

## To Bee or Not to Bee

Honey, Mead, Sugar, Subtleties, and Other Delights in Britain



Drawing of bees making honey in a *skep*, the type of man-made hive used by beekeepers in medieval England. The skep was essentially a basket woven from wheat-straw or other plant stems. The word derives from Old Norse *skeppa*, “basket”.

Image from a British illustrated bestiary manuscript written in Latin, believed to have been made c. 1200-1210 in Durham, northeast England, and now in the British Library in London.

# OF RELATED INTEREST

Discussions of medieval and Renaissance food usually focus lopsidedly on the eating habits of the rich and famous, and in this issue of *Repast* we shall be as guilty as anyone else. One reason for this imbalance is that when it comes to written records, those in which wealthy people or powerful institutions were involved are more likely to have been preserved. The earliest cookery books in English, starting with manuscripts from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, reflect the affluent foods eaten on feudal estates.

One scholar who has labored to redress this information gap is Martha Carlin, associate professor of history at the Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. As part of studying the food, diet, urban history, and domestic technologies of medieval and early modern England, she has extensively used household and commercial inventories, such as the lists kept by the Public Record Office of defaulting mercantile debtors in London and in Southwark between 1316 and 1650. One of her conclusions is that in the largest cities, hot, ready-to-eat food was available for purchase by the urban poor. She summarized this in "Fast Food and Urban Living Standards in Medieval England", one of the essays collected in a volume that she co-edited with Joel T. Rosenthal, *Food and Eating in Medieval Europe* (London, UK and Rio Grande, OH: Hambledon Press, 2003).

Returning, however, to the wealthier strata:

- Independent historian Alison Sim has written a series of popular books about the Tudor period (1485-1603), including *Food & Feast in Tudor England*, Third edition (Stroud, UK: Sutton Publishing, 2005) and *The Tudor Housewife*, New Paperback edition (Stroud, UK: Sutton Publishing, 2005).
- Christopher M. Woolgar, a history professor at the Univ. of Southampton, England, edited the two-volume *Household Accounts from Medieval England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992-3), which included a representative collection of 28 noble household accounts from the 12<sup>th</sup> through 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries.
- William Sayers, an adjunct professor of comparative literature at Cornell Univ., has been mining early literary sources written in English, French, Welsh, and Latin for information about food preparation in the British Isles. This has led to his recent articles, "Learning French in a Late Thirteenth-Century English Bakehouse", *Petits Propos Culinaires* 88 (Aug. 2009), pp. 35-53, and "Court-Bouillon: An Early Attestation in Anglo-Norman French?", *PPC* 89 (Jan. 2010), pp. 77-83.

Two publishers in England, Prospect Books and Anglo-Saxon Books, are issuing a number of new volumes on this subject:

- Peter Brears, *Cooking and Dining in Medieval England* (Devon, UK: Prospect Books, 2008; 512 pp., \$60 cloth) focuses on the dining customs of large households.
- Mark Dawson, *Plenti and Grase: Food and Drink in a Sixteenth-Century Household* (Devon, UK: Prospect Books, 2009; 335 pp., \$60 cloth) uncovers food patterns based on accounts from the Willoughby family estate.
- Malcolm Thick, *Sir Hugh Plat: The Search for Useful Knowledge in Early-Modern London* (Devon, UK: Prospect Books, 2010; 320 pp., \$60 cloth) is a study of this London author (1552-1611), who wrote household and cookery books as well as works on food technology and distribution.
- Stephen Pollington, *The Meadhall: The Feasting Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England*, Second edition (Norfolk, UK: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2010; 288 pp., \$49.95 paper) explores communal meals, both formal and informal, based on Old English texts.
- Ann Hagen, *Anglo-Saxon Food and Drink: Production, Processing, Distribution, and Consumption* (Norfolk, UK: Anglo-Saxon Books, Nov. 2010; 512 pp., \$49.95 paper) focuses on food production for home use, between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

Those readers who would like to try some medieval recipes will want to check out Greg Lindahl's *Forme of Cury* website, <http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/foc/>.

In the online archives for *Repast*, readers can find a number of previous articles addressing topics related to medieval and Renaissance England:

- Jan Longone, "Bibliography of Medieval Gastronomy" (June 1987).
- Judy Gerjouy, "Acquiring a Period Cookbook Library" (Summer 1989).
- Robert E. Lewis on Middle English culinary terms: "Sotilté" (Summer 1989), "Soupe" (August 1990), and "Tarte and Tartlet, Tourte and Tourtelet" (Spring 1995).
- Randy K. Schwartz, "Shakespeare Holiday Feast: 'How Say You to a Fat Tripe Finely Broil'd?'" (Winter 1999). ■

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# THOSE OLDE ENGLISH MEADS

by Dan McFeeley

*Dan McFeeley, of Kankakee, IL, has been involved with mead-making since 1994. He is a regular contributor to two online forums, the Mead-Lover's Digest ([www.talisman.com/mead](http://www.talisman.com/mead)) and GotMead (<http://www.GotMead.com>), and has published articles on the history and tradition of mead and on the science of honey fermentation. Originally from New Jersey, he moved to the Kankakee area to attend college, completing undergraduate and graduate degrees at Olivet Nazarene University. He is currently employed in Behavioral Health Services at Riverside Medical Center. Besides mead-making, his hobbies include playing the Irish tin whistle and bodhran at the local pub and in the hospital unit where he works.*



**A bottle of mead produced by the B. Nektar Meadery in Ferndale, MI.**

With a new Robin Hood film about to show in theaters earlier this year, the folk on the GotMead.com forums decided to get into the spirit of the movie and cobble together a Robin Hood-themed mead. A recipe that emerged, which was more fun than historically accurate, was a honey wine using dry oak leaves as a bittering agent, a blend of English wildflower and English heather honeys, juice of crab apple, cherry and elderberry to taste, rosehips and lavender to taste in the secondary, with a Nottingham ale yeast to ferment the batch. Another recipe used oak leaves, heather honey, and rose hips as ingredients. One of the participants pointed out a similarity to a Welsh oak-leaf mead recipe reportedly from the Middle Ages, posted on the [celtnet.org.uk](http://celtnet.org.uk) web site.

Whether or not the real-life Robin Hood, said to have lived during the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> Century, would have tasted a bit of home in these meads is difficult to say, although he certainly would have enjoyed the complexity of flavor that the GotMead folk put into them. The majority of early English mead recipes come from old cookbooks, such as Martha Washington's *Booke of Cookery* (1550 - 1625) or *The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelme Digby Opened* (1669). There are very few English mead recipes prior to this. Whatever it was that Robin Hood was wont to quaff with his merry men, the makings of these meads must be left to the guesswork of historical scholars.

“Mead” by itself is an unpacked word, much like “wine” without the context of history, culture, and development. Perhaps in France, *terroir* is forever, but what would the wines of France be like without enologists like Emile Peynaud, and others? The 1976 “Judgment of Paris” signaled a new upstart in world-class winemaking as the Americans trumped the French, and now it's the Australians coming up on the outback horizon. Although these are all makers of the same product, they are all different wine cultures. Mead? The story is much the same.

Describing the taste of mead is as difficult as describing the taste of wine as “something made from wine grapes”. One can discourse at length about the aroma and taste of the varietal honey or honeys in a mead, coupled with the vinous quality imparted by the fermentation, but it's best to try a taste and see.

## Early History

Honey has been used to make fermented drinks of all kinds, long before recorded history. “Mead”, the English word that we use for wine fermented from honey, is one out of a group of cognates in the Indo-European language family for wine made from honey (Sanskrit *madhu*, Greek *methy*, Old Church Slavonic *medu*, Lithuanian *medas*, Old Irish *mid*, etc.), suggesting an antiquity and tradition thousands of years old. The oldest known artifact showing the making of alcoholic beverages by any culture was identified by Patrick McGovern of the University of Pennsylvania, dated at 9,000 years ago in Jiahu, China, and made up of honey, rice, and grape or hawthorn berry. This pushes the history and tradition of making fermented beverages from honey even further back in time.

In the public mind, mead became associated with the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as a result of successful marketing strategies on the part of commercial meaderies promoting their products at Renaissance Faires. Bargetto Winery in Sorquel, CA, for example, has been making Chaucer's Mead since 1986, sold at Renaissance Faires in 10 different states. Mead and merry olde England— perfect together!

The Middle Ages in England are roughly outlined from the withdrawal of the Romans from Britain in the 5<sup>th</sup> Cen-

*continued on next page*

## Olde English Meads *continued from previous page*

ture through the 1500's. These were times of major upheavals in the populace and in the governing of the island, with shifts through Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, and Norman cultures. Each of these cultures in turn had a mead culture of its own.

### The Celts

In Celtic history, drinking is closely intertwined with ritual and other aspects of culture. A Celtic chieftain's burial mound from the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC, unearthed at Hochdorf, Germany, attests to this; among the grave furnishings was a huge 125-gallon cauldron that once held either mead, or honey to be used for making mead. Pollen analysis of the remains at the bottom of the cauldron showed that the mead/honey had been mixed with nearly 100 herbs and plants, including thyme, mountain jasmine, plantain, knapweed, and meadowsweet. Many of these herbs had been brought from a great distance. These people, the continental Celts, not only prized their mead, they saw it as a status symbol.

Increased contact with Mediterranean trading brought about a shift in drinking preferences from mead to wine, starting at approximately 500 BC. To the north, however, and especially among the Celtic peoples of what would become the British Isles, mead remained in vogue. In Wales, mead had a special place in the royal court. The mead-maker was 11<sup>th</sup> in order of the king's officers. The king was due a stipend of mead twice a year, contributed by the populace; his officers also received dues paid in mead, with the exception of the mead-maker who was paid in beeswax. Mead-making was widely practiced throughout Wales, and its value in the culture shows in the alternates to mead: a measure of mead was worth two of braggot, and four of ale. Welsh mead-making and brewing have given us two words for styles of mead that are still in use today: *meddyglyn* or *metheglyn*, mead made with spices and/or herbs, and *braggot*, a beverage made from malted barley and honey.

Records of Irish mead-making are scarce, but significant. The banqueting hall at the ancient Hill of Tara, in Leinster, mythical seat of the high kings and now an archaeological site, was known as *Teach Miodhchuarta*, i.e., the Mead Circling House. A page from the Book of Leinster, written during the 1100's, outlines a seating plan for the banqueting hall, showing the placement of the mead vat. St. Bridget of Kildare recognized the value of mead, changing a vat of water to mead in order to provide for the court of the king of Leinster whose vats were empty. The Irish saint, St. Finian of Clonard, was wont to break his six-day fast of bread and water with a bit of salmon and a glass of mead. A 9<sup>th</sup>-Century Irish penitential refers to the sin of drunkenness from too much indulgence in either ale or mead, and a phrase from a 10<sup>th</sup>-Century manuscript refers to *gair meda*, "a shout of those who drink mead".

### The Anglo-Saxon Period

The Anglo-Saxons brought their mead traditions with them from the North, gradually settling in and displacing the Celtic Britains during the 5<sup>th</sup> Century. There were rough parallels between the cultures of the ancient Celts and the



**The Celtic cauldron from Hochdorf, Germany.  
(Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart)**

Anglo-Saxons in these traditions. In one of the tales from the Irish Finian cycle, Fionn mac Cumhail (Finn McCool) is greeted by a cup-bearing princess with the descriptive words "mead, delectable and intoxicate". Likewise, there was the ritual of the cup-bearing Anglo-Saxon queen, distributing a cup of mead to be passed from warrior to warrior, when oaths were sworn and the community of the warrior band was renewed.

Even the Anglo-Saxon language itself attests to the role of mead in the life and culture of the Anglo-Saxons. The word for mead, *meodu*, became a cognate for words reflecting the traditions associated with the community life of the Anglo-Saxon lord and his warriors. The banqueting hall of the king was known as the Mead Hall, or *Medusel*. *Meodusetl* or *medubenc* referred to the mead-seat or mead-bench where the officials of the court were seated, and much was made of the oaths sworn over the mead cup, the *medoful*. To be at mead-drinking was to be in a solemn gathering, where oaths were sworn and alliances renewed.

It should be pointed out that mead was not exclusive to these gatherings. Anglo-Saxon words for other common drinks, such as *ealu* (ale), *beor* (fermented fruit drinks that might have included cider), and *win* (wine), were used in similar ways in the language, and they could at times commingle. A person could be at ale-drinking while sitting at the mead bench. Mead might have been prominent in much the same way as it was in Wales—as noted above, a measure of mead was worth two of braggot, and four of ale in the Welsh court system. Ale was brewed frequently and a ready batch for drinking was always kept at hand, but mead would be available according to honey production.

### Norman and Later Times

The decline of mead in England can be attributed to a number of factors, and not primarily to the Reformation in England and the decline in the need for wax candles, as claimed by Robert Gayre in his book on the history of mead, *Wassail! In Mazers of Mead* (1948, 1986).

The Norman ascendancy, following on the heels of William the Conqueror's invasion in 1066, brought Norman

culture and Norman prosperity to the royal courts. Soon, wine, which had always been present, prevailed more and more over mead and cider at the banquet table and became dominant, a process that worked over the next few centuries or so.

Another factor would be the shift in cuisine style described by Rachel Laudan in her *Scientific American* article on "The Birth of the Modern Diet" (December 2006). Up through the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, meals consisted of combinations of thick purées, sweet-and-sour sauces, and cooked vegetables, all heavily spiced. Wine was warmed and often spiced. Afterwards, the more familiar combinations of the modern Western diet began to appear: less spices, sauces based on fats and oils, raw fruits and vegetables. Laudan points out that a healthy diet was considered to be good medical practice, and looked after by the physicians of the time. Prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, physicians were strongly influenced by Classical theories of the four elements, the four humors, an understanding of digestion as a form of cooking, and how these schemas loosely correlated with the components of a healthy diet. After the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, a new scheme advocated by Paracelsus displaced the earlier Aristotelian ideas; digestion was seen as fermentation rather than cooking, and there were consequent changes in diet and cuisine. The new shifts in dietary habits also acted to displace mead from its familiar role in the Anglo-Saxon banquet hall, monastery table, or average home of the moderately affluent. Mead began its slow retreat from everyday life to the romanticized edges of tales of King Arthur, marauding Vikings, and Celtic myths.

#### Continuity of Mead-making Traditions

In the Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, and Norman periods, mead was not limited to the royal courts but was to be found wherever there was beekeeping. Good drink was a measure of good hospitality, and if there was sufficient honey left over from food production and payment of rent or other fees, there was mead to be had.

Mead-making at its most basic seems to have been a byproduct that followed from the process of harvesting honey. Tickner Edwardes (1865 - 1944), the "bee-man of Burpham", wrote in his book, *The Lore of the Honey Bee* (1908), how the leftover wax, crushed after the honey had been extracted from it, would be soaked in water to remove the remaining honey dregs; the honey must be strained and then fermented in earthen jugs. The longer it aged, the drier and more potent it became. A year was needed in order to attain the "true Saxon quality" of a good mead. The highest-quality meads would be fermented from pure honey, he wrote, and given sufficient aging would attain the quality of a fine wine, an observation also made by Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder during the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD.

Edwardes felt these were methods used by beekeepers for thousands of years. This is quite possible. Fraser notes in his book, *History of Beekeeping in Britain* (1958):

So far as the information available enables us to judge, the Anglo-Saxons had invaded a land in which beekeeping in wicker hives had been practised from

time immemorial, having continued unchanged through the Roman occupation. Up to the present no evidence has been produced that the Anglo-Saxons themselves changed it in any way, except for the introduction of the straw skep [beehive] in East Anglia. (p. 17)

A long tradition of beekeeping stretching back through the centuries could certainly include an equally long tradition of mead-making, with little change. Some innovations occurred here and there, elsewhere the same traditions prevailed. Henry Best of Yorkshire, writing in 1641, described the same process of making mead from the spent wax combs left over after the honey harvest.

#### A Medieval Recipe

One of the oldest surviving English mead recipes is that found in a 13<sup>th</sup>-Century Latin and English manuscript of household and medical recipes, collected by the late Detroit radiologist Dr. Lawrence Reynolds and now part of the Reynolds Historical Library at the University of Alabama. It was transcribed by C. Tidmarsh Major and is available at <http://www.uab.edu/reynolds/manuscripts/tractatus>.

A modernized version of the recipe, with further notes and comments by Tidmarsh Major, is available at the website of the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), <http://www.greydragon.org/library/13thCenturyMead.html>. With modernized spelling, that recipe is as follows:

For to make mead. Take 1 gallon of fine honey and to that 4 gallons of water and heat that water til it be as length [?]. Then dissolve the honey in the water, then set them over the fire and let them boil and ever scum it as long as any filth rises thereon. Then take it down off the fire and let it cool in another vessel til it be as cold as milk when it comes from the cow. Then take lees from the finest ale or else yeast and cast it into the water and honey and stir all well together, but first look before putting your yeast in that the water with the honey be put in a clean tub and then put in your yeast or else the lees for that is best and stir well together. Lay straw or else cloths about the vessel and above if the weather is cold and so let it stand 3 days and 3 nights if the weather is cold. And if it is hot weather, 1 day and 1 night is enough at the full. But ever after 1 hour or 2 at the most assay thereof and if you will have it sweet take it the sooner from the lees and if you will have it sharp let it stand the longer therewith. Then draw it from the lees as clear as you may into another vessel clean and let it stand 1 night or 2 and then draw it into another clean vessel and serve it forth.

This is a simple recipe for a five-gallon batch, approximately, and suited for a small household. It would take many more batches than this to work up to a Welsh king's mead stipend of a vat large enough to bathe in! Also of interest is the fermentation time, only a few days at most, and the observation that with aging the mead becomes drier. Doubtless, this would be from what old-time country winemakers used to call the

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# SUGAR'S ROUTE TO MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE ENGLAND

by Jacqueline Jacobson

*JJ Jacobson has been employed as Associate Curator for American Culinary History at the University of Michigan's William L. Clements Library since September 2009. An exhibit on sugar history that she curated there opens this Fall (see page 19 for details). JJ spent many of her earlier years as a chef and baker, but her interest in Food Studies eventually pushed her along to the UM School of Information, where she earned a master's degree in information science. Prior to her current position at UM, she had stints working in library and information science at the Georgia Institute of Technology and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.*

**S**ugar was probably little known in England before the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, but by the 13<sup>th</sup> Century it was in regular use, albeit only by the very wealthy. Sugar's use as medicine, culinary ingredient, and figurative substance grew steadily during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, as it became increasingly available and, with expanded production, affordable.

In 1226, Henry II asked the Mayor of Winchester to get him three pounds of Alexandrian sugar (which would have come from Egypt) if that much could be found at the Winchester fair. During King Henry VIII's reign (1509-47), his cooks at Hampton Court Palace made him grand sugar figures and display pieces such as sugar plates, figures of soldiers and saints, St. George on horseback, and St. Paul's Cathedral, displays that signaled royal wealth and power. As sugar became more common in England, throughout the Tudor era, the court and great households adopted the custom of following a feast with a separate collation, called a banquet, in which sugar played a starring role. Fresh fruits were served in season, but the rest of the collation was sweetened with sugar: fruit and flowers preserved in sugar in the form of wet and dry conserves or "suckets", jellies and creams, sweet cakes, comfits of flavored sugar or sugar-coated spices, sugar molded into figures or in imitation of other foods, and sugar cast into plates, goblets, and other table furnishings. This became a standard feature of court entertaining in the latter Tudor and early Stuart periods (Schwartz, p. 239).

But how did this sugar get to England? Where did it come from?



**A tall white loaf made from compacted sugar.**  
© York Castle Museum (York Museums Trust)

Until the manufacture of sugar from sugar beets became widespread in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, sugar was made from the juice of the sugar cane, *Saccharum officinarum*. The plant is believed to be indigenous to New Guinea, as it is there that the greatest variation of cultivated varieties is found, along with the widest range of forms of *Saccharum robustum*, its closest wild relative. The first written evidence of the cultivation of sugar cane, however, comes from India. Hymns of the Vedic period (1500-500 BC) contain references to sugar cane. The first references to manufactured sugar occur around 300 BC, in a Sanskrit manual on statesmanship that enumerates different grades of sugar, making it reasonable to infer that sugar manufacture had by that time become sufficiently developed to reach a state of some sophistication (Galloway, pp. 20-21).

Sugar was traded as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD between Arabian ports and Rome, and by 500 AD sugar's cultivation in the Ganges valley was widespread. Northern India is believed to have been the first center of innovation, whence knowledge of making sugar in crystallized form, sugar more or less as we know it, spread along trade routes to the West. Sugar spread to Persia by around 600 AD, and from there it diffused to numerous points in the Middle East. Evidence from a tax levy shows that sugar cane was being cultivated in Mesopotamia in 636-644 AD, and by the 10<sup>th</sup> Century it was an important crop there. The first sure reference to

sugar cane that survives from Egypt is from the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> Century AD, and by the 10<sup>th</sup> Century sugar cane was established as a crop in the Delta and the lower Nile. The general pattern is one of diffusion in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Centuries, and emergence as a cash crop of some importance by the 10<sup>th</sup> (Galloway, p. 24).

Sugar cane cultivation and sugar production spread to the Mediterranean by the 8<sup>th</sup> Century. Galloway, in *The Sugar Cane Industry*, states, “The first references to the cultivation of sugar cane around the Mediterranean come from Syria, Palestine, and Egypt in the years after their occupation by the Arabs in the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> Century” but adds, “Two centuries or so appear to have elapsed between the Arab conquests in the western Mediterranean and the emergence there of a commercial sugar cane industry” (Galloway, p. 33).

By the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, we find sugar cane being cultivated in Spain and Sicily. The Norman conquest of Sicily in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, along with the Crusades, brought Europeans into closer contact with areas that produced sugar cane. Increased familiarity went hand-in-hand with increased demand, and we subsequently see an expansion of cultivation, with sugar industries developing in Rhodes, Malta, Crete, and Cyprus.

When, in 1243, King Henry III ordered the purchase of 300 pounds of sugar, and again in 1287 when Edward I’s royal household used 677 pounds of sugar, this sugar would probably have come from the Mediterranean (Mintz, p. 82). In *The Forme of Cury*, written by Richard II’s master cooks around 1390, sugar is featured in such recipes as “egurdouce” (a sweet-sour sauce for rabbit or kid) and “chykens in cawdel” (a dish of chicken in a sauce thickened with egg yolks). Here again, it was most likely Mediterranean sugar that would have been used. Sugar probably first came to England with spice-traders from Venice or Genoa, and Venice was the site of some of the earliest sugar refining for the expanding European market.

The Mediterranean dominated sugar production for export to Europe until the early 15<sup>th</sup> Century, when Spain and Portugal established sugar colonies in the Atlantic, first on Madeira, and subsequently (when the industry needed to expand) in the Canary Islands and São Tomé. Sugar from the Mediterranean continued to find its way onto the European markets until the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century, but the new Atlantic colonies outstripped the Mediterranean sugar growers in production, and throughout the 16<sup>th</sup> Century more and more of the sugar in Europe would have come from these new centers of production. Most of the sugar in England during the time of Queen Elizabeth I, who reigned in 1558-1603, was probably from the Mediterranean. However, the sugar

for the sugar banquets at the court of James I, who was Elizabeth’s successor to the British throne, would likely have come from the Atlantic.

It seems that a fashion for black teeth might have arisen in England at this time, possibly because Elizabeth I’s teeth were blackened from eating sugar. In 1598, the German traveler Paul Hentzner visited her court and recalled “her Lips narrow, and her Teeth black; (a defect the English seem subject to, from their too great use of sugar)...” (McGee, p. 658).

There was a second dramatic phase of Atlantic sugar production, this time in the New World. Early in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Spain sent sugar cane plantings to Jamaica, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, and Portugal established sugar plantations in Brazil, with the first sugar reaching Europe in commercial quantities by 1526 (Mintz, p. 33). Sugar cane thrived in the West Indies, and production there soon exceeded that of both the Mediterranean and the older Atlantic colonies. In the course of the next 150 years, sugar plantations would be established on numerous islands in the Caribbean, and the West Indies would become the source of much of the sugar consumed in Europe. By 1640, when sugar cane cultivation began to dominate Barbados, England began to have her own sugar colonies and was no longer dependent on other nations to provide it, ushering in an era in which sugar became, increasingly, a commonplace of English life, and thus starting a new chapter of the history of sugar in England. ■

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# SUGAR OF BARBARY FOR THE QUEEN'S REALM

by Randy K. Schwartz

Poking around in the stacks of the University of Michigan library a few years ago, I ran across an interesting book, *Studies in Elizabethan Foreign Trade* (Manchester University Press, 1959). The author, Thomas Stuart Willan (1910-1994), an economic historian at the University of Manchester, had spent many years examining the customs books of British ports, as well as records of courts of law, the account books of mercantile partnerships, and even the private wills of merchants. He was thus able to give a fairly complete picture of the variety of foodstuffs and other goods that were reaching England from overseas during this period that preceded the planting of the crown's first colonies in the New World.

Most of the book is taken up by Chapter 4, "English Trade with Morocco", which runs more than 200 pages. There is a concluding Chapter 5, "Sugar and the Elizabethans". Because of my interest in Moroccan food history and its impact on the world, I took special note of the importation of sugar and other foodstuffs from "Barbary", as the Elizabethans referred to the area. This was the period of the Saadian dynasty in Morocco, whose rulers derived much of their wealth from a monopoly they maintained on the commercial cultivation of cane and the refining of sugar, both based on the labor of mostly African slaves. I had previously explored the ruins of two of the Saadian sugar refineries outside Marrakech and Essaouira.

Willan writes that regular British trade with Morocco began in 1551, a decade after the Saadians drove the Portuguese colonists from their coastal enclaves. It was during that decade that the art of sugar refining was reportedly introduced to the region by Christian slaves. In the ensuing trade between Englishmen and Moroccan Muslims, Moroccan Jewish merchants served as the middlemen.

The English imports from Morocco included sugar, molasses, dates, almonds, marmalade and other fruit preserves including succades (candied fruit), cumin, aniseed, argan oil, as well as some non-comestibles (gold, copper, saltpeter, indigo, gum arabic, wax, amber, raw silk, and animal skins). These were exchanged for English goods, including cotton, linen, and woolen cloth, often dyed; iron, tin, and lead;



**The author standing in front of part of the ruins of a large Saadian sugar refinery from about 1600, located some 75 miles west of Marrakech. Photo taken in 2002.**

knives, swords, and lances; oars; and ginger and saffron. In both directions, the goods were carried by English ships. (Besides this official trade, English merchants also frequently pirated sugar and other cargoes from other ships, but in quantities difficult to estimate.)

By value, the sugar and molasses accounted for over two-thirds of all goods imported by England from Morocco. The sugar, excluding molasses, came to 504 tons in 1587, a considerable part of England's total sugar supply. Apart from molasses, which was a byproduct of sugar production, there were three basic grades of imported Moroccan sugar:

- The highest grade was fine white sugar in conical loaves or in sacks of powder. These were packed in shipping chests that held 336 lbs. each.
- Of medium grade were the *panele* (from a Portuguese word for a type of clay pot), which were solid cakes of brown sugar produced by boiling cane juice to evaporate the water, then pouring the resulting syrup into round pots to solidify. (The result was similar to today's *rapadura* sugar of Brazil and the *piloncillo* sugar of Mexico.) These cakes were packed for shipping in large casks called hogsheads and puncheons.
- The coarsest grade of sugar consisted of the inferior fractions removed during the boiling of cane juice. This soft, dark sugar was packed in chests and came in three different forms. In order of decreasing quality, these were *quebrado* (from a Portuguese word for "broken, rough"), *ramel* (from a Portuguese word for "burnt, caramelized"), and *scome* (from Middle English for "scum", "froth").



Willan estimates that the average consumption of sugar in 1590's England was on the order of one pound per person per year, which is only about 1% of the consumption rate of the mid-1950's. However, due to the high price of sugar, the earlier rate would have varied wildly according to one's social position. Willan writes, "As a broad generalization it could be said that an Elizabethan craftsman would have to give about a day's wages to buy 1 lb. sugar" (p. 325). Grocers would break sugar loaves into smaller pieces, or even grind them into powder, for sale to customers of such modest means.

At the opposite extreme, the Royal Household procured its sugar at wholesale, to the tune of 20,160 pounds of Moroccan sugar in the representative year of 1589. This constitutes roughly 2% of all Moroccan sugar imported by England that year. However, some of this royal sugar was probably bestowed upon others, for it is known that sugar loaves were not uncommonly exchanged as presents among the British aristocracy at this time, just as were marmalade and other preserves. In addition, it should be kept in mind that sugar—besides its use in cookery, in preparing desserts, preserves, and candies, and in the ostentatious sweetening of wines (at a time when coffee, tea, and cocoa were not yet common in England)—was also an important ingredient in medicines.

Willan describes a household account book kept by the wife of a prosperous London merchant having two children and nine servants. In a one-year period during 1594-5, the family purchased 16 lbs. of sugar (over half of it around Christmas time) and 13 oz. of sugar candy. The sugar cost about 11 pence per pound, and the candy 24 pence per pound, as compared to 6 pence per pint for honey, and 4½ pence per pound for butter. Willan concludes, "Such comparisons merely confirm the view that sugar was a luxury beyond the purses of many Elizabethans. Its social distribution may perhaps be compared with the distribution of wine drinking today" (p. 332), referring to mid-1950's Britain. But he adds, "the luxuries of one age become necessities of life for later generations" (p. 332).

In the study of the sugar trade in England and the West, this relatively early chapter has been little discussed, despite its important role in establishing the taste for sugar, the various grades and shipping methods, and the use of slaves in the industry. Two recent histories do not include England's importation of sugar from Morocco: *Sugar: A Bittersweet History* (Penguin, 2008) by Elizabeth Abbot of Toronto, and *Bittersweet: The Story of Sugar* (Allen & Unwin, 2002) by Peter Macinnis of Australia. ■

## Olde English Meads *continued from page 5*

secondary fermentation, i.e., a fermentation that would renew itself in a bulk aging wine in the Spring, after cellar temperatures warmed up again.

This, then, would be an old English mead at its simplest and most basic, sweetly quaffable at first, but over time taking on that "Saxon quality" Edwardes referred to: drier with the flavor of English honeys coming out, along with the ambience of the mead-maker's working area, contributed by the local microflora. It was a well-crafted product of the land, something made for untold numbers of centuries with a rich history extending through ages of political upheaval and turmoil, a bit of comfort and continuity in a sometimes too-harsh world. ■

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# SUBTLITIES AND ENTREMETS



## THE EDIBLE ENTERTAINMENT

by Angela Schneider

*Angela Schneider is a violist in the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. She also gives tours and teaches courses related to the culture and cuisine of various world regions. She has led tours of Egypt, Central Europe, and other regions, sponsored by Capilano College and Great Expeditions Tours. This year, she has been an invited speaker aboard the Queen Mary II cruise ship, making presentations on Byzantine and medieval history, cuisine, and music.*

From the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries in Europe, a pyramidal structure was imposed on a society that had fragmented with the disintegration of Roman government and institutions. Known today as feudalism, it concentrated power and wealth into the hands of a small group that included warlords and clergymen. At the top of the heap were the great lords who granted lands to their noble vassals; the latter in turn provided military service for the lord. Besides military prowess, any lord hoping to retain his authority and influence in society needed to demonstrate his financial muscle and largesse, including by staging lavish feasts for his vassals. Because of the many Church holidays, Saint Days, weddings, annual guild dinners, and other occasions for entertaining notable people, the year was jam-packed with opportunities to host a feast.

The feast and its many attendant rituals were part of the fabric of feudalism, serving to cement friendships among the aristocracy, to reinforce a person's place in the social hierarchy, and to celebrate political events. The note to be struck at a banquet was exuberant abundance. Understated elegance was not a concept embraced in medieval society. For a society that was marginally literate, the goal was to provide a theatrical experience, and food was but one component in this. The objective of a good host was to surprise and entertain his guests with visual displays that astounded, amused, conveyed a story or political statement, and gave the guests "something to talk about".

A 13<sup>th</sup>-Century Franciscan scholar in Paris, known as Bartholomæus Anglicus (Bartholomew the Englishman), wrote about one element of a feast: "Noble men use not to make suppers without harpe or symphony."<sup>1</sup> Such music was used to announce the entrance of each course. Musicians might be part of a noble household, or the nobleman might hire a traveling band of minstrels for the evening. A cookbook from 1529 that has survived from the Estes court gives an account of a state banquet in Ferrara, Italy. It details which instruments were chosen to provide a musical accompaniment to the food. For example, a first course of sea bream, boiled sturgeon in garlic

sauce, and pike's entrails fried with oranges, cinnamon, and sugar, was accompanied by an ensemble of three trombones and three cornets. Between the third and fourth courses, six *viole di braccio* accompanied a six-voice motet, and so on, until desserts, when all the musicians gathered for the grand finale. Music was supplemented by jugglers, acrobats, trained animal acts, jesters, and storytellers.

The final ingredient of a banquet was the food and its presentation; the carrying in of dishes, the ceremony of carving, and the transformation of the food were all part of the drama of a good feast. The cook at a medieval banquet was a master craftsman who minced, pounded, colored, and reshaped his basic ingredients to form works of art. Such a banquet would have three courses at the very least.

The word *entremet* is French for "between servings", for these were the dishes brought out at the end of a course. The origins of the *entremet* (known in England as the *subtlety* or *sotelty*) were the wildly colored creations intended to show off the cook's creativity. Instructions for *entremets* appear in various cooking and household management books dating from around 1300. There is scant documentary evidence available to the food historian until we reach the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries, when there is suddenly an abundance of both visual and written material.

### Castles Made of Dough

The preparation of *entremets* required skills beyond those possessed by a novice chef. For example, the earliest version of the 14<sup>th</sup>-Century *Le Viandier*<sup>2</sup> lists 40 methods for coloring food. Deep rich yellow, believed to be the color of paradise, was the favored hue. A medieval recipe for "Brawn Royal" suggests coloring the sausage green with ground leek leaves, blue with plant dye from a turnsole, and brown with cinnamon and ginger.<sup>3</sup> Serving meat and fish in jelly was another opportunity to display color, as when fish were served "swimming" in a blue-colored jelly.

Other popular themes were roasted peacocks and swans re-dressed in their plumage to look lifelike; live animals made to look dead, such as a plucked chicken covered in glaze; gilded swans, piglets, or boars' heads, breathing fire by means of lighted alcohol-soaked cotton placed in the mouth or beak; fantastic beasts like the Cockatrice, in which the top half of a chicken was sewn onto the bottom half of a pig; tethered live birds, placed into pastry cases, who sang when the pie was cut open; a roasted bird that "danced", thanks to mercury placed in its cavity; and castles made of dough decorated with paper parapets and towers.

A feast given by Pope John XXII in 1317 featured an *entremet* shaped like a castle. We assume it was edible, as the ingredients included over two dozen birds mixed with flour, sugar, confitures, and honey. However, by 1343, at a dinner given for Pope Clement VI in Avignon, France (where the papacy was based between 1309 and 1378), the castle itself had become much larger and was probably not intended for consumption. Inhabiting the castle were a cooked and re-dressed stag, a boar, roe deer, and hares, upon all of which the guests could dine. The fifth course concluded with the presentation of a fountain built into a tower, from which flowed five kinds of wine. It, too, was bedecked with various roasted game birds.

And the spectacle wasn't done! Between the seventh and eighth courses, two trees— one silver, one green— were carried in. One was hung with gilded fruit and the other, iridescent in the candlelight, shimmered with many-hued candied fruits.

Clearly, at a sophisticated court such as that in Avignon, the *entremet* had evolved into a showpiece that required the craftsmanship of a set designer, not just the cooking skills of a chef. As *entremets* became more elaborate, they grew so large that they had to be wheeled into the hall. Eventually, sugar figurines were replaced with real actors; the presentations became more theatrical and were often vehicles by which to convey a political message. Gaston IV, Count of Foix, left us one of the most complete accounts of a late-medieval banquet, given by him in 1457 at Tours, France in honor of a visit by the Hungarian ambassador, with an entourage of Germans, Bohemians, and Luxembourgers in tow.<sup>4</sup> The French court was also invited. The four dramatic and extravagant *entremets* presented between the seven courses demonstrate the political bent that these entertainments were taking. The first *entremet* was a castle on a rock, wheeled in by 12 men. Architecturally accurate, the castle had four towers with four windows, each exhibiting an exquisitely attired lady. The central keep displayed heraldic banners bearing the arms of the King of Hungary and those of the other great lords of the embassy. Four children were perched at the top of the towers singing “like angels”.

The third *entremet* at the 1457 banquet was a mountain, so massive that it required 24 men to carry it into the hall. The two fountains on this massif spouted rosewater and *eau de muscade*. “Suddenly out of this rocky promontory rabbits scampered and wild birds emerged to fly around the hall. Four boys and a girl, all dressed as savages, descended to dance a morisco. Then the count distributed presents to the various attendants.” After the sixth course, consisting of red hippocras<sup>5</sup> served with wafers, a man

attired in embroidered crimson satin appeared astride a similarly caparisoned horse. In his hands he carried a model garden made of wax which was filled with roses and a variety of other flowers, and set it before the ladies. This, we are told, was the most admired of all the *entremets*.

There was however, more to come:

[a] heraldic menagerie sculpted in sugar: lions, stags, monkeys and various other birds and beasts, each holding in paw or beak the arms of the Hungarian king. Unbelievably, the banquet was not yet over. In came a live peacock with the arms of the Queen of France encompassing its neck and the arms of the ladies of the French court draped over its body. In response, all the Lords present advanced and pledged to support the cause of the Hungarian king.

England and Scotland

While the *entremet* was evolving in France into a sophisticated theatrical spectacle, royal courts in the relative hinterlands tended to lag behind. In 1449, just eight years before Gaston IV's banquet, a royal wedding banquet took place in



**This painting, an illumination from the *Grandes Chroniques*, depicts a banquet hosted by Charles V of France on January 6, 1378. We see the *entremet* that recreated the Crusaders' conquest of Jerusalem, complete with ships and with knights scaling the walls of the Holy City. Bernard the Monk and Richard the Lionhearted are included in the piece, even though they were on different Crusades.**

Scotland whose *pièce de résistance* was a flaming boar's head, a feature long considered *passé* on the continent.

In England, the *entremet* was known as the subtlety or *sotelty*, and its purpose was also to entertain and provide allegorical or patriotic table-sculpture. Some were edible creations made out of sugar, marchpane (marzipan), or pastry, but by 1467 the monks of Durham recorded a purchase of “Tinfoil for the decoration of subtleties for the feast of the Nativity”, which we can safely assume wasn't being eaten [cf. *Middle English Dictionary*, s.v. “tin” n.(1), sense (b)].

The creators of the subtlety— perhaps worried that the diners, in their often inebriated state, might miss the message of their table ornaments— attached helpful labels to their work. For example, at the coronation banquet of Henry V in 1413, the subtlety at the end of the first course was a swan (representing the King) surrounded by six cygnets, each of whom carried half of a suitably uplifting message in its bill. The cygnets were arranged in pairs, with one bird bearing the words *Eyez pete* and its partner completing the sentence with *des comunalte* (“Have pity... on the realm”). Twenty-four more swans followed, each one carrying a scroll written in English: “Noble honour and glory”.<sup>6</sup>

Subtleties in England grew increasingly more elaborate and costly. George Cavendish was present at the banquet given by Cardinal Wolsey at Hampton Court in 1527 in honor of the French ambassador. Writing his biography of Cardinal Wolsey 30 years later, Cavendish recorded the event in wonderful detail:

*continued on page 15*

# THE MIDDLE ENGLISH CULINARY TERM “SOTILTÉ”

by Robert E. Lewis

*Ann Arbor residents Bob Lewis and his wife Julie are longtime members of the CHAA. The article below is reprinted, with his permission, from the Summer 1989 issue of our publication. Dr. Lewis is currently Professor Emeritus of English Language and Literature at the University of Michigan and a volunteer docent in the manuscripts department at UM’s Clements Library. Prior to his retirement at UM, he was Editor in Chief of the Middle English Dictionary during the 1982-2003 completion phase of the massive project. In 2003, he was awarded the biennial Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Prize from the British Academy, which stated that the MED “is surely the most important single contribution from transatlantic scholarship to the understanding of medieval English texts.” An important resource for culinary historians, the work is published in 13 volumes and is also accessible free online at <http://ets.umdl.umich.edu/m/med>.*

The Middle English word *sotilté* was derived from Old French and first appeared toward the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. It has the range and variety of meaning of its Modern English counterpart, subtlety— shrewdness, an act of cleverness, complexity, a subtle argument, craftiness, etc.— but in addition it is often used in a culinary sense, now obsolete in Modern English. The *Middle English Dictionary* defines this sense of *sotilté* as “a culinary decoration for the table; a course of a meal; or a particular dish, frequently in the form of a historical or religious tableau.”

Medieval courtly feasts were intended to appeal to the eye as well as to the palate, and for this purpose cooks were expected to prepare *sotiltés*, which, in medieval usage, meant either elaborate dishes that would often look like something else or sculpture-like decorations that would accompany a course. The best-known example of the first variety is the so-called *cockentrice* (more accurately *cok-a-gris*, as in Middle English), which was created by sewing together the forward half of a chicken and the back half of a suckling pig, stuffing, baking, and roasting the beast, and then decorating it with a mixture of egg yolks and saffron, pastry leaves, and the like. Another example is *haslet* (Middle English *hastelet*), usually the internal organs of a game animal, but counterfeited of a mixture of dried fruits, nuts, and marzipan.

Elaborate sculpture-like decorations— the second variety of *sotilté*— were usually made of sugar, marzipan, or pastry (and therefore sometimes edible). They came in various shapes (persons, animals, castles, ships) and were paraded through the hall for guests to view, either between courses or accompanying a course. They are described in detail in the data accumulated for the *sotilté* entry in the *MED*, and I reproduce a few of the most interesting quotations in what follows. I have not translated them into Modern English, but I have slightly modernized the spelling so they would be comprehensible to readers of this newsletter. I hope they will give an idea of the ingenuity of the medieval cook and the extravagance and ceremony of the medieval feast.

The first, taken from the *Great Chronicle of London* of about 1450, is part of a description of the Feast of St. George held at Windsor Castle in 1416, with King Henry V and the German Emperor in attendance:

The first sotilte of the servyse was howe oure lady armyd saynt George and an Aungell doying on his spurres. The secunde sotilte was seynt George rydyng



**This illustration shows a relatively simple form of *sotilté* consisting of frumenty (grain porridge) colored a rich gold through the use of either saffron or egg yolk.**

From *Livre des Propriétés des Choses*, a 15<sup>th</sup>-Century French edition of the 13<sup>th</sup>-Century *Proprietatibus Rerum* (“*On the Properties of Things*”) by Bartholomæus Anglicus (Bartholomew the Englishman).

Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS France 9140, folio 193.

and fightyng with the dragon with his spere in his hande. The thrydde sotilte was a Castell and saynt George and the kynges doughter ledyng the lambe yn atte the Castell yates. And all the sotiltees were servyd before the Emperour and the kyng and no firther. And othir lordys were servyd with sotiltees after here astates and here degree.

A second example is taken from a description of another elaborate feast, this one celebrating the coronation of King Henry VI in 1429. The quotation itself is from the chronicle attributed to William Gregory written shortly after 1470 and describes the *sotilté* accompanying the third course: “Oure Lady syttyng, and hyr Chylde in hyr lappe, holdyng in every honde a crowne, Syn Gorge knelyng on that one syde and Synt Denys in that othyr syde, and they ii presentyng the kyng to oure Lady.”

For the feast at the installation of John Stafford as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1443, the following *sotilté* accompanies the third course (this abbreviated version is taken from a cookbook of about 1450): “A godhead in a sun of gold glorified above; in the sun the holy goste voluptable; Seint Thomas kneling a-for him, with the poynt of a swerd in his head and a Mitre there-uppon.”

Not all the examples in the *MED* files are from actual feasts. In the *Book of Nurture*, a household manual in verse written about the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century by John Russell, usher and marshall to Humphrey, Duke of

Gloucester, can be found sample menus for various kinds of dinners with *sotiltés*. Here is a menu for the first course of a dinner on a meat day:

Furst set forthe mustard and brawne [flesh] of boore,  
the wild swyne,  
Suche potage as the cooke hath made of yerbis, spice,  
and wyne,  
Beeff, moton, Stewed feysaund [pheasant], Swan with  
the Chawdwyn [a sauce],  
Capoun, pigge, vensoun bake, leche lombard [a spiced,  
boiled pork pudding], fruture viaunt fyne [a fine  
meat fritter];  
and than a Sotelte: Maydon mary that holy virgyne,  
and Gabrielle gretynge hur with an Ave [i.e., Ave  
Maria, Hail Mary].

This is followed by the menu for a four-course dinner on a fish day (or fasting day), with the *sotilté* for each course being a figure of a man representing one of the four seasons, beginning with Spring and ending with Winter, as follows:

Wyntur with his lorkys grey, febille and old,  
Syttyng upon the stone bothe hard and cold,  
Nigard in hert and hevyn of chere.

The cycle of the seasons, so important to the Middle Ages, can make its influence felt even in the subtleties of a courtly feast. ■

**A boar's head with an apple in its mouth was a classic *sotilté*, shown here being set out for serving. Meant to resemble a boar caught in the act of foraging, the dish might have been one of the earliest types made to imitate a live animal.**

From *Livre des Propriétés des Choses*, a 15<sup>th</sup>-Century French edition of the 13<sup>th</sup>-Century *Proprietatibus Rerum* (“*On the Properties of Things*”) by Bartholomæus Anglicus (Bartholomew the Englishman).

Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS France 9140, folio 113.



Book Review

# “TO DRESSE A PEACOCKE WITH ALL HIS FEATHERS”

Mark Morton and Andrew Coppelino,  
*Cooking with Shakespeare*  
Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008  
336 pp., \$55 cloth

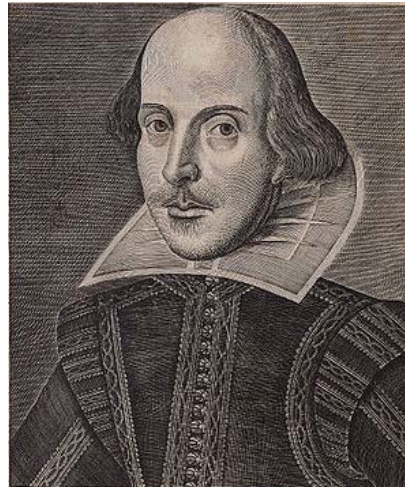
by Pat Cornett

*Patricia Cornett was both the first CHAA Newsletter Editor (1987-94) and the first CHAA Webmaster (2006-9). She and her husband Mel Annis, both longtime members, live in Beverly Hills, MI. Pat holds a Ph.D. in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama and has published a number of articles on Elizabethan food history. Long self-employed as a writer, in recent years she has also taught courses on how to create family cookbooks, and she formerly taught writing at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield, MI. In addition, for many years Pat has volunteered as a docent at the Longone Culinary Archives at the University of Michigan's Clements Library. Her most recent article for Repast was a review of a talk by Joan Nathan on Sephardic Jewish cuisine (Spring 2002).*

Written by two Ontario food writers with a light touch but solid scholarship, *Cooking with Shakespeare* should set a new standard for cookbooks about the food and cookery of 16<sup>th</sup>-Century England. The authors, Mark Morton and Andrew Coppelino, are omnivores with a healthy appetite for the food, cookery, culture, and language of early Renaissance England. Morton is an expert in literature and instructional design at the University of Waterloo, while Coppelino is a Kitchener-based freelance writer and the host of “The Food Show” weekly radio program.

Not since Madge Lorwin's *Dining with William Shakespeare* was published almost 40 years ago has there been a Shakespeare cookbook as comprehensive, scholarly, entertaining, and practical as this book, published in 2008. It surpasses Lorwin's book by far in its admirably clear organization of information and recipes and its generous quoting of sources, some well known, but others obscure, even esoteric. The authors also benefit from the increased scholarly interest and research of the last 25 years in culinary history in general and Renaissance culinary history in particular.

While the authors' scholarly approach is evident in many ways, it is signaled from the outset by their decision not to modernize the spelling of the original recipes and sources and to use an original-spelling edition of Shakespeare's plays. They also specifically limit their culinary resources to the period of



Copper engraving of William Shakespeare by Martin Droeshout, from the title page of a 1623 edition of the plays.

Shakespeare's life, between 1564 and 1616, although they occasionally include recipes and books from beyond these narrow boundaries. Of the 189 recipes in the book, 160 are from that 52-year period.

*Cooking with Shakespeare* works on two separate but well-integrated levels: first, as a scholarly, in-depth introduction to the food and cookery of Shakespeare's time, based on a wide range of contemporary sources; and second, as an ample collection of 189 historical recipes drawn from those sources and modernized for 21<sup>st</sup>-Century cooks.

The recipes are organized into 17 chapters according to the type of food (e.g., House Fowl; Game; Eggs and Dairy) or the method of preparation (e.g., Salads; Broths, Pottage, and Sops; Fritters, Fricassees, and Puddings). Each recipe is divided into two parts: first, the original recipe, including the source from which it was taken and an appropriate quotation from one of Shakespeare's plays; second, the authors' modern redaction set off on the page with a border faintly suggesting a recipe card. Each recipe has a “makeability rating” from 1 (simple) to 5 (challenging).

Each of the 17 recipe chapters also includes a short historical and culinary introduction to that particular food or cooking method. Often, there is a headnote, set off in italics, that elaborates on the recipe or some ingredient.

Don't miss these headnotes. They give full play to the authors' sense of humor and tongue-in-cheek approach to their subject. Even if you find the recipes too bizarre or too daunting, the headnotes are amusing and instructive.

One example will have to suffice, but there are many. In a headnote for the recipe “To Boyle a Capon or Chicken with Colle-Flowers”, the authors comment: “Andrew Boorde, in his 1547 *Compendyous Regyment*, affirms that capons are ‘moste beste’ in terms of digestibility. He does admit, however, that chickens can also be nutritious to eat in the summer, especially if they are ‘untrodden,’ that is, have not yet had sex. He does not comment on how the cook is to determine this” (p. 74). My favorite, although too long to quote here, is the headnote for “To Dresse a Peacocke with All His Feathers” (p. 84).

The other major feature of this book is its well-written and accessible historical introduction. In 67 pages it sets a high

standard for scholarly clarity and comprehensiveness. There are 10 sections, beginning with the literary (“Food and the Bard”) and then proceeding to the cultural in sections that survey the relationship between food and the ideological, medical (“Dietary Theory”), religious, and legal systems (“Food and Drink Laws”) of Shakespeare’s time. Additional sections address “At the Market and Beyond”, “In the Kitchen”, “At the Table”, “In the Cookery Books”, and “On Your Tastebuds”. The Introduction also contains more than a dozen black-and-white illustrations of woodcuts and pages from the cookery books themselves.

The amount of scholarly research behind this book is impressive, but it doesn’t weigh the book down with too much academic apparatus. Besides an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources and a detailed index (no separate recipe index, however), there are four appendices and a 10-page glossary. Most useful to cooks is the appendix describing 13 hard-to-find ingredients (from ambergis to verjuice) and the glossary, which defines obsolete terms and translates words that have different meanings from their 16<sup>th</sup>-Century counterparts (e.g., “pudding”).

To historians and literary scholars of the period, Appendix 2 on Wages and Prices in Shakespeare’s England and Appendix 4, a “Dialogue for Tabletalk”, are the most interesting. The latter is a transcription of a dinner table dialogue taken from a 1605 bilingual French-English educational treatise by Pierre Erondelle.

In addition, the book contains a rich array of quirky facts and fascinating figures about the food culture of the period. Some tidbits of information are directly relevant to the topic or recipe, as when the authors point out that “some common ingredients that rarely or never made their way into the published recipes” (p. 65) include leeks, garlic, and chestnuts. Or, as when they emphasize that the food and cooking of 16<sup>th</sup>-Century England have more in common with Moroccan cuisine than with traditional English food of modern times. After sugar, the most common flavoring agent in the 2,100 recipes published in Shakespeare’s time was rosewater, appearing in 20% of the recipes. Pepper appears in 20%, ginger in 18%, mace in 17%, cinnamon and cloves in 15% each, and almonds and raisins in 10% each.

The authors’ love of the English language, especially in the unparalleled linguistic richness of early Renaissance England and Shakespeare’s plays, is also much in evidence. This is not surprising, since Morton has published other books on language and writes a regular column on words, called “Orts and Scantlings”, for the journal *Gastronomica*. The authors often elucidate the origins and usage of strange and obscure words, such as the verb used in the recipe “To Smoore a Chicken”, *smoor* meaning to simmer or stew a food over low heat in a covered dish.

The authors are also enamored of numbers and statistics, as Appendix 2 suggests. Sometimes this passion becomes excessive, as in their headnote for “To Boyle a Capon or Chicken in Sacke and Pottage”, in which they laboriously (perhaps even sardonically) calculate the quantity of saffron called for in the original recipe by comparing the weight of an English penny in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century (0.018 ounces) to a modern paper clip (0.035 ounces).

In summary, *Cooking with Shakespeare*, as both a historical cookbook and a survey of the food culture of Shakespeare’s time, should satisfy almost everyone with an appetite for the subject. ■

## Subtleties and Entremets *continued from p. 11*

The cooks wrought both night and day in divers subtleties and many crafty devices, where lacked neither gold, silver, ne any other costly thing meet for the purpose. ... Anon came up the second course with so many dishes, subtleties, and curious devices, which were above an hundred in number, of so goodly proportion and costly that I suppose the Frenchmen never saw the like. ... There were castles with images in the same; Paul's church and steeple ... There were beasts, birds, fowls of divers kinds, and personages, most lively made and counterfeit in dishes; some fighting (as it were) with swords, some with guns and crossbows, some vaulting and leaping; some dancing with ladies, some in complete harness jousting with spears, and with many more devices than I am able with my wit to describe. Among all one I noted: there was a chessboard, subtly made of spiced plate [sweetmeats] with men to the same...<sup>7</sup>

The opulence and magnificence of these occasions left a lasting impression— exactly the point of a great dinner party in any age. George Cavendish accurately summed up the experience when he said: “So ended this triumphant banquet, the which in the next morning seemed to all the beholders but as a fantastical dream.”<sup>8</sup>

### Endnotes

1. *On the Properties of Things*, John Trevisa’s translation of *De Proprietatibus Rerum* by Bartholomæus Anglicus. Bartholomæus’s Latin is most easily accessible in John Trevisa’s Middle English translation, *On the Properties of Things*, ed. M. C. Seymour et al., 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).
2. *Le Viandier de Taillevent* is a recipe collection largely credited to Guillaume Tirel (c. 1312 – 1395), alias Taillevent, a chef of the French royal court. It is one of the earliest recipe collections of the medieval era. The latest edition of all the manuscripts (with English translation) is by Terrence Scully (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988).
3. Robina Napier, *A Noble Boke off cookry ffor a prynce houssolde or eny other estatly houssolde. Reprinted verbatim from a rare MS. in the Holkham collection. Edited by Mrs. A. Napier* (Elliot Stock: London, 1882).
4. The descriptions that follow are drawn from Gaston’s account, as found in Roy C. Strong, *Feast: A History of Grand Eating* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002).
5. Hippocras, or *ipocras*, was a warm, highly-spiced medieval cordial of white wine, often served as an aperient (mild laxative) near the end of a feast. For more information, see *Repast* Winter 1999, pp. 2-3.
6. Napier.
7. George Cavendish, *The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey*, in Richard Standish Sylvester and Davis P. Harding, eds., *Two Early Tudor Lives* (New Haven, Yale Univ. Press, 1962). First published in 1557.
8. *Ibid.* Some of the dishes served at Cardinal Wolsey’s banquet were recreated for the CBC radio program, “Ideas”.

# CHAA FAMILY-THEME MEAL: A REPORT

“I come from a family where gravy is considered a beverage.”  
— Erma Bombeck

The Culinary Historians gathered together on August 22 for a picnic-style meal based on the theme of Favorite Hometown and Family Recipes. This annual Summer participatory meal was held in the clubhouse of the Earhart Village condominium community in Ann Arbor.

A little over two dozen members and friends participated in the event, selecting and preparing dishes that they recalled from Summer cookouts, family reunions, vacations at the cabin, and similar occasions. Before diving in to sample the dishes, we took turns speaking about the significance of the recipes and the human relationships that attended them. Member Marvin Brandwin read his whimsical poem, “Potluck Party”.

Below is a summary of the dishes and their sources. ■



**Connie Fitzner’s homemade pumpkin pie used her grandmother’s recipe. Photo: Mariam Breed**

## Beverages

Iced tea; apple cider; Shiraz wine.

## Breads

Jewish braided *challah* (egg bread) from Mary Ann Sudhoff; Jewish rye bread (also known as *sissel*, a Yiddish word for caraway seeds), purchased by Doris Miller from a Jewish bakery in Detroit.

## Fruits

Slices of a regional muskmelon, Honey Rock, from Mike Mroz and Lili Krezel, whose physician was a founder of the annual Howell, MI, Melon Festival that celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in August; green and red grapes topped with sour cream, sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla, from Harriet Larson; apple sauce from Rich Kato, using a recipe from Jean Hewitt’s *New York Times Natural Foods Cookbook* (1972) and local ingredients (apples in four varieties, maple syrup, and honey) plus nutmeg and cinnamon.

## Salads and Side Dishes

Sliced cucumbers topped with sour cream, cider vinegar, and sugar, from Kaye Reardon based on a German tradition; Edie Bluestein’s famous potato salad, from Jan and Dan Longone based on her family’s Jewish tradition; green-bean casserole with a boiled-dressing gravy of cider vinegar, sugar, and bacon, from Mike Mroz and Lili Krezel, based on her mom’s recipe of German/Polish tradition; *lokshen kugel* (Jewish noodle-raisin casserole) from Eleyne Levitt and Marvin Brandwin, made like the version of Sophie Levitt, her ex-mother-in-law.

## Main dishes

Navy beans baked Vermont-style with maple syrup, dry mustard, ginger, and salt pork, from Pam Dishman based on her

grandmother’s tradition; fried chicken, served in a casserole dish nestled in a picnic-style striped tablecloth, from Rita Goss, inspired by her Kentucky upbringing; Polish *golabki* (often pronounced galumpki or galooptchy), sweet and sour stuffed cabbage with ground beef, tomato, and rice, from Doris Miller, who remembers that her family would wrap it in newspaper to take on picnics; Jewish *holishkes* (a Yiddish word), another version of sweet and sour stuffed cabbage, using raisins and lemon juice, from Marion and Nick Holt; pot-roasted chicken from Jane and Herbert Kaufer, adapted from a recipe from her grandmother, a Jewish immigrant from the Odessa region of Russia, who would make it on alternate Sundays in a large Dutch-oven-type of roasting pan until the meat would fall from the bones; Armenian “hash” of lamb, meat gravy, eggplant, tomato, onion, and garlic, served on lemony rice, from Eleanor Hoag using a recipe that she got in the 1950’s from the lovely dining room at Hudson’s Dept. Store in downtown Detroit, and that became a family favorite; tortilla casserole, from Randy Schwartz and Mariam Breed, using a recipe that his mom had adapted from her days living in Mexico City.

## Sweets

Bavarian apple torte from Mary Ann Sudhoff; *mustikkarahatorrtu* (Finnish blueberry-cheese torte) and rice pudding with blueberry sauce, two dishes from Nancy Sannar, inspired by her Finnish-American farm upbringing in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, where her mom would often can blueberries; pumpkin pie from Connie Fitzner, using her grandmother’s recipe; lemon meringue pie from Laura and Dan Gillis, using her grandmother’s recipe; Carroll’s Crunchies (cookies of oatmeal, raisin, coconut, and chocolate chips) from Carroll and John Thomson using her own recipe; marshmallow-cream fudge from Lisa and Tony Putman using a recipe of his grandmother, Una Putman (a farm wife), from the 1940’s or earlier, for which she won a Blue Ribbon at the Texas State Fair.



# TAKE PRIDE IN THE PERSIMMON

by Joanne and Art Cole

*Longtime members of the CHAA, the Coles formerly worked in the automotive industry. Joanne now runs a regional yarn-wholesaling business, while Art is President of Edwards & Drew, Inc., a logistics management firm.*

The 64<sup>th</sup> annual Persimmon Festival was celebrated on September 18-25, 2010 in Mitchell, Indiana. The festival itself is a tribute to small-town Midwestern America; Mitchell, the boyhood home of astronaut Gus Grissom, is well beyond the urban reach of Cincinnati, Louisville, Evansville, or Indianapolis, and preserves much of the culture of the post-World War 2 era of the first Persimmon Festival in 1947.

The persimmon that motivates the Festival is the native American Persimmon, *Diospyros virginiana*, not the Asian varieties such as *fuyu* or *hachima* that are commercially grown in California and found in specialty produce markets. The American persimmon tree is related to ebony, and persimmon wood was prized for making golf clubs (back when woods were wood) for its strength, resilience, fine grain, and beauty.<sup>1</sup> The fruit of the American persimmon resembles a small apricot in appearance, an amber-colored ovoid about 3-5 cm (1-2 inches) in diameter. When on the tree, the American persimmon is extremely astringent due to tannins, but when fully ripe the astringency disappears, the fruit softens, and very soon falls to the ground. The fruit are most often collected from the ground; during the Fall they must be retrieved often, ahead of the critters that would otherwise enjoy them. Ripe persimmons have a very sweet, fruity flavor; since ripe persimmons do not contain much acid, the sweetness is very prominent, somewhat like a date, combined with a delicate flavor like a mild peach or apricot.



The ripe fruit is a soft berry containing several seeds, so although it can be eaten somewhat messily out of hand, the more common procedure is to mash the fruit and collect the pulp. Persimmons were eaten by native

Americans either out of hand or dried and formed into bricks; John Smith wrote of them in 1612. Settlers used them in baking cookies, cakes, curries, and other foods.

But their most well-known use is in persimmon pudding, a baked pudding that resembles a brownie since it is usually baked in a square or rectangular baking pan. The resemblance is only in appearance: persimmon pudding is soft, tending toward a custard, along the lines of Indian pudding, English dessert puddings, or pumpkin or sweet potato pie. Cooks in the Mitchell area have dozens of recipes, consistent in using persimmon pulp,

## Eva Powell's 2009 Festival-Winning Persimmon Pudding Recipe<sup>3</sup>

2 cups persimmon pulp  
2 cups sugar  
1½ cups flour  
1 tsp baking soda  
1½ cups buttermilk  
¼ cup cream  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
2 large eggs  
½ teaspoon cinnamon  
1/8 pound butter  
1 teaspoon baking powder

- Mix pulp and sugar. Add two large beaten eggs and stir well.
- Add soda to buttermilk and stir until foaming stops. Add to first mixture and stir.
- Sift dry ingredients (flour, salt and baking powder). Sift into first mixture and beat well. Add cinnamon and cream.
- Put butter in pan and melt. Pour all into batter, leaving just enough to grease pan.
- Beat well and bake about one hour in slow oven. (Bake at 350° for 50 minutes.) Let cool and serve.

generous amounts of sugar, eggs, and fat (butter, cream, or shortening), and differing in details like spices (cinnamon, allspice, vanilla, or none) and whether nuts and dried fruit should be added. The persimmon pudding recipes we collected came mainly from churches in Mitchell. The town has only a couple of inconsequential drinking establishments, so the local recipes do not include adding brandy or bourbon as do recipes from other regions. All recipes call for baking puddings in an oven, rather than steaming or using a water bath, as older pudding recipes do. The typical topping for persimmon pudding is whipped cream, but a sugar-cinnamon-butter sauce is also popular. The puddings are often prepared in large quantities, since they keep or freeze very well for later use.<sup>2</sup>

As local foods return to the table, the native American persimmon is regaining some of its former status. Persimmon ice cream, persimmon butter, and persimmon wine are all available near Mitchell, and persimmon pulp is widely available from local producers via the Internet. The Persimmon Festival parade took almost 90 minutes to pass the reviewing stand in 2010, so the enthusiasm of the local community for its favorite native fruit is undiminished! ■

### Endnotes

1. Dymple Green, *Persimmon Goodies* (Mitchell, IN: Dymple's Delight Persimmon Products, 1996).
2. United Methodist Women of Jacob Finger United Methodist Church (Mitchell, IN), *Persimmon Country Cooking, Book 3* (Morris Press Cookbooks, 2009).
3. Recipe on p. 29 of the Program for the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Persimmon Festival (Greater Mitchell Chamber of Commerce, 2010).

# MORSELS & TIDBITS

Macomb Community College has been hosting a trio of talks on our local food industry this Fall:

- Oct. 7, 2010 at 11 am: “Sanders Confectionery” by freelance writer **Greg Tasker**, author of the photographic anthology *Sanders Confectionery* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006).
- Oct. 24, 2010 at 2 pm: “Detroit’s Drink: The Vernor’s Ginger Ale Story” by collector **Keith Wunderlich**, author of the photographic anthology *Vernor’s Ginger Ale* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2008).
- Nov. 6, 2010 at 1 pm: “Fresh to Success” by **Jack Aronson**, Detroit restaurateur and founder/ president of Garden Fresh Gourmet (Ferndale), the nation’s best-selling fresh salsa.

Talks are given at MCC’s Albert L. Lorenzo Cultural Center, 44575 Garfield, Clinton Twp., MI. Pre-registration is required; for more info, call 586-445-7348 or e-mail [culturalcenter@macomb.edu](mailto:culturalcenter@macomb.edu).

On Oct. 19, CHAA founding member **Jan Longone** gave a talk on “‘The Old Girl Network’: Charity Cookbooks and the Empowerment of Women” at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, Univ. of Michigan. Jan had curated an exhibit on this subject in 2008. Sanders Candy, which has a connection with the Institute, made a donation of sea-salt caramels for this talk.

CHAA members **Yvonne and Bill Lockwood** presented papers at the International Ethnological Foodways Research Conference, held in Turku, Finland on August 18-21, 2010. Bill’s paper was “The Coney: ‘Something Substantial for the Workingman’”, and Yvonne presented “Put the Coffee Pot On: Coffee Table and Visiting Traditions in Finnish America”. Yvonne also presented a paper at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Food in Society (ASFS), held in Bloomington, IN, on June 2-5, 2010. Her paper was on “Muskrat: A Cultural History of a Local Culinary Tradition”.

Jewish-foods maven, cookbook author, and Univ. of Michigan alumna **Joan Nathan** will make a presentation about her new book, *Quiches, Kugels, and Couscous: My Search for Jewish Cooking in France* (New York: Knopf, 2010; 416 pp., \$40 cloth) as part of the annual Jewish Book Festival at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor (2939 Birch Hollow Drive, tel. 734-677-0100). Joan’s talk, scheduled for Mon., Nov. 1 at 7:30 pm, will be moderated by CHAA member **Ari Weinzweig**, founding partner of Zingerman’s Deli. Ari will speak at the same festival, on Wed., Nov. 10 at 7:30 pm, about his new book, *Zingerman’s Guide to Good Leading, Part 1: A Lapsed Anarchist’s Approach to Building a Great Business*. Joan will reprise her talk on Tues., Nov. 2 at the Jewish Community Center of Metro Detroit (15110 West Ten Mile Road, Oak Park, tel. 248-967-4030).

Local cookbook collector **Geri Rinschler** shared a small part of her collection for the exhibit, “Cooking with Books”, at the Birmingham Historical Museum, 556 W. Maple Road, Birmingham, MI, which ran from June 2010 through October 9, 2010. Cookbooks included were from Julia Child, *Better Homes and Gardens*, Jell-O, and many more. Also on display were some of Geri’s antique cooking utensils, pans, and product packaging.

## In Memoriam

We mourn the recent losses of two longtime members and one friend of the CHAA.

Patricia Ruth “**Patty**” **Turpen** of Ann Arbor died on Aug. 14 at the age of 61 after a battle with cancer. She had been a very active and enthusiastic participant in CHAA activities, and for many years she volunteered as a docent at the Longone Culinary Archives at the University of Michigan’s Clements Library. A memorial for Patty was held on Aug. 22 at Island Park. Our sympathies go out to her husband, Carl Paulina.

Marjorie “**Marge**” **Reade** of Ann Arbor died on Aug. 17 at the age of 92 after a long illness. Over the years, she had lovingly assisted the CHAA in a variety of ways. She hosted at her home the Summer 1993 participatory picnic on the theme of Pacific Rim Foods, which was also a surprise 60<sup>th</sup> birthday party for founding member Jan Longone. The Fall 1990 issue of this newsletter carried Marge’s remembrance of her mother’s Christmas fruitcake in Depression-era North Dakota. She had previously co-authored, with Susan Wineberg, the book *Historic Buildings, Ann Arbor, Michigan* (Ann Arbor Historic District Commission, 1986), which has since come out in several editions. A memorial for Marge was held on Aug. 23 at the First Unitarian Universalist Congregation, the church in which she was very active. Our sympathies go out to her husband, Maxwell Reade.

**Michael Batterberry** died in Manhattan on July 28 at the age of 78 due to complications from cancer. Michael and his wife Ariane founded the magazines *Food & Wine* (1978) and *Food Arts* (1988). They also co-authored the book *On the Town in New York, From 1776 to the Present* (1973), a history of the city’s restaurants. As editors of *Food Arts*, they annually presented a Silver Spoon Award to a personality who contributed years of “sterling service” to the world of food and food studies; the 2000 award went to CHAA’s Jan Longone. The couple were big supporters of the Longone Center for American Culinary Research, and were members of the Honorary Committee for the center’s dedication in 2005. Last May, they were presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the James Beard Foundation.

“Vienna Circa 1780: An Imperial Silver Service Rediscovered” has been on display Apr. 13 – Nov. 7, 2010 at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art. **Wolfram Koeppe**, Curator of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, played a leading role in the re-discovery and acquisition of this superb bridal dowry of silver tableware, created by Ignaz Josef Würth, goldsmith of the Austrian Imperial court. The ensemble was commissioned by Empress Maria Theresa of Austria for her daughter’s 1779 marriage to the Duke of Sachsen-Teschen, and was taken by the newlyweds to their new home in Brussels. Embodying Viennese Neoclassicism, the set of over 300 pieces— including wine coolers, tureens, *cloches*, candelabra, dozens of plates, and porcelain-mounted cutlery— represents the splendor of royal dining during the *ancien régime*.

“Counter Space: Design and the Modern Kitchen” is an exhibit running Sep. 15, 2010 – Mar. 14, 2011 at New York’s Museum of Modern Art. The show, organized by Curator of Architecture and Design **Juliet Kinchin**, explores the transformation of the kitchen during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century using a wide variety of design objects, architectural plans, posters, archival photos, and selected artworks, all drawn from MoMA’s collection. Two complete kitchens are also featured: a “Frankfurt Kitchen” (1926–27), an early example of modern, compact, and ergonomic design, created by the architect Grete Schütte-Lihotzky for public housing being built around the city of Frankfurt; and a mobile fold-out unit (1968) manufactured by the Italian company Snaidero. Throughout the exhibition, prominence is given to the contributions of women, not only as the primary consumers and users of the domestic kitchen, but also as reformers, architects, designers, and as artists who have critically addressed kitchen culture and myths.

Sugar was originally known to Europe as a rare and costly spice, but between the 1600’s and the late 1800’s it was transformed from a luxury to a widely coveted necessity. A new exhibit curated by **JJ Jacobson**, “Sugar in the Atlantic World: Trade and Taste 1657-1940”, tells the story of the sugar trade in the British West Indies and the growing taste for and use of sugar. The exhibit runs Oct. 18, 2010 to Feb. 18, 2011 at the University of Michigan’s William L. Clements Library, open weekdays 1-4:45 p.m.

Organized by the Field Museum in Chicago and Tuskegee University in Alabama, the touring exhibit “George Washington Carver” comes to The Henry Ford, 20900 Oakwood Blvd., Dearborn, MI, from Nov. 6, 2010 to Feb. 27, 2011. **Whitney Owens**, the Field Museum’s Director of Traveling Exhibitions, reports that the exhibit includes artifacts, photography and film, plant models, and hands-on activities so that visitors can discover the life and work of this extraordinary man (c. 1860-1943), born into slavery, who became a trail-blazing economic botanist and humanitarian. In association with the museum, **Tonya Bolden** has written a book directed at young readers, *George Washington Carver* (New York: Abrams, 2008; 42 pp., \$18.95 cloth). For more info on the exhibit, call 800-835-5237 or see <http://www.thehenryford.org/events/carverExhibit.aspx>.

Three CHAA friends and veteran authors have new books out this year:

- **Sandra Sherman**, now an English professor and a specialist in intellectual property law at Fordham University in New York, has written *Invention of the Modern Cookbook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2010; 261 pp., \$55 cloth). She analyzes 300 years of cookbook history, focusing on such issues as culinary authority, the competence and intelligibility of recipe instructions, book-marketing strategies, celebrity chefs, and niche and specialty cookbooks. The CHAA plans to have her speak about the book at our March 2011 meeting. Dr. Sherman spoke about nationalism and foreign influences in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century British cookery at our Nov. 2004 meeting, and she wrote about that subject for our Summer 2004 issue.
- *Repast* subscriber and prolific cookbook author **Sheilah Kaufman** of Potomac, MD, teamed up with New Yorker **Nur Ilkin** to write *The Turkish Cookbook: Regional Recipes and Stories* (Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2010; 350 pp., \$35 cloth). Their diverse, easy-to-prepare recipes reflect the

## U.S. Immigrant Foodways

Two new books have come out this year on the subject of ethnic foodways among immigrants in the U.S.

**Lynne Christy Anderson** has written *Breaking Bread: Recipes and Stories from Immigrant Kitchens* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2010; 304 pp., \$24.95 cloth). The book is a collection of some four dozen first-person oral histories of food and the role of home cooking in the lives of recent immigrant families with whom Anderson met. Each chapter unfolds around one or a few dishes, with recipes provided. Sample titles include “Fausta’s Italian *Fettuccini*”, “Yulia’s Russian Mushroom Casserole”, “Johanne’s Haitian Soup *Joumou*”, “Xiu Fen’s Shanghai Fish and Vegetable Dinner”, “Genevieve’s Ghanaian *Nkatekwan* and *Fufu*”, “Liz’s Brazilian *Peixada*”, and “Limya’s Sudanese *Mulukhiyah*”.

More specific in its geographic focus, but delving much further back into American history, is **Jane Ziegelman**’s *97 Orchard: An Edible History of Five Immigrant Families in One New York Tenement* (New York: Smithsonian Books/HarperCollins, 2010; 253 pp., \$25.99 cloth). Ziegelman has provided separate chapters on each of five different families—the Glockners, Moores, Gumpertzes, Rogarshevskys, and Baldizzis—who successively occupied a single tenement at 97 Orchard Street on the Lower East Side around 100 years ago. Her portraits are lively and memorable, taking us in to the cooking areas and cramped apartments, and out to the multiethnic markets and streets of Manhattan, teeming with life and commerce.

Don’t neglect two earlier volumes:

- **Meredith E. Abarca**, *Voices in the Kitchen: Views of Food and the World from Working-Class Mexican and Mexican-American Women* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M Univ. Press, 2006; 264 pp., \$19.95 paper), a series of oral histories based on in-home interviews.
- **Louise DeSalvo** and **Edvige Giunta**, eds., *The Milk of Almonds: Italian American Women Writers on Food and Culture* (New York: Feminist Press at the City Univ. of New York, 2003; 368 pp., \$16.95 paper), a collection of recollections and ruminations by over 50 writers, some in verse and others in prose, some by well-known authors and others from emerging voices.

best of regional traditions, including those of urban, European Istanbul, rugged Anatolia, and the coasts of the Aegean, Black, and Mediterranean Seas. Sheilah wrote about Turkish *baklava* for our Fall 2008 issue.

- Former CHAA member **Rick Bayless** in Chicago presents some 150 Mexican recipes for entertaining in his new book, *Fiesta at Rick’s: Fabulous Food for Great Times with Friends* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2010; 348 pp., \$35 cloth).

**On the Back Burner:** We invite ideas and submissions for *Repast*, including for these planned future theme-issues: Experiences with Russian Food (Winter 2011); Fresh Foods, Preserved Foods (Spring 2011); Civil War Sesquicentennial Issue (Summer 2011). Suggestions for future themes are also welcome. ■

# CHAA CALENDAR

(Unless otherwise noted, programs are scheduled for 4-6 p.m. and are held at Ann Arbor Senior Center, 1320 Baldwin Ave.)

Sunday, October 17, 2010

Chef Lois Hennessey, faculty member,  
Culinary Studies Institute,  
Oakland Community College,  
“Culinary Metier: Cake Decorating”

Sunday, November 21, 2010

Michael Dority, microbiologist and  
fruit grower, Freedom Township, MI,  
“Heirloom Apples”

Sunday, December 12, 2010

4-7 p.m., Earhart Village Clubhouse  
(835 Greenhills Drive, Ann Arbor)  
CHAA annual participatory theme meal:  
“Zakuski: Tapas from Your  
Russian Great-Grandmother”  
(CHAA members and guests only)

Sunday, January 16, 2011

Chef Susan Baier, Program Coordinator and  
faculty member, Culinary Studies Institute,  
Oakland Community College,  
“Culinary Metier: Garde Manger”

Sunday, February 20, 2011

Steve Rupp,  
butcher at Hiller’s Market, Ann Arbor,  
“Culinary Metier: Butchering Meat”

Friday, March 11, 2011

7 - 8:30 p.m., Ann Arbor District Library  
(343 South Fifth Ave.)  
Sandra Sherman, author and English professor,  
Fordham University, New York,  
“Invention of the Modern Cookbook”

Sunday, April 17, 2011

2:00 p.m. or 4:00 p.m.  
(select either tour, 90 minutes each),  
Mindo Chocolate Makers, Dexter, MI  
Barbara Wilson, owner,  
“Culinary Metier: Chocolate Making, Bean to Bar”

REPAST

1044 GREENHILLS DRIVE  
ANN ARBOR, MI 48105-2722



Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

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