Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

Our first issue...

This is the first issue of the official publication of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor. It will be published three times a year: January, June, and September. Besides announcements of future meetings and reports of past meetings of the group, it also contains feature articles, book reviews, a calendar of upcoming events of culinary interest, culinary bibliographies, and reports of food-related travel, food festivals and other special events.

If you would like to contribute articles or have information to place in the calendar or other regular features, send them to CHAA Newsletter, c/o Susan Fussell, 316 Westwood Avenue, Ann Arbor, MI 48103.

Editorial Staff

Editor: Pat Carnett
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1987 Basil Festival

The nationally-known Basil Festival in Parma, Michigan will be held Sunday, August 2, 12-6 pm. Started in 1982 by Marilyn Hampstead, the Festival is so popular that reservations are required. The fee is $20 per person ($15 for those over 65 and for children 5-10). The deadline is July 15. About 700 people can be accommodated at Fox Hill Farm, a working herb farm that grows over 350 varieties of herbs. Parma is about halfway between Kalamazoo and Ann Arbor, directly off I-94 (Exit 130).

Festival events include seminars, nature walks, strolling musicians, and demonstration classes. The Basil Buffet, included in the entry fee, features foods prepared at the farm by volunteers. One of the most popular events is the Pasto Challenge, a cooking competition for amateurs only ($15 advance registration fee.) The Amazing Basil Maze is a 40' by 40' garden maze grown entirely of different varieties of basil. It is one of six garden designs featured in Marilyn Hampstead's The Basil Book, for sale, along with other herb books, at the Festival. Reservations should be sent to Fox Hill Farm, 434 W. Michigan Ave., Parma, MI 49269, (517) 531-3179.

Michigan Cookbooks and Recipes

130 Years of Culinary History

As early as 1842 a cookbook was written specifically for Michiganders and other midwesterners, for it was in that year that Mrs. Philomelia Ann Maria Hardin wrote Everybody's Cook and Receipt Book; But More Specifically Designed for Buckeyes, Hoosiers, Wolverines, Comracker,s, Suckers, and All Who Wish to Live With the Present Time (Sanford & Co., Cleveland).

It was not until 14 years later however, that the first cookbook known to have been printed in Michigan appeared. This was Recipes, a 16 page pamphlet written by A. W. Chase of Ann Arbor and published in Detroit in 1856. From a humble first edition of one thousand pamphlets, no copy of which is known to exist, there grew a major publishing industry which issued uncounted numbers of Dr. Chase's works, perhaps Michigan's single greatest contribution to American cookbook history.

By 1865, the small pamphlet was in its twenty-sixth edition and had expanded into a gilt-embossed, leather-bound book of 384 pages. This edition, now entitled Dr. Chase's Recipes for Merchants, Grocers, Saloon-Keepers, Physicians, Druggists, Tanners, Shoe Makers, Harness Makers, Painters, Jewelers, Blacksmiths, Tinners, Gunsmiths, Farriers, Barbers, Bakers, Dyers, Renovators, Farmers, and Families Generally .... was published at the author's new printing plant, located in a building which still stands at the corner of Main and Miller in Ann Arbor.

Dr. Chase's Recipes Carried Across Prairies

By 1870 more than half a million copies of Recipes had been sold; by the turn of the century, well over a million copies, in several languages, were in the hands of Americans and Canadians. Dr. Chase's books were carried across the prairies by thousands of settlers, and in some years of the nineteenth century, sales of Recipes were second only to those of the Bible. Variations of Dr. Chase's works were in print as late as the 1920's, and there have been reprints within the last decade.

Perhaps the second major Michigan contribution to American cookbook history emanated from the Kellogg

see Cookbooks, page 2

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Cookbooks, from page 1

Sanitarium and its attendant schools of health food purveyors in Battle Creek. Prior to the twentieth century, a dozen health, cereal, and vegetarian-related books and pamphlets had been published, with such titles as The Health Reformer's Progressive Cookbook and Kitchen Guide (1870), The Home Treasure (1890), and Science in the Kitchen (1892). Those who think that "organic" and "health" food stores and products are a recent phenomenon have only to look at the mid-twentieth century pamphlets issued by the Battle Creek Health Food Company and other cereal manufacturers. These booklets suggest using meat stretchers and meat protein substitutes and offer recipes for using such products as "protose," "nuttolene," and "savita."

These cereal and health food pamphlets are but one example of the many advertising ephemera issued by Michigan businesses and industries, which might be considered a third major contribution to culinary literature. The techniques of advertising have been and still are responsible for large numbers of Michigan cookbooks. An example of their diversity can be gauged from the following selected titles: The Leonard Cookbook (Leonard Furniture Co., Grand Rapids 1895), The Dainty Dutch Delicacy (Holland Rusk Co., ca 1905), Good Things to Eat with Henkel's Flour (Commercial Milling Co., Detroit 1930), and Beans (Michigan Bean Commission, Lansing 1970).

Michigan Charity Cookbooks

A fourth Michigan contribution is the many and diverse collections of recipes issued by charitable organizations to raise funds for their favorite causes. These "charity cookbooks" are a legacy of the Civil War. By World War I Michigan women had produced more than one hundred such books. The earliest recorded charity cookbook published in Michigan is the 1871 The Grand Rapids Receipt Book, compiled by the Ladies of the Congregational Church, Containing Many Choice and Carefully Tested Receipts, of Practical Value to Every Housekeeper. Thousands of charity cookbooks have been published in Michigan since that time, among them the Spicy Recipe Book by a Young Ladies Missionary Society (Detroit 1882); What the Baptist Brethren Eat and How the Sisters Serve It (Port Huron 1889); and Total Abstinence Recipes (Baptist Church, Muskegon 1890).

The charity cookbooks also offer a picture of Michigan's diverse ethnic makeup. There are books from the following groups: American Indian, Black, German, Jewish, Finnish, Dutch, Chinese, Armenian, Greek, Chaldean, Lebanese, Polish, Dutch, and French, among others.

The Ford Times

A fifth major Michigan contribution to American cookery literature is much more modern and is not, in reality, about Michigan cooking; simply the books are published in Michigan and are associated with the State's automobile industry in the minds of millions of its customers. These are the Ford Times Cookbooks whose drawings, travel hints and recipes have endeared them to travellers for the past 30 years.

The last major category of Michigan cookbooks is those absolutely warm and wonderful novels, reminiscences and memoirs-cum-recipes that seem to evoke Michigan's past and the life of earlier, simpler days. These include works by Delia Lutes such as Home Grown Millbook, and The Country Kitchen. Her stories of growing up near Adrian can still bring tears to the eyes of many a Michigander. Long-time readers of the Detroit News will remember the writings and recipes of Lucy and Sidney Corbett. Stories of their life and culinary adventures are lovingly recorded in two books: Pot Shots from a Grosse Ile Kitchen and Long Windows, both handsomely illustrated by William Thomas Woodward. The recipes, from Apple Pan Dowdy to Welneys with Kraut, and the stories of the Island and its people, past and present, add still another dimension to our knowledge of life in Michigan.

One early cookbook which I have never seen but would like to is A Choice Fragment of What Mother-in-Law Knows about Cooking; Or, Many a Dime Saved. This 24-page pamphlet was compiled by "two ladies of much experience both in cooking and economy" and published in Detroit by W. A. Scripps in 1875.

Jan Longone

Member Solomon Receives Scholarship

CHA member Charlie Solomon, chef at Escottier restaurant in Ann Arbor, has received one of 14 scholarships awarded this year by the International Association of Cooking Professionals. Winners are chosen from applications describing their backgrounds and reasons for use of the scholarship. Charlie chose to spend two weeks in April studying with Prue Leith, owner of Leith's Fine Food, a restaurant and catering business in London. Before coming to Ann Arbor, Charlie worked for several restaurants in East Lansing, including Beggar's Banquet. He has promised a full report of his experience for the Newsletter.
France before the Fork

Report on the April, 1987 Meeting

At the April 19, 1987 meeting, Professor Guy Mermier gave a witty, erudite talk on French gastronomy in the Middle Ages. Dr. Mermier, Chairman of the French Department and Director of the Medieval and Renaissance Collegium at the University of Michigan, is an authority in this area, currently writing an encyclopedia of medieval French gastronomy. He illustrated his talk with scenes from tapestries, herbals, woodcuts, and the Book of Hours, showing food preparation in the barnyards, fields, and kitchens of the Middle Ages.

Feast or Famine

Professor Mermier set the scene for his talk by describing the basic living conditions of medieval France. Famine was common during this period. The food supply was dependent on the weather, and separate regions were quite isolated so that one area of the country might be prosperous while another region was starving. Although not all historians would agree, Professor Mermier maintained that the poor in the Middle Ages ate better than the wealthy. The peasant who lived on a farm was closer to a fresh food supply than the nobility in the castles. Farmers could kill and eat their livestock while the meat was still fresh.

Medieval food was probably not very appetizing by modern standards. Because of the lack of refrigeration, food was dried or preserved with salt and heavily spiced. The salt holder was an essential item on the medieval table. Spices such as pepper and cinnamon were used to disguise the smell and taste of rotten food, or were burned as incense to mask the stench of rotten meat. In addition, most foods were boiled for hours over an open fire.

Spoons Were a Luxury

The basic eating utensil before the fourteenth century was the knife. Forks were not introduced until later, and spoons were rare luxuries used only by the nobility. Food was eaten with the fingers, and bowls and cups were shared. Instead of plates, a flat, unleavened bread called soupe was used for holding food. The bread

see Medieval Gastronomy, page 4

The Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor, founded in 1983 by Jan Longone and friends, is a group of scholars, cooks, food writers, nutritionists, collectors, students, and others interested in the study of culinary history and gastronomy. Groups with similar interests exist in Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. The group meets September through May from 7 to 9 p.m. on the third Sunday of the month. Invited speakers share their expertise on topics related to culinary history and gastronomy. Some of the 1986-87 topics were:

Medieval Gastronomy
The English Tea
Philippine Cuisine
Garlic

Guy Mermier
Julie Lewis
Mila Simmons
Marti Sousanis

Membership dues are $15.00 a year for one person or $20.00 for a couple. Included with your dues is a subscription to the Newsletter, published three times a year. If you cannot attend meetings, but would like to receive the Newsletter, a year's subscription is $7.50.
Medieval Gastronomy, from page 3

soaked up the meat juices and was eaten as part of the meal. The most common serving utensil was a large, flat board called a *tranchoir* used to carry meat.

There was a close relationship between medieval medicine and cookery. Herbs served both medicinal and culinary purposes. The first school of medicine in France at Montpellier, Provence, has some of the earliest records of French gastronomy as well as receipts intended for medical uses.

Books on Medieval History

After Professor Mermier's talk, Jan Longone talked briefly about the books on medieval gastronomy she had brought from her collection at the Wine and Food Library. Jan has provided a brief annotated bibliography of these books (see opposite column), many of which are available in modern reprints.

Katie Curtis and Joann and Ned Chalat provided the food to complement Professor Mermier's talk. Katie was inspired by the Middle Age's pervasive use of spices to create a savory meat pie. In keeping with medieval tradition, we ate with our fingers -- or tried to. The Chalats brought tarts, oranges, and dates, and served May wine with strawberries and violets. We all agreed that no one in the Middle Ages -- not even kings and nobles -- ate so well as we did. If you would like recipes for the foods served at the April 19 meeting, contact Katie Curtis, 820 Sylvan, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, 313-668-7770; and Joann Chalat, 677 Middlesex, Grosse Pointe, MI 48230, 313-821-1280.

Pat Cornett

Bibliography of Medieval Gastronomy

This is a selected list of books on the medieval period brought to the April 1987 meeting by Jan Longone. For more information, contact Jan at the Wine and Food Library, 1207 Madison, Ann Arbor, MI 48103, 313-663-4894.


*Petits Propos Culinaires*. All issues. Small but interesting periodical for culinary historians, researchers.
Michigan on the Mall

Washington's Smithsonian Institution Features Michigan in Folklife Festival

What do muskrat, cherry pie, and pasty have in common? You have an opportunity to find out at the American Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C., June 24-28 and July 1-5.

The American Folklife Festival is an annual event coordinated by the Smithsonian Institution Office of Folklife Programs and the National Park Service. Each year the traditions of one state are the focus of this festival; this year the spotlight is on Michigan to coincide with the state's sesquicentennial.

In preparation for the festival, 13 fieldworkers -- folklorists, anthropologists, ethnomusicologists -- conducted research throughout the state to identify tradition bearers, to document their knowledge and skills, and to record information about their communities' history and culture. Much of the local coordination and consultation has been directed through the Michigan Traditional Arts Program at Michigan State University Museum.

Autoworkers and Agriculture

From the many, many tradition bearers who were identified, more than one hundred have been invited to present their communities' cultural traditions in Washington. The invited participants represent the traditions of various occupational, ethnic, and regional groups, including the culture of autoworkers and agriculture; trapping, fishing, and river boat building; rag rug weaving, Afro-American quilting and crocheting, and Ukrainian embroidery; Michigan-style fiddling, polka, gospel, blues, Finnish American dance music, tamburitza, and Yemeni dance; and many more examples of Michigan's rich cultural tradition.

Of special interest to our readers is that aspect of folklife referred to as foodways. Traditional foods are an essential component of folklife, and they will be demonstrated, discussed, and even tasted. The terms "traditional" foods and foodways mean those skills and knowledge about food preparation and presentation that are passed on informally from one individual to another and one generation to another without reference to an instruction manual. In southeast Michigan, for example, one "just knows" how to prepare muskrat, because it is part and parcel of the local culture.

Visitors Can Experience Food Traditions

As a museum, the Smithsonian Institution's primary goals are education and conservation. This festival serves both. Visitors to the festival do not merely walk through, nor are the tradition bearers and their traditions merely on display. Rather, each tradition is demonstrated and discussed. The traditional cooks talk about themselves and their communities, about their "art," and even about their perception of the state of the world. Visitors learn about a culture that maintains a particular food, rather than just about the food stuff and its ingredients. The foodways, in other words, are presented in a manner more akin to a workshop than a step-by-step food demonstration.

Visitors will learn about black cooking traditions of rural Western Michigan. In contrast to the foodways of this very old community, whose ancestors settled in Michigan at the time of the Civil War, another, more southern Afro-American style of food preparation and fish canning will also be presented.

Fish Cookery in Michigan History

Fish plays an important role in Michigan cookery, especially around the many lakes and along the numerous rivers of the state. There are methods of cooking and eating fish that many of us have not experienced, because these traditions are localized or specific to certain ways of life. For example, fishing guides from inland rivers will demonstrate the manner in which they prepare fish for their patrons over an open fire along river banks. Smoking fish is a very old method of preservation, and the process will be demonstrated according to various traditions: historic and contemporary Native American methods, a converted refrigerator and 50-gallon drum, and the common portable backyard barbecue. In addition, fishermen will share information with visitors about other techniques of fish preparation and presentation.

Although the foods of all of Michigan's ethnic cultures will not be presented, visitors will be able to learn...
about Mexican American spices and sauces from western Michigan, Lebanese everyday and festive foods from Dearborn, Finnish American and Cornish American specialties from the Upper Peninsula, and muskrat from the French culture of southeast Michigan.

Many Michiganders know pasties are the specialty of the Upper Peninsula, but few are aware of their Cornish origin or their appropriation by Finns who settled the same area. This is an interesting story of multi-ethnic Michigan that will be told at the festival. Both versions of pasty will be demonstrated by traditional cooks of these communities.

Musk rat, like pasty, is much more than just nourishment. It is also a very important cultural symbol of Michigan's southeastern region. The history and culture associated with muskrat will be an important component of the festival, along with the trapping, skinning, preparation, and presentation of this tasty morsel.

If you cannot be in Washington, D.C., you have another chance to experience Michigan culture. The Michigan Festival, August 21-30, will present the same traditions and tradition bearers in East Lansing on the Michigan State University campus. This is an opportunity to enjoy the best of Michigan culinary tradition. For more information, contact Yvonne Lockwood, Michigan Traditional Arts Program, Michigan State University Museum, East Lansing, MI, 517-355-2370.

Yvonne Lockwood

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**Book Review**

**Michigan's Frontier Foods Come Alive in**

**The Land of the Crooked Tree**

U. P. Hedrick's *The Land of the Crooked Tree*, originally published in 1948 and reprinted by the Wayne State University Press in 1986, has been called one of the best first-hand accounts of pioneer life in northern Michigan. Hedrick's family settled on the northern shore of Lake Michigan at Little Traverse Bay, just after it was opened for homesteading in the early 1870's. For the next 15 years, the family hewed and hacked a farm out of the virgin forest, near Harbor Springs. This book, written in Hedrick's old age, is the autobiographical story of his boyhood growing up in "one of the last forest regions in eastern America to be settled by whites."

*The Land of the Crooked Tree* is worth reading for many reasons. For those interested in Michigan's culinary history, it is a delightful surprise. The book is a rich source of information about food and cooking on a frontier farm. Almost half of its 31 chapters focus on growing, gathering, and preparing food for the Hedrick family and their farm helpers.

In chapters like "Our Food," "Father's Garden," or "Farm Crops," this emphasis takes several forms. Unusual for a book of this type are the actual recipes and detailed descriptions of dishes Hedrick's mother prepared. She was understandably proud of her reputation as a good cook. Who would not like to have tasted her blackberry roly-poly or soda biscuits, her corn chowder or smear-case?

These recipes are complemented by more comprehensive descriptions of meals and catalogues of foods eaten. Among the most memorable are Hedrick's accounts of the butchering day feast and Madame Pettier's birthday banquet, to which he devotes three pages. It was at this birthday party that he tasted potato chips for the first time. Hedrick's robust appetite and love of good food come through superbly in these almost epic descriptions of meals and foods.

Hedrick's professional interests as an agricultural historian as well as his hearty appetite account for the book's emphasis on the agricultural processes of gathering and producing the foods they ate. The chapter "Maple Sugar" contains an evocative description of the early years of the maple sugar industry in our state, including a recipe for "sugar-on-snow." In Hedrick's words, "ours was a land flowing in maple syrup." "Butchering Day" describes the process of turning a live, squealing pig into hams, sausages, bacon, and other pork products.

Finally, as a naturalist, Hedrick describes the wild natural environment that provided his family with their sustenance. As always, his emphasis is on the edible products of the water and woods around them. The waters of Lake Michigan supplied them with fish, and the woods gave them wild game and fruits and berries. Even when Hedrick describes plant life, his interest inevitably turns to how it can be converted into food. His botanical description of ferns quickly becomes a culinary lesson on the value of fiddlehead ferns as "good, wholesome food."

*The Land of the Crooked Tree* has been reprinted in a facsimile edition that retains the charming woodcuts at the opening of each chapter. In paperback, it costs about $10.00 and is available at Border's Bookshops in Birmingham and Ann Arbor.

Pat Corno
Calendar

In keeping with the Michigan theme, this issue of the calendar focuses on food-related events within the state.

**Food Festivals**

| June  | Michigan Strawberry Festival, Antique Organ Museum | Hart       |
| 13    | Strawberry Fest (various churches)                | Hanover    |
| 19-21 | Festival of American Folklife: "Michigan on the Mall" (see pg 5) | Belleville |
| 24-28 | Battle Creek Sausage Festival                     | Washington, D.C. |
|       |                                                   | Battle Creek |
| July  | 4th of July International Food Festival           | Marquette  |
| 4     | National Cherry Festival (orchard tours & other events) | Traverse City |
| 5-11  | Strawberry Festival                               | Chassell   |
| August| Basil Festival (see pg 1)                         | Parma      |
| 2     | St. John's Mint Festival (farm tour)              | St. John's |
| 8-9   | Montrose Blueberry Festival                       | Montrose   |
| 14-16 | Michigan Festival, Michigan on the Mall, MSU campus | East Lansing |
| 21-30 | Wild Blueberry Festival                           | Paradise   |
| 21-22 |                                                   |            |
| September| Michigan Peach Festival                          | Romeo      |
| 4-5   | Michigan Bean Festival                            | Fairgrove  |
| 5-7   | Annual Grape & Wine Festival                      | Paw Paw    |
| 10-13 | Michigan State Potato Festival                    | Edmore     |
| 10-13 | Posen Potato Festival                             | Posen      |
| 11-13 | Applefest, Wixom/Weare Museum                     | Wixom      |
| 12    | Cider Festival                                    | Clarkston  |
| 16-20 | Taste of Southwestern Michigan, Cook Energy Info. Center | Bridgman |
| 19-20 | Cider Fest, Diehl's Orchard                       | Holly      |
| 26-27 |                                                   |            |
| October| Annual Sorghum Festival                           | Three Oaks |
| 3-4   | Apple Festival                                    | Belding    |
| 4     | Apple Festival, Kapnick Orchards                  | Britton    |
| 10-11 | Eat Your Art Out (edible art), Lansing Art Gallery | Lansing    |
| 27    |                                                   |            |
| November| Michigan Nouveau (1st wine of '87), Seven Lakes Vineyard | Holly |

The Calendar is continued on page 8

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**Crop Calendar**

Many local activities are planned around the crop calendar. Some of Michigan's crops that have inspired special events are shown below. For more information, check with local growers or consult Michigan Country Carousel, a guide to pick-your-own produce farms, roadside markets, and wineries, available from the Michigan Dept. of Agriculture, Marketing Division, P.O. Box 30017, Lansing, MI 48909.

- **June**
  - sweet cherries, gooseberries

- **July**
  - red raspberries, black raspberries, dewberries, blueberries, currants

- **August**
  - peaches, nectarines, cantaloupes, pears, plums, grapes

- **September**
  - fall apples
### Ethnic Festivals

*Food is an important component of ethnic festivals. The presentation is often an example of what the members of a group themselves regard as their culture's best foods.*

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