

## On the Trail of Jacques Marquette

*350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of French  
Settlement in Michigan*



Father Jacques Marquette, Jesuit missionary and explorer, as depicted by illustrator Stanley W. Galli. His design was used for a U.S. postage stamp commemorating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Marquette's arrival in the Great Lakes region, issued Sep. 20, 1968, at Sault Ste. Marie, MI.

# ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This Summer, Sault Ste. Marie is celebrating its “sesquicentennial” (350<sup>th</sup> anniversary) as the first permanent European settlement in the central interior of North America. Founded as a religious mission in 1668 by the French Jesuit, Père Jacques Marquette, Sault Ste. Marie now sits on the border between Ontario and Michigan. We at *Repast* thought that the town’s celebration would be a great opportunity to celebrate the origins of the French food traditions of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence regions. In this issue we take up the earliest French foodways, and in our next issue we’ll shift the focus to their enduring legacy, with such items as:

- Robin Watson’s review of Lucy and Sidney Corbett’s 1951 book, *French Cooking in Old Detroit since 1701*
- Robin Watson on the pears that the French introduced to our area
- Bernadette Pelland, “Growing Up French Canadian in Massachusetts”
- Agnes Dikeman, “An 1890 *Tourtière* Recipe from Michigan’s Copper Country”. ■

## Repast

ISSN 1552-8863

Published quarterly by the  
Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor (CHAA)

<http://culinaryhistoriansannarbor.org/>

An archive is available at <https://cooks.aadl.org/cooks/repast>

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## A Timeline of New France

- 1535:** Explorer Jacques Cartier declares a colony along the St. Lawrence, called *Canada*, part of New France. The colony will grow to also include the entire Great Lakes region.
- 1604:** France declares an additional colony, *Acadie* (Acadia), comprising much of what is now eastern Québec, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, and eastern Maine.
- 1608:** Explorer Samuel de Champlain establishes Québec as the first settlement town in Canada.
- 1629-1712:** Intense French exploration and installation of agricultural, trading, and military settlements in the colonies of Acadie and Canada.
- 1642:** Military officer Paul Chomedey de Maisonneuve founds Montréal as a Catholic mission.
- 1668:** Jesuit missionary Père Jacques Marquette founds Sault Sainte Marie, and three years later Saint Ignace, as missions.
- 1699:** Brothers Pierre and Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, natives of Montréal, establish Biloxi as the first settlement in colony of *Louisiane*. They go on to found Mobile in 1702 and Nouvelle Orléans (New Orleans) in 1718.
- 1701:** Military officer Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac establishes Fort Pontchartrain du Détroit on west bank of the Detroit River. Détroit emerges as largest French settlement between Upper St. Lawrence and Lower Mississippi valleys, with 800 people in 1765.
- 1705:** Governor of Montréal begins building Château Ramezay. Repeated wars with England from this time until final defeat of the French.
- 1713:** Treaty of Utrecht, ending War of Spanish Succession in Europe, gives some French possessions in Canada to British. Fort Louisbourg is built on Cape Breton Island, in what is now Nova Scotia, to defend what’s left of French territory.
- 1715:** French soldiers build Fort Michilimackinac in Michigan, near Odawa community and Jesuit mission. This fort played a role in support of fighting with native tribes in the area.
- 1720-45:** Louisbourg fortifications built. Becomes third busiest port in North America.
- 1745:** Louisbourg captured by British in War of Austrian Succession.
- 1748:** Louisbourg returned to French. Highest population: approximately 4100.
- 1754-63:** Britain fights France in North American theater of Seven Years’ War, also known as the French and Indian War.
- 1755-64:** Expulsion of 11,500 French Acadians following British capture of Fort Beauséjour. Most are deported to British colonies to the south, while many others will end up in Louisiana.
- 1758:** British capture of Louisbourg. Fortifications demolished.
- 1759:** Following a three-month siege, French forces under Montcalm fall to British forces under Wolfe in pivotal battle just outside city walls of Québec.
- 1760:** Final defeat of French at Montréal. Troops from Fort Michilimackinac participate in the battle.
- 1763:** Treaty of Paris officially ends Seven Years’ War. France cedes to Great Britain most of its territory in eastern North America.
- 1760-81:** British continue to fight Native Americans from Fort Michilimackinac. Fort abandoned in 1781.

# HAVING LUNCH WITH FATHER MARQUETTE

by Yvon Desloges

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Imagine that you become inspired and enthusiastic about writing a historical novel. A specific subject springs up spontaneously: the discovery of the North American continent and its most westerly lands in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. While reading a little on the topic, you become overwhelmed by the Jesuit missionaries' passion, evident in their discoveries of the territory and their apostolic zeal. The name of one particular Jesuit pops up because, along with his colleague Claude Dablon, he founded Sault Ste. Marie in 1668, a mission that brought Christianity to 2,000 Algonquians. Moreover, this Jesuit Father later reached the Mississippi valley with French discoverer Louis Jolliet. His name: Father Jacques Marquette.<sup>1</sup> The perfect subject.

However, your subject needs documentation, as the main character has to be fleshed out with context and detail. Therefore a few questions inevitably arise while writing, especially those dealing with daily life and more so with eating habits. What did Father Marquette eat on his way to Sault Ste. Marie? One might assume that he brought a few European goods in his canoe, but was this actually the case? Otherwise, what would he eat on site? Game probably, but what else? Furthermore, once his mission was built, would it be provisioned from Québec or from the St. Lawrence valley? And if so, how would the eating habits of these other French colonists differ from those of the Jesuit missions? These few questions would require an answer before you started to write your story.

## The Mission at Sault Ste. Marie

The Sault Ste. Marie mission was situated on the river Sainte-Marie between Lakes Superior and Huron, and it owed its French name *sault*—the jump—to the rapids in the river. Thus, the settlers of New France came to refer to the natives of this specific area as the Saulteux. The language of the Saulteux was part of the Algonquian family, which were languages spoken from the foot of the Rockies to the Maritime Provinces in what is now Canada. More specifically the Saulteux were part of the



Father Jacques Marquette in an 1895 oil painting by Donald G. McNab, exhibited at the Château Ramezay, Montréal.

Image: Wikimedia Commons.

Ojibwe nation, as were their immediate neighbors, the Mississauga to the northeast and the Mantouek to the northwest. To the southwest, between Lakes Superior and Michigan, the Noquet were established. Further south were the Potawatomi on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan in present-day Lower Michigan, and the Folle Avoine<sup>2</sup> on that lake's western bank in present-day Wisconsin.

Early ethnographic comments on the foods of the Saulteux or other Ojibwe tribes are limited; they come either from the Jesuits or from Nicolas Perrot, explorer, interpreter, fur-trader, and commandant at Baie des Puants, now Green Bay, WI.<sup>3</sup> According to archaeological data, the Ojibwe relied on fishing and hunting, especially deer and moose. They also gathered nuts and berries and practiced very limited agriculture, growing plants that were introduced to the French as the Three Sisters: maize, beans, and squash.<sup>4</sup> The natives ingeniously grew these three plants together: the cornstalks served as a support for the beans, while the presence of the squash at the foot of the maize plant preserved the humidity and brought the necessary nitrogen to the soil.

According to Marquette, the food of the French *voyageurs*—mostly fur-traders travelling by canoe—varied according to region, but generally relied on two basic ingredients: cornmeal

*continued on next page*

# LUNCH WITH MARQUETTE *continued from p. 3*

and smoked meat. These two could be kept for a long period of time. Cornmeal was used to make *sagamité*, a kind of porridge to which could be added either smoked meat, fish, or another kind of meat, preferably fatty. *Sagamité* was the staple of the *voyageurs'* foodways; it had been borrowed from natives among whom it also played a central role, from the Illinois Confederation in the Middle Mississippi to the Huron and Iroquois nations in the St. Lawrence. Depending on local availability, berries (mentioned by both Marquette and Perrot) and nuts supplemented the roster of foodstuffs.<sup>5</sup>



Ancient varieties of maize. Photo courtesy of Louise Saint-Pierre.

The Saulteux hunted beaver and moose, wrote Perrot, and they fished “an excellent fish” that he did not name or describe. François Dollier de Casson, a Sulpician missionary and explorer who visited Sault Ste. Marie when the mission was only a year or two old, noted that the Jesuits there delighted in eating moose guts, “the best part of the beast”.<sup>6</sup> Father Dablon, the co-founder of the mission, was more precise when describing the excellent fish: it was whitefish, as confirmed by Dollier de Casson. The Saulteux also fished sturgeon, another delicacy. In order to encourage natives to settle in the immediate vicinity, the Jesuits initiated the cultivation of the Three Sisters (although in smaller quantities than was grown on the shores of Lake Huron), “maize being to American Indians the equivalent of bread to the French”.<sup>7</sup>

These ingredients formed the basis of the missionaries’ diet, both *en route* to Sault Ste. Marie and on site. An additional aspect of food preparation was the celebratory meal, which, according to both Perrot and the Jesuits, took the form of a banquet. Perrot mentioned a number of types of feasts, including one in which the guests had to eat everything offered to them, and a more conventional repast in which one could eat sufficiently and bring home a “doggy bag”. But the supreme banquet was the dog feast, “reputed to be the first and the choicest of all”; the dog meat was accompanied by bear, moose, or another meat, or, if meat was not available, cornmeal seasoned with fat. Louis Nicolas enhanced the description when he wrote that the dog brought “exquisite taste” to the meal. However, not all of the native nations were convinced!<sup>8</sup>

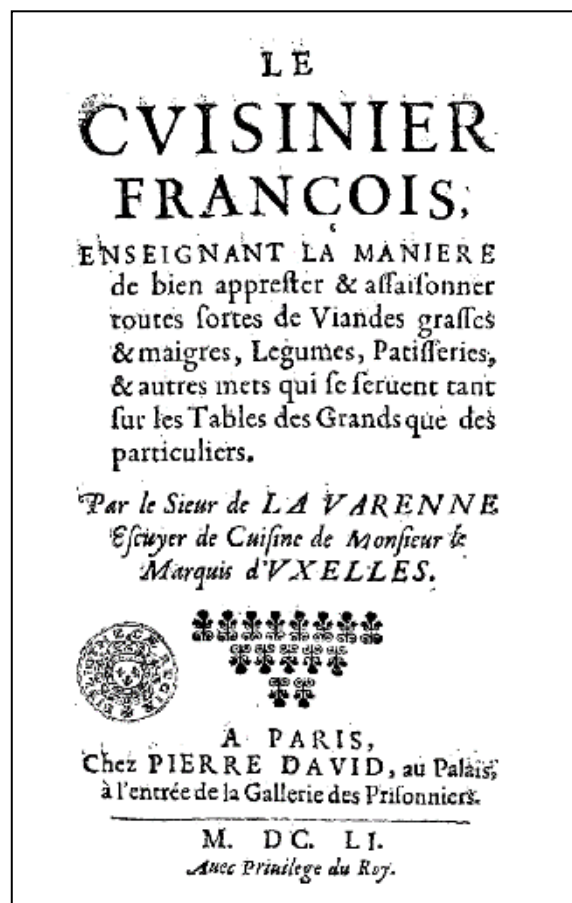
## Eating in 17<sup>th</sup>-Century France

For the Jesuits, the reliance on hunting and meat-eating in New France was a reminder of the situation in France itself, where only nobles and the upper clergy had the right to hunt and to feast on the carcasses. For the first Europeans who settled North America, the hunt of “wild beasts” had long since ceased to be a subsistence activity. Since the early Middle Ages, the

European nobility had gradually established game as its particular reserve. For the medieval *seigneur* (feudal lord), hunting not only represented a noble leisure activity but, as well, the product of the hunt was an important part of his diet.

In this respect, Native American society, to the European observer, was out of kilter. Lescarbot wrote that the “natives” *trenchent du gentilhomme*, that is, they acted as if they were members of the nobility.<sup>9</sup> The fauna of the New World represented a pleasant surprise, for it made meat available to all at a time when Europeans were eating less and less meat. The abundance of game and fowl was considered a wealth factor of the land, as was the forest, the fertility of the soil, and the numerous mammals— all formed an incitement for the French to emigrate. Game in Europe had been a symbol of ostentation, present on menus of special occasions; in fact, to eat game was itself “to banquet”.<sup>10</sup> Game’s abundance in New France seemed to assure the immigrant that he could live the life of a *seigneur*.

During the Renaissance in France, game had been seasoned with spices such as ginger, galangal, clover, nutmeg, or cinnamon— all imported, and thus pricy and ostentatious. In addition, beginning in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century sugar had been reconceived as a culinary spice instead of a medicinal ingredient. Although vegetables began to appear more regularly during the Renaissance, they were nevertheless rare; at most, a little less than 30 varieties were recorded in the 16<sup>th</sup>-Century cookbooks, a number that would double by the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.



Title page of La Varenne’s *Cuisinier français*, original 1651 edition. It was one of the best sellers of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

French cuisine was revolutionized in the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century by the publication of a cookbook that marked a rupture with medieval and Renaissance cuisine: *Le Cuisinier françois* by François de La Varenne. How did this publication and subsequent ones innovate? First, by diminishing the importance of spices, not only in their variety but also in their measure. Instead—as seen in the sample recipes here from La Varenne and Massialot<sup>11</sup>—cooks substituted aromatic herbs such as parsley, basil, thyme, and chives, to name a few; even roots such as parsnip and white turnip were used to flavor preparations. They also reduced the acid in their preparations and even the number of sour dishes, introduced the use of butter in preparing sauces, limited the use of sugar in savory dishes, and resorted to more varied cooking stocks and sauces. Previously, the use of butter and herbs had been considered by the nobility as a peasant vulgarity. Moreover,

*continued on next page*

### ***Esturgeon à la Sainte-Menehould*** **(Breaded sturgeon)**

*As early as 1615, Samuel de Champlain, the founder of Québec, was praising the sturgeon's quality. Like eel, it was caught in great numbers. Its caviar was also appreciated, as was the jelly made from its stock. In addition, it could be salted away for use in Winter and at Lent. This recipe is from François Massialot, Le Cuisinier royal et bourgeois (1691).*

15 ml (1 Tbsp) melted pork fat  
250 ml (1 cup) white wine  
250 ml (1 cup) milk  
1 bay leaf  
Salt and pepper  
1 kg (2½ lbs) sturgeon fillet, cut in 6 pieces  
125 ml (½ cup) breadcrumbs

#### **Anchovy sauce**

4 anchovy fillets  
15 ml (1 Tbsp) capers, chopped  
1 bunch parsley, chopped  
30 ml (2 Tbsp) green onions, chopped  
1 clove garlic  
180 ml (¾ cup) fish stock  
1 drop olive oil  
Pepper

Melt the fat in a large frying pan. Add the wine and milk. Cook for 2 minutes and strain. Return to heat and bring to a boil. Add the bay leaf, salt, and pepper. In this liquid, poach the pieces of sturgeon for 15-20 mins. over low heat.

Bread the pieces of sturgeon [i.e., sprinkle them with the breadcrumbs so as to give a slight crusty top], and place them under a broiler.

In the meantime, make the sauce by chopping finely the first five ingredients. Heat the stock and add the oil, chopped mixture, and pepper. Reduce a little.

Pour the sauce on a serving platter, and place the pieces of fish on top.

### ***Anguille à l'étuvée*** **(Braised Eel)**

*Because of Catholic ritual, fish was essential in the diet. "Eel", wrote Simon Denys in 1651, "takes the place of beef in this country." Fished by the thousands, an important part of the catch was salted. All chroniclers praised its culinary qualities. Its fat was enjoyed by all, as it was said to need no other seasoning. Eel was often braised with little or no liquid since its juices made "very flavorful sauces". This recipe is from François de La Varenne, Le Cuisinier françois, 1670 edition.*

900 g (2 lbs) eel  
250 ml (1 cup) white wine  
30 ml (2 Tbsp) parsley, chopped  
10 ml (2 tsp) capers  
60 ml (4 Tbsp) butter  
Salt and pepper

Skin the eel and slice into 2.5 cm (1 in) pieces. Place in a frying pan with the parsley, capers, wine and butter. Season and cook, tightly covered, over low heat for 15-20 mins.

### ***Cochon à la daube*** **(Braised pork)**

*In New France, pigs were raised mainly for their fat, but that is not to say that their meat was not eaten. This recipe is from François de La Varenne, Le Cuisinier françois, 1670 edition. In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the term daube referred to braised meat that was generally eaten cold. By the way, the saffron used here is a remnant of medieval preference that would disappear by 1700.*

2 kg (4½ lbs) shoulder of pork, with skin  
5 ml (1 tsp) marjoram  
5 ml (1 tsp) thyme  
Salt and pepper  
60 ml (4 Tbsp) fat cut from the shoulder of pork  
2 onions, diced  
250 ml (1 cup) stock  
250 ml (1 cup) white wine  
1 bay leaf  
1 pinch saffron  
Parsley

Season the pork with the marjoram, thyme, salt and pepper. Melt the fat and brown the shoulder on all sides. Remove the meat and set aside.

Brown the onions. Replace the meat in the pan, adding half the stock, half the wine, the bay leaf, and the saffron. Cover tightly and cook for 2½ hours over low heat.

Remove the meat and add the rest of the stock and wine. Bring to a boil and reduce by half. Strain. Let the pork and sauce cool on a serving platter so that the sauce thickens. Garnish with parsley.

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sugared dishes—desserts—migrated to the end of the repast. The segregation of sweet and savory preparations became one of the major characteristics of French cuisine. According to Florent Quellier, “social distinction was now demonstrated not by the quantity of meat dishes but rather by the quality and delicacy of the dishes served”.<sup>12</sup>

## Eating in New France in the Contact Period

The foregoing describes the context in which Father Marquette would have eaten in France before he crossed the Atlantic. But the “French revolution” in food discourse and preparation echoed on the shores of the St. Lawrence river. After all, the very expression “New France” refers to the transplantation of a specific cultural model, and the same can be said of New England, New Sweden, New Holland, and New Spain.<sup>13</sup>

With regard to foodways, the transplanted French cultural model necessarily included farming, the harvesting of grains, fruits, and vegetables, the baking of wheaten bread, the raising and butchering of livestock, and fishing (Catholic ritual prohibited meat-eating 165 days per year). These foundational elements represent the products that were most desired by the colonial population. But it took time to complete their transplantation, which explains why French settlers had to borrow foodways from the Native Americans. Samuel de Champlain, Louis Hébert, and Guillaume Couillard practiced French agriculture from the beginning of the colony, but the farming output during this early period was paltry: the colonial merchant companies were more interested in sending over fur trappers than farmers who could clear the land and sow.

Therefore, during the first 75 years of continuous French presence that began with the foundation of Québec in 1608, the settlers borrowed not only native foodstuffs but also native preparation techniques. They were intensely interested in foods indigenous to North America, such as maize and pumpkin. Mother Marie Morin of the Hotel-Dieu de Montréal specified that the hospital sisters were still preparing their *sagamité*—maize porridge—in 1669. Marie de l’Incarnation wrote that the Ursuline nuns of Québec ate pumpkin either as fritters or in soups or preserves. Baron de La Hontan preferred pumpkins roasted in ashes, American Indian style, while the above-mentioned Dollier de Casson favored them fricasseed in any kind of fat.

The Jesuits rarely complained about food preparations in their missions in New France; therefore, one can assume that Father Marquette felt content with the meals there. This might explain why the missions were not regularly provisioned from Québec or the St. Lawrence valley—which enjoyed greater access to imports from the Old World—but instead were rather self-sufficient. No doubt, *trencher du gentilhomme* by dining on hunted game was not a concept that frightened Marquette; on the contrary, he would have been as comfortable with it as were his compatriots living on the shores on the St. Lawrence. Potted hare and wild rice (see recipe in sidebar) is an example of a food preparation to which he would have had access.

## *Lièvre au pot et folle avoine* (Potted hare and wild rice)

*This recipe is reconstructed from archival sources and with reference to the 1684 edition of Les délices de la campagne by Nicolas de Bonnefons, a valet for King Louis XIV who wrote important works on cooking, hunting, and gardening. That book was first published in 1654 and, like La Varenne’s work three years earlier, it broke with medieval French practice by calling for simple food preparations without excessive spicing.*

- 1 trimmed hare complete with the bones
- 1.5 liter of broth (light beef broth or, preferably, made with venison)
- 50 g of bear fat (if you find some!) or bacon or strips of lard
- 30 ml of verjuice or vinegar

Bring the broth to a boil; then lay down the hare with the fat in the pot. Add the vinegar in the final minutes. Cook over a low heat 90 minutes. Bone and serve with a little broth and hot wild rice.

### *Folle avoine* (wild rice)

- 250 ml of wild rice
- 750 ml of water
- 750 ml of the hare’s cooking broth
- Salt

Wash the wild rice thoroughly. Bring the water to a boil and pour the wild rice into the pot. Stir well. Cook for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and let the rice simmer in the covered pot for an hour. Strain well.

Bring the cooking broth and salt to a mild boil, add the cooked wild rice and let simmer for approximately 30 minutes. Serve hot with the hare.

## The Effects of Royal Administration

In 1663, a major change occurred in the colonial administration when New France began to be administered directly by the French crown. The monarchy would implement its own bureaucracy, its own vision of colonial development, and its own cultural model. In turn, that implied sending colonial settlers, granting lands and clearing them, and developing livestock herds and agriculture *à la française*.

This was a rejection of the native agricultural model of the Three Sisters. French agriculture, on the contrary, required the clearing of vast acreage on which to grow cereals (mostly wheat), to develop herds of livestock (mostly cattle, hogs, and sheep), and to support a few barnyard animals (mostly chickens, for their eggs and the broth) that could be fed with the wastes from milling wheat. Another part of the fields would be sown with legumes, mostly peas. European cultivars would be used to develop orchards of large tree fruits such as plums, apples, and pears, while wild fruits other than berries would henceforth be ignored.

As early as 1664, an idealistic portrait of the new colony was published, *A True and Natural History of the Manners and Products of the Country of New France, Commonly Called Canada*. It was written by Pierre Boucher at Trois-Rivières, a settlement located between Québec and Montréal on the north bank of the St. Lawrence. In this work, Boucher tried to attract new colonists by drawing a complete inventory of the colonial wildlife and reviewing all of the basic ingredients that were on hand. Hunting and fishing, for example, were portrayed as a cornucopia in order to entice the meat-craving French to settle New France.

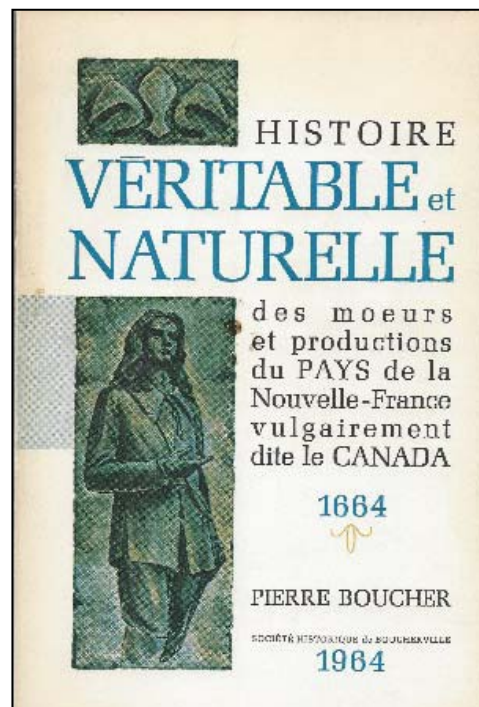
How accurate was Boucher's portrait? Fishing for eel, cod, salmon, and occasionally trout or crawfish remained generally viable in the colonies throughout this period. But game was already disappearing in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Archaeological investigations have found that big mammal bones are scarce, amounting to only 3% of the bone total. Wildfowl bones are only slightly more common, at 6%. There were at least three reasons for the decline in hunting. First, the expansion of the fur trade was driving away big game. Second, agricultural development was destroying the animals' natural habitat. Third, even though every man was required to serve in the militia from age 16 to 60, there was a shortage of firearms for hunting. (Birds, especially passenger pigeons, could be captured with nets when a flock stopped to rest.) These factors made raising livestock a more practical option than hunting.

#### Wheat, Meat, and Flavor Elements

Administrators and colonists in New France considered wheat as the basis of agriculture. Its importance was clearly demonstrated by the fact that in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century a daily ration of bread was fixed at two pounds per person,<sup>14</sup> representing 60-85% of the total quantity of foodstuffs consumed daily. The colonial bread was as high in quality as that of the mother country, and as white. It was a bread made with flour that still had a little bran, since, according to the dietetic discourse of the period, bran had a beneficial effect on digestion.<sup>15</sup> The importance given to wheaten bread also entailed a nearly universal repudiation of maize as a bread cereal for the French colonists, an experience contrary to that of New England. French dietary nutritionists considered corn more difficult to digest. In fact, corn breads and porridges had been popular in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, but in the following century only a few mentions are to be found, and in reference only to specific times (such as a bad wheat harvest) and places (close to the missions established in the St. Lawrence valley). Corn had offered an opportunity to adapt to the New World, but Canadians rejected it once their staple crops were in place. The same held true for most other native foodstuffs.

Most of the fruits grown, sold, and consumed were orchard fruits such as apples, plums, and Montréal cherries. There were brief seasonal harvests of currants and berries (the most popular being strawberries, white or red raspberries, and blueberries), preferably eaten fresh, although they could also be dried in the Native American style.

In the first years of royal administration, domestic animals had to be imported from France. The initial focus was on cattle, then hogs, and finally sheep. (The consumption of horse meat was prohibited by a papal bull dating to 892.) As soon as the herds of



An edition of Pierre Boucher's *True and Natural History*, published in 1964 to mark its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

livestock were large enough to be self-sustaining, the French colonists abandoned big game as a supplement to their own diet. Also notable is the fact that the settlers were disgusted by the meat preparations of the natives, who barely cooked the flesh. The French preferred their meat well-done (ironically, this was something that La Varenne was about to modify as part of his efforts to bring out more flavor in food preparation).

Producing enough fodder for their livestock continued to be a major problem for the colonists. The chronic fodder shortage made it difficult to keep animals all Winter, so peasants butchered some of their cattle in late Fall. Consequently, dairy production, including milk, butter, and cheese, was limited. (For those who could afford it, imported cheeses were present in the colony—firm cheeses that could withstand the Atlantic crossing, such as Gouda from Holland and Gruyère from France.) Since butter was thus too scarce to serve as a routine cooking fat, the settlers relied instead on lard. Hogs were prized primarily for lard, not lean meat.

Besides lard, what else did the colonists use to flavor their dishes? First, herbs were harvested from the wild and from gardens. In the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Pierre Boucher drew up an extensive inventory of native herbs available. Later on, mentions of “herb gardens” appeared in which thyme, chervil, parsley, chives, purslane, and sorrel grew alongside burnet and balm. Nasturtium rivalled borage in frequency, and hyssop and bugloss were ubiquitous. A number of mentions of salt-preserved herbs also spring up in the documents.

The spice rack in New France was limited. Pepper was the spice *par excellence*. With so much attention given to salt-preserved lard and other foodstuffs, the provisioning of salt was paramount. Salt was imported, but the imports were not taxed. At moments when salt became scarce in the St. Lawrence valley, the Newfoundland fisheries spared some of the precious ingredient.

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Native, wild varieties of bees existed in North America—they pollinated many of the native fruit trees—but there were no domesticated bees kept in the colony. Thus, honey was another foodstuff that had to be imported from Europe. Likewise, sugar was brought from the West Indies in the form of loaves of grey, brown, or sometimes refined white sugar. Available numbers show a personal consumption of less than two kilos of sugar yearly, which is by far inferior to numbers in England at the time, although similar to those of France. Either the colonists could not afford imported sugar, or they simply did not have much of a sweet tooth. The second theory is more plausible, as the consumption levels were maintained until the end of the next century. (As an exception that confirms the rule, we note that the Jesuits offered the Ursuline nuns candied orange and lemon as a New Years' present throughout the 1660s!)

### Beverages

No overview of available ingredients in the Laurentian valley would be complete without some discussion of beverages. Water emerged as the standard thirst-quencher, and peasants' young children also drank a little milk during Summer. But aside from these two basic beverages, did the colonists drink anything else?

Neither coffee nor tea was consumed in New France in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Pierre Boucher mentioned that the *habitants* drank spruce beer made from spruce branches, which helped to counter scurvy. A few religious institutions made fruit presses available for the production of apple cider, but this was too expensive to be affordable to most. The peasants produced *bouillon*, an alcoholic drink made by fermenting leavened dough in water for a few days. Jean Talon had a huge beer brewery built in Québec City in the 1660s. Its capacity was enormous: 800,000 liters of beer annually, of which the bulk was exported to the West Indies. But it proved to be a short-lived venture.

Thanks to imports by merchants, the town dwellers of New France enjoyed a wider selection of products for the table than most farming families. The imports that were available mainly to urban people and to the wealthiest peasants included not only salt, sugars, spices, and condiments, but also beverages, alcoholic or not. Until the 1670s, wines sent to the colony were mostly regional products from Aunis, Saint-Onge, and Angoumois. Since these left France through the port of La Rochelle, they were known as “wines of La Rochelle”. The colony also imported wines from the province of Ile-de-France in the north, which was still a winemaking area in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. These were light wines that tolerated the rather rough transport. Toward the end of the 1660s, wines from the Bordeaux region also started to be imported. As early as 1668 there was mention in Québec of a wine from the Graves area of Bordeaux, an area as renowned then as it is today. To complete the list, wines from Spain and Navarre were also present in the colony.

In the countryside surrounding Québec City, older folks were particularly keen on having *eau de vie*, mostly cognac and armagnac. The typical consumption was 20 liters yearly, or approximately 55 ml daily, the equivalent of a shot every morning before starting off to the fields. This custom was part of the breakfast ritual in France and from the earliest days of New

France. The Jesuits allowed their domestics a ration of *eau de vie* at breakfast starting in the Winter of 1636.

### Conclusion

To sum up the main ingredients appearing on the colonists' tables in 17<sup>th</sup>-Century New France: first and foremost, there was wheaten bread, preferably white. The ordinary meal might also include beef, lamb, poultry, lean pork, or, for variety, fish. During Lent, aside from fish, poultry eggs could be eaten. Few vegetables were available; among the more popular were root vegetables, onion, and cabbage. Plums and apples were grown in orchards, and wild berries were also popular. Water was the usual drink.

As we have shown with a few examples, New France *habitants*, and later French Canadians, differed from New Englanders in that, as soon as local agriculture was sufficiently developed, the Canadians simply rejected most of the indigenous ingredients and preparations. Dietary changes in the colonies were a function not only of this implantation of European-style agriculture, but also small-scale fluctuations in taste and culinary taboos, and the more fundamental variations in foodways that occurred every third or fourth generation.<sup>16</sup> ■

### Endnotes

1. Marquette's ordination is still a matter of debate as, first, there is no record of it; second, because of Marquette's request of 1665 to be sent to the missions without the regular course in theology; and, finally, different interpretations of the document of Marquette's final vows in the Jesuit order exist. According to his biography, Marquette arrived from France in Québec in Sep. 1666 and shortly after departed for Trois-Rivières in order to study native languages for a year. He left for Sault-Sainte-Marie in May 1668. Jacques Monet, “Marquette, Jacques”, *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada*, vol. 1 [1000-1700] (Université Laval and Univ. of Toronto, 2003), also available at [http://www.biographi.ca/fr/bio/marquette\\_jacques\\_1F.html](http://www.biographi.ca/fr/bio/marquette_jacques_1F.html).
2. In this article, the French names of the aboriginal nations are used, but in a few cases with Anglicized spellings. *Folle avoine*, the French term for “wild oats”, was adapted by the French settlers to refer to the native plant called “wild rice” in English, and also, by association, to refer to a native tribe in present-day Wisconsin for whom it was a staple food. The Ojibwe word for wild rice is *manoomin*, and accordingly the Folle avoine tribe are called the Menominee in English.
3. Claude Perrault, “Perrot, Nicolas”, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2 [1701-1740] (Université Laval and Univ. of Toronto, 2003). Also available at [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perrot\\_nicolas\\_2F.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perrot_nicolas_2F.html).

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# THE FOODS OF NEW FRANCE AS RECONSTRUCTED AT 18<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY SITES

by Mae E. Sander

*Mae and her husband Len Sander are CHAA members and long-time Ann Arbor residents. Mae frequently blogs about food (<http://maefood.blogspot.com/>), travel, and Jewish culture. Her most recent article for Repast was a review of Thomas Parker's Tasting French Terroir: The History of an Idea (Repast, Winter 2016).*

What foods were eaten by French inhabitants of the cities, military forts, rural farming areas, fur-trading villages, and fishing outposts in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century in Canada and Michigan? How did they make a living? What were their ties with local Native Americans? Details of daily life, and especially of food preparation and commodities from this era, can be found in several historic parks where re-enactments of colonial times include demonstrations of cooking in authentically-equipped colonial kitchens.

Three specialty cookbooks particularly reflect life in the French territories in North America. Commissioned by the historic sites, these offer modernized recipes and background information about food and cooking techniques of the era. At the parks themselves, visitors can eat colonial food in a restored dining room and see demonstrations of other colonial activities.

The three parks and their cookbooks are as follows.

- Fort Louisbourg National Historic Site is located on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia (formerly known as Île Royale). Louisbourg was a colonial town on the coast, founded in 1713 and surrounded by a massive stonewall fortress, now partially reconstructed. The cookbook is by Anne Marie Lane Jonah and Chantal Véchambre, *French Taste in Atlantic Canada 1604-1758* (Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton Univ. Press, 2012). This work is bilingual, with parallel English and French text.
- Fort Michilimackinac is located on Mackinac Island, Michigan. Dating to 1715, Michilimackinac was a trading post surrounded by wooden palisades. The cookbook is by Sally Eustice, *History from the Hearth: A Colonial Michilimackinac Cookbook* (Mackinac Island, MI: Mackinac Island State Park Commission, 1997; reprinted 2010).
- Château Ramezay, in Montréal, Canada, is a stonewall manor that was built in 1715 as the Governor's Residence. The cookbook is by Martin Fournier, *Jardins et potagers en Nouvelle-France: Joie de vivre et patrimoine culinaire* (Sillery,

Québec: Éditions du Septentrion, 2004; reprinted 2017). Translations of a few of the recipes from this French book appear on the website of the château: <https://www.chateauramezay.qc.ca/en/garden/recipes/>.

All three books discuss the background of colonial French life in North America, which lasted in parts of the Atlantic, St. Lawrence, and Great Lakes regions from the 1500s until the British defeated French forces in 1763 and expelled many French residents—called Acadians—from the Atlantic provinces that are now part of Canada. This article will review the three books while discussing the foodways of the time.

## The Challenge of Reconstructing Food History

No specific 18<sup>th</sup>-Century recipe sources, such as kitchen books, cooks' notes, or diaries, have survived. Information about the taverns and inns of towns and cities didn't include recipes. Particularly absent: writings by the women who did most of the food preparation. In *History from the Hearth*, the author writes:

One of the biggest difficulties in preparing this book was the lack of written records left by women. There is no known recipe book or diary from a woman who lived here.... Most of the recipes in the following chapters are generalized, based on the foodstuffs we know were available and what was customary at the time (Eustice, p. 10).

Other types of primary sources provided information for these historic narratives:

Through trade records, personal accounts, recipe books and archaeology we find the basis for recreating meals that people shared here hundreds of years ago (Jonah and Véchambre, p. 4).

Archaeologists particularly find evidence about food through analysis of early refuse dumps. One archaeological dig analyzed the bones in a garbage pile in Louisbourg: half were beef bones, and the rest were from game birds, hares, moose, and fish (Jonah and Véchambre, p. 136).

Travel narratives and military inventories add information:

Most of the travelers who passed through Mackinac made observations on the foods available. They wrote home and told of the harsh winters, the abundance of fish, and the monotony of corn.... The military officers kept track of the goods in the storehouse and made sure their men had flour and salt pork.... On occasion they ordered special items such as cheese and fine wines. Others recorded the planting of potatoes, peas, and beans (Eustice, pp. 9-10).

## The Food Supply

The socially stratified community of Nouvelle France included minor nobility from France, officers commanding the forts, town residents, and peasants living on farms and in small villages. The rural population, which supplied most of the food, vastly outnumbered those who lived in cities like Montréal. Colonial farmers in eastern Canada cultivated fields of wheat and corn, orchards with many types of fruit trees, and gardens with a

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Kitchens and gardens are maintained by the staff at Fort Louisbourg as part of reconstructing daily life in this outpost on the Atlantic coast.

Photo: Parks Canada.

**FOODS RECONSTRUCTED** *continued from p. 9*  
variety of European and native plants. They raised both New and Old World crops, particularly Indian corn, but potatoes and tomatoes were unknown during the French era. Farmers also kept dairy cattle, horses, chickens, and other livestock.

In *Jardins et potagers*, Martin Fournier describes the semi-feudal system of *paysans et seigneurs* (peasants and lords) on the land around Montréal, pointing out that the taxes and rents for farmers there were lower than they were in the old country. The gardens within towns and forts were also very important for providing herbs, salads, and root vegetables to the residents.

Imports from outside North America included sugar, molasses, and rum originating in the Caribbean colonies. Among many imports from Europe: salt pork, wine, spices, and chocolate (which was consumed as a beverage by officers at Fort Louisbourg—not today’s Mackinac Island fudge!). Cattle, sheep, chickens, and pigs had come across the Atlantic to the colonies in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Cattle from the French fort at Detroit were led to the Mackinac area via a narrow trail that is now the route of Interstate 75.

Cod, eels, lobsters, oysters, and many other types of fish and shellfish were abundant. The fishing was excellent in the rivers and lakes of Canada and Michigan and offshore in the Atlantic. French and Basque boats had been fishing in the North Atlantic for many years before the establishment of forts and farms on Île Royale. Dried cod was an important product for trade and for local consumption.

The people of Québec and Atlantic Canada ate much better than their forebears had in France, according to Fournier. Game was abundant and peasants as well as members of the upper classes were allowed to hunt, unlike in France where hunting was reserved for nobility. Thus, game was a valuable source of meat for people who hunted and trapped a variety of animals and also traded for them with the Native Americans. Much of this game is still popular today, such as geese, small birds, and venison, but there are also some surprises such as beaver. At the re-enactment

site at Mackinac, the cooks prepare beaver tail by first boiling and then frying it—and, they say, nobody likes to eat it.

### Food Preparation

A summary of normal meals consumed in Nouvelle France appears in *Jardins et potagers*. Here is my free translation of the French description:

When people could afford it, they would precede the main course with a light vegetable soup. One finds several references to *pois au lard* (peas with salt pork), a type of thick *fricassée* eaten in Winter, but no one mentions the famous pea soup which certainly became popular later under British influence. In Nouvelle France the “plat de résistance” was often a dish of meat with vegetables, such as *pot-au-feu*, *fricassée*, or *ragoût*. Salads were enjoyed in season, and meals often ended with fresh fruit or sweet dairy desserts (Fournier, p. 44).

As for those who could afford less: “One-pot dishes such as soups and stews were standard daily meals” (Eustice, p. 27). A 1755 court case against a poor fisherman, François Bénard, listed two meals that he ate at taverns in Louisbourg. The first was herring, bread, a pint of beer, and a pint of white wine. Another was sausage and a pint of wine. Because he paid for these meals in cash, he was accused of theft, and the record of his meals is thus preserved in court documents (Jonah and Véchambre, p. 164).

Each of the three cookbooks offers recipes for the soup, main, and dessert courses, as well as for bread, the mainstay of the diet, and for one-pot meals. Condiments, especially mustard, were popular as well. Imported pepper and nutmeg and local herbs and vegetables enhanced the flavors of these long-ago meals.

The authors base their selection of recipes on the best guesses they could make from the sources available, and also adjust the quantities for modern cooks, as each frontier kitchen actually served quite a large household. Lists of ingredients and



The restored kitchen at Château Ramezay, the Governor's Residence in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Montréal. To operate the *tourne broche* (turnspit) in the fireplace, a specially-bred dog would be placed in the *cage à chien* (dog cage), which is the running-wheel above and to the right of the mantle. Near this kitchen is what was called *le potager* ("the vegetable garden"), a large, shallow stone basin used to wash dishes and clean vegetables; its wastewater was drained out of the building in order to water the real garden outside.

Photo: TripAdvisor

instructions for the dishes prepared in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century kitchens for French officers, soldiers, settlers, and traders are all based on speculations.

French cookbooks of that era served the kitchens of the upper class; the question of what poor rural and urban people and common soldiers ate is based on travelers' accounts, diaries, and inventories of the era. Specifically, two cookbooks from France were influential, at least in the kitchens of officers and property owners. François Massialot's *Le Cuisinier royal et bourgeois*, published in 1691, was one of the two most important and continually-popular French cookbooks of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The other was *Le Cuisinier françois* by François Pierre La Varenne (1651). Many of the recipes in *French Taste in Atlantic Canada* are attributed to these two cookbooks.

Another motivation for inclusion of recipes in the three modern cookbooks might be the taste and expectations of visitors to the historic parks and to their gift shops. Possibly, the authors' selections favor dishes that continue to be part of modern French-Canadian and French-Michigander cuisine. For example, one of the most enduring dishes in French-Canadian cuisine is the *tourtière*, a savory, crusted pie made from pork, beef, game, fish, and other ingredients. In 18<sup>th</sup>-Century kitchens there were special pie dishes, themselves called *tourtières*, that enabled baking these pies in the fireplace. The three cookbooks include *tourtière*-type recipes.

Fish preparations included cod, lobster, oysters, etc., for which the recipes in each book are quite interesting. Each socio-economic class had its own fish dishes; for example, the quality of dried cod varied a great deal, and the poorest people had the worst choice.

Bread, for those who could afford only a less-plentiful diet, was the main source of nutrition in the colonies, as in France. Bakers used *levain*, a leavening or starter that was kept alive from one batch of bread to the next. Wheat, oats, and buckwheat were grown near the fort at Mackinac, but wheat flour also had to be

imported from Detroit. Eustice includes many recipes for various breads, biscuits, cornbread, oatcakes, potato bread, and more.

In Louisbourg, local wheat was the main ingredient for bread: this was considered an improvement over the common breads of Europe. People of means ate refined white bread, while poorer folk had darker bread, sometimes including rye flour. A soldier's ration included a six-pound dark-flour loaf. Each soldier received one such loaf every four days, along with salt-preserved meat and dried vegetables. At Louisbourg, "the largest ovens were in the King's bakery that baked the rations for the garrison soldiers. These massive ovens could bake one hundred loaves at a time" (Jonah and Véchambre, pp. 70-72).

Soup making was one of the most important cooking methods, as a large cauldron hanging over a fire was one of the most efficient ways to prepare meals in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century kitchens. If cooked a bit longer, soup might become stew or even a sort of hash, but most fireside cooks constantly added water to keep the pot's contents soupy. Although there are recipes for specific soups and stews, the reality was that whatever meat and vegetables were available in most frontier kitchens were added to the pot unless they were made into salads. In fact, many kitchens owned only one or two cooking pots for all uses.

In Winter a cauldron in the fireplace was especially useful because any liquid not held over a direct fire froze in a very short time. Modern workers in the reconstructed Fort Michilimackinac kitchen had several surprises from the force of the cold in the kitchens there; they were disconcerted, for example, when newly-washed dishes froze to the table where they were set to dry.

### Character Sketches

Besides the information on foodways and agriculture, the three books include quite a bit of information about the people who lived in each location, especially common people not usually covered in history books. Brief character sketches or biographies

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## FOODS RECONSTRUCTED *continued from p. 11*

of early residents of Fort Louisbourg are among the most interesting passages of *French Taste in Atlantic Canada*. One especially interesting figure was a woman named Marie Margurite Rose (1717-1757), who is now recognized by the government of Canada as a person of national historic significance.

Marie Margurite Rose was born in Africa, enslaved there, and was brought to French Canada in 1736. Purchased as a slave by an officer in the army, she cared for the numerous children of his household and kept house for him for 20 years. She was freed in 1755 and married a man of native Mi'kmaq heritage, Jean-Baptist Laurent. With him, she owned a "comfortable inn in the center of Louisbourg" and was respected "as a competent businesswoman."

Listed in the household inventory of the Laurent couple was a copy of one of the previously-mentioned cookbooks from France, Massialot's *Le Cuisinier royal et bourgeois*. Although she could not read, "Owning the book was an emblem of her skill, a representation of her role in the household. It separated her culinary knowledge from the traditional, informal and oral, and placed her skill with those based on the written, codified, and cultured" (Jonah and Véchambre, pp. 68-69).

While residents of Fort Louisbourg included a range of social classes from French settler society, Fort Michilimackinac was more isolated. It served as a military outpost and as the military government for the area, and was important in the fur trade: "The commanding officer controlled the fur trade licenses and dealt with the native peoples. The palisaded fort served as a collection and storage depot for the furs and trade goods, which were sent both east and west when the seasons permitted" (Eustice, p. 12).

Travelers who wrote about the French colonies are also intriguing. One traveler whose work is an especially important source about life in the colonies was the Swedish naturalist Pehr Kalm (1716-1779). He traveled through the French and English territories in North America during 1748-1752. Kalm's multi-volume account of his travels, including descriptions of colonial foodways, was published in English in 1770.

An earlier French explorer and settler of note was Nicolas Denys (1598-1688). He "recorded many encounters and exchanges of food with the Mi'kmaq that helped him and his companions prosper in this region that was his home for most of his life.... Denys first explored the southern and eastern shores of Nova Scotia, intending to trade for furs and to fish and finally established a post at Saint Pierre." Denys recorded some of his food preferences, such as recommending "that oysters be served cooked, accompanied with crushed black pepper and nutmeg" (Jonah and Véchambre, pp. 9, 18).

### Why Read These Cookbooks?

The pleasure of visiting a well-run and carefully researched reconstruction of the past is captured in these three books. The authors address their tourist audience, not a scholarly or foodie audience. They compromise between rigorous authenticity (if it were even possible) and modernization, so that a 21<sup>st</sup>-Century cook would be willing and able to follow the recipes while learning about the challenges of the past. Although their overviews of

## *Fèves au lard et au syrop d'érable* (Baked beans with salt pork and maple syrup)

*This recipe is from Jonah and Véchambre, French Taste in Atlantic Canada 1604-1758. Baked beans with salt pork have been and still are one of the great standards of French Canadian cuisine since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Their relatively easy preservation made them very popular in times of food shortages and in a harsh climate. Contrary to Québec culinary traditions, in Acadian cuisine the molasses or maple syrup was added as a condiment after the cooking, not during.*

Makes 6 servings.

3 cups (600 g) white navy beans  
1 large red or white onion, diced  
2 Tbsp. (30 ml) lard or olive oil  
½ lb. (220 g) bacon or pork belly, cut into ¾-in. cubes  
1 *bouquet garni*  
¼ tsp. (1 ml) cloves, ground  
6 Tbsp. (90 ml) molasses or maple syrup  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Cold water

Let the beans soak covered in water overnight. Brown the onions in the lard or olive oil in the bottom of a large pot. Drain the beans and add them to the onions. Add the bacon and the *bouquet garni*. Add enough cold water to just cover the beans. Sprinkle with the ground clove. Simmer over low heat for at least three hours, checking from time to time. Take out the *bouquet garni* before serving (hot). Give each plate two good turns of the pepper mill. Everyone can add molasses or maple syrup according to their own taste (usually about a tablespoon).

history are brief and simplified, they provide valuable information. The greatest limitation of these books might be the scarcity of detail about the role of various Native American tribes in each area.

Individual strengths and weaknesses of the three books include the following:

- *French Taste in Atlantic Canada* is a more detailed study, but has certain deficiencies. For example, it offers few details of how foods were obtained by farming, hunting, fishing, or trading with natives. Birth and death dates of historic persons are almost entirely omitted along with other factual material expected in history books. On the other hand, there's much excellent information. Beverages— wine, rum, beer, and more— are nicely described, and there's a lengthy discussion of chocolate, which was an incredible luxury at the time. An interesting section explains the conventions of upper-class table manners and formal table service, which were brought from France to the colonies.

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# INSPIRED BY THE VOYAGEURS

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## YELLOW SPLIT PEA SOUP

by Denise Paré-Watson

*Denise Paré-Watson is a professional chef and pastry chef currently living in Kelowna, British Columbia, and previously in Parksville, Vancouver Island, BC. She was born in Essex County, Ontario, which lies across the Detroit River from southeastern Michigan, and is a graduate of the culinary school at Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT). Denise absorbed French Canadian heritage from her mother's side of the family, which hails from the Gaspé Peninsula in Québec. With a series of 12 essays posted to her food blog "Urb'n'Spice" (<https://urbnspice.com/>), such as "My Mom's French Canadian Tourtière", she won first place in the Culinary Historians of Canada "Canada150" Food Blog Challenge in 2017, which celebrated the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian Confederation.*

This year marks the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Sault Ste. Marie. The Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor reached out to me regarding French foodways of the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes. French Canadian cuisine played a significant

role in the history and development of Sault Ste. Marie, and given my French Canadian heritage and culinary interests, I welcomed the opportunity to write this article on my version of traditional Yellow Split Pea Soup.

French Canadian Pea Soup was a staple food of the colonial *voyageurs*. Its roots in Sault Ste. Marie were established because of the trading routes that extended from Montréal through the Great Lakes all the way to the Grande Portage, which is situated on the north shore of Lake Superior at the Minnesota-Ontario border. During the fur-trading era, the waterways served as roads, and canoes were the means of transport. The *voyageurs* (French for "travelers") made the difficult 12- to 16-week journey along these routes to deliver their furs and other trading goods. Peas were a crop easily grown at trading posts such as Sault Ste. Marie, and this made restocking of supplies possible.

One needs to understand the physical characteristics of these men and the demands placed on them to see why their diet was so important. *Voyageurs* had to be young, strong, and healthy in order to endure the very fast-paced paddling, harsh conditions related to the weather or the terrain, and a dawn-to-dusk workday. They were required to be short in stature (approximately 5' 4"), because space in the canoe was needed for cargo. *Voyageurs* needed approximately 5000 calories daily, which is not unlike today's elite athletes. Normally, they ate only two full meals each day— breakfast and the evening meal. Therefore, their food had to provide masses of energy for their 14-hour days of paddling and of cargo hauling during portages. The food consumed by the men had to be high in calories, and had to keep well on the long journey.

Dried split peas were an ideal staple because they were easy to grow and cook, light to carry, and cheap. The *voyageur* diet might seem rather repetitive, but split peas offered an excellent food source, nutritionally high in fiber, folate, and protein. Peas are very rich in the amino acids and iron that are needed to build muscle. According to a number of research papers, yellow split peas offer more dietary fiber than most major food types and are a rich source of energizing complex carbohydrates.

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"Voyageurs at Dawn" is an 1871 work by Frances Anne Hopkins, a painter whose husband was a Hudson's Bay Company official.

Image:  
Library and Archives  
Canada, Acc. No. 1989-  
401-3.



Denise's photo of her soup in the relatively rustic version topped with croutons.

## French Canadian Yellow Split Pea Soup (*Soupe de Pois Cassés Jaunes*)

Yield: 6–8 servings

- 2 Tbsp. butter or olive oil
- 1 leek, white and light green part, sliced
- 1 onion, large, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 stalks celery, including leaves, chopped
- ½ small rutabaga, chopped
- 1½ tsp. dried marjoram
- ½ tsp. dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf (to be removed before puréeing soup)
- 4–6 cups chicken broth (or more as required)
- 1–2 cups smoked ham, cut into ¼" dice
- 1 cup dried yellow split peas, rinsed
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1–2 Tbsp. lemon juice or vinegar

Heat the butter or oil in a large saucepan. Add the leek, onion, garlic, carrots, celery, marjoram, and bay leaf. Cook for a few minutes over gentle heat without browning, stirring often until the vegetables are softened (about 6–8 mins.).

Stir in the broth, ham, and split peas. Bring to a boil, skim if necessary, then reduce heat to a simmer and cover. Simmer, stirring from time to time, until the split peas are softened and tender (about 60–90 mins.).

At this point, add the lemon juice or vinegar. **CHEF TIP:** It is IMPORTANT to note that in cooking peas,

*beans, or other legumes, acidic ingredients such as vinegar, lemon juice, tomato, or wine should be added only after the legumes have softened; otherwise, they will remain hard, no matter how long the soup is simmered.*

Remove the bay leaf. Remove half of the soup and set aside. Purée the other half of the soup with an immersion blender. Thin the soup with additional stock if it is too thick.

Season to taste with salt and pepper. Tweak, if necessary. Make sure that the soup is nice and hot. Ladle the puréed soup into warm bowls, and top it with the unblended chunkier soup as shown in the photograph.

### Serving ideas:

1. Finish the soup with a drizzle of Extra Virgin Olive Oil.
2. Sprinkle a bit of chopped parsley or snipped chives on top.
3. Crisp up slices of thinly-sliced pancetta or bacon in the oven, and prop these up against the chunky soup.
4. Serve with fresh crusty bread smothered in butter, or else bannock, *biscuits*, or potato scones.

### Variations:

1. Green Split Pea Soup: Substitute dried green split peas for the yellow split peas— delicious!
2. Add a diced potato or leftover potato to create an even heartier soup.
3. For a vegetarian soup, omit the ham and substitute vegetable broth for the chicken broth.

## SPLIT PEA SOUP

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The *voyageurs* ate split peas in the form of a thick soup that included pork when available. Another useful characteristic of peas is that they do not need to be soaked, as do most dried beans or other legumes. A *voyageur* might prepare a mixture of 9 quarts of split peas, water (typically lake water), and pork. This mixture was simmered throughout the night. In the morning, several biscuits would be added to thicken the soup. The biscuits would be the hard, dry type often called *hardtack*, which are made simply from flour and water; they are baked and left to dry to the point that they have almost no moisture left, becoming essentially nonperishable. The resulting cooked soup mixture was reputedly thick enough to stand a stick in.

This soup could be secured in the cooking pot for stowage in the canoe. At mealtime, the pot would be heated over a fire, and typically the soup was served with additional biscuit or bannock (a large, disk-shaped quick bread). This was a hearty meal, although probably very bland with no salt, pepper, or other seasonings, but only pork to add a bit of flavor.

Pea soup has been a part of the cuisine of many cultures for hundreds of years, and to this day is still very popular worldwide. Typically, it is a savory soup made from dried peas, such as split yellow peas. The peas are combined with vegetables, herbs, broth or water, and usually a ham bone for added flavor, with numerous variations depending on which country one lives in. My legume of choice is yellow split pea, which I use exclusively in my family recipe. I like the milder flavor of the yellow pea and the golden color of the finished soup. Green split peas are another option for this soup. The green peas impart a somewhat sweeter flavor to the finished soup. Both are delicious! Split pea soups are also gluten-free, dairy-free, and nutrient-dense, making them an ideal meal in one bowl.

As a chef and food blogger who wrote a number of articles and posts for the Culinary Historians of Canada in celebration of Canada150 last year, I have found that almost all classic Canadian recipes were born out of several common requirements: availability, cost, and ease of storage. Pea soup is an excellent example of these characteristics, which have made it a staple all over the world for over 2000 years.

My modernized version of French Canadian Yellow Pea Soup, published here on page 14, is delicious, easy to make, and can be quickly put together and simmering away in a Dutch oven or crockpot. It is nutritious, flavorful, and inexpensive to make, which in these times of ever-increasing food costs is a most welcome component to any menu plan. It is a soup that I make all year round, particularly when I have a ham bone available. The ham bone is placed into the pot while the soup is simmering, allowing the little bits of ham still clinging to the bone to add even more flavor to the rich broth.

Sault Ste. Marie can be proud of its roots, culture, and culinary history. I hope that this recipe will help carry on a rich tradition for another 350 years. Enjoy! ■

*For related essays with recipes, check out the archives at my blog site (<https://urbnspice.com/>):*

- *tourtière*, May 14, 2017
- maple syrup, Mar. 17, 2017

- food preservation, Aug. 24, 2017
- bannock, Nov. 12, 2016
- on potato scones, see “The Art of Doing Without”, Feb. 22, 2017.

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- Wikipedia articles “Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario”, “Pea Soup”, “Pottage”.



## Prêt à Manger

CHAA member Robin Watson snapped this photo of commercial canned French-Canadian Pea Soup that she found at Sparrow Market in Kerrytown, Ann Arbor. Manufactured by the Habitant Soup Co. of Montréal and distributed by Campbell’s, it is made with boiled yellow peas and a bit of lard, dehydrated onion, and seasonings.

# LUNCH WITH MARQUETTE *continued from p. 8*

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5. Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., *Jesuit relations and Allied documents, Travels and explorations of the Jesuit missionaries in New France, 1610-1791*, Vol. 59 (Cleveland: Burrows Bros, 1900), pp. 90, 122, 174; Nicolas Perrot, *Mémoire sur les mœurs, coutumes et religion des Sauvages de l'Amérique septentrionale* (Paris: A. Franck, 1864), p. 52, also available at <https://archive.org/stream/jesuits59jesuoft#page/n11/mode/2up>.
6. Perrot, *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 55; François Dollier de Casson and René de Bréhant de Galinée, *Voyage de MM. Dollier de Casson et Galinée, 1669-1670* [Mémoires de la Société historique de Montréal, vol. 6] (Montréal: Presses à vapeur de la Minerve, 1875), p. 46.
7. Dollier de Casson and Galinée, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-46; *Relations des Jésuites*, vol. III [Relation de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable en 1669 et 1670] (Québec: A. Côté, 1858), p. 80.
8. Perrot, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 172; Louis Nicolas, "Histoire Naturelle; ou la fidelle recherche de tout ce qu'il y a de rare dans les Indes occidentales...Divizé en douze livres", Library and Archives Canada, Mikan 3102528, Microfilm F-567, p. 68.
9. Marc Lescarbot, *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France*, vol. 3 (Paris: Tross, 1866), p. 758. For an overview of the history of hunting in Québec see Paul-Louis Martin, *Histoire de la chasse au Québec* (Montréal: Boréal, 1990); J. O. Benoist, "Le gibier dans l'alimentation seigneuriale (XI-XVe siècles)", pp. 75-87 in Denis Menjot, dir., *Manger et boire au Moyen Age: Actes du colloque de Nice (15-17 octobre 1982)* (Nice: CNRS, 1984); Marc R. Lafrance and Yvon Desloges, "Game as Food in New France", pp. 24-44 in Peter Benes and Jane Montague Benes, eds., *New England's Creatures, 1400-1900*, Annual proceedings (The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, 1993) (Boston: Boston Univ. Press, 1995).
10. Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), pp. 190-202; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Le territoire de l'historien* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), pp. 154-164; Robert Mandrou, *Introduction à la France moderne (1500-1640)* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1974), pp. 35-36. See also Jean-Hervé Yvinec, "Alimentation carnée au début du Moyen Age", in *Anthropozoologica*, 2<sup>nd</sup> special number, 1988, pp. 123-4. On the place of game on special occasions and in its symbolic relations, see Le Roy Ladurie, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-192, 208-214; and Robert Sauzet, "Discours cléricaux sur la nourriture", in Jean-Claude Margolin and Robert Sauzet, *Pratiques et discours alimentaires à la Renaissance* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1982), p. 248.
11. I have tested these three recipes, which are taken from the original French editions and respect the original

fashion in which they were prepared. The only alterations that I have made were to add ingredient quantities and modern cooking times.

12. For an overview of French cuisine at the end of the Middle Ages, see Florent Quellier, *La table des Français: Une histoire culturelle (XV<sup>e</sup>-début XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007), Chapter 4; Patrick Rambourg, *Histoire de la cuisine et de la gastronomie françaises* (Paris: Perrin, 2010), Chapter 1; Jean-Louis Flandrin, "Choix alimentaires et art culinaire (XVI<sup>e</sup> – XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)", Chapter 36 in Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari, eds., *Histoire de l'alimentation* (Paris: Fayard, 1996).
13. The material from this point onwards is largely a summary of Yvon Desloges, *À table en Nouvelle-France: Alimentation populaire, gastronomie et traditions populaires dans la vallée laurentienne avant l'avènement des restaurants* (Québec: Éditions du Septentrion, 2009).
14. The French pound was a little heavier than the British pound: 489 versus 454 grams.
15. Although it was called *pain blanc* ("white bread"), the small amount of bran, say 5% or less, gave this bread a yellowish color. In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century there were two other kinds of French bread aside from this: one with more bran than the *blanc* was called *blanc bis* and nowadays would be called "brown bread", and the other was called *bis* and had a full measure of bran, which made it dark. This last one disappeared from the baker's shop as the dietary discourse evolved during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.
16. Yvon Desloges, "Les Québécois et leur identité alimentaire: de Cartier à Expo 67", *Cuizine*, Vol. 3, Issue 1 (2011), available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.7202/1004727ar>.

## FOODS RECONSTRUCTED *continued from p. 12*

- *History from the Hearth* is briefer in regard to historic background, but is very detailed about culinary techniques and equipment, the challenges of cooking over an open fire, and the difficulty of cooking in the freezing Michigan winter. These kitchen details make it a fun read.
- *Jardins et potagers* particularly documents agricultural practices, especially the vegetable and herb gardens mentioned in the title. This book offers a wealth of quotations from travelers who observed life in 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Québec. The author provides lengthy and relatively complete lists of cultivated fruits, vegetables, and herbs, as well as diagrams of garden layouts. It's unfortunate that no English translation seems to be available.

Numerous recipes are included in each book. They appear to be quite delicious, and very well adapted to modern kitchens, although if made on an electric or gas range, the results would lack the taste of wood smoke that an open fire gives to food. This review does not reflect any actual experiments with the recipes.

# C.H.A.A. MEETINGS REPORT



## LEARNING ABOUT BAKING, BEEKEEPING, FARM COOKING— AND PICKY EATING!

The Winter/Spring 2018 meeting schedule of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor included talks about artisanal commercial baking, the history of children's picky food habits, small-scale commercial beekeeping, and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Michigan farm customs. Regrettably, Margaret Carney's Apr. 15 talk about Chicago's Well of the Sea restaurant was canceled due to a snowstorm, but our Program Chair, Laura Green Gillis, has rescheduled it for Oct. 21.

### Zingerman's Bakehouse

Amy Emberling and Frank Carollo, Managing Partners of Zingerman's Bakehouse in Ann Arbor, spoke to us on Jan. 21 following release of their book, *Zingerman's Bakehouse: The Cookbook* (Chronicle Books, 2017). The book describes the life of a commercial baker, instructs readers how to bake many Zingerman's products at home, chronicles the Bakehouse's 25-year history, and forecasts its future steps. The Bakehouse had its origin in 1992 when the founders of Zingerman's Deli realized that even for sandwiches, they needed bread as good as the great breads of the world, good enough to enjoy by itself. Carollo and Emberling were among the founders, and Michael London, a master baker at Mrs. London's in Saratoga Springs, NY, was hired as consultant. The number of products has multiplied many times over since then, but their emphasis remains on simple, full flavors that are traditional, rather than novel combinations and techniques.

Freshly-made Bakehouse samples for the audience included two wheat breads (Country *Miche* and Turkey Red Wreath) and two sweets (Graham crackers and *tahineh* cookies). In their flip-chart presentation, Emberling and Carollo described how they get ideas for such products from their life experiences, research, suggestions from Zingerman's staff and customers, holiday events, and encounters with fine ingredients such as artisanal *tahineh*. Then they experiment, formulating and reformulating a recipe over the course of 3-6 months. Marketing considerations include product name, size, price, packaging, location of sales, and timing of launch. Even after a product is launched, they never stop trying to optimize technique and ingredient quality, partly a reflection of Carollo's engineering background. Machinery is used only if it doesn't compromise quality. The quality and freshness of the grains used in milling flour is also important. Michigan, we learned, has long produced great cake flours and pastry flours, and in recent years the Bakehouse has

encouraged farmers in Michigan and Ohio to grow heritage wheats such as Turkey Red and hard red Spring wheat. It plans to acquire its own flour mill in the near future.

### Picky Eating

Picky eating is so common among kids in the U.S. today that most people assume it's biologically programmed. Not so, said Helen Zoe Veit in her Feb. 18 talk, "Inventing Picky Eating". Veit, Assoc. Prof. of History at Michigan State Univ., argues that this a modern, socially- and culturally-determined phenomenon. From time immemorial through the 1800s, she told us, children had enjoyed everything from "yucky" vegetables to offal, as well as strongly-flavored foods such as pickles and condiments. At that time in the U.S., the still-prevailing view was that children are naturally curious and want to try new foods and flavors.

But the dietary reform movement, which peaked during the Progressive Era a century ago, advocated that children be trained to prefer plain foods such as milk, dairy products, and bland fruits and vegetables, while being kept away from the bolder flavors of meats, spices, etc. The category of children's foods came to be modeled after that of "invalids", with its broths and porridges. Then, at mid-century, Benjamin Spock and developmental psychologists began to advise that children be given more power and independence. Mothers would bring their kids to the supermarket and allow them to pick their own convenience foods: hot dogs, mac'n'cheese, fish sticks, snack foods, sweetened cereals, etc. Prof. Veit is documenting these trends for her book-in-progress, *Picky: A History of Children's Food*, using a wide range of sources such as dietary reformers' writings, corporate advertising and market research, and newspaper advice columns.

### Beekeeping

The technology of beekeeping has changed little in 150 years, we learned on Mar. 18 from Randy and Sandy Graichen, owners of an Ypsilanti, MI-based business called Heart of the Hive. Sandy is also current President of the Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers Assn. The couple showed us examples of the squat wooden box-frames that make up a commercial hive, each with a notch allowing moisture to escape. Their own two dozen or so hives produce about 1000 lbs. of honey per year.

Since plant pollen and nectar are staples of a bee's diet, the best sites for hives are near woods, hedgerows, and fallow fields that lack recent pesticides. The bees "cure" the honey they produce by "fanning" inside the hive to promote evaporation, lowering the moisture level of the honey from about 80% to about 17%; that makes it fermentation-proof because bacteria can't thrive in such sweetness. In Winter, bees generally stay in the hive; their metabolism slows, and they "shiver" for warmth and cluster around the queen. The Graichens feed their bees supplementary protein and sugar to ward off colony collapse. When they need to procure new bees, they order them from firms in Georgia or Alabama.

A professional pollinating crew uses a tractor-trailer to haul hives containing several million bees from one farm or orchard to another on a precisely timed schedule. About one-third of

*continued on page 19*

# MORSELS & TIDBITS

CHAA member **Margaret Carney**, director of the Ann Arbor-based International Museum of Dinnerware Design, announces an exhibit, “Unapologetic Dinnerware: A Brief History of Disposable Dinnerware” (Aug. 28 – Oct. 12, 2018, Kreft Gallery, Concordia Univ., Ann Arbor). The exhibit traces the history of disposable or single-use dinnerware from ancient Mesopotamia to the present. It features artifacts of an intentionally “disposable” nature from diverse cultures and time periods, as well as prototypes from contemporary designers in India, Japan, Jordan, Portugal, Germany, and the U.S. In other activities, Dr. Carney presented a talk, “The Pig and Dinnerware”, at the Zingerman’s-sponsored Camp Bacon in Ann Arbor in early June, and in late May she went to China to share

her expertise about Cizhou ceramic wares recovered from Julu, a town on the Huang He River that was inundated by flooding in 1108 and famously preserved in the river silt.

“The Flavor of Wisconsin” is an exhibit running Jun. 26 – Nov. 10, 2018 at the **Wisconsin Historical Museum** in Madison. The displayed recipes, images, stories, and archival pieces drawn from the museum’s collection illustrate how products and producers have shaped the culinary traditions of the Badger State. The exhibit is inspired by a well-known book, *The Flavor of Wisconsin* by Harva Hachten and Terese Allen (1981; revised and expanded edition, 2009).

## A Flurry of Publishing

There’s been a flurry of recent publishing activity by writers who have made past contributions to *Repast*.

- In *My American Dream* (Knopf, 2018), **Lidia Bastianich** tells the story of her life, from her childhood on the Adriatic coast in Tito’s Yugoslavia, through her family’s arrival in New York as refugees, her first attempts at cooking, and her eventual success as a restaurateur and writer. Ms. Bastianich wrote the memoir “Growing Up in Istria” in *Repast* (Summer 2016).
- Chef **Arno Schmidt**, a member of the Culinary Historians of New York, has just self-published a 214-page memoir, *Chatting about The Waldorf-Astoria Hotel* (2018). The work, available on Amazon, affords a rare insider’s view of the days of waning glory at the Manhattan hotel and restaurant where he was Executive Chef in 1969-79. For *Repast*, Chef Schmidt wrote the memoirs “Fresh Food in War-torn Austria” (Spring 2016) and “How We Loved to Be Romanced at Fine Restaurants” (Summer 2017).
- In her well-researched book *Feast: Food of the Islamic World* (Ecco, 2018), Beirut-born **Anissa Helou** presents outstanding dishes that she has gathered from the days of the late-medieval ‘Abāssid caliphate in Iraq, the Ottoman Empire based in Istanbul, and the Mughal dynasty in South Asia. Helou wrote the memoir “Baking with My Syrian Aunt Zahiye” in *Repast* (Summer 2016).
- **Charles Perry**, longtime President of the Culinary Historians of Southern California, was the editor and translator of a bilingual edition of *Scents and Flavors: A Syrian Cookbook* (New York Univ. Press, 2017), an important manuscript by an unknown 13<sup>th</sup>-Century author of the ‘Ayūbbid dynasty, which was of Kurdish origin. Besides exquisite cooked dishes, baked goods, and sweets, the book also includes chapters on pickles, beverages, fragrances (perfumes, incenses, and oils), and distilled waters used as hand soaps. Perry wrote the article on “Damascus Cuisine” in *Repast* (Summer 2008).
- Iraqi native and Culinary Historians of Boston member **Nawal Nasrallah** was editor and translator of *Treasure*

*Trove of Benefits and Variety at the Table: A Fourteenth-Century Egyptian Cookbook* (Brill, 2017). Dr. Nasrallah wrote about “The Iraqi Cookie, *Kleicha*, and the Search for Identity” in *Repast* (Fall 2008).

- **Bruce Kraig**, longtime President of the Culinary Historians of Chicago, has published *A Rich and Fertile Land: A History of Food in America* (Reaktion Books, 2017). His book surveys the topic from prehistory to today, with special attention to the role of geography, climate, political beliefs, and multicultural mixing. Prof. Kraig wrote the article on “Turkish *Yufka* and its Offspring” in *Repast* (Winter 2005).
- *Repast* subscriber and contributor **Sharon Hudgins** of McKinney, TX, has published *T-Bone Whacks and Caviar Snacks: Cooking with Two Texans in Siberia and the Russian Far East* (Univ. of North Texas Press, 2018), the first cookbook in the U.S. devoted to foods of the Asian side of Russia. For *Repast*, Hudgins wrote the articles “Russian Potato Salad: From Classic to Contemporary” (Winter 2011) and “All Aboard to Dine by Train on Five Continents” (Spring 2018).
- **David S. Shields** has published *The Culinarists: Lives and Careers from the First Age of American Fine Dining* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2017), which consists of brief biographies of dozens of American chefs, restaurateurs, and cookbook authors, arranged chronologically, 1790-1919. Prof. Shields wrote the article “The Civil War and the Rise of Sorghum” in *Repast* (Summer 2011).
- Ginkgo Press publishers **Joan B. Peterson** and **Susan Peterson Chwae**’s EAT SMART culinary guidebook series was awarded Best in the World in the Food Series category at the 2018 Gourmand World Cookbook Awards, held in May in Yantai, China. Joan, of Madison, WI, authored or co-authored 11 of the 14 country guides that have appeared in the book series so far. She founded both Ginkgo Press and the Culinary History Enthusiasts of Wisconsin (CHEW) about a quarter-century ago. For *Repast*, Joan wrote articles on “Maize: Mexico’s Gift to the World” (Spring 2003) and “Halvah in Ottoman Turkey” (Winter 2009).

We will have in-depth coverage of the books by Nasrallah and Hudgins in our Winter 2019 issue.

CHAA founding members **Jan and Dan Longone** attended a Jun. 12 dinner at Zingerman's Roadhouse celebrating the publication of a book co-authored by Jan's cousins, **Sonya Gropman and Gabrielle Rossmor Gropman**, *The German-Jewish Cookbook: Recipes & History of a Cuisine* (Brandeis Univ. Press, 2017). Compared to the culinary traditions of Sephardic and Eastern European Jews, those of German Jews have been relatively neglected by food lovers and scholars. Jan reports, "Dan and I attended the dinner and were humbled by the passionate attention from the attendees. In fact, the dinner and questions lasted longer than usual. There are many recipes and the culinary history is remarkable."

Cookbook author **Nandita Godbole** has published an historical novel based on her family history, *Not For You: Family Narratives of Denial & Comfort Foods* (Turmeric Press, Mar. 2018). Godbole lived in Ann Arbor during 1999-2005 and taught Indian cooking for the Ann Arbor Rec and Ed program before moving to Atlanta. Her novel revolves around the transformation of eight different women and their kitchens, across many decades and regions of India, from the second half of the 1800s to India's 1947 independence and its growth as a free, cosmopolitan nation, and then the struggles of a young Mumbai immigrant maturing in pre- and post-9/11 America as a student, a professional, and a homemaker. Two chapters are set in Ann Arbor, and the book includes over 70 recipes from Godbole and her family.

Cookbooks are concentrated artifacts of culture; they tell the historian at least as much about the past as do excavated buildings and battlefields. Three fruitful studies in cookbook history were published last year:

- **Keith Staveland and Kathleen Fitzgerald** co-authored *United Tastes: The Making of the First American Cookbook* (Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2017), a study of Amelia Simmons's *American Cookery* (Hartford, CT, 1796). The respected food scholar Andrew F. Smith called this "one of the best researched and documented works written about any American culinary topic." It examines not only issues of food and cooking, but also the related issues of regionalism and nationalism, material and literary culture, and printing and publishing, in order to show the role played by this first cookbook in helping to form a distinctly American identity. The same husband-and-wife team previously wrote *America's Founding Food: The Story of New England Cooking* (2004) and *Northern Hospitality: Cooking by the Book in New England* (2011).
- **Megan J. Elias**'s *Food on the Page: Cookbooks and American Culture* (Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2017) traces cookbook publishing in the U.S. from Amelia Simmons to the present, although her emphasis is mostly on the post-WW2 period. Elias, an associate professor of gastronomy at Boston Univ., is at her best in showing how cookbook trends reflected broader social and cultural currents, such as nostalgia for the antebellum South, Francophilia in the postwar period, the counterculture of the 1970s, and today's "locavore" ethic. Her discussion includes not only the cookbook titans who are household names, but also less well-known authors; everyone would learn something in reading this book.
- **Henry Notaker**, *A History of Cookbooks: From Kitchen to Page over Seven Centuries* (Univ. of California Press, 2017) focuses on early printed cookbooks in Europe. The

author, a Norwegian scholar famous for his meticulous surveys of historical cookbooks, is concerned with such issues as the target audience of the book (there are separate chapters on the influence of such aspects as class, Christianity, Judaism, gender, nationalism, nutrition, and vegetarianism), the tone of the author toward the reader, the historical evolution of recipe formats, and the question of whether cookbooks are literary works or simply instruction manuals. ■

## C.H.A.A. MEETINGS *continued from page 17*

U.S. crops rely on honeybees for pollination. A key danger is Varroa, a genus of parasitic mite that arrived in California on a ship from Southeast Asia and has now infested the whole U.S. The mite latches onto a bee and sucks blood, leaving a wound that makes the bee vulnerable to viral infection, deformity, and death. Another key threat is neonicotinoids. Repeated exposure to these crop pesticides impairs bees' ability to navigate to and from the hive, and also impairs their ability to groom themselves, which weakens their immune systems and makes them more vulnerable to diseases and mites.

### Farm Diaries

For decades now, local author and historian Laura Bien has spent many an hour poring over archives at the Ypsilanti [Michigan] Historical Society. She shared some of her findings about late-19<sup>th</sup> Century rural customs in a May 20 talk, "Local Farm Foodways: Hints from the Diaries of the 'Farmeress', the Poet, and the Schoolgirl". Bien focused on manuscript diaries from four Washtenaw County farms, written respectively by Phebe Wheelock (1889, 1891), Mamie Vought (1886, 1889), Mary Seaver and her sister (1863, 1870), and Scottish-immigrant farmer/poet William Lambie (1863-99). All four of these farms were generalist ones selling to local buyers, grocery stores, and a stockyard in Ypsilanti. Their output included cereals (oats, wheat, corn), potatoes, fruits (apples, pears, cherries, grapes, berries), and animal products (beef, pork, lamb, wool, chickens, eggs, and domesticated turkeys). The diaries refer to such typical farm chores as gathering eggs, milking cows, churning butter, salting pork, making tallow, canning cherries, and baking bread and cakes.

Cakes make a case study of the elements that had to come together in a farmhouse kitchen. By the 1880s in the U.S., most farms had a cast-iron cook-stove burning either wood or gas. Farm-made butter could be used as shortening. Farm-fresh eggs contributed to the leavening action and to a smooth, creamy texture in the cake crumb. Honey, sorghum syrup, and maple "molasses" and syrup were locally produced, while imported cane molasses and refined white sugar could also be purchased at grocery stores. Factory-made bicarbonate of soda, sometimes called *saleratus*, had superseded yeast as the most common leavening agent for baking. The next-generation product, baking powder, was sold under many rival brands including Royal Baking Powder, whose ad we saw in an 1889 issue of the *Ypsilanti Commercial* newspaper. Also by this time, whole coconuts were a not uncommon grocery shipment item. All of these elements came together in baking molasses, raisin, or coconut cakes on Michigan farms. Other grocery items relied on new refrigerated railcars, including beef from Chicago and oysters from the East Coast.

# CHAA CALENDAR

(Unless otherwise noted, programs are scheduled for 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. and are held at the Ann Arbor District Library – Malletts Creek Branch, 3090 E. Eisenhower Parkway.)

## Sunday, September 16, 2018

Stephanie Ariganello and Jeremiah Kouhia,  
Mother Loaf Breads bakery, Milan, MI,  
“Long, Cold and Slow: Bringing Bread to Life,  
or, Raising the Bread...”  
(all about sourdough)

## Sunday, October 21, 2018

Margaret Carney, director and curator of  
the International Museum of Dinnerware Design,  
speaks on Well of the Sea,  
the acclaimed seafood restaurant located  
in Chicago’s Hotel Sherman in 1948-1972.

**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 2018: On the Trail of Jacques Marquette, Part 2: Food Legacies of the French Canadians
- Winter 2019: un-themed
- Spring 2019: The Food Industry: Pages from History (Part 4)
- Summer 2019: Immigrant Foods of Steel Country.

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Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

Volume XXXIV, Number 3, Summer 2018

*First Class*