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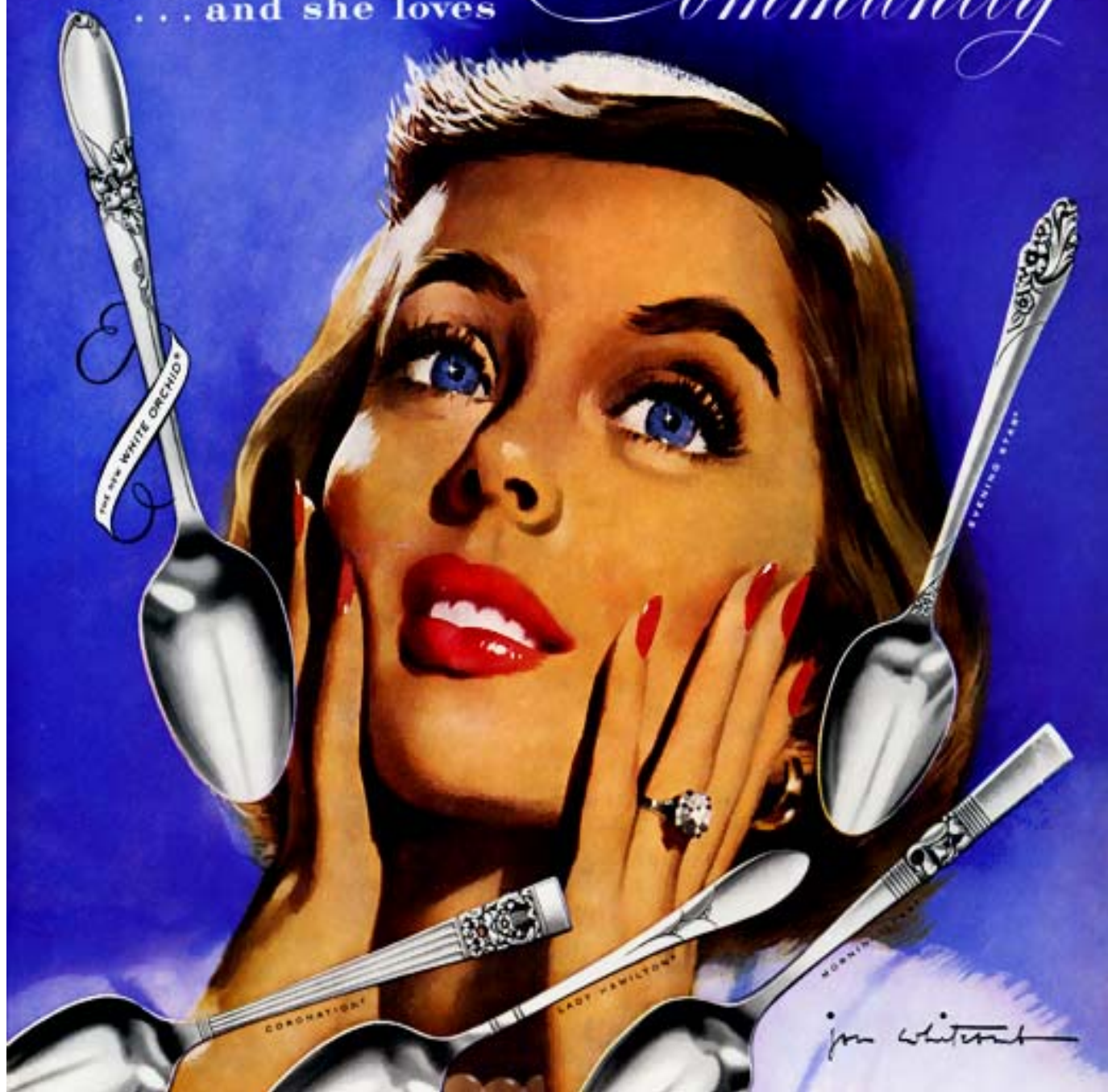
Repast

Quarterly Publication of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

she's in love

... and she loves

Community



C.H.A.A. FALL PROGRAMS SCANNED THE FOOD-BOOK WORLD

About 200 people attended the Sept. 18 meeting of CHAA, co-sponsored with the University of Michigan Clements Library and the Book Club of Detroit. CHAA Honorary President Jan Longone gave an illustrated presentation, "The Longone Center for American Culinary Research: Past – Present – Future". She described how she and Dan assembled their archive through over 30 years of work as antiquarian book dealers in the field of gastronomy. In the early 1980's an experience at Oxford University, where Jan's lecture on American culinary history was greeted with incredulity that such a thing could exist, solidified Jan's determination to reveal this history more fully. That led to a series of pathbreaking exhibits at the Clements on American cookbooks and cuisine. Eventually, library director John Dann asked Jan to become Curator of American Culinary History there, the first appointment of its kind anywhere. Once Jan agreed and began the work, she and Dan realized that

merging their personal collection with that of Clements would form one of the world's great treasures. A remarkable group of volunteers is helping to catalog their massive donation, as well as the culinary content of the rest of the library's holdings, creating the Longone Center for American Culinary Research.

Food historian and writer Alice Arndt spoke on Oct. 16 about the new book that she has edited, forthcoming in 2006, *Culinary Biographies* (Yes Press, Houston, TX). The book is the first real historical dictionary of food-related personalities— from Pythagoras to Julia Child, about 200 biographies in all. Alice made her presentation in a delightful guessing-game format, exposing layer after layer of information on each selected notable. The figures that she profiled for us included Catharine E. Beecher, the author of, among other books, *Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book* (1846) (see Cathy Kaufman's article in this issue, p. 8); Diamond Jim Brady, gourmand; Harvey W. Wiley, the USDA chemist behind the Pure Food and Drug Bill of 1906; Ida Bailey Allen, author of *Modern Cookbook* (1932) and others; Sir J. C. "Jack" Drummond, British biochemist and nutritionist who oversaw food rationing in World War 2; and Adele Davis, California dietician and "health-food evangelist".

Well-known author and University of Michigan alumna Joan Nathan spoke to us on Nov. 8 while on tour promoting her book, *The New American Cooking* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005). To gather material for this cookbook, she and some friends traveled across the U.S. to survey the food scene and to visit some of its leading innovators, from ethnic enclaves (African, Hispanic, Indian, Hmong, etc.) in Washington, San Diego, and other cities, to people like scratch cook Marion Spear in the Arkansas Ozarks, who makes use of garden-grown herbs, Japanese vegetables, homemade beer, and other ingredients. Joan emphasized that food is never static; even "grandma's" dishes varied from those that came before. Political and social changes in the 1960's prompted Americans, especially young people, to open themselves up to a whole world of influences in culinary and other spheres. As a result, and with the advance of technology, "alternative" foods have become mainstream, farmers' and whole-food markets have proliferated, and the social status of chefs has skyrocketed. We have the means today to elevate the best cooking of the past and present to a whole new level, Nathan says. ■

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A CASTING BOTTLE FROM THE ELIZABETHAN TABLE

by Jutta Page

Dr. Jutta-Annette Page is Curator of Glass and Decorative Arts at the Toledo Museum of Art in Toledo, OH. She has been working on a book about the glass collection there, to be published this Summer, and she curated the Tiffany glass exhibit that runs through April 30. Dr. Page earned an M.A. in the history of art and architecture, and a PhD. in classical archaeology, both from Brown University. She was formerly Curator of European Glass at The Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, NY, for which she edited the collection Beyond Venice: Glass in Venetian Style, 1500-1750 (2004).

Scented water, essences, and perfumes found multiple uses during the Tudor and Early Stuart periods in England (roughly the late 1400's to the early 1700's). At a time when eating utensils were few or nonexistent, scented water was customarily used to cleanse diners' hands at the end of a meal. Servants would pour the liquid from a ewer (a large pitcher or jug) over the hands of their lords or ladies while holding an (often matching) basin beneath.

Less commonly, small vase-shaped casting bottles with pierced metal tops were used to sprinkle a more highly scented essence such as rosewater, for which a towel would suffice to catch any spills.¹ Such small casting bottles were more likely pieces intended for the personal toilette of an elegant English lord or lady, such as one mentioned in the will of Elizabeth, Countess of Devonshire², or one belonging to the lady of the house at Hardwick Hall in 1601 ("a Casting bottle guilt with my Ladies arms"³). They were considered precious objects, listed among the silver plate of a wealthy household, and often featured in inventories and bequests. Along with tooth picks, bodkins, pomanders, and shoe horns in gold or silver, they were often exchanged in the annual ritual of gift giving at New Year's.⁴

The vessel bodies could be made from a variety of materials, which were fitted into metal mounts with chains for handling. Only six surviving examples in silver or silver-gilt are known. Other than silver, the most common material in the 16th Century was rock crystal: several examples are listed in the inventory of Queen Elizabeth I.⁵ A few known examples were made of agate and *lignum vitae*.⁶ Casting bottles of glass are also listed in court inventories of the day, and blue glass appears to have been a favored color. The 1542 inventory of King Henry VIII's possessions included "a Coffe of Crymson velvet embrawdred with crimson veluet and garnysshed with stone and / small Perle conteyneng... a little Casting bottell of collowred glasse garnysshed with golde", that was recorded amongst the "Jeweltes and other Goodes Founde in the Kinges Secrete Juelhous in Thold Gallory Towards the leades of the Privy Garden at Westminster".⁷ The 1542 inventory of Whitehall Palace lists "Item oone Casting bottell of blewe Glasse"⁸, and two further casting bottles "of blewe glasse" are mentioned in the 1547 inventory.⁹

Just last year, the Toledo Museum of Art purchased what appears to be the only surviving example of such a casting bottle



with a blown-glass body. The piece, which is five inches in height, consists of an ovoid glass receptacle that is mounted on a spreading silver foot, the latter engraved with a band of shaded arabesques within a molded border. Three vertical silver straps with scalloped edges and engraved stylized flowerheads enlase the vessel and are hinged to the metal base. The waisted collar enclosing the neck is engraved with arabesques above a band of stiff foliage, with two applied lugs to attach a chain (now missing). The domed cover is pierced and engraved with a stylized flower head.

This casting bottle is unusual not only because it encloses a glass body but also because it was made from dichroic glass, a type of glass that appears to be two distinctly different colors depending on the type of light under which it is viewed: in this case, the color of the glass changes from nearly opaque light blue in reflected light to translucent yellowish-green in transmitted light. Dichroic glass was developed in the 1st and 2nd Centuries A.D., when glassmakers added powdered gold and silver to their glass mixtures. The most prominent example is the so-called Lycurgus Cage Cup in the British Museum, which changes from opaque green in reflected light to translucent red in transmitted light.¹⁰ The technique and formula for dichroic glass fell into disuse until revived by Venetian glassmakers in the mid-16th Century. A group of five pilgrim flasks, dating to the second half of that century, is blown of similar blue glass with dichroic appearance to this casting bottle, but their walls are considerably thicker and those with metal fittings have simpler mounts.¹¹ Another glass example, in a lead mount, is in the collections of the Musée du Louvre.¹² And yet another, in the J. Paul Getty Museum, features an engraved pewter mount that recalls the work of Isaac Briot.¹³ While some of the metal mounts of these flasks appear to have been made in France, their

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HIGH STYLE, FASHIONABLE TASTE



THE CAMPBELL COLLECTION OF SOUP TUREENS

by Pat Halfpenny

Patricia A. Halfpenny, a ceramics expert, is Director of Museum Collections at The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum in Winterthur, DE. She began her career in her native England, where for 28 years she carried out research at the City Museum and Art Gallery in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire. She was named Curator of Ceramics and Glass at Winterthur in 1995, and was promoted to the directorship three years later. Among her many books is an exhibit catalogue that she co-authored with Curator of Metals Donald L. Fennimore, Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens at Winterthur (Winterthur Museum, 2000). Pat is also an adjunct faculty member at the University of Delaware.

In early history, soup was a simple meal cooked in a single vessel over the open hearth, and it was often eaten directly from the communal pot. From these humble origins, soup, and eventually soup tureens, evolved to become part of chic dinner parties and banquets. The tureen was not merely a utilitarian article for the service of soup, it was an expression of wealth and fashionable style. It was a statement that the owners were embracing the latest developments in serving, eating, and table etiquette and had acquired the requisite new tablewares and furnishings that signified a greater sophistication of domestic rituals.

The Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens represents some of the finest productions of silversmiths and ceramic artists from the early 18th into the 19th Century. The collection was started in 1966, the inspiration of John T. Dorrance, a member of the family long associated with the Campbell Soup Company. Eventually this fine collection of soup tureens and associated items (such as ladles, spoons, and soup bowls) was transferred to Winterthur, opening there with an exhibit in May 1997. About 140 of the most significant items are permanently displayed in Winterthur's Dorrance Gallery.

In the essay below, I will refer to several tureens in the Campbell Collection to illustrate and reflect upon the changing decorative styles of such tableware during this period.

Lifestyle and Table Style

From the 17th Century onward, we can document changes in lifestyle that included new ways of dining and entertaining. By this time the splendid public feasts that had been an indis-



Figure 1. John Edwards II, rococo tureen, London, 1746-47. Silver; H. 9¼", L. 15½"

pensable expression of power on the part of medieval monarchs and noblemen were displaced by more private dining practices. A new political, religious, and social order meant that a landowner no longer needed to keep great retinues of supporters to secure his estates on a daily basis. With an increasing degree of stability, life became more regular, more ordered, and more family oriented. Houses changed to accommodate new social requirements. Formal dining, which had taken place in the great hall with the whole household in attendance, became a more private affair. Parlors were used, and eventually separate dining rooms were introduced into house plans.

By 1700, dinner *à la française* was the fashion. Previously, every dish of a meal was placed on the table at one time. Dining *à la française*, however, began with a table laid with the first-course dishes only, and these were all set out before the diners were seated. Soup was naturally part of the first course. It was served at the beginning of a meal to take the edge off everyone's hunger. After soup was finished, the tureens and soup plates were removed and the soup course was replaced with another dish— often fish. The replacement dish was known as a "remove". During the meal, guests helped themselves from the choice of dishes within reach. Servants assisted by passing condiments, wineglasses, and drink from the sideboard as required. To be sure of attentive service, diners were often advised to give the servants a hefty tip before the meal began.

Banquets, dinner parties, suppers, and balls were a way of establishing one's place in society and impressing others with one's superior taste, great wealth, and fashionable practices. Early in the 18th Century, dinner might have begun at midday; gradually the meal was served later and later, until three or four o'clock was normal. The event might then last seven or eight hours, and part of the entertainment was to decorate the table with interesting food and ornamental devices to amuse the guests and stimulate conversation. To make a grand and dramatic first impression, there was no more suitable vessel than the soup tureen.



Figure 2. Meissen factory, rococo tureen, Germany, 1750. Porcelain; H.7 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", L.7"

Baroque and Rococo Designs

The earliest and most impressive of the tureens in the Campbell Collection is a flamboyant example in ormolu (a gold-colored alloy of copper), said to have been made for Prince Marc de Beauveau-Craon, who was High Constable of Lorraine and Viceroy of Tuscany from 1736 to 1748. While its exact origins are not known, the tureen was probably made in France in the 1720's. The bold, sculptural qualities of this powerfully modeled form exhibit architectural features such as S-scrolls, friezes, caryatid figures, and acanthus, which are typical of the baroque style. The word "baroque" was coined as a pejorative epithet in the 18th Century, when the highly ornate designs were considered by some to be grotesque and aesthetically unpleasing. A similar term of ridicule was coined for the next major international style of architecture and design—"rococo". In the decorative arts, rococo is exemplified by the fantastic, sometimes bizarre, use of ornament. The principal elements are a dependence on asymmetry; the use of cartouches (panels for inscriptions) made up from C- and S-shaped scrolls; an interest in natural, organic forms; and an emphasis on the grotesque—on grottoes and ruins, shells and marine Crustacea, and flowers and follies. The great strength of the Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens at Winterthur lies in the 18th Century and in the rococo style.

A standard ovoid shape was used for many ceramic and metal tureens made during the middle of the 18th Century, and the basic form was ornamented in various ways to conform to the demands of rococo fashion. The simplest way to add decorative details was to apply fanciful feet and frivolous handles. The most common handle form is composed of looped or entwined leaves and branches, but shells, boars' heads, lions' heads, deer heads, and caryatid figures are among the curious subjects that can also be found. The most practical and economical base for a tureen is a flat surface that sits securely on a stand or on a table; however, many of the Campbell tureens have ornamental feet. Sometimes the feet are "hairy paws", lions' pads, or cloven hooves. More commonly the feet are formed from scrolling foliage. Some of the more singular

designs include a range of marine subjects such as mermaids, dolphins, and tiny turtles.

A question that is commonly asked about tureens is whether the design of the finial (the ornamental apex) is related to the proposed content inside. Given that finials encompass a wide range of fantastic subjects from crayfish to cabbages, frogs to flowers, and putti to pomegranates, one would hope that this was not the case. Indeed, what we know of dining practices suggests that table services usually included soup tureens in multiples of two, with particularly large services having six. The normal dinner party offered a choice of two soups, one clear and one creamy. As the tureens were a matching pair and the soups were different, it is most unlikely that the finials were intended to be anything other than decorative.

Illustrated in Figure 1 is a silver tureen by John Edwards II of London. It dates to 1746-47. It is typically rococo, with the basic oval form covered by an assortment of amazing natural detail embracing a range of decorative techniques. The cover has *repoussé* (raised-design) bands of scrolling leaves that freely swirl and intertwine. The finial is cast in the form of a crayfish or lobster. The body of the tureen has a band of applied scrolling flowers and leaves supporting an asymmetrical cartouche on each side, finely engraved with the coat of arms of Gould impaling Shaw. The whole is supported by four dolphin feet, and the handles are in the form of boars' heads. The incongruity of the individual parts is somehow overcome by the unifying theme of swirling asymmetrical detail.

Exuberance in Porcelain

Ceramic tureens are sometimes less elegant than silver examples, perhaps because they often rely on color rather than form for decoration. Within the Campbell collection, only three 18th-Century ceramic tureens are unpainted. The white porcelain tureen from the Bow factory near London has an applied decoration of *prunus* sprays in imitation of the Chinese. This interest in the Orient was a branch of rococo expressing a curiosity about the fantastic and exotic. Two white salt-glazed stoneware tureens from Staffordshire follow more naturalistic themes. One is shaped and modeled to resemble a melon; the other is a more standard shape but with surface molding depicting intertwined and fruiting branches of currants. As with silver tureens, the appeal of these white examples lies in the overall form, which includes surface texture from molding or embossing.

Many decorated ceramic tureens have modeling on the surface, often of S- and C-shape scrolls that form panels or cartouches to frame exquisitely painted designs. From naturalistic flower sprays to Chinese gardens, rococo artists created a range of patterns to excite and please every taste and test the skills of manufacturers. German porcelain makers were the first to triumph with porcelain tureens. From the early years of the 18th Century, they acquired skills that allowed them to produce some of the most technically difficult pieces ever made. An example of this ingenuity can be seen in Figure 2. In

continued on next page

SOUP TUREENS

continued from previous page



Figure 3. Elijah Mayer, neoclassical tureen, Staffordshire, 1790-1800. Earthenware; H. 13", L. 16½".

this small, covered soup bowl, technical excellence and rococo extravagance come together to create a masterpiece. It was made at the Meissen factory about 1750, and the flower-encrusted surface is in the Schneeballen tradition. The snowball of white guelder roses is created by applying each handmade flower individually to the surface of the bowl and cover. At a later date, molded versions of this style were produced, but in the 1740's and 1750's the work was all done by hand. The finial on the cover is in the form of a classical goddess wearing a plumed helmet and metallic breast plate. The figure is Minerva as goddess of war, and it is only when we look closely at the meticulously hand-painted panels on the bowl that we realize that she is presiding over battlefields. The military scenes are thought to have been inspired by engravings of the War of Austrian Succession recorded by the war artist Georg Philipp Rugendas. The colorful coat of arms on the cover and stand is supported on a shell-shape shield with an ermine ground. Unfortunately, its origins have not been identified, but research may yet yield that vital information.

The exuberance and whimsical nature of rococo began to pall by the middle of the 18th Century. Its frivolity and excess eventually gave way to the symmetry and order of what contemporaries called the "true" or "correct" style. A return to familiar classical shapes and ornaments was advocated, and classical taste was fed with souvenirs from the "Grand Tour" and extensive collections from excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii. This classical revival, first manifest in new architectural styles, filtered down to the decorative arts that were needed to ornament rooms and serve as functional items. The cream-color earthenware tureen in Figure 3 has a simple shape and formal border pattern that echo the new demands for classical restraint. The manufacturer was Elijah Mayer of Staffordshire, and this piece was probably made in the last decade of the 18th Century. Tablewares of this kind were made for well-to-do homes. Royalty, nobility, and the wealthier members of the middle classes began to buy creamware dinner services in the late 1760's, particularly in England, where porcelain was still passing through its experimental stages and

dinner services with large flat dishes and big tureens were technically very difficult to produce. While Chinese porcelain was suitable for dinnerwares, by the end of the century it was no longer in fashion in Europe; the neoclassical earthenware dinner service reigned supreme.

From about 1800, rigorous classicism also receded. More complex forms emerged, but decoration was restrained with an emphasis on simple foliage, flower sprays, and sprigs. There was a new interest in the picturesque and in the countryside, which led to a comfortable calm after the excesses of rococo and the constraints of neoclassicism. Of course, the very nature of fashion is that it is always evolving. The quiet, gentrified qualities of the early 19th Century gave way, from the 1820's, to an interest in historical styles; the 1830's saw a revival of the florid rococo. The silver tureen in Figure 4 is overwhelmed by maritime imagery in the revived rococo style. It was made by Robert Garrard, Jr., of London in 1824-25. Garrard's successors are currently crown jewelers and goldsmiths. The body of the tureen is embossed with shell-molded flutes. The sculptured handles of a triton and a mermaid have double fish tails, and the applied border is made up of a variety of shells. The finial is a lobster amid shells and seaweed. The whole is set on a rolling sea of silver—the elaborately wrought flutes and scrolls simulate cresting waves. This kind of skillful, but perhaps excessive, ornamentation characterizes the expensive high style of mid-19th-Century decorative arts. For more modest households, the range of mass-produced goods increased.

For many economic and social reasons, the function of tureens seems to have changed in the second half of the 19th Century. Except in rare circumstances, they were no longer created by master craftsmen. It is only with the more recent decades that we find tureens have come full circle. The Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens at Winterthur includes modern pieces—not only to place the entire collection in



Figure 4. Robert Garrard, Jr., rococo revival tureen, London, 1824-25. Silver; H. 15½", L. 21 ¼".

context but also to demonstrate that the qualities of craftsmanship, design, humor, and exuberance are not the exclusive properties of past masters. As we see in Figure 5, they are alive in the work of contemporary artists as well. ■



Figure 5. Contemporary tureen, America, 1983.
Earthenware; H. 10", L. 15". The pink tongue is the
end of the ladle that rests inside the tureen.

ONEIDA SILVERWARE *continued from page 11*

the sales of their silver, it also had a profound effect on the whole advertising business." (Dorothy T. Rainwater and Judy Redfield, *Encyclopedia of American Silver Manufacturers*, Fourth ed. [Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing, 1998], p. 237.)

Oneida also pioneered the use of endorsements from celebrities, including the dancer Irene Castle and the socialite Mrs. Belmont. Among the company's other marketing innovations were materials aimed at adolescent girls, such as the promotional booklet *When Cinderella Dined With the Prince* (1924).

After purchasing the Wm. A. Rogers silver company of Connecticut, Oneida introduced a line of sterling silverware in 1933— during the Great Depression! As the company fell on hard times (relieved only by World War 2, when Oneida produced equipment for the armed forces), innovative marketing became even more important. The 1952 Oneida ad reproduced on our front cover was part of a campaign featuring illustrations by Jon Whitcomb.

In the 1960's, Oneida added stainless-steel cutlery to its product line. Its huge success "turned the tables" but reflected a general social trend. The firm produced and distributed promotional filmstrips for use in home-economics classes, such as "The Hostess With the Mostest" (60 frames) and "The Bridal Consultant: A Bride's Guide to Fine Tableware" (63 frames).

By 1990 Oneida completely dominated the flatware market, to the tune of 52% of all sales in the United States. Its chief rival is Toledo, OH-based Libbey Corporation, but the competition there is over plates and glassware. Oneida is the only cutlery maker that still has a factory in the U.S. ■

CASTING BOTTLE *continued from page 3*

glass, like that of the Toledo Museum piece, was most likely manufactured in Venice, which at that time excelled in the production of glass emulating semi-precious stones.

Like so much small silverware, casting bottles from this period are by no means always hallmarked, so that attributions have to be based on characteristics of style and technique.¹⁴ The construction of the mounts on this bottle, with scalloped straps formed of sheet, and the decorative engraving, are akin to other English-made mounted objects. The pierced, shallow-domed cover is identical to that found on a silver example, dating from about 1550–65, held by the British Museum.¹⁵ According to spectrographic analysis of the silver mount on the Toledo Museum bottle— an analysis carried out by the London Assay Office one year before the item's previous auction at Christie's in New York in 1988— the mounts appear to be within the parameters of metallic composition found in 16th-Century silver. Based on such evidence, we can date the piece to about 1580.

The body of this unusual scent-casting bottle, which mysteriously changed between blue and yellowish-green, was apparently deemed worthy of being fitted into an expensive English mount like a semi-precious stone vessel, the better to be admired as a rare and special object at the dining table. ■

Endnotes

1. Sir Charles Jackson, *An Illustrated History of English Plate* (London, 1911), 2:575. Casting bottles might also have been used for sprinkling aromatic substances onto textiles; see Oliver Impey, ed., *Four Centuries of Decorative Arts from Burghley House*, exh. cat. (Alexandria, VA, 1998), p. 109, cat. no. 22.
2. Impey, p. 109, cat. no. 22.
3. Lindsay Boynton, ed., *The Hardwick Hall Inventories of 1601* (London, 1971), p. 37. I am grateful to Eleanor Alcorn for her insightful comments and bibliographical sources regarding this object.
4. Jefferies Collins, *Jewels and Plate of Queen Elizabeth I: the Inventory of 1574* (London, 1955), pp. 108-10.
5. Collins, pp. 305-6 and passim.
6. An example with a carved, spirally-fluted agate body and silver-gilt mounts, thought to date circa 1535-40, is at Burghley House, Stamford. It was listed among the Duchess of Devonshire's jewels in 1690.
7. David Starkey, ed., *The Inventory of King Henry VIII: The Transcript* (London, 1998), p. 88, no. 3238.
8. Maria Hayward, *The 1542 Inventory of Whitehall Palace and its Keeper, Volume II, The Transcripts*, (London, 2004), p. 113, no. 1121.
9. Starkey, p. 244, no. 10949 and p. 428, no. 17393.
10. Donald B. Harden, Hansgerd Hellenkemper, K. S. Painter, and David Whitehouse, *Glass of the Caesars* (Milan, 1987), pp. 245-9, no. 139.
11. Marie-Laure de Rochebrune, "Venetian and *Façon de Venise* Glass in France in the 16th and 17th Centuries", in Jutta-Annette Page, ed., *Beyond Venice: Glass in Venetian Style, 1500-1750* (Corning, NY: The Corning Museum of Glass, 2004), pp. 154-5.
12. Inv. No. OA 457-1412, gift of Charles Sauvageot, 1856.
13. Catherine Hess and Timothy Husband, *European Glass in the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Santa Monica, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1997), pp. 170-3.
14. Philippa Glanville, *Silver in Tudor and Early Stuart England: A Social History and Catalogue of the National Collection 1480-1660* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1990), p. 354.
15. Harold Newman, *An Illustrated Dictionary of Silverware* (London, 1987), p. 65.

AN EMPHATICALLY UNSTYLISH DINNER, CIRCA 1850

by Cathy K. Kaufman

Cathy Kaufman teaches culinary history at the Institute of Culinary Education in New York City. Currently the chairperson of the Culinary Historians of New York, she was a senior editor of the Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America (Oxford University Press, 2004) and is author of the forthcoming Cooking in Ancient Civilizations (Greenwood Press, 2006), a cookbook designed to teach high school students about the cultures of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome through recipes. Cathy is a member of Les Dames d'Escoffier and is a 1999 graduate of Madeleine Kamman's School for American Chefs. Before earning an honest living in the kitchen, she practiced law for 11 years.

Dining changed dramatically in 19th-Century America. Expanding numbers of plates and utensils, different ways of serving formal meals, and the changing duties of host, hostess, and servants would make a fancy dinner party in the year 1900 virtually unrecognizable from one in the year 1800.¹ While the increase in material goods was important, it could not have flourished without the parallel shift in the meal's presentation. By the mid-19th Century, the traditionally elegant dinner served *à la française* was giving way to dinners served *à la russe*. The change in style had wide repercussions.

Under French service, diners came to a dining table covered in platters and serving dishes symmetrically displayed; once seated, the diners repeatedly helped each other, choosing among the array of foods and returning to a particularly favored dish if desired. Etiquette books coached diners in how to carve, an important skill as birds and joints were served whole, and other necessary skills, such as how to place delicate portions on a dinner plate or add gravies or vegetables to a plate. Three courses generally covered everything from soup and fish to dessert: a soup plate, one or two dinner plates, and a dessert plate, sufficed for each diner. Servants stood ready to fetch items located at distant ends of the table or to satisfy requests for drink, but, with the exception of the most aristocratic tables, servants assisted, but did not serve, individual diners.

Russian service debuted among the most fashionable echelons of American society in the late 1830's. Requiring many more plates, glasses, and utensils, and more servants, Russian service altered the duties performed at table by all participants. Upon entering the dining room, diners encountered a table largely bereft of platters: instead, waiters presented a dozen or more dishes to the individual diners in separate, sequential courses. Birds and joints were carved at side tables, relieving hosts and guests of the responsibility of

carving and portioning, and each course came to demand a fresh plate and specially designed implements, such as fish forks and knives, pickle forks, egg spoons, pie forks and the like.

Russian service encountered some initial resistance. Philip Hone, an urbane New Yorker, famously critiqued his first meal served in the Russian style:

One does not know how to choose, because you are ignorant of what is coming next, or whether anything more is coming. Your conversation is interrupted every minute by greasy dishes thrust between your head and that of your neighbor, and it is more expensive than the old mode of shewing [sic] a handsome dinner to your guests and leaving them free to choose.²

Within a few years, however, the wealthiest (including Hone) adapted Russian service's conspicuous consumption and teams of liveried, well-trained servants for their formal dinners: one etiquette writer praised the ease of Russian service, relieving the diner of all responsibilities at table other than to eat.

By the 1840's, the professional and middle classes found themselves able to equip their dining tables with generous supplies of fashionable tablewares, but the logistics of serving a dinner *à la russe* remained daunting, due mainly to the expense and difficulty of hiring skilled servants. A popular theme in 19th-Century household manuals and women's literature involved the overly ambitious hostess unfamiliar with all of the intricacies of Russian service who hired inexpensive servants and was humiliated by the errors in the fancy meal. For the aspiring classes struggling to demonstrate their elegance, a hybridized form of service evolved that would allow them to show off their pretty and plentiful tablewares without the difficulty of orchestrating a team of cooks and waiters to serve *à la russe*. One of the clearest statements of this middle to upper-middle class service style is found in Catharine Beecher's *Domestic Receipt Book*. First published in 1846, Miss Beecher provides detailed instructions to "a young and inexperienced housekeeper" on how to host "small dinner-parties" for guests "from the most wealthy circles". She is emphatic that her instructions are not "for what would be called a *stylish* dinner-party, but what in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, in the most respectable society, would be called a plain, substantial dinner."³ It was to be a dinner personally supervised by the hostess in the kitchen until the guests arrived, and only then would the finishing touches be delegated to an ordinary cook. Miss Beecher's company dinner melded the relative simplicity of French service with some of the material abundance demanded by stylish Russian service to forge a distinctive service suited to the aspiring Victorian hostess.

Guests entered Miss Beecher's dining room to find a table set with a double layer of white tablecloths over beautiful bare wood or a colored cloth, just like the traditional practice of French service. Castors containing condiments such as oil, vinegar, and soy (Miss Beecher's is a homemade reduction of anchovy essence, salt, sugar, and spices) or a celery stand

decorated the center of the table. Each place setting had a plate, napkin, tumbler and two wine glasses, knife, fork, and soup spoon. A few other condiment dishes holding jellies and pickles were placed in the corners, along with carving and serving utensils. Next to the host or hostess was a side table with additional dishware and silverware. The only significant foods on the table were the first course: in front of the hostess would be a soup tureen and a dozen soup plates, while in front of the host would be a covered platter holding fish. The hostess served the soup without inquiring whether the guest wanted any; those who declined soup simply passed the plate on to the next diner. The host then served fish to all who declined soup, or waited for the waiter to clear the soup plates (including the set plate) and replace the set plate from the stack on the side table.

While the soup and fish course were proceeding, the cook would bring up the remaining hot dishes; Miss Beecher's recommended dinner for twelve had two ducks with drawn butter, a boiled turkey with oyster sauce, a boiled ham, scalloped oysters, and potatoes, turnips, and parsnips. The waiter cleared the dirty dishes, replaced them with clean plates and then arrayed the main victuals like a simple French service dinner, with the turkey in front of the host, the ducks and ham across from (usually male) guests at the center of the table, and the scalloped oysters in front of the hostess. The vegetables filled the interstices. All of the dishes had domes, which were adroitly removed to prevent steam from dripping on the tablecloth. The host and guests nearest the meats carved at table, while the hostess portioned the oysters.

From our 21st-Century perspective, the one important detail lacking from Miss Beecher's otherwise detailed instructions was precisely how food got from the communal platters to the individual diner. She succinctly stated that once the meats were carved, host and hostess inquired as to what each guest would be helped, and "all are helped", along with the directive that waiters should be trained "to offer each article to guests on their *left* side."⁴ The mechanics of filling the plate and delivering it to the intended diner undoubtedly was so well-established that mid-19th-Century readers needed no explanation; instead, these folks needed detailed guidance on how to set the table with ever-increasing dinner paraphernalia. However, based on other etiquette guides from the first half of the century, we can infer how service might have worked, keeping in mind that Miss Beecher's professed goal was a respectable, rather than *haute monde*, dinner for twelve that could be served by one or two experienced waiters. Anything more "stylish" would have required three or four waiters.

The role of waiters was somewhat limited in French service, so Miss Beecher drew on that longstanding, familiar tradition. After laying the dishes on the table, waiters were to "observe if bread, water, or anything is wanting to any guest and offer a supply."⁵ The diners were responsible for "helping" their companions at table in private homes. Etiquette books exhaustively dealt with the challenges facing the diner-server, such as placing demure portions on the plate, or ladling gravy to the side of meats, not on top. After the host or hostess inquired as to the guest's preferences, a plate was

passed to the person in front of the preferred meat or vegetable. Once the plate was filled, and depending on the availability of servants, the diners might freely pass plates around the table to the intended diner or a waiter might place a filled plate in front of the intended guest. Given Miss Beecher's goal of serving wealthy guests accustomed to stylish dinner-parties but without straining the young household, it is likely that, if two servants were available, they would pick up the filled plates and deliver them to the indicated guests, as a nod towards more fashionable Russian service.

Diners were politely encouraged to continue eating after finishing the first serving by being "helped" to the dishes arrayed on the table. Miss Beecher's instructions for this part of the meal reveal her remarkable assumptions about the level of material goods owned by her middle and upper middle class readers: the number of plates and utensils she thought necessary to serve a plain but substantial meal drastically increased from previous bourgeois ideals. As late as 1860, one of the trickiest issues debated in etiquette books about French service was what to do with one's soiled knife and fork while one's plate was being passed for seconds. To hold them when not actively eating was vulgar, but to soil the tablecloth with them was equally rude.⁶ Most thought the best course was to slide the knife and fork onto the plate and send the unit round to the person nearest the preferred dish. Nevertheless, circulating used plates at table was falling out of fashion.⁷ Victorians found using one's own soiled plate for duck after turkey distasteful, even though the most elite diners in the late 18th Century would have found nothing odd or unappetizing in the practice, and nowadays we tend to follow suit at Thanksgiving feasts, where a slice of ham may nestle where the turkey had lain. Not so for Miss Beecher's guests: as soon as a guest had finished the first plate, the waiter was to whisk it and the used utensils away, replace them from the stacks on the side table (and a small wash stand with several clean towels was another feature of Miss Beecher's respectable dining room, just in case extra dishes needed to be washed during the middle of dinner). According to Miss Beecher, "there must be two dozen large knives and three dozen large plates, besides those on the table. This is to allow one plate for fish, and two for two changes of meat for each guest. Some would provide more."⁸

The remaining details of service fall back on the well-known French model. Once the main meats were finished, the hostess directed the waiter to remove everything from the table, including the upper tablecloth. This cumbersome exercise was required by French service's habit of carving meats at table: the double layer of cloths protected the wood from the inevitable meat juice stains and provided for a clean cloth for dessert. Some etiquette books advised "when the cloth is removed, the guests may assist in turning off that part of it which is before them, and contribute to the arrangement of the dessert plates which happen to be near, but without attempting to alter the disposition of them."⁹ Pudding, cheese and pastries were arranged on the table, along with serving pieces. For dessert, Miss Beecher recommended three dozen

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ONEIDA QUASQUICENTENNIAL SILVER FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS

by Randy K. Schwartz

“A table is never set with silver of different patterns at the different places. Silver can be mixed, but only when the odd patterns do not appear on the table together... It is quite incorrect to set two or three places with silver different from that used on the rest of the table.”

— Amelia Leavitt Hill, *The Complete Book of Table Setting, with Service, Etiquette, and Flower Arrangement* (New York, 1949), p. 68

To many a homemaker in North America, a set of Oneida silverware or china feels like a long-trusted friend who still has a sparkle of glamour. Even if she might never have purchased or used this tableware, nor given or received it as a bridal present—and those are four huge “if’s”—she will probably still remember the company’s famous advertisements. The latter were striking, highly romanticized appeals to the young woman of modest means who dreamt of having “correct service” with which to decorate her table.

This past January 1, the company celebrated its 125th anniversary. Oneida Community, Ltd. actually grew out of a utopian religious community in antebellum New York, but it metamorphosed into a big and profitable industrial corporation. Still headquartered in Sherrill, NY, a town that arose from the original commune farmhouses, Oneida is today the world’s largest manufacturer of stainless-steel and silver-plated cutlery for the home, as well as the largest supplier of tableware to the food-service industry.

The story of how such mass-market commodities were able to gain a glamorous image and a loyal customer base speaks to the relative importance of quality, price, technical innovation, and marketing in the modern food industry. This story is also an episode within a wider saga, the democratization of culture in 20th-Century America.

Manufacturing and Design Innovations

Oneida’s early years came during a period of rapid change and industrialization, which reshaped the market for fine tableware of the type sold at jewelry stores.

During this period, cutlery made of sterling silver (which is silver alloyed with a slight amount of copper) was still unmatched for quality and durability, but it was hopelessly expensive. One rung below it was the silver-plated cutlery



A turn-of-the-century ad for Oneida Community’s “Cereta” pattern silverware, which could be purchased with coupons packaged with Quaker Oats cereal

called “Sheffield plate”. That process, discovered in England in 1743, involves heat-pressing a thin sheet of silver to a copper object. But Sheffield plate was still out of reach for middle-class American families.

Silver electroplating was discovered in 1840. Immersing a base metal in a charged solution of silver ions leaves a very thin deposit of pure silver on the surface. Such electroplated cutlery was becoming affordable to people of modest means. Unfortunately, with extended use, the silver film had a tendency to wear off in spots, such as in the bowl of a spoon.

In Oneida’s lean, early years, it sold mediocre spoons plated with silver or even tin. But in 1899, General Manager Pierrepont Noyes decided to take on the biggest silverware companies by manufacturing silver electroplate of higher quality than had ever been made before. The company would dunk its new spoon three times as long in the plating bath so as to achieve a thicker accretion of silver, so-called “triple plus” plate. Their analysis had shown that the bulk of costs in manufacturing plated spoons lay in their shaping and polishing, not in the silver itself. Oneida’s new process led to affordable cutlery of fairly high quality, guaranteed 50 years against any silver wearing through.

Community Plate, as the new product line was called, was made at plants in New York and Connecticut. At first, it was sold not at jewelry shops but at hardware outlets and—a new turn-of-the-century phenomenon—via Sears Roebuck, Marshall Field, and other department store and mail-order catalog retail chains. Oneida’s product, initially scoffed at by the big silver makers, was so profitable that within five years

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

FREE OFFER

Any Community Silver customer can obtain free this Cole Phillips poster with another in color. These posters contain no reading or advertising matter and are printed on plate paper in a size suitable for framing. Ask your silverware dealer to show you these pictures and to get them for you.

COLES PHILLIPS

"Are your pink ears listening, Betty?"
 "Yes indeed. Will they hear something nice?"
 "Better than nice—it's true. Betty, are pearls any less lovely because they all have a grain of sand at the center?"
 "No, but what of—?"
 "Then how is table silver the worse for having a center of different metal?"
 "Well I somehow feel—"
 "Fardon me, dear, but that's just it: you only 'feel.' If you will just stop to reason a little you will see that table silver is for a purpose. If it fits that purpose gracefully and completely, I'm for it. Let me read you this:

COMMUNITY SILVER

is built by overlaying solid silver upon a center of stronger, stiffer metal. Do not confuse it with ordinary 'plated' silver, for Community Silver is so specially thickened at the wearing-points, and toughened to withstand wear, that in a long lifetime you will never see or touch anything but the purest of pure silver. It is guaranteed for 50 years. There are many attractive designs at your dealer's. The price is attractive, too. For instance, six teaspoons, \$200."

ONEIDA COMMUNITY, Ltd.

A 1911 ad for Oneida Community Plate from the *Saturday Evening Post*, with artwork by Coles Phillips

they, too, began manufacturing their own lines of triple-plate silver.

Design issues also proved important. Initially, Oneida used the same designs for its Community Plate as for its other silverware. But as a company history later recalled,

A girl clerk in a jewelry store had once pointed out to Pierrepont Noyes the fundamental weakness of such a policy. No woman, she said, wanted to pay good money for silver that her hired girl might buy at a fraction of the price. The clerk may have used snobbish terms to make her point, but she was voicing an elemental instinct. (Walter D. Edmonds, *The First Hundred Years, 1848-1948* [Oneida, Ltd., 1948], p. 42)

Such was the thinking behind the decision to come up with a distinctive pattern for Community Plate. The earliest was a rococo design called Avalon, unveiled at the Buffalo Exposition of 1901. In later years the firm adopted a wide range of designs, with names like Fleur de Luce, Louis XVI, Classic, Kenwood, Sheraton, Patrician, Georgian, and Exeter.

In 1912, a set of six Oneida teaspoons in the Louis XVI pattern could be purchased for \$2.00 ("engraving extra"). A complete oak or mahogany chest of Oneida table silver ranged in price from \$20 to \$200.

Aggressive Advertising and Promotions

Bold, innovative marketing has been another nearly

The Christian Roots of Community

The Oneida silversmithing corporation actually began as a utopian religious community, founded in 1848 by John Humphrey Noyes and his followers. Their doctrine of "Christian Perfectionism" or "Bible Communism" held that it is an abomination before God to lead a life not filled with great variety in all things. Thus, community members had a hand in everything: kitchen and other labor was collectivized, along with child-rearing and all forms of wealth. All members were considered wedded to one another, and monogamy was banned.

The few hundred members of the Oneida Community intended to live exclusively off of the land, but they weren't able to make a complete success of that. Instead, they took up a whole range of crafts and light industry. They made canned preserves of fruits and vegetables, and they fashioned textile products like traveling bags, straw hats, and silk thread. They also began to manufacture high-quality metal implements such as cutlery, chains, and animal traps.

By 1880, the beliefs of many of the community members had drifted. By vote, the religious community was disbanded at the stroke of midnight on the last night of the year, and the group was turned into a joint-stock company called Oneida Community, Ltd. Gradually the cutlery business emerged as the most successful one, and the others were sold off one by one over the course of a few decades. In 1935, the name of the company was changed to Oneida, Ltd.

constant factor in Oneida's success. In 1901, the company struck a major "premium" deal with the American Cereal Company, makers of Quaker Oats. Customers could exchange coupons from cereal packages for a line of Oneida silverplate called Cereta. This tableware pattern was the first ever designed specifically for a premium. The arrangement lasted many years and swelled public interest both in Oneida and in Quaker cereals. Many American households switched cereal brands as a result of the Cereta promotion. Similar Oneida premiums followed with other products, such as Betty Crocker and other General Mills flours in the 1940's.

Eye-catching ads have been a mainstay of Oneida's marketing. Formerly, silverware makers had tried to place as many ads as they could; each ad was small, and crammed with images of a whole line of cutlery. Oneida devised a new strategy based on full-page ads, placed sparingly in a few high-end, high-circulation periodicals, especially women's magazines. Typically, an Oneida ad showed only one or a few pieces, not a whole line of silver. Instead, it was dominated by a young woman captured in a moment of marital bliss.

Thanks to these ads, Community Plate became linked in the public mind to a modern, stylish woman with huge appeal. A campaign launched in 1910 featured work by Coles Phillips, whose "Fadeaway Girl" drawings were already favorites among young people. It has been noted that this campaign "was the first 'pretty girl' advertising in America and it not only affected

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DECEMBER SILK ROAD MEAL SPANS THE ASIAN CONTINENT

Even an entire continent is not overly ambitious for the Culinary Historians to tackle! In the latest of our now-famous theme potluck dinners, some 45 members and friends of CHAA succeeded in pulling off the culinary theme, “A Silk Road Journey”. Making use of an extensive list of resources and ideas distributed weeks earlier, on December 11 we gathered and unveiled our dishes at the clubhouse of the Earhart Village community in Ann Arbor. It was not only a grand feast but also a grand learning experience.

A few elements were introduced to the spacious, high-ceilinged clubhouse room so as to suggest a Central Asian *chaikhana*, or tearoom. The room was fragrant with hot, spiced tea provided by participants Carroll and John Thomson. To promote conviviality, diners were seated in groups at large tables covered with tablecloths, evoking the hospitality of the *dastarkhan* (“tablecloth” or “great spread” in Turkic). A portable CD player was used to play excerpts from cellist Yo Yo Ma’s project *The Silk Road: A Musical Caravan* (Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 2002), as well as Muslim devotional *qawwali* from Pakistan and sacred music from Eastern Orthodox lands.

In the 1870’s, Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen coined the term *Seidenstrasse* (“Silk Road”) as a unifying name for what was in fact not one road but a network of overland trade routes in silk, jewels, spices and many other goods, running generally east and west across the heart of Asia. During late antiquity and especially through the Middle Ages, up until the modern era, these routes helped intertwine the cultures and foodways of Eurasia, stretching from Chang-an (modern Xi’an) in China to the lands around the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea.

The *chaikhanas* were key social establishments along the medieval Silk Road, and they remain important community hubs to this day. This type of tearoom was typically an open-air, tree-shaded way-station where men would gather at large tables to amuse themselves. There they might exchange friendship, news, or opinions; drink green tea fragrant with mint, basil, cinnamon or other herbs and spices, or with dried jujube (“Chinese dates”) or other fruits; and partake of such foods as *pilaf*, *shashlyk* (shish kebab), or *laghman* (a soup or stew served over noodles), prepared in a *wok* or a *qazan* (cauldron) on adjacent wood-fueled

grills and burners. More information about the *chaikhana* and the related *caravanserai* can be found in Glenn Mack’s article “Creating a Central Asian Cuisine for Uzbekistan”, *Repast* Summer 2005. Glenn also notes that tea was transported along the Silk Road packed in bricks. From Tang-era China in the 7th Century it was introduced to Central Asia, and thereafter to Russia, India, and Turkey. All of the modern words for the drink, including *chai* and *tea*, derive from the Chinese *ch’a*.

Milk and Meat Products

Yogurt and lamb were key ingredients in many of the dishes at our meal, reflecting the nomadic character of the societies that lay along the trade routes across Central Asia.



The word *yoghurt* is found in modern Turkish, but it is rooted in the language and customs of ancient Tatar, Turkoman, and other nomads in Central Asia. These peoples discovered that fermenting the milk produced by their herds of cows, water buffalo, sheep, goats, mares, *dri* (female yaks), and camels turned it into something that was creamy, tangy, more digestible, and much longer-lasting. During late antiquity and the Middle Ages, various Turkic peoples migrated through Persia all the way to Asia Minor (now called Turkey), bringing this practice of yogurt-making and other food customs into the Middle East. There, especially in mountain regions, the fermented milk would also be turned into dry powders that could last through the whole winter: *tarkhana*, *kishk*, and *quroot*, still used in a variety of dishes (see Mermone van Deventer’s “Remembering Kichri Quroot, a Dish of Afghanistan”, *Repast* Summer 2005). After the Ottoman dynasty arose in Turkey in the late

1200’s, Turkish foodways spread across an empire that eventually included much of the Middle East, North Africa, and Eastern Europe.

Rita Goss made us *yoğurtlu patlican salatasi*, a Turkish salad of charred eggplant, mashed with garlic and dressed with a mixture of yogurt, ground raw walnuts, oil, and vinegar, using a recipe from Ayla Algar’s *Classical Turkish Cooking*. It bore some resemblances to *baigan-ka-bharta*, prepared by Joann and Ned Chalot from Madhur Jaffrey’s *An Invitation to Indian Cooking*. *Baigan* refers to eggplant, while *bharta* is any kind of mixture or mash of vegetables, even a salad. This particular *bharta*, useful as a relish or dip, is a Punjabi (northern Indian) dish of yogurt with eggplant and onion. The eggplant is charred and then either minced or mashed, and the dish is seasoned with salt, mint, and roasted cumin seeds.

Nancy Sannar and Rich Kato each made versions of *mast-o khiyar*, an Iranian salad of cucumber and yogurt with dill and tarragon. *Mast* is the Persian word for a type of yogurt thickened with rennet, the substance commonly used to curdle milk in making cheese. *Khiyar* refers to the smooth-skinned cucumber, although the ridged type (*quththa*) is also popular in Iran and elsewhere. There are similar salads made in Greece (*tsatsiki*), Turkey (*cacik*), the Arab world (*khiyar bi laban*), and India (*rayata*, modern *raita*), but these are all made with mint rather than with tarragon or dill. Tarragon and dill are indigenous to western Asia, and remain staple herbs in kitchens there. Dill is often used in the pickling of cucumbers or other vegetables, whence our phrase “dill pickles”. A delicious batch of *toorshi*, Armenian pickled vegetables with dill, was contributed by Phil and Barbara Zaret. This type of pickle is also popular in Iraq, and has the same name there.

Our lamb dishes included one from Persia and three from Turkey. Kay and Steve Oldstrom provided *qormeh sabzi*, a Persian lamb and parsley stew, made from a recipe in Craig Claiborne’s *New York Times Cookbook* and served over rice pilaf. *Qormeh* is a word and a concept that had spread eastward from its native Turkey (*qawurmah* comes from a Turkish verb meaning “to fry”) to mountainous parts of the Caucasus, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran. From there, under the Mongol and Mughal empires, it spread further to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and northern India. *Qormeh* can refer to lamb or other meat preserved in its fat *confit*-style; to any fried slices of meat; or to any of a range of meat-based stews and braises. The Persian stew *qormeh sabzi* usually also incorporates one or another kind of bean, while the Azerbaijani version, *kavourma*, is often a sweet and sour dish of lamb or goat, using either verjuice, vinegar, ground sumac, or lemon juice as the souring agent.

Ann Larimore, a geographer whose studies have taken her frequently to Turkey, made us one of the core dishes of its cuisine using a recipe in Algar’s cookbook. The dish is *patlicanli kebab*, a stew of lamb kebabs with eggplant, onions, garlic, and parsley. In the Middle East the scarcity of fuel, as well as Islamic aversions to eating rare (bloody) cuts, encouraged people to cook meat not in large joints but in smaller morsels called kebabs, a word from Arabic. Often these were roasted on a *shish* (Arabic for “skewer”) over an open fire or in an oven. This kebab concept was adopted elsewhere: *kebab* became *kebab* in Turkish, *ćevap* in the Balkans, while *shish* became *şiş* in Turkish, *shashlik* in the Caucasus and later in Uzbekistan and Russia.

Eleanor Hoag, who visited Turkey last Fall, found a newspaper recipe that she used in preparing a creamy casserole-type dish that’s popular there, made with ground-lamb meatballs, barley, and kale. Toni Hopping used a recipe from Joyce Goldstein’s *The Mediterranean Kitchen* to make Turkish *dolmas*, or stuffed grape leaves served with yogurt. The filling was made with ground lamb, cinnamon, basmati rice, onion, garlic, pine nuts, Zante currants, and other ingredients. *Dolmas*, which can also be formed inside other types of leaves (notably cabbage) or vegetables, might have originated in Armenia, but were brought to a fine art in the kitchens at Topkapi, the Ottoman palace in Istanbul. From there the dish spread eastward (*dolmades* in Greek, *dolmar* in Swedish) and westward (*dolâma*

in Turkoman, *tulma* in Tatar). Zante currants, from the island of Zante (Zakynthos) off the west coast of the Greek Peloponnisos, became a major trade item under Ottoman rule.

Grains, Seeds, and Nuts

Eleanor and Toni’s use of barley and rice in their respective dishes shows that Silk Road foodways also came to rely heavily on grains and other products of settled agricultural life.

By the 17th Century, the Ottoman government’s barley silos at Eminönü were receiving the enormous quantity of 300 shiploads annually. However, for the finest dishes rice was the preferred grain. In the sample year of 1640, in the Topkapi palace itself, where a cooking staff of about 200 made meals for 3000-5000 people every day, the annual purchases of rice totaled 265 tons, compared to only 3 tons of wheat (and 1131 tons of meat, 14 of yogurt, 4 of cheese, and 92 of spinach, the leading vegetable). Most of this rice was shipped in from Egypt, but the highest quality—the very long-grained varieties used in pilafs—was imported overland from Persia and Anatolia along the main silk-trade routes. Rice had been a feature of Persian cuisine since ancient times, having been introduced there from India.

Randy Schwartz used basmati rice from Pakistan in his *polow*, a Persian form of pilaf. The recipe, from Najmieh Batmanglij’s *Silk Road Cooking: A Vegetarian Journey*, also calls for lentils, Zante currants, dates, sugar, cinnamon, and orange rind. *Polow* (derived from the medieval Farsi word *pulaw* but now pronounced like “polo”) was originally a simple Persian rice dish; the rice is very thoroughly rinsed of all surface starch and cooked carefully so that the long grains remain distinct, making the end result light and fluffy. Historically, *polow* was also influenced by a Central Asian version made with *burghul* (parched, cracked hard wheat) and with onions and other scraps.

Under Arab and especially Ottoman influence, *pilav*, as the word was rendered in Turkish, became more refined, made more often with rice than with *burghul*, and with the addition of saffron, butter, dried fruits and nuts, and meats like ground lamb. In his journal, Ibn Battuta, the 14th-Century Moroccan who spent 25 years traveling through Asia and Africa, described a Persian *polow* of rice with pepper, cooked in clarified butter, served to him and other visitors by a *sheikh* in Tustar. In the Caucasus, Uzbekistan, and Russia, *plov* can be a simpler dish of lamb and short-grain rice with chickpeas, carrots, and cumin, or it can be more festive and make use of long-grain rice, pistachios, toasted almonds, and dried, tart cherries. Other Silk Road variants include *palaw* in Afghanistan, which can include the threadlike wheat noodles called *reshteh* along with the basmati rice, dried fruit, and orange rind; and *pullao* in India, which can be a sweet and sour dish incorporating tamarind paste and coconut flakes along with the rice, dried fruits, and nuts.

We also ate two savory versions of buckwheat pilaf, one of them in an Indian style with green peas (Joann and Ned Chalot), the other in more of a Russian style with mushrooms, almonds, and walnuts (Jan and Dan Longone). Buckwheat, which can grow in cold climates and very poor soils, was first cultivated in Central Asia, China, and Siberia, then spread east and west in

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SILK ROAD MEAL *continued from previous page*

the usual way, reaching Germany by the 1400's. Our word "buckwheat" comes from the Dutch, and Jan noted that it was colonists from the Netherlands who first brought the plant to North America, cultivating it along the Hudson in the early 1700's. Wolff's Kasha, produced in the same location since 1797 by Birkett Mills in Penn Yan, a town in the Finger Lakes region of New York, remains one of the leading suppliers of buckwheat groats (grits). While it is not a type of wheat at all, or even technically a grain, buckwheat, like wheat, has been used to make porridges (e.g., Russian *kasha*, Italian "gray" *polenta*), pancakes (e.g., Russian *blini*), and noodles (e.g., Japanese *sobu*). Russian *kasha* is usually a creamy porridge, either savory or sweet, but Americans of Eastern European descent often use the term to refer to a drier, pilaf-style savory dish.

Flours of various grains were used to make breads and other foods in Silk Road regions. The slightly-yeasted wheaten flatbreads of Asia were represented at our meal by fresh Syrian-style loaves, about ¾-inch thick, made by Mary Lou Unterburger. In 1994, Mary Lou and other women in her family were invited by her son-in-law's grandmother, Hopsie Salame, to see how she makes the bread of her old Syrian village at her home in Roseville, MI. Besides flour, butter, milk, salt, yeast, and sugar, the dough includes ground fennel and *mahlab*. The latter, available from Middle Eastern groceries, is an almondy-tasting spice made by grinding the soft kernels found inside the pits of wild black cherries. Before baking, the rounds are stamped with an attractive design using a *munush*. Traditionally, the dough was leavened by including some from the previous day, and the rounds were baked by slapping them onto the inside vertical surface of an outdoor clay oven, shaped like a jar or beehive with an opening, fueled with wood or charcoal, a device called *tinûru* in Akkadian (ancient Babylonian) and *tannour* in medieval and modern Arabic. This Arab practice was the origin of the *toné*, *tandir*, *tandyr*, and *tandoori* baking of Georgia, Turkey, Turkestan, and Punjab, respectively. We also had some commercially-made pita on hand. These pocket breads, which are baked in a European-style bread oven of stone or brick, originated in the Balkans in ancient times and diffused outward from there (compare Greek *pitta*, Romanian *pita*, Turkish *pide*, Georgian *peda*, and Italian *pizza*).

Semolina, the flour of hard durum wheat, is used in a range of pastas and sweets. It was central in the yogurt cake brought by Pat Cornett and Mel Annis, from a recipe in Paula Wolfert's *The Cooking of the Eastern Mediterranean*. The batter is spread in a pan to a shallow depth, baked and scored into lozenges each topped with a pinenut or almond, then drenched with sugar syrup. Pat made the Jordanian version, known as *harissah*, which uses *tahineh* (sesame paste) as well as yogurt. Also well-known are versions from Greece, which add egg, and from Afghanistan, which add rosewater and pistachio. Semolina is used as well in sesame *halvah* and in the sweet pudding called *ma'mouniyya*.

To thicken and enrich various foods, the peoples of the Silk Road could add crushed sesame seeds (just noted), or else crushed nuts such as almonds, pistachios, walnuts, and pinenuts. In Turkey, ground walnuts are used in dishes like *yoğurtlu patlican salatasi*, the yogurt-eggplant salad mentioned earlier;

tarator, a thick, tangy sauce spooned lukewarm over seafood (it is made instead with *tahineh* elsewhere in the Middle East); and *çerkes tavuğu*, Circassian chicken. The latter, which Sherry Sundling made for us using a recipe from her brother-in-law, is a cold, creamy dish of boiled and shredded chicken. It is traditional in Turkey as well as neighboring Georgia in the Caucasus region (Circassia refers to the northern part of the Caucasus). Sherry made the sauce, known as *satsivi* in Georgia, out of ground walnuts, bread, and chicken stock. One historical visitor to Topkapi described the women there picking apart the cooked chicken "hair by hair", then storing it overnight in a huge pot with the ground-walnut sauce. What we call the "English walnut" actually originated in Persia and became a fixture in the cuisines around the Caspian Sea. The region from the Caucasus to the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates is probably the only place in the world where walnuts are routinely used as a basic cooking ingredient, instead of just a garnish. The walnut was also carried eastward along the Silk Road, reaching China before 400 CE, where it became especially prominent in Sichuan cuisine.

Pastry and Pasta Doughs

The thinnest breads of Asia are of the unleavened, wafer-thin type known as *yubqa* in ancient Turkic languages and *yufka* in modern Turkish. In ancient times, Central Asian nomads lacked the ovens needed to bake loaves of bread. Instead, they would make thin rounds of wheat dough with a long rolling pin and cook them on a metal griddle set over a fire, implements known respectively as *oklava* and *saj* in Turkish. Kept dry, these breads would last for months, and could be made pliable again by re-heating with a few drops of water. Bertrandon de la Brocquière, a French noble traveling across southern Anatolia in 1433, came upon an encampment of Turkoman nomads in felt-covered yurts, who offered him "a dozen of thin cakes of bread, thinner than wafers: they fold them up as grocers do their papers for spices, and eat them filled with curdled milk, called by them Yogort." In this way, to achieve a thicker breadding, the nomads would wrap the sheets around a filling, or roll them several times around it. In other dishes, they would stack the sheets with alternate layers of other ingredients. Later, in the Ottoman palace kitchens at Topkapi, this layering technique would be used to create exquisite pastries, most famously the buttery, syrup-drenched nut confection known as *baklava*. In Ottoman-ruled Greece, *yufka* dough was named *phyllo* ("leaf"). See Bruce Kraig's first-hand report "Turkish *Yufka* and Its Offspring" in *Repast* Winter 2005.

Gwen and John Nystuen used imported *yufka* dough of the Güllüoğlu brand (produced in Istanbul since 1871) to make some *sigara böreği* ("cigar" *börek*s). These are pastries filled with *feta* cheese and parsley, rolled up like cigars and deep-fried in oil. The Nystuens followed a recipe from *Cornucopia*, an English-language Turkish magazine. They used another recipe there to make *kiymali börek*, a different kind of *börek* made with a dough of wheat flour, water, yogurt, vinegar, olive oil, salt, and egg yolk. In this recipe, the dough is rolled cigar-fashion around the filling of minced lamb, onions, and butter, and this is sliced into rolls that are brushed with egg white and baked in an oven.



Kiy mali and sigara böreği prepared by Gwen and John Nystuen (Photos: Randy Schwartz)

Joanne and Art Cole, who last May became friends of food scholar Darra Goldstein during her stay in Ann Arbor for the First Biennial Symposium on American Culinary History, were inspired to make a recipe from Darra's *The Vegetarian Hearth* for *yeşil zeytinli börek*. This is a kind of stuffed bread, akin to a turnover or *calzone*. The dough is made from wheat flour, yogurt, olive oil, salt, sugar, and yeast, while the filling includes minced green olives, parsley, walnuts, onions, and more oil; the Coles omitted tomatoes as a later New World addition. This particular *börek* is a specialty of the Turkish city of Gaziantep, near the Syrian border, which is also reputed to make some of the finest *baklava* in the world.

As seen in the three disparate versions at our meal, the word *börek* or *böreği* is applied to a whole range of Turkish pastries that can be made using any of a number of doughs, fillings, shapes, and cooking methods. They can be savory or sweet, eaten with main meals or as snacks. The earliest versions, using the unleavened *yufka* dough, apparently arose among Turkic peoples living around the Caspian Sea in the Middle Ages. The popularity of *börek* is reflected in a 14th-Century Persian poem recounting a fanciful battle between two rival kings representing *börek* and *pilaf*! In Ottoman Turkey, *börek* making became a variegated and elaborate art. At the height of its splendor, there were 4,000 *börek* pastry shops in Istanbul, as against 1,000 bread bakeries. Versions of the pastry are still made in Ottoman-influenced lands under variant names, such as *büreg* among Kalmuk Mongols, *bourag* in Iraq, *boereg* in Armenia, *bourekia* in Greece, *boureka* among Balkan Jews, *buricche* in Italy, *bourak* in Algeria, *breek* in Tunisia, *breewat* in Morocco.

Yufka dough that is boiled or steamed rather than baked, fried, or grilled becomes a kind of pasta called *tutmaç yufkasi*. The Turkish word for noodle, *tutmaç*, has cognates all across Asia, even in northern China. The practice of making these and other types of pasta must have traveled along the Silk Road, but the details are shrouded in mystery. Noodles made with all kinds of ingredients had been a characteristic feature of Chinese cuisine since the 1st Century CE. Conversely, pasta in various

forms was already well established in the Mediterranean and in Persia by the time Marco Polo made his famous voyage to China in the late 1200's. Food historian Charles Perry found that the ancient Persian word for noodle, *lakhsha*, which originally meant "slippery", is echoed in many words for noodle used elsewhere: *lakhchak* (Afghanistan and Tajikistan), *laksa* (Malaysia and Indonesia), *lapsha* (Russia), *lokshina* (Ukraine), *lokshn* (Ukrainian Yiddish), *lakštiniai* (Lithuania), *laska* (Hungary). He found that a similar trail has been left by the Persian word for a hat-shaped type of boiled stuffed pasta, *joshparag*.

A classic noodle dish of Uzbekistan and neighboring Kyrgyzstan, *shurpa laghman*, betrays influences from both the Near and Far East. It is a vegetable soup or stew served over hand-pulled wheat noodles. The word *shurpa*, from a Persian term for soup or stew, has cognates strewn all the way to the Balkans, while *laghman* derives from *liang mian* ("lo mein"), Chinese for a cold pasta noodle made of wheat flour and egg. Other noodle dishes of Central Asia that were apparently borrowed from China include *manpar* (Chinese *mian piar*), a soup or stew with slabs of sliced pasta dough, and *shima* (Chinese *zi mian*), a soup with vermicelli noodles.

The type of vermicelli noodle used by Jean and Arnold Kluge in their "Mongolian hot pot", a Chinese soup, was the *fen-szu*, a translucent noodle made from the starch of green mung beans, widely known as cellophane or bean-thread noodles. Mung beans are native to India (*moong*) and are also eaten to the west, in Persian lands (*mash*). Arriving in China, where soybeans were already well established, they came to be used mostly for making sprouts and cellophane noodles. Jean served the soup from a sterno-type hotpot that she bought on a 1961 trip to Hong Kong, where she tasted such foods at street stalls equipped with coal braziers. Other ingredients in her soup included chicken, lamb, pork, beef, shrimp, *tofu*, *bok choy* and another type of Chinese cabbage, spinach, mushrooms, and soybean and sesame oils. Sesame was introduced into China from Persia during the first couple of centuries CE.

Boris Silberberg and Frances Williams delighted us by making a batch of *ashak*, an Afghan pasta dumpling, filled with chopped leeks and served with a yogurt mint sauce. In Afghanistan, the most traditional filling is *gandana*, an Asian garlic chive (see Carlo Coppola's review of Batmanglij's cookbook, *Repast* Summer 2005), and the sauce is often made from *quroot*, the fermented-milk product mentioned earlier. *Ashak* and the similar meat-filled *mantu* of Afghanistan are, like *ravioli* or *wonton*, encased in a pasta dough made from wheat flour (but without egg), and are either steamed or boiled. Food scholars believe that this class of dumplings first arose in the nomadic societies of Central Asia, where a meat or other filling encased in a cereal envelope and furnished with a fermented-milk sauce was a flexible and convenient way to have a meal. The far-flung parallels to this custom and its terminology, as well as the accompanying fermented-milk sauces, provide one of the best case studies for the spread of foodways along the Silk Road. Alongside the *mantu* of Afghanistan and Persia, there are the *manti* of Turkey and Armenia, which are tiny meat dumplings, open at the top, served with a yogurt sauce, made

continued on next page

SILK ROAD MEAL *continued from previous page*

by filling squares of wafer-thin pasta with a mixture of ground lamb and minced onion, folding up the corners, and browning and then poaching them, both in an oven; the *manti* of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, which are large-ish but still wafer-thin dumplings enclosing mutton meatballs, steamed in a device called a *manti gasqan* and served with yogurt or broth; the *momo* of Tibet, and the *mok mok* of nearby Ladakh, in far northern India, which are steamed meat dumplings taking a variety of shapes; the *man t'ou* of northern China, which is an unfilled bun (a small, steamed, leavened bread) made with refined white flour and sugar; the *mandoo* of Korea, which is a circular, beef-filled dumpling often eaten in a soup; and the *manjū* of Japan—brought there by Zen Buddhist monks—which is a bun of wheat or rice flour, filled with pork or curry, sometimes sugared.

The Use of Vegetables and Legumes

Many important vegetables that we sometimes mistakenly assume are native to Europe were actually first cultivated in Asia, later diffusing elsewhere via migration and trade. These include kale, cabbage, mustard, cucumber, onion, spinach, eggplant, and many others. Food scholar Harold McGee notes that it was the westward migration of the Tatars, who were the first to pickle cabbage, that led to later European traditions of sauerkraut and other foods. Recovering ancestral varieties of onion and garlic from five then-Soviet republics in Central Asia was the goal of a 1989 USDA-sponsored expedition, recounted by participant John Swenson in his article “Stalking Alliums Along the Silk Road” (*Repast* Winter 2005).

Lois and Len Stenger brought to our meal a quintessential spinach dish from Punjab, *sarson da saag*, made with a recipe that Lois got from a Punjabi woman friend. This robust, winter dish is made with puréed spinach (and/or greens of the mustard plant, which is native to the Himalaya region), butter, herbs, onion, garlic, ginger, and nowadays with New World additions like tomato, chilies, and cornmeal. Spinach was first cultivated in late antiquity in Persia, where its name also originated (*aspanakh*). Within a few centuries it was being eaten in northern India as well. The world's oldest known written mention of spinach lists it as a gift from the King of Nepal to the Emperor of China in 647 CE. About four centuries later, spinach first entered Europe, via the Moors in Spain.

Jan Arps and Octavian Prundeanu made us an eggplant appetizer from Persia, using a recipe from Mollie Katzen's *Vegetable Heaven*. The eggplants are roasted in an oven, then mashed with garlic, parsley, turmeric, salt, and lime juice, and served cold with a drizzle of olive oil. The eggplant, which we cited earlier as a loyal companion to yogurt and lamb, is native to India, although the oldest surviving written mention is from a Chinese treatise on agriculture from the 400's CE. The subsequent travels of this fruit are traceable in the metamorphosis of its name: from Sanskrit *vatin gana* to Persian *badinjen*, Arabic *al-badhinjan*, Turkish *patlican*, Catalan *albadingen*, French and English *aubergine*, old Hindi *baigan*, modern Hindi *brinjal*, modern Spanish *berenjena*. In the Middle East, the eggplant has long been referred to as “lord of vegetables”.

One of the most popular eggplant dishes in the world, prepared on stoves or in ovens throughout the Middle East and the Balkans, is the Ottoman *imam bayildi*, provided by Marion and Nick Holt, who spent almost three weeks in Turkey last September. Marion followed a recipe from *The Sultan's Kitchen: A Turkish Cookbook* by Ozcan Ozan. It is made by stuffing an eggplant with chopped onion, garlic, and herbs (and often, nowadays, tomato and green pepper), and simmering this in olive oil. Traditionally it's a summer dish, eaten lukewarm. Its name means “the imam fainted”, an event that folklore variously ascribes either to a prayer leader's delight with the dish, his unhealthy overindulgence in it, his reaction when denied it, or else his alarm at the high cost of Mideastern oil (in this case, copious amounts of olive oil) used in its preparation! Other widely-traveled eggplant classics with colorful names include *badhinjan buran* (“Princess Buran's eggplant”) from 9th-Century Baghdad, a dish of fried eggplant, often layered with meat or dressed with yogurt; and *hünkâr beğendi* (“the sovereign was pleased”), a late-Ottoman purée of charred eggplant, *roux*, milk, and cheese, often served topped with lamb kebabs.

Julie and Bob Lewis provided a delicious Punjabi snack, *chana masaledar* (literally “chickpeas spiced”), from Jaffrey's cookbook mentioned earlier. The peas are gently fried with onion, garlic, and both hot and sweet spices. The spread of such legumes across Asia was especially important in history, since they were a cheap source of protein. In addition to native pulses like the soybeans of China and the mung beans of India, both mentioned previously, four legumes of the Fertile Crescent—lentils, favas, green peas, and chickpeas—were already migrating eastward across Asia in remote antiquity. In India, the chickpea and lentil emerged as the top pulses, in that order. In China, native soy remained king; green peas and favas, both very popular, were named “foreign legumes” and “Iranian beans”, respectively, marking their status as interlopers.

Fruits and Other Sweets

Interestingly, the largest city in Kazakhstan is named Alma-Ata, which means “progenitor of apples”. So even the apple cider that we drank, provided by Dan and Jan Longone, fit in with our Silk Road meal. USDA-sponsored expeditions to the Tien Shen mountains of Kazakhstan during 1989-96 tracked down the wild ancestors of our apple tree, which ranged up to 60 feet in height. Ancient travelers through those forests spread apple fruits, seeds, and cuttings east and west. They also brought the technology of fruit grafting, which was invented in China in the 2nd Millennium BCE. Grafting would prove crucial in domesticating the apple, which was accomplished in the Greco-Roman world.

Many other now-familiar fruits were transported along the Asian trade routes, such as quinces, pears, peaches, apricots, plums, cherries, pomegranates, melons, grapes, raisins, currants, figs, dates, and many varieties of citrus.

An old Bedouin proverb says, “If orange trees are much grown in a town, the town invites its own ruin.” The cultivation of citrus fruits, as well as of sugar cane, had originated in wet regions of East Asia. Medieval breakthroughs in irrigation

allowed Arabs to spread both citrus and sugar production westward, all the way to the Mediterranean. The elaborate irrigation needed to grow oranges in these new regions made them a symbol of sedentary life, despised by nomads as soft and decadent.

So, being soft and decadent, we put oranges to use in three different ways for our meal! Orange rind was used in the Persian sweet *polow*, described earlier; orange-flower water in *gatnabour*, an Armenian rice pudding made by Stephanie Rosenbaum; and orange juice in *melomacaromna*, a Greek honey-dipped cookie made by Harriet Larson. Orange-flower water (and also rosewater) is a frequent ingredient in Armenian sweets. Following a recipe in *The Cuisine of Armenia* by Sonia Uvezian, Stephanie simmered long-grain rice with water, milk, and sugar on her stovetop for nearly an hour, stirring almost constantly. When done, she stirred in the scented water, then decorated the top of the pudding with cinnamon and pistachios. Sweet puddings of rice grains are also eaten in East Asia, but without the milk that is used in this Armenian pudding and in the similar Persian *sheer-birinj* (literally “milk-rice”) and Indian *kshira* or *kheer*. In Ottoman times there was a specialized type of confectioner called a *muhallebeci*, maker of milk puddings.

Bill and Yvonne Lockwood, who lived in Bosnia in 1968-9, made us *bosanske urmašice*, an Ottoman-legacy pastry eaten there and throughout the Balkan and Anatolian region. It is called a “date pastry” but only because it is formed into that size and shape. The pastry uses wheat flour, yogurt, butter, and egg yolks, and is soaked in a syrup of sugar, water, lemon, and (New World) vanilla.

Date palms, since they grow naturally in Mideastern oases, didn’t arouse the disdain of nomads that orange trees did. We enjoyed dates stuffed with roasted almonds (*tamar mahshi*, brought by Pat Cornett and Mel Annis), as well as those in the *polow*.

Nancy and Bob Harrington made date-walnut *rugelach*, a pastry traditional among Jews in Central and Eastern Europe. Other ingredients include butter, sour cream, and cottage cheese. Such milk products were plentiful in Europe and are favored by Jews on Shavuot, the holiday celebrating their receipt of the Ten Commandments and of “the land flowing with milk and honey”. The *rugelach* filling is rolled up in a triangle of dough, which is then bent in a crescent shape. The idea that this little pastry, and the delicate crescent rolls called *croissants* in French, were both invented by Austrian bakers in 1793 to celebrate the lifting of a lengthy siege of Vienna by the Ottoman Turks (symbolized by the Muslim crescent), is probably just a legend. But the *rugelach* does bear some resemblance to a Turkish almond-crescent pastry called *bademli ay*. At least two other Shavuot dairy foods also show Silk Road influences: *lokshen kugel*, a savory or sweet pudding of noodles and cream cheese, tracing back to the Persian *lakhsha* noodles discussed earlier; and *sambousak*, a baked half-moon turnover stuffed with cheese. The latter is a version of the Persian *sanbusaj*, which can have a meat or cheese filling. It is thus kith and kin with the Tajik *sanbusa*, Arab *sanbousak*, Larestan *sambüsa*, Afghan *sambosa*, Indian *samosa*, and the Turkish, Uzbek, and Uighur *samsa*. ■

DINNER CIRCA 1850

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dessert plates, two dozen dessert knives and forks, one dozen saucers, and one dozen dessert spoons. Host and hostess again divided and distributed the desserts; this time Miss Beecher specifies that they be assisted by the guests, probably relieving waiters of delivery responsibilities in this simpler course. After dessert, the white tablecloth was removed to expose either bare wood or the final colored cloth, and fruit was served. The colored cloth, like the small fashionable colored napkins, was acceptable only for the post-prandial fruits whose juices might indelibly stain white linens. Coffee could be served either at table or in the drawing room.

For all its perceived simplicity, Miss Beecher’s entertaining model marks an extraordinary turning point in the levels of material goods needed by the middle class housewife circa 1850. Twelve diners required a minimum of four dozen dinner plates: the lay plate on which the soup plate would rest, plus at least three dozen more for changes of fish and meat. Two dozen dessert plates plus one dozen dessert saucers were also a minimum to serve twelve. This meal hardly represented the heights of Victorian excess, yet it brought into sharp focus the 19th-Century revolution in the accessibility and distribution of objects for the table. To repeat Miss Beecher, “Some would provide more.” ■

Endnotes

1. See especially Barbara Carson’s study, *Ambitious Appetites: Dining, Behavior and Patterns of Consumption in Federal Washington* (Washington, D. C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1990). She concludes, based on an examination of decedents’ estate inventories for the period 1818-1826, that only four percent of the population could set a table with matching plates to serve a two-course dinner for 12; the next eight percent could serve 12 with matching plates, assuming that the dishes were washed between courses, and the remaining 88 percent could not present a cohesive table. Compare this with works such as Regina Lee Blaszczyk, *Imagining Consumers: Design and Innovation from Wedgwood to Corning* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).
2. Louis Auchincloss, ed., *The Hone and Strong Diaries of Manhattan* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1989), entry for January 26, 1838.
3. Catharine E. Beecher, *Domestic Receipt Book*, 3d ed. (New York: Harper & Bros., 1858) [New York: Dover Reprint, 2001], p. 234. There are no significant service differences between the original and third edition.
4. Beecher, p. 239.
5. Beecher, p. 239.
6. See, e.g., Henry P. Willis, *Etiquette, and the Usages of Society* (New York: Dick and Fitzgerald, 1860), p. 29.
7. See, e.g., Eliza Leslie, *The Behaviour Book* (Philadelphia: W. P. Hazard, 1853), p. 128.
8. Beecher, p. 237.
9. Emily Thornwell, *The Lady’s Guide to Perfect Gentility* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1860), p. 101.

SOUL FOOD AS NUTRITIONAL SUSTENANCE

by Robert D. Harrington

Bob and his wife Nancy, a CHAA member, live in Ann Arbor and enjoy learning about the history and culture of food. One of their specialties is hunting down historic road-food, especially along Route 66. Robert retired five years ago from a career with Barrett Paving Materials, and he currently does consulting work for NASCAR auto racing.

Noon on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday found eight Culinary Historians attending Botany Professor George F. Estabrook's lecture at the University of Michigan on "The Roots of Soul Food". The lecture was given in conjunction with his course, "The Biology of Human Nutrition". I found it to be very interesting, especially when I was assured that there would be no exam!

Professor Estabrook noted that the crops grown in the American Southeast before and after the Civil War, notably cotton and tobacco, were highly labor-intensive. They were originally planted, cultivated and harvested by slave labor and, after 1865, by impoverished labor paid by the landlord. In both cases the field hands lived in marginal housing and worked on the property owned by the landlord. They were given either food (under slavery) or money to purchase food (under tenant farming). The food mainly consisted of kernel corn and pork fat.

The slaves were forced to work for their masters five to six days per week. At the end of the workday and on Sundays, some were allowed to tend their gardens to supplement their meager rations of food. The garden crops of African-Americans consisted of plants that could grow in poor soil and drought conditions— mainly black-eyed peas and turnip greens.

The meat eaten by these laborers consisted of pork fat from the belly of the hog, which supplemented the garden-grown produce. It is said that the expression "eating high off the hog" originated with the location of the cut of meat. The back and shoulder cuts were more desirable and therefore reserved for the owner. The pork belly, being lower on the hog, was consumed by the slave or tenant farmer. The fat was boiled with the turnip leaves and black-eyed peas. In order to make grits, the corn

kernels were soaked in a water/limestone solution to soften the hard seed enough to grind into meal. The cornmeal was then boiled to make grits.

It turns out that the African-American diet was outstanding in meeting all of the necessary dietary requirements. We now know that people have dietary needs of energy, protein, fatty acids, vitamins, fiber and phytochemicals. Fat is very high in caloric energy, as are corn or other grains, black-eyed peas or other beans, and potatoes or other tubers. Eating corn and black-eyed peas together provides a balanced protein source with all essential amino acids, similar to milk or meat. Pork fat is also a good source of essential fatty acids.

The fiber and vitamins needed in the African-American diet were provided by whole grains such as oats, and cabbage-family leaves such as turnip greens. Greens, as well as fruits, are excellent sources of vitamins A and C. Whole grains are a good source of the B-complex vitamins. Interestingly enough, vitamin B3 (niacin) is not available from corn unless the corn is soaked in water with limestone, a practice adapted from Native Americans. But the advent of the stone grinding-wheel eliminated the need to soften the corn in the water/limestone solution; consequently, vitamin B3 became unavailable and people developed skin diseases such as pellagra.

In closing his talk, Professor Estabrook challenged the class by contrasting the subsistence farm diet of the past to the contemporary modern diet of today. As we can see, the diet of the past met the nutritional needs of the individual quite well. Professor Estabrook's contention is that increasing technology is creating large pools of unemployed or underemployed people with low wages. These people tend to live in cities without gardens, or even the cultural traditions to know what to do if they did have gardens. His closing question was, Would we be better off nutritionally (and in other ways, too) with more people living in marginal housing with gardens and the knowledge and culture to tend them? It certainly is something to think about! ■

"I try to approach people with an anthropologist's eye. That's why I make constant references to food. If you study culture, you want to know what people eat, what their social organization is."

August Wilson— Pulitzer Prize-winning African-American playwright, who passed away last October 2 at age 60— in a 1987 interview with David Savran

MORSELS & TIDBITS

Related to our “Art of the Table” theme in this issue of *Repast*, we bring to the attention of our readers a conference and two exhibits:

- “The History of Dining” is the theme of the 16th annual Decorative Arts Symposium at the **Royal Ontario Museum** in Toronto this April 20-22. The museum itself has a rich collection of historical decorative tableware. At the symposium, sponsored by Waterford Wedgwood Canada, nine scholars from Canada and abroad will speak on various aspects of cooking equipment, serving pieces, flatware, place settings, and furnishings, using these to document the evolution of tastes and social customs associated with dining from ancient Roman times to the present.
- “Trade Taste and Transformation: Jingdezhen Porcelain for Japan, 1620-1645” is an exhibit of Chinese export porcelain, on display at the Gallery of the **Chinese Institute** in New York, running now through June 10 (including a daylong symposium on March 26 and an evening workshop on March 31) before it moves to the Honolulu Academy of Arts for a stay July 19 – Oct. 8. Guest-curated by Julia B. Curtis, this show features more than 100 items from Ming-dynasty China’s leading porcelain center, Jingdezhen, especially blue and white glazed plates, dishes, pots, and pitchers, many with whimsical motifs or associated with the tea ceremony. A striking feature of such Japanese-export items is that they were made with deliberate flaws, such as unpurified clay, substandard glazes, cracks, and warping.
- “Feeding Desire: Design and the Tools of the Table” is a major exhibition of European and American tableware, running May 5 – Oct. 29 at the Smithsonian’s **Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum** in Manhattan. The exhibit is guest-curated by Williams College professor and *Gastronomica* editor Darra Goldstein, who spoke at the Longone Symposium here last May on the subject of “American Dining Etiquette: How to Set a Table in the Gilded Age”.

CHAA founding member **Jan Longone** has announced a new exhibit this summer from the Longone Center for American Culinary Research. The show, “Patriotic Fare: Bunker Hill Pickles, Abe Lincoln Tomatoes, Washington Crisps and Uncle Sam Apples”, is scheduled to run July 5 – Sept. 29 at the University of Michigan Clements Library in Ann Arbor. Recent articles about the Center, and its dedicatory symposium last May, include those written by **Marion Roach** in *Martha Stewart Living* (Feb. 2006) and by **Meryle Evans** in *Food Arts* (Jan./Feb. 2006).

CHAA member **Susan Odom** spoke at Zingerman’s Roadhouse here on New Year’s Eve in conjunction with a

traditional American dinner that the restaurant prepared, based on the book *Buckeye Cookery and Practical Housekeeping*. Gustatory highlights of the meal, planned by chef **Alex Young** and manager **Ric Jewell**, included mock turtle soup, roasted venison with spiced gooseberries and currants, Phil Sheridan Cake, and bohemian cream, as well as Monte Bello and Nightingale Beringer limited-edition wines. Susan, currently a docent at the Clements Library, owns a number of different editions of this historically significant cookbook (first published in Marysville, OH in 1876) that she used in her previous docent work at Greenfield Village. She will address CHAA on this topic on April 16.

This just in: the James Beard Foundation has nominated chef and professor **Brian Polcyn** for the 2006 title of Best Midwestern Chef, and his new book for a James Beard Book Award. Polcyn, who teaches charcuterie at Schoolcraft College and who treated CHAA members to a memorable dinner at his Five Lakes Grill in May 2004, is co-author (with **Michael Ruhlman**) of *Charcuterie: The Craft of Salting, Smoking, and Curing* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005; 416 pp., \$35 cloth). The book, the first of its kind, gives instructions “for the home cook” to prepare 125 different types of items, from *kielbasa* sausage to homemade sauerkraut and pickles, and from salted, air-dried ham (which must be hung, the book says, “in a cool, dry place with good ventilation for at least 4 to 5 months, or as long as a year”) to a terrine of Maryland crab with scallops and saffron. Several CHAA members attended a Jan. 16 “All Pig Dinner” at Five Lakes Grill featuring recipes from the book.

Food writer **Francine Segan**, whom we mentioned in our Summer and Fall 2004 issues, will be editor of a three-volume reference work, *Encyclopedia on Entertaining Through Time and Cultures* (Greenwood Publishing), with approximately 300 alphabetized entries. Segan is looking for entries to be contributed about dining and entertaining practices in all major world regions, cultures, and time periods (ancient, medieval, Renaissance, Victorian, Colonial American, etc.), as well as on contemporary dining customs and celebrations among African, Asian, Arab/Muslim, Jewish, Native American, Latino/Hispanic, as well as Eastern and Western European cultures. She also needs shorter entries on specific dining objects (the fork, chopstick, finger bowl, samovar, etc.), minor entertainments (the bridge party, high tea, pot-luck dinner, brunch, 19th-Century gentleman’s game dinner, etc.), and so on. Contact her at fsegan@verizon.net to propose an entry, providing a brief bio that includes past writing and research experience.

On the Back-burner: Ideas and submissions are welcome for these planned future theme-issues of *Repast*: Traditional Baking Today (Spring 2006), Foods of the New World (Summer 2006), Artisanal Cheesemaking (Fall 2006), and 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, February 19, 2006

“The Story of the Classic American Cocktail”
Ric Jewell, Restaurant Manager,
Zingerman’s Roadhouse, Ann Arbor, MI

Sunday, March 19, 2006

Member participation: tell us about your favorite
cookbook, or the one that has influenced you the most.
Followed by a cookbook exchange

Sunday, April 16, 2006

“The Buckeye Cookbook: Plucky Housewives,
Pickled Mangoes and a Million Copies”
Susan Odom, Docent at Clements Library
and formerly at Greenfield Village

Sunday, May 21, 2006

“From Pabulum to Pad Thai: The Twisted
History & Big Business of Baby Food”
Margaret Kenda, author of several books on baby food

Sunday, July 30, 2006

Earhart Village Clubhouse
(835 Greenhills Drive, Ann Arbor)
CHAA Summer Theme Picnic,
“Salads from Around the World”
More details TBA

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” (see page 19 for more information)

REPAST

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Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

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First Class