

# ANN ARBOR CULINARY HISTORIANS

## FROM THE PAST

### *America's Charitable Cooks*



Currently on display at the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus is a splendid exhibition *MORE THAN RECIPES: Ohio's Community Cookbooks, which traces culture and women's roles through more than one hundred years of fund-raising cookbooks. Accompanying the exhibition are nine workshops, lectures and symposia.*

I was privileged to offer the opening lecture on Saturday, March 9. Among the subjects I was asked to address was how women's changing roles could be studied by examining fund-raising cookbooks. I quoted the two items below as a sample of how differently groups of women have perceived their role in society.

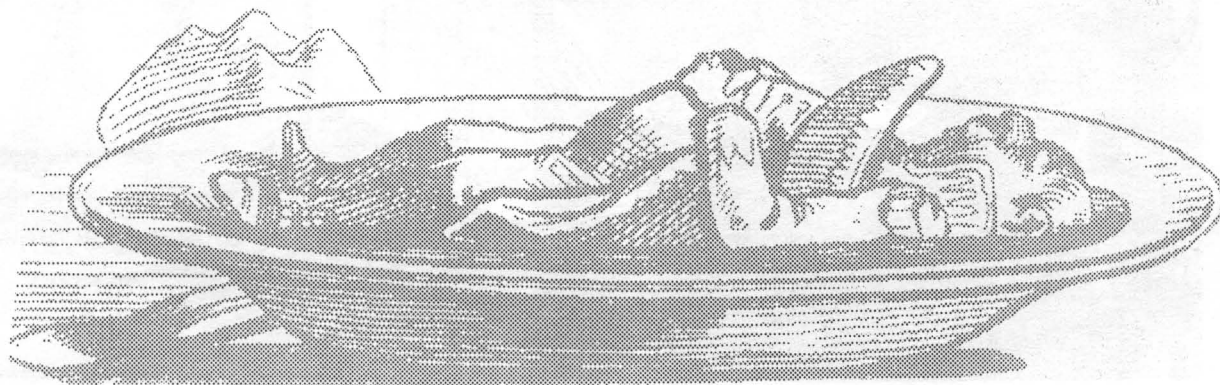
From: *Choice Recipes of the Mother's Club. Recipes by Twentieth Century Cooks* (Buffalo, N.Y.: The Mother's Club 1913)

## A Publication of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

### HOW TO COOK HUSBANDS *A Few Simple Rules, Which, if Followed by the Housewife, Will Insure Domestic Happiness*

Many husbands are spoiled by mismanagement in cooking, and so are not tender and good. Some good wives keep their husbands constantly in hot water; others keep them in a stew by irritating ways. Some roast them; some keep them in a pickle all their lives; others think they need to be blown up occasionally; and others let them freeze by their carelessness and indifference.

It cannot be supposed that any husband will be tender and good, managed in this way. But they can be made really fine and delicious when properly cooked. In selecting a husband a woman should not be guided by the silvery appearance, as in buying fish, nor by the golden tint, as if she wished salmon. Be sure and select him yourself, as tastes differ. Do not go to the market for him, as the best are always brought to the door. It is far better to have none, unless you will learn patiently how to cook him. See that the linen in which you wrap him is nicely washed and mended, with the required number of strings and buttons sewed on. A preserving kettle of the finest porcelain is best; but if you have only an earthenware pipkin, it will do, with care. Tie him in the kettle with the silken cord called love, as the one called duty is always weak. They are apt to fly out or get burned and crusty on the edges, since, like crabs and lobster, you have to cook them while alive. Make a bright steady fire out of comfort, cheerfulness and neatness; set him as near this as seems to agree with him. If he sputters and fizzes do not be anxious, as some husbands do this until they are done. Add a little sugar in the form of what confectioners call kisses.



But use no vinegar or pepper on any account. A little spice improves, but it must be used with judgement.

Do not stick any sharp instrument into him to see if he is becoming tender. You cannot fail to know when he is done. If thus cooked you will find him very digestible, agreeing nicely with you, and he will keep perfectly, unless you become careless and set him in too cool a place.

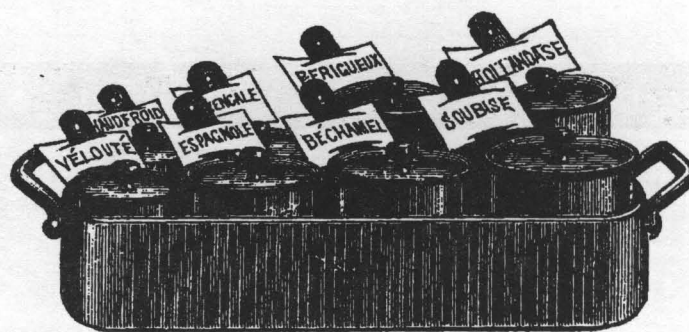
A quite different slant is taken in this dedication from *Washington Woman's Cook Book* (Seattle, WA: The Washington Equal Suffrage Association 1909)

#### DEDICATION

To the first woman who realized that half the human race were not getting a square deal, and who had the courage to voice a protest; and also to the long line

of women from that day unto this, who saw clearly, thought strongly, and braved misrepresentation, ridicule, calumny and social ostracism, to bring about that millennial day when humanity shall know the blessedness of dwelling together as equals.

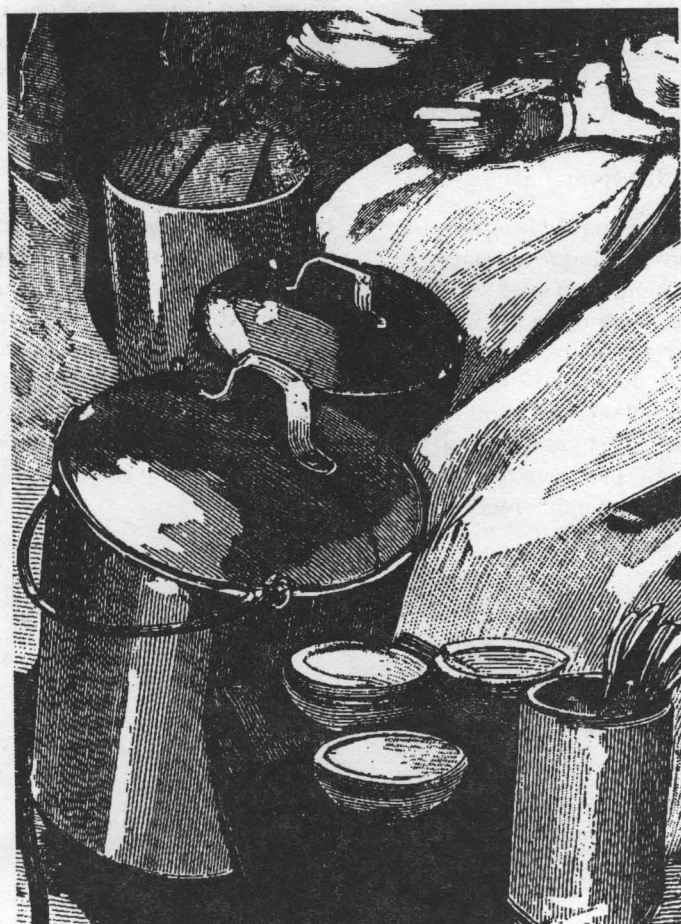
To all those valiant and undaunted soldiers of progress we dedicate our labors in compiling this volume.



The lecture was followed by an imaginative buffet lunch featuring recipes from Ohio charity cookbooks and served at the Col. Crawford Inn on the grounds of the Ohio Historical Village.

The exhibition, which is well worth a trip, will run from March 8 through May 31, 1996. For further information on the exhibition and the various seminars and lectures, call the Ohio Historical Society at 1-800-686-1541.

*Jan Longone*



Editor: Ann Woodward

Graphic Design: Rhonda DeMason

CHAA President: Julie Lewis

CHAA Founder and Honorary Chair:  
Jan Longone

For more information about anything in this  
publication, contact: Ann Woodward

2222 Fuller Road, #801, Ann Arbor, MI 48105

313-665-7345.



## SWEET SMELLING SATURDAYS



*F*ruitcake has had a rather bad press lately, but there are still those of us who think it is a fine thing. We appreciate that it is generally a winter holiday specialty, but we have decided to publish this article now so that anyone wanting to use the recipe will be sure of having it in time, remembering that three to four weeks must be allowed for ripening.

In my house the holidays start on the Saturday after Thanksgiving when I make my fruitcakes. There is a quality of high housekeeping to this ritual that appeals to me, and I move, for this one day, in the ancient satisfactions of the woman-in-the-house, inheritor of mysterious skills. Making fruitcake sets the tone of doing for others that is the essence of Christmas, and gives me one of the strongest of all connections with my own past.

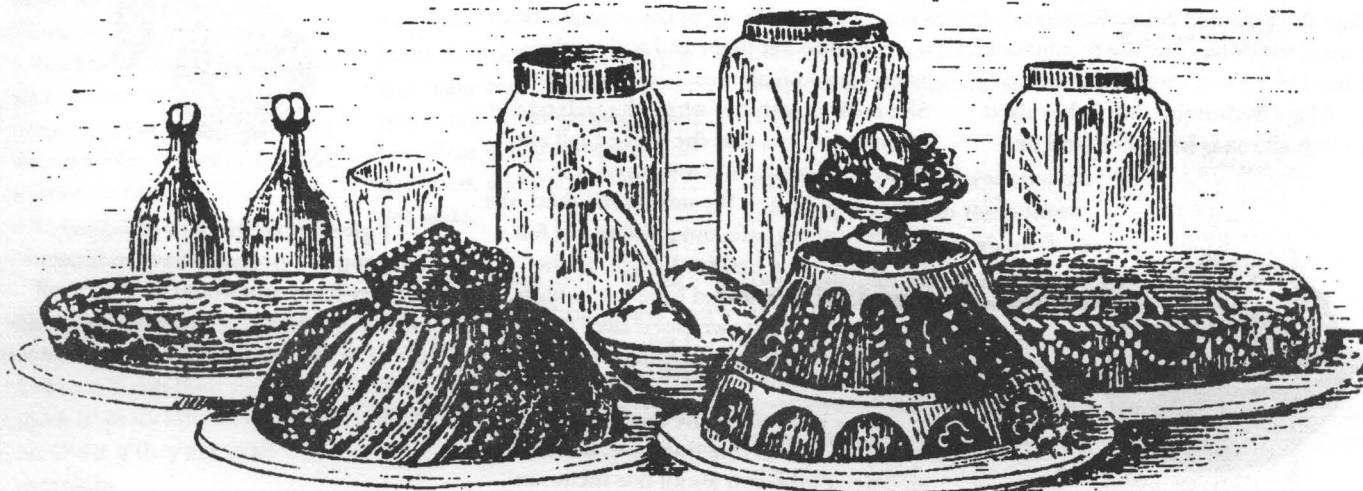
Using a recipe dictated long ago by my mother, I prepare a great mound of preserved fruits the night before, candying my own pineapple and cherries if I have time and am sufficiently ambitious. The list of ingredients starts "1 1/2 lb. butter" and goes on through "1 juice glass apple-jack brandy."

These spattered pages have little bits of letters pasted on them, telling the proportions of sugar to water for the candying syrup, saying to beat the batter until a drop of it will float in cold water, and to put a pan of water in the bottom of the oven while the cakes bake. There are also various notes to myself: that I should buy pineapple canned in heavy syrup, that it will take an hour to cut up the fruits, that the batter will rise two inches in the pan and which pans to use, that if the bowl scrapings are put on top of the cake, the decorative fruits will sink, that I should not do anything else on the day of baking and should *stay at home* while the cakes are in the oven. The borders of the two or three pages of the recipe are untidy with the hatch marks I use to count six cups of flour as I add them.

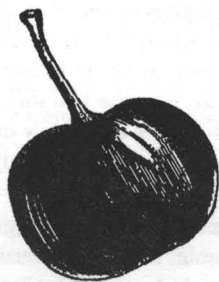
At the end of those fragrant Saturdays I have nine pounds of crisp-edged, glazed white fruitcake, maybe a small and a large round one, maybe the small round one, which comes from a fluted French tin pan, and two loaf-shapes. They will be sprinkled with brandy or a mix of bour-

bon and sherry, covered with cheesecloth, wrapped in plastic and then in foil and put on a shelf until the week before Christmas. We eat it throughout the holidays and it is always ready to offer to guests with a glass of sherry or a cup of coffee. Even when the whole family of seven children was at home it lasted well into the New Year, because you slice it thin. Now that there are only a few of us, I make half the recipe, or make it all and give some away.

But it is not really for eating that I go to all this trouble. It is for the return to being that small girl who stood by the white enameled kitchen table and watched; for the remembrance of serenity in the presence of my mother, a capable woman who could always do something to help; and for taking my place as next in line. Only through the combined fragrances of butter, sugar, citron, orange, nutmeg, and brandy can I achieve this dual metamorphosis—for I am not only the watcher but the baker, it is not my own strong bare hand that beats the butter and sugar together, slapping against the sides of the bowl until the butter no longer feels grainy—no, it is my mother's hand as I used to see it, square, sturdier, more muscled and untiring than mine. When the fruits are folded in—floured golden raisins, figs, dates, orange peel, pecans, cherries, pineapple, and lots of citron beloved of my brother—I must divide the



whole batch into two bowls in my puny modern kitchen. But I remember the oblong yellow-enameled dishpan she used for mixing fruitcake, and I see just where

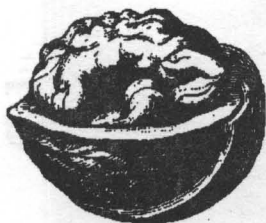


the chip was on the outside at one end. I remember the taste of the raw batter I used to dip up with my finger and all the anticipation of "licking," as we called it, with a spoon the whole big pan when she was through. She never had trouble with the scrapings drowning her decorative fruits; scrapings were left for us and I know now that she was purposely generous with them.

When I take the cakes from the oven, though, I come back to myself. Mine are never as beautiful, as richly decorated, as glossed as hers. And then I have all this wrapping to do when they are cool, every year wishing for giant Campfire Marshmallow tins to put them in, unswathed, as she did.

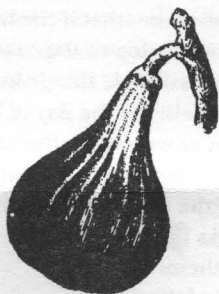
There was security in those fruitcakes of my mother's. During the Depression she made them to sell, using the money for Christmas presents, taking orders and charging a dollar a pound. If that does not sound like a lot, let me tell you that in those days she allowed twenty-five cents for the meat for dinner for the four of us.

We lived in a small Virginia town near the Blue Ridge Mountains. My father used to claim that all roads led there, and he



could take the map and prove it. Our house was on Main Street, right downtown, with a restaurant next door, and we lived there because we'd inherited it and it was rent-free.

One of the women who ordered cakes used to call us on the telephone and bel-low "Frawnces!" and launch into her mes-sage before I could tell her that I was Ann. I never knew why it was she had that pecu-liar accent, but older ladies in my town often used what I now consider to be strange English-isms left perhaps from colonial times. My great-aunts, for instance, regularly said "cyar" for car and "gyarden" for garden, pronunciations I have since encountered only in sixteenth century English literature with phonetic



spelling. My Aunt Tee would say "outer gyarment" instead of coat, just to parade her difference, but knowing herself to be amusing when she did it.

It was something of an excursion to deliver the cakes up the hill to the more residential sections of town, where some of the older matrons were glad to get Frances's fruitcakes and admired her enterprise, and some of the younger ones were glad to get them and wished they knew how to make such delicious ones. She took us with her when she walked out to deliver them, and she walked tall and straight, steadily, in a measured way, as she did all things. We were small then, she was everything safe and guiding, we felt the respect she had for herself, as she passed with her proud broad shoulders, carrying her tissue-wrapped cake that was good enough to sell, helping out in bad times.

Each year, when she made the last batch, there was one tiny cake, baked in a doll-sized tube pan about five inches in

diameter, just as cherried and pineappled on top as the big ones, just as moist with brandy. It was for Santa Claus, left on one end of the mantelpiece every Christmas Eve with a cup of hot coffee. The regular disappearance of these cakes and the empty cups on Christmas morning were our strongest justifications for belief in a real Santa long after we had reasoned that it could not be. Our parents were always gleeful about it—the drained cup, the bare place on the mantel shelf. Eventually we were told that the cakes went to old Mrs. Birney, who was crippled with arthri-tis and lived at the hotel. She loved the cakes, Mother said, and the Christmas Eve visits that went with their giving.

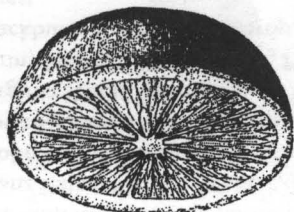
Fruitcake is an individual thing, I've found. Everyone likes their own best, else why would they go to all the trouble to make them? There are those who favor dark fruitcake, some even calling it black; my friend whose specialty this is makes it with coffee and it is spicy and very, very damp with spirits. There are those who like it white, like ours, but some put in so many of the cadillac fruits—cherries, pineapple, citron—that you wonder where the batter is. And there is the coconut argument, some saying it makes the cakes spoil. The balance of spices and fruits is crucial because fruitcake is an idea, an embodiment of family tradition, and if the taste is not what we're used to, it isn't Christmas.



I give our recipe with diffidence, knowing you probably have your own mother's way and would find mine all wrong. But in case you are not yet preju-diced in the matter of fruitcake, here it is.

# Frances Forbes's White Fruitcake

Usually I buy the fruits well ahead of Thanksgiving, to be sure of getting them. I like to candy the cherries and pineapple myself, especially the pineapple, and do that on the Friday before I bake on Saturday. It only takes half an hour and they are clearer and shinier than the ones you buy. I recommend making separate syrups if you are cooking more than one fruit, because syrup hardens if you boil it too long.



## Ripening:

Sprinkle generously with brandy or mixture of sherry and bourbon (proportions to taste).

Soak a rolled-up wad of cheesecloth (which is folded so that no cut edges will shed cotton on the cake) and put in the center, if a tube pan was used, or spread on top, if a loaf shape. Wrap in two layers of plastic wrap, then in aluminum foil. Sprinkle again and add moistener to the cheesecloth twice a week at first, later once a week. The total amount is up to you. Be careful not to let the cheesecloth get pressed into the tops. After 3 weeks, serve sliced thin.

Ann Woodward

Add flour mixed with seasonings alternately with brandy, beginning and ending with flour. Fold in egg whites.

At this point Mother's directions say beat with an over and over motion until a little bit will float on cold water. I have found that my electric mixer makes the eggs so light that this final beating is not necessary. Make the cold water test and see.

Fold in fruits, being sure to mix well. It may be necessary to divide the batter here, if your bowl is not big enough to hold it all.

Turn into one large angelfood cake pan and one 10" fluted pan, or one fluted pan and two loaf pans. All pans should be well buttered. (If using glass pans, lay a buttered strip of brown paper or baking paper into the buttered pan, covering the bottom and extending beyond the ends. This makes removal easier.) Decorate tops with halved cherries, citron cut thin, whole pecans or halved blanchéd almonds, and wedge-shaped pieces of pineapple. Be artistic.

Bake at 225°, with a large shallow pan of hot water on the bottom shelf of the oven, for about 3 hours, depending on pan size. It is done when a wooden toothpick inserted into the middle comes out with no batter stuck to it. Cool in pans for 1/2 hour, then remove and cool completely.

## The cake batter:

1 1/2 lb. butter (must be butter—we always use salted)

2 1/2 cups sugar

1 1/2 cups flour

6 cups fruit, separated

1 1/2 cups eggs, separated

1 1/2 cups nutmeg (if you have a grater, grate it fresh)

1 1/2 cups sugar for the egg whites

Remove with a fork and cool on racks. Store covered.

The fruits and nuts: (save out two slices pineapple and some pecans, cherries, and slices of citron for decorating. Blanchéd almonds are lovely on top, if you have some)

1 lb. golden raisins

6 oz. dates

a small package of dried figs, cutting out the pieces that seem hard

4 oz. candied cherries

4 oz. candied orange peel

(Mother made this too, but I never have)

12 oz. shelled pecans

1 lb. citron, cut into wedges and sliced crosswise (I buy whole pieces and cut it myself, mostly because thin, curved slices look so nice on top)

1 lb. or 10 large slices candied pineapple

Cut all this (except raisins) medium fine and mix, adding 1/4 to 1/2 cup flour to keep them from sticking to each other. Cover if they are to sit overnight.

Beat egg whites until stiff but not dry. Add 1/2 cup sugar and beat in. Then beat egg yolks until thick. Fold the egg yolks into the butter/sugar mixture.

Set aside.

Beat butter in your largest bowl until it is light. (Mother insists this is best done with the bare hand, through adding the sugar.) Take out 1 heaping teaspoon butter for greasing each pan. Beat in sugar until almost dissolved, adding it all at once.

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This book is said by the editor, Douglas Messerli, to be "a book about food, about the very art of eating," and it is a smorgasbord of writing and of reproductions of art, and photographs. Too rich to be read at a sitting, it is for browsing and dipping into over time. There are anecdotes, bits of novels and stories, poems, simple letters and straightforward recipes sent in reply to requests from the editor. Authors are well- and little-known: James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Samuel Beckett, Thomas Wolfe, Junichiro Tanizaki, Elizabeth Bowen, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Virginia Woolf; but also Juan Benet, Fanny Howe, F. T. Marinetti, Paul Blackburn, Rosmarie Waldrop, Barbara Guest.

It begins with deprivation. Kathy Acker is divorced, living in London, doesn't cook for anyone else and barely for herself, and works out under the supervision of "a vicious trainer," who does not allow champagne. So she does not send a recipe, as requested. Kenward Elmslie gives us "TV Lunch Haiku" and ends with the line "Top off with *Young and Restless*." John Cage tells us how to make a macrobiotic pesto sauce that includes miso but no cheese. Gertrude Stein is unintelligible for three columns about mutton, but it is interesting to try out her baffling sequences of associations. Charles Bernstein, a poet, says that "a writer's most important tool is a P C— a personal capuccino machine." One of the longest segments is called "Farce Double" (which means "Double Stuffing") and is a truly farcical and elabo-

rate description of a French village way of cooking a whole lamb.

Some of the recipes are surprising: curried oatmeal, specifying not only the kind of steel-cut oats but fresh spring water, a special butter, and three friends sitting on the porch of the beach house watching the waves while you cook; Orange Julius, which I am glad to have because my mother made it but she never told me how; "The Inner Organs of Beasts & Fowls"; and mint juleps. There are "Penitentiary Cookies" (to be taken to your man on visiting day and they will stay fresh until the next time) and ways to cook thrushes. My favorite stylistic invention is a series of unresolved parentheses that ends with four closings, ))) ). This is from Jacques Roubaud's "Law of Butter Croissants."

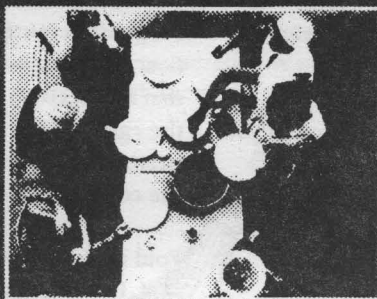
Times of conviviality are evoked, making the reader begin to plan assembling guests and dispensing hostly largesse. "Serve boiling hot, with a hunk of bread, some salami and ham, while telling jokes . . ." Fragrances of unimagined dishes waft from the pages, like spinach gratin with sardines, from Henri Deluy. The most ordinary foods and the most exotic sauces awaken a variety of carnal lusts for flavors and aromas, for oven-crisped surfaces, drip-

pings onto bread, dumplings, soups, and wine-enlivened occasions.

Clearly this is a book for the food-enamored. But also for those of literary bent and for the imaginative cook.

A. W.

THE SUN & MOON GUIDE TO  
*Eating Through Literature and Art*



EDITED AND WITH A NOTE BY DOUGLAS MESSERLI

THE SUN &  
MOON GUIDE  
TO EATING THROUGH  
LITERATURE AND  
ART

*A Review*





### Herb David

Herb was the subject of an article in the Ann Arbor News of Sunday, March 10. Herb is owner of the Herb David Guitar Studio, in Ann Arbor.

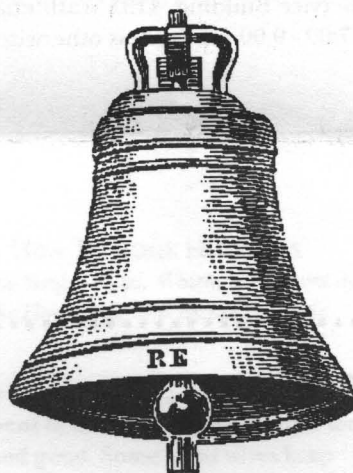
### Jan Longone

It looks like a banner year for the Wine and Food Library. In addition to the lecture at the Ohio conference, she spoke to the newly formed Los Angeles Culinary Historians in February. The meeting was part of the yearlong celebrations commemorating the bicentennial of the first American Cookbook and the centennial of the first edition of Fannie Farmer's Boston Cooking School Cook Book. Jan's illustrated talk was entitled: "The Cook Not Mad: 200 Years of American Cookbooks."

The April issue of YANKEE magazine is devoted to the same centennial of the Fannie Farmer book and there is a remarkable picture of Fannie on the cover. The issue includes an article called "Treasures Waiting to Be Found: Collecting Fannie Farmer" written by Jan Longone.

The April issue of the Martha Stewart LIVING magazine features an article about Jan and the Library, complete with pictures of Jan and Dan and some of their older books.

At the 18th Annual Conference of the International Association of Cooking Professionals (IACP) in Philadelphia this April 24-28, three Ann Arborites will be among the speakers: member Ari Weinzwieg of Zingerman's will be part of a panel on



How To Motivate Today's Employees; Jan Longone will be on a panel called

Beyond Historic Cookbooks: Where Else to Find Food History; and Toni Benjamin of Food For All Seasons will participate in a panel called First Impressions, Lasting Impressions: The Art of a Splendid Catered Event.

### Carroll Thomson

An article in the December issue of The Ann Arbor Observer featured Carroll and her business the Trellis Cafe and Tea Room, in Ann Arbor.



### Note

Member Jaqueline Newman notifies us of the availability of a newsletter concerned with Chinese Cuisine. It is called *Flavor and Fortune* and can be ordered by writing to P.O. Box 91, Kings Park, NY 11754. A year's subscription for four issues is \$19.50.

March 8 - May 31—*More Than Recipes: Ohio's Community Cookbooks*, a series of varied lectures and workshops at the Ohio Historical Center, Columbus.

April 21— A homestyle Italian meal at Peppina's, Lincoln Park.

May 19— Lucy Seligman: Foods of Tuscany. She will give the program that was scheduled for January and postponed because of illness.

August 4— Annual picnic, Independence Lake County Park. Details to follow.

Washtenaw County Extension Service Building, 4133 Washtenaw Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan  
Time 7:00 - 9:00 pm (unless otherwise noted)

CHAA Newsletter  
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Ann Arbor MI 48105

Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

Vol XII Number 2, Spring 1996