

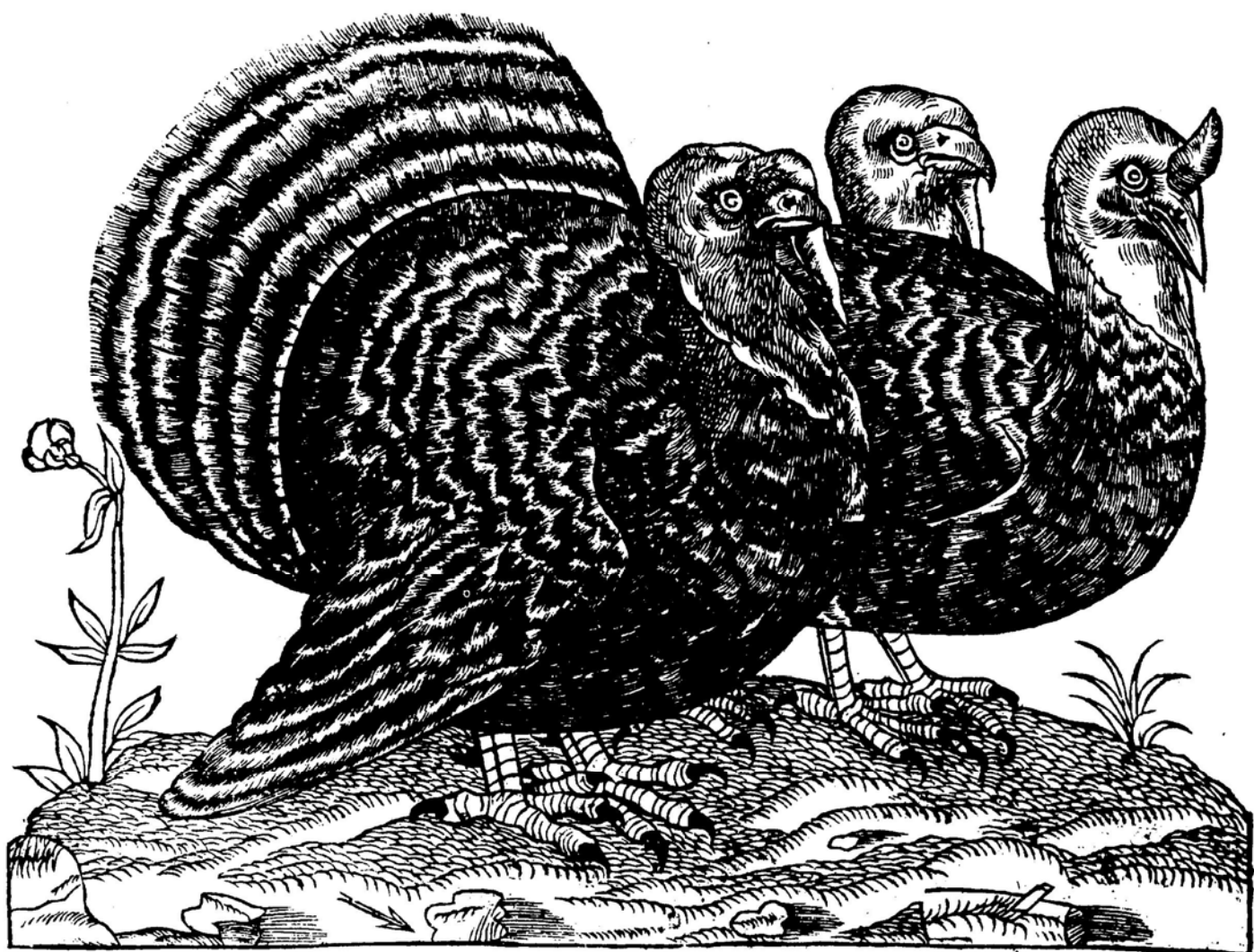


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Repast

Quarterly Publication of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

Foods of the New World



The North American wild turkey, based on a drawing by Pierre Belon in his *Histoire de la Nature des Oyseaux* (1555). From A. W. Schorger, *The Wild Turkey: Its History and Domestication* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966)

"CROPS OF THE AMERICAS" STAMPS

This past March 16, the U. S. Postal Service issued a series of five stamps on the theme "Crops of the Americas".

"We understand the influence American plants have on cuisines around the world", said Charles E. Bravo, a USPS Senior Vice President who presided over the dedication ceremony in New York City. "These stamps are a beautiful tribute to those plants", he noted, "and a great way to celebrate the rich history of our nation."

The crops depicted in the stamps had been cultivated in the Americas for centuries when Europeans first arrived in the New World. The stamp art includes ears of corn (*Zea mays*); red and green chili peppers (*Capsicum annuum*); lima beans (*Phaseolus lunatus*), scarlet runner beans (*P. coccineus*), and pinto and other common beans (*P. vulgaris*); various squashes (*Cucurbita spp.*); and the sunflower and its seeds (*Helianthus annuus*). All were indigenous to Central and South America except the sunflower, whose center of origin was in North America.

Stamp artist Steve Buchanan, of Winsted, CT, created the designs using slide photographs made by his wife Rita, a consultant for the stamp project. The slides document Rita Buchanan's research in the late 1970's on indigenous agricultural methods in the southwestern United States. ■

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CHAA WINTER PROGRAMS



FROM BABY FOOD TO COCKTAILS, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN

George F. Estabrook traced “The History of Citrus Fruit” in his talk to the CHAA on January 15. Estabrook, a University of Michigan professor of evolutionary biology who specializes in ethnobiology and economic botany, told us that the *Citrus* genus today includes some 30 species, of which about seven are commercially important. It was in Southeast Asia that people first began to protect wild species of citrus, probably about 20,000-30,000 years ago, and eventually to cultivate them, c. 5500 BCE. The origin of certain varieties is still controversial. Estabrook believes that the sweet orange originated in Indonesia as a cross between the mandarin (tangerine) and the pomelo (shaddock). The oranges introduced to the Mediterranean by Arab traders in the 900’s were likely all of the bitter “Seville” species, also originally from Indonesia. The sweet orange must have come to Europe later, about 1500, via Portuguese sea voyages to and from Asia. By the mid-1500’s, settlers had transplanted citrus to the Caribbean and Brazil. In the West Indies in the early 1800’s, the sweet orange and the pomelo were apparently crossed to produce the grapefruit, so called because its fruits grow in bunches like grapes. Estabrook also reviewed the origins and uses of the lemon, the common or “Persian” lime, the older “key” lime, and other species.

Ric Jewell, Restaurant Manager at Zingerman’s Roadhouse in Ann Arbor, served up “The Story of the Classic American Cocktail” on February 19. Jewell noted that in recent decades, cocktails had fallen out of favor because of the time involved in preparing them, the use of inferior ingredients—such as canned fruit juices—in mixing them, and the lowered social status of bartenders. But the Roadhouse has experimented with 60-70 historic cocktails, part of a national trend to rediscover these drinks. The word “cocktail” arose in what is now the eastern U.S. around 1800, but the details are in dispute. These drinks were used as before-dinner apéritifs or to relieve the morning blahs. An early example is the Sazerac of New Orleans, originally made with brandy and orange bitters; later, the brandy was replaced by rye whiskey and a touch of absinthe. Another classic is the Manhattan, made with equal parts sweet vermouth and rye whiskey (or bourbon in the South), with a splash of bitters. It was apparently invented at the Manhattan Club in New York about 1890. In the Old Country, whiskey had been distilled from barley mash, but Scots-Irish settlers in the western Appalachians improvised with rye mash, which was already being used by German immigrants to make schnapps. Following the 1794 Whiskey Rebellion, a tax revolt in western Pennsylvania, many of these farmer-distillers moved to what is now Kentucky and took to producing bourbon (named after Bourbon County), a form of whiskey made from corn mash. Bitters, originally a potion for upset stomachs, was found to impart balance to mixed drinks. Jewel also discussed the martini, mint julep, Ward 8, Bloody Mary, mai tai, and other drinks.

Our March 19 meeting was a “show and tell” affair. Members spoke briefly about the cookbooks that have most influenced their lives and their thinking. Some of those

mentioned include the *Cookbook of the Young Ladies’ Cooking Club* (Monroe, MI, 1884); Ruth Berolzheimer, *Culinary Arts Institute Encyclopedic Cookbook* (editions 1948-88); General Mills Foods, *Betty Crocker’s Picture Cookbook* (1950); Mildred O. Knopf, *The Perfect Hostess Cookbook* (1950); Good Housekeeping (Waverly Book Co.), *Cookery Compendium* (London, 1952); Waverly Root, *The Food of France* (1958); Julia Child et al., *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (1961); June Roth, *How to Cook Like a Jewish Mother* (1969); Chrissa Paradissis, *The Best Book of Greek Cookery* (Athens, 1972); Ellen Buchman Ewald, *Recipes for a Small Planet* (1973); Perla Meyers, *The Seasonal Kitchen: A Return to Fresh Foods* (1973); and Southern Living, *Cook Quick* (1986).

Wearing a calico-type period dress, Clements Library docent Susan Odom spoke on April 16 about “The Buckeye Cookbook: Plucky Housewives, Pickled Mangoes and a Million Copies”. In conjunction with her earlier work as a historical re-enactor, Odom amassed a collection of over 40 different editions of this popular farm-oriented cookbook. It began life in 1876 as a fundraiser for the Congregationalist Church of Marysville, OH, intended for sale at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Recipes were donated by Ohio women and their friends, and also lifted from earlier cookbooks like that of Amelia Simmons. In 1877, rights to the book were purchased by one of the principals, Estelle Woods, and her husband. The couple printed and sold over a million copies in successive editions through 1905, including one called *The Dixie Cookbook* that sold widely in the South. Easter Jelly, an 1877 recipe that Odom prepared for us, is very Victorian: a sweet, colorful, labor-intensive concoction of gelatin and blancmange molded in eggshells. Broad social changes are revealed in the way the book evolved; for example, the 1890 edition had a new dedication “to those American housewives who cannot afford to employ a French cook.” The section on meat dishes ballooned the following year, seemingly reflecting advances in food refrigeration and transport.

“From Pablum to *Pad Thai*: The Twisted History of the Big Business of Baby Food” was the title of Margaret Kenda’s presentation on May 21. Books written by Kenda, a writer in Sudbury, MA, include critiques of the social, historical, and health aspects of the nursing and feeding of infants and toddlers. With the aid of many illustrations and recipes, she reviewed the history of baby food, starting with feeding-cups from ancient times. Cookbooks of the 1800’s, exemplified by those of Sarah Josepha Hale, typically had a section on “foods for infants and invalids”. Since sensual pleasure was considered inappropriate for infants, their food tended to be very plain, usually flour-based “pap”. Due to dress and other customs, nursing was difficult for well-off women. In the 1860’s, baby formulae that were thought healthier than mother’s milk were developed by Isabella Beeton in England and Henri Nestlé in Switzerland. The later introduction of Nestlé formula in the Third World without proper understanding of local customs led to some public health disasters. Pablum, a palatable, easily digested infant cereal made with grains and other nutrients, was perfected by three pediatricians in Toronto in 1930. The Gerber, Beech-Nut, and Heinz firms in the U.S. began to offer cans and jars of strained vegetables and fruits as baby foods in the late 1920’s and early 1930’s. Today, there is a trend toward parents making baby food at home. Celebrity chefs have been known to feed their infants watered-down versions of adult foods, even spicy *pad thai*. ■

KING OF FRUITS: THE PINEAPPLE IN EARLY AMERICA

by Fran Beauman

Francesca Beauman, 28, from England, is the author of The Pineapple: King of Fruits (London: Chatto & Windus, 2005). The book, which is due out in a paperback edition this December, takes up the history of the fruit in both the U.S. and U.K. It is based in part on theses that Fran wrote at Cambridge University, where she graduated with a first class degree in History. Currently, she writes and hosts children's history and comedy programs for British television, and divides her time between London and Los Angeles.

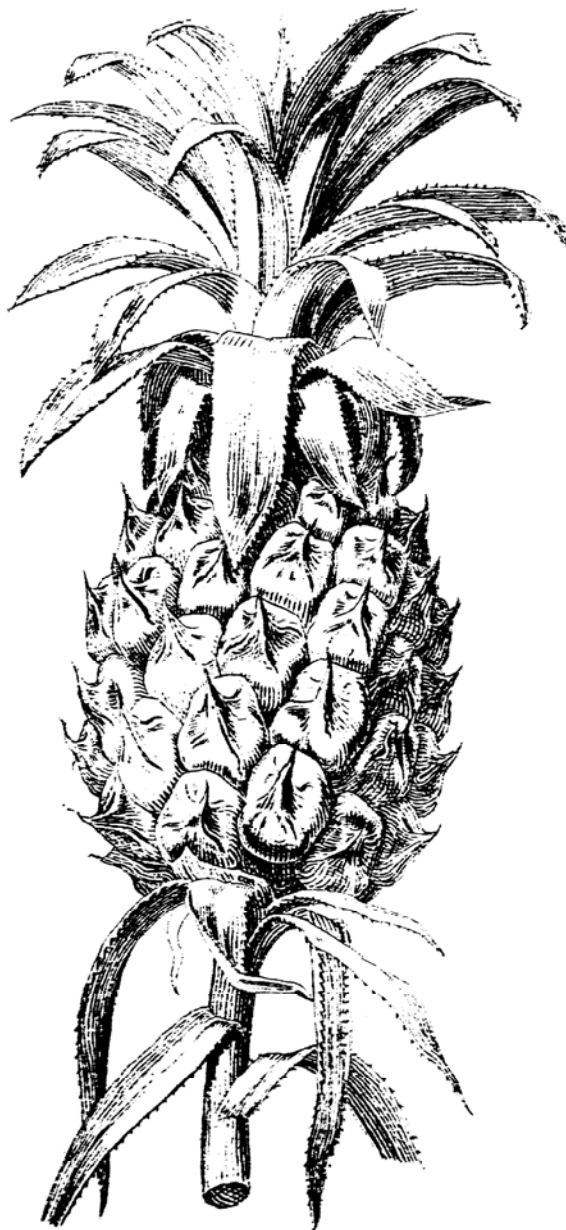
The earliest known reference to the presence of a pineapple in North America comes in the works of William Strachey. One of hundreds of brave or deluded men willing to sail from England into the all-but-unknown, where the climate was harsh, the resources limited, and the natives unfriendly, Strachey arrived in Jamestown in 1609. He had heard tell of a “dainty” and “nice” fruit that looked a little like a pinecone; Columbus and his men had taken some from the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe during their 1493 voyage. The reality in Virginia, however, turned out to be rather less forthcoming:

the Rootes of the delitious Indian-Pina, sett in a sandy place, thrived and continued life, without respect had of yt, until the cold winter and the weeds choaked yt.

For many years, English colonists were forced to make do with preserved pineapple instead. The fresh kind occasionally featured in cargoes coming north from the Caribbean from the beginning of the 18th Century.

It was not until the 1750's that pineapples began arriving all through the summer months at ports all along the East Coast. One day in the summer of 1752, for instance, the *Virginia Gazette* announced the arrival at Williamsburg port of seven dozen pineapples from the Bahamas, also a British colony. As they were unloaded on the dockside, the young scallions who scrimped a living by offering themselves up for casual labor clamored for a peek of this fruit that was so rare, so sought-after, that actually to taste one was a treat reserved only for the very wealthiest gentlemen in town.

One of the pineapple's best customers in Williamsburg was the Governor of Virginia, the Baron de Botetourt. His grave demeanor was undermined not only by a double chin so gigantic that it looked like it might entirely engulf his tiny mouth, but also by bags under his eyes that suggested far too



The earliest known European illustration of a pineapple, from Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés, *La Historia General y Natural de las Indias* (1535). This caption is corrected in the Fall 2006 issue, p. 19.

many late nights— this was a man for whom entertaining was a serious business. The account books of William Sparrow, the Palace cook from July 1769, support this. In Sparrow's first five months in the job, the average monthly cost of running the kitchen increased to nearly £70— a staggering 40% of the Governor's basic salary. Pineapples were no small element of this. They were purchased on his behalf by the Palace cook, either at the local town market, in a local store, or from a hawker who brought them directly to the kitchen. The cost was about two shillings each— in a period when two shillings represented a day's wages for the average tradesman. In July 1770, at the height of the pineapple season, a total of £1 14s was spent on buying 20 pineapples, a little over half of what was spent on meat in the same period, and the equivalent today of about \$200.

Yet the Governor clearly felt it was worth the enormous expense. No wonder, really—a fresh pineapple was among *the* status symbols of the colonial era. It was a fashion inherited from England, where the pineapple had emerged as very much the Prada handbag of its day—expensive, rare, exotic. “Look how rich / important / fashionable I am!” it proclaimed on the part of the host (much more, in fact, than “look how hospitable I am”, which, contrary to popular belief today, was much more a 20th-Century association).

The first recipe in English to feature a pineapple appeared in 1732 in Richard Bradley’s *Country Housewife*:

To make a Tart of the Ananas, or Pine-Apple. From Barbadoes. Take a Pine-Apple, and twist off its Crown: then pare it free from the Knots, and cut it in Slices about half an inch thick; then stew it with a little Canary Wine, or Madera Wine, and some Sugar, till it is thoroughly hot, and it will distribute its Flavour to the Wine much better than any thing we can add to it. When it is as one would have it, take it from the Fire; and when it is cool, put it into a sweet Paste, with its Liquor, and bake it gently, a little while, and when it comes from the Oven, pour Cream over it, (if you have it) and serve it either hot or cold.

This was followed by a recipe for how to dress the giblets of a sea-turtle, another great delicacy at the time.

But the expense of the pineapple meant that actually to eat it was commonly considered to be a waste. Instead, it became one of the most desirable ornaments for the dinner table. Served after dinner with dessert, the pineapple was placed at the peak of a pyramid of fruit (grapes, strawberries, oranges, and the like), arranged on a silver platter, and placed in the middle of the table for everyone gathered to ooh and aah. It was often made to last for quite some time, passed on from party to party until it began to rot so much that it stank out the entire household. With supplies of the fruit limited, rumors abounded that some colonial confectioners were even willing to hire them out by the day.

As the 18th Century progressed, prices for an imported pineapple began to fall, one result of which was that it became increasingly acceptable for a pineapple to be eaten rather than just admired. It would no longer have been such a complete disaster to chop it in the wrong direction, or to bruise it on the way up the backstairs. Even so, it tended to be served raw to ensure that it was not unnecessarily spoiled in the preparation. Its peel was removed, it was chopped into slices, arranged on a plate, then served and eaten with a fork. Actual recipes remained rare until well into the next century.

Even George Washington seems not to have been exempt from this colonial-era craze for pineapples. It was May 1774 and Washington had a dinner party to plan. This was an opportunity to wine, dine, and opine among his fellow Virginia plantation-owners during a crucial month for the burgeoning Independence movement. Although his party was scheduled for some weeks off, provisions had to be

ordered right away: the very limited transport network meant that there was simply no knowing how long they would take to arrive. Washington’s wife Martha was already under instructions to deal with most of the food—reams of beef, mountains of sea-turtle, half a sheep, and enough oysters to keep the scullery-maid busy from dawn ’til dusk—but it remained up to Washington to ensure that county gossip the morning after would be left in no doubt whatsoever that his dinner table represented the epitome of what it meant to be genteel in colonial America. He thought he had found the answer: pineapples.

Washington had had a predilection for pineapples ever since he first tried one, when he was just 19, on the only trip he ever made abroad—to Barbados with his half-brother Lawrence. “None pleases my taste as do’s the pine”, he confided to his diary. It was a judgment no doubt influenced by his choice of holiday reading, a copy of Griffith Hughes’s *Natural History of Barbados* (1750): “If the general, or at least if the Judgment of the most numerous Part of Mankind, who have tasted of this Fruit, may be relied upon, it deserves the Preference of all other Fruits; the agreeable Variety, and the delicate quick Poignancy of its Juice is justly esteemed to excel every other.” Who was Washington to disagree?

Following a typically sociable week (various dinners, a boat race, and a barbecue), on May 10 Washington had a free day at home at Mount Vernon. Much of it was spent, pipe in hand, catching up on the mountain of correspondence he had to deal with before he left for Williamsburg to attend the May session of the House of Burgesses. Among the notes promptly dispatched was one to an acquaintance, Captain Robert McMickan, placing an order, in exchange for a parcel of herrings and a hundred barrels of flour, for (among other things) three dozen West Indian pineapples.

Similarly, June 1768 saw Thomas Jefferson make a purchase of pineapples and oranges at a total cost of 12s6d. As was the norm, Jefferson’s pineapples usually appeared at dinner still whole, crowns intact in all their glory; but pineapple pudding was also a popular recipe in his household—it appears in a recipe book treasured by Virginia Randolph, Martha Jefferson Randolph’s fifth daughter. As an ambitious young lawyer in only his second year of professional practice, and hoping to make his mark, for Jefferson this kind of expenditure was surely an investment. He had a certain image to uphold, after all.

Thus, in mansion houses up and down the country, men like the Baron de Botetourt, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson, amid delightfully gracious and measured conversation by flickering candlelight, were displaying pineapples at dinner as one of a variety of means of asserting their place within this newly-formed and deeply fragile social structure. It demonstrated that they had the hard cash necessary to purchase such a luxury. It also hinted at close contacts with the burgeoning trade network with the West Indies, a situation to be much envied. If it was possible to get hold of a pineapple, was there no limit to the novelties that this gentleman had the clout to conjure up?

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THE PECAN: AMERICA'S SWEET NUT

by Edgar Rose

Edgar Rose is an avid cookbook collector as well as a Repeat subscriber. He and his companion Sylvia Rooth live in Glencoe, IL and are members of the Chicago Culinary Historians. Edgar wrote the entry on the pecan that appears in the Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America. His other culinary interests include James Beard, multilingual cookbooks, regional and international cookery, culinary history, baking, and barbecue. A retired mechanical engineer specializing in outboard motors, he was born in Germany and spent periods in Czechoslovakia, Istanbul, and Boston before moving to the Chicago area.

Virtually all of the New World foodstuffs in common use today originated in South or Central America. The pecan is the rare exception; it is native to North America. Around the year 1900, wild pecan trees were found only in a roughly trapezoid-shaped area with its base along the Mexican Gulf coasts of Louisiana and Texas, and extending north-northeast as far as southern Illinois and southern Iowa. Additionally, there were a few very small pockets in northern Mexico. Thus, the pecan is truly American—“American” as in The United States of America.

We know that pecans were used as food by Native Americans for several millennia. Remnants of pecan consumption by humans have been found at North American archeological sites dating back 6,000 years. The Native Americans ate them raw and also pounded them into a paste to use as a thickener in their stews.

Though the Spanish explorers Cabeza de Vaca (1528) and Ferdinand de Soto (1539, 1541) must have encountered pecans during their travels along, and inland from, the Gulf of Mexico, their main interest was gold and other riches, not some nut the appearance of which resembled that of the familiar walnut. It was not until the end of the 17th Century that fur traders, ranging from the Canadian colonies into southern Illinois and Missouri, brought pecans to the European settlers along the northern seaboard of America. They called them Indian Nuts or Illinois nuts. The latter term was a result of the fur traders' contacts with the friendly Illinois tribes. The term “pecan”, not adopted by the European settlers until the 18th Century, derives from the word *paccan* in Algonquin, the language group to which the Illinois and many other tribes belonged.

The pecan was first botanically classified as a genus distinct from the walnut by a Hessian forester, Friedrich A. J. Von Wangenheim. He and his compatriots had come to America from Germany when they were employed by King George III to squelch the American insurgents in the 1770's. Von Wangenheim named the nut *Carya Illinoensis*, which name as well as a few variations were in use until 1987, when the slightly different name *Carya Illinoensis* was adopted as the standard designation by the XIVth International Botanical Congress in Berlin.

Culinary Uses by European Settlers

At the time of the American Revolution, Louisiana— a prime pecan-growing area— was in the hands of the French and under their culinary influence. The French settlers originated an adaptation of a French confection, using the nuts from the many pecan trees, to make “pralines”, available to this day in New Orleans and the first extensive kitchen use of pecans by Europeans in America.

Though eventually Louisiana became part of the fledgling United States of America, the pecan made no further significant inroads into American cooking until the first half of the 19th Century, when Texas was beginning to be settled by Europeans from America's East as well as directly from Europe. This migration speeded up after Texas achieved statehood in 1845 and brought in many “Anglos” from the northeastern states. Thus, some of the English culinary traditions were brought to Texas, including the baking of dessert pies. One of the popular American pies during the middle of the 19th Century was the “Molasses Pie”. Its popularity was second only to “Lemon Pie”. With wild-growing pecan trees available all over Texas, it is not surprising that some home bakers would have embellished their molasses pie with a handful of pecan nut pieces, and discovered that this impromptu addition produced a great-tasting, crisp upper crust on their molasses pie.

The first published recipe for “Pecan Pie” did not appear until 1899 in a charity cookbook published in St. Louis. *[This statement is corrected in the Fall 2006 issue, p. 19.]* This recipe was from a lady who had sent it from San Antonio, Texas. She gave directions for two quite different versions of pecan pie, but one of these is very similar to the modern pecan pie. After this first publication, less than two dozen other pecan pie recipes were published in the next 28 years, the first of these not until 1910. This suggests that the baking of pecan pies spread very slowly from Texas to the rest of the country, along with the gradual availability of pecans in the stores and markets.

The adoption of pecan pie by home bakers was greatly accelerated in the mid-1920's when Karo Syrup started publishing a recipe for pecan pie on the tops of their syrup cans and in various company-issued booklets. Of course, these recipes specified Karo Syrup as the sweetener. Their promotion was successful, and the pie was so delicious that it became a national institution.

The Pecan Goes Commercial

Before 1900, there was very little commerce in pecans. From the 17th to 19th Centuries, the average housewife living outside the “pecan trapezoid” would use almonds or walnuts when she needed nuts for cooking or baking. Commercial exploitation of the pecan did not start until the very end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th Century, and was brought on through the development of trees with predictable and desirable characteristics. This, in turn, resulted from the development of budding and grafting techniques for pecan trees.

Successful grafting was the cornerstone to the commercial production of pecans, and thus to their availability in every American grocery store. It must be realized that pecan trees grown from nuts, like fruit trees grown from seeds, will have essentially unpredictable characteristics and fruits. But to establish a commercially successful orchard, the farmer-investor needs predictable trees, producing a large quantity of tasty, nice-looking nuts with thin shells, good nut-fill ratios, resistance to diseases and pests, suitability for the local climatic conditions, and ripening of substantially all nuts at the same time for economical harvesting. This could only be accomplished by experimentally grafting branches from various pecan trees onto different rootstocks until a particular combination yielded the desired results.

The first graft was achieved by an African-American slave named Antoine in 1846 or 1847. His master J. J. Roman, a Louisiana plantation owner, had little interest in Antoine’s pioneering efforts. It was not until 1877 that Emil Bourgeois’s efforts at the Rapidan Plantation (located on the Mississippi River near the town of Central, in St. James Parish, Louisiana) resulted in wide acceptance of the vegetative propagation of pecan trees, and thus the foundation for the modern pecan orchard was laid. Nurseries worked to bring forth the most desirable commercial features of the pecan, resulting in a number of prime cultivars. In fact, by the end of the 19th Century, prospective orchard growers were able to select young trees from up to 40 varieties developed by the nurseries.

And thus the Georgia pecan industry got started at the very end of the 19th Century. Up to that time there were virtually no pecan trees in that state, but the availability of good land with ample water and lots of sunshine resulted in productive pecan orchards. The production of pecans increased until Georgia became the largest producer of orchard-grown pecans, a position it holds to this day. Texas surpasses Georgia only if one takes into account also the pecans grown on wild trees.

Pecan Pie: Uniquely American

Currently, pecans are used in various confections such as chocolate- and sugar-coated nuts, salted and plain nut mixtures, New Orleans pralines, and pecan pies and other



pastries. But the pecan pie is among all pies the most American.

Besides having been invented in this country, adopted extensively by many housewives and commercial bakers, and having as its key ingredient a nut indigenous to America, it is also the only pie in which a top crust is formed by crunchy, crisp, succulent nuts. All other pies and French tarts have either a pastry top crust or a soft top layer. Thus, the pecan pie is not only delicious but also intrinsically unique.

And what is more American than a product invented in America, made by Americans, based on an American crop, and uniquely different from any other product in its class? Certainly not the apple pie which, tasty as it may be, is really an English pie brought over by the first settlers of New England, and is based on a fruit that was also brought over from Europe. Thus, to call some thing “as American as apple pie” really implies that that thing is a fraud! The argument has been made that apple pie’s popularity in this country should qualify it to be rated as American. Then should we say “as American as pizza”, “as American as spring rolls”, or “as American as a frankfurter”? No! The proper expression can only be “as American as pecan pie”. And what this expression loses in alliteration, it gains in historical truth.

And now to the baking of a good pecan pie. There are many recipes, including the one highly advertised by Karo Syrup since the 1920’s that uses their product. But I have felt, and proved by subsequent tests, that corn syrup is not the best sweetener for pecan pie, due to its lack of complex tastes. To perfect an improved recipe, I set up a tasting panel

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THE FALL AND RISE OF THE WILD TURKEY

by Andrew F. Smith

Andy Smith is one of this country's leading food historians, and a prolific writer, lecturer, and consultant. He lives in Brooklyn, NY, teaches culinary history and food writing at New School University in Manhattan, and for years has served as President of the American Forum for Global Education. His most recent talk in Ann Arbor was on the subject, "What is American about 'American' Food?", presented at the First Biennial Symposium on American Culinary History in May 2005. Andy is Editor-in-Chief of the Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America, and he serves as general editor for the University of Illinois Press's Food Series. His many published books include histories of the peanut, the tomato, catsup, and popcorn. Forthcoming books include The Encyclopedia of Junk Food and Fast Food (Greenwood Press, September), and The Turkey: An American Story (University of Illinois, October).

The wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) originated in North America about 50,000 years ago, but large turkey-like birds have inhabited the continent for a few million years. As their closest living relative is the Asian pheasant, researchers have proposed that the turkey's ancestors evolved in Asia or North America from common ancestors, but if so, no intermediate fossils have been located.

The word "turkey" was used in the English language before the discovery of the New World. It likely referred to the Guinea fowl or other large birds that were thought to have been imported from Turkish territory. The term was used interchangeably for several different birds until the mid-16th Century, when the North American domesticated turkey acquired sole possession of the word.

Throughout their areas of habitation, wild turkeys have been of great importance to humans since before the dawn of recorded history. Numerous archaeological remains of turkeys have been found throughout North America. In some sites turkey bones ranked second only to deer bones.¹ The Aztecs ate turkeys in great quantities as did many Native Americans. Wild turkeys are easily tamed and at some point during the past 2,000 years they were domesticated, probably in more than one location in Mexico and in the American Southwest.

Each Native American group developed its own approach to turkeys. Virginian William Byrd observed that some Indians would not boil turkey in the same vessel with "land animals" for fear of offending "the Guardian of the Forest".² The

Navajo only ate the birds roasted, while others boiled them.³ Some Indian tribes did not consider the wild turkey enough of a delicacy to warrant the attention of their experienced hunters. The Lipan Apaches ate no other fowl but the wild turkey, while other Native American groups refused to eat any turkey flesh.⁴ The Cheyenne eschewed the turkey because they believed it to be a cowardly bird, as it ran away at high speed at the least provocation.⁵ The Chiricahua Apaches did not eat the turkey because it ate insects.⁶ Turkey eggs, however, were consumed by many Native Americans, and some considered them a delicacy.⁷

The Turkey in North America

Turkeys were eaten in virtually every early European colony on the east coast of North America. Wild turkeys were so numerous along the banks of the James River in Virginia that in 1607 Captain John Smith named the island in the middle of the river "Turkey Isle". Two years later, the Indians brought turkeys to Jamestown, which helped stem starvation in that colony.⁸ In 1621, William Bradford, first governor of Plimoth Plantation, reported that there "was a great store of wild turkeys, of which they took many."⁹ William Byrd believed that turkeys were "a splendid dish, boiled or roasted. The wild ones have commonly a finger's thickness of fat on their back, which one uses for cakes and garden cooking, because it is sweet and far better than the best butter, as I myself have discovered."¹⁰ In 1797 John Heckewelder, a Moravian evangelist in Ohio, used wild turkey fat as a substitute for butter, and turkey eggs for making dumplings.¹¹ A pioneer woman in Iowa found turkey eggs more palatable than those of other wild birds.¹²

Through the rural parts of the West the wild turkey remained a staple food for some generations. When a family first settled a wilderness area and lacked both grain and vegetables, they called the breasts of wild turkeys and lean venison "bread", as neither wheat nor corn was available in the wilderness.¹³ In Georgia, in the 1830's, "For bread, they strung up and dried out the 'white' meat of wild turkey breasts, after which they cut it up and beat it into a kind of flour, and kneaded it for bread."¹⁴

In addition to providing basic sustenance, wild turkeys were also considered gourmet treats. The French gastronome Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin spent two years in exile in the United States after the French Revolution in 1789. He was delighted with the turkey, which he proclaimed was "certainly one of the most delightful presents which the New World has made to the Old." He ate wild turkey as well as domestic, writing that wild turkey flesh was "Darker and with a stronger flavor than that of the domestic bird." He recorded in his magnum opus, *Physiology of Taste*, that while visiting Hartford, Connecticut, he was invited to hunt on the land of a local farmer, and had the "good luck" to kill a wild turkey. Back in Hartford, Brillat-Savarin roasted the turkey and wrote that it was "flattering to the sense of smell, and delicious to the taste. And as the last morsel of it disappeared, there arose from the whole table the words: 'Very good! Exceedingly good! Oh! Dear sir, what a glorious bit!'"¹⁵



"The Wild Turkey Hunter", frontispiece from a book by Louisiana writer Thomas Bangs Thorpe, *The Hive of "The Bee-Hunter," A Repository of Sketches, Including Peculiar American Character, Scenery, and Rural Sports* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1854).

Courtesy of
"Documenting the
American South",

[docsouth.unc.edu/
index.html](http://docsouth.unc.edu/index.html)

Brillat-Savarin was not alone in his devotion to the wild turkey. The American naturalist and ornithologist John James Audubon wrote that it was "a delicate and highly prized article of food." Its meat was "of excellent flavor, being more delicate and juicy than that of the domestic Turkey."¹⁶ Wild turkey was on the menus of America's best restaurants, such as the City Hotel in New York, and it was often served stuffed with truffles.¹⁷ Gilbert du Montier, better known as the Marquis de Lafayette, appreciated wild turkeys to such an extent that when he visited the United States in 1824-25 he asked John Hartwell Cocke to send a flock to his estate in France so that he could release them. In gratitude for the shipment, the Marquis sent Cocke a bell for his barn, which still rings on occasion today.¹⁸

By the late 17th Century, Americans began to recognize that wild turkeys were rapidly disappearing. In 1672, John Josselyn reported that in New England the English and the Indian had "destroyed the breed, so that 'tis very rare to meet with a wild Turkie in the Woods."¹⁹ By the 1730's wild turkeys had almost disappeared east of the Connecticut River. They still thrived in upstate New York, eastern Pennsylvania, and most of the South. By the late 18th Century, Joseph Doddridge recorded that in Virginia "wild turkeys, which used to be so abundant as to supply no inconsiderable portion of provision for the first settlers, are now rarely seen."²⁰

The disappearance of the wild turkey from many areas of its original habitat did not diminish the wholesale slaughter of its surviving numbers. The last wild turkey in Connecticut was seen in 1813. Wild turkeys disappeared from Vermont by 1842, New York by 1844, and Massachusetts by 1851. They

were last seen in Kansas in 1871 and they disappeared from South Dakota by 1875, Ohio in 1880, and Nebraska the same year. In the following years wild turkeys disappeared from Wisconsin (1881), Michigan (1897), Illinois (1903), Indiana (1906), and Iowa (1907). So many wild turkeys had been hunted that in 1884 Gaston Fay predicted in *Harper's Weekly* that the wild turkey was soon to become "as extinct as the dodo."²¹ It appeared as if Fay's forecast was to come true. By the 1920's turkey had virtually disappeared from 20 of 39 states of its original range.²² Turkeys reached their lowest population in the late 1930's, when they survived only in isolated and inaccessible pockets generally away from humans.²³ Estimates vary as to the number of wild turkeys at that time, but some observers believe that there were as few as 30,000 left in the United States.

The Return of the Wild Turkey

As many American wildlife species became threatened, Congress passed legislation that was intended to protect wildlife. The Lacey Act of 1905 prevented interstate sale of wildlife. Along with other laws, this prevented the sale of frozen wild turkeys and thus gave some protection to wild turkey flocks. More important was the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937, which imposed an excise tax on sporting goods and ammunition to pay for the restoration of wildlife. By 1940, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration projects began reintroducing wild turkeys into natural habitats.²⁴ There was yet another important change: during the Depression, many farms were abandoned, and the land reverted to forest, which laid the foundation for a comeback of the wild turkey.

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WILD TURKEY

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With land returning to natural turkey habitats, the main problem was how to capture wild turkeys and re-introduce them to areas devoid of wild turkeys. While many methods were tried, the eventual solution was the cannon net, which had initially been used in the capture of waterfowl. In this method a concealed net is lobbed over a flock of turkeys, propelled by black-powder cannons that are detonated by an operator stationed in a nearby blind. The first wild turkeys known to have been captured in this way were taken in South Carolina in 1951. Since then, "trap and transplant" programs accelerated. In the 1960's sleep-inducing drugs were used to capture live birds. Computers and solar-powered transmitters with motion sensors have been used to help track wild turkeys.²⁵

The results of these restoration efforts have been astounding. From a nadir in the 1930's, wild turkey populations had increased to 500,000 birds in 1959. By 2005, there were an estimated 6.5 million wild turkeys nationwide.²⁶ Today, wild turkeys occupy more square miles than do any other game birds in North America, and they now inhabit an area far beyond their original ancestral range, including every state except Alaska, several provinces in Canada, and several countries in Europe.

The return of the wild turkey has also meant the return of hunting. Wild turkey hunting is one of the fastest-growing gun sports in the United States. Turkey hunters annually spend more than half a billion dollars on their sport. Likewise, the return of the wild turkey has seen a vast increase in recipes for preparing them, and several cookbooks have been solely dedicated to this purpose, including two books, by Rick Black and A. D. Livingston, both titled *Wild Turkey Cookbook*.²⁷

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THE PINEAPPLE

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In the early 19th Century, pineapples became more and more widely available. This was not only due to the flourishing craze for home-growing pineapples under glass (a fascinating story, but one for which there is not enough space here), but also to an increase in the number of imports. Rapidly improving transport methods—steamships, railroads, and so on—meant that many of those a little lower down the social scale were able to have a taste of the tropics for the very first time.

Consequently, other uses for the fruit were soon sought. The most common recipe to feature in early American cookery books was, not surprisingly, preserved pineapple. One method suggested in 1828 by the celebrated cookery writer Eliza Leslie went thus:

Pare your pine-apples, and cut them in thin round slices. Weigh the slices, and to each pound allow a pound of loaf-sugar. Dissolve the sugar in a very small quantity of water, stir it, and set it over the fire in a preserving-kettle. Boil it ten minutes, skimming it well. Then put in it the pine-apple slices, and boil them till they are clear and soft, but not until they break. About half an hour (or perhaps less time) will suffice. Let them cool in a large dish or pan, before you put them in their jars, which you must do carefully, lest they break. Pour the syrup over them. Tie them up with brandy paper.

A later book by Leslie, *The House Book* (1837), featured more of a variety, with not only preserved pineapple but also pineapple ice-cream, pineapple sorbet, and pineapple marmalade, in addition to detailed instructions about how to prepare fresh pineapple itself. Leslie's recipes for the pineapple were echoed by recipe books throughout the century, as well as by such mainstays of the American housewife's bedside table as *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Good Housekeeping*.

By the mid-19th Century, then, pineapples had become far cheaper and more plentiful than a hundred years previous. Yet they continued to present something of a conundrum in terms of taste: as a journalist at the *Gardener's Monthly* put it, "People accustomed to the miserable stuff sold in the markets for Pine Apples, have no idea of the delicious character of cultivated fruit, as grown by gardeners." The long journey from the Caribbean that imported pineapples were forced to endure meant that they lost much of their sweet, juicy flavor in transit. For this reason, period cookbooks prescribe the addition of tablespoon after tablespoon of sugar in order to make the fruit palatable.

The ultimate solution was canning. This was a technique that would radically transform the way the pineapple was utilized and perceived well into the 20th Century. That, however, is a story all its own. ■

THE PECAN

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of fellow employees from all walks of life and different educational and regional backgrounds. At each sitting, they would taste two different versions of pecan pie, and rate each one on many aspects such as taste of the pecans, taste of the soft filling, texture, etc. A few days later, I would bake two fresh pies, one of which used the recipe for the higher-rated pie in the previous tasting— as a control— while the second one incorporated as many changes as indicated by the previous tasting. This procedure was continued until the tasting panel felt that no further changes would provide an improvement. Below is the recipe that resulted from these tastings. ■

Traditional Pecan Pie by Edgar Rose

Ingredients:

9-inch pie crust, fully pre-baked to light golden brown, approximately 12 minutes at 450° F. (See Note 2)
4 Tbsp unsalted butter
4 extra-large eggs
1 pinch salt
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp dark rum (e.g., Myers)
11.5 oz (1½ C) light brown sugar
5 oz (1¼ C) chopped pecans
whipping cream

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Melt butter.
3. Beat eggs in a mixing bowl with a fork until uniform in color.
4. Add salt, vanilla extract, rum; mix.
5. Add sugar gradually, mix thoroughly.
6. Add melted butter; mix.
7. Spread nuts over the bottom of the pre-baked crust, and pour filling over the nuts in the crust.
8. Bake in preheated oven 20 minutes. Reduce heat to 250° F. and bake until center of filling has just barely stopped jiggling when shaking the pie pan (25-35 mins. at 250° F., or about 10 minutes after the top pecan crust has started rising).
9. Serve at room temperature with slightly sweetened, slightly vanilla-flavored whipped cream.

NOTE 1: For Southern tastes, increase the amount of sugar to 2 cups (1-lb package).

NOTE 2: My recipe for one pie crust uses:

1 C all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp sugar
1/16 tsp salt
5 Tbsp very cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
1 Tbsp very cold Crisco, cut into pieces
3 Tbsp very cold water, or as needed.

Make the dough in a food processor using the steel blade. Process until the appearance of coarse meal, adding only enough water to barely hold dough together. Flatten into a 6-8" diameter patty, refrigerate wrapped in plastic wrap 1-3 hours. Roll out and bake in 9" pie pans at 450° F. until golden brown, about 12 minutes.

AS AMERICAN AS INDIAN PUDDING

by Jan Longone

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“As American as Apple Pie.” Bah! Humbug! And pshaw! I propose that the credentials for “As American as Indian Pudding” are far more compelling. It is true that in Amelia Simmons’s *American Cookery* (Hartford, CT, 1796), considered to be the first American cookbook, there are two recipes for Apple Pie. These are, however, recipes of English origin, using ingredients readily available in England and on the Continent as well. Furthermore, recipes for Apple Pie abound in cookbooks published in England prior to the 19th Century.

On the other hand, the three recipes for Indian Pudding which appear in this first American cookbook have been considered by historians to be not only the first printed recipes in English for that homely yet delicious food, but also the first for any dish using corn meal as an ingredient.

We do know that the techniques used in making Indian or Hasty Pudding are age-old; gruels, potages, porridges, frumenties, and puddings were made from earliest times. We also know that specific pudding recipes very similar in nature to those for Indian Pudding appear in early English cookbooks, but these use wheat flour, rye flour, oatmeal, ground rice, crumbled bread or cake, or other cereals and starches in place of the corn meal. Further, there are records that various Indian tribes and civilizations in the New World were making some form of corn meal gruel or pudding, oftentimes sweetened with honey or native berries. But it is exactly the *combination* of the ancient techniques with the indigenous New World crop, corn, flavored with the colonial products of ginger, nutmeg, and molasses, which I believe makes Indian Pudding a contender for our national dish.

Although the first recipes for Indian Pudding did not appear in print prior to 1796, we know that Americans had been eating it for about 150 years before that time. The *Dictionary of Americanisms* (Chicago, 1951) records the first printed usage of the words “Indian Pudding” to be in the March 17-26, 1722, edition of *The New England Courant*, the third newspaper printed in Boston and the fourth in the British colonies. Examination of this newspaper in the Clements Library archives did, indeed, uncover the following news article, datelined Boston, March 26, 1722:

We are at present amus’d with a very odd Story from Martha’s Vineyard, which however is affirm’d for a Truth by some Persons lately come from thence. viz. That at a certain House in Edgar Town, a Plain Indian Pudding, being put into the Pot and boil’d the usual Time, it came out a Blood-red Colour, to the great Surprise of the whole Family. The Cause of this great Alteration in the Pudding is not yet known tho’ it has been Matter of great Speculation in that Neighbourhood.

The scientific curiosity expressed in this news article surprised me until I discovered that the probable author was none other than Benjamin Franklin, who was at that time working on *The Courant* as an apprentice to the editor, his brother James.

It should not seem radical to suggest that a recipe using corn be our national dish. Throughout the length and breadth of this hemisphere, Indians were using this native grain in a variety of ways before the Europeans arrived. When the colonists did come, they were immediately introduced to corn; it sustained them and played a decisive role in making permanent settlement possible. The earliest personal letter in English in the Clements Library reveals how quickly the new arrivals accepted corn, although we see the letter writer’s fear that his wife might not be pleased with this unknown grain when she arrived in America.

Written “from Newbery in New England this 11th of the 8th month called October, 1638”, Henry Biley sent a letter to his “deare & Lovinge wife, Mrs. Rebecca Biley in Sarum”. Mr. Biley had come to the colonies sometime early in 1638 but had to leave his wife back in England as she was pregnant. In this letter, he tells her of his life and progress in Newbery, “for I am confident that there is noe Country under the Sunn where men may more Comfort[ably] subsist if they be industrious.” He tells her that he eagerly awaits her coming, and then admonishes:

& to the end you may the more comfortably subsist heere, I would wish you to bring with you one hogshead of meale [I assume he means wheat], one barrel of oat meal, one hundred of ramish cheese with a firkin of suet, for I doubt whether this Country Corne may be so well liking unto you though for my part I like exceedingly well of it & so doe the most of the new Comers.

Should our nation accept Indian Pudding as its national dish, we would not be alone in our choice of a homely pudding as our culinary symbol. Any student of Scottish history knows that Robert Burns immortalized the “Great Chieftain o’ the Puddin’ Race” in his “Ode To Haggis”. Throughout the world on January 25, Haggis Dinners are given to commemorate the poet’s birthday— and the national pudding.

The American language and literature are filled with poems, stories, and references to corn. It is our national grain. Among the many poems of praise to corn, I would like to discuss two which illustrate the almost mystical role that corn plays in the American ethos. Both were penned when their authors were abroad and homesick for their native land. It was corn which they longed for and which they considered to be the symbol of their homeland.

On a cold and bitter January day in 1793, Joel Barlow, diplomat and later author of the epic nationalistic poem “The Columbiad”, found himself in the town of Chambery (then part of Savoy, now in eastern France). There he was unexpectedly served a dish of corn meal mush. In a moment of whimsicality and homesickness, Barlow wrote “The Hasty Pudding”, a poem on the virtues of this favorite New England version of Indian Pudding. First published in *The New York Weekly Magazine*, January 1796, and widely reprinted thereafter, “The Hasty Pudding” became Barlow’s most popular work. Because the poem actually contains a recipe for Indian Pudding, it is routinely cited in cookery bibliographies.

The poem is a delight to read, even today. In addition to the recipe for Hasty Pudding, Barlow discusses the planting, growing, harvesting, milling, and husking of corn as well as the role of Hasty Pudding in colonial life. Throughout the poem are paeans of praise for the discoverer of corn and all who work with it:

... what lovely squaw, in days of yore,
(Ere great Columbus sought thy native shore)
First gave thee to the world...

and to:

Some tawny Ceres, goddess of her days,
First learn’d with stones to crack the well-dry’d maize,
Thro’ the rough sieve to shake the golden show’r,
In boiling water stir the yellow flour.

There is praise for the corn itself (“generous maize”) and for Hasty Pudding (“my morning incense”) and a charming verse:

And all my bones were made of Indian corn.
Delicious grain! Whatever form it take,
To roast or boil, to smother or to bake,
In every dish ’tis welcome still to me,
But most, my Hasty-Pudding, most in thee.

A century and a half later, Paul Engle, poet and longtime director of the Creative Writing and International Writers Programs at the University of Iowa, found himself homesick in England— homesick enough to write his poem, “Corn”, published in *Corn: A Book of Poems* (New York, 1939). In it, he recalls the “thousand-mile field, midwest, plowed without end” and the “autumn prairie blonde with corn”. He complains that he had:

... grown tired of that dull foreign food,
Wanting the piled-high plates of August corn,
Golden like nothing in the English earth,
Sweet with the rain and yellow with the sun.

He says at last:

... I have come back
To land I carry in my bones as corn
Eaten when a child...

and:

... My life is
To be at home here by the cornfield’s edge,
Under the big light of American sky...

And so we close our nomination for Indian Pudding (or at least, some preparation utilizing corn) as our national dish with thoughts by Mark Twain, that most American of writers. In *A Tramp Abroad* (Hartford, CT, 1878), Twain tells of returning to America craving, yearning for, lusting after, certain American foods. Among them are six corn dishes: Hominy, Succotash, Hot Hoe-Cakes, Hot Corn-Pone with Chitlings, Green Corn, cut from the ear and served with butter and pepper, and Green Corn on the ear (Corn on the Cob).

“Serve it up hot”

I have selected for your delectation a sampling of recipes for Indian Pudding from the hundreds to be found in early sources. They represent one century of such recipes, from the first American cookbook in 1796 to the first edition of Fannie Farmer’s *Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* in 1896.

Note the great variations possible. The pudding can be baked or boiled; made hastily or in 12 hours; prepared in a pot, a dish, a pan, or a pudding cloth. It must contain corn meal and a mixture of some of the following ingredients: milk, water, butter, lard, molasses, sugar, salt, suet, raisins, currants, apples, whortleberries, dried peaches, cranberries, pumpkin, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and/or grated orange or lemon peel. The recipe styles vary from the elegant, explicit directions of Miss Leslie to the bare admonitions of Fannie Farmer. It is suggested that the Indian Pudding be eaten with a wide variety of accompaniments: wine sauce, sugar and cream, butter and molasses, or a sauce made from powdered

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INDIAN PUDDING *continued from previous page*

white sugar, fresh butter, nutmeg, and lemon or orange juice. For my part, the definitive pairing is that from my Boston childhood: hot Indian Pudding and a large cone-shaped scoop of ice cream, either Peach flavor, Tutti Frutti, or Frozen Pudding.

A Nice Indian Pudding

No. 1. 3 pints scalded milk, 7 spoons fine Indian meal, stir well together while hot, let stand till cooled; add 7 eggs, half pound raisins, 4 ounces butter, spice and sugar, and bake one and half hour.

No. 2. 3 pints scalded milk to one pint meal salted; cool, add 2 eggs, 4 ounces butter, sugar or molasses and spice q.s. it will require two and half hours baking.

No. 3. Salt a pint meal, wet with one quart milk, sweeten and put into a strong cloth, brass or bell metal vessel, stone or earthen pot, secure from wet and boil 12 hours.

Amelia Simmons, *American Cookery* (Hartford, CT, 1796).

Baked Indian Meal Pudding

Boil one quart of milk, mix in it two gills and a half of corn meal very smoothly, seven eggs well beaten, a gill of molasses, and a good piece of butter; bake it two hours.

Boiled Indian Meal Pudding

Mix one quart of corn meal, with three quarts of milk; take care it be not lumpy— add three eggs and a gill of molasses; it must be put on at sun rise, to eat at three o'clock; the great art in this pudding is tying the bag properly, as the meal swells very much.

Mary Randolph, *The Virginia Housewife* (Washington, 1824).

Baked Indian Pudding

Indian pudding is good baked. Scald a quart of milk (skimmed milk will do,) and stir in seven table spoonfuls of sifted Indian meal, a tea-spoonful of salt, a tea-cupful of molasses, and a great spoonful of ginger, or sifted cinnamon. Baked three or four hours. If you want whey, you must be sure and pour in a little cold milk, after it is all mixed.

Boiled Indian Pudding

Indian pudding should be boiled four or five hours. Sifted Indian meal and warm milk should be stirred together pretty stiff. A little salt, and two or three great spoonfuls of molasses, added; a spoonful of ginger, if you like that spice. Boil it in a tight covered pan, or a very thick cloth; if the water gets in, it will ruin it. Leave plenty of room; for Indian swells very much. The milk with which you mix it should be merely warm; if it be scalding, the pudding will break in pieces. Some people chop sweet suet fine, and warm in the milk; others warm thin slices of sweet apple to be stirred into the pudding. Water will answer instead of milk.

Hasty Pudding

Boil water, a quart, three pints, or two quarts, according to the size of your family; sift your meal, stir five or six spoonfuls of it thoroughly into a bowl of water; when the water in the kettle boils, pour into it the contents of the bowl;

stir it well, and let it boil up thick; put in salt to suit your own taste, then stand over the kettle, and sprinkle in meal, handful after handful, stirring it very thoroughly all the time, and letting it boil between whiles. When it is so thick that you stir it with great difficulty, it is about right. It takes about half an hour's cooking. Eat it with milk or molasses. Either Indian meal or rye meal may be used. If the system is in a restricted state, nothing can be better than rye hasty pudding and *West India* molasses. This diet would save many a one the horrors of dyspepsia.

Lydia Maria Child, *The American Frugal Housewife* (Boston, 1836).

Indian Fruit Pudding

Take a pint of hot milk and stir in sifted Indian meal till the batter is stiff; add a teaspoonful of salt and a little molasses; then stir in a pint of whortleberries, or the same quantity of chopped sweet apple. Tie it in a cloth that has been wet, and leave room for it to swell, or put it in a pudding pan, and tie a cloth over— boil it three hours. The water must boil when it is put in.

You can use cranberries, and eat it with sweet sauce.

J. Q. Jackson, *Valuable Receipts: Or, Secrets Revealed!* (Boston, 1846).

Ann's Indian baked pudding

One cup of meal, with one quart of Milk, a pint of which make hot and scald the meal, the other half add cold, three Eggs, a lump of butter the size of a large walnut, sugar Cinnamon, and nutmeg to your taste. Bake it one hour: you may add a little ginger if you like it—

Either Wine sauce or butter & sugar mixed together.

Elizabeth C. Kane, *Manuscript Receipt Book* (1822-1852), Clements Library.

An Excellent Indian Pudding without Eggs (A Cheap Dish)

Take seven heaping spoonfuls of Indian meal, half a tea-spoonful of salt, two spoonfuls of butter or sweet lard, a teacup of molasses, and two tea-spoonfuls of ginger or cinnamon, to the taste. Pour into these a quart of milk while boiling hot. Mix well, and put it in a buttered dish. Just as you set it in the oven stir in a teacup of cold water, which will produce the same effect as eggs. Bake three quarters of an hour, in a dish that will not spread it out thin.

Catherine Beecher, *Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book* (New York, 1852).

A Boiled Indian Pudding

Boil a quart of milk, and stir in meal to make it a thick batter; put in a tea-spoonful of salt, a tea-cup of suet, a spoonful of sugar; mix these well together, add two eggs, well beaten. If you have dried peaches, soak them; sprinkle them with dry flour, and put them in, or put in raisins, previously rubbed with wheat flour— beat it well; have your pot boiling, scald the bag, flour it, and put in the pudding;— it will boil in two hours. Eat with sugar and cream, molasses, or any kind of pudding sauce.

Elizabeth Lea, *Domestic Cookery* (Baltimore, 1853). [A Quaker cookbook].

Baked Corn Meal Pudding

A pint of sifted Indian meal.— Half a pint of West India molasses.— A quarter of a pound of fresh butter.— A pint of milk.— Four eggs.— The yellow rind of a large fresh orange or lemon grated.— A tea-spoonful of powdered cinnamon and nutmeg mixed. Boil the milk. Sift the Indian meal into an earthen pan, pour the boiling milk over it, and stir them well together. Cut up the butter into a small saucepan; pour the molasses over it; set it on the fire, and let them warm together till the butter is soft, but not oiled. Stir them well, and mix them with the milk and Indian meal. Set the pan in a cool place. In a separate pan beat the eggs very light, and when the mixture has become cold, add the eggs to it, gradually. Then stir in the spice, and grated orange or lemon peel. Stir the whole very hard. Put the mixture into a buttered white dish and bake it well. Serve it up hot, and eat it with a sauce made of powdered white sugar, and fresh butter seasoned with nutmeg and lemon or orange juice, and stirred together to a cream; or with a liquid sauce of melted butter, wine and nutmeg.

This quantity of ingredients will make a small pudding. For a large one, allow a double portion of each article, and bake it longer.

It will be improved by gradually stirring in at the last, a pound of Zante currants or of sultana raisins, well dredged with flour.

Pumpkin Indian Pudding

Take a pint and a half of cold stewed pumpkin, and mix into it a pint and a half of Indian meal, adding a tablespoonful of ground ginger. Boil a quart of milk, and as soon as you take it from the fire, stir into it a pint of West India molasses. Then add to it gradually the mixture of pumpkin and corn meal, and stir the whole very hard. It will be much improved by adding the grated yellow rind of a large orange or lemon. Have ready over the fire a large pot of boiling water. Dip your pudding-cloth into it; shake it out; spread out the cloth in a broad pan: dredge it with flour; pour the mixture into it, and tie it fast, leaving about one-third of the space for the pudding to swell. Boil it three hours or more— four hours will not be too long. Turn it several times while boiling. Replenish the pot as it boils, with hot water from a kettle kept boiling for the purpose. Take up the pudding immediately before it is wanted for table— dip it a moment in cold water, and turn it out into a dish. Eat it with butter and molasses.

This pudding requires no eggs in the mixture. The molasses, if West India, will make it sufficiently light.

Eliza Leslie, *Miss Leslie's New Receipts* (Philadelphia, 1854).

Baked Indian Pudding

Boil one pint of sweet milk, stir in one cup of meal while boiling, pour into a baking dish and add one-half cup of molasses, two tablespoonfuls of sugar, one teaspoonful of ginger, one-half teaspoonful of salt, and a little nutmeg. Then add one pint of sweet milk with one egg well beaten. Put into the oven and bake one hour.

Hasty Pudding, or "Mush"

We place this first as the most common and most easily made. No one ever "took sick" from eating mush and milk,

or fried mush in any suitable quantity. (We knew a student well, who left the active labors of the farm to pursue his studies in an Academy. The first term he used a variety of food, and was in poor health. The next term of 11 weeks he ate *only* mush and milk, for breakfast, dinner, and supper, and actually grew fat on it, while he lost all headache, and though pursuing five heavy studies, he was first in his class, and went through the term strong and vigorous, without an hour of lost time, though he worked enough in the field and garden, at 8 cents an hour, to pay all his expenses.) "Mush and milk" is seldom relished, because few people know how to make the mush. The whole secret is in cooking it thoroughly. Rightly made it is not "*hasty pudding*". A well made "mush" is one that has boiled not less than a full hour. Two hours are better. The meal needs to be cooked; then it is both good and palatable. The rule is: Mix it very thin and boil it down, avoiding any burning or scorching, and salt it just right to suit the general taste. Prepare a good kettle full for supper, to be eaten with milk, sugar, molasses, syrup, or sweetened cream, or sweetened milk. If a good supply be left to cook, and be cut in slices and fried well in the morning, the plate of wheaten bread will be little in demand. It must be fried well, not crisped, or burned, or soaked in fat. If thoroughly soaked through in the kettle, it will only need to be heated through on the griddle. If not cooked well in the kettle, longer frying will be necessary.

***The Nebraska Farmer & Western Educational Advocate*, December 1861.**

Plymouth Indian Meal Pudding

Mix one cup of yellow corn meal, one cup of molasses, and one teaspoonful of salt. Pour on one quart of boiling milk, add one tablespoonful of butter, three pints of cold milk, and one cup of cold water, or two eggs. Bake in a deep, well-buttered pudding-dish, holding at least three quarts. Bake very slowly seven or eight hours. Do not stir, but cover with a plate if it bake too fast. One cup of currants may be used to give variety.

Baked Indian Meal Pudding (made quickly)

Boil one quart of milk. Pour it gradually on three tablespoonfuls of granulated Indian meal. Put it back in the double boiler, and boil one hour, stirring often. Then add one heaping tablespoonful of butter, one teaspoonful of salt, half a cup of molasses, two eggs, and one quart of cold milk. Mix well, pour into a well-buttered dish, and bake one hour. Eat with cream or butter.

Mary J. Lincoln, *Mrs. Lincoln's Boston Cook Book* (Boston, 1884).

Indian Pudding

5 cups scalded milk. 1/2 cup molasses.

1/3 cup Indian meal. 1 teaspoon salt.

1 teaspoon ginger.

Pour milk slowly on meal, cook in double boiler twenty minutes, add molasses, salt, and ginger; pour into buttered pudding-dish and bake two hours in slow oven; serve with cream. If baked too rapidly it will not whey. Ginger may be omitted.

Fannie Farmer, *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* (Boston, 1896). ■

Book Review

THE PEANUT: FROM SLAVE FOOD TO AMERICAN ICON

Andrew F. Smith,
Peanuts: The Illustrious History of the Goober Pea
Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002
224 pp., \$29.95 cloth

by Stephen C. Oldstrom

CHAA members Steve and Kay Oldstrom live in Ann Arbor. Steve, a retired attorney, reviewed Larry Zuckerman's book The Potato: How the Humble Spud Rescued the Western World in our Winter 2004 issue.

Most readers have probably eaten one form or another of peanuts since childhood. Here is a book peanut lovers can read and enjoy while lunching on that favorite of children everywhere—a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and a bowl of warm chicken-noodle soup.

Andrew Smith is a renowned scholar of food history, and a longtime friend of CHAA. (Many members of our group will recall his presentations on the history of catsup, snack foods, and other topics.) His book is divided into various sections, and those who do not want to read the whole work can select the parts that most interest them. The book contains extensive notes, bibliography, and selected sources such as a list of peanut organizations. These resources will be useful for readers who choose to dig more deeply into the subject of peanuts.

In the course of his research, Smith found more than 5,000 recipes that use peanuts in one form or another, and 1,000 of these recipes were significantly different from one another. He selected 125 of these historical peanut recipes to reprint in the book. They include peanut-based beverages (milk, coffee, chocolate, etc.), soups and sauces, salads, sandwiches, peanuts in main courses and mock dishes, and all sorts of baked goods, candies, and other desserts. These

recipes differ greatly from modern ones, and many of them would take some effort to adapt to our own kitchens. More importantly, they suggest the huge impact that the peanut has had on American food preferences.

Thought of more broadly, it becomes clear that peanuts have been a foremost example of the work of globalization during the past five centuries. The plant itself was native to eastern Bolivia, but European explorers took this and other New World plants to Europe for study and use. From there, peanut cultivation spread across the Mediterranean region and into Africa and Asia. The plant was highly suited to those areas because it was comparable to certain indigenous plants (such as the ground nut of Africa), grew on poor soil, was easy to cultivate and harvest, and had high yields. In addition, the peanuts themselves were a rich source of oil, protein, and other nutrients, and could be consumed in innumerable ways.

African slaves returned peanuts to the New World, notably to North America where they became an important part of food culture. As early as the 1840's, U.S. farm journals recommended growing peanuts. The *Tallahassee Floridian* contained an article asserting that peanuts "were one of the surest crop, not withholding a generous yield even on poor land..." (It should also be noted that the peanut plant, and all other leguminous plants such as beans, peas, and alfalfa, actually improve the soil by taking in nitrogen from the air and depositing it in nodules along the roots.)

Printed peanut recipes appeared as early as 1837. Eliza Leslie was a Philadelphian and her seminal cookbook that year, *Directions for Cookery*, contained several peanut recipes possibly inspired by the dishes of Haitian Creoles and their slaves, who had reached Philadelphia in the 1790's. Leslie's recipes included "maccaroons" made with "ground-nuts" (a recipe that Smith reprints here), as well as "molasses candy", an early version of peanut brittle.

The newest arrivals to America tended to best recognize the worth of the peanut and were responsible for its early success there. This was an opportunity that was largely missed by settled Americans. Black people were selling peanuts in the South well before the Civil War, and that war exposed northern troops to the product. The Union soldiers liked peanuts and wanted them when they returned home.

One of the earliest forms of marketing of peanuts were the vendors who sold them on city streets, at theaters, and at circuses. The *New York Sun* reported in

1834 that the pit at the theater on the Bowery “was usually filled with a set of pea-nut-eating geniuses.” Complaints about the “peanut gallery” (peanut eaters and their discarded peanut shells) continued for decades. Italian peddlers came to dominate the sale of peanuts in urban areas, exposing Americans to the irresistible aroma of roasting peanuts. Immigrants have a keen ability to see and capitalize on opportunities, but the specific connection between Italians and peanuts was in large part an accident. In 1868, a shipment of peanuts from war-torn Norfolk, VA was procured by an Italian commission man in New York City. He dispatched Italian peddlers to sell the peanuts, and the scheme proved to be so successful that it was continued the next year. The broker recruited additional peddlers, who were each given a pushcart and a bag of peanuts on credit.

The Italians did not have a monopoly on the peanut-peddling business, but they did so well that Italians were even recruited to come to America specifically as peddlers. The peanut was a perfect product for them: their sale required little experience or preparation, and the required language skills were also minimal. One Italian peddler was so successful that he paid \$24,000, cash on the barrel head, for a house on Mulberry Street in New York City sold at auction in 1887. His purchase was a big surprise to New York’s elite! Another Italian peddler later co-founded Planters (see sidebar).

The peanuts sold by these vendors were eaten on-the-spot as snacks. But between 1895 and 1920, the peanut was transformed from a snack food to an important component of the American diet, widely accepted and appreciated. By comparison, in many other countries the peanut is little used. How and why did this transformation occur in the United States? The peanut, after all, did not have a classy pedigree; southern aristocrats had considered it trash food, fit for slaves and the poor, while the northern elite had regarded it as a symbol of urban rowdies.

Smith believes that this turnabout in the fortune of the peanut in the U.S. was a result not of luck but of a confluence of historical factors. The peanut was the right product, at the right time, in the right place here in America. Among the key factors that Smith cites are these:

Agriculture and processing. The boll weevil epidemic that hit Southern cotton fields in the 1890’s prompted farmers to switch to more promising crops

continued on next page

One Hundred Years of Planters Peanuts



In Smith’s book (pp. 49-55), you will want to read the story of Italian immigrant Amedeo Obici, who was 11 years old when he arrived alone in New York City in 1888. He became a successful and resourceful peanut-peddler in Wilkes-Barre, PA, and in 1906 he and another Italian immigrant created Planters Peanut Company there.

Even before 1906, as a vendor Obici had already made a range of innovations, such as selling premium Virginia peanuts instead of the smaller “Spanish” type; devising a method for removing the red skins from the peanuts; finding alternative uses for stale peanuts; and making simple promotional offers. Now, at Planters, he turned his genius toward packaging and advertising. In 1916, the company held a contest for a trademark; the winning entry, submitted by a 14-year-old boy and tweaked by a Chicago agency, became the ubiquitous “Mr. Peanut” logo. Planters featured this popular symbol in newspaper and magazine ads, advertising booklets, and huge outdoor signs, and pioneered such promotions as radio spots, company-sponsored musical groups, and a “Peanut Car”. Intensive advertising was a key factor in the company’s success.

Obici and his wife lived much of their lives in and around Suffolk, VA, where the largest Planters facilities had been established in 1912. In his senior years he was made a board member of the nearby College of William & Mary (Williamsburg, VA), where he endowed a chair of Italian language.

PEANUTS*continued from previous page*

such as peanuts and pecans. Mechanization of peanut growing, and eventually of processing, which was well underway by the 1890's, would help to control retail costs of peanut products. A one-pound can of peanut butter sold for 12 cents in 1912 and for the same amount in 1942, even though peanut prices themselves were higher in 1942.

Promotion by Doctors and Vegetarians. By the 1880's, mainstream cookery magazines and cookbooks contained some peanut recipes. But it was the vegetarian movement, which began in earnest in the U.S. in the last years of the century, that turned the peanut into a food fad. In Battle Creek, MI, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg and his brother Will and their families played a key role by promoting the peanut as a healthful food. They were Seventh-Day Adventists and advocates of vegetarianism. John patented a crushed-peanut paste in 1896. Peanut butter sandwich recipes appeared in print that same year. A Battle Creek follower of the Kelloggs, Almeda Lambert, published a book, *Guide for Nut Cookery* (1899), that made extensive use of peanut butter and "eased peanut cookery into the American mainstream", according to Smith.

Marketing consolidation. Like any other product, peanut foods have to be sold effectively; supply does not guarantee demand. The dominance of grocery giants such as A&P (formed in the 1860's) meant that peanut products could be distributed nationally, rather than locally. In addition, peanut producers and processors began to organize trade associations to create industry-wide standards and to nationally promote peanut butter and other products.

Candy industry. A German immigrant in Chicago, Frederick W. Rueckheim, patented Cracker Jack, the confection of popcorn, peanuts, and molasses, in 1896 (again, note the role played by immigrants). Cracker Jack became wildly successful, prompting other companies to introduce such peanut-containing candies as the Goo Goo Cluster (Nashville, 1901), the Squirrel Brand Peanut Bar (Cambridge, MA, 1905), Planters Peanut Bar (Wilkes-Barre, PA, c. 1916), the Clark Bar (Pittsburgh, 1917), Baby Ruth (Chicago, 1920), Oh Henry! (Chicago, 1920), Mr. Goodbar (Hershey, PA, 1925), Reese's Peanut Butter Cups (Hershey, PA, 1928), and the Snickers Bar (Minneapolis, 1930).

Government Support. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, federal and state agricultural experiment stations, and county extension services developed new

peanut varieties, pushed for peanut import tariffs, and published many peanut recipes and booklets. One great example of such a booklet, still in print, was African-American scientist George Washington Carver's *How to Grow the Peanut and 105 Ways of Preparing It for Human Consumption* (Tuskegee Agricultural Experiment Station, Alabama, 1916). Carver would create 300 or so peanut-based products and was a critical force in the peanut's success. In 1921, he testified before the House Ways and Means Committee, which was considering a tariff on imported peanuts. During his one and one-half hours of testimony, Carver displayed and discussed peanut products ranging from breakfast foods to chocolate-coated peanuts, and from animal feed to ink and wood stains. Carver was such a celebrity that, when he died in January 1943, the media and all Americans "paused to show their respect for him", Smith writes.

War needs. Wartime saw the rapid growth of the peanut industry as peanuts were used in all manner of products and as a substitute for meat, wheat flour, and other rationed foods. During World War 1, access to foreign vegetable oils was cut off, and peanut oil became an important substitute. Peanut cake, left after removal of the oil, was used to make flour and other products. Peanuts were also used to make glycerin, a component of explosives.

Later, during the Great Depression, people sought an inexpensive and nutritious food and turned increasingly to peanut butter. Peanut products were even more heavily relied upon during World War 2.

Certain types of technology developed in that war and its aftermath also increased acceptance of peanut products. For instance, a problem with early peanut butters was the separation of the oils from the solids. In the 1950's, Victor Mills, a researcher at Procter & Gamble (Cincinnati) who had earlier revolutionized the process of making Ivory Soap, developed a means to prevent separation in peanut butter. This led to the type of creamy product identified with brands like Jif, which was introduced by Procter & Gamble in 1958. In addition, the development of commercial bread-slicing machines led to the sale of packaged, sliced bread, which meant that even children could make their own sandwiches.

It was these developments, Smith describes, that resulted in the perfection of the modern peanut butter sandwich. He notes that approximately 120 billion peanuts are used each year just to make Jif brand peanut butter! ■

MORSELS & TIDBITS

Congratulations to **Pat Cornett** and **Lenny Karle Zenith** for getting the new CHAA website up and running. Their initial version of the site can be viewed at www.culinaryhistoriansann Arbor.org.

The exhibit “Patriotic Fare: Bunker Hill Pickles, Abe Lincoln Tomatoes, Washington Crisps and Uncle Sam Apples” opened on July 5 at the University of Michigan Clements Library in Ann Arbor. Curated by **Jan Longone**, the four large display cases present a vivid sample of food containers, advertisements, menus, and other artifacts (from salt and pepper shakers to cookie cutters) that make use of American historical and patriotic imagery. On Sept. 17, Jan will present a talk (see p. 20) in conjunction with this exhibit, which runs through Sept. 29.

To mark next year’s 400th anniversary of the first permanent British settlement in North America, at Jamestown, VA, the Winter issue of *The Virginia Culinary Thymes* will be devoted to items about Jamestown and its problematic food situation, as well as food and cooking more generally in the history of Virginia. This publication is the quarterly newsletter of the Peacock-Harper Culinary History Committee at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA. **Cynthia D. Bertelsen** (cbertel@usit.net), who co-chairs the committee and edits the newsletter, invites submissions on the theme by December 1, 2006. The committee is also planning an April 2007 symposium, “From Jamestown to Bristol: 400 Years of Cooking Up History in Virginia”.

We would like to mention here four new biographies of notable chefs and food writers of 19th-Century France and England...

English actor and writer **Ian Kelly** has written *Cooking for Kings: The Life of Antonin Carême, the First Celebrity Chef* (New York: Walker and Company, 2004; 304 pp., \$26.00 cloth). In the life of Carême (1784-1833), Kelly has found a remarkable tale. Abandoned in Paris by his impoverished father, the boy ended up a cook’s apprentice and eventually a pastry chef, gaining fame for his elaborate sugar sculptures. Carême would play a key role in the revolutionary invention of restaurant cookery; the *soufflé*, the piped *meringue*, and the *vol-au-vent* were just a few of his inventions. The likes of Talleyrand and Napoleon championed him, and after a stint with Tsar Alexander I he introduced *service à la russe* (dining by courses) to France. Carême was also the first chef to make a fortune with cookbooks. Kelly, who has a degree in history from Cambridge, has also turned his captivating biography into a one-man stage show, including an exclusive performance for the Culinary Historians of New York.

Writer and historian **Ruth Brandon** has written *The People’s Chef: The Culinary Revolutions of Alexis Soyer* (New York: Walker and Company, 2005; 336 pp., \$26.00 cloth; first published by John Wiley & Sons in England in 2004 with a different subtitle). Brandon’s work is based on archival materials from both sides of the Channel, and on research by the specialist Frank Clement-Lorford. She has cleverly structured the book into

life chapters that correspond to a seven-course dinner based on Soyer’s recipes. Born in poverty in Meaux, a town just east of Paris, Soyer (1809-1858) was sent at age 11 to train in restaurant kitchens in the capital, where he became a disciple of the great chef Brillat-Savarin. After the 1830 uprisings, he and his brother left for England and worked as personal chefs for various wealthy clients. Although Alexis rose to become the most celebrated cook in London—he was head chef of the Reform, a leading social and political club there, and he founded the city’s first French restaurant—he never turned his back on his humble roots. For instance, he established soup kitchens for the poor in London, as well as in Ireland during the potato famine, and he overhauled the kitchens at the British army hospital in Scutari, Crimea. In a fascinating way, he targeted his cookbooks variously at the upper classes (e.g., *Gastronomic Regenerator*, 1846), the middle classes (e.g., *The Modern Housewife*, 1849), and the laboring classes (e.g., *Soyer’s Shilling Cookery for the People*, 1854).

Susan M. Rossi-Wilcox, a board member of the Culinary Historians of Boston, is the author of *Dinner for Dickens: The Culinary History of Mrs. Charles Dickens’ Menu Books* (Totnes, UK: Prospect Books, 2005; 368 pp., \$50 cloth). In 1851, Catherine Dickens (née Hogarth), wife of the novelist Charles Dickens and mother of 10 children, published a small book of home menu ideas. Written under the pseudonym Lady Maria Clutterbuck, her collection was entitled *What Shall We Have for Dinner? Satisfactorily Answered by Numerous Bills of Fare for from Two to Eighteen Persons*. Rossi-Wilcox includes a full reprint of the work, a detailed commentary on the foods and dishes mentioned in it, and a study of how domestic affairs were arranged in the Dickens household.

The latest biography from **Kathryn Hughes**, a lecturer in Biographical Studies at the University of East Anglia, is *The Short Life and Long Times of Mrs. Beeton* (New York: Knopf, 2006; 480 pp., \$29.95 cloth; first published by Fourth Estate in England in 2005 with main title *Cooking Up a Storm*). The work reveals, for the first time really, the brief (28 years) but important life of Isabella Mary Beeton (née Mayson), author of the best-selling *Beeton’s Book of Household Management* (London, 1861). Commissioned by Beeton’s husband, a socially grasping publisher, this was a comprehensive manual for the kind of Victorian working-class women who hired help and aspired to a higher station in life. The items in it, including some 2,000 recipes, were mostly taken from earlier works such as cookbooks by Eliza Acton and Alexis Soyer, but the quality of the result made it the “bible” in its field. The narrative by Hughes reads like a novel, giving a rich picture of social life and change in the England of the time, and of the dramas within the Beeton family, including their struggles with illness and infant death.

On the Back-burner: We invite ideas and submissions for these planned future theme-issues of *Repast*: Artisanal Cheesemaking (Fall 2006), Food and Children (Winter 2007), Regional and Ethnic American Cuisines (Spring 2007). Suggestions for future themes are also welcome. ■

CHAA CALENDAR

(Except where noted, programs are scheduled for 4-6 p.m. at Ann Arbor Senior Center, 1320 Baldwin Ave.)

Sunday, July 30, 2006

4-7 p.m., Earhart Village Clubhouse
(835 Greenhills Drive, Ann Arbor)
CHAA Summer Theme Picnic,
“Salads from Around the World”

Sunday, September 17, 2006

3-5 p.m., Clements Library
(909 S. University, Ann Arbor)
Jan Longone’s lecture in conjunction with the
exhibit “Patriotic Fare: Bunker Hill Pickles,
Abe Lincoln Tomatoes, Washington Crisps
and Uncle Sam Apples”

Sunday, October 15, 2006

“Tea 101: An Historical Overview and
Guided Tasting”
Jeremy and Aubrey Lopatin, owners of
New World Tea, Ann Arbor

Sunday, November 19, 2006

“In the Kitchen with Doña Petrona: A Culinary
History of 20th-Century Argentina”
Rebekah E. Pite, PhD Candidate and Instructor,
History and Women’s Studies, University of Michigan

Sunday, December 10, 2006

4-7 p.m., Earhart Village Clubhouse
(835 Greenhills Drive, Ann Arbor)
Holiday participatory dinner,
“A Salute to Our Friends on the Gulf Coast”

REPAST

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Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

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First Class