

This Blessed Plot, This Earth, This Realm, This Kitchen

Snapshots of Culinary History in England, Part 3



At left, a shoulder of mutton is being roasted by the chef and educator Ivan Day at his 17th-Century farmhouse in Cumbria, England. Under the roast, collecting the juices, is a “dripping pudding” prepared from a recipe in an anonymous collection, *The Whole Duty of a Woman* (London, 1737)— the earliest known English recipe for a pudding fired under meat.

Photo from Ivan Day,
<https://www.historicfood.com>

Three Cookbooks from 1846 London

The year 2021 marks the 175th anniversary of the publication of three of the most influential cookbooks from the Victorian era.

The Gastronomic Regenerator: A Simplified and Entirely New System of Cookery, available at the Gutenberg website (<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/47444>), was the first all-purpose cookbook by the French-born Alexis Soyer, the most celebrated chef in England at the time. By this date, Soyer had been employed for 9 years as *chef de cuisine* at the Reform Club, a members-only gentlemen’s club on the Pall Mall in central London, which is still operating in 2021. There, he supervised a crew of more than 60 servants to prepare regular meals, as well as major banquets which he organized on approximately a weekly basis, such as a breakfast for 2,000 people for Queen Victoria’s coronation. Soyer’s innovations in kitchen equipment included gas cooking ranges, ovens with adjustable temperatures, and refrigerators cooled by water. Many of the 2,000 recipes in *The Gastronomic Regenerator* were elaborate in their French refinement (pheasant *à la Piémontaise*, presented in an aspic with wine and truffles), while others were designed for mass use (simple roasts and chops, hashes, and stews). The 1846 cookbook went through four editions in its first year alone, and sold a quarter of a million copies by 1890. *The Times* of London called it “a pyramid which the remotest posterity will applaud.”

Published that same year, *The Jewish Manual; Or Practical Information in Jewish and Modern Cookery... Edited by a Lady* (<https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/12327>) was the world’s first English-language Jewish cookbook and household manual. It was compiled by Lady Judith Cohen Montefiore, a linguist, musician, and writer who was married to a prominent banker and philanthropist. Her heritage was Ashkenazic, his was Sephardic; accordingly, the manual incorporated customs of the two great branches of world Jewry, and in that sense reflected the contemporary state of London’s Jewish community. Aimed at relatively well-off middle-class readers, the work embraced Jewish customs both old and new, both observant and secular. For instance, the author included not only recipes for traditional dishes “of the Hebrew kitchen”— such as matso-ball soup, and kugel with the stew *hamin*, which she called “commean”— but also kosher versions of non-Jewish dishes such as *chorizo* sausage (“chorisa”) and *olla podrida* (“olio”) made with beef instead of pork, and buttery *vol-au-vents* filled with stewed fruits instead of meat. The manual influenced the first Jewish cookbook in the U.S., published exactly 25 years later by Esther Levy (Philadelphia, 1871).

The year 1846 was the second year of the Great Potato Famine that was stalking the British Isles. In response, the well-known Philadelphia cookbook author Eliza Leslie prepared for two publishers (in London and Dublin) a 55-page volume, *The Indian Meal Book: Comprising the Best American Receipts for the Various Preparations of That Excellent Article* (<https://archive.org/details/b21526618>). The author noted that she had once lived in England (ages 5 to 11), and hoped “that this little book may be found a valuable accompaniment to the introduction of Indian Meal into Great Britain and Ireland.” Cornmeal, which had begun to be exported to the Isles from America, was coarse at this time, closer to grits than to flour. Leslie gave recipes for using the meal to make dozens of products, including mush, pudding, dry corn yeast, cornbread loaves with wheat or rye flour, Indian fritters (fry bread), ponies, johnnycakes, flapjacks, biscuits, muffins, dessert cakes, and feed for poultry and calves. “There is no sort of grain that can be turned to so many uses as Indian corn, and with so little expense and trouble”, she argued, adding: “Many persons do not like it at first, but eventually become fond of it.” She also included some other native-influenced foods, such as corn-kernel soup, hominy succotash, samp, dumplings made with boiled green corn, and stewed cranberries. From a comment in the publisher’s preface we learn how unfamiliar corn was in England: “There are two kinds of maize, white and yellow, or ‘red’ as it is called in the London market. Miss Leslie describes the yellow as decidedly the sweetest and best which it doubtless is to American palates; though English people, unaccustomed to eat preparations of Indian meal, prefer the white; thinking the flavour of the ‘red’ or yellow, too strong.” Nevertheless, maize did catch on; in Ireland, for example, cornmeal was often used as daily porridge, and was mixed with wheat flour in making sweet soda cakes.

Taken together, these three books, all published in London in the same calendar year, can be seen to have advanced English cookery at a critical juncture, increasing its diversity by popularizing foods of French, Jewish, and Native American heritage. —RKS

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Editor.....Randy K. Schwartz
 CHAA President.....Mariam van Deventer Breed
 CHAA Program Chair.....Glenda Bullock
 CHAA Treasurer.....William Walker
 CHAA Website Editor.....Glenda Bullock
 CHAA Founder and Honorary President...Jan Longone



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For submissions or inquiries about *Repast*, contact:

Randy K. Schwartz
 1044 Greenhills Drive
 Ann Arbor, MI 48105-2722
 tel. 734-662-5040
rschw45251@aol.com

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MORSELS & TIDBITS

“Colorful California Dinnerware” is a special exhibit from the International Museum of Dinnerware Design (<http://dinnerwaremuseum.org>), running Sep. 7 – Dec. 3 at the Gifts of Art Gallery, Taubman Health Center (Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor). It displays some of the more than 350 items donated from collector **Bill Stern**’s estate last year. IMoDD director and CHAA member Dr. **Margaret Carney** reports that these California-designed tablewares show “exuberance.... The forms are innovative, the decorative patterns are spell-binding, and the glazes are frequently bright bright bright.”

Culinary history has blossomed as a scholarly discipline, reflected in the exciting new projects being undertaken all the time nowadays. Four recent ones have been based in Washington, DC; Chicago, IL; Santa Cruz, CA; and Guelph, ONT:

- CHAA member Judy Steeh alerted us to a collaborative humanities research initiative launched by the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington. “Before ‘Farm to Table’: Early Modern Foodways and Cultures” is a five-year project (2017-21) funded by the Mellon Foundation and co-directed by **David B. Goldstein** (York Univ., Toronto) and **Amanda Herbert** (Durham Univ., UK). A project website (<https://beforefarmtotable.folger.edu>) was created this Summer that includes selected Early Modern British recipes and manuscript cookbooks, as well as essays and blog entries on such topics as globalization and the spice trade; colonization, sugar, and enslavement; and the introduction of turmeric in England.
- *Repast* subscriber Charles Witke tipped us off that the Center for Renaissance Studies (Newberry Library, Chicago) has posted new 10 presentations about early-modern food history to its YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLJLWjPnkjflOBgIMNt-cA12LzS9rfudq1>). There, Newberry Scholar-in-Residence **Sarah Kernan** (who wrote about early-modern recipes in England in the last issue of *Repast*) addresses such topics as “17th-Century English Household Books”, “How 17th-Century English Audiences Met the Watermelon”, “Buying Street Food in 18th-Century London”, “Setting a Dessert Table in Early Modern France”, and “Food and Food Production in Diderot’s *Encyclopédie*”.
- Baking expert Jenny Bardwell of Mt. Morris, PA, told us that she’s collaborating with a project to produce a new edition of **Malinda Russell**’s *Domestic Cook Book* (1866), the earliest-known printed cookbook by a Black woman. Russell, who was born free in Tennessee, had a pastry business before eventually settling in Paw Paw, MI, where her 34-page book was published. The reprint effort is led by **William Rubel**, an independent baking scholar in Santa Cruz; volunteer food historians are helping him to research the book’s origins and test its recipes. It was CHAA founding member **Jan Longone** who discovered the only known surviving copy of this work, and in 2007 she prepared a facsimile edition published by the William L. Clements Library at the Univ. of Michigan.
- This year, the McLaughlin Library at the University of Guelph launched “What Canada Ate” (<https://whatcanadaate.lib.uoguelph.ca>), a website that

provides open access to nearly 300 historical Canadian cookbooks from its Archival & Special Collections. There are digital facsimiles of domestic manuals, government publications, and community and commercial cookbooks, as well as some virtual exhibits created by students in a food history course at Guelph. Special Collections Librarian **Melissa McAfee** explains that the digitized cookbooks were selected from the library’s Canadian Cookbook Collection (<https://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/archives/our-collections/culinary>), which is the largest of its kind in North America, with nearly 20,000 cookbooks dating from the 17th Century to the present.

We’re now living to see the 100th anniversary year of two U.S. food brands that are still very popular:

- **Wonder Bread** was introduced in Indianapolis in 1921 by a local firm, Taggart Baking Co. Both the brand name and the iconic red, yellow, and blue balloons on the wrapper were inspired by an International Balloon Race held at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway more than a decade earlier in 1909. The brand went national in 1925 when Taggart was acquired by Continental Baking Company; five years later, Wonder became one of the first loaf breads to be sold pre-sliced. Within a few decades, it was the largest-selling bread brand in America; millions of consumers craved the soft, doughy, snow-white slices in BLTs, PB&Js, and other sandwiches. Continental began adding vitamins and minerals to the product in the 1940s in line with a federal initiative to enrich refined white bread to help prevent certain diseases; this led to a new ad slogan, “Wonder Bread Helps Build Strong Bodies 12 Ways”. Today, its U.S. manufacturing is owned by Flowers Foods (Thomasville, GA), third-biggest bread company in the country.
- Prohibition was just underway in the U.S., and candy sales were soaring as a result, when the first **See’s Candies** shop and kitchen opened in Los Angeles in 1921. The founding couple, Charles and Florence See, had moved to the U.S. earlier that year from Ontario, taking with them Charles’s widowed mother, Mary See, and the candy recipes that Mary had developed at the family’s hotel on Tremont Island, near Kingston, ONT. The candies, mostly creams, truffles, and other chocolates, drew a devoted following in California, and the See’s operation expanded to 30 shops in that state during the Great Depression. Seeking out cooler weather, the firm moved to El Camino Real in South San Francisco, where it’s still headquartered. In 1952, actresses Lucille Ball and Vivian Vance practiced dipping chocolates on the production line at a See’s in L.A. to prepare for the famous “Job Switching” episode of the TV show *I Love Lucy*, and in 1962 high-school dropout Cher met her future husband, songwriter Sonny Bono, while she was working at another See’s store in L.A. Surprisingly, the company has been owned since 1972 by Warren Buffett’s real estate firm, Berkshire Hathaway. It purchases its *couverture* (coating chocolate) from Guittard Chocolate Co. (San Francisco), and its nuts from Mariani Nut Co. (Winters, CA). Sales have been brisk despite the COVID-19 pandemic, in part because all 50 states designated candy making an “essential service”. ■

EATING OUT IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES



THE CONTEST BETWEEN ENGLISH AND FRENCH FOOD

by Christel Lane

Christel Lane is Professor Emeritus of Economic Sociology at Cambridge Univ. and a Fellow of St. John's College. She gained her BA degree at the Univ. of Essex and her Ph.D. at the London School of Economics, and came to Cambridge Univ. in 1990 after holding a teaching post for nine years at the Univ. of Aston in Birmingham. While her latest scholarly interests have focused on restaurants and chefs, her earlier work centered on the comparative study of varieties of capitalism in Europe. She is the author of numerous books, among them a pair of volumes published by Oxford Univ. Press: The Cultivation of Taste: Chefs and the Organization of Fine Dining (2014) and From Taverns to Gastropubs: Food, Drink, and Sociality in England (2018). Below, with permission from the publisher, Prof. Lane has abridged and edited Chapter 3 of her 2018 book for this issue of Repast.

Food not only nourishes, but also signifies. The customs associated with food may become an important signifier of both inclusion in one nation and opposition to another, whose cuisine is viewed as a threat to national culinary identity. In his work *Beef and Liberty*, Ben Rogers suggested: "If food helps to mark out all social distinctions, it is particularly important to national ones. ... Food, after language, is the most important bearer of national identity" (Rogers 2003, p. 3).

This article investigates the relationships between food, national identity, and class in England during the period from the 1660 Restoration to 1830, the end of the "Long 18th Century". It examines the food eaten in these centuries in taverns and inns, with some references also to entertaining at home, particularly by the aristocracy. Not surprisingly, most of the sources consulted cover the experience of the aristocracy, gentry, and middle classes, with only occasional references to the lower classes.

Current notions of cosmopolitanism usually refer to an eagerness to experience newness, and in some cases an openness toward and respect for other cultures. In contrast, historically in England the term "cosmopolitan" has often had very negative connotations, implying wasteful conspicuous consumption and

an almost traitorous absence of patriotism. Symbolic threats against British food and food practices, in the 17th and 18th Centuries, were regarded by some sections of the population as assaults on heritage and culture that demanded the assertion of British foodways. Both Rogers (2003) and Gerald Newman (1987) showed that such expressions of national identity were allied to both class identity and political allegiance. As I will document here, among sections of the middle classes with predominantly Tory sympathies there arose a food nationalism that opposed the cosmopolitan cultural attitudes and habits among the Whig aristocracy, and both of these strata expressed strong political sentiments about England's relation to France.

A Growing Larder for the Upper Classes

Between the late 17th and the early 18th Century, England underwent dramatic commercial and population expansion, and the market economy became ever more integrated (Fox 2013). Post-Restoration London was the hub of a growing empire, and its residents began to think of the world as its larder. The establishment of trading posts on several continents led to the appearance of many exotic food stuffs, such as oranges, soy sauce, and spices (Paston Williams 1993; Bickham 2008). Continental delicacies, such as Parmesan cheese, anchovies, olive oil, and artichokes also were available at a price. Nevertheless, it is difficult to discern any great impact of this foreign bounty on the food served in eating-out venues.

After 1660, agriculture advanced markedly in England and commercial capitalist development began. A new wave of the setting up of large country estates, financed from the profits of the great trading ventures, gave rise to entrepreneurial landowners who introduced new methods of cultivation. This increased appreciably both the quantity and quality of grain cultivated, as well as the quantity of meat produced. Another new development was the popularity of greenhouses among the rural gentry. This provided them with a much greater variety of fruit, including more exotic ones like grapes, peaches, and even oranges and lemons. On the other hand, the variety and quantity of vegetables grown remained surprisingly small as they were not yet accepted as tasty food stuffs (Drummond and Wilbraham 1939, pp. 117, 134).

The nobility, the gentry, and the emerging urban bourgeoisie and professionals lived well at this time. It was during this period in England that the middle ("middling") classes and/or bourgeoisie emerged (although some historians still prefer to use terms such as "the better sorts", conceiving of these as "social ranks" instead of classes; all such terms will be used interchangeably here). Food supply became much more varied and secure, and the gulf in consumption patterns between the better sorts and the lower orders became less marked (Fox 2013). In addition to individual or small-group consumption, much of the provision of food was associated with corporate institutions such as the East India Company, guilds and craft companies, and Inns of Court (training and professional associations of lawyers), as well as the Church and parochial feasts (Withington 2014). The amount of meat eaten indicates that, after 1660, meat could be afforded by most people, even if the quality and the amount consumed differed between classes (Paston Williams 1993, p. 143). The expanding commercialization of entertainment, including that of dining out,

At right, The Prospect of Whitby (est. 1520), a Tudor tavern perched on the banks of the Thames in London, was frequented by Samuel Pepys and Charles Dickens. Still open for business, it boasts a flagstone floor, pewter-topped bar, and fine wooden tables, chairs, and paneling.

Photo from a Dec. 2017 blog entry by Ann Laffeaty, <https://londonpubswherethehistoryreallyhappened.wordpress.com>

“points to an affluent and growing middle class which was willing to spend for the sake, not only of prestige, but also for enjoyment...” (McKendrick et al. 1982, p. 285). Toward the end of the century, reliable observers such as the English economist Charles Davenant judged that the English lived far better than their counterparts in other European countries (Drummond and Wilbraham 1939, p. 123).

First Stirrings of National Rivalry

The competing English and French claims on diners' allegiance is a theme that appears constantly in the English literature on dining out in the 17th and, even more so, in the 18th Century. The strong disapproval of French cuisine by some sections of English society has to be viewed more in political than in culinary terms: it represented an attempt to link consumption of English dishes to national identity and belonging and to make indulgence in French meals appear unpatriotic (Colquhoun 2007; Vogler 2020). This should be placed in the context of the prolonged and often bitter enmity between the two countries, and the waging of five costly wars against the French between 1689 and 1815.

La Varenne's book of cookery, published in France in 1651, had already appeared in an English translation in 1653 (Spencer 2002, p. 166). The craze for French food was given a further strong impetus in 1660 by the many aristocrats and politicians, associated with Stuart Royalty and Roman Catholicism, returning from exile in France, where they had become fond of *cuisine française* (Spencer 2002, p. 148). Foremost among these returnees was the future King Charles II. The fondness for French food shown by him and his courtiers set off a wave of enthusiasm among the aristocracy for refined French cuisine, fashion, and dancing (Saunders 1970, p. 57; Paston-Williams 1993, p. 143). Such court fashion also influenced the way food was presented at table: it gave rise to the *à la française* style, a very formal layout in which dishes of an enormous variety are arranged on the table in an elaborate, symmetrical fashion according to a predetermined order (Colquhoun 2007, p. 157).

While different food stuffs tend to be consumed by different social ranks, food can also unite them when faced with foreign cuisines, tastes, and cultural identity expressed through them. Even English servants in grand houses regarded vegetables with some contempt, believing their own meat-focused consumption patterns to be far superior to those of their French equivalents who greatly relied on vegetables and pottages (Drummond and Wilbraham 1939, p. 124).



English Tavern Dining in the 17th Century

The profusion of taverns as dining destinations in 17th-Century London reflects their early development there, as compared with dining-out opportunities in France. Dining in taverns and inns was mainly confined to the higher social ranks, including the expanding bourgeoisie (Spencer 2002, p. 154). They were attracted not only by the food and drink, but also by the opportunities for companionship and for hearing the latest news at a time when newspapers hardly existed.

Meals in taverns and inns of this period were relatively diverse in the basic ingredients used, including many varieties of meat, fowl, game, and fish that later disappeared from most English menus. This great diversity was noted centuries later by a writer in the post-war rationing era: “The kitchens of inns and dining rooms have held the odours of all sorts of pies— e.g. pigeon pies and humble pies, and eel pies, many kinds of fish, such as carp pike, eel and sprats; all manner of wild birds; ox cheek, boar's head, neats' tongues, and suckling pig; tansy cakes, hasty pudding; frumenty, syllabub and cheese cakes” (Burke 1947, p. 12).

Meals consisted of ample portions of meat, cooked in a fairly homogenous manner: they were either boiled, or were roasted in very large pieces on a “smoak jack”, a roasting-spit

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EATING OUT

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whose turning was powered by smoke from the fire. Preparation was void of such refinements as stock-based sauces with a vegetable foundation (onions, mushrooms, etc.). Instead, gravy and pungent (often vinegar-intensive) accompanying condiments, such as mustard, horseradish, or mint sauce, were well liked (Rogers 2003, p. 24). Meat and venison pies also were popular. Puddings tended to be heavy or, in more negative terms, stodgy, but existed in an astonishing variety. Meat was mainly the staple diet of the middle and upper classes. However, the widespread existence of cook shops in London, providing snack meals of various cuts of meat, indicates that these were affordable also for the lower stratum of the middle classes, such as skilled workmen of various kinds.

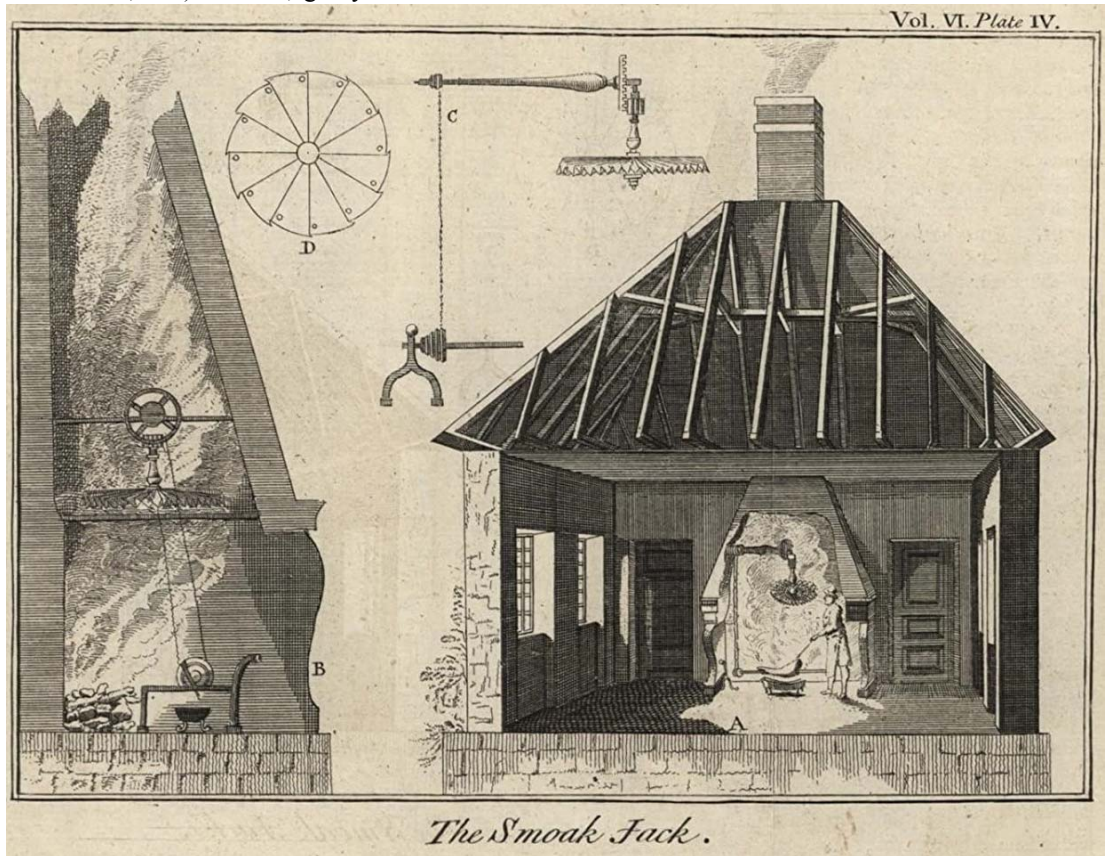
Among the various English dishes, beef was often singled out. While beef has been consumed by

members of many other European nations, it was widely assumed that the superior quality and quantity of beef reared in England was due to the country's specific geographic and agricultural conditions. In other words, English beef was seen to have "the taste of place", which set it apart from the beef eaten in other countries. Beef was not only liked for its taste but became endowed also with symbolic qualities. Its consumption became closely linked to cultural production in both literary and visual media, particularly in posters and the theatre, and often constituted a political statement.

The nature of English food and its comparative plainness even in this period was often remarked upon by outsiders. French visitor Henri Misson, a self-declared Anglophile who lived in England for several years early in the 18th Century, was very impressed by the quantity of meat sold at cook shops, but less so by the quality of its preparation:

Generally speaking, the English Tables are not delicately served.... Among the middling Sort of people they have ten or twelve common sorts of Meats, which infallibly take their Turns at their Tables, and two dishes are their Dinners: a Pudding, for instance, and a piece of roast beef; another time they will have a piece of boiled beef, and then they salt it some days beforehand, and besiege it with five or six heaps of cabbage, Carrots, Turnips or some other Herbs or Roots, well pepper'd and salted and swimming in butter: a Leg of Mutton, dished up with some dainties... (Misson 1719, p. 314).

Below, a diagram of a smoke jack in a 1748 engraved print. Photo: International Book Sales, Inc., Dover, NH.



Misson went on to draw an unfavorable comparison with French preparation of meat: "The English dress their meat much plainer than we do. We eat abundantly more delicately than they do" (p. 316). He was, however, very appreciative of English savory and sweet puddings— "Ah, what an excellent thing is an English pudding!"— of which a much greater variety existed than is presently the case. According to Misson, fruit, unlike in France, "is only brought to the Tables of the Great, and of a small number even among them" (p. 315).

In the late 17th Century, English taverns became connected with *prix fixe* Ordinaries (Earle 1989: 52). The Ordinary consisted of several dishes of which one took as much as one pleased, at a fixed price. The menu was arranged in terms of separate courses, similar to the *table d'hôte* in later restaurants. The Ordinary was served by the landlord at the common table, and conversation was general. Amid the proliferation of exotic food stuffs and new colonial influences, most taverns were associated with plain English fare— but even at this early date there were a few serving French meals, the most outstanding of which was Pontack's.

A Hundred Taverns for Samuel Pepys

Samuel Pepys's diaries of 1660-69 are generally held to give the best account of dining during this period, both at home and in taverns. Pepys (1633-1703), a high-level employee in the Navy Office, may be regarded as a member of the rising bourgeoisie who also had personal connections to the

aristocracy. His diaries give an impression of both the wide diversity and the huge quantities of the food consumed by him and his guests from middle- and upper-class backgrounds. Unlike many later accounts, Pepys's writing at least expresses appreciation of the preparation and quality of the food, as well as conveying enjoyment of meals consumed. But even Pepys comes across as more of a glutton than a gourmet.

Like many of the better sort of Londoners of his day, Pepys loved to eat out. Berry (1978, p. 10) listed 90 different taverns that he frequented, while Spencer (2002, p. 148) mentioned visits to "over one hundred taverns in Westminster and London alone". Although early on Pepys had mildly derided the appointment of a French cook by his aristocratic patron, the Earl of Sandwich, he became quite partial to French food himself. This is evident from his report on a visit, in May 1667, to a simple French Ordinary in Covent Garden. He and his wife enjoyed "a mess of potage, a couple of pigeons a l'esteuve, a piece of beef a la mode, all exceedingly well seasoned and to our liking". He also expressed pleasure at "the pleasant and ready attendance that we had, and all things so desirous to please and ingenious in the people did please me mightily" (Pepys 2011, p. 70). For all this he paid six shillings, which is more than he would have paid in most English taverns. Other French Ordinaries mentioned in the literature are Lockett's and Chatelaine's. Pepys especially liked to dine in the latter, a very expensive and up-market establishment that he referred to as the French House (Shelley 1909, p. 125). Such French meals were invariably accompanied by expensive imported wine.

Pepys provided even greater detail when describing domestic dinner parties, showing some pride in the richness of what his own household could offer. At a dinner given at his home on 13 January 1662, for example, he offered his guests oysters, a hash of rabbits and lamb, a rare chine of beef, a great dish of roasted fowl, a tart, and fruit and cheese. A dinner on 4 April 1662 consisted of a fricassée of rabbit and chicken, a boiled leg of mutton, three carps in a dish, a dish of a side of lamb, a dish of roasted pigeons, a dish of four lobsters, three tarts, a Lamprey (a kind of eel) pie, and a dish of anchovies.

It is more difficult to decide where the other great diarist of the century, John Evelyn (1620-1706), stood in the controversy around food and patriotism. On the one hand, he worked tirelessly for King and Country (Bowe 1981; Saunders 1970); on the other, he had spent much time in France and admired a lot about its culture, including its cuisine. The French people, he noted, "ate like Princes, and far exceeded our tables" (Saunders 1970, p. 37). His critical comments on a dinner given by the Portuguese ambassador to England, however, betray more of a liking for ample meat and a disdain for sauce: "The dishes were not at all fit for an English stomach [sic], which is for solid meate [sic]" (Spencer 2002, p. 155).

"As for French kickshaws..."

Who, then, consumed French food in late 17th-Century England? It was idolized by a section of the aristocracy and the gentry, who often employed top French chefs at home and/or dined in French Ordinaries. They were said to be of Whig political persuasion, less tradition-minded, less loyal to the King and not close to the established Church. In other words, French food was embraced by the cosmopolitan social elites with a less

developed national identity that allowed them to cultivate and display wider horizons in food consumption.

Many of the upper and some of the middling sorts had travelled to France repeatedly. The existence of many hotels in Calais catering for the English (Tombs 2015, p. 296) suggests that a liking of French food was not confined to a few aristocrats. Some members of the bourgeoisie—merchants, members of the creative and liberal professions, particularly in London—who, as with Pepys, were in contact with those above them in the social hierarchy, also developed some fondness for French dining. Writers, artists, politicians, and many members of the aristocracy were "determinedly cosmopolitan" (p. 298).

The following verse of the time poked gentle fun at such men who ate in expensive French restaurants in preference to consuming solid English food:

At Lockett's, Brown's and at Pontack's enquire,
What modish kick shaws [*quelque choses*] the beaux Desire,
What fam'd ragouts, what new invented sallat,
Has best pretensions to regale the palate
(Shelley 1909, p. 113).

Spending freely on French food was satirized when it was said that Lockett's was the resort of those who thought quite as much of spending money as of eating (p. 126).

On the other hand, most of the food served in taverns and in homes of the middling sorts did not show a French influence. The range of spices used in English cooking was much smaller than in earlier centuries, being confined to mace, cloves, nutmeg, and ginger (Spencer 2002, p. 139). Here too, there was a great emphasis on meat, which also was tougher and more sinewy than it is today (Driver and Berrydale-Johnson 1984, p. 23; Rogers 2003, p. 23). A meal had by Pepys at The Bell, a tavern on King Street in London, consisted of a leg of veal, bacon, two capons, sausages, and fritters; and at The Dog on King Street, he ate ham with lobster, oysters, anchovies, and olives (Berry 1978, p. 25). If he wanted a fish meal, he usually travelled down the Thames River to Greenwich, since fish, in the era before refrigeration, travelled badly. Vegetables were mentioned in England only toward the end of the century and were rarely eaten as accompaniments to meat (Drummond and Wilbraham 1939, p. 133). They consisted mainly of carrots, turnips, and cabbage; potatoes had not yet been introduced. Fruit was more widely available in markets, although exotic fruits were usually gifts from aristocratic households that owned hothouses.

English culinary nationalism was avidly embraced by certain sections of the upper and upper-middle social groups who tended to be Tories. The Earl of Rochester, a wit at the Restoration Court of Charles II, used these lines of verse to praise the roast beef dinners offered at the Bull Inn in London:

Our own plain fare, and the best terse the Bull
Affords, I'll give you and your bellies full.
As for French kickshaws, sillery and champaigne,
Ragouts and fricassees, in throth, w'have none.
Here's a good dinner towards, thought I, when straight,
Up comes a piece of beef, full horseman's weight
(Goody 1982, p. 134).

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Most members of the upper classes prided themselves on their plain, unaffected taste and their liking for country fare. They extolled their virtues by contrasting themselves to the French who, they claimed, were more prone to use cooking to signal and entrench class distinctions (Rogers 2002, p. 34). This, however, exaggerates the simplicity of upper-class food and, more so, its similarity to that of lower classes. The food of the better sorts, particularly in the country, was more varied— game and fruit, for example, played a big role— and above all more plentiful in the amount of meat consumed.

Culinary Nationalism in an Expanding Empire

The supremacy of the English on the seas and their dominance of foreign trade meant that, for the first half of the 18th Century, “fortune smiled on most of the people of England” (Drummond and Wilbraham 1939, p. 205). A series of good harvests and the relatively low price of grain meant that the cost of living in relation to wages was favorable to a steady rise in the standard of living during this period (p. 206). In the second half of the century, however, times became harder again.

Further improvement of transport meant that all kinds of regional food stuffs were easily transported around the country to satisfy the continuously growing demand, particularly of Londoners. The expansion of the empire and of overseas trade during the 18th Century was accompanied by an even more intense commercialization of the supply of goods and leisure, to the extent that historians date the beginning of the consumer society to this century (McKendrick et al. 1982).

The link between embracing English food and cooking and cultural nationalism became even more common during the 18th Century, shaped by the many years of war with rival France (Newman 1987; Rogers 2003). The invasion by the French became perceived as an acute danger during the period of 1798-1815 (Tombs 2015, pp. 397ff.). French cultural conquest was portrayed “as part of a larger and more sinister scheme to paralyze native resistance and virtue” (Newman 1987, p. 72). A Prussian writer observed that “the English in general have the greatest hatred that can be imagined to the whole French nation” (Archenholz 1790, p. 2003). “Beef and Liberty” became a rallying cry for Britons worried about the military threat from France abroad, and about the spread of Gallic luxury and alleged corruption at home (Newman 1987, p. 47; Rogers 2003, p. 2). The following extract from a patriotic drinking song, from the *Literary Magazine* (ca. 1757), expresses this link between traditional English food, particularly beef, and nationalism:

Should the French dare to invade us, thus armed with our poles,
We'll bang their bare ribs, make their lanthorn [sic] jaws ring:
For you beef-eating Britons are valiant souls
Who will shed their last drop for their country and King
(King 1947, p. V).

Despite this widespread culinary nationalism, the great Whig houses during this century were “bastions of French sophistication” (Vogler 2020, p. 87). Until the French Revolution, the English upper classes were in thrall to all things French— valets, dancing masters, and cooks (Rogers 2003, p. 51).

The opposition to French food, in many quarters, gave expression to a disapproval of the Whig grandees around Robert Walpole, who, between 1721 and 1742, completely dominated the government and the country. They had amassed great wealth and were seen by the middling ranks to live in immoral luxury. According to Newman (1987, p. 50), “there was a sense that the dominant culture was far too much under the spell of France, and simultaneously, too much the bastion of an overbearing and selfish oligarchy, a Fashionable World excessively contaminated by corrupting spiritual influences originating ... in France”. Vogler (2020, p. 172) confirms the political dimension when she posits that serving French food turns “the dining table into a political manifesto, announcing liberality, cosmopolitanism and power”. Most aristocrats kept both a French and an English cook, and the former had to be paid double the amount of the latter (Paston-Williams 1993, p. 231). The dominance of French *haute cuisine* in the highest circles is highlighted by the fact that the multi-volume cookbook of Vincent La Chapelle, French chef of the Fourth Earl of Chesterfield, was published in English (*The modern cook*, London, 1733) two years before it was published in French (*Le Cuisinier moderne*, The Hague, 1735) (Rogers 2003, p. 43).

Resentment against conspicuous consumption by the Whig-affiliated upper ranks of society and against their cultivation of “all things French”, particularly of French food, was expressed by a variety of social groups. It came from patriotically minded English small merchants and traders. It was additionally articulated from the 1740s by “a broad and expanding generational cohort of sensitive and ‘socially conscious intellectuals’” (Newman 1987, p. 63), including literary men, such as Fielding, Shenstone, Goldsmith, and Smollet, as well as artists and journalists such as William Hogarth, Samuel Johnson, Richard Steele, Joseph Addison, and David Garrick. Newman therefore characterized the period from the mid-1740s to the mid-1780s as “the crucial years for the launching of English nationalism”.

These intellectuals, who were often Tory sympathizers, attacked the consumption of lavish French food, as they saw it, by their political opponents, the Whigs, whom they liked to portray as Frenchified aristocratic fops. The latter were depicted as snobbish and mincing little men destined for a horrible end in the paintings and engravings of “The Rake’s Progress” (1732-35) by William Hogarth. Samuel Johnson, also a Tory, after having been shown a French menu, is reported to have asserted his love of traditional plain English food thus: “I prithee bid your knaves bring me a dish of hog’s pudding, a slice or two from the upper cut of a well-roasted sirloin, and two apple dumplings” (Spencer 2002, p.71). Influential essayists, such as Steele and Addison, also railed against over-refined French food and contributed greatly to putting food chauvinism on the map. Steele, in the *Tatler*, “pleaded for a return to the diet of our forefathers, the beef and mutton on which we had won the battles of Crécy and Agincourt” (Drummond and Wilbraham 1939, p. 254). Some of these chauvinist Englishmen pronounced French food not only as extremely expensive and extravagant but also as unhealthy, since the “made-up dishes” held “the Seeds of Diseases both cronick [sic] and acute” (*The Tradesman*, cited by Rogers 2003, p. 40).

The prejudices held against the French and their way of life were also expressed widely in theatrical works (Scarfe, ed. 1995, p. 206). One of the most effective of the literary critics was the writer Henry Fielding, who, in his play “The Grub-Street Opera” (first performed in 1731), created a song whose refrain may be said to have become Britain’s culinary anthem:

Oh the roast beef of England
And Old England’s roast beef.

The song became a popular hit and later inspired a 1748 painting by Hogarth, “Oh the Roast Beef of Old England”, sometimes referred to as “The Gate of Calais”. The image, which also became a best-selling print, features a sturdy Englishman carrying a big round of beef while, right behind him, a skinny Frenchman carries a pot of *soupe maigre*. No wonder the French subsequently came to refer to Englishmen as “Roast Beefs”.

The hostility toward the French was not only expressed by men of the “better sort”; it seems to have been eagerly lapped up by the lower orders on London’s streets (Grosley 1772, pp. 78, 106). Newman (1987, p. 37) detected a “tradition of xenophobic and anti-French feeling, particularly at the bottom of society”. Grosley (1772, p. 106), an Anglophile French visitor to England in 1765, recounted many instances of verbal abuse, such as the epithet “French dog”, as well as physical assault, that were confronted by him and some of his compatriots in the street.

Dining at Home in Georgian Times

Detailed information on domestic dining is conveyed by the diaries of the Reverend James Woodforde (1740-1803), resident in the village of Weston, near Norwich, in Norfolk. The meals that Woodforde ate at home were mainly plain English, and the range of foods served was quite large. Parson Woodforde frequently dined at his squire’s house where the dinner was more elaborate, with some French influence. They enjoyed a variety of game which was shot locally, as well as a greater range of freshwater fish, than is common today. Vegetables were more rarely mentioned, but a good variety of fresh fruit was eaten, although usually for dessert. Expensive parmesan cheese was also offered at the end of the meal (Beresford, ed., 1967 and 1968). The general impression is that in this rural Norfolk area, the middle and upper classes lived extremely well, in terms of both quantity and variety of food eaten.

That the household of Woodforde’s squire was not exceptional is borne out by a

lengthy description of the meals enjoyed at Brambleton Hall (Drummond and Wilbraham 1939, p. 250). It is this country-house cooking that is usually remembered when sociologists of dining and food, such as Stephen Mennel (1985, p. 135), make a case for a great farmhouse tradition of good English cooking. Food certainly was characterized by freshness and a variety of ingredients, but its mode of preparation even then appears to be basic.

A comparison of food and dining with that of the 17th Century reveals a striking continuity in ingredients and mode of preparation, except for one significant change. During Georgian times, the use of vegetables and fruits became more common, taking their place at table as side dishes (Colquhoun 2007, p. 205). While the quality and quantity of English meat and particularly of beef served was certainly commented upon in a favorable manner by foreign travellers, I have not come across much praise for any great English tradition of cookery during this period. Roast beef continued to be much loved in England, being a favorite dish “as well at the King’s table as at a Tradesman’s” (Muralt 1726, p. 39). A French visitor observed, “Sauces are never used in English kitchens. . . . All the dishes are based on various joints of meat, either boiled or roast, the roast weighing as much as twenty to thirty pounds” (Scarfe, ed. 1995, p. 22). Muralt, also astonished by the enormous size of the joints roasted, recognized beef as a symbol of national identity. He

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Below, William Hogarth’s oil painting,
“Oh the Roast Beef of Old England” (1748).

Photo: Tate Britain via Wikimedia Commons.



EATING OUT*continued from page 9*

commented that beef was regarded as “the Emblem of the Prosperity and Plenty of the English” (Muralt 1726, p. 39). Grosley, the French visitor mentioned earlier, was not impressed by English meat and judged it much inferior to French meat: “...after having used it in all the different shapes in which it is served up to tables, that is to say both roast and boiled, I could find in it neither the consistence, the juice, nor the exquisiteness, of that of France” (Grosley 1772, p. 75).

With regard to the diet of the lower rural classes, diary accounts from this period do not portray a dire situation. The French aristocrat François Rochefoucauld, who visited many Suffolk farms in the late 18th Century, noted that meat consumption was common right down the social scale. Harvest laborers received meat three times a day, and even the inhabitants of poor houses “are well-nourished and eat meat three times a week” (Scarfe, ed. 1995, pp. 152, 175, 207).

French Ordinaries in the West End

The new pattern of consumer spending that became established in 18th-Century England included a stronger predilection for dining out than in the previous century. Much of this activity was centered on London, which, by 1750, was the biggest and among the most splendid cities in the world. The fixed-price Ordinary continued to be available in the 1700s. Well-to-do Londoners were still able to get a break from plain English fare by going to a tavern offering French or Italian meals (Earle 1989, p. 52). At Pontack’s one could enjoy stewed snails, baby chicks, and “all the best French dishes of the time” (Burke 1947, p. 142). Both Earle (1989) and Shelley (1909) commented on the comparatively high and even outrageous prices of a French Ordinary. Earle remarked that “London was full of fops with small fortunes and the French Ordinaries prospered” (Earle 1989, p. 53). A meal at Pontack’s could cost between one and two guineas per head during the early years of the century, compared with only a few shillings in English establishments. Customers were said to be noblemen, merchants, and “other affluent folk” (Clark 1983, p. 13).

Patronage of these French Ordinaries was particularly common among members of the aristocracy, and their dining habits again became likened to a cosmopolitanism that undermined English strength in the fight with France. The “devils in the west end” of London were said to be assisting “the devils in France” (Newman 1987, p.76). To many rural gentlemen and provincial traders, London— particularly its West End— was “a place where courtiers and placemen, pimps and fops, pastry cooks and hairdressers united to drain the country of its wealth” (Rogers 2003, p. 52), and the city was derided as “a cultural colony of Paris” (Newman 1987, p. 38). This resentment was also shared by smaller merchants and tradesmen from the eastern parts of London. It gave rise to what we now regard as a rather contemporary sentiment in favor of native produce. Such nativism was closely linked to cultural and political nationalism.

Much information about dishes prepared in high-end taverns toward the end of this century can be gleaned from the cookery book first published in 1783 by John Farley, the chef of the cele-

brated London Tavern. His recipes show influence both of regional English and of French sophisticated cooking. Apart from the wealth of recipes supplied, we get some comments on the food’s provenance and on the eating habits implied, from both Farley himself and his contemporary editor, Medcalf, who placed Farley in “the great tradition of English cookery which was well established by the early part of the eighteenth century; a tradition that ... was much admired by visitors from the Continent”. Medcalf contrasted traditional English country house cooking with other cuisines and identified both its positive and negative distinguishing features:

There is nothing in Farley of the modern urge to preserve the native flavours of the raw foods. His notion of cooking involves a fairly elaborate art of mixture of ingredients, rather than an impregnation with sauces. His notion of a sauce remains an added ingredient, an extra vegetable, rather than something pervasively altering the whole nature of the dish. ... John Farley’s then is a cookery neither contrastive, like the medieval, nor rich like the Elizabethans, not seeking essences, like the moderns, nor using impregnations like the French but rather combination. It is very much English (Medcalf, ed. 1988, pp. 11,12).

For meals consumed at inns, we can draw on a little information from the diary of Woodforde, mentioned earlier. The parson arrived at his favorite inn by horse, accompanied by his servant. His experience is very different from that of the German parson, Moritz, who arrived on foot. Moritz usually received only very basic meals. His lunches were mostly cold—a piece of cold meat or eggs and salad or once, just bread and butter, and for evening meals, too, he was rarely served something warm. A high point on his journey occurred when he was offered hot “cheese on toast” (Moritz 1965, pp. 175-176). Another description of meals offered by inns comes from the diary of John Byng, a minor aristocrat who travelled much in the provinces in the 1780s and 1790s. Byng commented both on the wide range of dishes available at dinner and supper and on their lack of variability between inns: “The food was standard fare, with recipes that were fairly identical in whichever part of the country I happened to be.” The quality of food, however, varied enormously between inns, ranging from a delicious pigeon pie to a substandard damson tart. His summary comment is, “Inn cookery, in general, is wretched work” (Andrews, ed. 1954, p. 390). Rochefoucauld also bemoaned the quality of food in inns; of one in Burnham Market, in Norfolk, he wrote: “I arrived dying of hunger and scarcely managed to appease my appetite” (Scarfe, ed. 1988, p. 179).

An entirely different take on food prepared by an inn comes from a 1759 cookbook, *A Complete System of Cookery*, by William Verral. Verral was the Master of the White Hart Inn in Lewes, Sussex. He had learnt his craft under Monsieur de St. Clouet, then cook at the residence of the Duke of Newcastle, one of the 18th-Century Whig grandees. His cookbook is likely to give a broad impression of what meals could be enjoyed by high-ranking travellers or what dishes would be prepared for local elites’ annual special-occasion dinners, such as those for local Members of Parliament or Justices.

The editor of the Verral book claims that “so much of his cookery resembles what we have come to think of as good old English fare” (Mégroz 1948, p. 9), but such English influences are scarcely visible to me. The recipes are almost entirely French. The English elements discerned may be the few pies, which, despite their names, bear little resemblance to English modes of preparation. Meat is usually stewed or braised and served with a sauce rather than a gravy, and the pies are made with a lot of flavoring ingredients— shallots, parsley, and lemon juice or wine— that are not usually found in English cooking. Verral also instructed how to make a *coulis* or *cullis*, the base for many sauces. He was certainly not typical of his time; nevertheless, his book shows that the social elite could eat extremely well in 18th-Century England. Comments on food served at inns thus vary, but the meals served at most were rarely greeted with enthusiasm.

Nation, Class, and Cuisine

In conclusion, in the 17th and 18th Centuries dining out in taverns and inns was already well established for the higher social orders in England. The meals were predominantly traditionally English, with a strong prevalence of cooked and roasted meat, pies and stodgy puddings, while vegetables were either absent or indifferent accompaniments to the meat. The ingredients were quite varied and did not yet display the homogenizing impact of a more pronounced industrialization in the 19th Century.

There existed a strong identification of beef eating with English nationalism, particularly in the 18th Century. That century also witnessed cultural and political conflict between social groups indulging in French food and other groups expressing their patriotism through the love of English food. This conflict between cosmopolitan lovers of French dining and patriotically minded consumers of English food constituted, at the same time, an emerging class conflict. It was a conflict between, on the one side, typically members of the aristocracy, and, on the other, bourgeois intellectuals and artists, as well as yeomen farmers and urban merchants and larger craftsmen. Predilection for French food by a cosmopolitan social elite was seen to demonstrate a love of luxury and a squandering of resources, undermining national strength. The class-based nationalist conflict therefore had clear political overtones and became manifested in many cultural creations of the time. Xenophobic sentiments also appealed to some sections of the middle classes and even found resonance among the lower classes.

These conflicts around culinary tastes and identities pose a challenge to those who assert the absence, in English history, of any nationalism, as well as to the historians who doubt the emergence of any class identity before the 19th Century. ■

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“SURELY YOU’RE GOING TO WRITE ABOUT THE PASTY, AREN’T YOU”



CORNISH FOOD IDENTITY IN THE “LAND APART”

by Andrea Broomfield

Dr. Andrea L. Broomfield has been a Prof. of English at Johnson County Community College (Overland Park, KS) since 2000. She is the author of Food and Cooking in Victorian England: A History (2007); Kansas City: A Food Biography (2016); and, with Beebe Bahrami, The Atlantic Celts: A Gastronomic Memoir from Ireland to Iberia (forthcoming). She also writes about British food and culture on her blog (<https://www.andreabroomfield.com>), including the five-part “Florence White: A Biography of Britain’s Champion of British Cuisine”.

Over centuries, pasties and clotted cream are food items that have come to signify Cornish identity. They express the spare pragmatism and resourcefulness of a people accustomed to coping with a harsh landscape and carving out their distinct identity within Great Britain. At the same time, these foods also embody flashes of joy and spiritual transcendence that punctuated that spare pragmatism. While pasties and clotted cream are relevant in a wider British context, they are particularly cherished among the Cornish, now as much as in the past.

Initially, I was perplexed by the Cornish affinity with the pasty in particular. It seemed a stereotypical or cliché food to me, associated with tourists more than with Cornish people themselves—my own affinity for these delicious hand-held pies notwithstanding. In Summer 2017, as I travelled the Duchy of Cornwall conducting fieldwork for a book project on Atlantic Celtic foodways, I heard an oft-repeated refrain when I explained the purpose of my travels: “Surely you’re going to write about the pasty, aren’t you.” As my conversations with informants continued, they inevitably also brought up the importance of clotted cream, a food that I understood to be integral to all of the West Country, not specifically Cornwall. Over time, however, I came to grasp why these two foods matter deeply to Cornish people, playing a role in both their sustenance and their cultural expression.

The pasty was traditionally composed of humble ingredients, but on Sundays and at parish fetes it was expanded to incorporate the richest ingredients that a family could afford. Clotted cream, too, was associated with parsimoniousness, particularly with fuel, but in farming communities it enriched a number of otherwise monotonous foods, including pasties. As such, the pasty and clotted cream are simultaneously utilitarian and luxuriant, and the Cornish people embrace them for both of these reasons. Their refrain, “Surely you’re going to write about the pasty, aren’t you”, was not so much a question as a command. This article is the result.

Traditional Food Preparation and Cooking Methods

“Cooking took low priority in our family”, Caroline Black informed me one afternoon over coffee in Liskeard, Cornwall. “Fuel was expensive”, she clarified when she noticed my puzzled expression, “so it had to be used mainly to warm us up when we came in from work, and it was needed for washing and drying mountains of clothes.” A retired historian in her 80s, Black was raised on an East Cornwall farm that remained largely untouched by modernization well into the 1950s. The more she told me about farm life, the more I understood: while *eating* is of course a priority, *cooking* is a luxury when it comes to fuel, space, and time. For Black’s generation and preceding ones, food centered on sustenance, and as such, experimenting with or trying out new recipes, dreaming up interesting ways of combining spices—which is how many people understand “cooking” in the 21st Century—was indeed an extravagance for most of the Cornish. While several dishes that the Black family ate were cooked, meals were prepared efficiently; aside from Sunday dinner and certain holidays, cooking was often beside the point.

Since the Iron Age, Cornish homes have been built around the hearth, and most farmhouses were small, consisting of one main room, “the engine room”, as John and Pat Hanson described it in *To Clothe the Fields with Plenty*, a book about farming in St Kew Parish (1997, pp. 49-50). A couple of smaller rooms attached to the main room stored dairy equipment and food. Housewives were engineers, in charge of the hearth and its activities. The hearth itself was large, with a cavity five or six feet wide and about the same height, extending back for a distance of nearly five feet, wrote A. K. Hamilton Jenkin in “Home Life in Old Cornwall” (1968, p. 312). Built into the chimney breast was a cloam oven, a dome-shaped masonry oven. To use it, women literally walked into the hearth and removed the clay oven door. They stuffed the interior with gorse, ignited it, and a fast-burning fire resulted. (Gorse and furze are common names of *Ulex*, a genus of thorny, leguminous evergreen shrubs traditionally used in Western Europe for oven fuel and livestock feed.) When the white-hot ashes were all that remained, they swept the oven clean and commenced baking. As the oven itself suggests, such cooking was relegated to minimal space with as little cheap fuel and time spared as possible. Baked yeast breads were stored and did not require heating up, just as a potato could be cooked and eaten cold, or a cured pilchard (sardine) could be taken out of the family *bussa* (an earthenware pot) and eaten cold.



Talskiddy (Mar. 2008) via English Wikipedia.

A cloam oven on display at the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro.

More often than not, food preservation itself was based on residual heat—the heat that better-off people could literally allow to go up the chimney. Black recalled her father curing hams and bacon by suspending them on chimney hooks to smoke. Those residing by the sea also used chimney smoke to cure bream and hake. (Cornwall, situated at the tip of the peninsula of South West England, is surrounded by the English Channel and the Celtic Sea.) This was economy and efficiency at its best.

In general, Cornish food preparation and cooking resembled that of other Atlantic Celtic cultures. In homes without a cloam oven, particularly in mining districts, housewives relied on a “kettle”, “ire”, “brandis”, and cauldron. In *Cornish Homes and Customs*, A. K. Hamilton Jenkin described cottage cooking thusly: “The kettle, it should be explained, in no way resembled the ordinary utensil of that name (which was distinguished in Cornwall by being termed a ‘tay’, tea kettle), but was simply an iron bowl with three legs capable of being stood on the ground like a small crock” (1934, p. 61). To bake, a brandis (trivet) was topped with the baking ire, similar to the girdle or griddle used on the Isle of Man, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Once hot, the ire was greased and smoldering embers were brought up under and around it. Onto it went the bread or other food. The ire was covered by the inverted kettle, hot embers were raked around, and “a fire of furze and ‘bruss’ (dried hedge gatherings, etc.) was built up over the whole”, Jenkin explained (1934, p. 61).

Other cooking was done in a cauldron hung by chain from the chimney cross-bar. These one-pot meals all but cooked themselves, out of the way of the other activities that depended on direct heat—from warming premature lambs to warming miners and bal maidens returning from work, or farmers and dairymaids returning from pre-dawn chores. (Bal is Cornish for “mine”, and bal maidens are young women workers doing surface jobs at mines.) These all required access to whatever direct heat was available, and laborers’ clothing likewise needed room to dry before work was resumed. Thus, Caroline Black’s observation about the need to minimize cooking gets to the heart of traditional Cornish foodways.

The Cornish Pie as Kitchen Genius

Roughly a century before Caroline’s birth, a Reverend Warner made an equally significant observation about Cornish food. The pilchard may be considered “rank” by “those who are unaccustomed to eat it”, observed Warner, but in Cornwall “it is esteemed as the greatest delicacy; and happy is it that taste which goes hand in hand with necessity” (qtd. in Gilbert 1917, vol. I, p. 331). Warner respected Cornish pragmatism, but he also recognized how poor people not only made the most of what was available, but also found reason and occasion to celebrate it.

The legend of Tom Bawcock and Mount Bay, in the fishing village of Mousehole, illustrates that truth. Every December 23, a celebration commemorates the heroic fisherman by holding a lantern-lit parade and serving up stargazy pie. While the veracity of Tom Bawcock is questionable, folklorist Robert Morton Nance took it seriously enough to trace Mousehole’s celebrations back to the 19th Century and to create a poetic rendition of the fisherman’s voyage during raging storms. When Tom returns with his boat loaded with “sibm [seven] soorts of fesh”, the women bake a huge “starry gaze” pie to feed the starving villagers (Nance 1932, p. 7). The two pilchard seasons around which Cornish life depended brought grueling, frantic work as well as heightened anxiety. The miracle of Tom Bawcock’s catch is heavy with symbolism, as is the stargazy pie with pilchard heads poking through the crust to gaze reverently at the heavens (see photo on next page). The pie encapsulated both the necessity of wrestling food from a dangerous sea and the transcendence that resulted from the success of beating all odds to do so.

For that matter, pies and the pasty, which eventually usurped the pie in importance, are integral to the Duchy’s culinary heritage. A crust signifies both utility and superfluity, just as the ingredients within the crust can be reduced or expanded, depending on resources. Cornish people jokingly relay the tale about the devil never crossing River Tamar for fear of being put into a crust. How far back the tale goes is impossible to tell, but in 1877, E. S. Dallas wrote of it for his entry on “Cornwall” in *Kettener’s Book of the Table* (1877, p. 139). A colorful version was recorded by the American professor and writer Katharine Lee Bates:

It is reassuring to know that the Devil never enters this country [Cornwall], having a wholesome fear of being

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The author created this stargazy pie for culinary hospitality students enrolled in the course "Cuisines of the United Kingdom" at Johnson County Community College. It is traditional for the fish to be placed so that their heads protrude from the crust, creating a festive presentation and also respecting Cornish frugality: it would be wasteful to devote space inside the pie for a part that isn't eaten, and cutting off the heads before baking would allow the pilchard juices to escape and be lost.



A tray of fresh-baked pasties from the Great Cornish Food Store, Truro. Then as now, pasties come in all sizes, and the fillings are as varied as the ingredients on hand and the imagination. Both photos here are from the author's personal collection.

CORNISH FOOD

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made into a pie. His cloven hoofs once ventured across the Tamar, but he was dismayed to find that the Cornish women put everything, fish, flesh, fowl, vegetables, whatnot, into pie. By the time poor Beelzebub had partaken of fishy pie, stargazy pie—made of pilchards—, conger pie—made of eels—, lamy pie—made of kid—, herby pie, parsley pie and piggy pie, his nerves gave way, and he bolted out of the shire so precipitately that he strewed the hills and the coast with his traveling equipment of Devil's Bellows, Devil's Ovens and Devil's Frying-pans (1907, pp. 310-311).

That Cornish housewives put anything edible into a crust testifies to a diet based on ingenuity born of frequent deprivation. Indeed, lamy pie might have been made of lamb, but stillborn or overlaid ones. Hamilton Jenkin described other ingenious pies and pasties: Muggety, of sheep or calf entrails; nattlin, of pig entrails; and taddago, made from prematurely-born "veers", or suckling pigs (1945, p. 363). All are virtually nonexistent today, but they signified the necessity of never wasting an edible.

The crust likewise depended on what was affordable. Flaky, tender wheat-and-fat crusts were rare in most Cornish homes in past times, reserved for special occasions. Instead, a barley crust

was the norm because that grain grew better in Cornwall's damp climate and thin, rocky soil. During hard times, the crust was literally a paste of barley flour and water, the term "pasty" derived from the 13th-Century French word *paste* or *pastez*. Peter Brears pointed out that in Middle English, the word *paste* described "meat or fish in a pastry crust rather than [in] a dish", and that well-to-do English families encased venison "or other good-quality meats" in their pastry. They "were always large and expensive ... and totally unrelated to the small half-round pasties eaten by the working classes", noted Brears (2015, p. 52). While meat and wheat flour were of course class markers, so too was the fat used to tenderize and enrich a crust. Fat, like meat, is inessential to the pie or pasty, and Cornish laborers did without fat when lard was used up or too expensive.

With Industrialization, the Pasty Replaced the Pie

Not only are pie and pasty ingredients indicative of Cornish resourcefulness, but so, too, are their cooking and consumption. The pasty probably supplanted the pie in importance during the economic downturns that occurred in Cornwall, especially from the mid-17th to mid-18th Centuries. Fuel became more expensive, cooking space minimal, cooking implements fewer, and time increasingly controlled as the economic autonomy of many Cornish miners was jeopardized. By the late 1700s, that autonomy was virtually nonexistent for all but the privileged. While a pie suggests luxury, a pasty suggests the hardship that

increasingly defined Cornish life in an industrialized extraction economy.

While it would be erroneous to suggest that Cornish laborers lived “high on the hog” prior to the 1600s, they did maintain their agency longer than did most English, in part because they were more mobile and less tied to the villein or cottar feudalism that typified the medieval English manorial system, observed Philip Payton in *Cornwall: A History*. (A villein or cottar was a feudal peasant who gave dues and labor to a manor in exchange for occupying a farmplot or a cottage, respectively.) This distinctive culture, he wrote, was the “precursor of the independently minded small tenant farmer that came to typify Cornwall in later centuries.” He went on to note that the Cornish economy grew in the 14th and 15th Centuries because it diversified, with shipbuilding robust due to the build-up of the British navy during the Hundred Years’ War; cloth exports out of Looe, Fowey, and Saltash; quarrying; agriculture; fishing industries in Polperro and Mevagissey; and increasingly important, tin-streaming and tin-mining (Payton 2017, Ch. 5). (Streaming, the earliest form of mining in this region, involves collecting ore from alluvial deposits in stream beds.)

For millennia, Cornish tin was an essential export, but during the medieval period its importance became even more pronounced. Cornish miners controlled mineral deposits and answered to the Stannary Parliament, a mechanism first put in place in 1198 CE and reaffirmed in 1201, when the first Charter of the Stannaries arose from the desire of Cornish tanners to separate their governance from that of Devon. In 1305, Edward I established a Charter for the Stannaries and Stannary Law that allowed Cornish miners to continue to dig for tin much as they had since ancient times, “living and toiling according to their own rules, capable of enacting their own laws independently of Westminster, answerable only to their own kind”, wrote Payton. A tribute system allowed a miner to act as an entrepreneur, “bidding for the area or ‘pitch’ that he was to work, providing his own equipment and materials, and being paid according to the value of the ore won (tribute) or the amount of ground mined (tutwork)” (Payton 2017, Ch. 5). Such men were thus their own masters. For some centuries, this system worked, partly because tin was relatively easy to mine by streaming, and the industry was booming. Hence, people lived hard lives, but they could often afford to fill their pies with more than wild herbs and leeks; they could afford the fuel to bake them, the utensils and flatware by which to eat them, and furthermore, they could usually afford to enrich their pie crusts with some wheat flour and fat.

By the late 15th Century, however, the Cornish standard of living was already in jeopardy due in part to the encroachment of a Tudor state that reduced Cornish semi-autonomy, particularly when Henry VII confiscated the Stannary charters, suspending the Stannary government (Payton 2017, Ch. 6). Although by 1508, Henry VII issued a Charter of Pardon and restored the Stannaries and Stannary Parliament, tin prices during this and the following century radically fluctuated. Surface mining became difficult, shafts had to be dug deep in the earth, and water constantly pumped out of them. The capital investment to mine meant that large numbers of Cornish people had no choice but to work for a meager wage at a richer man’s behest, and miners’ diets took a direct hit. By the 1800s, the prices of

Cornish tin and copper were collapsing. Many “Cousin Jacks and Jennies” emigrated to other mining regions in the United Kingdom, particularly the lead mines in North Cardiganshire, Wales, and eventually, to wherever mining jobs were to be had, from North and South America to Australia.

In all cases, the Cornish took their love of the pasty with them, not only as a sustaining food source but also as a badge of identity. Unlike the pie, the pasty enfolds smaller amounts of ingredients, often cheap or free if foraged. By the mid-to-late 1600s, the potato and the swede or rutabaga (what the Cornish call the “turnip”) became main ingredients for laborers due to cost and ease of growing them. In 1776, a *St. James’s Chronicle* article quoted a traveler who observed that Cornish “labourers in general bring up their families with only potatoes or turnips, or leeks or pepper grass, rolled up in black barley crust, and baked under the ashes, with now and then a little milk” (qtd. in Jenkin 1934, p. 109). Since pasties are often small and the fillings do not need to be pre-cooked, fuel could be conserved and no pie pans or cloam ovens were necessary. Instead, the pasty could be placed directly atop the fire and covered with the kettle, as Hamilton Jenkin described above.

A Symbol of Cornish Strength and Endurance

The Cornish acknowledge that the pasty did not originate in Cornwall. Hand-held pies were known throughout England and parts of Europe. However, starting in 1879 with Mrs. Catharine M. Buckton’s recipe cards for cookery lessons at Leeds Boards Schools, what had simply been a pasty became labeled a “Cornish Pasty”. This trend continued with other instruction manuals aimed at middle-class Victorians, such as *Plain Cookery Recipes for Use in Elementary Schools* (1892) from the Liverpool Training School of Cookery (Brears 2015, pp. 54-56). Surely these instructors, in distant English cities such as Leeds and Liverpool, understood and were acknowledging the prominent role that the pasty held in Cornwall particularly.

In all ways, the pasty was the most pragmatic of food parcels due to its transportability. It was well suited for laborers who spent long hours away from home and often ate meals in transit or on the job. *Crib*, *croust*, and *mossil*, Cornish dialect words, describe a pause in work, and/or the food one eats during a pause. Loaded down with tools, people had little room for carrying delicate snacks, let alone meals. The pasty’s crust withstood jostling, while its size allowed it to be carried in one’s pocket. Its crimp allowed one to hold and eat the pasty with no utensils. During cold weather, people appreciated the fact that pasties taken off the baking fire were piping hot; the heat warmed hands on trudges to work— another instance of precious heat being utilized in any manner possible.

This memory and the subsequent heritage that it has built persists in Cornwall, as does the pride of a culture heavily dependent on the land for its livelihood. Strikingly, the pasty is often identified with that other symbol of Cornish and Celtic pride, rugby. Sports historian Dilwyn Porter has argued that rugby functions “effectively as a symbolic statement of Cornish national identity.” The County Championship matches resulted in fans carrying this identity with them, dressing in gold and

continued on next page



A modern-day version of the Cornish pasty, this one from JH&M Choak in Falmouth, Cornwall. While some might take umbrage at the proportion of turnip and potato to meat, Choak's fillings get to the truth of the Cornish pasty: Meat recalls a flavor and whisper of prosperity.

Photo from the author's personal collection.

CORNISH FOOD *continued from page 15*

black and singing “Trelawny”. With the 1908 County Championship held at Redruth, Cornwall, there began a tradition of roaring down opponents while “a huge pasty ... was attached to the crossbar before kick-off” (Porter 2014, p. 319). “Trelawny’s Army” also began greeting the rival team’s entrance on the pitch with a chant, “Oggie, Oggie, Oggie, Oi! Oi! Oi!” “Oggie” probably originates from the word “hoggan”, a smallish amount of pork filling wrapped in unleavened barley bread; “hoggan” also described a Cornish miner’s *croust*, or lunch (Mansfield 2012, p. 95). During the period in which Cornish was dying out as English became the enforced standard language, various dialect words persisted, including “hoggan”, shortened to “oggie” and increasingly associated with the pasty. Legend has it that when miners’ wives arrived at the shafts with the *croust*, they shouted down to their menfolk, “Oggie, oggie, oggie”, and in order to signal that they were ready to catch their lunch miners shouted back, “Oi, oi, oi!” (“yes, yes, yes!”). Eventually, the Cornish transferred the chant to rugby matches as a sign of collective identity (Mansfield 2012, p. 112). Thus, the pasty became an enduring symbol of what it means to be Cornish because over centuries, the Cornish themselves decided on it as a symbol of their resistance to English hegemony, and of their pride in withstanding the pressure to conform.

The award of Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status to the Cornish pasty in 2011 was controversial. It frustrated many “Cousin Jacks and Jennies” living abroad, since they are no longer able to legally sell the food of their homeland as a *Cornish Pasty*. As Peter Brears also persuasively argued, if the food that is labeled “Cornish pasty”, a meat and potato combination, was invented outside of Cornwall by cookery

instructors, then it is “surely a grotesque distortion of historical fact” for the Cornish to claim it as their own. “If the ‘Cornish Pasty’ may only be made in Cornwall, after originating as a nation-wide product, why would other obviously ubiquitous products not be given equal status?” Brears asked (2015, p. 60). Likewise complicating the use of “Cornish” for the pasty is what Rachel Laudan calls “food and back migration”: As Cornish people moved abroad and became citizens elsewhere, they took the concept of the pasty with them, but a rise in their economic status allowed them to construct pasties with wheat flour and to fill them with expensive meat. These richer versions of the pasty travelled around the worldwide Cornish network, “including moving back to Cornwall itself” (Laudan 2015).

I would argue, however, that the Cornish pasty’s PGI status represents a wider British and European Union recognition of Cornwall’s distinctive identity. When Elisabeth Ayrton, in her classic book *English Provincial Cooking*, included three 19th-Century pasty fillings— such as fresh beef and potato, or fresh lamb and potato and turnip— she emphasized that the recipes were not from a school instruction manual outside of Cornwall, but from a farm near Talland, a hamlet on the south coast of Cornwall (1980, p. 130). It’s also important to keep in mind that regardless of the recipes published in school cookery books, among the Cornish the pasty was not uniform in ingredients nor in size. While women took pride in their beautiful crimping, the pasty’s size depended on the family’s needs and means, including for that matter, the size of their flatware. The definitive source on this topic is the Cornwall Federation of Women’s Institutes, whose 1929 *Cornish Recipes Ancient and Modern* continues to be the authority among Cornish cooks. Roll

out the pastry “about 1/4th inch thick”, the recipe reads, and “cut into rounds with a plate to the size desired” (Martin 1950, p. 31).

To be labeled a PGI-approved Cornish Pasty today, the stipulations are these: it must be made in Cornwall and composed of not less than 12.5% beef (skirt steak or chuck, sliced or diced instead of minced), turnip (technically *Brassica napo brassica*), potatoes, onions, salt, and pepper. No artificial flavor or colorings may be added. Ingredients must be raw when enclosed in the crust. Each stipulation gets at an ancient truth about Cornish people and the conditions under which they labored, cooked, and ate. While many insist that a Cornish pasty today should include much more than 12.5% uncooked beef, it is important to appreciate just what 12.5% recalls: a time when meat was more flavor and a whisper of prosperity than significant protein. As with the Irish, the bulking out of one’s diet with potatoes and turnip tells the story of the so-called “Celtic Fringe”, nations reduced largely to plantations designed to feed the English while the workers themselves gave up their butter, cheese, and meat, and instead were forced to make due with livestock fodder, alliums, and greens. The resulting utility and pragmatism bound up in the Cornish Pasty are to be celebrated, I came to understand in my fieldwork, as signifiers of Cornish strength and endurance, not of weakness and defeat.

Rich Cream, Rich Life

I also came to understand that while sparsity defined Cornish life in centuries past, it acted as a brilliant foil to rare occasions when frivolity and excess demanded their due. The food on such days reflected the richness of life. as did other Cornish cultural signifiers such as Guise dancing, singing, hurling, and rugby. On parish feast days, holidays, and Sundays, if a family could afford it, their pasties expanded in size and filling. Crusts were made of precious wheat flour and enriched with fat; fillings included at least some meat if at all possible. Even during the week, rural families could usually enrich their meatless pasties with a precious dollop of clotted cream, which is what Hamilton Jenkin referred to as “a little milk” in the above quotation.

Caroline Black’s family experience was again indicative. To preserve milk, she explained, the cream was clotted (scalded is another word for this process) or churned into butter. Buttermilk, the discard from churning, was a farmhouse staple, eaten with boiled potatoes, mixed with oats for porridge, and baked into bread. All butter was sold because it brought families the most profit; clotted cream, however, entered the Cornish culinary lexicon because for farm families, there was often so much of it that a portion could be spared for family use, especially during Spring and Summer.

Black could vividly recall how her mother made clotted cream. Her description matched that found in *Cornish Recipes: Ancient and Modern*:

Use new milk and strain at once, as soon as milked, in shallow pans. Let it stand for 24 hours in winter and 12 hours in summer. Then put the pan on the stove, or, better still, into a steamer containing water, and let it slowly heat up until the cream begins to show a raised ring around the edge. When sufficiently cooked place in

a cool dairy and leave for 12 or so hours. Great care must be taken in moving the pans, so that the cream is not broken, both in putting on the fire and when taking off. When required, skim off the cream in layers into a dish for the table, taking care to have a good “crust” on the top. Clotted cream is best done over a stick fire (Martin 1950, p. 26).

Making clotted cream recalls Black’s initial observation that cooking was of minor importance in the hierarchy of needs attached to fuel. Cream cannot be clotted over direct heat because it burns; only the low, steady heat at the back corner of the kitchen range allowed it time to thicken properly. Black’s mother routinely placed shallow milk pans at the range’s edge so the rest of the stove could be used for more pressing chores.

In its preserved state, clotted cream was simultaneously a pragmatic staple and a transcendent luxury. It made plain food taste richer, and it offered an essential calorie boost to a population vulnerable to malnutrition. In addition to enlivening otherwise meager porridges or barley-crustured turnip pasties, it topped fried eggs, was spooned onto warm potatoes, and mashed into baked apples. It remains in Cornwall— as in neighboring County Devon— the essential accompaniment to scones and soft wheat rolls called splits. Cornish children still love “Thunder and Lightning”, in which a scone (in previous eras more likely a split) is spread with clotted cream and drizzled with treacle. On Sundays, clotted cream came to play an integral role in all manner of celebratory Cornish treats, including in saffron cake or buns and as a topping for junket, a dish of sweetened milk curds.

Since Devon and Cornwall share similarities in their culinary heritage, teasing out what is authentically “Celtic-Cornish” and what is more broadly “Cornish-West Country” is a fool’s errand. What I did find, however, was that the language, sea, and rocks have shaped the Cornish experience in ways that do separate it from the rest of England, and the food customs of Cornwall reflect that separateness in some important instances.

When traffic jams at the Tamar Bridge begin at the start of Summer, those heading to Cornish shores not only anticipate the crossing, they salivate in anticipation of queuing for a pasty from Chough bakery in Padstow, or from Ann Muller’s on the Lizard, or farthest afield, from Martin’s Island Bakery on the Isles of Scilly. Meanwhile, the Cornish treat the pasty as a fact of everyday life, but also a food that they incorporate into their celebrations. Reduced to a filling of little more than wind itself in lean times, but expanded to take in the richest ingredients on feast days, the pasty’s importance cannot be underestimated. Surely I have written about the pasty, haven’t I. ■

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BOOK REVIEW



THE CLASSIC ENGLISH BREAKFAST AND ITS VICTORIAN ORIGINS

Kaori O'Connor,
*The English Breakfast: The Biography of a
National Meal with Recipes*
London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013;
first published in 2006 by Kegan Paul

by Mae E. Sander

Mae and her husband Len Sander are Ann Arbor residents and long-time CHAA members. Mae frequently blogs about food (<http://maefood.blogspot.com>), travel, and Jewish culture. Her most recent previous article for Repast was "The Foods of New France as Reconstructed at 18th-Century Sites" (Summer 2018).

The English Breakfast today is a popular choice for discriminating lovers of all things British. In London and other English destinations there are B&Bs, country inns, urban hotels, pretentious and unpretentious dining establishments, Harry Potter theme park restaurants, and probably a few surviving country houses that still offer a version of this classic meal. You can even get an English Breakfast at some places in New York; cruise ship menus often have English Breakfast options, as do trains and car ferry restaurants.

But just what is an English Breakfast? If you order one, you should expect to find most, if not all, of the following:

- tea or coffee
- toasted bread with copious amounts of butter
- marmalade
- variously cooked eggs
- a grilled tomato and a few mushrooms
- possibly something or other in a white sauce
- Heinz baked beans
- fish such as bloaters, smoked salmon, haddock, or kippers
- a dish of kedgeree (more about that below)
- one or more kinds of broiled bacon, such as "streaky bacon" (the fatty slices that Americans usually eat, which consist of side bacon cut from the pork belly) or "rashers" (leaner slices of back bacon, which are cut to include both pork belly and pork loin in the same piece)
- several types of English-style sausage, such as the chipolata (a long, thin, encased fresh sausage of spiced

pork) or slices of black or white pudding (encased sausages made of pork or other meat scraps, combined with oatmeal or other cereals, herbs, spices, and either with animal's blood ["black"] or without it ["white"]).

The flavors are traditionally mostly savory, not sweet, and the choices are mostly fattening, not abstemious. If, instead, you find a croissant, a blueberry muffin, or a Danish pastry in an "English Breakfast", then your host has probably overstepped the traditional definition of this very English meal. An egg-white omelet would also be suspect.

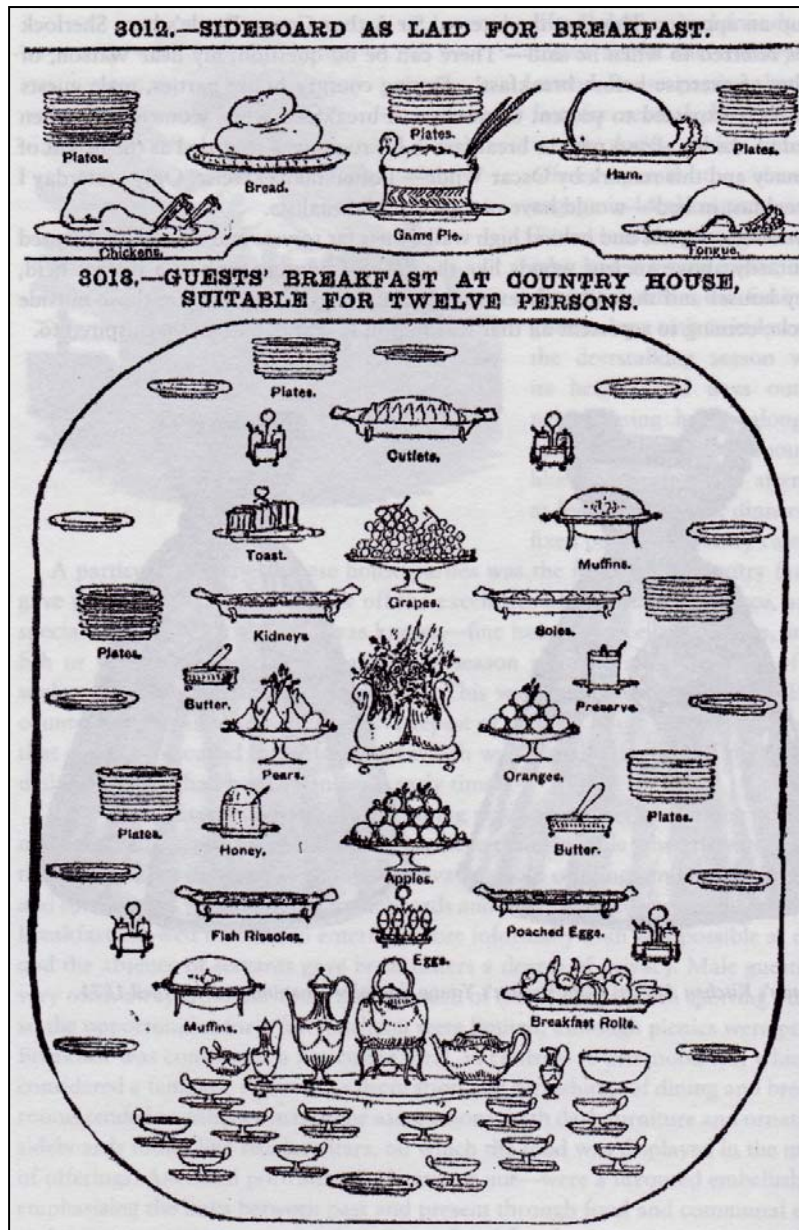
"The English Breakfast is the national dish of a mythic and indivisible England, a repast that, despite differences in execution, binds its people together as one", explains Kaori O'Connor in *The English Breakfast* (p. 46). There are Welsh, Irish, and Scottish versions, but there is one English Breakfast to rule them all.

The Rise and Decline of a Classic Meal

Dr. O'Connor, an American social anthropologist who is employed as a senior research fellow at University College London, begins her book with three chapters on the history of this meal. The remaining five chapters reproduce historical recipes, menus, and advice for serving breakfast in aspiring British homes, including facsimile versions of three Victorian and Edwardian classics: Georgiana Hill's *The Breakfast Book: A Cookery Book for the Morning Meal or Breakfast Table*, Miss M. L. Allen's *Breakfast Dishes for Every Morning of Three Months*, and Colonel Arthur Robert Kenney-Herbert's *Fifty Breakfasts*.

The English Breakfast actually originated during the Victorian era, writes O'Connor. The gentry who lived in country houses were a model of English propriety—and culinary correctness. A real gentleman's estate would ideally stretch as far as the eye could see from the manor house. From these lands would come all of the food served in the dining rooms and breakfast rooms of the stately home at the center of the property. The dishes that showed up on the table were the products of "one's own soil, rivers, forests and moorlands. The upper class fondness for venison, game and salmon springs from the fact that these are all specific products of country estates, once largely available only to those who possessed them" (p. 23).

If you were an aspiring non-aristocrat, you could draw upon the large volume of British literature on how to act genteel even if you weren't born so. The 19th- and early 20th-Century manuals, including those reproduced in O'Connor's book, provided instructions on how to emulate the ideal, high-class breakfasts of the gentry in their country houses, no matter how humble your actual circumstances. Some of the challenges included training your domestic staff to cook and serve as they should, as well as to set a worthy table. This required proper recipes for the foods, but also demanded the use of damask tablecloths, china place settings and serving dishes, silver tableware, such utensils as a special pair of scissors for cutting the top off of a boiled egg, various types of toast racks, coffee and tea sets with ewers, creamers, and so on. You needed to own a big table to hold all of these items, plus a diagram to know how to arrange them. It wasn't easy!



Above, an instructional diagram for “a breakfast in either autumn or winter” for 12 guests at an English country house. From the 1901 edition of *Mrs. Beeton’s Book of Household Management* (London: Ward, Lock & Co.), as reproduced in Kaori O’Connor’s *The English Breakfast*.

prepare, and less dependent on domestic servants. She quotes the English architect and author Philip Morton Shand, who wrote in the 1920’s: “No one who can get good porridge would ever want to eat those nauseating American proprietary cereals.” But that’s not entirely fair to the U.S.: for instance, it was an American corporation, Heinz, that produced the canned baked beans that became a luxury item at country house breakfasts in England— years before canned foods in general became a cheap and easy item for breakfasts there. In any case, the English Breakfast did not die, but was resurrected after World War 2, when rationing almost brought it to extinction.

Kedgerie and Other Specialties

O’Connor writes that her historical recipes and menus are “a feast of lost dishes that richly deserve rediscovery.” In fact, she encourages her readers to try preparing these foods themselves because, she argues, “When reading or writing about food, one should also be able to taste it” (pp. 54-55). In truth, however, I can’t say that I see any recipes here that make me curious to actually try them— especially not for breakfast! All those strange fish preparations, all those meat pies, all those game dishes for which I couldn’t legally obtain the main ingredient... snipe on toast, anyone? Cooked with its head tucked underneath its wing? Uh-uh.

However, to give you some idea as to the recipes and menus (of which there are an overwhelming number), I will single out a dish that is often mentioned in literary breakfasts. That would be *kedgerie*, a dish of rice, hardboiled eggs, and smoked fish, sometimes with curry powder and other Indian spices.

A recipe for *kedgerie*, as well as recommendations for its inclusion in menus, appears in almost every one of the cookbooks and menu books that O’Connor has reproduced. Menu XIV from Colonel Kenney-Herbert’s *Fifty Breakfasts* (1891) specifies a breakfast intended for meatless days such as Lent:

- Kitchri (Indian).*
- Macaroni à la Livornaise.*
- Eggs in white sauce.*
- Sally Lunns.*

The text below the menu explains: “This dish, from which the so-called ‘kedgerie’ of English cookery books was doubtless taken, was originally a dish of rice cooked with butter and an Indian pea called *dál* [on this South Asian *kitchri*, see the article in *Repast*, Summer 2005], but now it may either be composed of cold cooked fresh fish, or of salt fish that has been soaked and either boiled or fried.” He continues with a detailed recipe using hardboiled eggs, shallots, and turmeric, used to color the dish “a nice light yellow color” (p. 265).

Of *The Dictionary of Dainty Breakfasts* (1899) by Phyllis Browne, only the Introduction (written by “A Mere Man”) is reproduced in O’Connor’s book. This introduction consists of a list of various categories of dishes. Category 3(d) appears as follows (p. 67):

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(d) *Products of fish, etc.*

Cod's roe: excellent.

Herring's roe, on toast: an admirable accessory.

Kedgerie, from the remains of yesterday's fish (not very good).

Would I try kedgerie if I found myself in a country house or hotel buffet that included it? Maybe—it depends on what else was on offer. As with many Americans, I'm partial to eating sweet breakfasts, so I might instead choose some of the various breads and rolls and marmalades that appear on most of the menus. Still, I find it fascinating to learn about all such things.

Among the hundreds of menus and recipes in the book, the following menu (p. 154) from Georgiana Hill's *The Breakfast Book* (1865) features perhaps the most unfamiliar foods, while also indicating how the various dishes should be arranged on the breakfast table:

Autumn Quarter.

BREAKFAST FOR 8 OR 10 PERSONS.

Middle of the Table.

Collared Sucking Pig.

4 By-dishes, Cold.

Anchovy canapés.	Pressed Caviare.
Potted Cheese.	Pickled Mussels.

2 By-Dishes, Hot.

Brain Cakes.	Dried Sprats, tossed.
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2 Entrées.

Salmi of Partridges.	Pork Cutlets and Poached eggs.
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Compotes of Fruit, Cheese, Breakfast cakes, etc.

I hope that when I return to hotel buffets for breakfast, I don't encounter a sucking pig or brain cakes!

Breakfast or Brunch?

The bounteous and leisurely English Breakfast survives in brunch Effectively a country house breakfast without the game and with desserts and champagne, Bucks Fizz, or Bloody Mary cocktails added, it is usually served on a Sunday morning from eleven o'clock onwards (p. 54).

The iconic English Breakfast seems to be a huge meal, one that still fascinates some modern food writers. You could make it at home, but you would probably serve it for brunch, which is generally not viewed as a meal suitable for launching a day's work in an office, in the fields, or on the assembly line. Maybe it's not even a meal that you would want before a day's work at your home computer on Zoom!

At the English country houses where this breakfast tradition arose, it was served rather late. Breakfast took place after the lord of the manor and his male guests had been out shooting or some such activity—and after the servants had taken time to prepare and lay out the varieties of porridge, casseroles, eggs, fish, meat, game, pies, beverages, and so on that were expected. Often, the hostess and women guests would have taken a dainty

cup of tea in their bedrooms before entering the breakfast room, if they chose to partake of the meal at all.

The collected 19th-Century breakfast cookbooks in *The English Breakfast* often encouraged working people to eat at least some of the substantial foods of an English breakfast. However, it was the working class that most turned to the use of instant foods for breakfast, especially packaged cereal. By the 1970s, the English Breakfast survived mostly in “independent country inns and small hotels” (p. 361).

According to O'Connor, a number of British marketing boards in the mid-20th Century promoted products such as eggs and bacon that were going out of style for breakfast. The egg marketing board, in particular, offered “Anytime, any day egg recipes”, extending the times when people might eat their product. This set the stage for what happened to breakfast next:

‘Brunch’— a combination of ‘breakfast’ and ‘lunch’— is an English invention, being neither more nor less than the elaborate late breakfasts of the Victorian era.... Having fallen out of fashion in Britain, it survived in America where it was first developed into a lavish meal offered at the weekend by hotels, private social clubs and society hostesses, then imitated more widely. For Americans, the great appeal of brunch was conviviality in a more informal setting, with guests able to serve themselves from a wide variety of foods. In the 1970s— with great irony— brunch was imported back to Britain as an American invention (p. 387).

Does it sound as if we are going in circles? That seems to be the case with brunch, which is now a very luxurious and indulgent meal. What will be the next fashion in breakfasts and brunches? When restaurant dining and travel are fully resumed following the pandemic, who knows which of the many trends in English Breakfasts and morning meals will take the world's fancy? ■

EATING OUT *continued from page 11*

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HISTORICAL BAKING RE-ENACTMENT

❧

A FORT MEIGS FEAST

by Mary Bilyeu

CHAA member Mary Bilyeu has been the Food Editor at The Blade in Toledo since 2014, and is a former contributor to The Ann Arbor News and The Washtenaw Jewish News. Her most recent previous article for Repast was “Sephardic Matzah for Passover” (Winter 2014).

Photographer Jetta Fraser and I walked across the grounds of Ft. Meigs on a sunny afternoon last April, escorted by John Thompson (the site’s Manager of Historic Programs) and Isabela Haack, re-enactors serving as soldiers in the 2nd Artillery Regiment of the U.S. Army in 1812. We were there to do a story for our paper, *The Blade*, about early 19th-Century baking techniques, and were going to drop in on a class to see— and, of course, sample—the finished goods.

Located in Perrysburg, Ohio, about 10 miles southwest of what is now downtown Toledo, Ft. Meigs (fortmeigs.org, tel. 419-874-4121) was built in early 1813 in response to British attacks in the region during the War of 1812. It burned down after the hostilities ended, and was initially reconstructed in the 1970s before being rebuilt again in the early 2000s. The fort is now a popular educational site that hosts reenactments and military-miniatures gaming events, as well as offering tours, classes in tinsmithing, baking, or other crafts, and other special programs.

“The food is incredible”, John enthused as we walked back toward a large stone building where the class was being held. He and Isabela were giving Jetta and me a brief overview of what we’d find, including a cooking tool that I didn’t know much about: a reflective oven, which “amplifies the heat” of the fire that it’s placed in front of, he said. As we arrived at the building, several people were bustling about in front of a small campfire. They were setting up the reflector—a foot-tall curved shield of polished metal propped up on the grass and surrounding three-quarters of the fire—and placing inside the curve a small, open-fronted baking platform with two shelves, where it would benefit from the heat of the flames and, as John had noted, from reflected heat as well.

Two small loaves of apple cinnamon bread were placed on the top shelf of the oven platform along with a pan of Empire



Jetta Fraser/ The Blade

Assistant John Nelson sets up a reflective oven during a period-appropriate 19th-Century baking class held at Ft. Meigs. This type of oven became common for use in home hearths in the late 1700s, when it was known as a “tin kitchen”.

biscuits, so named because “they’re from the Empire—England”, as class instructor Annette Bristol explained. The biscuits, which are actually small spice cookies, would later get sandwiched together with jam, topped with a simple white icing, and garnished with a cherry to make them extra festive.

Annette explained that she has been involved with Ft. Meigs for more than three decades. She joked, “It’s my mother’s fault. She felt that we needed to be involved in our community.” In 1985, Donna Bristol had signed her daughter up to make costumes at the fort because Annette “loved to make period clothing for dolls”, she said. But when Annette learned that there were opportunities for food preparation, she said “Aha! I’ll cook!” Ever since then she’s been feeding the troops at reenactments, as well as teaching classes.

Annette further explained to us that back when Ft. Meigs was active in the war effort, sets of seven soldiers would eat together at a mess, but since the men didn’t cook, women handled all of the meals. The dishes that she was teaching her class that day would have been considered “officers’ fare”—more special than what was prepared for the rank and file. She showed off a beautifully rustic Passenger Pigeon Pie as it sat cooling on the nearby picnic table, while the sweets continued to bake and be monitored carefully by volunteer Nancy Pacabis.

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Instructor Annette Bristol and volunteer Nancy Pacabis place apple cinnamon loaves and Empire biscuits into a reflective oven to bake during the class.



Jetta Fraser/ The Blade

FORT MEIGS *continued from page 21*

It’s “made with chicken now”, she said, “because there are no passenger pigeons” anymore despite their having been a plentiful nuisance 200 years ago.

The 19th-Century-style meal was nearly complete, so we all moved inside to where the day’s students— a small group, due to required social distancing protocols— continued to prepare the final items. Friends and history buffs Susi Fletcher, Anne Wight, and Judy Yokom are regulars at the fort and were taking their third cooking class together. They also “help out” at the River Raisin Battlefield in Monroe, MI, Anne said, and Susi’s husband teaches tinware and makes ornaments for the Ft. Meigs gift shop. The women were gathered around a table as they prepared a small bundt cake using historically appropriate tools, including striped utility cloth sacks to hold flour and sugar, and a grater that Annette’s late father, Robert, had made. A wood- and metalworker, he’d “made most of our period stuff”, Annette told us. She went on, “I cooked for 600 people a day using this equipment”, in reference to an anniversary event held at the fort in 2012 and the pots, pans, utensils, and heating elements that she’d employed.

“We have our batter done!” Susi announced, at which point the cake was taken outside to the reflective oven. They had started their work at 10 a.m., and it was now nearly 3 p.m. Along with teaching aides, the trio of women had prepared a buffet of treats, some of them baked in the reflective oven and others in the hearth in the stone classroom: individual mushroom tarts, currant scones, Scotch eggs, a cake-like nut bread, Maids of Honor (small tarts of raspberry jam topped with meringue), and spice cake donuts, as well as the savory pie and the apple cinnamon breads, biscuits, and cake that were still baking.

Assistants are integral to making the classes at Ft. Meigs run smoothly. “We are so lucky to have the staff and volunteers that

we do”, said Ashley Dukeshire in Visitor Services. “Without them, we couldn’t have all these programs.” Annette’s team included Nancy’s partner Frank Wisniewski, who’s worked at Fort Meigs for 15 years, and her own sister Jeanna Nelson, along with Jeanna’s husband John and their 11-year-old son Gunnar.

Gunnar has been coming to the fort since he was two years old, and is now the self-proclaimed “fire guy” who tends the flames so they don’t get too hot or fizzle out. If either happens, Annette noted matter-of-factly, then “you can’t bake.” She explained that to bake in the hearth with embers and ashes— rather than cooking a stew, for example, in a pot over flames— the fire has to be started one hour ahead of time and burn down. To keep children away from the dangerous area in the home, mothers would sew leading strings into the kids’ clothing to serve as de facto leashes. For the large oven situated outside of the stone building (which wasn’t used during this class), the fire needs to be started four hours ahead; its bricks hold the substantial heat well, cooling off over a very long time to facilitate long, slow bakes.

As food was being set out on a serving table, Donna, who’d started all of this in motion so many years ago by signing Annette up at Ft. Meigs, was washing the dishes in period fashion in two large tubs set in a back corner of the room. “I’m 85 years old” she said, and lets her daughters do the cooking because it is hard on her back, but she added with a smile, “I supervise.” “She’s the head of everything!” declared Gunnar, and Frank seconded the motion.

Everyone— students, re-enactors, staff, volunteers, and two hungry journalists— sat down to enjoy the meal. “The Passenger Pigeon Pie is dynamite”, John said. “I went for all sweets” said Isabela as her face lit up. “It’s so good. The doughnuts taste like elephant ears.” Everyone enjoyed the crunch of the Empire bis-



John Thompson and Isabela Haack, re-enacting soldiers in the War of 1812, serve themselves during the baking class.

Jetta Fraser/The Blade

cuits, whose flavors— like those of the Maids of Honor, as well— can be varied with different fillings. “Whatever fruit they found, they made jam” with, said Susi. She also noted that many of the items that the class had prepared that day were good keepers. In the early 19th Century, and particularly during wartime, “they made stuff that would travel well.”

Many of us— myself included— tried to taste a bit of everything that day, both sweet and savory, but there was so much good food that it was impossible to eat one of each item. “This is coming home ... this is coming home”, said Judy, as she set some things aside to take with her. “Whether my family gets [to sample] it or not, I don’t know”, she said with a smile.

As we sat and ate, we discussed what ingredients would have been available for cooking and baking in 1812. Flour and sugar were staples, and the latter “came in cones, wrapped in paper”, Judy said. In homes rather than at the fort, “they could use molasses ... or honey”, she added. Frank noted that there would have been a cook stationed at Ft. Meigs to prepare meals. But when the troops were traveling, they’d have portable hardtack— a mix of flour, water, and salt— which is “basically a cracker.” These were thick and square, Judy added, “like a giant saltine.”

As everyone gathered up plates full of treats to take home (three of them were generously given to me to share with my family), Susi complimented the teaching staff. “These ladies do a lot of prep!” she exclaimed. “Don’t forget the men, too”, Frank chimed in. It had been a long day of baking without any modern conveniences, but the staff, volunteers, and students alike were all giddy from eating a hearty meal, with a sense of pride in their accomplishments. “We like doing stuff like this”, Susi said with a big smile. ■

CORNISH FOOD *continued from page 17*

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“I KEEP TELLING EVERYONE ABOUT THE CHAA” A SUMMARY OF SIX PROGRAMS

Undeterred by the pandemic, the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor launched 2021 with a successful monthly series of online presentations. The six talks during this calendar year have focused on various aspects of culinary history and culture in North America and the British Isles. These Sunday afternoon events are organized by our Program Chair, Glenda Bullock, in collaboration with our hosting partner, the Ann Arbor District Library (AADL).

We look forward to resuming some in-person meetings this Fall, perhaps simultaneously streamed online. Our speaker series will resume this September with Maite Gomez-Rejón’s online presentation on “Mexico’s Early Cookbooks”, scheduled in conjunction with National Hispanic Heritage Month (see page 28). Details about this and subsequent talks will be available on the CHAA website.

The programs via Zoom have been very popular, often drawing audiences of 100 or more viewers from around the world. A woman in London, England, who became one of our audience “regulars”, wrote to us in appreciation:

I keep telling everyone about the CHAA. I think you are one of my favourite “finds” of Lock-Down. If it had not been for Zoom and your December talk on suffragette cookbooks, I would never have heard of you. Lock-Down does have a silver lining!

Indeed, the 10 online talks of the 2020-21 season motivated about 50 new people to become members or subscribers with our organization.

Below, we have briefly summarized the CHAA talks from January through June, plus an April talk about the Ann Arbor exhibit “Breakfast”. Many of the video recordings of the talks are now freely available on YouTube; the links are posted on the “Program Schedule” page of the CHAA website (<https://culinaryhistoriansannarbor.org>) and, for “Breakfast”, at <http://dinnerwaremuseum.org>.

Greek-American Candy Makers in the Midwest

Most of us who Zoomed into the Jan. 17 program didn’t know that Greek-immigrant candy makers and vendors were once legion across the Midwest. In “Sweet Greeks: First-Generation Immigrant Confectioners in the Heartland” (the title of both her presentation and her 2020 book from Univ. of Illinois Press), Dr. Ann Flesor Beck described her own family’s confectionery, Flesor’s Candy Kitchen in Tuscola, IL, which she and her sister now own and operate—in fact, she spoke to us while sitting at the shop’s soda fountain. But she also surveyed dozens of other Greek-founded confectioners, ranging from nationally famous ones such as Dove Candies & Ice Cream (est. 1939) in Chicago, to more local ones such as the Sugar Bowl (1911-67) in Ann Arbor. Chicago, which Beck called “The Acropolis of the Greek-American candy business”, saw its first such shop open in 1869, and 2,000-3,000 of them before World War 2. Virtually every small town in central Illinois also hosted

at least one Greek-immigrant confectionery.

Families of Greek heritage generally arrived in the U.S. via chain migration from the Peloponnese region or from the Aegean coast of Turkey. They fled poverty, and in some cases oppression under Ottoman rule. Most of the men in the first generation took up making candy and selling it by pushcart as street vendors, preferring an entrepreneurial livelihood to factory work as wage slaves. But there was no Greek tradition of candy making! This explains why the candies themselves are American, not Greek. The men consulted cookbooks such as W. O. Rigby’s *Rigby’s Reliable Candy Teacher and Soda and Ice Cream Formulas* (Topeka, KS, ca. 1897), and they often banded together in common kitchens to make the candy. Some of the men became owners of soda shops or movie houses; about 40% ended up returning to Greece, often satisfied with the money they’d saved.

Ann’s grandfather, Constantine “Gus” Flesor, came in 1901 from Pigadakia, a village north of Sparta. By 1913 he’d saved enough money from railroad work in the West for him and his wife Sophia to buy a candy kitchen on Main Street in Tuscola. Even though they were assimilation-oriented, their shop was a target of Klan agitation. Yet it thrived until the early 1970s, when the family closed it and sold the property. Decades later Ann and her sister ended up back in town, and they renovated and re-opened the place in 2004. There they make 40-50 kinds of candy in the traditional ways (such as hand-dipping), most of them coated with chocolate, toffee, and/or caramel, while others are cinnamon- or horehound-flavored hard candies or brittles. They buy their chocolate from the family-owned Guittard Chocolate Co. in the San Francisco Bay area, founded in 1868 by a French gold miner. The sisters also make ice cream and sodas, and they serve lunch and dinner.

For a Faster, Easier Way to Raise Dough

Why was baking powder invented? Why in New England? And how did this invention and the ensuing trade wars affect American life and foodways? These were the key questions addressed by Dr. Linda Civitello in her Feb. 21 talk, “Baking Powder Wars: The Cutthroat Food Fight That Revolutionized Cooking”, which is also the title of her latest book (Univ. of Illinois Press, 2017). Civitello, a Connecticut-based food historian and currently a Research Fellow with the National Food & Beverage Foundation (New Orleans), opened her talk by reviewing the history of leaveners. Women in early America, she reminded us, were expected to bake good bread for their families every week. This home baking made them more independent than European women whose bread came from community ovens and guild master bakers. But bread baking was also a big chore, motivating a search for easier, faster dough-raising agents. Refined ash, or “pearl ash”, a new homemade leavener popularized by Amelia Simmons’s *American Cookery* (Hartford, CT, 1796), was preferable to the traditional messy, finicky slurries of yeast. In 1856, Harvard chemist Eben Horsford improved upon pearl ash by inventing a stable, reliable “baking powder” that could be canned commercially and kept safely on a

kitchen shelf; it combined baking soda, calcium biphosphate as an activating acid, and corn starch as a buffer.

Civitello identified geographic and social factors that led New Englanders to be the pioneers of baking powder. Since wheat didn't grow well in that region, the standard grains were corn and rye; the resulting "rye'n'Injun" dough, low in gluten, rises poorly with yeast but tolerably well with baking powder. Meanwhile, in the American South there was less motivation to adopt such new baking technologies and time-saving conveniences because of the large enslaved workforce; Mary Randolph's *The Virginia Housewife* (1824) favored beaten biscuits (which require 2-3 hours of kneading and pounding) and barely even mentioned pearl ash. Similarly in Europe, the baking guilds had the general effect of squelching a spirit of innovation and enterprise.

After Prof. Horsford established the Rumford Chemical Works to manufacture his baking powder, rivals arose including Royal (Indiana, 1866), Calumet (Illinois, 1889), and Clabber Girl (Indiana, 1899). This was a lucrative new industry, with fierce competition. By 1900, there were 534 baking-powder firms in the U.S.; many of them used soda alum in place of calcium biphosphate. Calumet coined the phrase "double acting" to advertise its baking powder that used two different activating acids. Royal, whose product used cream of tartar as acid, tried to destroy competitors with ads and legal actions; in Missouri and other states it even succeeded in getting alum banned for several years as a "food impurity". This vicious 50-year trade war highlighted how the U.S. food industry was vulnerable to deceptive advertising, corporate lobbying, and government corruption. The rivalry also affected cookbooks; as late as the 1943 edition of *The Joy of Cooking*, recipes for leavened goods had two sets of instructions, one for each of the main types of baking powder. Nevertheless, guided by such cookbooks, and equipped with the powerful chemical leaveners and tall baking pans, homemakers were able to bake lofty, majestic loaves and cakes, even when they burdened the dough with rich extra ingredients such as molasses, honey, sugar, eggs, ground spices, chocolate, vanilla or other essences, raisins, chopped fruits and nuts, and citrus juices and peels. Thus, Civitello concluded, "baking powder gave women something they didn't have with their daily bread": the freedom to personalize their oven-baked goods and to establish family baking traditions.

"Pacific Coasting" with *Sunset* Magazine

When Jennifer Pagano was completing her master's degree in food studies a few years ago, she focused her thesis research on gender attitudes at the celebrated California magazine *Sunset* during 1928-38. Pagano, a chef currently employed by a food and beverage innovation firm in San Mateo County, spoke to us on Mar. 21 about "Creating *Sunset* Magazine's Cooking Department: A Study of Men, Women, and Cooking in the 1930s". She explained that the magazine had gone through many changes in the decades after the Southern Pacific Railroad founded it in 1898, naming it after its Sunset Line. In 1929, veteran ad executive Lawrence Lane took over as Publisher and reconceived it as a Western regional magazine focused on home, gardening, and cooking, aimed at a middle-class female and male readership. He hired Louvica ("Lou") Richardson as Editor and Genevieve A. Callahan as Director of Home Economics.

Susan Wineberg's Deep Dive into Baking Powder

Local historian and CHAA member Susan Wineberg has been engaged for some time in a daunting personal quest: to collect promotional trade cards from every baking-powder company that ever existed in the U.S.! So far, about 300 of the more than 500 such firms are represented in her collection of the mostly postcard-sized ads, which she sorts by company and keeps in a couple of shoeboxes. Susan told us that most of the companies were established in the years after the Civil War, "when baking powder was a new and wonderful invention." She continued, "I got interested first because of the graphics, then because I realized they document capitalism and how it works: when a new niche opens, hundreds of companies join the fray to make money." And capitalism is a dog-eat-dog system: Susan marvels that most of the firms had perished by the early 1900s, and today only a few of those remain— one of them, Clabber Girl, owns some of the others. She plans to eventually donate her baking-powder cards to the culinary archives at the Univ. of Michigan Special Collections Library, where over the years she has also donated many of her other boxed collections of food-related promotional items.

These two women, whom Lane had pried away from Iowa-based *Better Homes and Gardens*, would go "Pacific Coasting" together, road-tripping to explore and learn about the West. Callahan established "Kitchen Cabinet", a paid reader column in *Sunset* for the exchange of recipes and menus. She would home-test the recipes and carefully edit them for general use before publishing them in a two-page spread with how-to steps and drawings. The recipes, contributed by women from all walks of life, featured California ingredients such as avocado, abalone, and salsa. Many contributors were from the Sierra Club, notably Helen Gompertz, a founding member. (Experienced cooks, including Chinese-American ones, were often hired for Club trips.)

Cooking-related articles were included in the Western Housekeeping section of the magazine, while articles in the Travel Outdoors section explained techniques and conveniences related to picnicking, camping, and auto-camping, which were gaining popularity at the time. The magazine made room for the cooking experiences of men, who were portrayed as leisurely cooking hobbyists and special-occasion cooks with stereotypically "masculine" food tastes (more meat, less salad, etc.). In the mid-1930s, "Kitchen Rangers" was introduced as a sporadic recipe-exchange column "For Men Only". They could share and brag about their exploits in camp cooking, Dutch oven cookery, grilling and barbecuing, preparing venison, and the like. Later attempts along those lines included the columns "Come and Get It", "Outdoor Eating", and "Chefs of the West".

Many of these columns and articles found their way into a series of thematic cookbooks compiled by Callahan and Richardson and published by the magazine. Both women left *Sunset* in 1937-38, but continued to contribute writing to the magazine, and Callahan later authored *The California Cookbook* (New York: M. Barrows & Co., 1946).

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CHAA PROGRAMS *continued from page 25*

Celebrating the First Meal of the Day

The opening reception for the Ann Arbor exhibit “Breakfast” was held online via Zoom on April 10. The exhibit, which ran through Aug. 28, was organized by the International Museum of Dinnerware Design (IMoDD) and mounted at The Museum on Main Street. It showcased breakfast-related tableware created by 40 contemporary artists and designers in all media, as well as some historical pieces and images.

CHAA member and IMoDD director Dr. Margaret Carney, who curated the exhibit, explained that the contemporary art included some pieces entered in the museum’s fourth biennial juried competition, “Breakfast: Celebrating the First Meal of the Day” (with prize money donated by Chelsea Milling/ Jiffy Mixes), while other pieces were loaned for this show by invited artists. Among the juried works, First Prize went to a sculpture, “Over Easy with French Toast, No Bacon” by artist Julianne Harvey, an adjunct faculty member at the Univ. of New Mexico. On a blue and white plate, her porcelain breakfast of fried eggs and French toast is surmounted by pigs (instead of bacon) and is circled by menacing sharks, recalling Géricault’s “Raft of the Medusa” while playfully skewering current politics and other hot-button issues, such as our relationship with animals. Another juried work was submitted by Ann Arbor ceramic artist Irina Bondarenko. In her “Egg Cup Set”, the glazed, free-flowing interior surfaces of the sculptural pieces contrast with the unglazed, hard-faceted exteriors, thereby mimicking the textural qualities of a soft-boiled egg in its shell.

Among the works by invited artists was a heavy stoneware sugar and cream set created by Malcolm Mobutu Smith, a professor of ceramic art at Indiana Univ. in Bloomington. His two thick bowls of highly glazed ceramic are formed of vibrant, flowing lobes, inspired by Hip Hop culture and African art traditions. The historical segment of the exhibit, which touched on six art movements, included a Pop Art-inspired work from 1966 by Roy Lichtenstein. This china tableware place setting “for breakfast after the Happening” is a six-piece in black and white that Lichtenstein designed as a limited edition for Jackson China Co. (Falls Creek, PA). Also on display, selected from IMoDD’s permanent collection of more than 9,000 objects, were some classic Art Deco bread toasters from the 1930s and 1940s in shiny chrome (sunglasses please!).

The reception was brought to a close by a Happening that was worthy of Andy Warhol: the ceremonial opening and testing of a vintage 1960 single-serving box of Rice Krispies breakfast cereal. Carefully following the directions, Dr. Carney opened the box, turned it sideways, and poured in the fresh milk. At first, we thought that she had accidentally muted her audio. Alas, she reported: despite Kellogg’s waxed-paper lining, after 80 years in the cupboard there were none of the usual “snap, crackle, and pop” sounds. Mind those “best by” dates!

Black Lives Also Matter in Barbecue History

Adrian Miller describes his new book, *Black Smoke: African Americans and the United States of Barbecue* (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2021), as “part celebration, part restora-

tion” of Black people’s position in the annals of barbecue, a culinary art wildly popular today. Miller, a Denver food historian and author, attorney, and certified barbecue judge who spoke to us on Apr. 18, says that Black barbecuers have often been neglected in books and other media—egregiously so in publications such as *Bon Appétit* magazine and in videos such as “Paula’s Southern BBQ” (2004) from Paula Deen. Barbecue culture, he told us, is actually rooted in age-old Native American practices. To cook and smoke meats slowly for as long as several days and prolong their “shelf life”, several different methods had been developed before Columbus, variously based on piercing-sticks, a rotating spit, a raised platform, a shallow pit, and an earth oven. The African American contributions to barbecue, we learned, were mostly in seasoning and refinement, and their locus was centered in Virginia. Whole-hog barbecues evolved into major social affairs on plantations and in hamlets there and throughout the South. By 1830 there are records of massive, sometimes elite events at which tens of thousands of white people were each served a hunk of barbecued meat, bread, and coffee, prepared by a large crew of servants or slaves laboring under a few white bosses. The Blacks then entertained the guests; only afterward were they able to consume any of what they’d prepared.

Until the 1900s, Miller said, American barbecue generally involved men digging a trench and roasting a carcass—be it pork, beef, possum, mutton, or raccoon—on skewers over a fire. Side dishes were made by other men and/or women. After Emancipation, formerly enslaved people sometimes worked as freelance barbecuers at white political rallies, church socials, and other gatherings. Miller’s book also documents barbecues for Black people, including at church camp meetings. He reviewed for us the legacy of Black barbecue entrepreneurs such as Columbus B. Hill (Denver), Henry Perry (Kansas City), and Ernestine Vanduvall (Nicodemus, KS). The first Memphis in May barbecue competition (1968) was won by an African American, Bessie Mae Cathey.

Black barbecue aesthetics include: an emphasis on the quantity and quality of the sauce; often, the barbecuing of less common or more “funky” items, such as pork steaks, chopped pork, pork spareribs with the tips attached, chicken, hotlink sausages, bologna, even spaghetti; and sometimes a hot/fast phase of cooking preceding the slow cooking, a trend that reflects Black urbanization. We heard a summary of regional styles including Carolina, Deep South, Memphis, Chicago South Side, East Texas, and KC. Common side dishes include collards, baked beans, mac’n’cheese, coleslaw, potato salad, potato fries in the Midwest, burgoo stew in the Appalachian region, and corn hushpuppies in the Gulf states. Peach cobbler and banana pudding are popular desserts. The Black barbecue scene today, Miller told us, is “shifting, but thriving and exciting”; leading gurus include Rodney Scott (Charleston, SC), Ed Mitchell (Raleigh, NC), and sisters Deborah and Mary Jones (Kansas City, KS).

How Foodways Merged in Puerto Rico

On May 16, Oswald Rivera whetted our appetites both for eating and learning about Puerto Rican food. Sadly, he said, the warm and sensual cuisine of the island is unfamiliar to most Americans, in part because it’s a small segment of the vast and

diverse corpus of Caribbean, Latin, and Hispanic cuisine. There wasn't even a cookbook devoted to it until 1975, when Carmen Aboy Valldejuli published one in San Juan. Rivera, a writer and cooking instructor now living in northern Vermont, was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, in 1945 and grew up in New York City. He is the author of *Puerto Rican Cuisine in America: Nuyorican and Bodega Recipes*, (Running Press, Revised edition 2015).

Mr. Rivera explained that Puerto Rican foodways developed by amalgamation from the cultures of three peoples especially: the Spanish colonial settlers, the enslaved West Africans, and the indigenous Taíno. Pre-Columbian foods used by the Taíno included local seafood; New World beans; maize; bell peppers and chile peppers; other local vegetables, especially starchy roots such as *yuca* (cassava) and *batata* (sweet potato); avocado, guava, and other tree fruits; green herbs such as *recao* (culantro); and *achiote* seeds, used for color and flavor. The Spaniards introduced rice as a staple grain in the region, along with the custom of foods breaded with wheaten dough; various dairy foods and meats (pork, chicken, lamb, and some beef); certain legumes, notably the garbanzo bean and the *guandul* (pigeon pea); olive oil; Old World herbs and spices such as garlic, onions, cilantro, oregano, turmeric, and black pepper; the tomato and white potato, native to Mexico and the Andean region, respectively; Asian-origin fruits such as citrus and coconut; and sugar, molasses, and rum. African customs include thick, hearty soups and stews, often involving starchy vegetables such as the plantain. Green plantains are also sliced, pounded, and deep-fried twice to make *tostones*, as ubiquitous a meal accompaniment as is bread in the States.

Examples of dishes that incorporate all three of these cultural influences are *mofongo con chicharrón* and *asopao*. The first, which is akin to West African *fufu*, features dumplings made of green plantains that are fried and then mashed with broth, olive oil, garlic, and fried pork cracklings. These softball-sized dumplings are usually served in a bowl of rich chicken broth. *Asopao* is a stew similar to gumbo, with rice, pigeon peas, pork or other meat or seafood, tomatoes, olives, and *sofrito*. *Sofrito* is a ubiquitous seasoning made of green bell pepper, *ají dulce* (mild chile pepper), garlic, cilantro, and culantro, all finely chopped and blended.

Puerto Rican food, an amalgam from its inception, is highly adaptable and prone to “fusion”. Rivera noted that about 3.1 million of the *Puertorriqueños* (also called Boricuanos) live on the island itself, while another 5.8 million live in the U.S., concentrated in New York City; those born and raised in New York are known as “Nuyoricans”. He recalled that when he was growing up there in Spanish Harlem, his mother would serve spaghetti noodles once a week but would give them an island flair, such as by topping them with a Boricuan chicken dish. Such kitchen improvisation, creatively throwing things together, is called *sambumbia*. Mainland American influence also made the cuisine less spicy. Other Nuyorican dishes include *pollos con domplines*, chicken served with dumplings made of flour, cornmeal, baking powder, onion, and cilantro; lamb chops broiled with garlic, pepper, and *sofrito*; and rack of lamb cooked with garlic, oregano, melted butter, and rum.

The Jars of Marmalade Were Quite A-peel-ing

Centuries ago, marmalade was such an exquisite luxury that it was sometimes exchanged among British royalty and nobles, who had their servants carefully preserve not only the fruits but the recipes. This type of jam had evolved from a candied, solid quince paste of medieval Iberia. We learned this from “The Marmalade Mavens”, a Jun. 20 talk by Sarah B. Hood, Board member of the Culinary Historians of Canada. Hood, a journalist and award-winning jam maker in Toronto, is the author of *Jam, Jelly and Marmalade: A Global History* (Reaktion Books, 2021).

By 1714, when the earliest known published recipe appeared in London, marmalade was a spreadable preserve most often made with citrus peel— especially that of bitter or Seville orange, which is very high in the pectin that promotes coagulation. In other cases, the pulp of apple, cherry, or plum was used. Sugar was not so expensive as in previous ages, and the wives of greengrocers were using it to preserve citrus fruits before they spoiled. Janet Keiller (1737-1813) of Dundee, Scotland, for example, considered the “inventor” of marmalade, was reportedly the first to slice orange peels for this purpose instead of mashing them. The firm James Keiller & Sons was established in 1797 and eventually built factories around the world to produce marmalade, which was packed and shipped in appealing ceramic jars. It was acquired by Crosse and Blackwell, which in turn was gobbled up by Smucker's— a type of jam “coagulation” that's occurred over and over with industry globalization. Hood discussed four additional firms of this grocer-entrepreneur type: Robertson's “Golden Shred” brand (Paisley, Scotland, 1864), Lauchlan Rose & Co. (London, 1867), Hartley's (Pendle, Lancashire, 1871), and Frank Cooper's (Oxford, 1874). Rose's, which supplied preserved Caribbean lime juice to the British Navy, didn't start to make its famous lime marmalade until the 1930s.

Farm factories also helped shape marmalade history. In 1875 the Chivers family, who were market gardeners and orchardists, built a model farm factory and worker village beside the railway station in Histon, Cambridgeshire. There, the firm Chivers & Sons manufactured marmalade and other fruit preserves and the jars for them. Other farm factory companies that made marmalade include E. D. Smith & Sons (Hamilton, ONT, 1882), Wilkin & Sons (Tiptree, Essex, England, 1883), Welch's (Westfield, NY, 1893), and J. M. Smucker (Orrville, OH, 1897). Welch's Grape Juice Co. began making its grape and orange marmalades when it landed an Army contract during World War I.

Hood, whose personal favorite is to use grapefruit peel, also discussed the steps in making marmalade and presented several historical recipes. Her own high-quality product uses a sugar-to-fruit ratio of 3:4, but she found a recipe from Shirriff's, a leading Toronto firm, that uses 8:5, while U.S. marmalades are even sweeter. Today, she noted, when the industry is dominated by a few multi-brand global giants like Smucker's and Hain Celestial, more and more artisans and celebrity chefs have begun small-scale marmalade operations. ■

CHAA CALENDAR

Programs start at 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time. For the Oct. and Nov. talks, please check the CHAA website to see whether it is being held in-person and/or online.

Sunday, September 19, 2021

(Event held online-only via Zoom)
Maite Gómez-Rejón,
founder and director of ArtBites,
“Early Mexican Cookbooks”

Sunday, October 17, 2021

TBD

Sunday, November 21, 2021

Tammy Coxen,
founder and director of Tammy’s Tastings,
“Prohibition and Repeal”

Sunday, December 19, 2021

(4-7 p.m., Ladies’ Literary Club of Ypsilanti)
Members-only participatory theme meal,
“The Cuisines of the Caribbean”

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

- Fall 2021, Winter 2022: unthemed
- Spring 2022: Culinary History in England, Part 4
- Summer and Fall 2022: Fruits of the World and How to Use Them
- Winter 2023: Foods of the Ancient Roman World.

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1044 GREENHILLS DRIVE
ANN ARBOR, MI 48105-2722



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