draining, and pressing. It is air-dried on a mat and is ready to eat within a few days.

Most of the cheeses that we made were fresh cheeses, meaning that they will last only a few days or weeks in the refrigerator. While it was fun to make so many cheeses, I was lucky to have some cheese-loving neighbors with whom I could share the week's work.

The John C. Campbell Folk School is a magical place and well worth the journey. I took an in-person course there in canning and preserving several years ago, and more recently one in pictorial felting. If a trip to Brasstown isn't feasible, taking an online course with one of their instructors is an economical and highly enjoyable experience.

Locally, Jason and Julia Gold, an Ann Arbor couple who'd been taking courses at the JCC Folk School for many years, were inspired to establish the nonprofit Michigan Folk School in 2012. It is now located at Staebler Farm (on Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road, just northeast of the Ann Arbor boundary), and is part of the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission. The school gives short, hands-on courses to teach traditional rural cooking, baking, cheese making, gardening, hog butchering, food preservation, broom making, and other skills. It also offers such courses through Washtenaw Community College's Continuing Education program. ■

Resources

- A book recommended Gary Colles: *Home Cheese Making* (4th ed., 2018) by Ricki Carroll, "The Cheese Queen"
- John C. Campbell Folk School, Brasstown, NC (folkschool.org)
- Gary Colles, Instructor (northhouse.org/instructors/gary-colles)
- Lessonface (lessonface.com)
- New England Cheesemaking Supply Co., Northampton, MA (cheesemaking.com)
- Calder Dairy, Lincoln Park, MI (calderdairy.com)
- Michigan Folk School, Ann Arbor, MI (mifolkschool.com)

MORSELS & TIDBITS



Louise Johns/ *New York Times* (Aug. 4, 2021)

A private booth at the Pekin Noodle Parlor, Butte, MT.

The **Pekin Noodle Parlor** (above) was established in 1911 in the Chinatown section of Butte, Montana, a mining and railroad hub; the owning family had arrived in the region from Guangzhou (Canton) in the 1860s. Today it's the oldest family-owned, continuously-operated Chinese restaurant in the U.S., and it was one of the six winners of the 2023 James Beard Foundation "America's Classics" awards. Much of the original décor at Pekin Noodle Parlor is still in use there, and while the menu has evolved over the past century, it still consists largely of Cantonese-American dishes, such as *yateamein* (wet noodles), pork spareribs covered with a sweet-and-sour sauce, and 16 varieties each of chow mein and chop suey. From the beginning, this type of fare was "common man's food", suitable to local workers as well as theater-goers and wealthy citizens. Interestingly, takeout meals and delivery to customers' homes and businesses were also implemented very early on, as the Chinese shrewdly adapted their trade to the busy pace of American industrial towns.

Ann Arbor native **Hanna Raskin** (née Miller) was the winner of the 2023 James Beard Foundation Journalism Award in the Dining and Travel category for her exit-by-exit eating guide to Interstate 95, the major East Coast superhighway in the U.S. An interactive version of the guide is available at https://flo.uri.sh/visualisation/10419470/embed. Hanna, who won several earlier food writing awards when she worked at newspapers around the U.S., now lives in Charleston, SC, where she publishes The Food Section (https://thefoodsection.substack.com), her online newsletter about food and drink in the American South. She was the author of an article in *Repast* (Summer 2007), "Gebhardt and La Choy: Making Ethnic Food Safe for Middle America".

Juli McLoone, Curator of the Special Collections Research Center at the Univ. of Michigan Library, played a leading role in organizing a recent panel discussion celebrating the work of **Jan Longone**, the late culinary historian and founder of the CHAA. The program, "A Legacy to Savor: The Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive", was held on May 11 at the Michigan League on the UM campus. Three invited speakers addressed the impact of Longone's contributions and of the archive that she established: UM English Prof. **Peter Heydon**, Zingerman's co-founder **Ari Weinzweig**, and UM Anthropology Lecturer **Lisa C. Young**. A few items from the JBLCA were on display, including a 17th-Century manuscript cookbook, 19th-Century cookie cutters, and early issues of *Gourmet* magazine. "The event went beautifully. We had a great crowd," Juli told us afterward, "with many former JBLCA volunteers, folks from the Clements Library who remember Jan fondly, and people across campus who have worked with the

collection. Dan Longone was even able to join us, which was truly lovely."

CHAA member **Yvonne Lockwood** of Chelsea, MI, gave a presentation, "Michigan Foodways", at the Fraser Public Library in the Detroit area on the evening of June 21. The talk was part of the library's programming for this year's "All Together Now" theme, which was set by the American Library Assn. as a way to celebrate aspects of life that bring people together. Dr. Lockwood retired several years ago as Curator of Folklife at the Michigan State Univ. Museum and Associate Coordinator of the Michigan Traditional Arts Program.

Collector Henry Voigt recorded a video tour of the 224-menu exhibit that he recently curated, **"A Century of Dining Out: The American Story in Menus, 1841-1941"** (Grolier Club, New York City, Apr. 26 – Jul. 29, 2023). The 65-minute recording can be freely accessed online at the address https://vimeo.com/822186614/f68d729bef.

"A Syrian Lebanese American Kitchen", running May 25 – Aug. 15, 2023, is the latest exhibit from the Southern Food & Beverage Museum (SOFAB, https://southernfood.org) in New Orleans. Immigrants from Lebanon and Syria, under Ottoman rule at the time, began to arrive in large numbers in Louisiana and other parts of the U.S. around 1900. Attracted by economic opportunities, they established dry goods stores and other ventures in various districts of New Orleans, including the French Quarter, and adapted their foodways from the Old Country as part of a more general process of assimilation. A SOFAB volunteer curated this exhibit, literally recreating the kitchen of her *sitty*, or Syrian-American grandmother— a good cook who hosted many large family dinners— supplemented with information gained from interviewing other descendants of the earliest immigrants. The *sitty*'s own cookbook is on display— her personal recipes for *baba ghanoush*, *hummus*, *tabbouleh*, *meshi* (stuffed grape and cabbage leaves), flatbreads, pickled beets and olives, raw and baked *kibbe*, apricot leather, *baklava* made with New World pecans, and more.

A multi-year touring exhibition, **"Julia Child: A Recipe for Life"**, makes its first stay on May 20 – Sep. 10, 2023 at The Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation (Dearborn, MI). The exhibit goes in-depth into many key moments in the life and career of the famous American cooking teacher, author, and TV personality, as well as tells stories of family and friends who supported her career. Also displayed are personal papers, favorite kitchen tools, photography by Julia's husband, Paul, and interactive spaces such as "The French Chef" TV studio. At The Henry Ford, entry is included in the museum's general admission fee; the show is free for museum members (for more information, see the museum website at https://www.thehenryford.org/current-events/calendar/julia-child-a-recipe-for-life). The exhibit was authorized by The Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and Culinary Arts, and was produced and managed by Flying Fish Exhibits in collaboration with the Napa Valley Museum. For more information on the tour as a whole and on how to schedule bookings, see https://flyingfishexhibits.com/exhibitions/julia-child-a-recipe-for-life.

"Ancient Food and Flavor" is an exhibit running Jun. 3, 2023 through Fall 2024 at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the Univ. of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia. Co-curated by Katherine Moore and Chantel White, it recounts millennia of hunting, gathering, fishing, cultivation, and food preparation by displaying artifacts and food remains unearthed in both hemispheres. The focus is on archaeological sites in Jordan, Switzerland, and Peru. Examples include clay urns and jugs for storing wine, from a site in Numayra, Jordan, near the Dead Sea; remains of fishing nets and harpoons from Robenhausen, Switzerland, just east of Zurich; and from the Inca site at Pachacámac in southern Peru, a black ceramic vessel for pouring sacred *chicha* (maize beer), shaped in the form of a macaw eating an ear of corn. For more information, visit the web pages https://www.penn.museum/on-view/galleries-exhibitions and https://www.penn.museum/documents/pressroom.

The *Unforgettable Dinnerware* online lecture series organized by the International Museum of Dinnerware Design (IMoDD) resumes on Sep. 13, 2023, with **"A Tour of Fishs Eddy's Museum of American-made Restaurant-ware"**. Julie Gaines, co-founder of the iconic New York City dinnerware shop Fishs Eddy, will conduct the live virtual tour of the museum area, which is upstairs overlooking the store. The Ann Arbor-based IMoDD (www.dinnerwaremuseum.org) has scheduled lectures this Fall on the second Wednesday of each month through December.

Reflecting the heightened popular interest in U.S. culinary history, two books have recently been issued in the nation's capital, both quite reasonably-priced:

- Veteran food writer Lisa Kingsley was commissioned by the **Smithsonian Institution** to write *Smithsonian American Table: The Foods, People, and Innovations That Feed Us* (Harvest [Harper Collins], 2023). The work surveys the history of American sustenance with brief, interesting vignettes of key foods, food producers, inventors, cooks, chefs, culinary scholars, and dietary crusaders, including those among Native American, African American, and immigrant groups. The narrative also includes 40 recipes of iconic foods.
- Zach Klitzman and Susan Reyburn, two editorial writers at the **U.S. Library of Congress**, co-wrote *American Feast: Cookbooks and Cocktails from the Library of Congress* (Library of Congress, 2023). The book showcases some of the 40,000 books related to cookery that are found in the nation's library, and traces the evolution of American recipes from the earliest founding-era American household manuals to 21st-Century themed cookbooks.

"European Empires on a Plate" is the theme for the upcoming biennial symposium of the International Commission for Research into European Food History (ICREFH), scheduled for Oct. 4-6, 2023 in Seville, Spain. The talks and discussions will focus on economic, sociopolitical, cultural, and scientific aspects of the relationship between food and empire in European history from ca. 1750 to today. For more information, visit the web page https://icrefh2023.confnow.eu or send an e-mail message to icrefh2023@confnow.eu. ■

CHAA Calendar

Except where otherwise indicated, programs are scheduled for 4:00-5:30 p.m. Eastern U.S. Time, both in-person at the Downtown Ann Arbor District Library (343 S. Fifth Ave.) and streamed live on YouTube. For the latest information, check the CHAA homepage at http://culinaryhistoriansannarbor.org.

Sunday, Jul. 9, 2023 at 4-7 p.m.
Ladies' Literary Club of Ypsilanti
(218 N. Washington St., Ypsilanti, MI)
Summer participatory theme meal
for members and guests of CHAA,
"The Kitchen Front in WWII: Home Gardens,
Rationing and Eating for Victory"

Sunday, Sep. 17, 2023
Howard "Howdy" Holmes, CEO of
Chelsea Milling Co. (Chelsea, MI),
"The Story of Jiffy® Mix"

Sunday, Oct. 15, 2023
Dr. Helen Zoe Veit,
Assoc. Prof. of History, Michigan State Univ.,
"Dining in the Gilded Age".

On the Back Burner: We welcome ideas and submissions from all readers of *Repast*, including for the following planned future theme issues. Suggestions for future themes are also welcome.

- Fall 2023: Central & Eastern European Foodways
- Winter 2024: History of Grains, Flours, Milling, and Baking in North America

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1044 GREENHILLS DRIVE
ANN ARBOR, MI 48105-2722
U.S.A.

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First Class