VOLUME XVII, NUMBER 2 SPRING 2001

Quarterly Newsletter of the ns of Ann Arbor

GERBER AND THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF BABY FOOD

d Industry Issue

by Amy Bentley

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In the space of about a hundred years, from the mid-19th to the mid-20th Centuries, the diet of infants in the United States changed dramatically. The normal feeding pattern shifted from the near-exclusive consumption of breast milk (whether from mother or wet nurse) and the introduction of solids later in the infant's first year, to bottle feeding and the introduction of solids at six weeks postpartum.

These interrelated changes from breast to bottle and from late to early introduction of solids resulted from a variety of social and economic trends: the industrialization, mass production and advertising of the food supply; changing consumption patterns; the discovery and promotion of vitamins; evolving notions of the body and health; the promotion of science as the ultimate authority; and the medicalization of childbirth and infancy, yielding the medical establishment's increased prominence and power. Mothers and health professionals alike welcomed commercially mass-produced baby food as a convenient, affordable way to provide more fruits and vegetables year-round for American babies. But beyond this, the creation and marketing of Gerber baby food, which has dominated the U.S. market since the company's inception at Fremont, Michigan in 1927, helped spur the introduction of solid foods into babies' diets at increasingly earlier ages. Gerber baby food thus functioned as not only a supplement to, but also a substitute for, breastmilk, playing an important role in the dramatic decline of breast feeding in the 20th Century.

Mrs. Gerber Fights with the Peas

In the late 1920s the market was ripe for the introduction of industrialized canned food for babies, especially produce, and Gerber stepped up to fill the niche. According to company legend, a narrative prominently featured in late-1990s Gerber public relations, the Gerber Products Company grew not out of a corporate-driven search to develop a new product and generate a consuming public, but out of the genuine need and inventiveness of a mother trying to prepare mashed peas for her seven-month-old child. Those canned fruits and vegetables for infants previously brought to market were expensive, manufactured in limited quantities, and available only at drug stores. Now that fruits and vegetables were a recommended part of a 6-12 month old's diet, women routinely cooked and strained fruits and vegetables for their toddlers, an often onerous process. Thus, in the summer of 1927, Mrs. Dan Gerber, wife of the Fremont Canning Company's owner Dan Gerber, "following the advice of a pediatrician," we are told, was trying to strain peas for her infant daughter. Finding the job tedious and time-consuming, she asked her husband to try his hand at the task. According to the company history, "After watching him make several attempts, she pointed out that the work could be easily done at the Fremont Canning Company, where the Gerber family produced a line of canned fruits and vegetables. Daniel Gerber, covered in strained peas, thought his wife had a good point." From this, we are told, came the idea to market strained vegetables and fruits along with the company's regular line of canned produce. By late 1928, strained peas, prunes, carrots, spinach, and beef vegetable soup were ready for the national market.[1]

We do not know whether this creation narrative is "true," especially since in its 1930s advertising Gerber related a much different version (discussed below). However, the information could quite conceivably be accurate. Since women at the time performed most of the work of child rearing, it makes sense that a frustrated mother would have sought methods to save time and labor. That the husband of "Mrs. Dan Gerber"

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(we never learn her given name) already hand-processed fruits and vegetables from a can makes the story still more plausible. Whether accurate or not, it creates a compelling, personalized portrait of the beginnings of Gerber— a homey, "authentic" happening far removed from the cacophony of noise, and the mire of produce byproducts of the industrial canning factory. The story of a woman's ingenuity transforming child rearing in the United States enhances the purity and trustworthiness of the product, a key factor to Gerber's success, and also mutes the profit motive of the company.

The new baby food products were so successful that within a matter of years the Fremont Canning Company changed its name to the Gerber Products Company, and abandoned its line of regular vegetables to become the exclusive makers of baby foods. Part of the canned goods industry, which in general experienced solid growth during the Depression years, Gerber baby food did extremely well.[2] First producing pureed vegetables and fruits (the process was termed "strained" at the time), it soon added a line of cereals, and within a few years introduced chopped produce and dinner combinations for older toddlers. While in 1930, the company produced 842,000 cans of baby food, by 1931 the number had risen to 1,311,500 cans; one year later, in 1932, Gerber manufactured 2,259,818 cans.[3] Despite competitors' quick development of their own mass-produced strained baby foods— only one "drugstore" baby food, Clapp's, began selling in the supermarkets, while by 1935 Gerber's biggest competitors, Beech-Nut, Heinz, and Libby's, had entered the baby food market— Gerber managed to maintain its dominance of this new market.[4]

Repast

Published quarterly by the
Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor (CHAA)

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Evidently Gerber had hit a chord with consumers, mothers, and health professionals. Conditions were such that the public was primed to accept commercially canned baby food. Canned goods were becoming more affordable and familiar to more Americans. Advertising was hitting a stride. Fruits and vegetables were more commonly recommended for infants, and doctors and health professionals were becoming more and more involved in (and controlling of) infant health and everyday care. Women at home full time, as well as the many working mothers employed as domestics, factory workers, seamstresses, teachers, secretaries, clerks, and telephone operators, embraced and benefited from already-prepared solid infant food. Moreover, Gerber baby food was not the only new phenomenon to significantly alter child rearing. Commercial diaper services, more homes wired for electricity, washing machines, refrigerators and other innovations of technology in the home altered women's work in general as well as childcare in particular.

Between the 1920s and the 1950s, the average age at which infants were first fed fruits and vegetables decreased dramatically. In the late 1920s, just as Gerber began its national advertising and distribution of canned baby foods, prevailing wisdom advocated introducing strained fruits and vegetables around seven months. By the next decade, however, pediatricians advocated the introduction of fruits and vegetables between four and six months of age. Adhering to the "if a little is good, a lot must be better" school of thought, by the 1950s the average age doctors recommended these foods be first fed to infants was four to six weeks, with some doctors advising— and mothers complying with the advice— that newborns be fed strained cereals and vegetables within days of birth.[5] While there is not necessarily a causal connection between the decline of breastfeeding and the earlier introduction of solid baby food, it makes sense that the widespread acceptance of artificial formulas acclimated mothers and doctors alike to infants' ingestion of non-breastmilk substances. Thus it may have felt more comfortable, and seemed more customary, to introduce solid baby food into an infant's diet at earlier and earlier ages. This early introduction of solids became standard advice and practice.

The Gerber Baby as Icon

One way of documenting the emergence of the idea of introducing solids for such young infants is to examine the early advertising campaigns of the 1930s. Shortly after the Fremont Canning Company began to manufacture its baby food, it began to advertise it. Thanks in part to these campaigns, Gerber has dominated such competitors as Clapp's, Stokeley,

Libby, Heinz and Beech-Nut in U.S. market share since its first full-scale production and marketing of commercially canned solid baby food.[6] Indeed, the Gerber name is synonymous with baby food, and the icon of the Gerber baby has symbolized quality and trustworthiness, so much so that a 1998 survey found Gerber to have the highest consumer loyalty of any commercial brand in the United States.[7]

Few Americans today are unfamiliar with the winsome, compelling Gerber baby who has graced the labeling and advertising of the company since the early 1930s. In 1928 the company had solicited illustrations of a baby face for its ad campaign. Dorothy Hope Smith, an artist who specialized in drawing children, submitted a simple, unfinished, charcoal sketch, indicating she could finish the sketch if it were accepted. Again according to the company narrative, Gerber executives were so taken with the simple line drawing of an infant's head that they acquired it as it was. The illustration proved so popular that Gerber adopted it as its official trademark in 1931, and offered consumers copies for ten cents.[8]

Mass-producing any industrial product, especially in the Depression 1930s when consumer purchasing slowed to a minimum, meant establishing and expanding a steady market of buyers by acquainting the public to products through such ad campaigns. Gerber, like other manufacturers of new products, found it necessary to educate and persuade the public not only to feel comfortable enough to buy and use baby food, but to acclimate and familiarize people with the manner in which it was packaged and presented, the metal cans as well as the labeling. Since fully automated canning factories, supplying canned foodstuffs for consumers at reasonable prices, had been in operation for only a relatively short while, Americans still held lingering suspicions about the quality of canned goods. Although it had been two decades since Congress had passed the Pure Food and Drug Law, some remembered well the days of adulterated and spoiled foods concealed by opaque packaging.

Further, Americans in the first part of the 20th Century were still becoming acquainted with mass advertising designed to create new needs where none had existed before, or to promote products, such as Gerber baby food, which responded to and allowed for a more fast-paced life brought on by technological innovation. With the mass production and advertising of goods, memorable packaging and branding became an essential part of the product, "an integral part of the commodity itself."[9] The Gerber Baby early on became just that: an indivisible part of the commodity, allowing the Gerber Products Company to bypass such traditional middlemen as grocers and to appeal directly to women as dietitians or as mothers.

Dorothy Hope Smith's sketch of the Gerber baby.

By playing on the guilt of parents, especially mothers, by presenting medical doctors as the ultimate baby experts, and by positing the uncontested assumption that commercially prepared foods are superior to those cooked at home, Gerber advertising in the 1930s (which I discuss in detail elsewhere[10]) successfully imbued its products with qualities of exceptional purity and wholesomeness, convenience and modernity, and scientific efficiency. A survey of 1930s issues of the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* and *Ladies Home Journal* helps reveal how Gerber quickly undertook an ambitious national campaign to convert health professionals and consumers to its baby foods. In its earliest years of advertising Gerber focused on helping consumers and dietitians become comfortable with the idea of using canned goods in general and Gerber products in particular, and persuading women that it was in their best interest, and in their babies' interest, to use Gerber baby foods.

In addition, Gerber advertising indirectly or directly advocated the earlier and earlier introduction of these foods. Many ads referred to the use of solids at three months or earlier. Under the above mentioned photo of "Mrs. Dan Gerber" and her daughter Paula, for example, the caption notes that "Paula began to eat Gerber Strained Cereal at 3 months, and had her first Gerber's Strained Vegetables at 3½ months."[11] (This is in contrast to the 1990s creation story that mentions that the mother is feeding peas to her "seven month old," an age no doubt assigned in light of our contemporary standards of introducing fruits and vegetables only after four to six months of age.) Gerber's competitors contributed to this trend as well.[12] Not only did specific ad copy and photographs encour-

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MILK PASTEURIZATION AND FOOD IRRADIATION

A REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

by Tobias A. Ten Eyck

Toby Ten Eyck is assistant professor of sociology at Michigan State University and is associated with the National Food Safety and Toxicology Center there. He grew up near Coos Bay, Oregon and came to MSU in 1999. His PhD. dissertation at Louisiana State University applied the symbolic interactionist perspective to analyze U.S. media coverage of the food irradiation controversy. Prof. Ten Eyck spoke to our group last September 17, comparing the cultural valuation of cuisines in Louisiana and Michigan. The journal Rural Sociology *has just published his article "Managing Food: Cajun Cuisine in Economic and Cultural Terms."*

At the end of the nineteenth century, two technologies became available to preserve and protect the U.S. food supply. Both have been the center of heated public debates, though one has become an integral component of our food landscape, while the other is largely unused. These technologies— pasteurization and irradiation— illustrate the process of making public claims and setting social agendas in our society. Here, I want to offer a brief description, analysis, and interpretation of the trajectories of these technologies. I gathered data from newspaper reports and historical treatises on pasteurization and irradiation, as well as interviews with some of the individuals who have been involved in the public debate surrounding irradiation.

Pasteurizing Milk: From Big News to No News

The idea of using heat to kill bacteria was put forward by Louis Pasteur and associates in the mid-19th Century, based on Pasteur's observations of the role played by microorganisms in causing diseases. By the 1880s, pasteurization was being touted as a possible process to safeguard the milk supply, though various individuals and groups were concerned that it was just another way to adulterate milk. The adulteration of milk and other food stuffs was a major concern at this period in U.S. history, and various social movements, including the Pure Food movement, began at this time. The Pure Food group was the impetus behind the founding of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

In 1893, Nathan Straus, an important player in New York City politics and business, opened a pasteurized milk depot in one of the poorer sections of New York City. The depot was meant to offer pasteurized milk to families with infants and young children that did not have the resources to home-

pasteurize their milk. By 1900, Straus had opened a number of depots around New York City, in addition to demonstrating his technique in various European countries. The New York City health department reported declining infant mortality rates where pasteurized milk was available, and Straus was often portrayed in the *New York Times* as a hometown hero.

This positive press, though, did not stop others from attacking Straus and his pasteurized milk. One of the main concerns with milk at this time was the spread of tuberculosis, yet certain scientists argued that there was no proof that humans could contract tuberculosis from drinking milk, so that pasteurization was unneeded. Others in the medical community contended that pasteurizing made milk non-nutritious and indigestible, especially for infants. Larsen and White[1] summarized the concerns as follows: pasteurization would kill desirable properties within the milk, it would be costly, negatively affect the flavor and creaming properties of milk, and it would promote unclean practices within the dairies.

Straus continued to operate the milk depots during the summer months while receiving both positive and negative press for his efforts. When a law was introduced in 1907 before New York state legislators to make the pasteurization of milk mandatory, opposition from various milk producers and health officials defeated the bill, though Straus continued to push his agenda. When he was personally attacked by the *New York Sun* for his work shortly after the defeat of the pasteurized milk bill, his attempt to close the milk depots was diverted by numerous charity organizations, and opposition to pasteurization began to slowly ebb. By 1915, pasteurization was gaining wide acceptance, and by the end of World War I, it rarely gained media coverage any longer.

Irradiation: A Technology Without a Hero

While pasteurization was introduced by the middle of the 1800s, the use of ionizing radiation to preserve certain food stuffs was not far behind. The first patent for food irradiation was given in 1905 to J. Appleby and A. J. Banks in England[2], though adoption of this technique was slow. Irradiation was first tried on a commercial level around 1917 to keep cigar beetles

What is Food Irradiation?

Food that is irradiated has been briefly bombarded with electrons, with x-rays, or with gamma rays from radioactive cobalt or cesium. The process destroys microscopic and other organisms (such as insects) that can spoil food. It does not destroy viruses, like those that spread hepatitis, or prions, like those suspected in mad cow disease. Vitamin loss is minimal, and the food itself does not become radioactive.

The U.S. Army pioneered irradiation of fresh food to try to prolong its shelf life. In 1963, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration initiated a regime of rules to allow irradiation in order to reduce insects in foods, microbes in spices, parasites in pork, and to retard spoilage in fruits and vegetables. The first commercial food irradiation plant in the U.S. began operation in Florida in 1992 for treatment of strawberries.

In February 2000, the FDA and the Dept. of Agriculture approved the irradiation of red meat to combat coliform bacteria. After one year, Marian Burros wrote in the *New York Times* this past February 28, only about 1,500 stores in the U.S. had begun to offer irradiated ground beef. Consumer reaction to the treated food, which must be labeled with the radura symbol (shown on page 4), has been jittery. Omaha Steaks declines to inform readers of its catalogs and web pages that its beef is irradiated. The National Food Processors Association and the Grocery Manufacturers of America are lobbying the FDA to permit the use of the label "cold pasteurized" as an alternative to "irradiated," since the former has received much more favorable response in consumer tests. "Pasteurization is a nice, very positive word," a spokesperson said.

– R.K.S.

from wreaking havoc on cigar shipments. X-ray machines were used, but the technology at that point was insufficiently developed and could not hold up to commercial demands. It was not until the dawn of the atomic age that irradiation became a plausible commercial venture, and in 1947 Brasch and Huber published a paper in *Science* touting the benefits of irradiated food items ranging from oysters to vegetables.

It was not long before a rebuttal was presented. In 1951, Proctor and Goldblith published an article in *Food Technology*— now a major forum for proponents of food irradiation— warning that irradiation was not a cure-all for foodborne pathogens. In addition, they argued that if there were ever an industrial accident at an irradiation facility, the ionizing materials used to kill harmful organisms might also harm or kill workers. Still, in the 1960s, with very little fanfare, the FDA approved irradiation for spices and potatoes. By 1970, Canada and the Soviet Union had joined the U.S. in allowing some foods to be irradiated.[3]

The debate has continued in the technical and academic journals. Some studies show irradiated foods might cause cancer[4], while others argue that irradiation could help feed the world.[5] With so little middle ground on the issue, this was a topic that fit current media logic[6], and by the 1980s it was being covered by the popular press. This coverage involved sources from industry, research institutions, and consumer groups. Such a long standing debate implies the development of repertoires within these organizations that would help coordinate activities so that a unified message would be displayed, while reporters have profited from sustaining the debate.

An analysis of these trajectories highlights the importance of *claimsmakers*. When Nathan Straus stepped forward to support milk pasteurization with his pocketbook and name, this technology received a tremendous boost and was able to weather a great deal of negative press at a time when many consumers were concerned with adulterated food. Food irradiation, on the other hand, has not received the backing of a popular and charismatic spokesperson. Regardless of the efficiency of the technology, it seems that someone or some organization that is highly respected and visible would need to take a stand in favor of irradiation if it is to gain the kind of public support that was eventually accorded to pasteurization.

However, such claimsmakers can work either for or against a technology, as evidenced by Meryl Streep putting the dangers of pesticides on the front page of many newspapers. The rise in the popularity, or at least notoriety, of various consumer activists (e.g., Jeremy Rifkin, Ralph Nader, Michael Jacobsen), while trust in governmental and scientific spokespersons has decreased, has given this group an extra advantage in our media saturated society. Someone who opposes governmental advice or policy is no longer automatically seen as anti-American, but often as someone who has taken the trouble to protect the American public from corrupt industrial practices. Even if they are proven wrong, these individuals are often treated as concerned voices in an ever changing consumer environment replete with toxicological and microbiological dangers.

When Food and Technology Overlap

These two cases also point to the importance of cultural boundaries. Food is an important component of our self image and cultural belonging, while we also enjoy our technological innovations (e.g., space travel, TV remote controllers, microwaves, automobiles). However, this does not mean we are comfortable when these two cultural spheres overlap, especially in new

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MR. FRANK P. GLAZIER OF CHELSEA, MICHIGAN

A WORLD COOKSTOVE MAGNATE

by Louis William Doll

Emeritus Prof. Doll, age 90, retired from the history department at Delta College in 1977 and resides in nearby Bay City, MI. He grew up in Chelsea and Ann Arbor, and earned a doctorate in history at the University of Michigan in 1937. In 1992, he published his book Less Than Immortal: The Rise and Fall of Frank Porter Glazier of Chelsea, Michigan.

I was astonished to learn that the commanders of both armies in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, General Kuropotkin of the Russian Army and General Oyama in Manchuria, warmed their tents with stoves manufactured at the Glazier Stove Company of Chelsea, Michigan. At the time, Frank P. Glazier's company was the largest of its kind in the world, and it was selling stoves all over the United States and in Europe and Asia.

The Rise of a Cookstove Empire

Frank Porter Glazier was born in Jackson, Michigan in 1862 and moved with his family to Chelsea in 1867. Three years later his father George, a pharmacist, established a drug store. A couple of years after that George Glazier joined with a Mr. Noyes in adding a bank to the institution, and soon bought out his partner to become sole proprietor of the bank-drug store. This is where young Frank got his introduction to the drug business and explains why he studied pharmacy at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, 15 miles to the east.

There is little evidence, but Frank undoubtedly worked in the store and bank when he got old enough. He kept his hand in on both until he, with three other men, organized the stove company in 1890.

How he happened to hit upon the idea of oil cookstoves is not known, but it was one of those inventions whose time had come. Fuel oil or kerosene was cheap, and it saved the housewife from firing up the old wood or coal stove in the middle of the hot days of summer. By 1892, the Stove Company was prospering. It was reported in July of that year that the company had purchased five train carloads of crates.

A campaign portrait of Frank P. Glazier.
From *The B & B Way*, courtesy of Bentley Historical Library.

This meant that the company was now shipping out stoves, in addition to catering to the local market. Later that year, Glazier bought out Strong and the other partners, and became sole proprietor.

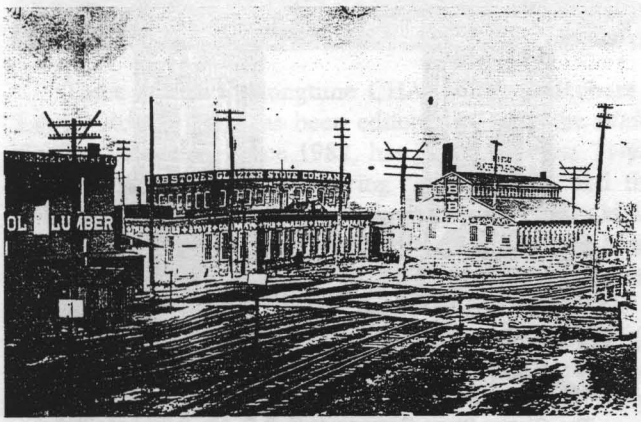
Although the year 1893 was one of terrible depression in the United States, the Stove Works didn't immediately suffer. The *Chelsea Standard* reported in August that the company

> has added to its already extensive line of machinery a ten ton E. W. Bliss Toggle Drawing Press. This press is used for the manufacture of oil stove tanks, wash bowls, pans, milk kettle breasts, tea kettle bodies, sauce pans, buckets, scoops, cuspadors, trays, dust pans, brass and copper goods, etc. This press covers a floor space over all of 80 × 80 inches, extreme height to top of gear 113 inches, weight of balance wheel 900 pounds.

The following month the editor of the *Standard* wrote:

> Orders are coming in freely at the stove works and a number of men have been added to the force. This factory has not shut down during the hard times, but has kept a large number of men at work all the season. Would that Chelsea had more of similar enterprises.

It is important here to note what Porter's contemporaries were doing. In 1893, the terrible Pullman strike occurred in Chicago. George Pullman had established a model in his manufacture of Pullman railroad cars; he built homes for his workers and provided stores for them to purchase their needs. The



A photo of the Glazier Stove Company, circa 1900.
From Louis W. Doll, *Less Than Immortal.*

trouble was that the workers had nothing to say about conditions. During the depression of 1893, their pay was cut, their rents were raised, and the high prices in the stores were not reduced. The workers were treated just like peons. This was also the case in factories in the east, and in the coal and metal mines in both eastern and western states. The companies had no hesitation to use force, hiring Pinkerton agents to threaten strikers.

Now let us take a look at Mr. Glazier's policies. He fired strikers, but did not hire anybody to use violence. The men whom he employed were his neighbors with whom he walked the streets daily. At the height of the company's existence, he had an average of about 300 employees and was paying each about $10 per week. In 1899, the company was consolidated with a stove trust centered in Cleveland, Ohio.

With the huge amount of $3,000 in wages pouring into the small village of Chelsea every week, the Glazier workmen were content. They returned the favor by voting for Frank when he ran successfully for village president in 1898. The employees of the Stove Company were an important element in the Workingmen's Party, which was Glazier's organization. Eventually, he was elected as a state senator, and in 1905 he took office as State Treasurer.

Chelsea should remember Frank P. Glazier, for the town is decorated with his memorials. In 1899 he built the First Methodist Church from cut fieldstone, which is still today a beautiful building. Then he built the bank on the corner of Park and Main Streets in honor of his father, and it is really an architectural gem; in the 1990s, it was purchased for use as the 14th District Court and restored to its original opulence. His next projects were the Emily J. Glazier Home for Old People, the Glazier Water Tower (now the Chelsea Clock Tower), and Ann Arbor's first skyscraper, the seven-story office building on the north end of the west side of Main Street.

When the Panic of 1907 hit, Glazier was finishing the Welfare Building (now the offices of the *Chelsea Standard*), which was a recreation hall for Stove Company workers, with a gymnasium, showers and lockers, swimming pool, billiards, theater and reading room. (Most company workers commuted to Chelsea for the workweek each Monday from Detroit by special train, as rural Chelsea lacked skilled labor.)

Financial Ruin of a Company

The money panic of 1907 was Frank's nemesis. He had used his bank to finance his building projects, and extended himself by large sums borrowed from Detroit banks. In order to protect their equity during the panic, the bond performance holders insisted on throwing the bank and the stove company into bankruptcy. Using his position as State Treasurer, Frank had deposited some of the state's money in his own bank to finance his building projects. When he could not repay the state's money, he was sentenced to prison for embezzlement.

I have heard it said that the oil stove business was coming to an end at any rate, to be replaced by electricity and gas. That may well be true but that was some time away, and the oil stove business still had a future. It is entirely possible that Frank, if not removed from the scene, could have revived the business.

My family lived on Van Buren Street in Chelsea, and on Sunday evenings we frequently went to have supper with my mother's sister and two brothers who lived across from what at one time had been the offices of the Glazier Stove Company. My earliest recollections were of the great clock tower reaching up to the heavens with its glorious chimes. I was one year old in 1912 when Governor Osborne pardoned Glazier, and he was discharged from Jackson Prison and took the late trolley to his home on Cavanaugh Lake. I was 10 years old when he died on January 1, 1922. During that period he lived practically as a recluse at Cavanaugh Lake.

The Panic of 1907 had one good result, a bipartisan reform of the currency and banking system. It took five years to do it, but in 1913 the Federal Reserve System became the law of the land, allowing the amount of currency in circulation to be increased or reduced so as to promote stability and prevent panics. Unfortunately, it was too late to help Frank P. Glazier. ■

MATERIALS ON GLAZIER STOVES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

by Randy K. Schwartz

At the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library, I found an undated (c. 1900) catalog of the Glazier Stove Company. It was in box 9A of the Commercial Catalogs collection. The 80-page catalog was printed in Detroit and distributed by Prescott Bros. of Boston, general agents for the company's cookstoves in New England. It was addressed to a Miss Ida Seekell at 207 Second Street in Jackson, Michigan, most likely a retail agent herself.

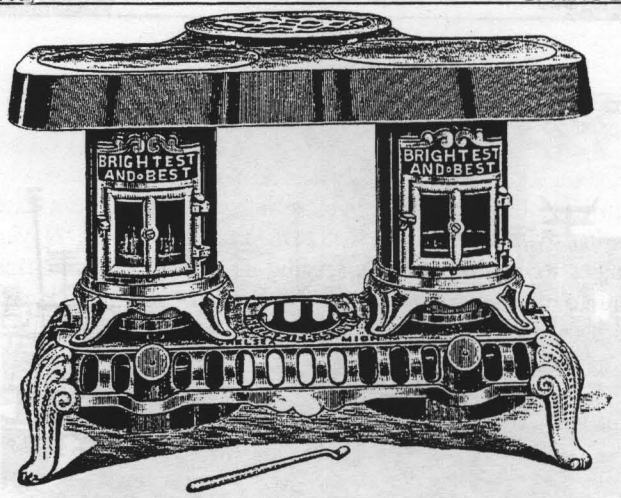
"B. & B.," for brightest and best, was the name of the line of stoves and ovens manufactured by Glazier. "Brightest because they outshine everything except the sun," the catalog boasted. "Best because nothing but the best materials are used in their construction. Because only the best modern machinery and skilled labor are employed in their manufacture. Because we have spared no expense to make them the best. Because they are built in the best equipped Oil Stove Factory in the world." The catalog did caution, "We ship all goods at 'owner's risk' of breakage, unless otherwise noted," for the products were sent by rail, fully assembled in wooden crates. The cookstoves listed were all roughly one foot tall and priced at $5 or more. Also offered were extension tops, heaters, tanks, gas tubing, wicks and sundries.

For telegraphic orders, a clever system of code words was used. For instance, the code word "Baste" meant "ship via the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern Railroad." The word "Banquet" meant, "please ship us at once, by freight."

The code word "Fricacé" was reserved for the company's top-of-the-line product, the B. & B. No. 9-3 oil cookstove with three burners. Priced at $9, it was made of nickel and brass, stood 14 inches tall and weighed 45 pounds. For another $2.50, you could get a double-lined oven to fit this stove as an extension.

Also in the Bentley collection is a delightful piece of corporate propaganda directed at "dealers and jobbers," entitled *The B & B Way: a Collection of Truthful Words and Pictures Carefully "Assembled" to Relate Our Way of Making "B & B" Oil Stoves and Heaters and Explaining Why They are So Much Better Than the Kind That are Not "B & B"*. The 24-page pamphlet relates the Glazier Stove Company story and includes many photos as well as fanciful drawings of its factories and offices, workers and owners.

"Good workmen do not know how to do poor work," the pamphlet enthuses. The company's employees are superior, the piece maintains, because they and their families reside in "a wholesome, healthful environment" in "the beautiful little country town of Chelsea, Mich." B. & B. stoves are made of sheet brass, the text notes with pride, rather than the cheaper tin, which rusts quickly. At the Glazier works, everything is made from scratch starting with raw materials like steel, iron and lumber (for the shipping



The Glazier Stove Company's B. & B. No. 9-3 oil cookstove.
From the company catalog, courtesy of Bentley Historical Library.

crates). The company claims a production capacity of 500-600 stoves a day with a workforce of 150-200 mechanics. Accounting for this intense pace, the booklet notes, "A large portion of our work is paid for by the piece. This method has proven very advantageous both to ourselves and to our men, as it insures the lowest possible cost of production while capable workmen are able to make much higher wages.

"Not an action is lost," the pamphlet continues, waxing poetic, "not a motion wasted in forming casting moulds; each man works with the regularity and precision of clockwork mechanism." Noting that the factory is an open shop combining union and nonunion labor, it is asserted, "The best of feeling prevails between employees and employers— no employee has ever complained of injustice or ill-treatment."

The Graduate Library of the main UM collection owns a copy of Louis W. Doll's 160-page book, *Less Than Immortal: The Rise and Fall of Frank Porter Glazier of Chelsea, Michigan.* Prof. Doll's book, self-published in 1992, is largely based on local news archives, as no significant corporate archives have survived. His 16 chapters are grouped into sections dealing with the "background and development," "years of power," and "downfall" of Glazier and his empire. There are also photos and illustrations of company products and history, and appendices containing historical letters and other records.

In 1897, we learn in Prof. Doll's book, Glazier claimed he was producing a stove every three minutes. In a single week in October three carloads of B. & B. stoves and other odd lots, one bound for Russia, were shipped out by rail. In December, another carload went out for Australia. By 1899, the pace was up to two minutes per stove. A local paper carried a story about a woman in Seoul, Korea who had written about her B. & B. stove.

In Spring 1905, the company began running 10 hours a day, and Saturday half-holidays were cancelled in alternate weeks. In 1907, on the eve of the panic, it was reported that it took a train a mile long to ship out Glazier Stoves. The stoves were being shipped everywhere, from the famous Wanamaker's Department Store on Broadway in Manhattan, to ports in China. ■

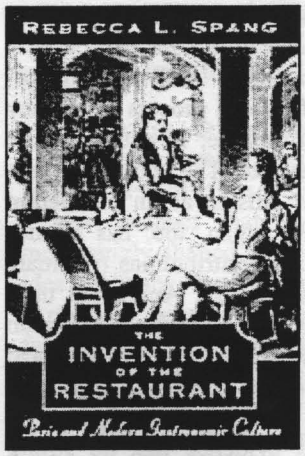
MORSELS & TIDBITS

Three cheers for longtime CHAA member **Robert E. Lewis**! Robert, who has been editor-in-chief at the *Middle English Dictionary* since 1982, has just guided the 71-year project to completion by serving forth the 13th and final volume of the dictionary. The University of Michigan kicked off a series of scholarly and celebratory meetings in March to mark the event. For culinary scholars there is also cause to celebrate, for the dictionary is an indispensable tool in tracing the evolution of our cooking terminology (try looking up *chawdwyn*, *raucoles*, *sotilté*, *soupet* or *zucarine*). Word goes that the online version will keep Robert busy a few more years; then, a well-earned retirement.

Our founding member **Jan Longone** has made a splash with her "Early Black-Authored American Cookbooks" in the inaugural issue of the journal *Gastronomica* (University of California Press, February 2001). Jan's piece, which launches an envisioned regular column "Notes on Vintage Volumes," introduces culinary antiquarians to the previously unnoticed *A Domestic Cookbook* by Malinda Russell (Paw Paw, Michigan, 1866), now the earliest known unequivocally African-American work devoted solely to cookery. In the same issue, Ann Arbor's **T. R. Durham** writes on "Salt, Smoke, and History," a topic he addressed at our April 1999 meeting. Among the other historical articles are "Turtle Soup" by Amy B. Trubek, "The *Olla*" by Alicia Ríos, "Sicilian Cheese in Medieval Arab Recipes" by Charles Perry, and "'Eat Your Words!': Seventeenth-Century Edible Letterforms" by Gillian Riley. Editor Darra Goldstein opens the issue with an overview and manifesto, "Food Studies Comes of Age."

Joan Nathan, a University of Michigan alumna whose books, broadcasts and other work explaining Jewish cookery are widely admired, returned to Ann Arbor on March 7. The Frankel Center for Judaic Studies sponsored her lecture at the Rackham Building on "The Social History of Jewish Cooking in America." Zingerman's Deli later hosted a signing party for her new book, *The Foods of Israel Today* (New York: Knopf, 2001; 496 pp., cloth $40), which includes recipes and discussions of hundreds of Jewish, Christian and Muslim dishes.

The French word *restaurant* originally meant "restorative," specifically a healthy broth or *bouillon* made in a sealed pot from vegetables and chicken or beef. **Rebecca L. Spang**, a lecturer in modern European history at University College, London, argues that the first person to apply the term to a place where one might quaff such a broth was Mathurin Roze de Chantoiseau, a businessman who, vowing to serve "only those foods that either maintain or re-establish health," opened what he called a *restaurant* on Rue St.-Honoré, Paris in 1766. But Spang, in her scholarly and iconoclastic book *The Invention of the Restaurant: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000; 325 pp., $35 cloth), shows that what most characterized these new establishments was not what they served, but how they fit into society. Unlike inns,



taverns, *tables d'hote* and *traiteurs*, the *restaurant* was a place where one could select what one liked from a list of entries, eat at a private table at a chosen hour, and dine alone, or with one's own companions. In the restaurant, then, for the first time in world history, the diner had the illusion of being severed from the social fabric, for he was removed from the brawl of the mob and the din of the kitchen, and was free to contemplate and satisfy his own taste preferences. Readers might recall Spang's talk "All the World's a Restaurant: Gastronomics of Tourism and Travel" at the University of Michigan Food in Global History Conference in October 1996.

But how did restaurant cooking turn into "gastronomics"? According to **Amy B. Trubek** in her *Haute Cuisine: How the French Invented the Culinary Profession* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000; 200pp, $24.95 cloth), a key shift had occurred by the 1820s, as French chefs cooked down their restorative broths and fashioned them into stocks and reduction sauces. Trubek, a PhD. anthropologist but also a Cordon Bleu-trained professional chef who teaches in the Continuing Education Department at the New England Culinary Institute, argues that a cuisine based on a lengthy vocabulary of stocks and sauces required an elaborate "grammar," a system of rules formulated by professionals like Brillat-Savarin, Carême, and Escoffier. Gastronomy is thus simply a grammatical language of cookery that is no longer intelligible to the common cook. ■

Contact *Repast* editor Randy Schwartz for further information about these opportunities:

June 11-15, 2001: "Reading Cookbooks as Social History," a seminar offered by Barbara Ketcham Wheaton, one of the founders of the Culinary Historians of Boston. Held at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Cambridge, MA.

June 16, 2001: An English team of four people, currently researching and restoring a 1639 room in the kitchens of King Charles I, will speak about these kitchens, focusing on 17th-Century confectionery. Sponsored by Historic Foodways Society of the Delaware Valley. Held at Pennsbury Manor (the home of William Penn), Morristown, PA.

October 27, 2001: Beginner Hearth Cooking Class. Introduction to the intricacies of 18th Century open-hearth cooking. (An advanced class is given in the Spring). Held at Gunston Hall Plantation (the home of George Mason), Mason Neck, VA.

October 2001: Seventh Symposium of the International Commission for Research into European Food History; theme, "Eating Out in Europe: Eating and Drinking Outside the Home Since the Late 18th Century." Held at Free University, Brussels, Belgium.

A ROUNDUP OF OUR FALL AND WINTER MEETINGS

Toby Ten Eyck, assistant professor of sociology at Michigan State University, spoke to us September 17 on "The Cultural Value-Added Process of Cuisine: Lessons from the Foodways of Louisiana and Michigan." Louisianans he has interviewed focus on process when they are asked what makes their food unique: how to combine ingredients, how to prepare dishes, etc. The cooks are quite conscious of the history of their cuisine as an interaction among diverse ethnic groups. Michigan, too, has ethnics who have made important culinary contributions (German, French, African, Cornish, Finnish, Polish, Arab), but their cuisine has generally not been commercialized, especially on a regional or national scale. Michiganians asked about local food tend to list isolated ingredients (cherries, whitefish, asparagus) rather than cooking traditions and repertoires, which Prof. Ten Eyck takes as evidence that no strong cultural scheme exists to add value to Michigan foods by highlighting their distinctiveness. Such a value-added process can only result from cultural history and in turn further shapes that culture, making Louisiana today world-famous for its food.

Veteran members **Bill and Yvonne Lockwood** organized our October 15 banquet at Talal's in Dearborn, one of the finest of the many Lebanese restaurants in southeastern Michigan. By way of orienting us they wrote, "The appetizer course, called *meza*, is considerably more important in the Middle East than elsewhere, and this is especially true of Lebanon, where a *meza* can consist of as many as 50 different dishes." Our *meza* included *fattoosh* (bread salad), *mihshi waraq 'inab* (stuffed grape leaves), *fatayer bi sabanekh* (spinach pies), *hummus beiruti* (chickpea dip with fava beans), *baba ghannooj* (eggplant dip), *labni* (drained yogurt), *kibbi nayyi* (ground raw lamb with cracked wheat and spices), and *kibbi miqleeyi* (like the *nayyi* version but fried). Entrées included *lahm mishwee* (lamb shish kabab), *kafta mishweeyi* (ground lamb shish kabab), and *shish tawook* (marinated chicken shish kabab), all accompanied with Lebanese rice.

CHAA member **Barbara DeWolfe**, since 1999 curator of manuscripts at the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, shared some of her findings and ongoing projects with a slideshow on November 19. Culinary gems at Clements include a 1698 cookery manuscript that appears to be English, and a copy of the first published American Jewish cookbook written in English (Esther Levy, 1871). A trove of culinary information also lurks in items such as letters, household journals, cooking class notes, sales receipts, menus, business cards, drawings and photos. Clements has papers from at least two U.S. Civil War cooks, and a manuscript from a Filipina woman describing food shortages and famine on the islands a century ago. As DeWolfe has pointed out, "History would read differently if women's history were included." Volunteers are invited to donate family materials to Clements or to help examine its manuscripts for culinary references.

Member **Shirley Tong Parola** spoke January 21 on "Hawaii's Cuisine: Metaphor for its Diversity." Shirley, who was born in Hawaii, teamed with her daughter Lisa to write the cookbook *Remembering Diamond Head, Remembering Hawaii* (1999). As she describes it, Hawaiians enjoy a "pidgin cuisine" thanks to borrowings from many cultures. For instance, the beef stew that is still popular today was a product of Chinese cooks brought from California to prepare meals for Mexican *panioles* (cowboys) working American-owned cattle ranches a century ago. Elegant Chinese *dim sum* became simplified in difficult islands conditions, while the Japanese *wakame*, a simple dish of *nori* (seaweed) and raw fish, grew more elegant with ingredients like sesame oil from China and hot sauce from Korea. On island plantations where Japanese labored, the traditional rice ball became Hawaiian *musubi*, a rectangular slab of rice cooked and pickled to withstand the hot sun, and laced with bits of carrot and burdock, or perhaps a pickled plum, before being wrapped in *nori*. Today, *musubi* has been Americanized, the bits of vegetable or fruit replaced with SPAM and the whole thing wrapped in clear plastic for sale as a quick snack.

"Our Passion for the Stinking Rose" was the title of the February 18 talk on garlic by Cleveland authors **Linda and Fred Griffith**, who last addressed us in April 1997 on Dutch ovens. Their recent book, *Garlic, Garlic, Garlic*, contains scores of interesting recipes and other information. This ancient plant originated east of the Caspian Sea, although a USDA-led expedition there in 1989 to recover the ancestral variety failed because of recent overgrazing. There are apparent garlic references in the Bible, and an ancient Egyptian document describes a rite in which garlic was used to detect if a woman was fertile. Pliny catalogued the plant's use against infertility, tapeworms, pallor and other ailments, and garlic has been unearthed at Pompeii and other sites. English notables despised garlic because of its odor, John Ruskin even citing this as a formidable barrier between the classes. Amelia Simmons, author of *American Cookery* (1796), focused more on the herb's medicinal than culinary uses, but one 1799 U.S. cookbook lists a cucumber salad recipe using garlic. In WW2, garlic from the Gilroy, CA area began to be dehydrated and used in provisions for GIs overseas. The annual Gilroy Garlic Festival has helped make eating garlic in the USA more fun, fashionable and well-informed. Among the varieties brought by the Griffiths were Spanish Roja, German Red, and Music Pink.

Dave Boutette, a Marketing Manager at the Whole Foods outlet in Ann Arbor, shared his knowledge of "Exotic Produce" with us on March 18. Using a papaya, Dave made the important point that one of the main ingredients missing from American cooking today is not the "exotic" but rather the subtle flavor. He called the lime "one of the most underappreciated fruits in the world. It should be on every table next to the salt and pepper." Sometimes, attitude decides everything: the Chinese gooseberry was exported to England in 1847 and the US in 1904, but the luscious berry failed to catch on in those parts until it was marketed as "kiwi fruit" in the 1960s. Dave also showed us or discussed

varieties of mango, plantain, red banana, apple banana, persimmon, starfruit, *cherimoya* or "custard apple," *lai chi* or "leechee nut," coconut, sweet potato, yam, taro, purple varietal potato, burdock root, lotus root, celery root, horseradish, and chilies.

On April 22 at Zingerman's Deli in Ann Arbor, founding partner **Ari Weinzweig** gave us a taste of "Life on the Wild Side: The Story of Wild Rice in North America." Ari spent three days in northern Minnesota late last August observing and assisting the Ojibwa of the Leech Lake Indian Reservation in their annual harvest of *mahnomen* (wild rice) from the shores of Cass Lake. Wild rice was the staple grain of native tribes across northern North America, who revered it as a sacred gift entrusted to them yearly by their Creator. Rice was traded widely between tribes, and prompted some intertribal wars for control of harvest beds. Every late summer in many tribes, the "rice chief" decided when to begin the harvest. Wild rice (an aquatic grass, not a true rice) is still gathered in two-man canoes, one man knocking the grains from their stalks into the boat, the other man poling forward. Harvested rice was cured (protected from mold) by being sun-dried or parched in trays over open fires; in wet weather, it was instead moistened or, after Europeans arrived, boiled in iron kettles. Husks were removed by "jigging" (dancing) on the seeds and then winnowing them. Nowadays, most parching and threshing is done with mechanical equipment by non-Indian small-time operators who buy the harvests. Over 85% of what is sold today as "wild rice" is actually machine-cultivated on paddies by agribusinesses encroaching on the Indians' livelihood. ■

REVERSAL OF FORTUNE *continued from page 5*

ways that are not fully explained. Milk pasteurization was being pushed at a time when adulterated foods were ubiquitous and there was a growing concern with the industry. Food irradiation has become visible at a time when nuclear technology in various uses has been seriously questioned.

These historical contexts, as well as the public's comfort level with the linkages between technology and food, impact the adoption of these types of innovations. Worries about biotechnology, at a time when many consumers are concerned with pesticides, insecticides, and the mad cow disease outbreak, are a reflection of this pattern. The food information wars are far from over. ■

Endnotes

1. Christian Larsen and William White, *Dairy Technology* (New York: Wiley, 1913).
2. Johannes F.Diehl, *Safety of Irradiated Foods* (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1995).
3. Ibid.
4. C. Bhaskaram and G. Sadasivan, "Effects of Feeding Irradiated Wheat to Malnourished Children," *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 28 (1975), pp. 130-135.
5. B. Chinsman, "Food Irradiation," *World Health* (March 1987), pp. 10-11.
6. David L. Altheide and Robert P. Snow, *Media Worlds in the Postjournalism Era* (Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter, 1991).

GERBER *continued from page 3*

age the notion that infants under four months need solid food, but the icon of the Gerber Baby itself contributed. The young appearance of the Gerber Baby gave and gives the impression that babies younger than four to six months of age should be eating solid foods.

It makes sense that Gerber and other baby food manufacturers would advocate the early introduction of their foods. They, of course, sought to create and expand sales of a new product that seemed tailor-made for a society increasingly shaped by technology and modernity. Once the idea of "baby food" in general, and Gerber baby food in particular, became a common part of American infant feeding practices, it was easy for mothers and for health and nutrition experts to assume that when it came to fruits and vegetables, the more the better and the earlier the better. This, then, was the wisdom that came to prevail in the mid-20th Century, and it would take a later generation of mothers and health professionals to significantly question it. ■

Endnotes

1. Gerber Company History at Gerber website, www.gerber.com. A similar version, one that gives Mrs. Gerber's given name as Dorothy, is recounted in Ellen Shapiro, "The Consultant Trap," *Inc.* 17 (December 1995), pp. 31-32.
2. "Food Industries Buy," *Business Week* (December 15, 1934), pp. 14, 16.
3. *History of the Fremont Canning Company and Gerber Products Company, 1901-1984* (Fremont, Michigan: Gerber Products Company, 1986). Publication found in the Gerber corporate archives, which are closed to the public. (This specific information was supplied to the author by Ms. Sherri Harris, Gerber archivist.)
4. Stephen S. Nisbet, *Contribution to Human Nutrition: Gerber Products Since 1928* (New York: The Newcomen Society in North America, 1954), p. 15.
5. See, for example, Walter W. Sackett Jr., M.D., *Bringing Up Babies: A Family Doctor's Practical Approach to Child Care* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), Chapter 6.
6. Judson Knight, "Gerber Products Company," in *Encyclopedia of Major Marketing Campaigns*, Thomas Riggs, ed. (Farmington, MI: The Gale Group, 2000), p. 667.
7. Mercedes M. Cardona, "WPP Brand Study Ranks Gerber 1st in U.S. Market," *Advertising Age* (October 5, 1998), p. 3.
8. At the start of the 21st Century, the Gerber baby continues to appear on all company packaging and advertising, including in its recently redesigned labels and new line of organic foods. Judann Pollack, "Gerber Starts New Ads as Agency Review Narrows," *Advertising Age* (December 16, 1996), p. 6.
9. Gerald B. Wadsworth, "Principles and Practice of Advertising," *A&S* (January 1913), p. 55, as quoted in Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), p. 32.
10. See Amy Bentley, "Inventing Baby Food: Gerber and the Discourse of Infancy in the United States," in Warren Belasco and Phillip Scranton, eds., *Food and Drink in Consumer Societies*, forthcoming, Routledge, 2001.
11. Elsewhere I have seen the baby's name given as "Sally." See Shapiro, "The Consultant Trap."
12. *Ladies Home Journal*, vol. 55 (December 1938), p. 99.

CHAA CALENDAR

May 20
(7-9pm at Walden Hills Community Room)
Sherry Sundling
"The History of Dorm Food"

July 22
Summer participatory picnic
"A Hawaiian Luau"
at Sherry Sundling's home
14055 Red Barn Circle,
Chelsea, MI
(details forthcoming)

Call for Volunteers

One or more volunteers are needed for these projects:

1. To gather notes on our Summer Picnic and write up a summary for *Repast*
2. To organize the CHAA archives and write up a summary of our history.

If you might be interested in either project, please contact Margot, Michael or Randy Schwartz.

REPAST
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Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor Volume XVII Number 2, Spring 2001

First Class