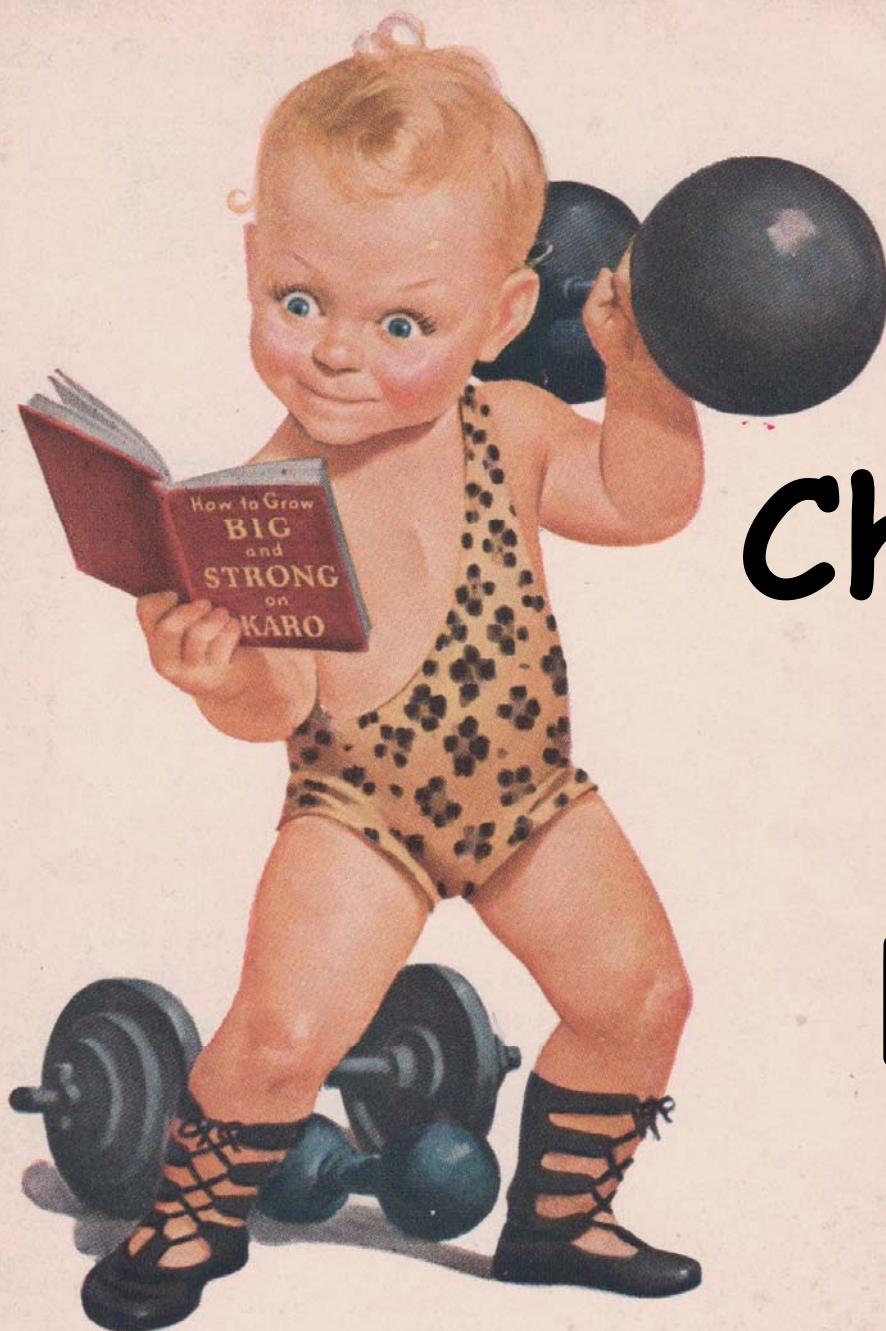




VOLUME XXIII, NUMBER 1 WINTER 2007

# Repast

Quarterly Publication of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor



## Children and Food

Cover of a 1945 promotional booklet  
from the Corn Products Company,  
makers of Karo corn syrup

Longone Center for American Culinary  
Research (William L. Clements  
Library, University of Michigan)

"...the power behind the home"

# FALL PROGRAMS EXPLORE ICONS IN AMERICAN, ASIAN, AND ARGENTINE FOOD

The first Culinary Historians meeting of the Fall was held on Sept. 17 at the University of Michigan's Clements Library in conjunction with the exhibit "Patriotic Fare: Bunker Hill Pickles, Abe Lincoln Tomatoes, Washington Crisps and Uncle Sam Apples". In an illustrated lecture, curator Jan Longone noted that beginning about 1850, the use of historical and patriotic imagery by the American food business soared. The lecture and the exhibit's 16 display cases presented a sample of relevant historical food containers, advertisements, menus, cookbooks, and other artifacts, from salt and pepper shakers to cookie cutters. The images incorporated into these items included historical figures such as Washington, Franklin, Revere, Lafayette, Jefferson, Webster, and Lincoln; patriotic symbols such as the flag, bald eagle, Liberty Bell, Yankee Doodle, and Uncle Sam; and significant sites such as Plymouth Rock, Valley Forge, the White House, and Mt. Rushmore.

"Tea 101: An Historical Overview and Guided Tasting" was presented on October 15 by Ann Arbor natives Jeremy and Aubrey Lopatin, who founded an online tea emporium

([www.newworldtea.com](http://www.newworldtea.com)) in 2004. Tea proper is made from the leaves or buds of a plant indigenous to China and India. The speakers reviewed the global history of tea, starting with its earliest use as a medicinal tonic made from wild tea leaves (tea was not cultivated until the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century CE in China). They passed around an example of a finely crafted Asian baked brick of tea leaves, of the type used as currency in Silk Road trade with the Turks beginning before 476. The Tang Dynasty (618-906) was the golden age of tea, when it was subtly flavored with flower blossoms and was associated with elaborate ceremonies. The baking of tea leaves to produce black (oxidized) or Oolong (partly oxidized) tea was invented in Ming China (1368-1644). In the early 1600's, tea became a major trade item by caravan and ship; powerful Dutch, Portuguese, and British monopolies brought tea to Europe, where it was distributed in coffeehouses. Dutch colonists introduced tea to North America in the early 1700's. In the U.S. today, 80% of all tea is consumed in "iced" form, reportedly an innovation from the 1904 St. Louis Exposition. Meeting participants enjoyed tasting "white tea" steeped from dried young tea buds; Dragon's Well, a Chinese green tea; smoky black Russian Caravan tea; and a black tea from the Rembang Estate in India's Assam state.

"In the Kitchen with Doña Petrona: A Culinary History of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Argentina" was the title of our November 19 talk by Rebekah E. Pite, a Ph.D. student in history at the University of Michigan. Studying Argentina's most famous cook, Petrona Carrizo de Gandulfo (1898-1992), Pite has found that her life and work reflect the evolution not only of cuisine but of women's status in that country. Her research has entailed visits to Argentina, an examination of Petrona's manuscript recipe collection there, and interviews with associates and relatives; she later wrote the entry on Petrona that appears in Alice Arndt's *Culinary Biographies*. Petrona began work with the British-owned national gas company, *Primativa*, as a home economist in 1928, demonstrating the use of gas stoves to women. She took classes at *Le Cordon Bleu* in Buenos Aires, and managed to parlay her position into that of a corporate-sponsored cooking celebrity. Her cookbook *El libro de Doña Petrona*, with over 100 printings since 1934, became the "bible" of the middle-class Argentine kitchen. A savvy businesswoman, Petrona would later write several other books, and she enjoyed wide exposure in magazines and on radio and TV. By highlighting home recipes and styles, she was the first to synthesize or "creolize" the many culinary influences in the country, including Spanish, Italian, French, Eastern European, and indigenous. In step with the reformist Perón government (1946-55) despite its nationalization of *Primativa*, Petrona turned her attention toward the working masses. She taught them how to make wiser and more economical choices, and she famously sponsored a program to ensure that all Argentines could afford *pan dulce de navidad* (sweet Christmas bread), a ritual holiday treat. Meeting participants enjoyed *pan dulce* and Argentine *alfajores* cookies, made by the speaker and by John Thomson, respectively. ■

## Repast

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# FEATURED PRESENTATIONS AT THE SYMPOSIUM ON REGIONAL AND ETHNIC TRADITIONS

The Second Biennial Symposium on American Culinary History will be held May 18-20 at the University of Michigan, with the theme of Regional and Ethnic Traditions. The symposium is organized by the Longone Center for American Culinary Research (William L. Clements Library). Attendance is limited to 200. The featured presentations are previewed below; for full program and registration information, visit the symposium web page at <http://www.clements.umich.edu/culinary/symposium.html>.

John T. Edge [author of *A Gracious Plenty: Recipes and Recollections from the American South*], **Mouth of the South: The Southern Foodways Alliance at Ten**. In 1998, the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the Univ. of Mississippi hosted a symposium on regional food culture. Speakers included anthropologists and cooks, playwrights and preachers. From those beginnings, the member-supported Southern Foodways Alliance has emerged. It's a queer beast, a socially-conscious confab of writers, eaters, chefs, and thinkers, known for documenting the life work of barbecue pitmasters and hosting late-night symposium parties that end when the gendarmes arrive. John T. Edge, director of the SFA, will sketch its evolution and screen two short films.

Marcie Cohen Ferris [associate director, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, UNC-Chapel Hill], **Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South**. Jews in the South reinvented traditions as they adjusted to living in a largely Christian world, where they were bound by regional rules of race, class, and gender. In a culinary journey through the Jewish South, an Arkansas native explores how southern Jews embraced, avoided, and adapted southern food and, in the process, found themselves at home.

Larry B. Massie [co-author of *Walnut Pickles and Watermelon Cake: A Century of Michigan Cooking*], **Rubbaboo, Kalamazoo, and Pasties Too: Aspects of Michigan's Culinary Heritage**. The diverse ethnic groups who people Michigan's past—ranging from indigenous Americans, steel-sinewed French voyageurs, and intrepid Yankee pioneers to Dutch, German, Irish, Scandinavian, and Italian immigrants—contributed distinct culinary traditions. They interacted with Michigan's unique natural setting, two majestic peninsulas lapped by more fresh water than any other place on the globe, to create intriguing regional foodways. This illustrated lecture will explore some of the ways Michiganders have developed a special and alluring cuisine.

Peter G. Rose [co-author of *Matters of Taste: Food and Drink in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art and Life*], **The Influence of the Dutch on the American Kitchen**. This lecture explores the foodways brought to America by the Dutch more than three centuries ago and the way these foods were adapted to the new circumstances. Slides of 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Dutch art works depicting various foodstuffs are part of the talk.

Michael and Jane Stern [culinary historians, food writers, columnists for *Gourmet* magazine], **America's Least Fashionable Cuisine: A Road Trip through the Vastly Underappreciated Cuisine of America's Northeast: Unknown, Disrespected, Hidebound, Inexplicable, Ghastly, and Delicious Foods that Define the Region's Unique Taste**. The Northeast's best-known contribution to American gastronomy is Thanksgiving dinner, the meal most famous as a repository of parochial foodways, even if that means dry turkey, bread stuffing, and bland creamed onions. So it is with Northeast cuisine in general, which has never been and never will be trendy or cutting-edge. And yet, if you travel

through this region, you find pockets of culinary character that are colorful, strange, sometimes delicious (Connecticut's farmhouse pies), and sometimes a taste that needs to be acquired from childhood (Maine's vinegar tripe). In this region—the original melting pot—specialties range from primordial cornmeal jonnycakes to such frivolities as the Whoopie Pie and Grape-Nuts ice cream. Our talk will cover the deep-rooted common threads of Northeast cooking as well as some of its inexplicable oddities.

Dan Strehl [author of *Encarnación's Kitchen: Mexican Recipes from Nineteenth-Century California*], **Hon-Dah a la Fiesta: the Immigrant Cuisines of the American West**. American Indians, Spaniards from Mexico, and New Englanders settled the West and redeveloped their cuisines. The Gold Rush remapped the face of California food. Cuisines melded with others, yet maintained their own integrity. Modern waves of immigration have brought new Asian, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern influences into the mix. A tour from the *Sacramento Ladies Kitchen Companion* to *The Tassajara Bread Book* will look at the history of cookbook publishing in California.

Toni Tipton-Martin [food journalist, author of *A Taste of Heritage: The New African-American Cuisine*], **The Jemima Code: A Cook's View into the Heart, Soul and Recipe Box of a Wise Servant**. American history has been cruel to the African American cook. Much of what is known about her reflects more about the way society viewed her than the way she really was. This presentation examines late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-Century cookbooks and recipes to destroy a myth and find a seat for African American cooks at the long table of Southern food history.

William Woys Weaver [contributing editor for *Gourmet* magazine, professor of food studies at Drexel Univ., author of *Pennsylvania Dutch Country Cooking*], **The Amish as a Symbol of Regional and Ethnic Cuisine**. The Amish have become an icon of Pennsylvania Dutch culture, even though numerically they represent a very small proportion of the total Pennsylvania Dutch population. The blurring of distinctions between things Amish and things Pennsylvania Dutch began in the 1930's as a reaction to events in Europe. This presentation will trace the history of Pennsylvania Dutch foods and how tourism has created mythologies that are now accepted as real.

Ari Weinzwieg [founding partner of Zingerman's Delicatessen (Ann Arbor, MI), food writer and lecturer, past President of the American Cheese Society], **What's for Lunch and Why: Artisanal Cheeses in Wisconsin**. This talk will offer a short but sharp introduction to Wisconsin artisanal cheeses as a *segúe* to the box lunch sponsored by the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board.

Jacqueline B. Williams [author of *The Way We Ate: Pacific Northwest Cooking, 1843-1900*], **In The Midst of Plenty: Pacific Northwest Foodways**. The talk begins with the Native Americans, the first group to feast on the Pacific Northwest's abundant fish and seafood. It then follows the Oregon Trail pioneers and those who first settled in the Pacific Northwest as they sought ways to stretch available foods and adapted and substituted ingredients in planning family meals. It examines the role foodways played in encounters between indigenous communities and the arrival of these diverse newcomers on the Northwest Coast. And lastly it shows how the combination of good soil and a favorable climate made agriculture the number one industry in the Pacific Northwest and in turn affected the foodways of all Americans. ■

# A SALUTE TO OUR FRIENDS ON THE GULF COAST

We held our annual CHAA participatory theme meal on December 10 as a tribute to the people of Louisiana and the Gulf Coast. Their courage and steadfastness in the face of the hardships they have suffered— not only in Hurricane Katrina and the resulting breach of the river levees, but in earlier episodes of suffering that have punctuated their history— serves as an inspiring lesson to all of us.

Diners were encouraged to contribute to the local recovery efforts of the well-known chef Paul Prudhomme. He swung into action quickly after Katrina struck in August 2005, doing much to assist not only his own employees but thousands of others who have been affected. Prudhomme, a native of Opelousas, LA, is a restaurateur in New Orleans, where he has worked for the last quarter-century to popularize Gulf Coast cooking to Americans and the world.

Toting their contributions of food and drink, over 40 people turned out at the Earhart Village Clubhouse in Ann Arbor for this meal, “A Salute to Our Friends on the Gulf Coast”. Thanks go to Rita Goss and other CHAA members for organizing the meal and getting the hall ready. Our dining tables, decked out with red tablecloths and white candles, were strewn with Mardi Gras-style trinkets (coins, bead necklaces and the like), as well as candies and miniature bottles of Tabasco® sauce. On the sound system we played New Orleans jazz, as well as music by the Blind Boys of Alabama and by John Sinclair and His Blues Scholars.

Frank Brigtsen, of Brigtsen’s Restaurant in New Orleans, has commented that it’s not only depth of flavor that makes the food of this region so very gratifying. He said, “When you eat a meal of Southern food, you feel satisfied that you’ve had something special. It’s food not just for the body but for the soul, for the spirit.”<sup>1</sup> Our own meal, made with our own hands, was an opportunity to taste for ourselves this soulful and satisfying element of Creole, Cajun, and Southern food, and to familiarize ourselves with the joys, hardships, and other “cultural ingredients” that have gone into creating these unique traditions.

It shouldn’t surprise us that the origins of Creole and Cajun culture and cuisine, and the interrelationships between them, are very complex, for the Gulf Coast region throughout its recorded history has been the setting for a rich mixture of different peoples and cultures. To understand the influences behind the dishes at our meal requires understanding the forces and events that have shaped this region.

## Why is French Louisiana “French”?

The French were the first Europeans to actually settle the north central coast of what is now called the Gulf of Mexico, beginning with settlements at Biloxi (1699) and Mobile (1702). They also claimed the entire Mississippi River valley for the French crown, naming this territory Louisiana after the reigning king, Louis XIV. Nouvelle Orléans (New Orleans) was founded near the mouth of that river in 1718.

Among the waves of French immigrants to this diverse region, those who managed to retain or acquire a measure of

wealth and refinement made up the heart of what became known as the Louisiana Creoles. These urbane French strata included merchants and professionals living in New Orleans and other towns, as well as slave-owning planters in the levee lands. Creole culture and cuisine is thus distinguishable from that of the people called Cajuns: despite some shared traits and dishes, Cajun cookery is generally less refined and cosmopolitan than Creole, and reflects the conditions of poor rural folk. The relation between Creole and Cajun culture might be likened to that between jazz and blues.

Initially, Louisiana was a neglected colony, and the influx of French settlers and African slaves was sporadic. The immigration swelled only later, due to three distant political events:

- First, during the French and Indian War, the British gained control of Acadia (part of the Nova Scotia region of New France), and in 1755 they began forcibly expelling its roughly 15,000 French inhabitants. The Acadians, who were mostly farming and fishing families, were stripped of their property and dispersed to the 13 Colonies by shiploads. From there, many fled back to France or to the Caribbean and the Gulf Coast, some arriving, perhaps as early as 1756, in southern Louisiana.<sup>2</sup>
- Second, in a secret 1762 treaty that helped end the War, French king Louis XV ceded New Orleans, and all of the territory west of the Mississippi, to his cousin Charles III of Spain. The Spanish monarchs, who held this region until returning it to France in 1800, greatly encouraged French and Spanish settlement, for they wanted to use this territory as a buffer to thwart any British thrust into the region.
- Third, a number of French noble families came to New Orleans to flee either the French Revolution of 1789 or the ensuing slave revolt in St.-Domingue (now called Haiti), a French sugar-plantation colony in the Caribbean. Africans from St.-Domingue, some free and others in chains, also arrived in huge numbers.

All of these groups had a marked influence on Gulf Coast folkways and cuisine. For over a century, southern Louisiana had a distinctly French and Afro-Caribbean culture that was as different from its surroundings as is French Canada’s today.

## A Proper Southern Breakfast, Creole-Style

Our meal included the components of a fine traditional Louisiana Creole breakfast: *grillades* of beef served with baked-cheese corn grits, the deep-fried rice fritters known as *calas*, and plenty of strong *café noir*. These items help us to see how Creole cuisine originated as an adaptation of the foodways of France, New France, and West Africa to the conditions of the Mississippi Delta.

The beef *grillades*, contributed by Rita and Jim Goss, are individual portions of round steak, fried and served in a thick sauce or “gravy”. Their name comes from the French word for “grill”. *The Picayune’s Creole Cookbook* (1901 edition) referred



Participants spoke about their dishes before the meal began.

(Photos: John Thomson)

to *grillades* as “a favorite dish among the poorer classes of Creoles, especially being served not only for breakfast, but also at dinner”. The sauce incorporates fundamental ingredients of French Louisiana cooking: a dark *roux*, a *mirepoix*, chopped tomatoes, and Creole spices and seasonings.

*Roux* is a classic of French cuisine, especially the “blond” form used as the basis for *velouté*, *béchamel*, and other white sauces. It is a cooked mixture of roughly equal quantities of wheat flour and fat—originally melted pork lard, as seen in La Varenne’s cookbook (1651). In the 1700’s, butter became the fat of preference in France as well as among the French Creoles. But in Louisiana, the roux is more often cooked longer to reach the reddish-brown (literally “roux”) stage, where the flavor and aroma are more strong and nutty. As in classic French cooking, in Louisiana a blond roux tends to be used for a sauce that will incorporate milk or cream; a “peanut butter”-colored roux to incorporate a stock made from chicken, fish, or veal; and a “chocolate” roux for a stock of beef or game. Some Louisianans substitute olive or other vegetable oil for the butter, which facilitates the extended cooking needed to make a dark roux.<sup>3</sup>

Classic French *mirepoix* is a mixture of finely diced onions, celery, and carrots, sautéed in butter until very tender. In Louisiana the vegetables are often referred to as “the holy trinity”, but the carrot is usually replaced with bell pepper, a New World ingredient.

*Calas* [contributed by Pat Cornett and Mel Annis] are fritters made from a yeasty, slightly soured dough of leftover white rice, wheat flour, eggs, sugar, vanilla, and nutmeg. The spoonfuls of dough are deep-fried in a skillet until golden brown, then sprinkled with powdered sugar. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, these fritters were part of life in the *vieux carré*, the French Quarter of New Orleans, where in Creole homes African servant cooks prepared them for breakfast, especially on Sundays and other days of religious importance (First Communions, weddings, Lent). They would also be hawked at street-corners early on Sunday mornings by black Creoles, often women servants with a day off from work. The women would bear them on their heads in covered baskets or bowls, shouting *Calas belles, tout chauds!* (Beautiful calas, very hot!). Calas had

almost disappeared from the city in modern times, but their preparation has been revived as a point of cultural preservation and pride following Hurricane Katrina.<sup>4</sup>

The word *cala* reportedly derives from an African term for a fried cake.<sup>5</sup> “Wet rice” from Africa (*Oryza glaberrima*) was the one grain that the early settlers found could be grown reliably in the swampy Delta region. It was introduced to Louisiana in 1719 when the Duc du Maine arrived with a shipload of 250 slaves from Senegal. We can imagine that *calas* might have evolved from the New Orleans *calais*, which were sweet rice pancakes grilled in lard.<sup>6</sup> Seizing slaves from the rice-based societies of West Africa meant transplanting not only their rice itself, but the labor, culture, and know-how associated with its cultivation, milling, and cookery.<sup>7</sup>

Classic New Orleans *café noir* [Jan and Dan Longone] is strong black coffee brewed with chicory. Chicory enhances the beverage, as it has an even more “roasted” flavor than coffee itself; in addition, it has a sedative effect that counteracts the caffeine poisoning that might otherwise be caused by drinking lots of strong coffee. The chicory is ground from the dried, roasted roots of a specially-bred, large-root variety of the plant, which is a close relative of endive. The use of chicory as an extender, or even substitute, for coffee was a French custom adopted in The Crescent City in response to the scarcities of the War Between the States. The practice had originated in Europe in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, when coffee was still very expensive.

#### Creole Dining in Fat Times or Lean

Many a sumptuous Creole dinner begins with a refreshing appetizer of shrimp *répoulade* [prepared for us by Nancy Sannar]. It is made with boiled, peeled shrimp that are coated with *répoulade* sauce, chilled, then served on a bed of shredded lettuce. French *répoulade* is a mayonnaise-based dressing with mustard, anchovy essence, herbs, and chopped onions and other (often pickled) vegetables; however, the Creole version tends to be spicier, thanks to additional ingredients like horseradish and chili sauce or powder.

Imagine how a chef might feel if he let a colleague use his kitchen, but the kitchen were returned in a different shape than before. Something analogous to this must have been felt by the French Prefect of Louisiana—a territory that had recently been returned to France by Spain—when in 1802 he complained that the local dishes had become too spicy!<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the heat factor does appear to have crept into the Louisiana kitchen during the period of Spanish rule (1762-1800), which encouraged the migration of Afro-Caribbean people and foodways from the West Indies, notably the use of chili peppers. The most famous Louisiana hot sauce, however, would appear only later, during Reconstruction. The McIlhenny-Avery family began to produce their Tabasco® sauce commercially in 1868. It was made from red peppers grown at their bayou sugar plantation, propagated from a specimen believed to have come from the Tabasco region (now a state) in southern Mexico.

We sampled two different versions of gumbo, a spicy soup or stew that makes a satisfying meal, especially when served

*continued on next page*

# Gulf Coast Meal

*continued from page 5*

over rice. Its influences are French, Afro-Caribbean, Native American, and Spanish. Traditionally, gumbo starts as a dark roux, to which seasonings, water or stock, and meats and vegetables (notably tomatoes) are added. There is a rival version in Charleston, SC that is also based on a roux. New Orleans is especially famous for gumbos of shrimp, oysters, and crab, which might have been influenced by the seafood boils of local Choctaw natives.<sup>9</sup> Cajun versions of gumbo tend to feature more game, and they often lack tomato. Marking gumbo's roots among West Indian slaves, *ki ngombo* is the Bantu (central and southern African) word for okra, which is indigenous to that continent and is an important ingredient in the dish. Toward the end of the simmering, the okra is sliced into wheels and added to the pot, where its gooey juice serves as a thickener. Okra was introduced to New Orleans and Charleston in the early 1700's from the Caribbean.<sup>10</sup>

Harriet Larson, who made us a Creole-style chicken and sausage gumbo, explained that its long, slow simmering made gumbo an ideal dish for women to prepare on washing day, since, once assembled, it can be left pretty much unattended in a pot on the stove. She used her grandmother's recipe, but as thickener she decided to replace okra with the equally traditional *filé* powder, which is added after the cooking is complete. The powder, another Choctaw borrowing, is produced by drying and grinding young, tender sassafras leaves, which have a similar gooey quality.

The gumbo brought by George and Virginia Estabrook represented a variant that is made without roux, yielding a thinner soup. George used a recipe from his mother's culinary roots in Mississippi and Alabama, and dubbed it "Ma's Not Very Expensive Gumbo Soup". The ingredients included diced turnip, carrot, tomato, and fresh thyme; sliced okra, which was dusted with flour and sautéed in fat rendered from salt-cured bacon, gave it added flavor and thickening. Cayenne pepper and chopped green pepper were added shortly before serving. Such vegetable-based gumbo soups bring to mind the well-known *gumbo aux herbes* (*gumbo z'herbes*), a version rich with greens and bearing similarities to *potage aux herbes* from France. In New Orleans, a vegetarian *gumbo z'herbes* is traditional for Lent, especially on Maundy Thursday (the day before Good Friday), and is a token of good luck.<sup>11</sup>

Most Creoles were Catholics, so they developed delicious, hearty soups that didn't require meat or meat stocks. An example is the *potage maigre d'hiver* (Winter fast day soup), made by Joanne and Art Cole from a recipe in the 1945 edition of *The Picayune's Creole Cookbook*. It is a dried-pea soup with finely-chopped vegetables (onion, celery, carrot, turnip), sliced lettuce, and spinach, seasoned with mint, thyme, parsley, and bay leaf. The Coles noted that during Advent (the four weeks leading to Christmas), Wednesdays and Fridays were fast days, on which meat was prohibited to Catholics and only one full meal was allowed each day. They speculated that in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Creole cooks making this soup might have gone out to the garden or woods and plucked some lamb's ears or similar crisp local greens. But by the 1940's that was a less viable option, and supermarket greens such as spinach and lettuce were being substituted.

A spicy preparation called red beans and rice [Pat Cornett and Mel Annis] was traditionally prepared in New Orleans homes as a main or side dish for Monday lunch, using the ham bone left over from Sunday dinner. There are an endless number of variations; Pat's was a vegetarian version, although she added liquid smoke. Made with white rice and dried red kidney beans, or the smaller red beans of southern Louisiana, the dish was clearly influenced by *moros y cristianos* ("Moors and Christians"), the Spanish West Indies dish of black beans and rice. Local African-American cooks often call it simply "red and white". Jazz musician Louis Armstrong, who hailed from The Big Easy and loved the dish, called it his "birthmark"; he often signed his name "Red Beans and Ricely yours".

Our meal included two classic Creole sweets made with pecans. Louisiana is one of the few sugarcane-growing areas in the U.S., and the pecan, indigenous to North America, also grew plentifully in the area. Pralines [John and Carroll Thomson] are a confection made with sugar, pecans, butter, and milk or cream; John used his mom's recipe, which calls for buttermilk. The heated mixture is dropped by spoonfuls onto a slick surface to produce patties that harden. Pralines were the first extensive kitchen use of the pecan by European settlers.<sup>12</sup> They arose from a simple French almond candy of the same name, and their evolution was possibly influenced by Latin American candies. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, African-American women known as *pralinieres* would sell pralines and other sweets on New Orleans streets to earn some spending money.<sup>13</sup>

Louisiana pecan cake [Boris Silberberg and Frances Williams], with chopped pecans and whiskey-soaked raisins, is an otherwise traditional leavened cake of flour, butter, sugar, and eggs. The Creoles often bake this for use as a *gâteau de roi* ("king's cake"), which is their version of the Twelfth-Night Cakes prepared in France and elsewhere for the season that begins on Three Kings Day, January 6. The Feast of the Epiphany that day commemorates the arrival of the Magi in Bethlehem twelve days after the Christian nativity. In New Orleans and across the Gulf Coast, king's cakes are found throughout the Carnival season, which extends from January 6 until Mardi Gras ("Fat Tuesday"), the last day before Lent. As in France and England, the cake is baked with a single bean or other trinket hidden inside; whoever is served this is named the king or queen for the day.<sup>14</sup>

We also had two Creole bread puddings of European ancestry: New Orleans Bourbon bread pudding served with a sweet sauce [Mary Lou Unterburger], made with torn pieces of *baguette* and raisins stewed in bourbon whiskey; and gingerbread bread pudding served with ice cream [Laura and Dan Gillis]. Southern Louisiana is famous for its spicy gingerbread, traditionally made with unrefined cane syrup and Jamaican ginger, and baked into rectangular slabs nicknamed "stage planks" or "mule bellies".

Wine was traditionally taken at the close of dinner among the New Orleans Creoles, and was generally imported from France. Our wine [Dan and Jan Longone] was Côtes de Luberon, a fruity, crisp, dry white produced by La Vieille Ferme in the Rhône Valley of southeastern France.



## Cajun Food Stirs the Soul

After their cruel expulsion from Canada, known as *le grand d rangement*, the majority of the Acadians who settled in Louisiana wound up not in towns but on plots of sometimes marginal land, granted to them by the colonial authorities. These “Cajuns” (a corruption of the word “Acadians”) became small farmers, ranchers, fishermen, hunters and trappers in the prairies, river bayous (swamps), and coastal marshes of the greater Delta region. Cotton was an occasional cash crop, but their major subsistence crops were rice and corn, while cattle supplied most of the protein in their diet.<sup>15</sup> Of course, also very important were pork, chicken, duck and other game birds, and seafood, as were such vegetables as beans, peppers, and sweet potatoes.

At our meal, Cajun cornbread made in a cast-iron skillet and served with red pepper jelly [Toni Hopping] was wonderfully moist and delicious, even without the jelly. But readers be warned: opinions as to the best way to make or eat these items can get heated. In November 2000, two cousins outside Belleville, in rural southern Alabama, got into an argument about cornbread, jelly, and “chitterlings” and ended up attacking each other with a broad-axe, each landing in the hospital!<sup>16</sup> Other renowned Cajun skillet-dishes of corn include *cush-cush* (originally *couch-couch*), a fried cornmeal mush, often eaten drenched with cane syrup or with milk and sugar; and *maque choux*, a spicy-sweet dish of corn kernels and chopped vegetables boiled in milk, and sometimes thickened with beaten eggs.

The Cajuns, being of modest means, were resourceful in making use of whatever was available to them. A good example of this is “dirty rice” [Julie and Robert Lewis], also called “rice dressing”, a spicy dish of white rice saut  d with the holy trinity and scraps of meat. Traditionally, bits of the off-parts (offal) of an animal were used here, a common practice within the broader category of Southern “soul food”. Julie used a great-tasting recipe from Paul McIlhenny’s 125<sup>th</sup>-anniversary *Tabasco Cookbook* (1993), which calls for chicken gizzards and livers, and of course Tabasco® sauce. Also famous in Cajun country is *boudin*, which can be thought of as a kind of dirty rice made with pork parts (shoulder, neck, liver, feet) and turned into a sausage casing; pig’s blood is sometimes added to produce *boudin rouge*. The links of *boudin* are poached or smoked, then eaten while fresh and warm. *Boudin*, an old French term for sausage, is the source of our word “pudding”.

Hogs were already rooting around the Gulf Coast when the first French settlers arrived in the late 1600’s. Local Indian tribes were keeping small domesticated herds, descended from the pigs that thrived so well after they were released into the wilds of Florida in the early 1540’s by Spanish explorer De Soto and his men. Many African slaves who were Muslims and loathed pork at the time of their capture had been converted to Catholicism—and its culinary customs—within a generation of their arrival in Louisiana.<sup>17</sup> These facts help explain why pork and lard have always played such an important role in Cajun (and to a lesser extent in Creole) cooking.

The Cajun community pig-slaughter was a festive occasion called a *boucherie* (a French term related to our “butcher”). Families would gather there not only to make pork products but



A few of the confections that were prepared for the meal: from left, pralines, Louisiana pecan cake, *calas*, and pecan pie.

to play music, dance, and socialize: *Laissez les bon temps rouler!* (Let the good times roll!) The foods eaten from a butchered hog, or laid away in the larder, were many and varied, including fresh pork and sausage, *boudin*, *gratons* (fried cracklings or pork rinds, akin to Spanish *chicharrones*), head cheese, salt pork, bacon and fatback, ham and ham hocks, *tasso* (smoked pork shoulder), *chaudin* or *ponce* (pig’s stomach stuffed with seasoned pork and then smoked), *andouille* (a spicy, dry, smoked sausage made from minced pork neck, stomach, or other parts, also found in France), and *chaurice* (a hard, red, cured-pork sausage, spicy with pepper and paprika, akin to Spanish *chorizo*).

Chicken jambalaya [Marjorie Cripps] is probably the most famous Louisiana dish associated with pork. It’s a highly-seasoned stovetop casserole that functions as a one-dish meal. Using a recipe from Jessie Tirsch’s *A Taste of the Gulf Coast: The Art and Soul of Southern Cooking* (New York: Macmillan, 1997), Marjorie made her version with diced ham, dark-meat chicken, sliced *andouille* sausage, the holy trinity, olive oil, garlic, and hot spices. Jambalaya is made in both Cajun and Creole kitchens, but the inclusion of *andouille* and the exclusion of tomatoes in this dish are markers of Cajun style. For logistical reasons at this large gathering, Marjorie chose to serve the rice separately. Traditionally the rice is cooked right in with the other ingredients, as in the European *paellas* and *pilafs* that seem to have given rise to jambalaya.<sup>18</sup> Ham also seems to have been integral from the beginning, for the name, originally *jambalaia* in the Occitan language of southeastern France, echoes the main French and Spanish terms for ham (*jambon* and *jam n*). But jambalaya is highly adaptable and has evolved in many directions; some versions, such as of duck or seafood, do not always include ham.

* touff  e* is a kind of soup or stew usually featuring a single local seafood item, and served over rice. Like gumbo, it is popular in both Cajun and Creole cooking. In comparison with Louisiana gumbo, * touff  e* tends to be thicker and spicier, and orange in color rather than dark brown. Eleanor Hoag made crawfish * touff  e* using a light-brown roux, the holy trinity, garlic and other herbs and spices, chicken stock, and tomato paste. Sonia Manchek prepared a shrimp * touff  e* that she made into tarts, her own idea. * touff  e* is a Louisiana innovation, seemingly unrelated to a French technique with the same name,

*continued on next page*

# Gulf Coast Meal

*continued from page 7*

whereby food is cooked by “smothering” it in a covered pot, with fat but no water.

## American, Italian, and Other Influences

When Napoleon sold the vast Louisiana territory to the United States in 1803, it was a major turning point because it set off a flood of Anglo-American immigration to southern Louisiana. By various means, the wealthy and aggressive newcomers forced many small Cajun farmers off of their riverfront ribbon plots and onto more marginal lands in a process that has been called “the second *dérangement*”. Between 1810 and 1823, the population of South Louisiana doubled. Many Anglos, and some Creoles, set up profitable slave-labor plantations growing cotton or indigo at first but, in time, mostly sugarcane.<sup>19</sup> A thriving steamboat trade got underway along the “river road” in 1812, the same year Louisiana became a state. Mississippi and Alabama were granted statehood in 1817 and 1819; Florida and Texas both in 1845.

The craze for pecan pie— we had three versions at our meal— nicely crystallizes these trends. It is a Southern adaptation of the Molasses Pie that had long been popular among Anglo-Americans. The first known recipe for pecan pie appeared in Texas in the 1860’s; only in the 1920’s did corn syrup become a common substitute for cane sugar in this pie.<sup>20</sup> One of our pecan pies was brought by Kay and Steve Oldstrom. Kay used a recipe from one Martha Knowlton, a friend of Steve’s mother; Knowlton’s family owned a plantation in Perthshire, MS, which sits on the Mississippi River near its junction with the Arkansas. Pecan pies made with yams (originally from Africa) or sweet potatoes (from South America) tend to be less intensely sweet than others. The yam pecan pie brought by Lois and Len Stenger was the prize-winning recipe at the 1958 Louisiana Yambilee in Opelousas; Lois found it in *River Road Recipes* (Junior League of Baton Rouge, 1959). Sweet potato pecan pie [Patty Turpen and Carl Paulina] was from a Paul Prudhomme cookbook.

Muffaletta sandwiches [Jan and Dan Longone], now celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, exemplify the influence of the Italian and other European immigrants around the turn of the century. Many Italians worked on plantations in Louisiana before becoming fruit peddlers, and some of these eventually established ship-provisioning businesses or storefront groceries, especially in the New Orleans French Quarter. The Muffaletta was first prepared in 1906 at one such establishment, the Central Grocery owned by Sicilian immigrant Salvatore Lupo. Like an Italian submarine sandwich, it is piled with sliced meats and cheeses (ham, Genoa salami, mortadella, provolone, mozzarella), but the *coup de grace* is the tangy green-olive salad used as a dressing or condiment inside the sandwich. *Muffuletta* (now also spelled *muffaletta*) was originally the name, in the Sicilian dialect, for the sturdy loaf of bread on which the sandwich is still made— squat and round, about 10 inches across. This type of bread had been produced locally since about 1895 by an Albanian-ethnic baker from Palermo, Sicily. The Longones substituted a *ciabatta* loaf, which worked beautifully.

St. Joseph’s vegetables over pasta [Marion and Nick Holt] also reflects the Sicilian presence in Louisiana. Sicilian

Catholics revere Joseph as their patron saint: tradition holds that centuries ago, he miraculously ended a famine on the island. In a custom that is still widespread, Sicilian families in New Orleans, Houma, Monroe, and other towns in Louisiana mark the approach of St. Joseph’s Day, March 19, by building elaborate multi-tiered altars of thanksgiving in their homes and churches. They decorate these formidable structures with linens, bottles of wine, loaves of St. Joseph’s Bread, actual dishes such as baked fish, pasta, gumbo, or fresh fennel in tomato sauce, and fig cookies or other sweets. Traditionally, a donkey tethered at the front door, or nowadays a bundle of greens, is a sign for others to enter, partake of the celebratory food, and make a donation that will be forwarded to a charitable organization.<sup>21</sup> Paul Prudhomme, inspired by the fennel and tomato dish popular for this holiday, devised the recipe that Marion used. Its Italian character comes through in the pasta, tomato sauce, fennel, butternut squash, olive oil, garlic, and spices.

Several of our dishes showed how, especially since World War 2, Gulf Coast foodways have been influenced by the same Americanizing and modernizing forces as have those of other regions. Among these influences are the rise of commercial packaged and other convenience foods, and related trends such as 1950’s casserole cooking; the growing importance of the tourism industry and the use of food, sometimes “exotic” food, as a commercial attraction; and new modes of shipment and communication, including mass media and the Internet. We can probably identify these trends at work in the following dishes:

- scalloped chicken [Randy Schwartz], a casserole with shell macaroni, sliced egg, and breadcrumbs, from the *Acadian Bi-Centennial Cookbook* (Jennings, LA: Louisiana Acadian Handicraft Museum, 1955)
- New Orleans salad [Nancy and Bob Harrington], a cabbage salad with sweet and sour dressing, composed to feature the Mardi Gras parade colors of purple, green, and gold
- a simple pasta dish [Rich Kato] from *Justin Wilson’s Homegrown Louisiana Cookin’* (New York: Macmillan, 1990)
- “Cajun rotelle and red beans” [Gus Amaru], a warm, spicy pasta dish from a Williams Sonoma cookbook
- blackened catfish [Judy Goldwasser], from a Chuck Muer cookbook, in which the filets are dipped in melted butter, dredged in a very hot spice mixture, and seared briefly on each side in a hot skillet until they char. This highly nontraditional technique was invented by Paul Prudhomme when he was a chef at Commander’s Palace in the late 1970’s, and perfected in the early 1980’s at his K-Paul’s Louisiana Kitchen.<sup>22</sup>
- scalloped sweet potatoes and apples [Phil and Barbara Zaret], a simple casserole with butter, brown sugar, and mace. In November 2005, the recipe was posted on the website of TV station WLOX (Biloxi, MS) by a “Nancy”, but otherwise without attribution. It turns out to be a verbatim copy of a recipe from the *Pennsylvania Dutch Cookbook— Fine Old Recipes* (Culinary Arts Press, 1936).

Thus, today as throughout their history, the people of the Gulf Coast continue to amalgamate a myriad of influences! ■

*The endnotes for this article are on page 18.*



# HOW TO FEED A VICTORIAN BABY

by Margaret Kenda

*Margaret Kenda, a writer in Sudbury, MA, gave a presentation to CHAA in May 2006 entitled "From Pabulum to Pad Thai: The Twisted History and Big Business of Baby Food". She is the author of several books about baby food, including Whole Foods for Babies and Toddlers (La Leche League, 2001) and The Natural Baby Food Cookbook (Avon, 1982). Her other books present creative, hands-on projects for children, in science, math, geography, language, inventions, and cooking. Dr. Kenda is a graduate of Northwestern University and holds a doctorate in Victorian literature from the University of Iowa.*

The writers of the household manuals and cookbooks of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century were a more colorful sort than you would think from looking at the heavy and humorless tomes they produced.

The popular American author Sarah Josepha Hale was a multi-talented writer. Her primary fame these days is her nursery song, "Mary Had a Little Lamb". She is also the founder of a major holiday, since she was the one who persuaded President Lincoln to declare the fourth Thursday in November a national holiday of Thanksgiving— not to celebrate the Pilgrims' treatment (or mistreatment) of the Indians, but to celebrate the end of the Civil War and the preservation of the Union.

Writing at about the same time as Hale was that most British of all the Victorian advice-givers, Isabella Beeton, a young woman so haunting that her photograph is the bestseller of all the portrait cards for sale at London's National Portrait Gallery. Isabella Beeton admitted she couldn't cook, but as Mrs. Beeton, she was the author of Britain's most famous series of cookbooks and household advice manuals.

Isabella died at age 28, doomed to motherhood disaster. Her first two children died young, and she herself died from complications of childbirth with her fourth child. She left behind her husband suffering from a deadly disease himself and with two young children and a failing publishing business. Only after her death did she become the ghost-written Mrs. Beeton, with her books famous, much-used references that dominated the publishing world. Whoever held rights to the use of her name in any given era produced Mrs. Beeton's books, decade after decade. Advice and cooking styles changed, and books appeared even into the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, with such historically absurd titles as *Microwaving with Mrs. Beeton*.<sup>1</sup>

It was to Sarah Josepha Hale and Mrs. Beeton— and others like them— that young mothers turned for help, at least often enough to make some of their books bestsellers. And it was they who brought a scientific approach to the feeding of babies and young children, along with a concern for systematic hygiene and nutri-

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### COOKERY FOR CHILDREN.

*Observations on the Care of Children—Times of Giving Food important—Duty of Mothers—Food for Infants—Milk—Porridge—Meats—Vegetables—Puddings—To prepare Fruit—Rice and Apples—Fresh Fruits—Blackberry Jam, &c.*

SOME preparations of food proper for the young have been given in the course of this work; nevertheless, we are sure a chapter on this important subject, so generally neglected in cookery books, will be welcomed by the judicious.

It is of great consequence to fix the times of taking food, as well as to regulate the quantity given to a child. The mother should, personally, attend to these arrangements; it is her province.

There is great danger that an infant, under 3 years of age, will be over-fed, if it be left to the discretion of the nurse. These persons, generally, to stop the screaming of a child, whether it proceed from pain, or crossness, or repletion (as it often does)—they give it something to eat—often that which is very injurious, to tempt the appetite; if it will only eat and stop crying, they do not care for the future inconvenience which this habit of indulgence may bring on the child and its mother.

Arrange, as early as possible, the regular times of giving food to your children, according to their age and constitution. Young infants require food every 2 hours when awake; after 3 months old, they may go 3 hours—then cautiously lengthen the time, as the child can bear it. But remember that all temperaments are not alike. Some of the same age may require more food than others. One rule, however, will apply to all

**From a page of Sarah Josepha Hale's  
*The Ladies' New Book of Cookery* (1852)**

tion. They changed the history of baby feeding and baby food for good—and occasionally for ill.

#### First Steps Toward Humanizing Animal Milk

Before there were the organized recipes and advice manuals of the Victorian era, the various substitutes and supplements for human milk were generally homemade concoctions called by the unappealing names of pap (the liquid variety) and panada (a semi-solid type, similar, at least in consistency, to modern commercial baby food).

Over the course of human existence, hapless babies had found themselves the subject of experiments with various types of animal milk. Even without the availability of chemical analysis, however, it became clear that babies did not thrive on animal milk. So, in the absence of a mother or wet-nurse, caretakers tried various additives to humanize animal milk and make it humanly digestible.

Essentially, **pap** represented an attempt to alter the milk of cows or goats. The first step in humanizing this milk was to dilute it with water, usually with an addition of flour, sugar, or barley. The second step was to add an acid to break down the difficult-to-digest curds of cow's milk. Flour itself is mildly acidic. Other types of acidic additives could speed the process: acidified whey left over from making cheese (still an ingredient in modern processed foods and in animal feed), lemon juice for its citric acid, or, to supply tartaric acid, a drop or two of sweet wine.<sup>2</sup>

*continued on next page*

## VICTORIAN BABY *continued from previous page*

But then the mix easily became too acidic, unnatural and unbalanced. A few chemically-aware caretakers added an alkaline substance, most often shavings from Castile soap.

Still others seem to have abandoned all caution. They stirred in beef broth, raw beef drippings, or beer. Women, especially those who worked long days in fields or factories, sometimes added the opiate-derivative laudanum, to soothe their babies toward that elusive full night of sleep— or sometimes to encourage babies to sleep all day when they were in the grip of unreliable group care.

**Panada** was a similar mix, a sort of soup for older babies and toddlers. Though it was a common first baby food, there was no particular recipe. In whatever proportion they chose, cooks combined a variety of the ingredients they might have on hand, such as milk, flour, bread crumbs, barley, sugar, and butter, with perhaps a little cod liver oil for its nutritional benefit.<sup>3</sup>

Lacking such a variety of potentially expensive ingredients, some orphanages made do with just thin broth and a little bread.<sup>4</sup>

As one Victorian-era doctor noted, “When I see the ordinary practices of a nursery, I am astonished, not that such numbers die, but that any live!”<sup>5</sup>

### The Victorian Craving for Precision

It was clear that caretakers needed instruction. Soon, the writers of the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century household manuals stepped in, and perhaps that was the true and inevitable beginning of the commercialization of infant feeding. In the midst of the Industrial Revolution, these were writers taking full advantage of the latest advances in science and industry.

Perhaps as a result, some of the advice to new mothers sounds almost modern. Both Sarah Josepha Hale and Mrs. Beeton were concerned about the impoverished diets of the children of the poor, malnourishment that would twist their bodies and cause mental and even moral deterioration. For the children of the middle classes, they warned against the excess that would cause digestive problems, or at the very least, encourage a child to prefer inferior— but tasty— foods. They worried about the reliability of caretakers, the household help and nannies who were the daycare providers of the day. Both urged busy and distracted mothers to oversee food for their own children, and to make sure that no food, as Hale put it, was given a child merely “to amuse or to keep it quiet, when it is not hungry, or to reward it for being good.”<sup>6</sup>

Mrs. Beeton, especially, aimed at precision in infant feeding. According to her biographer, Mrs. Beeton’s ideal household “is a scientific one, run according to the latest findings in biology, chemistry, physics, and much more. Foods are analyzed for their nutritional values, developments in canning are welcomed, and the time-and-motion efficiency of the factory are applied to making beds or bread.”<sup>7</sup>

Mrs. Beeton assures her readers that she advocates “natural” as opposed to “artificial” food for a child. But this is a weak preference at best, as she takes a scolding tone toward mothers who nurse their babies for more than nine to fifteen months. A

woman, she said, “has as much right to consider herself and her health, and her duties to her husband, society at large, and her own house, as to give herself up body and soul to a baby, who thrives as well on the bottle.”<sup>8</sup> (This is an argument favored in formula advertisements to this day.)

If a young mother needed time away from baby feeding, Mrs. Beeton’s artificial alternative does not sound all that convenient to modern ears. She prescribed pap created from flour “cooked into a pale brown mass, and finely powdered.”<sup>9</sup> Here is a rough recipe for infant formula of the day:

- Take a pound or so of flour, put it in a cloth, and tie it tightly.
- Boil for four or five hours.
- Peel off the outer rind that will have formed at that point.
- Grate the hard inner substance.
- Finally, mix with water and sugar.

In her efforts to turn out encyclopedic volumes quickly, Mrs. Beeton often reprinted the work of other writers almost word for word, with only occasional attribution. So it is difficult to know which words are solely hers. But she may have been the author of the famous phrase, “A place for everything, and everything in its place.”

And certainly breastfeeding seemed unscientific to her. In an era when virtually every healthy mother breastfed, Mrs. Beeton makes breastfeeding seem an untidy business, “unseemly” and “out of place”, especially when she pictured babies sleeping with their mothers and nursing on and off all night. She was sure that such a practice caused diseases both in mother and baby. In a colorful phrase, she refers to the typical mother weakened from nursing “her vampire baby”.<sup>10</sup>

She may well have been right that mothers among the poorest of the poor suffered from malnourishment, and their circumstances would produce frail babies. The middle-class mother, on the other hand, would have been expected to stay in bed for two weeks, or much longer, after giving birth. She would have been on an invalid’s diet, and she would have lacked fresh air and exercise. All that time, she would be breastfeeding, too. She could well have emerged from the experience weakened.

In America, Sarah Josepha Hale’s substitute for human milk is simply a mix of a tablespoon of fresh cow’s milk with two tablespoons hot water, and a small grating from a loaf of sugar. For children ready for something more than human milk or its substitutes, she recommended a diet “light and simple, gruel alone, or mixed with cow’s milk; mutton broth, or beef tea; stale bread, rusks or biscuits, boiled in water to a proper consistence, and a little sugar added.”<sup>11</sup> Like most other food writers of her time, she groups food for both small children and for invalids together in the same chapter.

Often missing from these recipes are fruits and vegetables. People widely viewed produce— especially fresh and raw fruit— as suspect foods, suitable only for older children or adults, and then only in moderation. And to some extent, they were right. Hale’s opinion was that a large part of the problem was that fruit sold in the cities had often never ripened properly and yet had fallen into decay. Given that produce could have been irrigated or washed with polluted water, it was safer for children if baked or

cooked. And she added recipes for vegetables well cooked to reduce roughage and aid digestion.

Hale, along with a few other Victorian writers, defended fruits and vegetables as not so dangerous as popularly supposed. The problem, they thought, was that greedy children tended to eat too much fruit. Picture the often-reprinted Victorian print of a small boy sitting under an apple tree. He is obviously sick and bloated from eating too many apples. Hale was concerned about the time of day for eating (and digesting) fruit. Apples, she said, were “gold in the morning, silver at noon, and lead at night.”<sup>12</sup>

Both Hale and Beeton worried over changes that affected the kind of milk available for children, as more and more families moved away from the farms and could no longer keep their own cows. The authors recommended that a mother make sure that the milk she bought from a dairy always came from the same cow, and they warned that dairy operators, for their own convenience, could mix in the milk of several cows and then lie about it. In the cities, especially, there was no telling where milk came from, and there milk with too much cream could be a hazard. Milk from plain ordinary low-cream cows was best for babies.

### Bottles and Other Delivery Systems

When Mrs. Beeton, in her 1861 manual (in which Isabella herself was still in charge), refers to the “bottle”, there was actually no technology for safe nipples or bottles. If the ingredients for pap and panada constitute perilous nutrition, then the delivery systems often seem actively dangerous.

For her, there were two choices of nipples, artificial and natural. Hard black artificial nipples were available, including the recent invention, foul-smelling nipples made of India rubber. Mrs. Beeton preferred what she viewed as the traditional and (all too) natural alternative, the dried teat from a calf. This was available from the local chemist, who would have acquired it as a butcher’s byproduct and preserved it in spirits. A caretaker was to soak it in warm water, wash it, and use some fine twine to tie it onto a glass bottle or the spout of a kettle. Then, “the nipple put into the child’s mouth is so white and natural in appearance, that no child taken from the breast will refuse it.”<sup>13</sup>

The calf’s teat could last a fortnight, or even longer, she said, before it became putrid.

Within a few years, the era of commercial feeding of infants had begun in earnest. By the late 1860’s, Henri Nestlé in Switzerland was at work inventing his *Farine Lactée*, a mix of milk and cereal with acids and starches chemically removed. A German chemist, Justis von Liebig, added potassium bicarbonate to reduce the acid in his formula for infants. By the 1870’s, patents for recipes and feeding devices were flowing.

For caretakers near the end of the Victorian era, rubber or cork nipples guaranteed no more problems with the putrid calf’s teats. But the newly invented glass bottles had other dangers, since they were made of cheap, fragile glass, with an intricate system of tubes. The bottles broke easily, and were so difficult to clean that infections were a more common risk than the injuries from broken glass. In their own time, they came to be called “murder bottles”. Some types came with a metal harness



**Nanny feeding a baby in a 19<sup>th</sup>-Century advertisement for “Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk”.**

Courtesy of the Baby Bottle Museum, an online museum in England (<http://www.babybottle-museum.co.uk>)

suitable for strapping to a baby’s mouth so the baby could be left alone.

### Looking Back from Today’s Vantage

How far have we come? The rates of breastfeeding, though not so high as in the Victorian era, are nevertheless the highest they’ve been in more than fifty years, and many parents prepare food for older babies and toddlers from wholesome and organic ingredients. They don’t resort to bottle or jar.

Yet powerful commercial enterprises are everywhere, and they communicate in the surreal lingo of their trade. Over the years, generic names such as “pap” or “artificial substitute”—terms that would never pass a focus group—changed to the seemingly more scientific name, “formula”, and eventually to the feel-good advertising language of today, such as “Nature’s Basket” and “Gerber Graduates”.<sup>14</sup> Large corporations strive for “share of stomach” in a “specialty nutrition market”.<sup>15</sup> That means mass-produced baby food, and the targeted stomachs are those of small children.

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## CHILDREN'S CULINARY EPHEMERA AT THE CLEMENTS LIBRARY

by Kathleen Schafer and Carroll Thomson

*Kathy Schafer and Carroll Thomson are docents at the Longone Center for American Culinary Research (William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan). For more than five years, they have helped organize and study the collection of culinary ephemera located there, numbering over 100 boxes of product advertisements, promotional items, catalogs, and newsletters. Carroll and her husband John are longtime members of CHAA, of which she has been President since 2001. John, also a Clements docent, prepared the illustrations accompanying this article using items in the collection.*

The collection of children-related ephemera at the Longone Center encompasses three boxes. There are references to children in other areas of the collection, which are cross-referenced. Subjects include nutrition, manners and social graces, entertainment, food preparation, and adult-child interaction.

The collection presents an especially varied and interesting range of graphics. Starting with early rhyme pieces, the illustrations are detailed, finely colored, whimsical, original, signed, and often indicative of the era. The artwork progresses from photographs, utilitarian drawings, and sketches to cartoonist and commercial gimmicks appealing to the contemporary consumer.

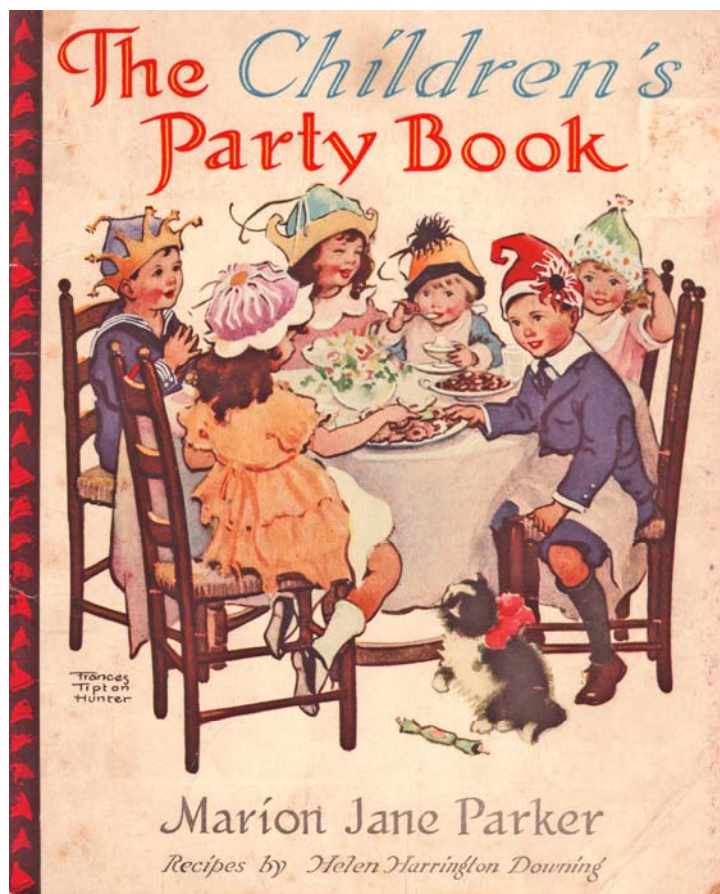
Many of the early children's ephemera were from the flour and baking powder companies and were intended to be read by or to children. Here is a sample from *A Little Book for A Little Cook* (Pillsbury 1905): "To the kitchen I go, to the bakers who bake, the bread and the cookies, the pies and the cake; it was there that I met the package of yeast who raised the dough for the coming feast, and that's why I sit and talk tonight for tomorrow I know I'll be out of sight; so I'll toast myself ere this tale I close to Pillsbury's best, the flour one knows."

Continuing in rhyme, Royal Baking Powder issued *The Little Gingerbread Man* in 1923:

Good cakes are light and tasty  
And his voice grew louder and louder  
Good cakes like us are baked with care  
And Royal Baking Powder.

If you are baking a cake, perhaps you are having a party? Covering all the essentials of birthday and holiday parties, from invitations to food and games, was a goal of *The Children's Party Book*, published in Chicago in 1924 by the Russell-Miller Milling Co. of Minneapolis. The book included, for example, a suggested party game called "You Auto Know", involving such questions as: What auto is called after a former President? (Lincoln). What do you do when in the path of an auto? (Dodge). The book was written by Marion Jane Parker, with recipes by Helen Harrington Downing and illustrations by Frances Tipton Hunter.

The late 1920's and 30's featured a series of healthy eating



A promotional book from the Russell-Miller Milling Co., 1924

pamphlets from such companies as Ralston Purina, Beech-Nut, Van Camp, the Kroger Food Foundation, Gerber, and the California Fruit Growers Exchange Corporation (Sunkist). In the 1924 edition of *Beech-Nut Book of Menus & Recipes*, author Ida Bailey Allen advised parents about "Balancing the Ration" in their children's diets. This meant properly apportioning each one of the various food constituents so as to build muscle, furnish energy, store up reserve force, re-create nerve fiber, and cleanse or vitalize the body. Specific foods were suggested to provide these various benefits. Bailey also suggested learning to eat less meat, and selecting a meat substitute in each meal to provide food for growing muscles. Nuts were recommended, but caution was given, as children often do not chew food sufficiently for proper digestion. Different seasonal menus were suggested for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, as were school lunchbox ideas for proper physical, mental, and spiritual growth. Emphasis was on balancing the menu, the Beech-Nut Way. Meals, of course, were planned around the line of Beech-Nut products, which was extensive: it included bacon, sliced beef, "pork and beans", jams and jellies, mustard, confections, peanut butter, and macaroni products.

In the Gerber booklet *Baby's Cereal and Vegetables* (1932), Dr. Charles Anderson Aldrich, Associate Attending Physician at the Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago, conveniently tabulated the causes of poor appetite in children. He emphasized that mealtime should be happy time. The Gerber booklet *Recipes for Toddlers* (1950) encouraged parents to better understand and control the transition period from infancy to toddler eating routines. *Pathways to Good Food Habits* offered guidelines



**An illustration from *The Little Gingerbread Man*  
(New York: Royal Baking Powder Co., 1923)**

regarding variety of foods, size of serving, texture and consistency, temperature, introducing new foods, serving times, dinnerware (scaled to the child's small size), attitudes of adults at the table, discipline, mealtime with playmates, between-meal eating, and bedtime. It also had recommendations for "Mother-Toddler Meals". Most recipes used Gerber's junior foods.

In 1937 the ephemera take on an added dimension, that of directing an adult and child cooking together. *The Presto Recipe Book for Little Girls and Their Mothers* was published that year by the Hecker H-O Company, a Buffalo, NY producer of flours and cereals. In the Clements's ephemera collection, this 32-page soft-cover booklet of simple recipes is the earliest example of children cooking with adult supervision. There were subsequent editions in 1939 and 1941.

Ephemera continued on the dual track of healthy eating and children cooking. Missing, however, are the rhyming and story format of our early examples. The late 1940's to the present bring examples of energy treats for children from the Corn Product Sales Company, makers of Karo corn syrup (see front cover of this issue).

As children's toys became more sophisticated, an era of electric play equipment that children could use for cooking began. Tacoma Metal Products published a washable plastic cookbook to accompany their miniature electric stoves. In 1968, Kenner Products toy company in conjunction with the General Mills brand "Betty Crocker" marketed junior baking kits, which contained mixes, pans and utensils to be used in the Easy Bake Oven.

The more contemporary ephemera in the collection focus on cooking with children, using products from the sponsor: *Molly*

*continued on page 16*

## VICTORIAN BABY

*continued from page 11*

According to Andrew F. Smith, who teaches culinary history at the New School in New York, "Historically, there was no such thing as children's food. Babies would eat what adults ate, chopped up, until Gerber created baby food in 1927."<sup>16</sup> He is certainly referring to the more sensible of our ancestors.

But high-risk baby food is not new at all. In their own times, Sarah Josepha Hale and Mrs. Beeton were well aware of some of the same problems we confront today, and they were doing what they thought best to promote healthier ways of feeding children. ■

### Endnotes

1. The title of a new (and first full) biography exactly describes her dual existence: Kathryn Hughes, *The Short Life and Long Times of Mrs. Beeton* (New York: Knopf, 2006) [see capsule review in *Repast* Summer 2006, p. 19]. Look for a drama about the double (and dark) life of Isabella Beeton and her alter ego Mrs. Beeton, "The Secret Life of Mrs. Beeton" (BBC television, 2006; PBS, 2007).
2. By the 1860's, doctors were recommending a new product, bicarbonate of potash, to "peptonize" or increase the digestibility of baby food mixes. It was a precursor of baking soda, and it also made possible the baking of quick breads.
3. A form of panada, with a rice base, is still in use for feeding babies in the orphanages of the Third World. In current cookbooks, the name defines a paste or gruel with milk or water, thickened by bread crumbs or flour. Its primary use is to bind meatballs or to thicken sauces or soups.
4. There was a literature of protest. Who can forget the famous scene of *Oliver Twist*, an orphan just old enough to complain, outraging the authorities by requesting "more"? Dickens brought out *Oliver Twist* in monthly installments beginning in 1837.
5. Quoted from an unnamed physician, 1857, by Judith Flanders, *Inside the Victorian Home: A Portrait of Domestic Life in Victorian England* (New York: Norton, 2004), p. 61.
6. Sarah Josepha Hale, *The Ladies' New Book of Cookery: A Practical System for Private Families in Town and Country* (New York: H. Long & Brother, 1852), p. 422. The full text is available in the online collection *Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project* (Michigan State University Library and MSU Museum, 2005), [http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book\\_19.cfm](http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book_19.cfm).
7. Hughes, p. 6.
8. Mrs. [Isabella] Beeton's *Book of Household Management*, 1861, ed. Nicola Humble (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), section 2475, p. 1038.
9. Mrs. Beeton, section 2500, p. 1042.
10. Mrs. Beeton, section 2471, p. 1034.
11. Hale, p. 422. Rusks were double-baked biscuits. Imagine them after they were boiled.
12. Hale, p. 426.
13. Mrs. Beeton, section 2498, p. 1041.
14. For more on the commercialization of baby food, see Amy Bentley, "Inventing Baby Food: Gerber and the Discourse of Infancy in the United States", in Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton, eds., *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 92-112. Or see her article, "Booming Baby Food: Infant Food and Feeding in Post-World War II America", *Michigan Historical Review* 32:2 (Fall 2006), pp. 63-87.
15. "Face Value: The Baby-Food King", *Economist*, Sept. 2, 2006, p. 56.
16. Quoted by Jennifer Steinhauer, "Generation Pad Thai", *New York Times Magazine*, Jan. 15, 2006, p. 64.



# HISTORICAL TRENDS IN CHILDREN'S COOKBOOKS

by Doug Harris

*Doug and Elaine Harris are longtime members of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor as well as the Book Club of Detroit. They spoke to CHAA in February 1992 about their collection of children's cookbooks and related materials, which currently numbers over 1,500 items. The illustrations accompanying this article were provided by Doug from that collection. Doug is retired now after a career spent in marketing.*

It hasn't been too many years since our first inquiries for children's cookbooks at local book shops were answered with blank stares and followed by responses such as, "Really?" or "Children's what?"

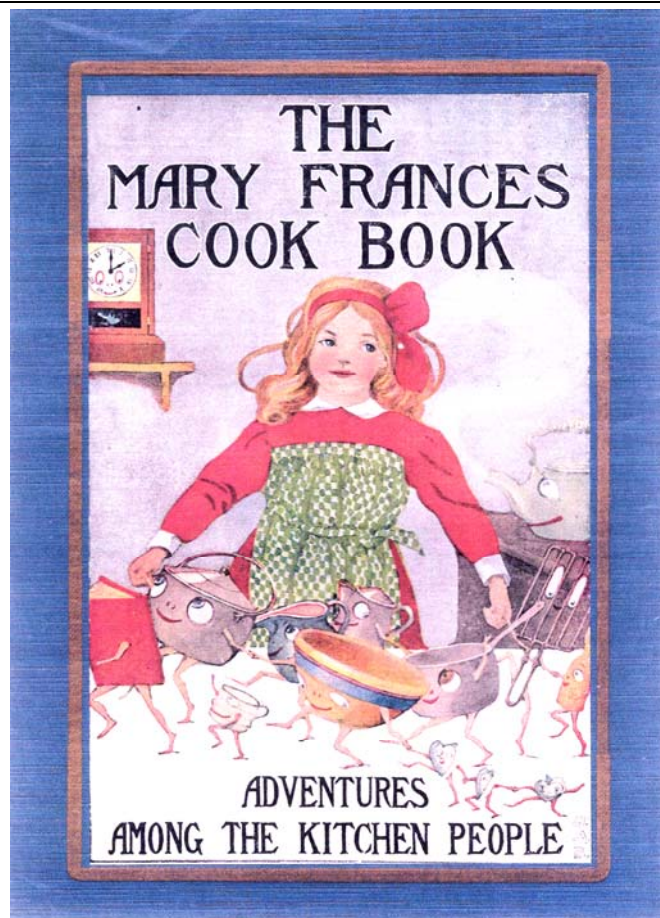
This no longer appears to be the case. Children's cookbooks have come into their own, and can not only be found in most new and used book shops, but are often treated to a special place on a shelf— if not having an entire shelf dedicated to them. From our viewpoint as collectors, it would seem that they are being produced at an astounding rate. The themes range from snacking to nutrition, from literature to comic strips, and from cartoons and technological changes in food preparation to health concerns.

## Girls First

Tradition held that children— *girls*, really, since they were the future homemakers— learned to cook at their mother's side as she prepared the family meals. That was a tradition that continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. But emerging from amid all this was a new concept: a book designed specifically to appeal to children and to teach them how to cook. It all began with the appearance 130 years ago of what is believed to be the first children's cookbook, *Six Little Cooks* (1877) by Elizabeth S. Kirkland.<sup>1</sup> A very able storyteller, Mrs. Kirkland chose to write her cookbook as a story of six little girls being taught to cook by a kindly Aunt Jane, who takes them step by step through the many recipes.

In 1905, there appeared *A Little Cook-Book for a Little Girl* by Caroline French Benton. It is noteworthy for a couple of reasons. First, the Introduction carries the storyline of how Margaret learned to cook. Impatient to begin learning, she says, "I don't want to wait until I'm big; I want to cook now; and I don't want to do cooking-school cooking, but little girl cooking, all by myself."<sup>2</sup> Second, the following acknowledgment appears: "Thanks are due to the editor of *Good Housekeeping* for permission to reproduce the greater part of this book from that magazine."

The storytelling technique proved successful with other authors as well. *The Mary Frances Cook Book* (1912) by Jane Eyre Fryer is the story of a little girl eager to learn how to cook to help her mother, who is leaving for a rest.<sup>3</sup> She learns to cook with the help of the "talking kitchen people" (Tea Kettle, Sauce Pan, Auntie Rolling Pin— to name a few), who guide her



Front cover of Jane Eyre Fryer's  
*The Mary Frances Cook Book* (1912)

through the cookbook her mother had prepared for her. The engaging storyline and delightful illustrations combine to make this one of the most sought-after cookbooks by collectors.

In *When Sue Began To Cook* (1924) by Louise Bennett Weaver and Helen Cowles LeCron, we have yet another cookbook using the story format; and like the previously cited ones, it offers up a genteel society both in manners and in table settings. These are all upper middle class families, often with a "cook" or "servant"; and in *When Sue Began To Cook* there are rather condescending references to a large neighbor family with the mother working outside the home. Ultimately, Sue befriends them, but out of a feeling of *noblesse oblige* as I read it.

*When Mother Lets Us Cook* (Constance Johnson, 1908) is beautifully written and illustrated. There is no story, just simple recipes and some helpful rules in rhyme ("Make your friends wait if there's any delay, But never your omelet, cakes or soufflé, For friends will not spoil, but the other things may"). The author's Preface says it all:

To make something that we can eat! Surely it is always delightful to do this, and never quite so nice as when it is a stormy day, and one is— well— ten or twelve years old. My aim has been to give this little book a few simple rules and receipts, which may serve as a beginning, and help small folks to have their fun without troubling mother and the cook too much; yet I trust that these directions may prove useful to them even when they are grown-up housekeepers. The selection is made with a view to economy and a child's diet.



Recipes for sweets, cakes, pastries and puddings abound in these early books. Carbohydrates are everywhere, followed closely by fats of every description. Lard and beef suet are vital ingredients of the era's cooks; and while vegetables and fruits are held to be important, they are secondary to the mainstays: boiled beef, pork, and mutton. To a large degree, these are the foods and diets of the past.

It wasn't until the mid-1900's that boys really got into the act. While the early cookbooks were not addressed exclusively to girls, still there were constant references to girls' future roles as housekeepers, and the need for them to please fathers, brothers and husbands at the table. Boys were fine for tasting and licking the bowls clean. Even in the public schools of the 1920's and 30's there was a separation, with girls going to domestic science class for instruction in cooking and sewing, while the boys went to manual training class for instruction in more manly skills!

There were exceptions, notably *The Young People's Cook Book for Home and Camp* (Inez M. McFee, 1925). This opens with mother offering to teach her baseball-star son, Tommy, to cook. He jumps at the chance, and away we go with yet another storybook cookbook, but this time focusing on a boy. The frontispiece of *Young America's Cook Book* (Home Institute, New York Herald Tribune, 1938) shows a color photograph of a teenage boy and girl ready to cook (see page 16). Neither wears an apron, yet she's in a dress, and he's wearing a well-pressed pair of slacks, a tie, and black and white wing-tipped shoes. We can reasonably assume that afterward, they'll be off to the malt shop!

*The First Book of Boys' Cooking* (Jerrold Beim, 1957) is all boy! The offerings are basic, and the table of contents uses words like "workshop", "safety", "efficiency expert". One way to interest boys in taking cooking classes in school is offered in the "Preface and Suggestions to Teachers" to *Everyday Foods* (Jessie Harris and Elisabeth Speer, 1933):

Although this book is written primarily for girls, *Everyday Foods* may be used for boys' classes, because it is a science text and not primarily a laboratory manual of cookery.<sup>4</sup>

#### New Times, New Lifestyles

Today, nearly all of the children's cookbooks are written for both boys and girls, the titles often using the inclusive word "kids".

In response to technological advances, cookbooks now refer to "refrigerators" in place of "ice boxes". And the introduction of the microwave oven prompted the writing of a number of cookbooks to accommodate that new technology. *Kids' Microwave Cookbook* (Sally Murphy Morris, 1991) is an excellent soft-cover for the beginner as well as for the more experienced youngster. An effort urging the U.S. to adopt the metric system of measurement led to the publication of children's cookbooks employing that system. *Metric Cooking for Beginners* (Ginevera Barta, 1978) is one of them.

Our present-day concerns for safe, healthy ingredients and recipes are also being reflected in the children's cookbooks being written today. *Growing Up Slim* (Polly Bolian, 1971) was one of the first to tackle the weight problems of teens. *Heart Smart Kids Cookbook* (Henry Ford Health System, 2000), published by the *Detroit Free Press* using their Yak character, speaks to the need for exercise and calorie control in building a healthy body. Several other cookbooks promote this concept. *The Healthy Body Cookbook* (Joan D'Amico and Karen Eich Drummond, 1999) offers activities and recipes to this end. *The Teen's Vegetarian Cookbook* (Judy Krizmanic, 1999) deals with yet another aspect of diet.

Cookbooks with literary connections are always in demand: *The Little House Cookbook*, *The Wizard of Oz Cook Book*, *The Narnia Cookbook*, *The Mary Poppins Cookbook*, *Anne of Green Gables Cookbook*. Even Mother Goose has cookbooks. The literature list is endless.

Children's interests are often reflected in the themes of the cookbooks. Name a kid who's not a fan of comic strips, cartoons and super heroes. You can't! And that's why there are *The Super Heroes Super Healthy Cookbook*, *The Mickey Mouse Cookbook*, and *The Peanuts Cookbook* featuring Charlie Brown. There are even three cookbooks based on the Star Wars movies, one titled *Wookiee Cookie Cookbook*.

continued on next page



Above: an illustration from the page on "Hot Breads" from Clara Ingram Judson's *Child Life Cook Book* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1926)

# HISTORICAL TRENDS *continued from page 15*



**Frontispiece of *Young America's Cook Book*  
(Home Institute, New York Herald Tribune, 1938)**

The Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Campfire Girls are all represented with cookbooks of their own, and there are cookbooks that serve the interests of unaffiliated young campers, as well. *Jack Knife Cookery*, *Cooking Out-of-Doors* and *Cooking on a Stick* are examples of this.

In recent years, food celebrities have lent their names and talents to the field. Emeril Lagasse authored three: *There's a Chef in My Soup* (2002), *There's a Chef in My Family* (2004), and *There's a Chef in My World* (2006). These books offer basic fare, good instructions, and useful and interesting information. Rachael Ray's 2004 *Cooking Rocks! 30 Minute Meals for Kids* is "cool". The recipes are on the light side, with the book divided into age sections. The colors are bright—the graphics in-your-face—and it is a fun book. In Alice Waters's *Fanny at Chez Panisse*, Alice's daughter Fanny narrates her experiences at the famous Berkeley, CA restaurant. Excellent recipes follow in the second half, and taken together with the narration and the illustrations, they make it one very sophisticated volume.

We live in a multicultural world, and it's reflected in today's children's cookbooks. There are cookbook series with titles like *Cooking the Caribbean Way*, *Cooking the Russian Way*, and *A Taste of Italy*. There are cookbooks issued through UNICEF that feature cooking from around the world (*The Little Cooks* and *Many Friends Cooking*). Kathleen Bart has a splendid book, *Global Gourmet* (2003). The *Kids' Kosher Cookbook* (Miriam Zakon, 1991), *The African-American Heritage Cookbook*

(Vanessa Roberts Parham, 1993), and *The Asian Cookbook for Juniors and Beginners* (Kay Shimizu, 1973) are titles illustrating the diversification found in today's children's cookbooks. Additionally, there are books to help kids celebrate the Christmas, Passover, and Kwanzaa holidays and one with the intriguing title *Tasty Bible Stories: A Menu of Tales and Matching Recipes* (Tami Wilzig, 2003).

There have been many changes in children's cookbooks since the publication of Ms. Kirkland's *Six Little Cooks*, changes that reflected the times and lifestyles in which they were written. The roles to which women today can aspire go far beyond just those of domesticity. There has been a change in children and the family since the young ladies held forth in *When Sue Began to Cook*. Children's cookbooks are now designed to appeal to every child, not just to those of privilege.

We are more focused on the quality and safety of ingredients, food storage and food preparation; healthy food and healthy eating are primary concerns today. The children's interests are wider, and their lives seem busier than those of 75 or 100 years ago. The lifestyle is less formal, and we don't have time for the type of food preparation and dining that we once had. We don't seem to be the same genteel society about which, and to which, the earlier authors wrote.

It's not just the food industry that has experienced technological change. There have been changes in publishing, as well: innovations regarding color and graphics, often resulting in eye-popping presentations. The kids seem to love them, and the themes are so varied that there is something for everyone. ■

## Endnotes

1. Mrs. Kirkland also authored *Dora's Housekeeping* (1877), *Speech and Manners for Home and School* (1883), and two important children's history books: *A Little History of Italy* (1878) and *A Little History of France* (1896). She spent a part of her childhood in Detroit, where her father operated a private school for girls, and later in Pinckney, MI.
2. "Cooking-school cooking" was probably a reference to vocational training schools.
3. Interestingly, there is no explanation for her "rest".
4. Pretty slick; but I wonder if it worked.

## EPHEMERA *continued from page 13*

*Moo Cooks With You!: Snacks Kids Can Make* (Atlanta: Southeast United Dairy Association, 1993) offers recipes using milk, yogurt and ice cream; *Kellogg's Cooking with Your Kids* (1997) suggests safety in the kitchen along with recipes; *McDonald's World Cup Soccer and Activity Fold-Out* (1998) has health tips, mazes, and exercises.

While they have changed with society, production costs, and consumer interests, the children's materials are a treasure trove. Their appeal to children and adults makes them an integral and valuable part of the history that is revealed by the ephemera collection. ■

# THE SOURCES AND USES OF CHILDREN'S COOKBOOKS

by Ann A. Hertzler

*Nutritionist and dietician Ann Hertzler, Ph.D., RD, LDN, is a Professor Emeritus at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Blacksburg, VA) and currently resides in Kure Beach, NC. During her years at Virginia Tech, she also served as a Cooperative Extension Specialist, established the Ann Hertzler Children's Cookbook Collection (part of the Library Special Collections), and helped found the Peacock-Harper Culinary History Committee. Dr. Hertzler is a new member of the Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C. (CHoW) and a new subscriber to Repast.*

Cookbooks and related literature can play an important role in children's early food choices and their resulting growth, health, and attitudes. Cookbooks for or about children therefore merit increased attention and study. Their number has multiplied greatly since their inception in the late 1800's. In an earlier article<sup>1</sup>, I divided this subject into historic periods in order to identify trends in the nutrition messages, cultural meanings, and themes and topics of these books. Such themes include the teaching of abstract concepts such as size, shape, number, or alphabet letters; the teaching of social values such as table manners and family interactions; the introduction of cultural choices through ethnic cookbooks; etc. Children's cookbooks can also be classified by cooking techniques (microwave, food processor, etc.), by foodstuffs (breads, vegetables, desserts), and many other areas of interest.

Jan Longone has stated that very little of the relevant literature with regard to children's cookbooks has been studied or classified.<sup>2</sup> How do adults teach children to cook? What do children actually learn from cookbooks? Because of the diversity of people writing cookbooks, different aims or objectives develop for the children based on the author's viewpoint. In this article, I want to describe some examples of these objectives and the resulting uses of these books.

**Nutritionists** write cookbooks to teach providers (preschool staff), families (parents), and their children to make food choices for health and wellness. They develop recipes and educational materials for each level of learning. Nitrogen and carbon were the focus of the earliest nutrition guidelines; Food Groups were added in the 1900's to highlight the vitamin, mineral, and protein content of various foods—milk, vegetables, fruits, etc.; and eventually, Dietary Guideline restrictions were put forward. These scientific principles have informed children's feeding guidelines and sample recipes from government agencies. More recently, the guidelines have also been used by nutritionists in university extension programs to develop web sites recommending cookbooks and storybooks supporting certain nutritional messages.

Nutritionists have also been concerned with the kitchen safety of children. Tasks should be appropriate to children's levels of muscular development, and should not call on them to work with equipment that is hot, heavy, sharp, or electrically

hazardous. Muscle skills start with those involving large muscles (scrubbing potatoes and tearing greens) and progress to fine motor skills (beating with a mechanical egg beater).<sup>3</sup> At the same time that preschoolers are learning food preparation skills, they can learn about other important everyday skills such as "Cart Smart Food Choices", "Germ Squirm—Food Safety", and "Hurts and Hazards in the Kitchen".<sup>4</sup>

**Child Development Specialists** use cookbooks as part of considering what kind of diversity in programming will allow children to learn about the world around them. They incorporate customs and celebrations of the child's family and community; include majority and minority cultures in similar positions; and avoid stereotyping by featuring cultures in daily living and not just at special times (e.g., Indians at Thanksgiving). Featuring cultures just at celebrations and parties is an inappropriate focus known as Cultural Tourism. It can introduce misconceptions of ethnic groups and reinforce ethnic stereotypes. By learning about different cultures in all kinds of food routines and situations, children learn about their own culture, too.

**Family Life Specialists** look at cookbooks from the point of view of family interactions. As families and gender roles change, how will the content and messages of cookbooks change, and who will be the audiences? How long will girls remain "mother's little helpers" happily waiting on the men of the family? Projects that involve all family members avoid the reinforcing of stereotypes, giving each member the chance to develop food and nutrition skills and to learn different possible roles: talking, planning, shopping, preparing food, visiting places where food comes from. By working together in the kitchen, family members exchange ideas and become sensitive to different ways of doing things and different points of view. How do taste, pleasure, and appreciation of food fit into the cooking experience? What does each family member need to know about cooking in order to make food choices for health and wellness? All family members can learn kitchen skills and appropriate food choices by cooking with the family, and some may even be inspired to develop careers as cooking professionals.

**Teachers** write cookbooks using food and nutrition concepts to teach math and reading skills. For example, pieces of candy or cereal can be counted to develop addition and subtraction concepts. Cutting cakes or breaking sectioned candy bars apart can be used to study fractions. But it is also fun to make numbers or alphabet letters with pancake dough, pretzel dough, or other foods. Other skills relevant to mathematics can be learned by measuring amounts for recipes, and by learning what to do first, second, and third in a cooking procedure.

Language arts can be learned by reading pictures, making "picture shopping lists", and naming colors, shapes, and sizes. Interviewing preschoolers about what they had to eat is a particularly good way to exercise their counting and naming skills.<sup>5</sup> Some grownups marvel if a two-year-old can name ravioli but not orange juice, but that is what would be expected in a family that eats ravioli frequently during the week but never has orange juice. The three-year-old can name foods served daily (e.g., milk) and count one or two foods. The five-year-old can begin to classify foods by food groups, and name foods in different forms and different preparation methods. Such food habit information told by a preschooler can give a general sense

*continued on next page*



## SOURCES AND USES *continued from previous page*

of nutrient intake and help the nutritionist identify culturally-defined food patterns. In this way, professionals become aware of family foodways and do not preach from the teacher's own point of view of food choices. Educators have often been accused of choosing recipes from other ethnic groups without considering the broader foodways and culture of that group.

It is still difficult to find children's cookbooks developed for those with special needs. This would include handicapped children—those with hearing or sight impairments or other physical disabilities; children speaking a language other than English; and children living in dysfunctional families. The survival skills required by such children represent new challenges for authors of children's cookbooks and storybooks that meet the needs of families and children.

**Business and industry** professionals develop cookbooks in order to "sell" new products in the marketplace based on the newest food technology. Early cookbooks showed how to make cookies, cakes and other foods with products that have now become quite refined. Recipes nowadays often combine package mixes and canned goods for easy mixing and popping into a temperature-controlled oven. Today's food market requires food knowledge on "sugar free", "fat free", "reduced sodium", and much other nutrient information. Many skills are needed to read labels, identify ingredients, and interpret recommendations.

**Family caregivers**, especially mothers, write cookbooks for children that are fun, usually leading to either (1) foods presented as identifiable objects (faces, candles, animals, pumpkins), or (2) party foods typically higher in fat, sugar, and sodium content, no matter the plethora of nutrition choices available. This raises the question, why is the concept of fun associated with foods on the restricted food list, and not with foods from the groups rich in vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients? Is there a way that fun can be tied to family togetherness, providing important life skills in the marketplace and in the kitchen and with the many aspects associated with everyday food choices for nutrition and wellness?

**Cultural historians** look at children's cookbooks to track messages of the times. The words and pictures in these books tell much about geography, history, food, dress, and the expected or "proper" roles of various family members. Some storybooks are without words, designed for the child to tell the story about the food, the recipe, and the event in the picture. Children's cookbooks in the United States started with a focus on English culture (kudos to Hannah Glasse and the English settlers), expanded to European cultures, and are currently developing into a multicultural focus with cross-cultural sensitivity to many ethnic groups. Historians should also ask how children's cookbooks and storybooks reach families. Do the families who buy cookbooks for their children tend to be well-to-do? Single-parent? Low-income? Of different ethnicity?

Cookbooks and storybooks for children are just one medium. Food messages that reach children also appear in magazines, newspapers, broadcast media, food packages, and in billboards and other forms of advertising. These more "hidden" materials can also be called ephemera. Each of these media provides an opportunity to develop skills, whether the family is riding together in the car, traveling by plane, at home watching TV, or sitting at the breakfast table.

A children's culinary collection provides a marvelous way for families or professionals to begin exploring food and history. ■

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2. See pp. 15-25, 31 in James H. Dorman, *The People Called Cajuns: An Introduction to an Ethnohistory* (Lafayette, LA: Univ. of Southwestern Louisiana, 1983).
3. Terri Pischoff Wuerthner, "First You Make a Roux", *Gastronomica* 6:4 (Fall 2006), pp. 64-68.
4. Kim Severson, "'Faerie Folk' Strike Back with Fritters", *New York Times*, December 6, 2006.
5. John F. Mariani, *The Dictionary of American Food and Drink*, Revised edition (New York: Hearst Books, 1994), p. 52 s.v. "cala".
6. See pp. 81-82, 85 in Bethany Ewald Bultman, "Who Saved Jambalaya?", *Petits Propos Culinaires* 80 (March 2006), pp. 79-92.
7. This point forms the theme of Judith A. Carney's *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 2001), which focuses especially on South Carolina.
8. Bultman, p. 82.
9. See p. 152 in Amanda Watson Schnetzer, "Cajun and Creole Food", in Andrew F. Smith, ed., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 150-157.
10. *Oxford American*, p. 58.
11. Schnetzer, p. 152.
12. Edgar Rose, "The Pecan: America's Sweet Nut", *Repat* 22:3 (Summer 2006), pp. 6ff., and addendum in 22:4 (Fall 2006), p. 19.
13. Schnetzer, p. 156.
14. An extensive and interesting discussion of this tradition is included in Prosper Montagné, *Larousse Gastronomique* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1961), pp. 204-205 s.v. "cakes and small cakes".
15. See p. 146 in Malcolm Comeaux, "Louisiana's Acadians: The Environmental Impact", in Glenn R. Conrad, *The Cajuns: Essays on Their History and Culture*, Second edition (Lafayette, LA: Univ. of Southwestern Louisiana, 1978), pp. 142-160.
16. *Oxford American*, p. 9.
17. Bultman, p. 83.
18. Schnetzer, p. 153.
19. This process is described in Dorman, pp. 25-29; and Comeaux, pp. 146-151. Cane had been introduced to Louisiana from St.-Domingue in 1751, but only in 1795 was Louisiana sugar first successfully granulated and thus made commercially viable.
20. Rose.
21. These customs are detailed in Nancy Tregre Wilson, *Louisiana's Italians: Food, Recipes, and Folkways* (Gretna, LA: Pelican, 2005).
22. Pableaux Johnson, "Burnt Offering", *Saveur* 91 (March 2006), p. 30.

# MORSELS & TIDBITS

CHAA founding member **Jan Longone** has announced an upcoming exhibit that she is curating at the UM Clements Library in conjunction with the Second Biennial Symposium on American Culinary History (see page 3). The free public exhibit, "A to Z: An Alphabet of Regional and Ethnic American Culinary Traditions", will be on display Mar. 26 – Jun. 1, 2007. We also want to mention here some of the interesting presentations that Jan has given recently. On Nov. 6, 2006, she spoke at Central Michigan University on "The History of Michigan Cookbooks", in conjunction with the opening of an exhibit of Michigan cookbooks that were donated to CMU by collector Maureen Hathaway. A week later, on Nov. 13, Jan spoke on "Foods of the Founding Fathers" before the Ann Arbor Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. And on Jan. 20, she gave a major lecture, "What Is a New Orleans Cookbook?", at a one-day symposium sponsored by the Historic Collection of New Orleans.

CHAA member **Yvonne Lockwood**, Curator of Folklife at the Michigan State University Museum, spoke at last year's meeting of the Association for the Study of Food and Society (ASFS). This annual conference was held at Boston University on Jun. 7-11, 2006, with the theme "Place, Taste, and Sustenance: The Social Spaces of Food and Agriculture". In her talk, entitled "The Fish That Caught the Man", Yvonne focused on the Bay Port (Michigan) Fish Sandwich Festival and issues of culinary tourism, reflecting her long period of fieldwork, interviews, and friendship with the family responsible for this festival. (She plans to write about this work for our Winter 2008 issue.) Yvonne and husband/ UM anthropologist/ fellow CHAA member **Bill Lockwood** are continuing to investigate Finnish-American and Bosnian-American foodways, and have given preliminary talks on that research.

Yvonne Lockwood has also organized a Michigan Foodways exhibit to accompany the Smithsonian's "Key Ingredients" exhibit, as described in this column in Spring 2006. Supported by the Michigan Humanities Council, the exhibit will open in Chelsea on May 25 to begin a six-town, nine-month tour through the state. Fundraising events include a Michigan-theme four-course dinner on Mar. 19 at the Common Grill in Chelsea (with piano boogie and blues by Mark Lincoln Braun, "Mr. B"), and the Michigan Foodways Chef Challenge, an "Iron Chef"-style competition on Apr. 21 at Schoolcraft College in Livonia. Information and tickets can be accessed at <http://www.michiganhumanities.org>

The Dec. 25, 2006 issue of *U.S. News & World Report* included a brief article by **Linda Kulman**, "Write Your Family Cookbook", on the growing popularity of this activity. The article included comments from, among others, CHAA members **Pat Cornett** and **Jan Longone**. Pat, who has taught classes about making family cookbooks, said that the best of them reflect family history. Jan noted that the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976 prompted a resurgence of interest in family history, still being felt today.

Chef **Alex Young** and Sous Chef **Julio Vanderpool** have continued to prepare historically inspired, multi-course theme meals on special evenings at Zingerman's Roadhouse in Ann

Arbor. Most recently, on Dec. 31 (New Year's eve), there was a fine Jeffersonian meal based on notes from Monticello; on Jan. 16 (the day after MLK Day), an African-American dinner based on Malinda Russell's *A Domestic Cook Book* (Paw Paw, MI, 1866) and Abby Fisher's *What Mrs Fisher Knows About Old Southern Cooking* (San Francisco, 1881); and on Feb. 20 (Mardi Gras), "Sicilian Creole in the Crescent City" featured chicken *saltimbocca* and jambalaya-stuffed eggplant. To be kept apprised of upcoming theme meals, contact Christine Darragh at [cdarragh@zingermans.com](mailto:cdarragh@zingermans.com).

The University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology has just published its third monograph from UM anthropologist **Jeffrey R. Parsons** concerning the puzzle of ancient Aztec food production in the marshlands of central Mexico. His new work is entitled *The Last Pescadores of Chimalhuacán, Mexico*, which joins *The Last Saltmakers of Nexquipayac, Mexico* (2001) and *Maguey Utilization in Highland Central Mexico* (1990). Dr. Parsons has presented talks to CHAA on each of these three topics. All three publications can be purchased directly from the Museum or through Amazon.com.

An important resource for culinary historians, the 13-volume *Middle English Dictionary*, is now accessible free online at <http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/m/med>. CHAA member **Robert E. Lewis**, a professor of English at the Univ. of Michigan, was Editor in Chief of this massive scholarly project during its final years (1982-2003). The digitization effort itself was led by **John P. Wilkin**, head of Digital Library Production Services at the UM Library.

**Natalie Foreman**, Editorial Assistant at McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers (Jefferson, NC), invites prospective culinary-history authors to send in proposals regarding serious book-length works. For an overview of the publisher and its titles, visit [www.mcfarlandpub.com](http://www.mcfarlandpub.com). Natalie may be contacted directly at [nforeman@mcfarlandpub.com](mailto:nforeman@mcfarlandpub.com).

The 22<sup>nd</sup> **Leeds Symposium** on Food History and Traditions will be held on Apr. 21, 2007 at the Friends Meeting House, Friargate, York, England. This year's theme is "A Variety of Feasts". Historically, feasts were held not just to allay hunger, but also to make statements to both participants and onlookers. Starting from a particular historical feast, each speaker will examine its implications and social context. For further information, visit <http://www.historicfood.com/leeds.htm>.

The 26<sup>th</sup> **Oxford Symposium** on Food and Cookery will be held on Sept. 8-9, 2007 at St Catherine's College, Oxford, England. This year's theme is "Food & Morality", or how habits of consumption invite us to confront issues of pleasure, quality, safety, the environment, and justice. For further information, visit <http://www.oxfordsymposium.org.uk>.

**On the Back-burner:** We invite ideas and submissions for these planned future theme-issues of *Repast*: Foods of the American Heartland (Spring 2007); Foods of the American South (Summer 2007); The Revival of Native American Cooking (Fall 2007); Fairs, Festivals, and Cook-offs (Winter 2008). 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, March 18, 2007

Charles A. Baker-Clark, Asst. Professor and Chair,  
Department of Hospitality and Tourism Mgmt.,  
Grand Valley State University,  
“Profiles from the Kitchen: What Great Cooks  
Have Taught Us about Ourselves and Our Food”

Sunday, April 15, 2007

Sherrie A. Inness, Professor of English,  
Miami University of Ohio,  
“Glamour Torte and Pink Perfection Peppermint Cake:  
Women, Creativity, and Convenience Foods in the 1950’s”

Friday, May 18 - Sunday, May 20

Second Biennial Symposium on American Culinary  
History – “Regional and Ethnic Traditions”  
The Longone Center for American Culinary Research  
William L. Clements Library,  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
(see page 3 for more information)

Sunday, July 29, 2007

4-7 p.m., Earhart Village Clubhouse  
(835 Greenhills Drive, Ann Arbor)  
CHAA annual participatory theme picnic  
(details TBA)

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