

## Topics in Early American Cooking: Middle Atlantic States



Inside the kitchen of the Bellamy Mansion Museum, the former home of a planter and his family in Wilmington, North Carolina. The photo, courtesy of the late Ann Hertzler, was taken about New Year's Day 2008 at a revival of the Jonkonnu celebration, a custom that spread from Jamaica to North Carolina in the late 1700s.

“...EVERYONE TO HER OWN DEMAND.”<sup>1</sup>



# DUTCH AND ENGLISH FOODWAYS IN THE MIDDLE COLONIES

by Clarissa F. Dillon

The North Sea has England on one shore and The Netherlands on another. But despite this proximity, in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century the respective sets of foodways of these two nations did not for the most part directly influence one another, even though they bore some similarities. Their independent development persisted until after the Glorious Revolution near the end of the century. These are among the conclusions that I have reached in my comparison of receipt books widely used in the Middle Colonies of America at the time.

## Repast

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The establishment of New Amsterdam was an important part of European expansion throughout the world.

In the year 1609, the Dutch East India company... employed Henry Hudson, an Englishman, to attempt the discovery of a north west passage to China;... he discovered Delaware Bay, and also sailed to the place, where New York now stands, and up North river, called by him Hudson's river... In consequence of which, the Dutch, having purchased of him, as they say, his chart of discoveries, on the coast, obtained a patent from the states, in the year 1614, for an exclusive trade, on the said river; and made a settlement, in the province, now called New York, to which they gave the name of New Netherlands, claiming within the same the country of Delaware. --On the island, called Manhattans, at the mouth of the said river they erected a fort; which they afterwards, in the year 1656, laid out and began their town of New-Amsterdam, now New-York. ...

In... 1623, they erected several forts in different parts of the new territory, to which they had thus made claim; among which they built one on the Delaware, in New-Jersey. But the commodious situation of New-York, for the sea and trade, induced most of them... to... fix their settlements on both sides of North river, before any of the Swedes came into America.<sup>2</sup>

Because of Hudson's nationality, the English disputed the Dutch claim to what would later be called the Middle Colonies.

Dutch and English patterns of settlement differed greatly. In 1627, the Dutch West India Company adopted the 'Conditions for Colonies' that established a patroon system. In this system, a merchant settler such as Kiliaen van Rensselaer would be deeded title to a large tract of land over which he exercised manorial rights. Others colonists living on the patroonship were required to pay him rent, to obey his court system, etc. In return, the Company required the patroon to establish a settlement of at least 50 families within four years of the land being granted to him.<sup>3</sup>

### Salads and Boiled Greens

The anonymous Dutch work *The Sensible Cook* (1683) and Gervase Markham's *The English Housewife* (1615) contain what might be called parallel receipts, and I have selected a number of them for comparison in what follows.<sup>4</sup> These and other receipt books used in this research were designed for families of middling affluence. Many of the settler cooks would have prepared meals based on the season, the availability of ingredients, practices learned from family members, and perhaps a spirit of experimentation.

Salads appear in both *The Sensible Cook* and *The English Housewife*. The former specified the type of greens to be used, and two different types of dressing:

To prepare raw Salads.

Take Head Lettuce, Leaf Lettuce, Curly Lettuce, Lamb's Lettuce, also the shoots of the Dandelions or wild Chicory, Endive, or red and white Cabbage or Cucumbers, whatever one has on hand that is best or that is in season and all well cleaned is eaten with a good Oil of Olives, Vinegar, and Salt. On some [vegetables] additional herbs are used according to everyone's desire,

but the usual are Cress, Catnip, Purslane, Burnet, Rocket, Tarragon, Buttercup, one may also add the flowers of Bugloss, Borage, Rose, and Calendula. This salad is also eaten with melted Butter and Vinegar, according to every one's desire.<sup>5</sup>

Markham distinguished between "simple" and "compound" sallets:

Of sallets. Simple sallets.

...simple sallets are chibols peeled, washed clean, and half of the green tops cut clean away, so served on a fruit dish; or chives, scallions, radish roots, boiled carrots, skirrets, and turnips, with such like served up simply; also, all young lettuce, cabbage lettuce, purslane, and diverse other herbs which may be served simply without anything but a little vinegar, sallet oil, and sugar; onions boiled, and stripped from their rind and served up with vinegar, oil and pepper is a good simple sallet; so is samphire, bean cods, asparagus, and cucumbers, served in likewise with oil, vinegar, and pepper, with a world of others, too tedious to mention.

Of compound sallets.

Your compound sallets are first the young buds and knots of all manner of wholesome herbs at their first springing; as red sage, mints, lettuce, violets, marigolds, spinach, and many others mixed together, and then served up to the table with vinegar, sallet oil, and sugar.<sup>6</sup>

The salads appear interchangeable except for the dressing: the English use of sugar was not found in Dutch dressing, and the latter's use of melted butter did not appear in English dressing.

Boiled vegetables were called "pot herbs" or "greens" by the Dutch:

To cook Pot-Herbs.

Take clean Well-water, add one or two stale round White breads, depending on how much you want to cook, hang it [the pot] over the fire. In the meantime cut the Pot-Herbs: Chervil, Beet, a few blades of Mace, Borage, or Bugloss, the first tiny leaves of the black Curranta and of Celandines, also Leek and Catnip, a little Spinach, but not Sorrel that would make it too greyish [in color], when it is cut up fine and the water and bread have boiled for a while until it [the bread] has dissolved. Add [the Pot-Herbs] to it and let it boil until done then Butter and Salt as you desire.

To stew all sorts of Greens.

One takes Spinach, Head-Lettuce, Endive, Beet [greens], Sorrel or Brussels Sprouts or Purslane; each cooked until well done, is stewed with Butter, Mace, Nutmeg, and Salt.<sup>7</sup>

Cooked vegetables in English books were often called "boiled sallets" and were somewhat different than those of the Dutch. For instance, Markham describes a sweet and sour preparation:

An excellent boiled sallat.

To make an excellent compound boiled sallat,



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take of spinach well washed two or three handfuls, and put it into fair water, and boil it till it is exceeding soft, and tender as pap; then put it into a colander and drain the water from it; which done, with the backside of your chopping knife, chop it, and bruise it as small as may be: then put it into a pipkin with a good lump of sweet butter, and boil it over again; then take a good handful of currants clean washed, and put to it, and stir them well together; then put to as much vinegar as will make it reasonable tart, and then with sugar season it... and so serve it upon sippets.<sup>8</sup>

#### One-Pot Meals

One-pot meals represent an efficient use of time and energy. Peter Rose summarizes that 17<sup>th</sup>-Century Dutch foodways included a variety of dishes referred to as *hutspot* (literally "shake-pot" or "mix-pot"):

Mutton, beef, and veal are prominently featured in the *hutspot* recipes. These one-pot dishes sometimes contain just one meat and seasonings as, for instance, in "a beef *hutspot* in the Brabant manner," seasoned

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with slices of ginger and crushed mace, then served with a butter sauce with chopped parsley. At other times, more than one meat or cuts of meat are cooked with a variety of vegetables.<sup>9</sup>

There were similar dishes prepared in English kitchens, as in this example from a 1744 cookbook:

To make Hodge-Podge.

TAKE about six Pounds of Beef, a Knuckle of Veal, a Cow Heel, and a Pig's Ear; let them be a little more than covered with Water, put them on the Fire, keep skimming them, and let them boil about an Hour; then season it with Pepper and Salt, and put in Carrots and Turnips cut; some Onions, Beet-Leaves, Cellery, Thyme, and Winter Savory in a Faggot, to be taken out again; then let them all stew over a gentle Fire about two Hours more.<sup>10</sup>

There were several dishes that seem common to both cultures. They are not simple “hot pots” but instead require specific ingredients in combination. From *The Sensible Cook*:

To make Meatballs in Head-lettuce.

Take chopped Veal with Veal-fat, a little fatter than usual and then spiced with Nutmeg and a little Mace, Pepper, and Salt as appropriate, knead it together, take as many of the tender Heads as you please and clean off the outer leaves and then wash clean and open up the inner leaves of the Head, take then as many Eggs as you have Heads, make also as many little Meatballs and place in the middle of each the yolk of an Egg, put inside the Head, tie with a string, and when the water boils put them in the pot, when it is done you could add to the broth a little finely crushed Rusk and some Butter, some Gooseberries or unripe Grapes or Verjuice, according to everyone's liking.<sup>11</sup>

There was a similar receipt in the 1744 English cookbook:

Forc'd Lettuce.

TAKE twelve Lettuces, set them off, and let them be cold. Then take out the Hearts, and fill them with Sweet-breads and forc'd Meats; set them in your Pan Stalk upwards, and stove them half an Hour; season them with Salt, Pepper, Vinegar and Bay-leaf, and so serve them.<sup>12</sup>

An earlier receipt from John Nott had called for a more elaborate stuffing: the lettuces were to be tied up in little parcels, simmered in broth and gravy, and untied before serving.<sup>13</sup> An addendum to a veal receipt in Hannah Glasse contained the following: “Note. If you would make a very fine Dish of it, fill the Inside of your Lettuce with Force-Meat, and tye the Top close with a Thread; stew it till there is but just enough for Sauce.”<sup>14</sup>

#### Puddings, Wafers, and Pies

A dish long associated with English foodways is pudding. Those “boiled in a cloth” were not uniquely theirs, as seen in the Dutch book:

To boil a Pudding which is uncommonly good.

Take a pond and [a] half of Wheat-flour, three quarters pond of Currants washed clean, a half pond Kidney-suet, cut it very small, 3 Eggs, one and a half Nutmegs, grated fine, a little Salt, mix it with a little sweet Milk so dry that one kneads it like a Bread and tie it in a clean cloth rather close and throw it into a pot with boiling water and let it boil for two hours, then it is done.<sup>15</sup>

The early English puddings were boiled in animal intestines. In a book published in 1655, there was a receipt for a pudding boiled in a cloth:

To make a shaking Pudding.

Boil some large mace, Nutmeg and Ginger, with a pinte of Creame, adde to them a few Almonds blanched, then beat four eggs [sic], and but two of the whites with Rose-water, then straining them all together put to it sugar, salt, grated bread, and sliced Ginger: then tye it hard in a cloth, wel flowered and buttered, and boile it, and serve it up with verjuice, butter and Sugar.<sup>16</sup>

Such a cooking “container” did not depend upon the slaughtering and butchering season. By the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the cloth was more often used than intestines.

A traditional Dutch dish was wafers.

To fry wafers.

Take a pond Wheat-flour, a loot Cinnamon, a half loot Ginger, 2 Eggs, a half beer glass Rhenish-wine, a stuyver Rose-water, a small bowl Butter without Salt, a little Sugar; beaten with some lukewarm water until the thickness of Pancake [batter] and fried in the Iron. Is delicious.<sup>17</sup>

In this case, the English version sounds more borrowed than independently developed:

To make wafers.

To make the best wafers, take the finest wheat flour you can get, and mix it with cream, the yolks of eggs, rose-water, sugar, and cinnamon till it be a little thicker than pancake batter; and then, warming your wafer irons on a charcoal fire, anoint them first with sweet butter, and then lay on your batter and press it, and bake it white or brown at your pleasure.<sup>18</sup>

But an early 18<sup>th</sup>-Century English cookbook distinguished between “Wafers” and thicker, yeasted “Dutch Wafers”:

To make Wafers.

PUT the Yolks of four Eggs, and three Spoonfuls of Rose-water, to a Quart of Flower; mingle them well, make them into a Batter with Cream and double-refin'd Sugar, pour it on very thin, and bake it on Irons.

To make Dutch Wafers.

BEAT six Eggs very well, take a Pint and half of Cream, and a Pound and half of fine Flower, two Spoonfuls of fine Sugar, and a large Nutmeg grated, and a Pound and half of melted Butter, four Spoonfuls of Rose-water, and three Spoonfuls of Yeast; mix all these well together, and bake them in your Wafer-

Tongs. Make a Sauce for them of Canary [wine], melted Butter, and Cinnamon grated, sweeten it to your taste.<sup>19</sup>

Pies were also common to both cultures. A Dutch apple pie contained fruit that had first been cooked in wine:

To make an Apple-taert,

Take of the best Apples, peel them and cut them in quarters, remove the cores, cook them with Rhenish wine in an earthenware pot until they thicken, add to them a good piece of Sugar, crushed Cinnamon, powder of Sandalwood, Rosewater, rub it all together with a wooden spoon through a sieve set up side down, place it in the crust and bake it in the Oven. It will be good.<sup>20</sup>

An English receipt similarly used wine to achieve a red color for the filling, but it specified mashing rather than sieving the boiled apples, and icing the pie before serving:

A made Dish of Pippins.

Take pippins, pare and slice them, then boil them in claret-wine in a pipkin, or between two dishes with some sugar, and beaten cinnamon, when 'tis boiled good and thick, mash it like marmelade, and put in a dish of puff paste or short paste... and being baked ice it.<sup>21</sup>

#### A Marriage of Two Cultures

Near the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, a more direct Dutch influence began to appear in English cookery. When James II of England was deposed in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, William of Orange, a Dutch stadtholder married to James's daughter Mary, was considered an appropriate heir to the English throne. William and Mary ruled England as joint sovereigns. Dutch dishes would then have appeared desirable and would have found their way onto the dinner tables of those at court and members of the aristocracy.

By the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, there were plenty of dishes identified as "Dutch" in printed English cookbooks, like this beef dish reminiscent of a Dutch *hutsopot*:

To make a Hotch-pot of Beef.

TAKE a Brisket-Band of Beef, some Mutton and Veal, boil them together in a good Quantity of Water, scum it well; then mince Cabbage and sweet Herbs, and slice Carrots [sic], and put in, season with Salt and Pepper; let them boil till they are almost a Jelly, then serve them up on sippets.<sup>22</sup>

Although there had been no receipt for gingerbread in *The Sensible Cook*, there was a receipt "To make Dutch Gingerbread" in Eliza Smith's popular English cookbook; it included five additional receipts for gingerbread containing very similar ingredients, so it is unclear why one was identified as "Dutch".<sup>23</sup> In the same book, "To make the thin Dutch Bisket" called for rolling the dough "into cakes pretty thin", while the receipt for Drop Biskets called for yeast to raise the dough and then dropping the dough onto tin sheets in "what bigness you please".<sup>24</sup>

#### Increasing Assimilation

When considering Dutch and English foodways in the Middle Colonies, it must be remembered that both had been transplanted to the New World, and had had to be adjusted to their new environments.<sup>25</sup> The dominance of the English culture began to appear in urban foodways.

[There was a] growing cultural gap between Dutch patricians, who were the landowners and merchants living in and around New York and Albany, and boers, the Dutch subsistence farmers situated in outlying areas.<sup>26</sup>

Peter Kalm, a Swedish-Finnish traveler in the American colonies in 1748-51, mentioned Dutch foodways in the Albany area. He observed, for example: "Their meat, and manner of dressing it, is very different from that of the English."<sup>27</sup> However, there were also opportunities for interaction between Dutch and English families; in such cases, there was more influence from the dominant English culture. This gradual assimilation of the urban Dutch groups was noticed by people at the time, including Kalm:

They begin, however, by degrees, to change their manners and opinions; chiefly indeed in the town and in the neighbourhood; for most of the young people now speak principally English, and go only to the English church; and would even take it amiss if they were called Dutchmen and not Englishmen.<sup>28</sup>

The acculturation of the Dutch was also reflected in their foodways, as clearly revealed in the collection of 1785-1835 receipts from a Van Rensselaer family in Albany. Most of the dishes selected for publication are very like receipts in popular English cookbooks used throughout the Middle States at the time. "English foods such as syllabubs, puddings, and custards appear frequently, documenting the anglicizing of the well-to-do Albany Dutch in the eighteenth century."<sup>29</sup> Several receipts appear to have been copied, like "white fricasey"<sup>30</sup> and "Fry'd Sellery"<sup>31</sup>. Naturally, there are also some traditional Dutch receipts, such as these for two kinds of yeasted doughnuts:

Very Common Snook-Kill Dough Nuts

1 pint of Molasses	1 pint milk
1 d[itt]o lard	1 d[itt]o Emtins
the milk and lard warmed together as much flour as they will take <sup>32</sup>	

To make Oly Cooks 4 lb flour

1 lb butter	1 lb Sugar	12 Eggs, some yeast & as much milk as you like. <sup>33</sup>
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In these two receipts, which do not appear in English books that I consulted, the cook is clearly expected to know how to mix up the batter and cook the items.

The concentration of Dutch colonists in northern New Jersey and New York explains the persistence of some of their culture and foodways after the English took over. Traditional foods at holiday celebrations continued, and descriptions of colonial practices in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century literature described various

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Dutch traditions. Certain Dutch practices were adapted and included in some American holidays, like Saint Nicholas/Santa Claus at Christmas, and continued, not just in the greater New York area.

When on November 10, 1674, the Dutch flag in New Amsterdam was lowered to make place for that of the English, it marked much more than the end of the hesitant Dutch involvement in the New World. The changing of the guard in what was to remain New York was the clearest sign of the steadily growing power of the English nation.<sup>34</sup>

In spite of their absorption into the national culture, the Dutch presence in the Middle Colonies, and their foodways, continued, though muted. ■

**Endnotes**

1. Rose, ed., 1989, p. 43.
2. Proud, Vol. I, pp. 109-110.
3. For more on the conditions of Dutch settlement, see Dillon.
4. Many receipts can also be found in Rose, 2002.
5. Rose, ed., 1989, p. 45.
6. Markham, pp. 64-65. Cf. Evelyn.
7. Rose, ed., 1989, p. 47.
8. Markham, p. 65.
9. Rose, ed., 1989, Introduction, p. 17.
10. *Adam's Luxury*, p. 184.
11. Rose, ed., 1989, p. 57.
12. *Adam's Luxury*, p. 142.
13. Nott, n.p. [L, 41].
14. Glasse, p. 17.
15. Rose, ed., 1989, p. 79.
16. Ruthven, p. 58.
17. Rose, ed., 1989, p. 78.
18. Markham, op. cit., p. 117.
19. Nott, n.p. [W, 1 and W, 4].
20. Rose, ed., 1989, p. 80.
21. May, p. 145.
22. Nott, n.p. [B, 61].
23. Smith, pp. 175-177.
24. Smith, p. 179 and p. 178.
25. Rose, p. 23.
26. Van Rensselaer, p. 7.
27. Kalm, p. 325.
28. Kalm, p. 140.
29. Van Rensselaer, p. 7.
30. Van Rensselaer, p. 15. Cf. Glasse, p. 14.
31. Van Rensselaer, p. 20. Cf. Glasse, p. 105.
32. Van Rensselaer, p. 28. Emtins were a form of yeast used at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.
33. Van Rensselaer, p. 26.
34. Van Der Zee, p. 404.

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# ANN HERTZLER

Sep. 9, 1935 – Feb. 6, 2014

This issue of *Repast* is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Ann A. Hertzler of Wilmington, North Carolina, a CHAA member and frequent *Repast* contributor. Before she died on February 6, 2014, at the age of 78, Ann prepared two final articles for us, which we are including in this issue.

Prof. Hertzler was a nutritionist and dietician who taught for 10 years at the Univ. of Missouri (Columbia, MO), then spent the bulk of her career (1980-2000) at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State Univ. (Blacksburg, VA), where she was a Professor and Dept. Chair of Human Nutrition as well as a Virginia Cooperative Extension Specialist. Her key areas of expertise there were (1) community nutrition, and (2) children's cooking and nutrition education. She wrote more than 80 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, created educational exhibits, mentored dozens of graduate students, established and endowed the Ann Hertzler Children's Cookbooks and Nutrition Literature Archive (the first collection of its kind), co-founded the Peacock-Harper Culinary History Collection and its associated Committee, and established and endowed the Hertzler Culinary History Prize.

Ann was born and raised in the Harrisburg, PA, area, and earned a bachelor's degree in home economics education at Penn State, a master's in nutrition at Drexel Univ., and a Ph.D. in nutrition, with a minor in sociology, at Cornell. In 1989-90 she was a Fulbright Scholar in Australia. After retiring, Ann moved to the Wilmington area where, as a volunteer, she interpreted, researched, and wrote about historic African-American foodways associated with the Bellamy Mansion Museum (the former home of a planter and his family in the heart of downtown Wilmington) and Poplar Grove (a former peanut plantation northeast of the city).

Ann grew frustrated that local Civil War enthusiasts, and even fellow historical interpreters and writers, tended to focus only on the battles, troop movements, political conflicts, etc., with little concern for food problems, domestic issues, and the role these played in history. She frequently sent us notes such as, "Your past 2 REPAST issues about African American Food History have been wonderful. Your contributors have all provided detailed information, which has added to our interpretation ideas.", "Love your quarterly newsletter, you do a terrific job.", "I always love anything Jan Longone writes. She is a treasure of information." Ann's previous articles for *Repast* have been:

- "The Sources and Uses of Children's Cookbooks", Winter 2007
- With Madeline C. Flagler, "Recipes from the Cape Fear Region: Jonkonnu in the Kitchen", Summer 2010
- "Southern Souvenir Cookbooks: Authenticity and Stereotype", Spring 2013
- "African-Americans and Peanuts at Poplar Grove Plantation", Spring 2013.

Ann also actively promoted *Repast* and suggested other writers for it.



A sample of Ann's writings elsewhere that are of interest to culinary historians:

- With H. L. Anderson, "Food Guides in the United States: An Historical Review", *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 64:1 (1974), pp. 19-28.
- "Review of *America's Collectible Cookbooks: The History, the Politics, the Recipes*, by Mary Anna DuSablou (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1994)", *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 94:12 (1994), p. 1461.
- "Florence Nightingale's Influence on Civil War Nutrition", *Nutrition Today* 39:4 (Jul./Aug. 2004), pp. 157-160.
- With Merle Chamberlain, *Modern Recipes from Historic Wilmington* (Wilmington, NC: Lower Cape Fear Historical Society, 2004).
- With Merle Chamberlain, "Sarah Stark Robinson: Her Household Book", *Bulletin of the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society*, April 2005.
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- "Scurvy— American Civil War", *Nutrition Today* 41:1 (Jan./Feb. 2006), pp. 28-31.
- "Dressing a Salad" (a survey of techniques from historical American cookbooks), *Virginia Culinary Thymes* 12 (Summer/Fall 2006).
- "Sugar in the Colonies, According to Old Cookbooks", *Virginia Culinary Thymes* 13 (Winter 2006-7).
- "African-American Foodways in the Cape Fear Area", *Bulletin of the Lower Cape Fear Historical Society*, Nov. 2008.
- "That Indispensable Civil War Coffee!", Cape Fear Civil War Round Table, 2009, <http://www.cfcwrt.com/thismonth9.html>.
- "Manuscript Cookbooks", *Virginia Culinary Thymes* 15 (Fall 2010).
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# PEPPER VINEGAR IN VIRGINIA AND THE CAROLINAS

by Ann A. Hertzler

**W**ant to add some zing to your food? In Wilmington, North Carolina, homemade or locally-produced Pepper Vinegar is all the rage now, a condiment that people put on everything from pulled pork and barbecued pork to collard greens and kale, not to mention eggs, chili, soup, sandwiches, pizza, and pasta.

But this superficially “new” ingredient goes back a long, long way. The Lower Cape Fear Historical Society published a cookbook featuring recipes served in Wilmington homes (Hertzler and Chamberlain, 2004). One local recipe passed down from “Grandma” was Pepper Vinegar. Fill a clean glass jar with green cayenne peppers fresh from the garden or red cayenne peppers; pour in apple cider vinegar. Keep on hand for a year.

Written sources such as cookbooks, diaries, letters, and narratives confirm that pepper vinegars such as this were consumed by families in Wilmington and throughout the Carolinas going back to Colonial times.

Wilmington, a port on the Cape Fear River, was the biggest city in North Carolina in the 1800s. By the middle of that century, it had roughly equal numbers of African-American (4000 enslaved and 600 free) and white (5000) inhabitants. During the colonial and antebellum periods, the whole coastal region between Wilmington and Jacksonville, FL (designated by Congress in 2006 as the Gullah/Geechee Heritage Corridor) became permeated with the culture of people transplanted from Africa and the Caribbean.

Used alone or added to vinegar, hot peppers heighten the seasoning of many foods. The peppers that have been used in various forms of Carolina pepper vinegar have been referred to as capsicum, cayenne, red chilies, Guinea pepper, bell pepper, bird pepper, red pepper, and paprika. But it is unlikely that any of these types of pepper were known in the Middle Atlantic region prior to the arrival of Europeans and Africans. At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Robert Beverly and William Byrd II, Englishmen, listed the native food products and herbs of Virginia, but no pepper was mentioned (Carson, pp. 5ff.).

How, then, did these cultural groups— English, African, and Caribbean— combine to introduce hot peppers and pepper vinegar to Southern cooking in colonial days and later?

## English Sources

English cookbooks were the most widely used of all European cookbooks in the Virginia colonies (Carson, pp. xvii, xxii, 196). To what extent do they reflect an awareness and enthusiasm for hot peppers and pepper vinegar?

The late Karen Hess wrote that by the mid-1700s, cayenne pepper was called for in English cookbooks being used in the New World, copies of which have survived (Randolph, pp. xv, xxxi). Patricia Reber, a culinary historian in Maryland, brought to my attention two English recipes from around 1800, one for drying red pepper and the other for making Pepper Vinegar:

**Chyan** (Capsicum) pepper pods are gathered when full ripe; they are opened, the seeds taken out, and the pods laid to dry in the sun; when quite dry, they are beaten to a coarse powder, ... Some mix bay-salt with it and others powder of mushrooms (Charlotte Mason, *The Lady's Assistant for Regulating and Supplying Her Table*, London, 1777).

**Chili Vinegar, called Pepper Vinegar** Infuse a hundred red chilies, fresh gathered, in a quart of the best white wine vinegar for ten days, or more, shaking the bottle occasionally. A half ounce of genuine Cayenne will answer the same purpose. This makes an excellent and cheap addition to plain melted butter for fish, &c. (Margaret Dods and Christian Isobel Johnstone, *The Cook and Housewife's Manual*, Edinburgh, 1826)

Two of the six most popular English cookbooks in Virginia were Mrs. Glasse's *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*, first published in London in 1747, and Mrs. Raffald's *The Experienced English Housekeeper*, published in 1769 (Carson, p. vii). Glasse's 1805 edition, which was used at the Governor's Palace in coastal New Bern, just north of Wilmington, included recipes for making vinegar and for pickling many fruits, vegetables, and nuts, but no recipes for hot pepper vinegar. Mrs. Raffald had a “Bombarded Veal” recipe with Chyan (cayenne) pepper, grated nutmeg, and salt, but no vinegar. Carson's survey did find two Colonial Virginia recipes with cayenne pepper, white wine, and other seasoning: “To Dress a Turtle” (p. 61) and “The Soup” (p. 62).

English pickling recipes in Virginia used vinegar and seasonings such as red, black and white pepper, turmeric, mace, cloves, nutmeg, ginger, mustard seed, garlic, fennel, horseradish, tarragon, dill, and bay leaves (Carson, pp. 191-2). Oyster catsup was similar to mushroom catsup, made with red pepper, salt, and mace, and stewed briefly in white wine (Carson, p. 11).

The English cookbooks used red peppers for seasoning a few foods, but rarely for fish, meat, or vegetables. English and French sauces tended to be lighter, as seen in gravy, butter, bread, mushroom, egg, celery, onion, and white sauces. Popular seasonings were salt and pepper, horseradish, mustard, walnut or mushroom catsup, parsley, chervil, fennel, burnet, tarragon, cress, and pepper-grass. Vinegar, lemon, or white wine sauces were used with wild game (Carson, pp. 81, 135-7, 146, 194).

## African and Caribbean Traditions

“Hot fiery” red peppers became associated with the African diaspora even before the American Colonies were established. Unfortunately, African American recipes were rarely written down, and we must rely on other written sources and forms of evidence.

Robert L. Hall, in his article in *Southern Quarterly* (Winter 2007, p. 33), reported many traditional African dishes of the





This postcard from the 1960s, with a re-enactor in costume, depicts the interior of the kitchen building of the Burgwin-Wright House, built c. 1770 in Wilmington, NC.

Created by Joseph Ne. Historical Society of Lower Cape Fear, Online Image Collection, 05.893,100.

1700s characterized by “bitey” or “hot” seasoning. The bite was provided by red chili pepper (cayenne) and/or malagueta pepper (a small, brown spicy berry, also known as African pepper, British pepper, alligator pepper, guinea pepper, or grains of paradise). These two types of pepper—the first indigenous to the Americas, the second to West Africa—were used to prepare hot, spicy vegetable stews on the African Gold Coast, and often served with cooked greens throughout West Africa (Mendes; Hall, p. 24).

Helen Mendes, in her *African Heritage Cookbook*, reviewed letters and diaries from historical African sources and reported liberal use of hot pepper—fresh, dried, grated, or pounded to a paste (pp. 31, 14). Other seasonings were salt, onion, garlic, lemon juice, seeds, nuts and oils to enhance bland-tasting food. Two sample recipes published in the 1900s help to substantiate the tradition of fiery-hot sauces in Africa:

- *Ghana Recipe Book* by Nyaho et al. (1950) included Hot Pepper Sauce combining *kpakpo shite* (dried hot peppers), spring onions, tomatoes, and salt, to be served with grilled fish, sardines, or hot *kenkey* (dumpling). “Discarding the seeds reduces the ‘hotness’ of the sauce to make suitable for children. It may be diluted by adding lots of tomatoes or partly ripe pawpaw and oil before serving to older children. Addition of vinegar ... makes a great improvement” (p. 17).
- Mendes (1971) included a recipe for Mixed Greens, a dish seasoned with ¼ tsp red pepper flakes, 2 tbsp vinegar, and other greens such as kale and collard (p. 151).

Columbus, on his voyages to the Caribbean, was the first European to encounter chili peppers. In subsequent British colonization of the West Indies, chili peppers were an important product for internal use as well as for export, albeit overshadowed by sugar and rum. Patricia Reber called to my attention an important 18<sup>th</sup>-Century source of information on this, Edward Long’s *History of Jamaica*. Long, a British colonial administrator, observed that there were about 15 varieties of the capsicum (“Indian Pepper”) thriving in the West Indies. He wrote that the bell and bird peppers were the most commonly used varieties for pickling. The bird-pepper would be gathered when ripe, dried in the sun, pounded, mixed with salt, and kept in stopped bottles as “cayan-butter”, an excellent relish for

soups, turtle, and other dishes. The pickled pepper and cayan-butter were also modest exports to North America, he wrote (Long, vol. 3, pp. 722-723).

Because the British colonial territories of the Caribbean and the American Low-Country were closely bound together at this time, including via trade in African slaves and in agricultural products, this suggests a mechanism by which the custom of preparing and consuming pepper vinegar might first have reached Wilmington and other ports. In her study of the seminal cookbook by Mary Randolph (see below), Karen Hess noted two consecutive recipes that are versions of Gumbo and Pepper Pot, both of which are cayenne-rich stews in the British West Indies. Based on clues such as this, in a range of cookbooks and other materials, Hess concluded that “the use of capsicum peppers seems to have come to Virginia by way of the West Indies” (Randolph, p. 283).

### Plantation Cooking in Early America

Cooking with red peppers in colonial and early America was clearly influenced by African Americans. Spicy chili peppers, along with garlic and ginger, provided cooking flavors in African American dishes in addition to seasoning from vegetables, molasses, and meat.

In the Low-Country, living in geographic isolation on plantations with few whites, African Americans from Africa and the West Indies shared and merged their diverse cooking styles in ways that formed characteristic patterns. For example, red peppers distributed to slaves at Somerset Plantation in North Carolina in 1787 were used to season stewed vegetable dishes (Hughes, p. 22). A planter in South Carolina in 1851 reported that beans well seasoned with red pepper were very commonly eaten in the slave community (Joyner, p. 96).

Since African Americans were not allowed to learn reading and writing, combinations and flavors such as pepper vinegar were handed down from mothers who taught daughters by word of mouth and practical experience. Their recipes were usually recorded only by others, if at all.

Mary Randolph (1762-1828), an outstanding Southern cookbook author of English heritage who was considered the best cook in Virginia in the years around 1800 (Carson, p. xxxi), was responsible for the legacy of many African American dishes. Her eclectic cooking style and familiarity with Low-Country cooking introduced many new dishes and flavors to Southern cooking fame.

Randolph and her husband lived at first on a 750-acre plantation along the James River, and later at homes in Richmond and Washington. It was because the African American women cooking in her kitchens left such deep “imprints” that Randolph included many of their recipes in her cookbook, *The Virginia House-Wife*. Here is the Pepper Vinegar recipe:

Get one dozen pods of pepper when ripe, take out the stems, and cut them in two; put them in a kettle with three pints of vinegar, boil it away to one quart and strain it through a sieve. A little of this is excellent in gravy of every kind, and gives a flavour greatly superior to black pepper; it is also

*continued on next page*

## PEPPER VINEGAR *continued from page 9*

very fine when added to each of the various catsups for fish sauce (p. 202).

In her commentary accompanying this facsimile edition of the cookbook, Karen Hess suggested that “pods of pepper” in the above instructions likely refers to cayenne, since Randolph contrasts its flavor with that of the (milder) black pepper. In addition, we know that chili pods were available on at least some plantations in the region because, Hess wrote, Thomas Jefferson in Virginia was planting cayenne as early as 1767, and some correspondence of his from 1813 refers to seasoning foods with vinegar in which cayenne has been steeped (Randolph, p. 283).

If the pepper vinegar in Randolph’s household was fiery hot, it was also used in moderation, as evidenced by her own words: “A little of this is excellent in gravy” and other sauces. As Hess put it, “the use of hot peppers in traditional Virginia cookery was highly skilled and discreet, just enough to brighten the taste, not to set it afire” (p. 283).

Randolph’s cookbook was one of the most widely used in Southern homes. She was regularly quoted in the Wilmington press during the Civil War. It was partly due to her lasting influence that regional cookbooks called for red peppers in steadily increasing amounts. Over 100 years later, her Pepper Vinegar recipe was included in *The Williamsburg Art of Cookery* (1938) by Mrs. Helen Bullock, a collection of historical recipes “of the most Ancient & Approv’d Recipes in Virginia Cookery”.

### The Civil War and Later

Pepper vinegar was used in Wilmington during the Civil War era. Crushed red pepper, fresh jalapeño pepper, and pepper vinegar were used by African-Americans to season greens, soups, stews, sauces, macaroni, sausage, and haslet (liver mush). Pickled Oysters were a Sunday night favorite of the plantation-owning Bellamy family in the Civil War years (Bellamy). Pickled Oyster recipes typically instructed to boil the oyster liquor with vinegar, wine, pepper, mace, and salt, and to pour this over the oysters.

After the Civil War, Annabella Hill in Georgia published *Southern Practical Cookery and Receipt Book* (1872) to assist white wives who had lost their African American cooks—cooks who had known by heart how to prepare dishes. Hill’s recipe for Hot Pepper Vinegar included instructions on how to make a goose-quill spout for the cork:

Put into a quart bottle thirty small pods of green or red pepper (make of both kinds separately). Set the bottles in an oven in water; make the water boil. When the peppers are thoroughly hot, pour in good vinegar to fill the bottle; cork tight. In the centre of the cork insert a goose quill or reed three inches long open at both ends; through this the vinegar may be poured when using it. Stop with a good cork when not in use (p. 206).

In 1881, Mrs. Fisher’s book on *Old Southern Cooking* was published. Abby Fisher was an African American, originally from Orangeburg, SC, who had established her own firm in San Francisco to produce pickles and preserves (Brower). Her award-winning recipes included the use of cayenne and vinegar in such items as Chow Chow, Creole Chow Chow, Cherry

## Locating Resources for Teaching Children about African Cooking

Most American cookbooks for children are written for Anglo-American families based on European heritage. Finding children’s cookbooks for a particular heritage is a challenge. Searches for children’s cookbooks on African cooking can follow three streams.

First, search for children’s cookbooks with titles that suggest inclusion of African culture. UNICEF publishes educational materials with a multicultural, international approach. Some educational materials in the U.S. are designed to include international or a national focus on many cultural groups. Some sources provide a more historical perspective than others. Examples:

- *The Little Cooks: Recipes from Around the World for Boys and Girls*, by Jean-Christopher Raufflet and Valerie Pettinari (New York: UNICEF, c. 1995), 32 pp.
- *The Kids Multicultural Cookbook: Food & Fun Around the World*, by Deanna F. Cook, illustrated by Michael P. Kline, a Williamson Kids Can! Book (Charlotte, VT: Williamson, 1995), 159 pp.
- *Kids Around the World Cook!: The Best Foods and Recipes from Many Lands*, by Arlette N. Braman (New York: Wiley, 2000), 116 pp.

Second, search for children’s books that include the word Africa in their titles. Some children’s cookbooks and story books tell about celebrating Kwanzaa. Other children’s story books can help tell history about specific foods such as sweet potatoes or rice. Examples:

- *Cooking the African Way – 22 Kid-tested Recipes!*, by Constance R. Nabwire and Bertha Vining Montgomery (Minneapolis: Lerner, 1988), 48 pp.
- *The African-American Child’s Heritage Cookbook*, by Vanessa Roberts Parham (South Pasadena, CA: Sandcastle, 1993), 290 pp.

Third, build a classroom “cook book” from local resources—interviewing African families, church, and business people. Have these resource people list African foods for each of the food groups in the Food Guide Pyramid. Include the African name of the dish. Design a list of activities with the food information. Invite resource people to tell about the African recipes and about family stories connected with the recipes. Some might prepare foods for the children to taste (but check local food-sanitation guidelines for food tasting in the classroom). Children can write or draw stories about the foods they hear about or taste. And best of all, the children can learn to prepare and eat them.

This same basic approach can be used for introducing many cultural groups to children.

— Ann Hertzler

Chutney, Game Sauce, Compound Tomato Sauce, Napoleon Sauce, Pepper Mangoes, and Meat Dressing. Some recipes had directions on how to halve or double the amount of peppers to regulate the hotness. Other recipes containing cayenne and vinegar (wine vinegar or claret) were Chicken Salad, Beef a la Mode, and Spiced Round.

Pepper vinegar as a stand-alone product was also beginning to reach grocery store shelves. In 1869, the Louisiana planter Edmund McIlhenny brought to market his soon-to-be-famous Tabasco® Pepper Sauce, using locally-grown red chili peppers and white wine vinegar imported from Bordeaux (Bernard). Artemas Ward's *Grocers' Hand-Book and Directory* (1886) included descriptions of black and white pepper and cayenne pepper. After the turn of the century, William D. Polite, an African-American in Wilmington, NC, developed, patented, and marketed Polite's Pepper Sauce with a serial number under the Pure Food and Drug Act. According to the local press in 1911, the sauce was sold at all Wilmington grocery stores: A&P, Piggly Wiggly, and City Grocery. Due to a bottle shortage caused by World War I, Polite's went out of business in 1918.

#### A "Modern" Revival

One factor underlying the upsurge of interest in hot peppers and pepper vinegar is that many more cookbooks began to be written by African Americans from the South, especially in the 1970s and later. In the more mainstream American diet, chili peppers were being used merely to add a hint of seasoning. By contrast, since the late 1700s African Americans had enjoyed the fiery taste of red pepper and pepper vinegar in amounts described as bitey, hot, spicy, fiery, and heady. As African Americans authored and published their own cookbooks, pepper vinegar was among their recipes promoting a greater degree of hotness in a greater variety of dishes.

In her 1970 book, *Vibration Cooking: or, The Travel Notes of a Geechee Girl*, South Carolina-born Vertamae Smart-Grosvenor wrote that she never bought powdered cayenne, but instead crushed whole guinea peppers herself. In her 1996 book she described Pepper Vinegar as a common Southern condiment of distilled white vinegar and fiery chilies (p. 25). She stated that in the South, cooks put up their own supply by packing the peppers into sterilized jars, filling them up with vinegar, and perhaps adding a touch of sugar and salt. Pepper Vinegar, she wrote, is passed at the table for sprinkling on greens or anything else that needs a spark of hot-pepper sauce such as Three-Onion Salsa (pp. 121-2).

A second factor in promoting pepper vinegar in African American communities has been the increasing focus on nutritious food choices. In her 1998 cookbook commemorating the Tuskegee Institute, Carolyn Quick Tillery included a "George W[ashington] Carver Salad" of mixed greens, "named in honor of this health-conscious scientist". Drizzled on the greens before tossing is an Herb Vinaigrette Dressing of cider vinegar, black and cayenne pepper, olive oil, and minced fresh herbs (pp. 44-45). The dressing is not only delicious but also healthful, economical, and easy to make—the very concerns that preoccupied Carver at Tuskegee a century ago. ■

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# “COLEWORTS” AND POT LIKKER IN NORTH CAROLINA

by Ann A. Hertzler

Collard greens are a traditional New Year’s Day good-luck vegetable in the South. In Colonial days the most important garden vegetables in the Lower Cape Fear of North Carolina were Irish and sweet potatoes, many varieties of peas and beans, and vegetables native to the New World and from Europe (Cathey, pp. 4-6).

The word “collard” is a corruption of the older English word “colewort”, which was still being used in the American colonies. Collards are a variety of the same cruciferous species that includes kale, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, and others.

Colonial gardens in the Carolinas contained coleworts and many other green vegetables, whose year-round use was limited without some way to preserve them. Greens such as collards, mustard, spinach, cabbage, okra leaves, turnip greens, etc., were grown in a communal garden on some plantations or by slave families with small plots of their own (Joyner, p. 95; Carney, p. 158). Some slaves gathered wild greens and salvaged turnip and beet tops discarded by the master (Tillery 2010). A daughter of a slave who was kept at the Bellamy Plantation in the Wilmington area recalled for a WPA writer in the 1930s, “We always had plenty of collards, an’ po’k an’ corn bread” (Harriss).

Many vegetables such as collards were sold in the Wilmington Market. By the 1840s, market house stalls 1-4 were assigned to vegetables, 5-24 to meats, and 25-30 to fish (Watson, p. 188). A public dock at the foot of Market Street also sold vegetables.

Fort Fisher, a Civil War stronghold, guarded the entry of supplies to the port of Wilmington for shipment to General Robert E. Lee, Commander of the Confederate Army. Being assigned to the post’s garden was considered a lucky duty compared to the manual work involved in actually building the fort. Collards and other garden vegetables supplemented the soldier’s diet (Gragg, p. 22).

In the 1930s commercial vegetable farms in the Wilmington area harvested lettuce, greens, and other vegetables in June. These were packed in large wooden baskets, placed in railroad cars, iced down, and shipped north to New York. Many African-Americans worked at the Vegetable Gardens; their children helped pick in the Summer. The pickers were allowed to bring home vegetables for the family (Hertzler).

Although old-time city food markets have disappeared around Wilmington, collards are still found in today’s groceries and roadside vegetable stands. African-American churches in



Image courtesy of North Carolina Museum of History. Used with permission; further reproduction prohibited.

**“Woman with Collard Leaf to Cure Headache” is by the artist Mary Lyde Hicks Williams (1866-1959) of Faison, NC. As the young daughter of a plantation owner who was a former Confederate officer, Williams painted scenes of freed slaves at home and at work in the surrounding Duplin County.**

Wilmington celebrate Family and Friends Day, sharing many vegetables such as collards, along with other traditional food such as pig’s feet, ham hocks, and clam fritters. Such events have also been reported in other areas of the Gullah Geechee Corridor (Beoku-Betts, p. 292). African-American church groups support similar food events for missionary meetings, funerals, and other gatherings.

## Searching for Early Collard Recipes

In a preliminary search of English cookbooks that were popular in the Colonies, I found recipes for spinach and greens but none specifically for collards. An early American edition of Hannah Glasse’s English cookbook, *The Art of Cookery* (1805), noted that over-boiling garden things hurts crispness, sweetness, and beauty (pp. 31, 35).

The first American cookbook, written by Amelia Simmons in 1796, included recipes for cabbages and lettuce (pp. 12, 14) but no other greens. In the early 1800s Mary Randolph’s *The Virginia House-wife*, famous for introducing Southern cooking, contained no recipes for collard greens but one for Turnip Tops (p. 125). Sarah Rutledge, *The Carolina Housewife* (1847), had only stewed spinach (p. 100).

Even after the Civil War, Southern cookbooks by white women listed recipes for greens without mentioning collards. Most African Americans around Wilmington would know how to cook collards, a green they prepared often. Such experienced cooks would not need printed recipes for everyday foods.

A hundred years later, Thurman's *Historical Cookbook of the America Negro* (1958) recognized famous African-Americans such as George Washington Carver and events such as food festivals and celebrations. Its recipes were based on distinct African-American traditions, many deriving from African heritage, but the book did not dwell on the history of food. The recipes for Boiled Turnip and Mustard Greens were considered typical middle-class choices (p. 66).

### Cooking Collards

The first African-American collard recipes published in cookbooks began appearing after the 1950s, including Ruth Gaskins (1968), Vertamae Smart-Grosvenor (1970), and the Dardens (1978).

These sources explain that collards are best harvested after the frost, or can be put in the freezer for the same result, since the cold makes them more tender. Cooking collards begins with washing two or three times, or until the bottom of the sink is clear of bugs and dirt and after discarding damaged or yellowed leaves. Some sources advise to remove the thick core of the leaf; others say to use the whole leaf. The leaves are rolled up and sliced crosswise with a knife or scissors for cooking. Most recipes suggest simply cooking in the water that clings to the washed greens, while others suggest covering the greens with water. The choice of seasoning may be some kind of pork, other greens, sugar, salt and pepper, onion, vinegar, or a bit of hot sauce. Hot pepper vinegar is often on the table for individual use (Smart-Grosvenor 1970, p. 132).

Gaskins commented to be sure that some pot liquor, the liquid left after the greens are cooked, is spooned out with each helping to maximize the amount of vitamins consumed. Pot liquor (also written as pot likker or pot-licker) can also be consumed as a soup, a delicious drink, or a stock for soups. Eating the pot liquor with a piece of cornbread in it, a traditional meal in Southern culture, was still popular with African-Americans in Wilmington in the 1980s (Blanks, pp. 81, 82).

Pot-likker and cornmeal were fed to slave children. Lunsford Lane, a North Carolina slave, wrote:

the pot-liquor in which the meat was boiled for the 'great house,' together with some little corn-meal balls that had been thrown in just before the meat was done, was poured into a tray and set in the middle of the yard and a clam shell or pewter spoon given to each of us children, who would fall upon the delicious fare as greedily as pigs (Andrews, ed., p. 105).

Dumplings were often cooked with collard greens (Tillery 1998, p. 127). As the greens finished cooking, fingers were pressed into a cornmeal dough stiff enough to leave fingerprints, and pieces of the dough were then dropped into the pot of cooking greens.

### Health Considerations

Collard greens were important for the health and wellness of African American slaves and low-income whites, due to the meagerness of diet and accessibility to garden greens in Colonial days and later, well after the Civil War. Collards were considered beneficial by Europeans against inflammation and by Native Americans and African Americans for aching heads and misery, as shown in the painting on the previous page.

Twentieth Century food research in the United States documented the need for leafy greens, especially among poor Southern farmers. Based on his nutrition studies at the Experiment Station near Tuskegee, AL, George Washington Carver produced 44 bulletins between 1898 and 1943 instructing poor farm families how to raise and prepare nutritious foods such as greens in the home garden (Simms).

The importance of the "collard habit" was described by two African-American authors. In the 1970s Vertamae Smart-Grosvenor, a South Carolina native, wrote that she needed to eat collards every other day (p. 132). Ruth Gaskins (p. 38) pointed out that it was hard to think anyone could grow up without greens. Both authors had experience with white women in supermarkets asking, "What do you do with those things?" Vertamae once cooked "Collard Greens a la Shepp" for a soul food party in Chelsea, Manhattan. She obtained the recipe, which calls for adding "a bit of hot sauce and a bit of sugar" to the cook-pot, from her friend, the party's guest of honor: African-American jazz musician and playwright Archie Shepp (pp. 131-2).

Since the middle 1900s greens have been part of programs to promote the health and wellness of Americans. Dark leafy greens have been noted for their rich contribution of many water-soluble vitamins and minerals such as Vitamins A and C, iron, and calcium. Although collards often appear incognito under the category of dark leafy greens, they are a favorite choice of many who have grown up in the Wilmington area or been connected to Southern foodways. In fact, many dark greens are emerging as a possible food choice and prepared in many new ways. But for the moment, collards appear to predominate as the choice with older populations in Wilmington. ■

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## In Memoriam: Marjorie Cripps

We were very sorry to learn of the recent passing of Marjorie Cripps, a member of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor since 2000. For many years she had lived in a condominium on Waters-edge Drive in northeast Ann Arbor, but last September she had moved to Arbor Hospice after her leukemia became untreatable. She died there peacefully on March 2. Her twin son and daughter, Mark and Lynne, survive her along with her sister Wendy in England.

Marjorie was a very friendly and likable person, and often got together with other CHAAers. Everyone who knew her will remember her dazzling eyes and smile— we wish that we had a photograph to accompany these words.

Marjorie had emigrated from England with her husband and their children in 1966. They came to Ann Arbor, where her husband took up a position with the Bendix Corp. Marjorie worked for the Univ. of Michigan for many years, retiring in 1998 as the Registrar for the School of Public Health.

While she was only able to get to CHAA meetings intermittently, Marjorie greatly enjoyed those that she was able to attend, especially the participatory theme meals. The care that she took in preparing her contributed dishes was quite notable. For our Spanish *tapas* meal in Dec. 2001, she made *tartaletas* (miniature *empanadas*) with a filling of anchovies, caramelized onions, garlic, and capers. After cutting out little circles of pastry dough to line individual tartlet shells, she had first baked these "blind" for firmness, then spooned in the filling before their final turn in the oven. For "Sandwiches from Around the World" (Jul. 2007), Marjorie prepared examples of Danish *smørrebrød*, or open-faced sandwiches. She used a dark brown bread, layering some of the sandwiches with herring and slices of cucumber and beet, others with such morsels as hardboiled egg, olive, red onion, and tomato. A few of Marjorie's other memorable creations included her 12<sup>th</sup>-Century Alsatian Jewish dish of cooked red cabbage with wine and chestnuts for "Jewish Foods Around the World" (Dec. 2000); Apicius's *lenticulam de castaneis* (lentils with chestnuts) for "Foods of Ancient Greece, Rome, and the Holy Land" (Dec. 2004); and a jambalaya of diced ham, dark-meat chicken, and sliced *andouille* sausage for "A Salute to Our Friends on the Gulf Coast" (Dec. 2006).

In her spare time, Marjorie was an avid stamp collector, traveled internationally, and never lost her love for England where her roots were. We in the CHAA shall remember her fondly.

# Carroll J. Thomson

October 11, 1942 – December 15, 2014

Carroll Thomson, a beloved longtime member and past President of CHAA, died last October at the age of 72 following a long and courageous battle with cancer. A memorial service was held on Dec. 19 at the First Congregational Church of Ann Arbor. Carroll and her husband John, who had died unexpectedly in Aug. 2013, are survived by two sons, two daughters, and six granddaughters.

Jan Longone, CHAA co-founder, recalled Carroll as “a wonderful, creative, contributing citizen and a good friend to so many of us.” Phil Zaret was one of several members over the years who joined our group as a result of Carroll’s influence. He first met Carroll and her husband as fellow actors with the Thurston Players, and then came to know her eateries in northeast Ann Arbor, called Carroll’s Corner and the Trellis Café & Tea Room. As a fellow business owner, Phil admired how hardworking she always was. Darcy Crain-Polly, a minister at the memorial, noted that Carroll “never really took breaks, she just kept going. She was a true Wonder Woman.”

Minister Robert Livingston recalled Carroll’s tremendous hospitality. With her “warm smile, hearty laughter, and wonderful sense of humor,” he said, Carroll was “able to make everyone feel like family.” Our members felt this warmth strongly, especially at the participatory theme meals that the Thomsons hosted in their home on Liberty Road. Carroll’s son Bryan Young noted that food was “a recurring theme” in her life. When he was in kindergarten and “ran away from home”, Carroll packed a snack for him to take along, and had hot cocoa waiting for him when he changed his mind and returned about an hour later! Before trying to start her own restaurants, she learned the trade by working at established ones. The specialty at Carroll’s Corner were the delicious scones and tea, and a favorite at the Trellis Café was Aunt Kay’s Macaroni.

Carroll Jo Lanzen was born in Detroit in 1942, and she married John in 1976. Together they enjoyed growing vegetables and other plants, learning about foods and culinary history, and traveling across the U.S. and overseas. Carroll taught at Ann Arbor’s Oak Trails Montessori School in her early years, and later at the Congregational Church, where she also served on the Board of Deacons, eventually as Chair.

When Carroll joined an organization, it wasn’t just to be a member or to earn a wall plaque: she wanted to help people, to lead people, and to leave a lasting impact of change. For years she headed the Michigan Division of the Woman’s National Farm and Garden Association. She also had prominent roles in the American Red Cross and the American Business Women’s Association.



For the CHAA, Carroll served as President from 2001 to 2012. She and John were co-presenters of talks on “The Social and Cultural History of Coffee” (Jan. 1986) and “The Docents Speak: The Making of a Culinary Archive, Clements Library, Univ. of Michigan” (Sep. 2001). At their home, they hosted participatory theme meals focused on the bicentennial of American cookbooks (Dec. 1996), the foods of the Impressionists (Jul. 1998), Tuscany (July 2000), Spanish *tapas* (Dec. 2001), and Mexico (Dec. 2002).

Carroll and John also worked as docents at the Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive (Univ. of Michigan Libraries). Carroll helped organize and research the boxes of culinary ephemera, focusing on the cooking guides (wartime shortages, paper-bag cookery, etc.) and the items related to raising a family (such as gelatin, cereal, baking powder, and dairy products). For more information, see Kathleen Schafer and Carroll Thomson, “Children’s Culinary Ephemera at the Clements Library”, *Repast*, Winter 2007, pp. 12-13, 16. ■

# Joann Chalats

March 6, 1928 – January 21, 2015

Joann Chalats of Grosse Pointe, MI, who with her husband Ned was a leading CHAA member from the mid-1980s to 2006, passed away in January at the age of 86. Throughout her last days Ned cared for her tenderly, and she died at home surrounded by their beautiful collection of antiquarian books. A memorial service was held on Jan. 25 at Ira Kaufman Chapel in Southfield, followed by a private funeral at Beth El Memorial Park, Livonia. In addition to her husband of 62 years, Joann's survivors include two of their three children, and five grandchildren. The family encourages memorial contributions to Doctors Without Borders-USA.

The Chalats were among the earliest members of the CHAA. To attend our monthly meetings they would make the lengthy drive from their home in the northern Detroit suburb of Grosse Pointe. In truth, it was also a great excuse to revisit some of their old haunts in town: they had first met and fallen in love there as students at the Univ. of Michigan. Joann once gave a bittersweet recollection of the original CHAA meeting place, the Old Second Ward Building downtown: "I have many happy memories of meeting upstairs at the Democratic Club headquarters, sitting around a big oak table and sometimes freezing. The heat was not always reliable!" Yet they found the meetings worthwhile enough that they convinced several other couples in the Detroit suburbs to join the fledgling CHAA.

Early on, in 1985 or 1986, Joann made a presentation to our group on the subject of Chocolate, and twice later she presented jointly with Ned, on "Food and Family" (Apr. 1992) and "From Marjolaine to Camel's Hump: Eating Out Around the World" (May 1998). The dishes that she prepared for our gatherings over the years were often memorable, including a very large lime-green Jell-O mold to accompany her tape of Joan Morris singing "Lime Jello Marshmallow Cottage Cheese Surprise" for our participatory meeting about Food and Music (Dec. 1991). Other memorable dishes included her *bœuf à la bourguignonne* to represent the French Revolution of the 1960s at our "American Food in the Twentieth Century: Decade by Decade" theme (Dec. 1999), and her lentil-olive and cucumber-mint salads, both made with recipes from Eileen Gaden's *Biblical Garden Cookery*, for "Foods of Ancient Greece, Rome, and the Holy Land" (Dec. 2004). The Chalats also graciously offered their home and garden as venues for some of our picnic themes:

- "Italian *al Fresco* Picnic" (Jul. 22, 1990)
- "Julia Child's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Picnic" (Aug. 9, 1992)
- "Home Grown: Farmers' Markets" (Aug. 3, 1997).

Joann Steinberg was born in Detroit in 1928 and attended Central High School there and UM in Ann Arbor. A campus leader, sorority gal, and member of the women's synchronized swim team, she graduated with a bachelor's degree in mathematics and science in 1949. In that same year she married



Ned Chalats (pronounced sha-LOT), and she began working for Dr. Ralph Pino as a certified orthoptic technician helping to test children's eyesight. Shortly thereafter the couple moved to New York and then to Livermore, CA, where Ned, an otolaryngologist, served in the Air Force while Joann worked as a lifeguard at Parks Air Force Base. It was on one of Joann's trips to the Livermore library with their children that a librarian sparked her interest in children's literature, which she would pursue avidly for the rest of her life.

When the family moved to Detroit, Joann became an active volunteer for Children's Hospital, Head Start, and other organizations. After the children were grown, she managed her father's business, the White Color Card Company, a firm that specialized in printing color cards for the automotive and paint industries.

Joann had a great *joie de vivre* and sense of humor. At the memorial in January, her daughter Nancy said that Joann's life was one "filled with love, learning, and adventure.... She was a voracious reader, an adventurous world traveler, a gourmet cook." She kept competitive in swimming, cycling, and downhill skiing; loved going to restaurants, theatres, and art museums; was fluent in French and active in the Alliance Française; and led several French reading clubs.

The couple collected antiquarian books and accumulated a renowned 10,000-volume library, including many wonderful works for children. On each of their own children's birthdays, Ned would give Joann, whom he called "his muse", a rare book and a sentimental note. Joann served on the Board of the Detroit Public Library, and rose to be President of the Detroit Book Club and of the Arthur Rackham Society, which celebrates the work of that English artist and book illustrator. In 2000, she and Ned were honored for their contributions to UM, including their donation of a collection of rare books illustrated by Rackham. ■



# WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE!

The Fall 2014 programs of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor, and affiliated exhibits, focused on coffee roasting as well as on high-chair tableware, Dutch-American food customs, the life and legacy of Duncan Hines, and the life and legacy of *Gourmet* magazine. We provide brief summaries here; our December theme meal is reported in the next article.



Tableware for Babies

“The Art of High Chair Fine Dining” was a Dinnerware Museum exhibit held at the Ladies’ Literary Club of Ypsilanti in September. It had three parts:

- Historical and vintage baby-ware, ranging from classic to “kitsch”. Examples included a Quaker Oats promotional chrome bowl from the 1930s featuring images of the Dionne quintuplets; monochrome plastic Chow Chow Trains (c. 1940s) to carry cups and spoons; and a plate, cup, and bowl with a Humpty Dumpty motif, made in Czechoslovakia for the export market.
- Contemporary baby-ware created for this exhibit by invited artists. Examples included Val Cushing’s glazed porcelain child’s dinnerware set in gorgeous earth tones; and Rebecca Harvey’s pap boat (a vessel for feeding soft food to infants), made of slip-cast porcelain in the shape of an upside-down Ping, the yellow Chinese duck in the 1933 tale for children, *The Story about Ping*.
- An open juried exhibit, in which artist Marie Woo (Bloomfield Hills, MI) judged works in clay, paper, and fiber submitted by artists from eight states in the U.S. Prizes were provided by Chelsea Milling (local makers of “Jiffy” mixes) and Zingerman’s. Award winners were Andrée Valley, first prize for her painted paper “A Bowl o’ V’s”, Matisse-like in its primary colors; Stephanie Osser, second prize for her “Ba Ba Blue Sheep”, a set of four triangular plates and two pitchers of glazed porcelain slip; and Susan O’Connor, honorable mention for “Mother Earth”, a colorfully glazed white-stoneware set of plate, bowl, and cup with pleasing calls to protect the planet’s resources.

## The Dutch Legacy

Peter G. Rose of South Salem, NY, a scholar of historical Dutch and Dutch-American food customs, gave two talks in Ann Arbor, “Influence of the Dutch on the American Kitchen” (Sep. 19 at a gathering of the Netherlands America University League) and “Art in Food and Food in Art” (Sep. 21 at a branch of the Ann Arbor District Library). Originally from Utrecht, Peter came to the U.S. at age 25 in the 1960s. Based on studying cookery manuscripts, government records, and other documents, as well as paintings of the period, from both sides of the Atlantic, she and others have reconstructed the foodways of the early Dutch settlers in the Hudson and Delaware valleys. The settlers arrived in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries to establish profitable trade networks, not only in furs but in food and other provisions to supply Dutch West India Company (GWIC) ships bound for the Caribbean. From the Old Country they transplanted seeds and stocks of their familiar food plants, as well as their ways of cooking and eating; kitchen implements were supplied by the GWIC. Dutch cultural identity and food customs persisted in the Northeast even after the language itself stopped being spoken there in the mid-1800s.

The mainstay of the diet, bread, typically a coarse black rye, was usually brought for baking to a community oven to conserve fuel. Wheat was easy to grow in America, and Peter described many other baked and fried goods: *herrenbrot* (“gentleman’s bread”), refined, white, and highly leavened; the twice-baked *zotinnekoek*, i.e., zweiback or rusk, too dry to ever spoil, sold in barrels of 13, 25, 50, or 100; *poffertjes* and other types of thin, yeasted pancake; wafers (often cinnamon-flavored) and waffles, both made in iron tongs and often sold on the street; pretzels, which were sweet; gingerbread, which was hard; *oliekoeken* or *oliebollen*, deep-fried doughnuts; pastries and cakes; raised pies filled with fruit or fowl; and *doot cockjes* (*coekjes*), imprinted funeral cookies.

Also fairly common were game, freshwater fish, mussels, and shrimp, the last cooked in seawater. The Dutch ate more vegetables than other Europeans, and were especially fond of *spinazie* (literally “spinach”, generically “greens”). The commoners’ breakfast consisted of bread, cheese or butter, and “pottage” (vegetable mush). The main repast, at 10 a.m. or noon, was a one-pot meal of meat or fish with vegetables (or among the poor, a simple stew of peas or beans), eaten with bread. The *hutspot* of Leiden featured carrots, onions, and parsnips; potatoes weren’t common until after 1800. The typical evening meal, just before bed, was a milky porridge, accompanied by bread and beer. The Dutch adopted the Indians’ custom of cornmeal mush, but with the addition of milk.

## Ruling the Roast

“Coffee Roasting: History, Theory, and Modern Practice” was the Oct. 19 talk by Adrienne Sigetti, a licensed home roaster who sells at the Farmer’s Market in Depot Town, Ypsilanti. She reviewed the history of coffee from its origins in the Red Sea region (Yemen and Ethiopia), where beans were traditionally roasted over a fire on metal pans or ceramic dishes. From there

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## SMELL THE COFFEE! *continued from page 17*

coffee spread across the Ottoman world, including the Middle East and North Africa, motivating early coffeehouses in Constantinople (1554) and Vienna (1645). American colonial roasters included hand-cranked drums and three-legged spiders; coffee drinking was boosted by the anti-British tea protests. The late 1800s saw the introduction of motor-driven rotary roasters for homemakers and street vendors, and larger models for industrial packers such as Chase and Sanborn in Boston. Instant coffee became popular in the 1930s, while the 1970s saw the rise of craft suppliers (single-origin, organic, and/or fair trade), such as Peet's, Biggby, Starbucks, and Green Mountain. Small-scale processors such as Zingerman's Coffee Co. roast batches of only hundreds of pounds at a time.

Adrienne explained that each coffee berry contains a pair of olive-green seeds, or "beans". Depending on geography, they are processed "wet" or sun-dried before export. The two main varieties are Arabica and Robusta, the first prevalent in countries such as Brazil (the leading exporter) and the second in Southeast Asia. About 20 minutes of roasting are needed, varying with the darkness desired. The skins come off as chaff, but can be retained for a "grassy" flavor. Leading brands of home roasters include Sirocco, Hearthware Gourmet, and Behmor.

### A Kentucky-Fried Chow Hound

Duncan Hines (1880-1959) was only peripherally related to the cake mixes that bear his name, but he was actually far more important to our society than most people realize, helping to shape popular culture. This was the message presented on Nov. 9 by Louis Hatchett, who wrote a book about his fellow Kentuckian, *Duncan Hines: How a Traveling Salesman Became the Most Trusted Name in Food* (Univ. Press of Kentucky, 2014). Hines's fascinating career began as a telegraph operator for Wells Fargo out West. In Albuquerque he visited a Fred Harvey restaurant and was impressed by its quality and cleanliness, rare in those days. Later, traveling the U.S. by rail and auto as a very effective salesman for printing companies, he began to keep detailed notes on the best restaurants he could find in each town. As word spread, he compiled a choice list of 167 eateries in 30 states, and sold it by mail-order. This led to a self-published book, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1936). By 1938, he went full-time into writing and printing his own hotel and restaurant guides. These were the first independent, and thus truthful, handbooks for discriminating travelers: unlike his predecessors, he refused to take payments or advertising from the establishments he judged. His reviews were also vivid and fun to read.

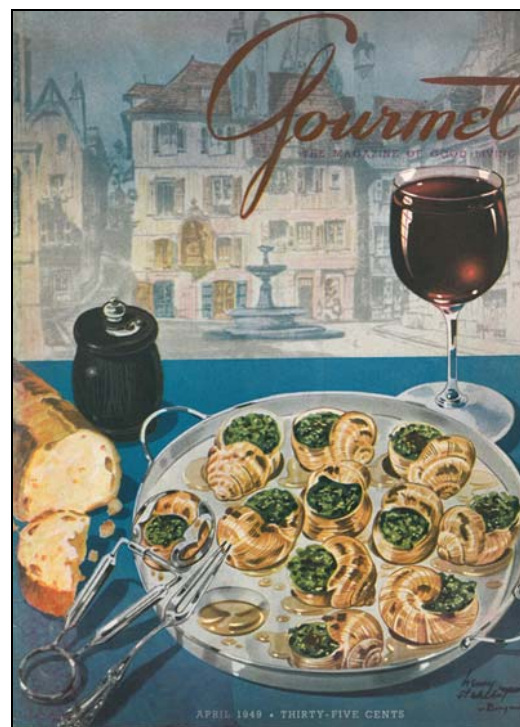
Hines was a national celebrity; according to a 1945 survey, his was the most trusted name in the food industry. Soon he sold rights to use that name to a partner, Roy H. Park, for marketing cake mixes, ice cream, jams and jellies, pickles, sauces, and other products. Much more important was the long-term impact of the Duncan Hines guides: restaurants vied to be mentioned in them by maintaining quality, sanitation, and technical improvements. Hatchett told us, "He essentially used his guide as a weapon to reform the industry. And it worked", permanently raising the standards and expectations of both owners and customers. Arguably, this was also a key factor enabling the rise of fast-food empires.

## The Brilliant Life of *Gourmet*

On Nov. 18 Jan Longone, Adjunct Curator of American Culinary History (Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive, Special Collections, Univ. of Michigan) spoke about "The Life and Death of *Gourmet: The Magazine of Good Living*", a major exhibit on display in the Fall. Her co-curators were Cecilia Fileti, Lili Krezel, and Joanne Nesbit. One issue was on display from each of the 69 years of publication (Jan. 1941 – Nov. 2009), as well as books published by *Gourmet* and books published over the years by leading contributors to the magazine.

Earlier food magazines had focused more narrowly: practical tips for preparing meals and for managing the home and kitchen. When publisher and Editor-in-Chief Earle MacAusland launched the monthly *Gourmet*, he resolved that it would be much more broad and diverse, offering an intellectual dialog to upscale readers about the whole world of food production and consumption, plus the history of food, chefs, and gastronomes. The magazine's internal functioning was never written about, and no detailed records were kept, but it's known that recipes were home-tested by staff until the mid-1960s, when a test kitchen was established. French native Louis Diat became the "in-house chef" in 1947, and also wrote his own feature articles.

Samuel Chamberlain, who had lived in France for many years and had very broad interests, wrote for *Gourmet* during 1941-66 and was perhaps its greatest asset. Much of his writing was in regularly appearing columns such as "Bouquet de France" and "Clémentine in the Kitchen". A few of the dozens of other writers whose works were displayed are M.F.K. Fisher, Joseph Wechsburg, Clementine Paddleford, Calvin Trillin, Jane and Michael Stern, Ruth Reichl, and William Woys Weaver. An oft-heard criticism was that *Gourmet* was elitist; in many ways it reflected an earlier world. With ad revenue falling in the Great Recession, mega-publisher Condé Nast could no longer sustain the lavish monthly. ■



April 1949 cover of *Gourmet*, from the Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive.

# TO EACH THEIR OWN COMFORT

Here are a few ways to describe them:

- They are beloved and cherished.
- They are often passed down within families.
- People turn to them again and again, especially for solace in difficult times.

Are we talking about Bibles? Qur'ans? We could be— but instead, let's talk about comfort foods!

“Global Comfort Foods”, held last November 23, was the latest in a series of semi-annual participatory theme meals by the Culinary Historians, dating back more than two decades. Over 40 CHAA members and friends prepared some of their most comforting and cherished dishes and brought them to the Ladies’ Literary Club in Ypsilanti for a grand meal that educated our minds and our palates. We’re grateful to member Phil Zaret for organizing the event, to member Robin Watson for first suggesting the theme, and to facility caretaker Susie Andrews and others for all of their assistance.

Craig Claiborne, in a 1983 *New York Times* column presenting a Smothered Chicken recipe that he’d perfected with help from Pierre Franey, defined comfort food as “a food that gives solace to the spirit when you dine on it.” That seems straightforward enough, but at our meal we discovered a few surprising wrinkles:

1. Comfort dishes vary greatly in their occasion and level of ambition, ranging from a simple bite or snack to a complete meal.
2. The comfort food phenomenon apparently exists in all world regions (but don’t ask us to identify the comfort foods of the Arctic or of Papua New Guinea!).
3. The food characteristics that are considered comforting often vary from culture to culture, and even from person to person within a given culture.

We aim to demonstrate these points in the summary that follows.

## Cheesy Masterpieces

Rich, creamy cheese fits in well with many Westerners’ notions of comfort food, and it was the feature ingredient in two of our dishes.

“For me,” Detroit chef Jimmy Schmidt has said, “macaroni and cheese is the ultimate comfort food.” Two decades ago he contributed his four-cheese recipe for this dish to a charity cookbook, *Comforting Foods* (see sidebar on this page).

At our meal, the macaroni and cheese was baked in a large casserole by Sandy Regiani, a friend of member Sonia Manchek. This dish is distinctly American. It was already being made in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but a recipe that helped spread its popularity appeared in 1930 in *Good Housekeeping’s Meals Tested, Tasted and Approved: Favorite Recipes and Menus from Our Kitchens*

## The Comforts of a Great Chef

*Comforting Foods: Feel-Good Recipes from America’s Top Chefs* (New York, 1996) is one of 375 books donated to Schoolcraft College last Summer by award-winning restaurateur and author Jimmy Schmidt from his personal collection. Schmidt himself was the source of three of the volume’s 173 recipes: Navy Bean Soup with Shallots and Ham; Spinach, Radicchio, and Warm Goat Cheese Salad; and Macaroni with Four Cheeses and Herbs. Compiled and edited by Norman Kolpas, the book was a fundraiser for Project Open Hand, a San Francisco nonprofit that provides home-delivered meals, groceries, and nutrition counseling to people living with HIV/AIDS.

Jimmy Schmidt has a real appreciation for the comforting qualities of food. As he explained once, “Sometimes a good meal is the only good part of a day.”

Born and raised in the Midwest before he headed to France and Boston to study under Madeleine Kamman, Schmidt would later lead the Detroit dining scene as chef at The London Chop House and then at his Rattlesnake Clubs in Detroit and Denver. He went on to head the kitchens at several other restaurants, including Morgan’s in the Desert, a farm-to-table in La Quinta, CA. Decades before it was fashionable, he was a champion of healthful fine dining and of the “cleaner, lighter, fresher” ethos for growing and eating food. Some of his interests and influences are reflected in the books he donated from his collection. A few titles:

- *Cooking with Daniel Boulud* (1993)
- *Lenôtre’s Ice Creams and Candies*, trans. by Philip and Mary Hyman (1979)
- Diana Kennedy, *Mexican Regional Cooking* (1990)
- Barbara Pool Fenzl, *Southwest: The Beautiful Cookbook* (1994)
- *Chef Paul Prudhomme’s Louisiana Kitchen* (1984).

Prudhomme’s book bears the author’s handwritten inscription to Schmidt: “Good Cooking, Good Eating, Good Living, To a Great Chef”.

*to Yours*. Soon thereafter the dish went commercial: in 1937 Kraft introduced its Macaroni & Cheese Dinner, and eight million boxes were sold that first year alone. With grated American cheese premixed with the other ingredients, it was billed as “A meal for four in 9 minutes for an everyday price of 19 cents.” Kraft is still the market leader, selling on the order of 250 million boxes annually.

Reflecting the continued prominence of macaroni and cheese in the American diet, the National Thanksgiving Turkeys for 2014 were named just that, Mac and Cheese. Three days after our meal, President Barack Obama officially pardoned both turkeys from execution. “If you’re a turkey, and you’re named after a side dish, your chances of escaping Thanksgiving dinner are pretty low”, joked the President at the ceremony, to deserved laughter— although we might quibble with him for referring to mac’n’cheese as a “side dish”. (The birds, by the way, which

*continued on next page*

**COMFORT FOODS** *continued from page 19*

weighed in at 47 and 49 lbs., respectively, were raised at Cooper Farms in Oakwood, OH.)

*Poutine* [contributed by Robin Watson] is Quebecois diner fare and a leading regional comfort food. It consists of a plate of French fries topped with cheese curds and brown gravy. Robin secured her curds from Zingerman’s Deli in town, and she made the gravy with a Canadian recipe. The dish is only a few decades old, and the U.S.-based *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* added “poutine” to its listings in early 2014.

With Egg on Our Faces

Egg, like cheese, adds a level of elegance (or as they say in the industry, “superior mouthfeel”) to many comfort foods. *Petites quiches Lorraine* [Sherry Sundling] are savory baked tarts eaten hot or lukewarm. They are filled with a mixture of beaten eggs; either milk or sour cream or *gruyère*-type cheese; and usually some onions and diced, sautéed bacon. The term *quiche* appears to be related to the German *kuchen*, “cake”; the dish comes from the German-bordering French region of Lorraine, where traces of its origins can be found as far back as a 1586 entry in a ducal account book. Sherry uses a technique that she learned decades ago from her mentor, Charity deVicz Suczek, who was a Detroit-area émigré from Europe (see Sherry’s memoir about Mme. Suczek in our Fall 2013 issue).

Other eggy dishes at our meal included:

- twice-baked spinach *soufflés* [Laura and Dan Gillis], using a recipe in Anne Willan’s *From My Château Kitchen* (New York, 2000)
- *tortilla de patatas* [Randy Schwartz and Mariam Breed], a Spanish egg-potato omelet eaten lukewarm, using a recipe in Alicia Rios and Lourdes March, *The Heritage of Spanish Cooking* (New York, 1992)
- codfish cakes [Joanne and Art Cole], a pan-fried Yankee classic, made with freshened salt cod, Kennebec potatoes, egg, and a recipe from Fannie Merritt Farmer, *Boston Cooking School Cookbook* (Boston, 1959)
- eggs and tomatoes served on noodles [Margaret Carney and Bill Walker], a Chinese dish that was presented with pairs of chopsticks
- poppy seed sweet rolls [Sonia Manchek], a family eggbread recipe.

Baked Meals-in-One

You can tell that a cooking style must be mighty important to a region if its name is used both for the cooking vessel itself and for its edible product, as in *casserole*, *cazuela*, *paella*, or *tagine*. Our meal included several examples of casseroles, baked one-dish wonders. Either dry or wet, they are filled with all of the ingredients needed for a complete meal. These are essentially humble dishes that arose out of the stock of peasant and bourgeois cookery.

*Moussaka* [Judy Steeh] is a hearty baked casserole of Ottoman Balkan origin. Judy prepared slices of globe eggplant and yellow potato, and made a meat sauce with ground lamb, tomato paste, red wine, lemon juice, onion, garlic, and spices such as allspice, cinnamon, and oregano. She layered these com-



Judy Steeh’s parmesan-topped *moussaka*. (Photos: Mariam Breed.)

ponents in the dish along with crumbled feta, and topped it with *béchamel* sauce and grated parmesan. The term *moussaka* is not itself of Balkan origin. Instead, the dish and its name appear to be rooted in a non-layered eggplant casserole of the Levant, made with chickpeas instead of potato, usually meatless, and called *musaqqa’ah* (“cooled”) in Arabic because it is served at room temperature. Already in Turkey, prior to the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, this dish had evolved into *musakka*, made with minced meat and sautéed eggplant, and served with rice and yogurt. It was only after 1492 that these dishes began to incorporate New World ingredients such as potato, tomato, zucchini, green pepper, and allspice.

Our meal included some other casserole-style dishes:

- *mămăligă la cuptor* [Tavi Prundeanu and Jan Arps], the baked cornmeal-polenta dish of Romanian Transylvania, with sausage, bacon, and feta cheese. Tavi, who hails from Romania, prepares this frequently at home as a comfort food; for more information, see our Winter 2014 issue, pp. 20-21.
- *golubtsy* [Marion and Nick Holt], ubiquitous in Eastern Europe, a sweet and sour dish of cabbage leaves stuffed with minced meat and rice, baked with tomatoes, black raisins, and other ingredients. Marion learned her very labor-intensive version from her mother.
- *bœuf à la bourguignonne* [Gwen and John Nystuen], the classic oven-baked beef stew from the Burgundy region of France. Typically the meat is first marinated in red wine, and onions, mushrooms, and other vegetables are added to the long-simmering stew.
- shepherd’s pie [Nancy and Bob Harrington], in a version made with a top layer of ground beef and simmered with the contents of a whole bottle of Guinness stout. In earlier times, this dish of the British Isles was made with leftover roasted meat that would be minced by hand. A pastry-crust topping was once common, especially in Scotland. Later, when potatoes became prevalent, mashed potato would be used to line the entire pie in the baking dish, not just the top. “Cottage pie” is an older name for the dish,

first recorded in 1791, while “shepherd’s pie” is a term that didn’t appear until the 1870s, when mincing machines were developed. Either name can be used, regardless whether the meat is lamb, mutton, or beef.

### From the Indian to the Anglo

To some tastes, comfort implies relative blandness, a haven from the stresses, the storms, or the simple overstimulation of everyday life. But to others, what is comforting are familiarly sharp spices and piquant flavors. In South Asia many British colonials, who had inherited food traditions that might be considered bland by today’s standards, dabbled and delighted in the stronger-tasting local ingredients and customs. They embraced but also transformed these foods to make them their own, as seen in such famous Anglo-Indian creations as curry, kedgeree, Country Captain, chutney, piccalilli, and Worcestershire sauce. As part of a trend that some have called “the globalization of comfort food”, these spicy dishes have now become objects of crave-able comfort in the West.

A leading example is chicken *tikka masala* [Jane Wilkinson and Howard Ando], a dish of roasted chunks (*tikka*) of chicken served in a creamy, orange-colored, curry-type sauce made with tomato, coriander, and a spice mixture (*masala*). The dish is a legacy of the imperial kitchens of the Mughal rulers in Northern India (1526-1857). Traditionally the chicken morsels are marinated in spices and yogurt and then cooked on skewers in a *tandoor* oven. The British adaptation of this dish has become wildly popular: reportedly it is now the single most frequently-ordered menu item in the British Isles, and represents about 1 in 7 of all curries sold in Britain. In 2009 a campaign was begun to request that the European Union grant Protected Designation of Origin status to Scotland for the dish, and two years later Robin Cook, the British Foreign Secretary, declared chicken *tikka masala* the new “national dish” of the UK.

Another popular Anglo-Indian adaptation is Mulligatawny soup, brought to our meal by Cheryl Hollins and her neighbor Anna Bielinska and friend André Furtado. Using a “simplified” recipe from Madhur Jaffrey’s *Foolproof Indian Cooking* (Etobicoke, ONT, 2002), they incorporated chicken and stock, red split lentils, ginger, garlic, ground cumin and coriander, curry powder, cayenne pepper, fresh cilantro, and lemon juice. The original Indian dish, with the Tamil name *mullaga thanni* (literally “pepper water”), is simply a sauce for rice, made of chicken- and lamb-stock, fried onions, and spices.

### Comfort Me with Veggies

As every devotee of baked sweet potatoes or of mashed or fried white potatoes appreciates, flavorful vegetables— whether creamy, chewy, or crunchy— can easily be the stars of a comfortable dish.

*Ratatouille* [Susan Bishop] is a Provençal dish of eggplant, tomato, zucchini, and herbs. Traditionally it was prepared as a wet stew, then topped with herbs and breadcrumbs and placed in an oven to give it a brown *gratin* (crust). Susan’s version was delicious, the chunks of vegetable still having some firmness and individuality. She used a recipe from Craig Claiborne’s *The ‘New York Times’ International Cookbook* (New York, 1971) and also a Jacques Pepin recipe that was part of the “Freedom

and Independence” episode of “Lidia [Bastianich] Celebrates America” (PBS-TV, Bastille Day 7/14/14).

A number of other dishes at our meal starred veggies and had origins from all over the world:

- *baklazhannaya ikra* [Phil and Barbara Zaret], literally “eggplant caviar”, a tangy staple of the Russian *zakuski* table. Using a recipe from Jane Blanksteen’s *Nothing Beats Borscht* (New York, 1974), Phil minced and fried eggplant, onion, garlic, and green pepper, adding tomato paste and lemon juice. In a tilt to his mother’s Romanian heritage, he also added some chopped black olives before chilling. He served the caviar with slices of Russian black bread that he made with his own recipe.
- herbed sweet potato bake with spinach [Joanne Nesbit], from Lyniece North Talmadge’s *The Sweet Potato Cookbook* (Nashville, 1998)
- red cabbage and green cabbage [Nancy Sannar], warm side-dishes from Sweden and Iceland, respectively
- chicken salad [Howard Ando and Jane Wilkinson] featuring *jicama*— the crunchy tuberous root of Mexican origin— and homemade “black garlic”— a caramelized form of garlic invented by Korean Scott Kim in 2004 and now often used in Asian cuisine.

### Carbo-Loading to the Heart’s Content

Who hasn’t enjoyed the comfort of a bowl of hot oatmeal on a cold Winter day? Since the dawn of agriculture grits, groats, and grains have been dietary staples, supplying basic calories and other nutrients as well as simple, satisfying flavors. This grainy goodness can be found in everything from gruels, porridges, and other cereals to puddings, pastas, dumplings, leavened and unleavened breads, pies, cakes and cookies, pancakes, waffles and wafers, crackers, popcorn, pretzels— even beer. What a heavenly panoply of possibilities for munching and crunching!

*Kasha varnishkes* [Jan and Dan Longone] is an Eastern European Jewish (Ashkenazi) dish of *gretshke* (buckwheat) groats, onion, and bowtie egg noodles. Jan prepares the dish in a manner inherited from her mother, a Ukrainian immigrant. Typically the *kasha* is browned in a frying pan, boiled in water, and drained, then fried (traditionally using *schmaltz*, rendered poultry fat) along with the onion and noodles. The term *varnishkes*, a Yiddish rendering of the Russian word *varenichki* (small stuffed dumplings), reflects the fact that the original version of *kasha varnishkes* was a dish of small *kasha*-filled dumplings, not very different from *ravioli*.

While Russian *kasha* is usually a creamy porridge, either savory or sweet, Americans of Eastern European descent came to use the term for a drier, savory pilaf-style preparation. In Russian, the word *kasha* refers to any hot cereal porridge or gruel, baked in an oven at a falling temperature to a creamy consistency; only much later did buckwheat groats become the standard choice for making *kasha*. Our word “buckwheat” comes from the Dutch, and Jan has noted that it was colonists from the Netherlands who first brought the plant to North America, cultivating it along the Hudson in the early 1700s. Wolff’s Kasha, produced in the same location since 1797 by Bir-

*continued on next page*

## COMFORT FOODS *continued from page 21*

kett Mills in Penn Yan, NY, remains one of the leading suppliers.

According to food writer Gil Marks, in the early 1900s the firm A. Goodman & Sons, a New York City-area purveyor of *matzo*, *lokshen* (noodles), and other Jewish food products, introduced the use of bowtie noodles (known in the Italian pasta vocabulary as *farfalle*, “butterflies”) for preparing *kasha varnishkes*, which was formerly being made with square or rectangular noodles. For more information, see Jayne Cohen’s article about Goodman in our Winter 2013 issue.

A few other grainy comforts that we enjoyed at our meal:

- rice pudding [Julie and Bob Lewis], warm and creamy with raisins served alongside, prepared using Irma Rombauer’s *The All New All Purpose Joy of Cooking* (New York, 1997)
- shrimp and grits [Bob and Marcella Zorn], a traditional breakfast dish in the Low Country (the coastal tidewater region of the American Southeast), served canapé-style for this meal. The Zorns were influenced by recipes from the Savannah, GA, chef Paula Deen, calling for corn grits, large shrimps, bacon or *tasso* ham, onion, green pepper, shredded cheddar cheese or heavy cream, and other ingredients.
- chicken *paprikás* [Morris Friedman and Rita Goss], a Hungarian dish of chicken and homemade dumplings. Morris and Rita used a recipe from Deb Crane (Waterford, MI) contributed to the *justapinch.com* website, in which Crane reminisced:

If there is food served in Heaven, I am sure this is on the menu! My Grandmother was the best cook ever. She would have this hardy dish ready and we could hardly wait! Now I serve it to my Grandchildren, and they love it as well! Down home pure comfort food.

O Sweet Oblivion!

One of the quickest ways to forget— for a blessed interlude— the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, the myriad pains of our oh-so-tortured lives, is to dunk and drown the bitterness in syrup or some other sweet concoction. What doctor or dentist, what parent, what member of the human race has not discovered this secret recipe for sugar-coated bliss?

Pecan pie [Leslie Nystuen] is possibly the sweetest confection devised in the American kitchen, and it is the only major pie with an “upper crust” of nuts, as opposed to another layer of pastry. Leslie used a recipe— borrowed from a friend fittingly named Cookie— that incorporates both white sugar and white Karo, a brand of corn syrup introduced in New Jersey in 1902.

Pecan pie likely descended from the English molasses pie. The earliest known published recipe came from Texas. It appeared in a monthly magazine in the 1860s, after Texas had achieved statehood and had acquired plenty of Anglo settlers and pecan groves. However, the custom seemed to spread beyond Texas only very slowly until the mid-1920s, when the people who manufacture Karo began to include a recipe for pecan pie on their cans of syrup and in promotional booklets. In the South



Sonia Manchek’s cranberry Jell-O ring

today, pecan pie is often called “Karo pie”. For more information on pecan and pecan pie history, and an improved pie recipe using light brown sugar and dark rum instead of white sugar or corn syrup, see Edgar Rose’s article in *Repast* Summer 2006 (pp. 6-7, 11), and his addendum in Fall 2006 (p. 19).

Some of the other sweet delights at our meal:

- butterscotch pie [Pam Dishman], adapted from Craig Claiborne, ed., *New York Times Cookbook* (New York, 1961)
- pumpkin cheesecake [Sherry Sundling]
- chocolate chip cookies [Laura and Dan Gillis], adapted from a Jacques Torres recipe in the *New York Times* (7/9/08)
- cranberry Jell-O ring [Sonia Manchek], made with raspberry Jell-O, whole-berry cranberry sauce, crushed pineapple, and port wine
- berry crisp [Sherry Sundling]
- apple crisp [Judy Steeh], made from Judy’s mother’s recipe, with apple, sugar, butter, and cinnamon.

Yes, the “sugar high” is a sure way to forget the troubles of life— but alas: it only lasts for a time, like sleep itself. Yet “in that sleep of death, what dreams may come”!

At some point, and you won’t remember when, the idea strikes you that people cook in the face of death to remind the grieving household of life— to make sorrow taste less like rage and more like normal life. Less like fear and more like fruit and cookies and cheese and ham and good bread and lasagna and every kind of pie. This is when you learn that sorrow can be as kind and forgiving as a silky bite of Texas sheet cake, sliding down your throat and battling the bitterness and the weariness and the anger deep inside (from Mary Morris’s essay “Comfort Food”, *Gastronomica* 14:4, Winter 2014-15, pp. 81-82). ■

# MORSELS & TIDBITS

Our co-founder **Jan Longone** (Adjunct Curator of American Culinary History, Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive, Special Collections, Univ. of Michigan) was recently profiled by **Steve Friess** in a sizeable article in the *Jewish Daily Forward*, “Cookbook Collector Savors Recipes for Living in Michigan: Jan Longone’s Delectable Trove of 25,000 Food Books” (Jan. 30, 2015). “What has become ever clearer in recent years”, Friess wrote, “is that Longone— though she herself has never been a professional chef nor restaurateur nor author— is just as much an icon of gastronomic history as any of those who worked with pans or pens. The JBLCA’s collection of 25,000 items that Longone collected throughout her lifetime, has drawn to Ann Arbor a constant stream of authors and researchers...”. The article also quotes, among others, CHAA member **Mary Bilyeu**, food editor of the *Toledo Blade*: “The thing Jan really understands about this subject matter is that it’s not just about the cookbook and the recipe. It’s about history and culture. The material she has shows how economics, dining habits, groceries, transportation have changed.”

In the current fundraising campaign by the Univ. of Michigan Library, among the smaller items on their acquisition “wish list” is \$900 needed to purchase a copy of a recently published four-volume work edited by **Jeffrey M. Pilcher**, *Food History: Critical and Primary Sources* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2014). Donations toward this purchase may be sent to the UM Library Development Office, 8076 Hatcher Graduate Library, 913 S. University Ave., Ann Arbor, MI 48109. The work is a comprehensive survey of problems and methods in our discipline, organized chronologically, from the evolution of humans and the dawn of complex societies to contemporary industrial diets. Pilcher, a history professor at the Univ. of Minnesota Twin Cities campus, has focused much of his own scholarship on the history of Mexican and Mexican-American food. He was also the author of *Food in World History* (Routledge, 2005) and editor of *The Oxford Handbook of Food History* (Oxford Univ. Press, 2012).

“Jell-O: America’s Most Famous Dessert: At Home Everywhere” is a new online exhibit (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/online-exhibits/exhibits/show/jell-o>) of materials drawn from the Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive in the Univ. of Michigan Special Collections Library. First trademarked in 1897, Jell-O began its rise in popularity with the prophetic slogan “America’s Most Famous Dessert” (1904) and later, “At Home Everywhere”. The exhibit features luscious color advertising images (from “molded jellies” to the iconic blonde Jell-O Girl), promotional booklets, and other ephemera. It was co-curated by Dr. **Nicole Tarulevicz** (Senior Lecturer in Asian Studies, School of Humanities, Univ. of Tasmania) and CHAA member **JJ Jacobson** (Outreach Librarian and Curator of the American Culinary History Collection, Special Collections Library). JJ has also been maintaining a blog (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/blogs/nonesuch>), and she contributed brief, topical culinary-history essays to the local monthly *Current* on pumpkin pie (Nov.) and New Year’s cookies (Dec.)

Ann Arbor’s two-year-old Dinnerware Museum (<http://www.dinnerwaremuseum.org>), directed by CHAA member **Margaret Carney**, created two popup exhibits that opened here in town in January:

- Jan. 7 – Dec. 15, 2015, “The Dinnerware Museum: A Place at the Table”, at the Univ. of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center’s “Gifts of Art Gallery”
- Jan. 26 – Apr. 10, 2015, “Tea”, at Zingerman’s Coffee, 3723 Plaza Drive.

The museum is also a special guest exhibitor at the brief “Time for Dinner” exhibit, May 8-9, 2015 at the Front Porch studio (1219 Traver Street). On Mar. 15, Margaret spoke to CHAA about “Anomalies and Curiosities of Dinnerware”.

Running through Aug. 2015, “Made in Toronto: Food and Drink Manufacturing in Our City” is an archival exhibit exploring the story of food and beverage production in Toronto. The show, held at the City of Toronto Archives (255 Spadina Road), features materials from those archives together with items from the Weston Corporate Archives and the Toronto Public Library, and artifacts loaned from Toronto Museum Services.

Several friends of the CHAA had essays in the recent anthology edited by Peggy Wolff of Chicago, *Fried Walleye and Cherry Pie: Midwestern Writers on Food* (Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2013):

- **Donna Pierce** contributed “The Black Migration”, on her parents’ culinary evolution after they moved from the Gulf Coast to rural northwestern Missouri. Donna, who is based in Chicago, wrote the article “Freda De Knight and Postwar Black Cooking” in our Spring 2013 issue.
- **Jules Van Dyck-Dobos** contributed “Le Dog, Ann Arbor, Michigan”, about that gourmet soup stand that he founded in 1979. Jules spoke to CHAA in Jan. 2010.
- **Molly O’Neill** contributed “I’ll Eat Columbus”, about how she and her family refused to be limited by the boring culinary landscape of the Ohio capital. Readers of *Repast* might recall that Molly attended the Second Biennial Symposium on American Culinary History (Ann Arbor, May 2007), where she signed copies of her anthology, *American Food Writing*.
- **Robin Mather**, former food writer for the *Detroit News*, contributed “On Cider, Cornmeal, and Comfort”, a memoir of the foods of her childhood in Grass Lake, MI. Mather has served as a judge for the Great Lakes Olde World Syder Competition, an annual celebration of fermented beverages made with apples or pears.

Upcoming conferences include:

- Apr. 25, 2015, “British Dairy”, Leeds Symposium on Food History and Traditions, Friends’ Meeting House, Friargate, York, UK (<http://www.historicfood.com/leeds.htm>)
- Jul. 3-5, 2015, “Food and Communication”, Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, St. Catherine’s College, Oxford, UK (<http://oxfordsymposium.org.uk>). ■

# CHAA CALENDAR

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(Unless otherwise noted, programs are scheduled for 4:00-6:00 p.m. and are held at Ann Arbor Senior Center, 1320 Baldwin Ave.)

Sunday, Apr. 19, 2015

Roger Blackwell, President of  
Chestnut Growers, Inc.,  
and Dennis Fulbright, Prof. of Plant  
Pathology, Michigan State Univ.,  
“The Amazing Chestnut: The Grain That Grows on Trees”

Sunday, May 17, 2015

2:00–5:00 p.m., Special Tour of  
Calder Dairy and Farm  
(9334 Finzel Road, Carleton, MI).  
Reserved places for CHAA members  
are \$9, limit 30 guests.

**On the Back Burner:** We welcome ideas and submissions from all readers of *Repast*, including for the following planned future theme-issues. Suggestions for future themes are also welcome.

- Spring 2015: Florida Foods— Traditional and Exotic
- Summer 2015: Reminiscences of Food Professionals
- Fall 2015: Restaurants and Menus.

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