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Repast

Quarterly Publication of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

# A Spur to the Food Trade

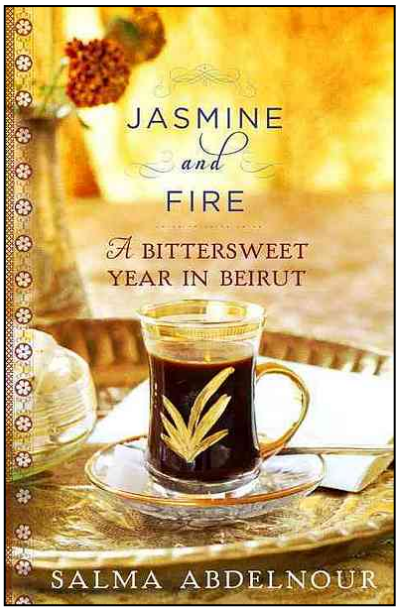
## *Edible Legacies from the War Between the States*


Acquired from a New York seller by the McIlhenny Company Archives, this is the only known completely-intact Tabasco sauce bottle from the product's early period. Courtesy of McIlhenny Company Archives.

See inside, pages 8-11, for McIlhenny Company historian Shane K. Bernard's article, "Up from the Ruins of the Civil War: Edmund McIlhenny and Tabasco® Brand Pepper Sauce".

# MIDDLE EAST MEMORIES

Amidst the continued unfolding of the Arab Spring, four recently-published memoirs invite perusal. They evoke the cultural context of food in Lebanon, Jerusalem, Iraq, and Morocco.




In the 1980s, when Salma Abdelnour was still a young girl, she and her Christian family fled civil war in Lebanon and settled in Houston, while keeping possession of their Beirut residence. Now an accomplished food and travel writer based in New York City, Ms. Abdelnour recently dared to go back and live in the old house for one year, an experience she recounts in her food-focused travel memoir, *Jasmine and Fire: A Bittersweet Year in Beirut* (New York: Broadway Books, 2012; 336 pp., $14 pbk). She tells of her adventures— making new friendships, rekindling old ones, exploring the neighborhoods and markets of the city as well as outlying villages, learning how to cook and to dine out in these new conditions— while skillfully weaving in bits of culture, history, and politics. Over 20 pages of Lebanese recipes appear at the end, such as *zingol*, a tangy soup with chickpeas and *burghul*; *harrak osb'oo*, a dish of lentils with lemon juice and pomegranate molasses; and *moufattaka*, a cake made with sticky rice, *tahineh*, and pine nuts. Abdelnour spoke at Nicola's Books in Ann Arbor on Sept. 28.

Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi, Jewish and Muslim, respectively, are Jerusalemites transplanted to London, where they are business partners and chefs at four restaurants. They embarked on writing their latest work, *Jerusalem: A Cookbook* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2012; 320 pp., $35 hbk.), in part as a way to reflect on the food traditions of their childhoods spent on opposite sides of the "Green Line". They also include 120 new recipes from their repertoire of Mideastern-European fusion cuisine, including chicken with Clementines and *'arak*; meatballs of turkey and grated zucchini served with a *sumaq* sauce; roasted sweet potatoes with chili pepper, fresh figs, *chevre*, and balsamic vinegar; and pan-fried mackerel with a salsa of golden beet and orange. Jane Kramer, in her extensive profile of the two men in *The New Yorker* (Food issue, Dec. 3, 2012), wrote that the book includes "nimble, often eloquent evocations of the city and its multitudes of different peoples". Ottolenghi was also interviewed on NPR on Oct.15.

Chicago native Annia Ciezadlo, who has reported from war-torn locales for *The Christian Science Monitor* and *The New Republic*, is the author of *Day of Honey: A Memoir of Food, Love, and War* (New York: Free Press, 2011; 382 pp, $26 hbk.). The account grows out of her time spent in U.S.-occupied Baghdad along with her Lebanese husband, also a news reporter. That experience serves as the backdrop for thoughtful, well-written ruminations on traditional and contemporary foods of Iraq and other parts of the Middle East. She torpedoes the notion that Iraq has no cuisine worthy of the name, and she observes how people find ways to adjust their customs of cooking and eating to wartime conditions.

Kitty Morse, a California food writer who grew up in the French colonial or *pied noir* community in Casablanca, has written *Mint Tea and Minarets: A Banquet of Moroccan Memories* (Vista, CA: La Caravane, 2012; 327 pp., $30 pbk.). She shares recollections and photos of Morocco, especially her native Casablanca and her more recent explorations in and around the ancient *medina* of Azemmour an hour to the south. There, she worked as executor of her father's estate, including his ancestral home Dar Zitoun, a cooking school refurbished as a mansion. There are 32 recipes, which instruct us in ways to prepare *couscous*, the varied sumptuous stews called *tagines*, as well as more unusual dishes such as *bestila*, a flaky, savory-sweet pastry of pigeon or other fowl. ■

**Repast**

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# WHICH CAME FIRST: THE CHICKEN, THE EGG, OR THE HOT DOG?

For those taking notes, the correct answer is the hot dog, as far as the sequence of three Fall CHAA talks is concerned.

The CHAA December theme meal is summarized elsewhere in this issue, on pages 19-22.

## Ya Want Beef-Heart with That?

Authors and journalists Katherine Yung and Joe Grimm spoke to us on September 16 about the "Coney Island" genre of restaurant, a fascinating dining tradition that's the subject of their book *Coney Detroit* (Wayne State University Press, 2012). These hundreds of eateries, mostly family-owned and located in southeastern Michigan, began to arise almost a century ago offering primarily one item: a hot dog and bun topped with spicy beanless chili, chopped raw onion, and yellow salad mustard. The immigrant owners called this a "Coney Island" hot dog because, from their first arrival in America, they associated hot dogs with New York. Over time, these eateries evolved into popular places where one could also get breakfast, Greek salads, and other diner fare.

We learned that possibly the earliest place to serve such a Coney-style hot dog was Mama Vicki's (also called Coney Island Lunch), established by a Greek immigrant in Port Huron in the late 1910s or early 1920s. During the 1920s, brothers Gust and Bill Keros, originally shepherds from a village in southern Greece, founded Lafayette Coney Island and American Coney Island in neighboring storefronts in downtown Detroit. The Coney phenomenon appeared in Flint in the same decade, and was also brought to Jackson by Macedonian immigrants in the mid-'30s. The Flint-style Coney dog differs from that of Detroit in that the ground-beef chili is replaced with a dry-meat topping made from ground beef-heart.

Today, most of the Coneys are singletons, but there are three Detroit chains, all begun in the 1960s and '70s, that have over 20 locations apiece: National, Leo's, and Kerby's, the last founded by four nephews of the Keros brothers. The trade is still dominated by people of Greek, Macedonian, or Albanian heritage, although there are also some Lebanese, Yemeni, and Korean owners. Interestingly, the Yemenis are largely observant Muslims who cannot partake of the Coney dogs they are selling.

What explains the popularity of this type of eatery in southeastern Michigan? Yung and Grimm cited three factors: the enduring presence of local firms that can supply high-quality, natural-casing hot dogs; the food's appeal to working-class people; and the opportunities this type of business presented to the area's enterprising immigrants.

## Pecking Order

Dr. Darrin M. Karcher at Michigan State University undertook to give us a two-part lesson about the chicken and the egg on Oct. 21 and Nov. 18. He delivered "The Chicken: How to Keep Them Happy" as planned, but being unable to make the second date, "The Eggs: What You Don't Know!", he asked his capable colleague, Dr. Richard Balander, to deliver it. We will report the two talks as a unified whole, hoping this does not scramble our readers too much.

Traditionally, all commercial chickens were raised for both meat and eggs. But in the mid-1950s, when chicken breeds were developed to optimize one or the other type of product, the industry separated into producers of meat and eggs.

The industrial urge to maximize the pace and volume of production led to chicken meat that is much more tender but less flavorful. Specifically, the birds are harvested as young as possible, and they are not allowed to roam but are confined to the maximum extent (only about 90 square inches are needed for them to carry on all functions, including eating, dust-bathing, etc.). Unfortunately for consumers, the meat of young birds like broilers (6-7 weeks old) has little flavor compared to that of roasters (11-12 weeks) or stewing hens (much older).

By contrast, most backyard growers are not motivated mainly by economics but instead by hobbying interests or health concerns. But commercial and backyard growers alike must address a host of technical and management issues affecting the poultry: housing layout, lighting, temperature, ventilation, feeding and nutrition, manure management, flock social structure, and the control of pests, diseases, and cannibalism.

Most commercial egg layers are a variety of White Leghorn that was specifically bred to optimize egg production. It takes about 26-28 hours to produce and lay one egg; to re-synchronize with daylight, the hen's physiology skips producing an egg on the order of one day per week, so the typical output is 280-300 eggs per year. Naturally, egg layers are kept alive and producing much longer than meat chickens. But due to physiological changes, as the hen ages her eggs tend to enlarge toward "jumbo" size. Since her available shell-making material, essentially limestone, remains the same, these larger shells are thinner, and the rate of cracks or breaks increases from about 0% to 7-10%. In a modern hatchery, such defective eggs are costly, but their detection and removal are completely automated.

Besides whole eggs, there are now liquid, dried, and frozen egg products available. Drying and powdering of eggs, a technology that arose by the 1920s, results in a product of reduced quality and flavor, used mostly in industrial-scale baking. Taking all forms into account, annual per capita egg consumption in the U.S. has fallen from over 400 in 1945 to under 250 today.

We learned that chicken egg white, or *albumen*, is about 10% protein (mainly *albumin*), and the rest is mostly water with traces of fat and carbohydrates. The yolk is about 17% protein (mainly *ovovitellin*), 33% fat, and the rest mostly water. We also learned why hard-cooking is best done at a simmer rather than a boil, and why eggs become easier to peel with age. ■

# BUILDING TASTE AND TRUST

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# THE CIVIL WAR'S INFLUENCE ON THE U.S. CANNING INDUSTRY

by Anna Zeide

*Anna Zeide is a Ph.D. student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in the Program for the History of Science, Medicine, and Technology. She writes about food ethics and politics on her blog, Dining and Opining, and on the environmental website, Grist. In May 2012, she gave a presentation to the Culinary History Enthusiasts of Wisconsin (CHEW), "Finding the Roots of the American Food Industry Beneath the Cannery Floor". Anna is also active in many food and community initiatives at UW and throughout Madison.*

In July 1864, David Coon, a member of the 36th Wisconsin Infantry Regiment, wrote a letter home to his wife and children. Such letters from soldiers were common during the Civil War, but this one was a little different: Coon had written it on the back of a label peeled from a can of Borden's Condensed Milk.[1] Perhaps he was short on paper because he could not afford to buy it from a sutler who sold such supplies. Or perhaps Coon had just reached for the nearest writing surface available, peeling back the label from a can of milk to find a clean white writing space. Whatever the reason, this back-of-the-label letter speaks to the presence of canned condensed milk throughout the Union army camps.

Most soldiers encountered canned foods during the war, often for the first time. Canned milk was the most common such product, but Union men also ate canned meats, tomatoes, and peaches, among other items. After the war's end, the surviving soldiers returned home, deeply altered. Among many other changes, they had now been exposed to, and were more likely to trust, commercially-canned food. This change in taste and trust among soldiers would have a significant impact on the ensuing rise of the packaged food industry in the United States, leading to a dramatic increase in canned food sales in the years after the Civil War.

In the conclusion to his study of food in the Civil War, historian William C. Davis suggests that the war had little impact on soldiers' food habits and preferences once they returned home. He writes that "virtually none of them missed the food", and that kitchen affairs basically returned to normal.[2] While it is surely true that soldiers did not long for hardtack or rat meat, their newly-acquired taste for canned foods certainly emerged from the wartime context and transferred over into civilian life.[3] The years after the Civil War saw a phenomenal increase in the production of canned


A drawing from *New Magic in the Kitchen*, a Borden Company recipe booklet (1920s).

foods. Whereas there had been five million cans produced in 1860, there were about 30 million by 1865, and more than 90 million by 1880.[4] The war had made a name for the canning industry by bringing together young men from all parts of the country, from all walks of life, and exposing this diverse bunch to a homogeneous food supply, which prominently featured the tin can. Further, a number of canning companies that had just begun operations before the war gained financial stability through wartime contracts and grew to become major food processors in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries.

Among these food processors, perhaps the most successful, and thus most prominent in ensuing years, was Borden's Condensed Milk Company. As David Coon's back-of-the-label letter suggests, condensed milk was one of the most common canned food items that soldiers encountered. The company's founder, Gail Borden, Jr., had only begun commercial production in 1857, after several failed attempts. But when a commissary agent from the Union army entered Borden's New York Office in 1861 to request a contract with an initial order of five hundred pounds, the company began its rapid trajectory toward success.[5] Soon, with high demand for his product, Borden was paying 200 area dairy farmers for their 20,000 gallons of milk, which was condensed and preserved through heating and the addition of sugar.[6] The Civil War contract was crucial to Borden's success. As other commentators have noted, condensed milk might have risen to popularity without the war, but it would have taken many years and much promotion to do in peacetime what just a

few short years of wartime accomplished for the new product.[7] Besides the popular condensed milk, other companies that had lucrative Union army contracts included Van Camp's pork and beans, Underwood deviled ham, and J. Winslow Jones canned corn.[8] Besides these products, army men also had canned fruit like cherries and peaches, canned tomatoes, canned oysters, and other canned meats.

There were a variety of venues in which soldiers encountered these canned foods. Although the standard rations did not include canned items, the Union army's commissary department— which was in charge of providing food— did offer cans from time to time.[9] Officers tended to have easier access to canned goods, but troops were able to buy them from sutlers, or to receive them from the U.S. Sanitary Commission, especially in the hospitals.[10] Sutlers sold a wide range of canned goods— canned beef, lobster, blueberries, jams, pickles— that appealed to soldiers who'd grown weary of their monotonous rations. But although they provided great pleasures, sutlers also sometimes took advantage of desperate enlisted men; one episode saw sutlers selling condensed milk for $2.50 a can when the wholesale price was 15 cents.[11] The U.S. Sanitary Commission, a volunteer-run private relief agency that supported sick and wounded soldiers during the Civil War, also provided condensed milk, in large quantities. One 1863 report estimated that the Sanitary Commission had provided 9,000 pounds of condensed milk, along with 20,000 pounds of fresh mutton and poultry, 10,000 dozens of eggs, and much more, to Union soldiers.[12] Condensed milk was considered "the sick soldiers' nectar", and was especially used in hospitals to provide nourishment to ailing men.[13]

While most of the above discussion applies particularly to the Union Army, the Confederates also encountered canned goods. Commercial canneries in the U.S. at the time of the Civil War were all located in Union territory, so the Union army was able to secure contracts, while the South could not. Further, the Sanitary Commission catered only to the Union. Still, Confederate soldiers did have exposure to these novel food products. Some were imported from overseas, others were acquired from raids of Union supply trains or mess pantries, and still others were fed to Confederates imprisoned in Union camps.[14]

The rise in production of canned foods after the war relied not only on wartime exposure, but also on technological development. Two of the most important innovations of the late-19th-Century canning industry were the addition of calcium chloride to the cooking water in 1861 and the use of the steam retort in 1874. Just before the Civil War began, Isaac Solomon, a Baltimore canner, discovered that he could raise the boiling point of the water in which cans were processed by the addition of calcium chloride, a salt. By raising the boiling point, he was able to use higher temperatures to cook the canned food more quickly, which allowed for an increase in production volume and a resulting decrease in prices. For example, using a temperature of 240º F. (rather than water's normal boiling point of 212º F.) cut the processing time from 6 hours to just 40 minutes. This, in turn, allowed canners to produce 20,000 cans per day, where they'd previously produced around 2,500.[15] Later, nearly a

*continued on next page*

## How the Can Lifted the Tomato

*In his book* The Tomato in America: Early History, Culture, and Cookery *(Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1994), Andrew F. Smith notes (p. 150) that the rise of canning during the Civil War brought about a dramatic long-term expansion in tomato production.*

Many Northern soldiers ate canned vegetables for the first time while they were in the army. After the war, the demand for canned products soared. In 1868 a single establishment in Philadelphia employed "four hundred women at a time for canning tomatoes and small fruits, and consumed in a single season $30,000 worth of sugar." Three factories in Burlington, New Jersey, employed six hundred people and disbursed several thousand dollars weekly for wages. These factories processed the production of nearly a thousand acres of tomatoes lying within a three-mile radius. By 1870 tomatoes were among the big three canned vegetables, along with peas and corn. By 1879 more than nineteen million cans of tomatoes were manufactured annually, generating revenue of over one million six hundred thousand dollars. Within a few years this production quadrupled. In subsequent years more tomatoes were canned than any other fruit or vegetable. By 1884 a single canning factory, J. H. Butterfoss in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, produced 340,000 cans of tomatoes and 43,000 gallons of catsup. In 1885 more than two million cases containing twenty-four cans each were produced nationally. Within three years more than five and a half million cases were produced. By the end of the century the number increased to almost fifteen million cases. In addition, the production of tomato ketchup expanded exponentially. By 1896 the *New York Tribune* proclaimed that tomato ketchup was the national condiment of the United States and was available on every table in the land.

To meet the expanded need, farmers grew tomatoes in hothouses and used other techniques of forwarding them. By 1866 fresh tomatoes were available in many large cities throughout the year. With the completion of the transcontinental railroad, fresh tomatoes were shipped from California to New York in July 1869.


Advertisement for a public showing of Alexander Livingston's improved tomato, c. 1870, Reynoldsburg, OH.

Graphics collection, William L. Clements Library, Univ. of Michigan

## CANNING INDUSTRY *continued from page 5*

decade after the war, but as the industry was still in its very early stages, another Baltimore canner, Andrew Shriver, introduced the steam retort. This was basically a large, closed-kettle, steam-pressure cooker that once again allowed for much higher processing temperatures and a much more quickly finished product.[16] These two inventions, along with the first patents for can openers in the Civil War years— a sickle version in 1858, and a rotating wheel can opener in 1870— helped the canning industry flourish.[17]

Still, the soldiers' wartime exposure to canned foods played the central role in the expansion of the industry. This widening base of consumer trust reverberated back up the chain of production by providing the demand that canners needed in order to innovate and expand. Tastes are often slow to change when consumers are given a choice between new products and their standard, habitual items. But because army men in the Civil War had little choice when it came to their food supply, they gave new foods a chance, and pushed the limits of what they considered palatable in order to accommodate canned items. After the war, they brought these new preferences home with them. With reference to the most common wartime canned item, historians Waverly Root and Richard De Rochemont write, "The Union soldiers liked condensed milk and after the war became propagandists for it, demanding it in civilian life and thus introducing it to their friends and families."[18]

This transfer of culinary experience would expand the market for canned foods, which went from being necessities for explorers and soldiers to being staples in the home and the kitchen pantry. As Liberty Hyde Bailey wrote of condensed milk in 1908, "Not only is its consumption increasing in localities and lands unable to produce fresh milk, in the mining camps, on the battle-fields, in the tropics, in the arctic region, on ocean liners and on men-of-war, but the demand for condensed milk in our home markets is growing with astonishing rapidity."[19] Thus, once canned foods became increasingly familiar in the home, canners had established a foothold to extend their consumer base.

The Civil War gathered Americans from many different backgrounds and exposed them to a common way of life, one that diverged from their normal habits and preferences. From there, men returned to areas urban and rural, to the Midwest and to New England, to homes that were poor and homes that were affluent. And to all these places, along with their injuries and memories, these men carried a new taste for and trust in canned foods, and especially Borden's condensed milk. Now, after the war, Americans all over the country had a son or husband or friend who requested these products and brought them into the home. This laid the foundation of trust that allowed the industry to grow to national prominence within 40 years, as marked by the establishment of the National Canners Association in 1907. When Wisconsin infantryman David Coon wrote his family on the back of a Borden's Condensed Milk label in 1864, he might not have known that he was helping to build an industry by familiarizing his wife and children with a new way of eating. But this and many other threads of exposure wove together in the coming years to build the fabric of a new processed-food industry in America. ■

## Endnotes

1. Letter from David Coon, July 1864. Civil War Letters, 1864, Wisconsin Historical Society. Madison, Wisconsin.
2. William C. Davis, *A Taste for War: The Culinary History of the Blue and the Gray* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003), pp. 125-127.
3. Other historians have written about the impact of wars on the American diet, most notably in the context of World War II. See Lizzie Collingham, *The Taste of War: World War II and the Battle for Food* (New York: Penguin Press, 2012); Kellen Backer, *World War II and the Triumph of Industrialized Food*, dissertation (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2012).
4. Ray B. Browne and Lawrence A. Kreiser, eds., *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), p. 82; Tom Dicke, "Red Gold of the Ozarks: The Rise and Decline of Tomato Canning, 1885-1955", *Agricultural History* 79:1 (Winter 2005), p. 2; Mark McWilliams, *Food and the Novel in Nineteenth-Century America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), p. 129.
5. Joe Bertram Frantz, *Gail Borden, Dairyman to a Nation* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), p. 254.
6. Southeast Museum (Brewster, NY), "Borden's Milk: New York Milk Condensary", http://www.southeastmuseum.org/SE_Tour99/SE_Tour/html/borden_s_milk.htm.
7. Earl Chapin May, *The Canning Clan: A Pageant of Pioneering Americans* (New York: Macmillan, 1938), p. 177; Clarence Wharton, *Gail Borden, Pioneer* (San Antonio, TX: The Naylor Company, 1941), p. 197.
8. For Van Camp, see Browne and Kreiser, p. 82; Dorothy Denneen Volo, *Daily Life in Civil War America*, 2nd ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Press, 2009), p. 237; New Netherland Project, The New Netherland Institute, "Van Camp, Gilbert C., Sr. [c. 1830-?]", http://www.nnp.org/nni/Publications/Dutch-American/camp.htm. For Underwood, see Andrew F. Smith, *Starving the South: How the North Won the Civil War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011), p. 81. For J. Winslow Jones, see Paul B. Frederic, *Canning Gold: Northern New England's Sweet Corn Industry: A Historical Geography* (University Press of America, 2002), 28.
9. To see a description of the standard rations and more details on the commissary department, see An Officer, "The Quartermaster's Department, 1861-1864," in *Annals of the Army of the Cumberland,* (Philadelphia, 1863), http://www.qmfound.com/quartermaster_1861-63.htm.
10. Volo, p. 143.
11. "The Siege of Charleston: The Siege Progresses Well", *New York Times*, Aug. 5, 1863. For more on sutlers see, for example, Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carol Sheriff, *A People at War: Civilians and Soldiers in America's Civil War* (Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 217–218; and Philip M. Zaret, "Sappers and Miners of the Army: Sutlers in the Civil War", *Repast* 28:3 (Summer 2012), pp. 11-14.

*continued on next page*

# Food and Fundraising

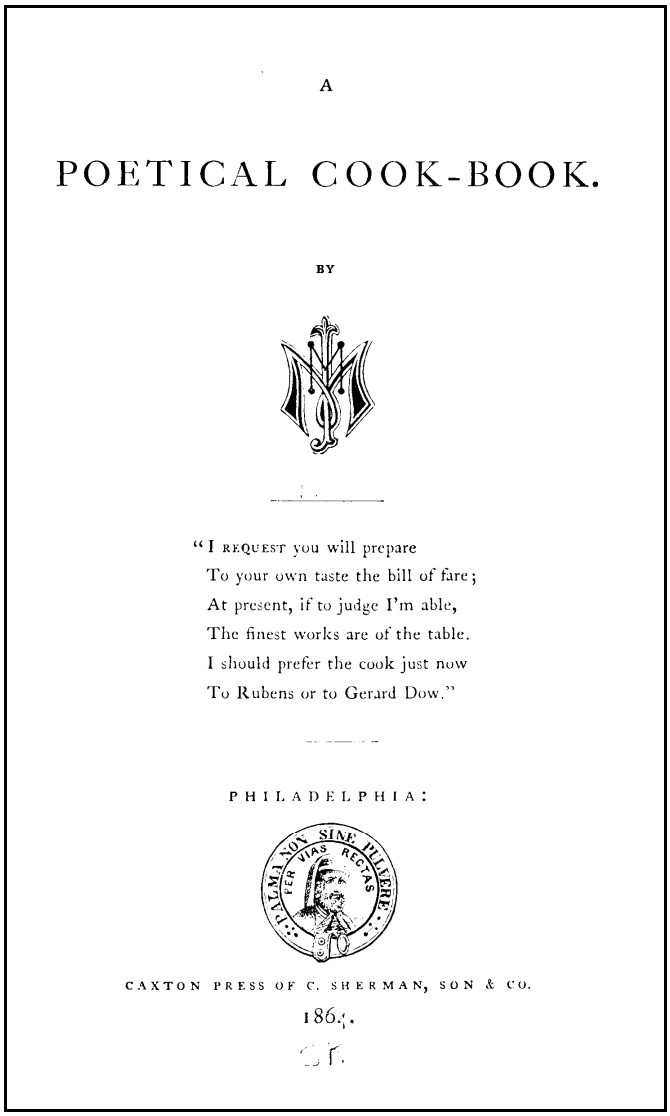
Anna Zeide's article mentions that some of the cans of condensed milk and other preserved foods used by Union forces were provided by the U.S. Sanitary Commission, a relief agency of mostly female volunteers. The Commission, signed into law by President Lincoln on June 18, 1861, was modeled after the British Sanitary Commission in the Crimean War (1853-56), in which Florence Nightingale and others had played such an important role (see Janice B. Longone, "'Learning How to Cook and Kill at the Same Time': Cookery in the American Civil War, the Alexis Soyer and Florence Nightingale Connections", *Repast*, Summer 2012, pp. 15-18).

The volunteers of the USSC made uniforms, worked as nurses, ran field kitchens, administered lodging for wounded and disabled soldiers, and collected donations of money and supplies to support the war effort. Among their most successful fundraisers were the Sanitary Fairs, such as those held in Chicago (1863) and Philadelphia (1864). These fairs featured parades and displays of arts and crafts, agriculture, and mechanical technology, and encouraged people from different communities and ethnic groups to come together in a common national cause.

Besides its general importance as an episode in the empowerment of women, a few facets of the USSC's work turned out to have a more direct impact on American culinary history. A prime example is the publication of Maria J. Moss's *A Poetical Cookbook* in conjunction with the Philadelphia Sanitary Fair in 1864 (see title page at right). Sold to raise funds for the wounded, widowed, and orphaned of the war, this was one of the very first charity cookbooks in the U.S., a phenomenon that would balloon in subsequent decades. The book included 137 annotated recipes, some of them in poetic form. A digitized copy can be accessed or downloaded from the Gutenberg website at http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/25631.

Philadelphia-area food scholar William Woys Weaver pointed out to me that the 1864 fair also played an important role in reviving Pennsylvania Dutch culinary identity. The fair organizers put out a call for the event to include authentic Pennsylvania Dutch foods, and even distributed posters in the local Pennsylfaanisch dialect. The displays at the fair also included a "Pennsylvania Kitchen" that was furnished with vintage Pennsylvania Dutch cooking equipment. For both citizens and soldiers from the Pennsylvania Dutch community, their experiences with the fair and with the overall war effort helped solidify a new ethnic consciousness by highlighting both their similarities and differences relative to other groups. This soon led to a literary and cultural revival. The first attempt by a "mainstream" publication to acknowledge Pennsylvania Dutch cuisine and culture occurred with *The Gettysburg Centennial Cook Book* (1876), a fundraiser compiled by the Ladies of the Presbyterian Congregation of Gettysburg, PA. Dr. Weaver notes that it included some real Pennsylvania Dutch recipes.

— RKS



A

POETICAL COOK-BOOK.

BY

"I REQUEST you will prepare
To your own taste the bill of fare;
At present, if to judge I'm able,
The finest works are of the table.
I should prefer the cook just now
To Rubens or to Gerard Dow."

PHILADELPHIA:

CAXTON PRESS OF C. SHERMAN, SON & CO.

186[illegible].

## CANNING INDUSTRY *continued from page 6*


12. "Labors of the Sanitary Commission", *New York Times*, July 30, 1863; Judith Ann Giesberg, *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000).
13. Sanitary [Commission], "Northwestern Fair.: Eighty Thousand Dollars Raised— What has been Done with it", *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 12, 1864, p. 0_4.
14. See, for example, "This Day in the Civil War: Tuesday, Feb. 3 1863, Queen's Quest Quietly Quantified", http://www.civilwarinteractive.com/This%20Day/thisday0203.htm; and Smith, p. 82.
15. "A History of the Canning Industry", *The Canning Trade*, 37:21 (1914), p. 10.
16. May, p. 26.
17. Ezra J. Warner, "Can opener", U.S. Patent 19,063 (January 5, 1858); William W. Lyman, "Improvement in can openers", U.S. Patent 105,346 (July 12, 1870).
18. Waverly Root and Richard De Rochemont, *Eating In America* (New York: Morrow, 1976), p. 187.
19. Liberty Hyde Bailey, ed., *Cyclopedia of American Agriculture: A Popular Survey of Agricultural Conditions, Practices and Ideals in the United States and Canada*, vol. III: Animals (Macmillan, 1908), p. 194.

# UP FROM THE RUINS OF THE CIVIL WAR

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# EDMUND MCILHENNY AND TABASCO® BRAND PEPPER SAUCE

by Shane K. Bernard

*Shane K. Bernard, Ph.D., has served as historian and curator to McIlhenny Company since 1993. He holds degrees in English and History from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and earned a Ph.D. in History from Texas A&M University. Dr. Bernard is the author of several books, including* Tabasco: An Illustrated History *(2007), from which this article has been partly adapted.*

In the generations since its Reconstruction-era birth, Tabasco brand pepper sauce has appeared on dinner tables at the White House and Buckingham Palace, gone to war with U.S. soldiers in their MREs ("Meals Ready to Eat"), and flown into orbit aboard Skylab, the Space Shuttle, and the International Space Station. It has appeared in numerous TV programs and movies, from Charlie Chaplin's 1917 classic "The Immigrant", to a 1997 episode of "The X-Files", to the notorious 2003 flop "Gigli". While the condiment originated three years after the American Civil War, it was the conflict itself that sparked a chain of events propelling Edmund McIlhenny toward the creation of this now-ubiquitous culinary icon. Indeed, it is probably safe to say that without the Civil War there would be no Tabasco sauce.

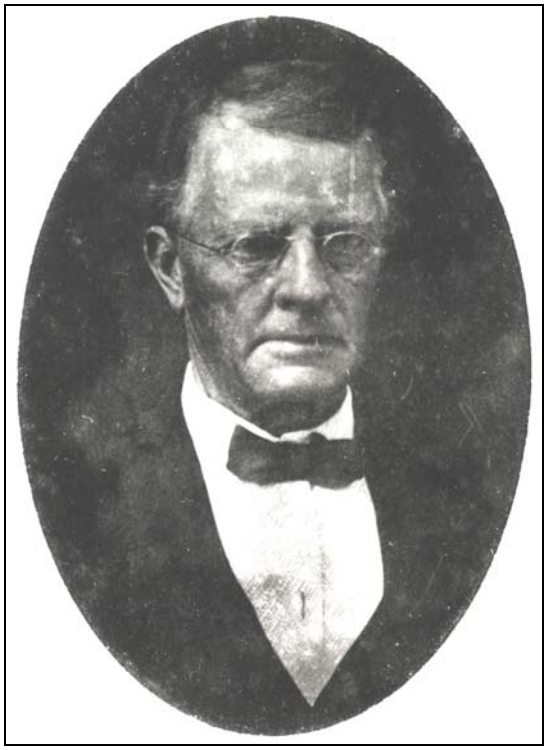
Born in 1815 in Hagerstown, Maryland, McIlhenny moved to New Orleans in 1841 to enter its flourishing banking industry. Armed with letters from his father's friends, he secured a job at the Bank of Louisiana. There he worked his way up from the post of "bookkeeper" to that of "general agent", a position of enormous trust whose duties consisted of monitoring the bank's five branches in south and central Louisiana.

Through his own thrift and industry McIlhenny accrued a small fortune by the late 1850s, when he purchased these branches and became an independent banker. During the same period he acquired a reputation as a *bon vivant*, joining the elite Louisiana and Orleans clubs; racing his boat *The Secret* as a member of the Southern Yacht Club; and riding his prize mare "Fashion" through the streets of New Orleans. In confidential documents he recorded his own worth in 1860 at $112,000 (about $2.5 million at present-day value).

In 1859 McIlhenny married young Mary Eliza Avery, daughter of his close friend, prominent Louisiana attorney and planter Daniel Dudley Avery. Judge Avery, as he was later known, resided in Baton Rouge and through his wife's family acquired a sugar plantation deep in the Teche country. This plantation lay at a place called Petite Anse Island, today known as Avery Island.

## "They lost everything"

By the time the Civil War erupted in 1861, McIlhenny, Mary Eliza, and newborn daughter Sara had taken up residence on Rampart Street in New Orleans. The next year Union flag officer David Farragut ascended the Mississippi River to capture New Orleans. After securing the city he continued on to Baton Rouge, which also swiftly fell to the Union naval forces.



Left:
Tabasco inventor Edmund McIlhenny, painted portrait, 1857. Image courtesy of McIlhenny Company Archives.

Right:
Judge Daniel Dudley Avery, owner of Petite Anse Island (Avery Island), Louisiana, and father-in-law of Edmund McIlhenny, c. 1860. Image courtesy of Avery Island, Inc., Archives.

In a note from that chaotic time McIlhenny informed Mary Eliza, "Your pa will tell you of the destruction of all of our effects at Baton Rouge and of Ann [a slave] and her family having gone off with the foe. 'Tis by letter from D. Hickey, who went to the house and found everything in our room taken and papers and letters scattered on the floor." A friend lamented, "They lost everything at Baton Rouge."

Among the looted items were McIlhenny's own collectables, which included coins, gems, and bronze statuettes. Union troops used one of the items— an Alexandrian statue of Isis suckling Horus— as a hammer when boxing up the other bronzes, discarding the battered relic afterwards. (The statue is now in the McIlhenny Company Archives.) McIlhenny's 31-volume set of *The Plays and Poems of Shakespeare* and other English writers ended up in the hands of Union officer William W. Wheeler of Vermont, who was stationed in Baton Rouge during its occupation. (Wheeler's descendants returned the volumes to the McIlhennys over a century later.) The horror of war would again touch the two families when McIlhenny's brother-in-law, young Dudley Avery, was severely wounded at the battle of Shiloh in Tennessee (April 1862).

## An Underground Treasure

With New Orleans and Baton Rouge occupied by Union forces, the Avery and McIlhenny families sought refuge from the conflict on the Averys' isolated sugar plantation. At that time occurred an event that would forever alter Avery Island's history: the discovery of solid rock salt only 16 feet underground. With salt imports cut off by a Union blockade, southerners regarded this find as a "gift from Heaven", as Ella Lonn wrote in *Salt as a Factor in the Confederacy*. The South needed salt not merely to season food, but to ward off disease in human beings and livestock, to preserve meat that armies ate while on the move, and to cure hides used to make boots, saddles, and holsters, among other uses. As a result, up to 500 teams of horses from throughout the lower South descended on the Island daily to be loaded with salt. McIlhenny put his financial skills to work helping his in-laws run the salt works. "My duty is at the mine," he wrote to Mary Eliza, "and I must necessarily be absent from you."

The salt mining activity on Avery Island transformed the family's obscure plantation retreat into a military target. In November 1862 two Union gunboats, the *Diana* and the *Kinsman* (also called the *Grey Cloud*), along with the transport *St. Mary's*, moved up the narrow, winding Petite Anse and put troops ashore to destroy the salt mine. Confederate howitzers guarding the mine opened fire. As a southern officer recorded, "[This] caused them to disperse and retire hastily to their boats, dragging with them a number of dead or wounded men." The Union unwisely tried the same attack the next day before withdrawing in defeat.

Family tradition holds that during this two-day attack a Union shell barely missed Marsh House, the family's modest plantation home, passing through a pump house before slamming into the backyard. From inside the residence McIlhenny spotted the unexploded shell, its fuse still burning, and, as his son Paul related many years later, "He ran out, pulled the fuse out, threw it away, and took the shell into the house" as a souvenir.

The Island remained beyond Union control until April 1863, when General Nathaniel P. Banks invaded south Louisiana. With southern troops withdrawing rapidly to the north, the McIlhennys and Averys— except for Dudley Avery and brother John Marsh Avery, both active-duty Confederate officers— left the Island for self-imposed exile in Texas. Union troops captured the salt works by land less than two days later.

In Texas McIlhenny worked as a civilian employee of the Confederate military. He initially served in the commissary's office at Galveston overseeing supplies for the insular stronghold— an office of consequence, given a recent mutiny there over substandard provisions. As he wrote to Mary Eliza from Galveston in late 1863, "As yet I have accomplished but little. Have taken up [my superior's] order book from 1862 and am indexing it by way of familiarizing myself with the duties of the office. The office is receiving large quantities of provisions and today the Major ordered 540 beeves [sides of beef] to be sent on . . . [Galveston] Island, which is 90 days rations for 2,000 men, in case the Island should be cut off from the mainland."

*continued on next page*


Reconstruction-era engraving of the salt mine at Petite Anse Island (Avery Island), Louisiana, by A. R. Waud for *Harper's Weekly*.

Image courtesy of Avery Island, Inc., Archives.

## TABASCO *continued from page 9*

McIlhenny later transferred to the paymaster's office, traveling by rail and stage across Texas to distribute funds to southern troops. He rarely saw his wife and daughter at this time, even though they lodged with his Avery in-laws in Houston, Brenham, Austin, and elsewhere in southeast and central Texas. "Your papa is very sorry he cannot be with you this Christmas", he wrote to three-year-old Sara in 1863, "kissing and wishing you and your mama a merry Christmas. . . . I fear most of the children will think the Yankees have taken Santa Clause, but your papa knows one little girl who will not have any reason to think so, and she is, who do you think?"

### Rebuilding from War

After the South's defeat McIlhenny returned with his family to Louisiana. Although the Freedmen's Bureau occupied their Baton Rouge residence, the Averys still held their sugarcane fields, salt mines, and country home. McIlhenny's banks, however, were in physical and financial ruin. Having lost his antebellum wealth, he spent months alone in New Orleans looking for work, only to find that no one wanted to hire a middle-aged former independent banker, especially when young carpetbaggers could be had so inexpensively. As McIlhenny wrote to Mary Eliza from New Orleans in December 1865, sounding little like someone who had risen through the ranks of the financial industry:

> You can have no idea of the complications and selfish interests I have had to contend with. "The Almighty Dollar" seems to be the only soul of the bustling city and its striving denizens. I am among them but not of them. Their display rains no admiration from my eyes, their smiles no smile in response. If I could be with you in some quiet retreat, oh how happy we could be with our little family and books and nature around us. I fear my humble aspirations will never be realized and I feel most dejected with the thought.

Confederate officer Dudley Avery, left, and John M. Avery, right, also in Confederate uniform, c. 1863. Both were brothers-in-law of E. McIlhenny. Images courtesy of Avery Island, Inc., Archives.

McIlhenny gloomily returned to the Island, moved into the Avery residence, and occupied his time tending the family's fruit and vegetable garden. It was during this period that he first experimented with making a red pepper sauce for the family table.

What spurred McIlhenny to do so remains unclear because he left behind no personal account. (His autobiographical sketch, for example, focused entirely on his former success as a banker.) Furthermore, his wife and children later could not agree about such basic details of the story as *when* and *from whom* he obtained his peppers. Their differing accounts, however, exhibited several common elements, agreeing that McIlhenny obtained the peppers in New Orleans from a soldier possibly named Gleason. Regardless of the peppers' origin, McIlhenny planted their extracted seeds on Avery Island and used the offspring (along with white wine vinegar from Bordeaux and salt from the Island's mine) to invent a pepper sauce for family consumption. He placed this homemade concoction in used cologne bottles and soon shared it with friends in New Orleans, who urged him to market it in local groceries.

Following their advice, McIlhenny grew his first commercial pepper crop in 1868. Although he made no sauce for sale that year, he used the crop of 1868 and that of the next year to send 658 bottles to market in 1869. In 1870 he produced 1,012 bottles; in 1871, 2,896 bottles. Despite his lack of experience as a planter or manufacturer, McIlhenny had found a new career in his 50s: pepper-sauce maker.

Civil War connections played a role— both real and, in the case of one General Hazzard, possibly imagined— in the sauce's early success. As a 1951 Tabasco promotional booklet noted,

> Among those who tried [Tabasco sauce] was General Hazzard, Federal Administrator for south Louisiana [during Reconstruction]. . . . General Hazzard persuaded Mr. McIlhenny to give him several bottles of the sauce for family and friends in the north. . . . General Hazzard's brother, Mr. E. C. Hazzard of New York, was head of the largest wholesale grocery house in the United States. He immediately realized that here was a flavor destined for fame far beyond the neighborhood of the Avery Island plantation. Soon Mr. Hazzard arranged with Mr. McIlhenny to make and pack a quantity of the sauce, and ship it by steamboat from New Orleans to New York, to be distributed by his company.

A Union general named John Gardner Hazard did indeed reside in south Louisiana after the Civil War. And he was related to E. C. Hazard, the New York wholesaler who introduced Tabasco sauce to major markets in the industrial northeast. Moreover, both McIlhenny and General Hazard belonged to New Orleans' exclusive Boston Club, which used Tabasco sauce on its tables. But General Hazard was not a federal Reconstruction administrator; rather, he was a New Orleans cotton broker and commission merchant, having recently retired from the military. Furthermore, he was not a brother, but a cousin of wholesaler E. C. Hazard.

More significantly, McIlhenny's own voluminous correspondence and business records do not refer to General Hazard— but they do provide alternate explanations for how E. C. Hazard learned about and came to distribute Tabasco sauce. E. C. Hazard himself, for example, wrote in Spring 1872 regarding his introduction to the product, "We have seen the article about one year ago, represented by a young man from your section." That young man was McIlhenny's brother-in-law, former Confederate officer John Marsh Avery, who while in New York on salt-mining business had visited Hazard to persuade him (albeit without success at the time) to distribute Tabasco sauce.

Other letters in McIlhenny's papers indicate that it was his sole Tabasco sales agent, former Union major John C. Henshaw, who finally convinced E. C. Hazard to actually distribute the sauce. Henshaw— who had once been challenged to a duel by future Confederate general P. G. T. Beauregard and who had been photographed during the conflict by Matthew Brady— reported to McIlhenny in April 1872, "I had, however, seen Park and Tilford, Acker and Merrill, G. C. Yevelin and Co., in fact all the leading houses in the business, and concluded that Hazard and Co. were the best parties to assist in introducing it into the market."

McIlhenny's appointment of Henshaw as his sales agent demonstrated a willingness to do business with former enemies. (Indeed, in 1874 McIlhenny sent two complimentary bottles of Tabasco sauce to sitting U.S. president and former top Union general Ulysses S. Grant.) The appointment proved extremely profitable to the growing business: It was Henshaw who proposed that McIlhenny obtain his bottles, stoppers, labels, crates, and other supplies from highly competitive manufacturers in the industrial Northeast. He correctly asserted that these manufacturers could provide such items more cheaply than less efficient firms in New Orleans, even when factoring in shipping costs. Furthermore, it was Henshaw who suggested that Tabasco bottles carry a warning label for the uninitiated. "Caution— This sauce should always be mixed with your gravy, vinegar, or other condiment, before using", read the new rectangular label on the back of each bottle. "One or two drops are enough for a plate of soup, meat, oysters, &c., &c."

In the Civil War's aftermath, McIlhenny, the ex-Confederate, put aside wartime animosities, allied himself with a former Union officer, embraced northern business concerns over rival ones in the South, and consequently saw his fledgling pepper sauce thrive in the industrial Northeast and beyond. Granted, Tabasco sauce did not experience an overnight success, as has sometimes been claimed, but the brand's development over many years into a nationally (and later internationally) known household word testifies to McIlhenny's hard work, tenacity, and business acumen. Still, had not the upheaval of the Civil War deprived McIlhenny of his banks, his job, and his fortune, he undoubtedly would have had neither time nor reason to invent what is now arguably the world's most famous liquid seasoning. ■

## The Rise of the Georgia Peach

It was amid the ruin of the South that the Georgia peach first came into national prominence.

In the decade before the Civil War, pioneering growers in the Georgia Piedmont, such as Raphael Moses in Columbus, had begun to market small numbers of clingstone peaches as human food at a time when most peaches were being used to feed hogs or to make brandy. Moses, a Jewish planter and attorney originally from South Carolina, grew peaches and plums at his plantation, Esquiline. He made a key advance in preserving the flavor of shipped peaches by packing them in champagne baskets instead of in pulverized charcoal. He was apparently the first to successfully ship peaches outside the South; they began arriving in New York markets in 1858-60. The baskets were carried by horse-drawn wagon to Augusta on the other side of the state, then by shallow-draft boat to Savannah, and thence by steamship northward.

When the war broke out, Moses was appointed the chief commissary officer for Confederate Gen. James Longstreet, and thus was responsible for feeding and supplying upwards of 54,000 troops. Three dozen other members of the Moses family fought for the Confederacy, including both the first and the last Southern Jews to die in combat.

In 1870, Georgia grower Samuel H. Rumph of Marshallville finished developing a new, firm, yellow-fleshed variety of peach that he named the Elberta, after his wife. This high-quality variety shipped better, and would remain the state's premier peach for almost 100 years. By 1900, Georgia was known as "the Peach State".

Peaches were one of several crops that surged in Georgia, South Carolina, and other states as farmers shifted away from production that had relied on enslaved labor, notably cotton and, in coastal and tidewater areas, rice and sugar. James C. Bonner notes that in Georgia, where some 30,000 acres had been devoted to rice growing before the war, the rice industry never recovered from Union occupation and labor emancipation. By the turn of the century, the center of rice production had moved westward to Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas.

Southeastern farmers shifted to growing peaches and other tree fruits, along with corn, sorghum, peanuts, soybeans, and black-eyed peas (cowpeas). These changes in agriculture would exert an immense, long-term impact on what people ate in the South (among both Blacks and whites) and also in the North and West.

Related reading:

- David S. Shields, "Of Strife and Sweetness: The Civil War and the Rise of Sorghum", *Repast*, Summer 2011, pp. 14-20.
- Heather Welch, "Rice in the Big House, Rice in the Street: Rice and the Lowcountry Homefront", *Repast*, Fall 2011, pp. 11ff.
- James C. Bonner, *A History of Georgia Agriculture, 1732-1860* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1964).
- John Solomon Otto, *Southern Agriculture During the Civil War Era, 1860-1880* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994).
- Gilbert C. Fite, *Cotton Fields No More: Southern Agriculture, 1865-1980* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1984).
- Joseph J. Marks, ed., *Effects of the Civil War on Farming in Michigan* (Lansing: Michigan Civil War Centennial Observance Commission, 1965).

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# FROM A UNION FIELD TENT TO A BAKERY IN MANHATTAN

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# A. GOODMAN & SONS

by Jayne Cohen

*Jayne Cohen of Greenwich Village, NY, is a food writer and longtime member of the Culinary Historians of New York. She frequently lectures about Jewish food and culture and has written two books:* Jewish Holiday Cooking: A Food Lover's Treasury of Classics and Improvisations *(Wiley, 2008) and* The Gefilte Variations: 200 Inspired Re-creations of Classics from the Jewish Kitchen *(Scribner, 2000). Jayne is a Contributing Editor and food blogger at Jewish Woman Magazine, and she also writes "Essen Around", the food column at centropa.org, a website devoted to European Jewish heritage. She holds a B.A. in English literature from the City College of New York, and a Master of Library Science degree from Pratt Institute.*


A Goodman's advertising page from *The Auxiliary Cook Book*, a 1909 charity cookbook that the firm sponsored.

All photos accompanying this article are from the private family collection of Robert Cowen, Jr.

It was probably no accident that when Gutkind Gutkind, a young Prussian Jew, arrived in the United States in 1861, he found work as a master baker for a company in Washington that traveled with the Union Army as suppliers. After all, the soldiers' baked rations consisted primarily of hardtack, a simple, dry cracker designed to sustain them during long marches and campaigns. It was not all that different from the plain, unleavened cracker he had learned to bake as a child: matzo, which Jews believe sustained the Israelites on their long sojourn out of Egypt.

Matzo would be the overarching theme in Gutkind's professional story: a few years later, renamed Augustus Goodman, he would start a company that would become one of the largest matzo manufacturers in America.

## From the Old Country to the New

But let's start at the beginning. In the little village of Filehne on the Prussian/Polish border (now Wielen, and part of Poland), Gutkind's grandmother was the town matzo maker, actually known as Chanah the Matzo Maker. According to the family history, Chanah began the business in 1766, when "family lore has it that . . . the honor of baking Passover matzos fell to her. Her seven children helped to carry in the water from the village well and prepare and roll the dough. It took two children, one on each end of the rolling pin, to roll out the matzos before they were placed on the stone hearth in the oven. When the matzos were ready, Chanah's husband sold them from the front room of their home where he had his grocery shop."[1]

The population of Filehne in 1837 was 1380, and since matzo sales were generally limited to the Passover season, one assumes that the business she started was a modest, family one. So Gutkind, born August 17, 1840, left home at age 20 to seek his fortune in America.

He arrived with baking skills, but no knowledge of English. Gutkind Gutkind (which translates from the German as "Goodchild Goodchild") became Augustus Goodman either at the time his name was recorded on the ship's manifest when he boarded in Europe or when he began work as a baker.

At the close of the Civil War, Goodman, together with his American-born wife, Clara, whom he married in 1864, and their infant son, Isidore, moved to Philadelphia, where he opened a combination ice cream parlor and bakery. He prepared German-style baked goods and he made all his own ice cream. And around Passover, Goodman baked matzo by hand as he had done as a child for the local Jewish community.

The growing family— they eventually had six children— lived above the shop, and by 1870 included not only Clara's mother, but her younger brother, Solomon Craft, as well. Craft was probably one of Goodman's first employees, as the U.S. Census for Philadelphia that year lists both him and Goodman as

produce dealers at the home/shop address. The business kept expanding. Ten years later, the U.S. Census lists seven additional members of the household who either worked as a baker or waitress at the shop or as a servant for the family.

## The Move to the Lower East Side

Around this time, the great waves of Jewish immigration began. Lasting until the restrictive quotas of 1924 were enacted, they would bring over two million Jews— mainly from Eastern Europe— to America. By and large, these Jews were more religious than the mostly German-speaking Jews who had arrived earlier during the 19th Century, and the greatest number settled in New York, primarily in the crowded Lower East Side of Manhattan.

So, in 1883, lured by the vast and growing market for his matzos and other baked goods, Goodman relocated his business, now called A. Goodman and Son (later changed to A. Goodman & Sons), to 12 Avenue B, and in 1886, to larger quarters on East 17th Street, between Avenues B and C. Goodman's was now ideally situated for the driver/salesmen who could easily service their accounts with their horse-and-buggies. For one driver/salesman, Max Cohen, it was even easier: his horse, he claimed, knew the route by heart, and needed no prompting to stop at each customer.

When Goodman noticed that his customers often bought more matzos than they needed for the Passover holiday, he began making matzos year-round. A print advertisement from 1909 shows his round "Berliner Tea Matzoth" with a label boasting "made fresh daily". By 1900, the U.S. Census for Manhattan records Goodman and his son-in-law, David Cowen (who lived in the Goodman household with his wife and son), as "cracker bakers", meaning matzo makers.

Matzo-making had changed. As Dr. Jonathan Sarna points out, "the industry as a whole was in the midst of a great transformation. Through the mid-19th Century, most matzah had been baked by synagogues which either maintained special ovens of their own for this purpose, or . . . contracted with commercial bakers whom they supervised." As the nature of the synagogue community changed, matzo-making was taken over by independent matzo bakers.[2]


Augustus Goodman and his wife Clara (front row) before sailing for Europe on June 2, 1907, surrounded by their children and grandchildren.

And matzo production in the U.S. was becoming mechanized. A machine for rolling out matzo dough had been invented by Isaac Singer, an Alsatian Jew, in 1838. While rabbis in Europe, America, and Palestine continued to argue for many years whether matzos made using machines could be considered kosher for Passover, machine-made matzo eventually gained acceptance. As a result of continued mechanized processes, as Dr. Sarna notes, matzo in time became square, instead of round, irregular, or oval-shaped, "largely because of the demands of technology and packaging"; and "where before each matzah was unique and distinctive in terms of shape, texture, and overall appearance, . . . now, every matzah in the box came out looking, feeling, and tasting the same."[3]

## A Charity Cookbook Sponsored by Goodman

By 1910, A. Goodman and Son, with 114 employees, was the largest baker serving New York's Jewish community.[4] AG, as Goodman was known, had also expanded his line in New York, with some products geared to their Jewish customer base (such as egg barley, or *farfel*, a Jewish egg-noodle product shaped like barley), and others with a wider, more general appeal. An advertising page from *The Auxiliary Cook Book*, a 1909 charity cookbook benefiting a Jewish orphan asylum and sponsored by Goodman's, shows pretzels, vermicelli, macaroni, and egg noodles.[5] (Much later, the company would branch out further with soup mixes and other prepared products.)

Let's glance through the book. There is a general entry noting that "when breading chops, cutlets or frying fish use A. Goodman & Son's Matzoth Meal." In a Passover section of "Dishes to be made of A. Goodman & Son's Matzoth and Matzoth Meal", there is a recipe for "Matzoth Balls" prepared in the classic Central European Jewish way. Instead of making the dough entirely of matzo meal— the method familiar to most American Ashkenazi Jews today— the dumplings are based on whole matzos, which are soaked in water, then mixed with sautéed onion, eggs, and some matzo meal to thicken the batter.

*continued on next page*

## GOODMAN'S *continued from page 13*

The pasta recipes feature dairy ingredients, like butter and milk; one calls for a Jewish-style gratin of matzo meal and lumps of butter. While no recipes mix Goodman's with unkosher meats, "Italian Spaghetti" does combine a bit of meat with dairy (a contravention of kosher law perhaps not as obvious): tomatoes and meat juice are added to a butter-based roux, and cheese is sprinkled on top of the dish.

Pasta products, in fact, would in time become the most important part of the business, and sales were by no means limited to Jewish customers. When the company moved to Long Island City in 1945 to make way for Stuyvesant Town, a large housing development built by Metropolitan Life Insurance, the *New York Times* reported the story with a sub-headline that began, "Noodle Concern Buys Factory".[6]

Jewish food writer Gil Marks credits Goodman's with transforming the dish *kasha varnishkes* (buckwheat groats with egg noodles). Traditionally the recipe was made using square or rectangular egg pasta, such as Goodman's Egg Noodle Flakes. But according to Marks, "during the early 1900's, probably influenced by the farfalle (butterflies) pasta of Italian immigrants, Goodman's began pinching the top and bottom edges of dough rectangles inward to the center, which Americans called bow ties. These soon became the favorite form for Eastern European Jews in America for making kasha varnishkes."[7] And in fact, today the dish is often Anglicized to "kasha with bow ties".

Goodman's egg matzos were especially prized, too— particularly by one of their New York competitors. As Robert Cowen, Jr., tells the story, "every Passover we'd get a call from him asking us to send over a few cases of egg matzos. He knew ours tasted better than his."

### Continuity and Disruption

Goodman's was always a privately owned, family enterprise, with children, grandchildren, and eventually great-grandchildren employed there. David Cowen took over the reins from AG, his father-in-law (who died in 1921 at age 80), then passed them on, in turn, to his son Robert Cowen, whose son, Robert Jr., was the last president and chairman of the company.

But it was a family business in another way, too. As Robert Cowen, Jr., explains, other families who worked for the company also passed on their jobs from one generation to the next. He cites a couple of examples among others: the Italian family involved with pasta production, and the German mechanics who brought their sons in and taught them the business.

The pasta industry changed markedly during the 1970s, and in 1978 Goodman's was sold to Paramount Macaroni. Goodman's products are still made and sold, but the company is now part of the Manischewitz Group, owned by TMCI Holdings, a major holding company in the kosher industry with a portfolio that includes, in addition to Manischewitz and Goodman's, brands such as Rokeach, Season, Guiltless Gourmet, Cohen's, and Ratner's, among others.

*continued on page 18*

## "Moses Never Tasted a Slice of Cincinnati Ham"

By the time Augustus Goodman established his matzo bakery, many Jews in America were already becoming assimilated into the mainstream culture. Some of them found reasons to bend— if not downright flout— certain rules of kosher eating.

One rationale sometimes given for breaking kosher rules was what might be called a theory of American exceptionalism. In her book *97 Orchard: An Edible History of Five Immigrant Families in One New York Tenement* (Smithsonian Books, 2010), Jane Ziegelman quotes (p. 99) from an 1869 written account of a meal in New York City:

> A friend of mine, not long since was invited to dine with a wealthy Jew whose name is well known among the most eminent businessmen of the city. The table was elegantly spread, and among the dishes was a fine ham and some oysters, both forbidden by the law of Moses. A little surprised to see these prohibited dishes on the table and anxious to now hear how a Jew would explain the introduction of such forbidden food, in consistency with his allegiance to the Mosaic law, my friend called the attention of the Jew to their presence. "Well," said the host, "I belong to that portion of the people of Israel who are changing the customs of our fathers to conform to the times and country in which we live. We make a distinction between what is moral in the law, and, of course, binding, and what is sanitary. The pork of Palestine was diseased and unwholesome. It was not fit to be eaten, and therefore was prohibited. But Moses never tasted a slice of Cincinnati ham. Had he done so, he would have commanded it to be eaten. The oysters of Palestine were coppery and poisonous. Had the great lawgiver enjoyed a fry or stew of Saddlerocks or Chesapeake Bay oysters, he would have made an exception in their favor."

Ziegelman goes on to point out (p. 100) that "even the most assimilated Jew felt a certain unshakable reticence with regard to pork. Shellfish, however, was another story entirely." She writes that this was especially true of

> the oyster, the Jews' favorite forbidden food. This appreciation was a reflection of the larger American culinary culture. Throughout the nineteenth century, oysters were consumed with equal gusto by society swells and poor working stiffs, men and women, East Coasters and West Coasters. Perhaps no other food held such universal appeal. By the 1870s, New York alone was home to 850 oyster eateries, some grandly decorated in true Gilded Age style, others no more than a stall at the market. And thanks to the newly constructed railroad, the oyster craze penetrated to the middle of the country as well. For the assimilated Jew, it was impossible to resist the tug of the oyster— more so, it seems, than other *treyf* foods.

# A Concoction Aged by the Civil War

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# Vernor's is "Detroit's Drink"

by Keith D. Wunderlich

*Keith Wunderlich has been an avid Vernor's Ginger Ale collector for 30 years. He is the founder of the Vernor's Ginger Ale Collectors' Club and the author of* Images of America: Vernor's Ginger Ale *(Arcadia Publishing, 2008). Mr. Wunderlich is employed as Superintendent of New Haven, MI, Community Schools, and also serves as an administrator in the neighboring L'Anse Creuse school district. He lives with his wife Mary in Troy, MI.*

Have you ever taken a drink of ginger ale and had to cough or sneeze before it ever hit your lips? That's Vernor's Ginger Ale. It has that sparkling fizz, the unique taste, and a history that goes all the way back to the Civil War era, before Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Hires, or Moxie. Vernor's is Detroit's Drink.

Detroiters remember the huge illuminated sign on the river, the gnome character, Boston coolers, Cream-Ales, hot Vernor's, and waiting for the Bob-lo boat beside the soda fountain at the foot of Woodward Avenue. The Bob-lo boats are gone. The huge sign and the fountain at the foot of Woodward are gone. Vernor's has gone through a series of owners since 1966 and is now owned by the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group in Plano, TX. Yet, Vernor's Ginger Ale is still Detroit's Drink. And when you open a Vernor's, there's still that sparkling fizz and unique taste that created a sensation when it was first introduced to the public in 1866.

## Pharmacist and U. S. Cavalry Medic

Almost 150 years ago, James Vernor served the first glass of Vernor's in his pharmacy at 235 Woodward Avenue. The story of James Vernor is as complex and interesting as the secret formula for the soda. He was not just a man who invented a soft drink; he was a leader and one of Detroit's most admired citizens.

James Vernor's first job was as an errand boy at the Higby and Sterns Drug Store. He began working there in 1858 with all the spirit and enthusiasm that a 15-year-old often has. He made quite a name for himself due to his parcel wrapping and fast deliveries. He was soon promoted to the position of Junior Clerk.

Vernor stayed with Higby and Sterns until the age of 19, when he enlisted in the Fourth Michigan Cavalry. Possibly


due to the fact that he worked in a drug store, he was assigned to the medical corps. He was captured and released twice during the war. In July of 1865, he was discharged and returned home to Detroit. Almost immediately after his return home, he opened his own drug store at 235 Woodward just south of Clifford Street.

Vernor was admired as a pharmacist and a civic leader. He closely scrutinized his prescriptions for quality, accuracy, and possible drug interactions. Vernor was meticulous about his work. Everything he did needed to meet his high standards. He served on the State Board of Pharmacy for eight years and was one of the driving forces to pass the state's first pharmacy law. He held Michigan's pharmacy license #1 all the years he practiced. Vernor was also a Detroit Alderman, similar to serving on city council today. In recognition of his dedication to the City of Detroit, a street was named after him.

Like many pharmacists, Vernor also had a soda fountain in his drug store. It was very popular with Detroiters. A unique ginger ale that he had invented filled it on many nights.

According to the most popular story about the origins of the ginger ale, Vernor began experimenting with a formula for it prior to leaving for the Civil War. Upon returning from the war, he opened a wooden cask of his extract and found the taste he had been hoping to discover all along. The secret

*continued on next page*

## VERNOR'S *continued from page 15*

combination of ingredients, along with the four years of aging in wooden casks during the Civil War, perfected his ginger ale.

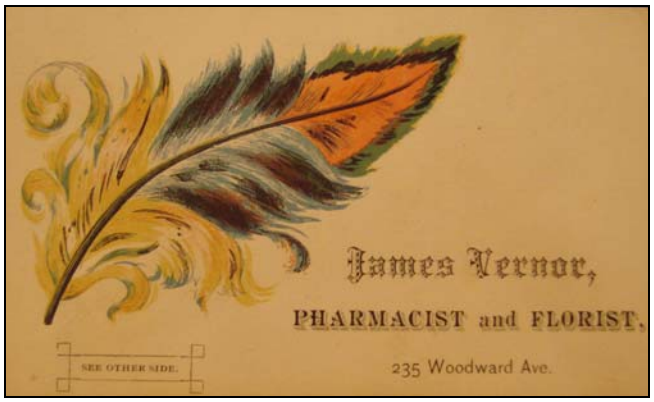
The Vernor family was once asked when the first Mr. Vernor retired from business. The answer was, "A few hours before he died." He was a hard-working and energetic man, one who made his mark on Detroit with both business and civic contributions.

James Vernor II, who had been born in Detroit on March 25, 1877, came into the business early on, in 1896, working alongside his father in the old drug store. It was at that point that his father decided to concentrate full-time on ginger ale. At first, they were the only employees; they often worked 16-hour days together, washing bottles, making and bottling the ginger ale, delivering it to various sites in the city, and taking care of clerical duties.

The same standards of purity and consistency that had been applied in dispensing Vernor's prescription medications were applied to Vernor's Ginger Ale. The water had to be specially purified. The finest Jamaican Ginger needed to be blended in the absolute proper proportion with other fruit juices for distillation. Even the carbonic gas used was produced in-house so it would meet the company requirements.

The two Vernors decided that a great way to further expand the business would be to produce the extract for sale to franchise holders. The expansion of their plant illustrates how successful this idea and strategy was. In 1918, Vernor purchased the old Riverside Power Plant, and in 1919, a six-story main building was erected adjacent to the other two.


When his father died in 1927 at the age of 84, James Vernor II became President of the James Vernor Company. It was largely due to his influence and style that the firm grew into an international organization. The drug store was closed and a small bottling plant was established at the foot of Woodward Avenue. The plant was devoted to the blending, aging, and bottling of Vernor's Ginger Ale. That same year brought two other developments: a horse and light wagon were purchased for distribution purposes, and Vernor's became available in bottles for the first time. Customers no longer had to come to the Vernor's soda fountain to enjoy a refreshing ginger ale. They could order a case to be delivered to their home.

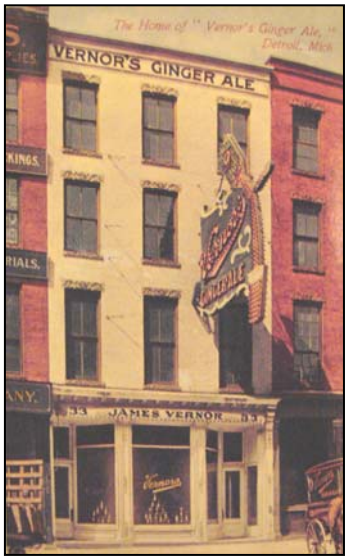




Above:
An early business card for "James Vernor, Pharmacist and Florist" gives the original pharmacy address, 235 Woodward Avenue.

Left:
A vintage advertisement.

The next 20 years would see tremendous expansion of the plant and distribution area. Picture the scene: the foot of Woodward was the location of the docks for commuters taking ferries to Windsor, Canada, and the Bob-lo and Belle Isle boats. Excursion boats also docked nearby. Thousands of thirsty passengers stopped daily at Vernor's fountain for a refreshing taste of ice-cold Vernor's Ginger Ale. The huge Vernor's illuminated sign lit up the waterway between two nations, and the skyline of a major city.




Vernor's grew as Detroit grew, and the demand for Vernor's was huge. Every first-class drug store in Detroit installed dispensing equipment specifically to serve Vernor's. Hospitals began utilizing it more, and thousands of cases were being delivered to homes. In 1939, the 10-story Siegel building was purchased and renovated. In 1941, the "most modern bottling facility in the world" was completed at 239 Woodward Avenue.

Boston Coolers

Many people came to that fabulous bottling plant to get a Boston Cooler at the soda fountain. Can you taste it? The Boston Cooler was a perfect blend of Vernor's Ginger Ale and vanilla ice cream. Eventually, in 1970, Vernor's actually patented the name Boston Cooler. The Boston Cooler and the Vernor's Float rank as the two most popular recipes using Vernor's Ginger Ale.


So, what's the difference between a Vernor's Float and a Boston Cooler, or is there no difference at all? The earliest Vernor's recipe booklet (c. 1925) doesn't mention either one of them by name, but it has recipes for a Vernor's Ice Cream Soda and a Vernor's Ginger Ale Frappé. The former appears to be a float, since the ice cream simply floats in the Vernor's, while the latter could be an early, thick version of the Boston Cooler. The frappé recipe reads: "Place ice cream in a chilled dish. Pour ice cold Vernor's Ginger Ale slowly over the ice cream, stirring until you have a smooth mixture with no remaining ice cream lumps." Perplexingly, however, of the many Vernor's recipe booklets that came later, the few that mention a Boston Cooler describe it as two scoops of vanilla ice cream in a glass of Vernor's Ginger Ale— which sounds like a float!

Another mystery surrounding the Boston Cooler is the name. Why is it called a Boston Cooler and not a Detroit Cooler? One of the more widely-accepted explanations refers to Boston Boulevard in Detroit, even though Mr. Vernor never lived there. Fred Sanders, the famous Detroit candy and ice cream purveyor, did live on Boston Blvd., but Boston Cooler was never on his menu. Sebastian Kresge, a Detroiter whose namesake stores (forerunners of K-Mart) had soda fountains, also lived on Boston Blvd., so it is plausible that Kresge could have invented the term Boston Cooler after the street where he lived. Or perhaps Boston just sounded more exotic than Detroit?

The most rational and believable theory, however, is that the name Boston Cooler originally referred to *any* kind of soda pop mixed with ice cream to a milkshake-like consistency. You could get a root-beer Boston Cooler, a cola Boston Cooler, or a Vernor's Boston Cooler. It wasn't until Vernor's patented the name in 1970 that Boston Cooler came to mean exclusively Vernor's blended with ice cream.


The Vernor Family Loses Ownership

While the public loved Vernor's ginger ale, several things happened in the 1950s that took ownership of the company out of the hands of the Vernor family.

The family had expanded. James Vernor II had a son, James Vernor III, who in turn had a son, also named James Vernor. The James Vernor Company had always been family-owned, but the presidency did not pass on to either of these men. Instead, in 1952 James Vernor III became vice president, and it was his cousin J. Vernor Davis who was named president of the company. Vernor Davis, a grandson of James Vernor I, had been with the firm since 1931.

When James Vernor II died two years later, in 1954, the company had to sell some stock to the public to settle his estate. About the same time, the City of Detroit asked Vernor's to relocate from its riverfront location so the city could use the property for a promenade; the move cost the firm $5 million. The company was hemorrhaging money, and the family was forced to sell off its ownership. (Possibly as a result, in the late 1950s the spelling of the name was changed from Vernor's to Vernors.)

The firm's financial problems of the mid-1950s proved to be short-lived. Under Vernor Davis's leadership, the company prospered tremendously. A stockholders' annual report from 1963 indicates that sales grew from just over $6,000,000 in 1961 to over $9,000,000 in 1963. In 1966, the 100th birthday of the James Vernor Company, Davis became chairman of the board. That same year, Vernors was sold to a group of investors, members of the New York Stock Exchange.

This was simply the first in a long series of sales. Vernors was sold in 1971 to American Consumer Products, and in 1979 to Cincinnati-based United Brands. The latter abruptly ended bottling operations at the plant in 1985. (The property was purchased the following year by Shula Assoc-

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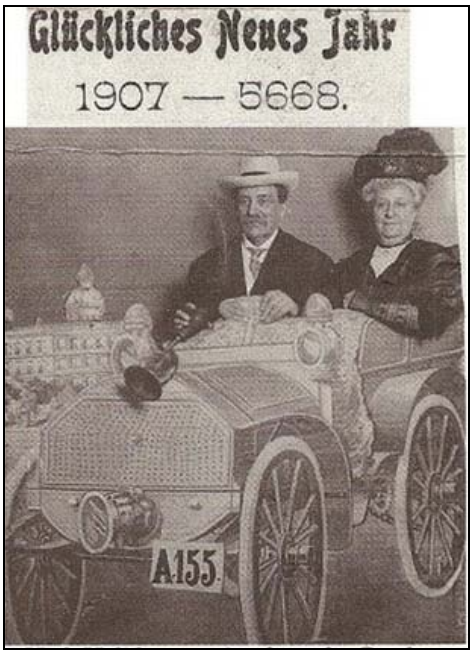
## GOODMAN'S *continued from page 14*

Robert Cowen, Jr., remained with the company through Passover of 1979. He then went on to open three very successful Swensen's ice cream franchises— like his great-grandfather, Augustus Goodman, creating a rewarding career of matzos and ice cream. ■




Top: A High Holiday greeting from Augustus and Clara Goodman from a trip to Atlantic City in 1907. From the collection of Else Grunwald.

Middle: August 1914 dinner celebration for their 50th wedding anniversary. Augustus and Clara are standing at rear.

Bottom: Augustus Goodman at age 80, less than a year before his death in 1921.

### Endnotes

1. I am deeply indebted to Robert Cowen, Jr., the last president and chairman of A. Goodman & Sons— and the great-grandson of its founder— for sharing with me the history, personal stories, records, and more of his family. I could not have written this article without his generous help. Except where otherwise stated, all direct quotes, and most of the information, for this article have been taken from his unpublished written account of the company and from our interview on November 18, 2011.
2. Jonathan D. Sarna, "How Matzah Became Square: Manischewitz and the Development of Machine-Made Matzah in the United States", Sixth Annual Lecture of the Victor J. Selmanowitz Chair of Jewish History, Graduate School of Jewish Studies, Touro College, 2005, p. 2. Available at the Union for Reform Judaism website, http://urj.org/east/calendar/forum/?syspage=document&item_id=64722.
3. Sarna, p. 7.
4. Jeffrey S. Gurock, *American Jewish History*, Volume 3, Part 3 (New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 261.
5. *The Auxiliary Cook Book* (New York: The Auxiliary Society of the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society of New York Orphan Asylum, 1909).
6. "A. Goodman & Sons Moving to Queens", *New York Times*, September 15, 1945.
7. Gil Marks, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Food* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), p. 293. I have not yet been able to corroborate Marks's conjecture that Goodman's created noodle bowties based on Italian *farfalle*.

## VERNOR'S *continued from page 17*

iates, and the plant was eventually demolished and replaced by an apartment building for Wayne State University.) In 1987, United Brands sold Vernors to A & W Brands, which in turn was purchased in 1993 by Dr. Pepper/Cadbury. In 1996, the latter company merged with 7UP and moved to Dallas, but eventually split in 2008 and became the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group.

Even with all the changes, all the owners, and the closing of the bottling plant; Vernors remains Detroit's Drink. Possibly because of the plant closing, interest in Vernors has grown. Once something taken for granted is gone, people become interested again. The rescue effort of the Vernors mural in Flint in 1996 is a good example of this interest.

There is also a small group of Vernors collectors who regularly pursue the history of Vernors Ginger Ale through its advertising. From many points across the U.S., this group is bringing back to the Detroit area pieces of Vernors' past before they are lost forever.

The plant is gone. The huge illuminated sign is gone. The fountain at the foot of Woodward is gone. But many Detroit hearts are warmed with the fond memories of a man, his ginger ale, and the mark he left on his city.

# FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF CRAIG CLAIBORNE

In the 23 years of participatory theme meals organized by the Culinary Historians, only three food writers or chefs have single-handedly become the theme of an entire meal. On December 9, Craig Claiborne (1920-2000) took his place beside Julia Child and James Beard among the ranks so honored. Once again, we have CHAA members Art and Joanne Cole to thank for organizing this instructive affair. Our meal at the Earhart Village Clubhouse in Ann Arbor drew 22 members who'd prepared foods associated with Claiborne. We will use those foods as the basis for our discussion below.

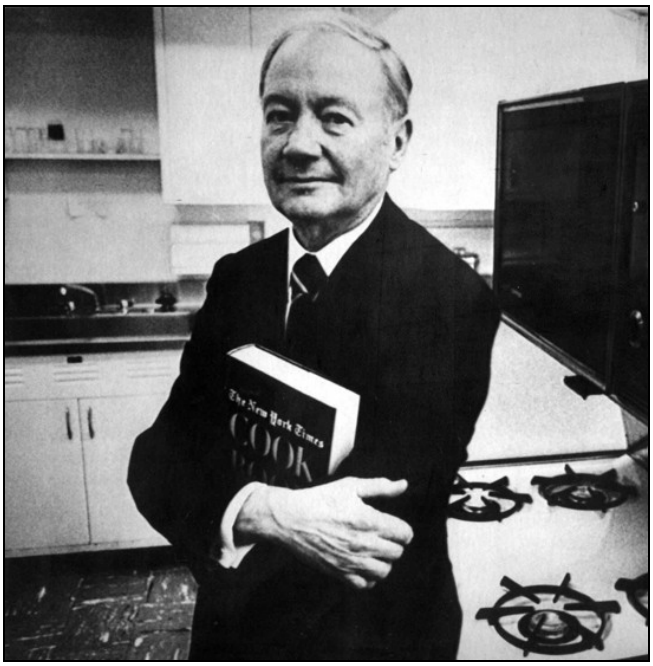
Arranging our dishes on long tables, we could begin to take a measure of the man's influence. One thing is certain: the American culinary scene, and the way people think about food, would be relatively impoverished today had it not been for Craig Claiborne's efforts. For most of three decades he served as Food Editor and sometimes restaurant critic for *The New York Times*. Never complacent, he was always hunting down fresh and innovative ideas in the world of food, setting high standards both for culinary professionals and for everyday readers of his columns. The whole way that food columns are written today, as well as the procedure for reviewing restaurants, are due to those standards that he pioneered in setting.

Craig Claiborne expected the best of others, and in return we expected the best from him. His judgments were unsparing but fair, and his writing was always confident, stylish, and engaging. Legions of readers got swept up in the project that his daily or weekly jottings represented, and millions more purchased and used his cookbooks. At our meal, many members referred to one or another of those books as having played a formative role in their cooking education.

## Before and After Claiborne

Before Craig Claiborne came on the scene in the 1950s, food columns in U.S. newspapers were generally of low quality and were relegated to the "women's pages". Often, the pieces were lazily cobbled together from news releases or promotional boilerplate that the editor had received from food companies and restaurants hungry for publicity. Other columnists made a habit of uncritically publishing humdrum recipes sent in by readers.

Certain contrasts between the years BC (Before Claiborne) and the years CE (Claiborne Era) are evident even within the pages of the highly-respected first edition of *The New York Times Cook Book*, issued in 1961. Although it bears Claiborne's name as author, the book was based on columns published in 1950-60; thus, most of the recipes date from before he was first hired by the *Times* in 1957. An example is Myra Waldo's Chicken Kundou [contributed to our meal by Jan and Dan Longone], renamed Indian Chicken in the cookbook. This recipe was part of a column written for the *Sunday Magazine* (Dec. 16, 1956) by Jane Nickerson, Claiborne's predecessor as Food Editor. It was contributed by Myra Waldo, food consultant to Pan American World Airways and author of *Round the World Cookbook* (Doubleday, 1954). The dish is tasty, but it lacks authenticity as far as South Asia is concerned, from the canned tomato, cornstarch, and heavy cream to the flaked coconut and finely chopped cashews. Apart from onion and garlic, the only spices or aromatics called for in this "Indian" recipe are ginger and chili, both of them in powdered form. Fresh ingredients were harder to find in America prior to the food revolution that Claiborne, Child, and others helped to ignite.




Craig Claiborne posing with a copy of *The New York Times Cook Book* in an April 1981 photo from the Associated Press.

Ironically, the same Dec. 16, 1956 column, "When the Guests Linger On", included recipes from three other contributors including Craig Claiborne! This was one of the first times that his name appeared in the pages of the *Times*. Nickerson described him as

> a young man who gave up a radio job in Chicago to go to a hotel school in Switzerland. Now this gentleman with the charming Mississippi accent is on the staff of Seranne and Gaden, food consultants and photographers. This fall Mr. Claiborne has given cooking demonstrations at Bloomingdale's. His fondue (see recipe) reflects his Swiss culinary training.

When Claiborne took over from Nickerson in 1957, the recipes that populated his columns didn't come from Pan Am consultants or other corporate spokespersons. Which raises the question: where did he get them? If we continue to closely examine the dishes from our meal, we'll be able to retrace the footsteps that Claiborne took over the years in gathering his information and his recipes. We'll see that he drew from four main sources:

- his mother and her cook-servants
- his formal training in Lausanne, Switzerland
- professional chefs and other food experts
- talented home cooks from across the U.S.

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# CRAIG CLAIBORNE *continued from page 19*

## A Manuscript Treasure from Mississippi

Mary Kathleen Claiborne (née Craig), Craig Claiborne's mother, was a magnificent cook when he was growing up in Mississippi. He later said that perhaps the most prized possession in his personal library was a notebook in which his mother had written out her favorite recipes for him. She had presented this to Craig after he returned from the Navy in 1946, and over the years it had become tattered and stained from repeated use.

> It is filled with her favorite recipes, including her "famous" creation, chicken spaghetti, with its mushrooms and cubed chicken in a garlic-tinged tomato-and-meat sauce; "heirloom" recipes for a family Wedding Punch, which she notes is two hundred years old; many Cajun and Creole recipes; biscuits, corn muffins, hush puppies, and spoon-bread; a recipe for crumpets, "a recipe from the most famous crumpet maker in all of England"; and a pasted-in recipe for ravioli Italiana made with "a dozen eggs, one peck or two bunches of spinach, one set of brains", plus instructions for making the pasta dough and the "gravy". The recipes are contained in a twenty-five-cent composition book with a cardboard binder in mottled black and white (*Craig Claiborne's Southern Cooking*, 1992 edition, p. xvii).

Our meal included at least two of Kathleen Claiborne's dishes:

- My Mother's Chicken Spaghetti [Rita Goss], a four-layer casserole published in the *Times* (Apr. 7, 1975) and later in *Craig Claiborne's Southern Cooking* (1987, 1992). Claiborne wrote, "I believe it was strictly my mother's own creation, and she was famous for it up and down the Mississippi Delta."
- Pecan Pie [Judy Steeh and Robert DiGiovanni], published in *The New York Times Cook Book* (1961). Claiborne called this "the best, richest pecan pie in the world" and often made it for dinner parties at his Manhattan apartment.

Detail of the Pecan Pie baked by Judy Steeh.
Photo: Mariam Breed.

Claiborne's father, Lewis "Luke" Claiborne, was a well-off planter and bank president in the hamlet of Sunflower, MS. His farm property included a smokehouse where he made sausage, bacon, and ham. He and his wife and their neighbors had grand barbecues, catfish fries, and picnics. When the family fortune was lost in the cotton-market collapse of 1920— the year Craig was born— Kathleen and the African-American servants set up a successful boarding house. The family and servants eventually relocated to the county seat, Indianola, to establish a larger boarding house. Craig recalled:

> That kitchen is where I spent my childhood. … Blanche was the chief cook and she made the best fried chicken in the world. … My mother had a fantastic palate, and I think that where Southern food is concerned, I lived in the best of all possible worlds. My mother had an incredible ability to reproduce any flavor, to analyze the ingredients of any dish she sampled. She could visit the restaurants of New Orleans and come back to re-create in her own kitchen such foods as eggs Nouvelle Orleans, oysters Rockefeller, shrimp rémoulade, and so forth. … It is not a question of chauvinism, but I have always averred that Southern cooking is by far the vastest and most varied of all traditional regional cooking in this country. I do not wish to demean the other regional cooking of the nation, but it is far more limited in scope (pp. xvi-xviii).

He also noted that his mother was very proficient in non-Southern cookery as well, drawing much of her knowledge from *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, "which was, in a sense, her culinary bible" (p. xviii).

## By the Shore of Lake Geneva

Craig Claiborne's horizons expanded considerably when, fresh from graduating with a journalism degree at the University of Missouri, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy and was assigned to the Intelligence Division in July 1942. During World War 2, and later in the Korean conflict, his work as a communications specialist on cruisers, sub chasers, and desert jeep convoys exposed him to many foreign cultures and cuisines. He was especially enamored of the French-influenced foods of Casablanca.

He used money from the G.I. Bill to finance his first stay in Paris (1949-50), and in 1953 began studies at one of the most prestigious and highly disciplined cooking schools in the world, l'École Professionelle de la Société Suisse des Hôteliers, located in Lausanne, Switzerland. All instruction there was in French, and included both classroom and work experience. Claiborne earned two one-year certificates there— one in classical French cuisine and the other in table and banquet service— but he skipped the third year, devoted to culinary management.

The textbooks that he used in Lausanne and took home to the States, together with his mother's notebook and his copy of *The Joy of Cooking* (given to him by his sister in 1949), would remain three key culinary references for the rest of his life. In his 1982 autobiography he wrote that many of the recipes from the first several years of his *Times* columns "were enthusiastically adapted from my textbooks at the Professional School of the Swiss Hotel Keepers Association" (as quoted in Thomas

McNamee, *The Man Who Changed the Way We Eat: Craig Claiborne and the American Food Renaissance* [Simon and Schuster, 2012], p. 91).

It is easy to imagine that a number of recipes used at our meal might have been among those adapted by Claiborne from his Swiss textbooks:

- Beet and Scallion Appetizer [Phil and Barbara Zaret], in which cooked beets are sliced *en julienne* and combined with scallions, sour cream, mustard, pepper, and lemon juice. This recipe was included in the 1961 cookbook.
- Lentils Côte d'Azur [Joanne and Art Cole], in which dried lentils are stewed with leek, onion, garlic, tomato, and bits of smoked ham. In his *Times* column of May 2, 1974, Claiborne recommended this to accompany *cotechini* (garlic sausages) purchased at Giovanni Esposito's pork store on Ninth Ave. in Midtown Manhattan.
- Ham and Mushroom Casserole [Sherry Sundling], in which rolls of sliced ham are baked in a *béchamel* sauce enriched with sautéed mushrooms and grated Swiss or Gruyère. This recipe appeared in Claiborne's *The New York Times Menu Cook Book* (1966).
- Lamb with Basil [Robin Watson]. Lamb, Claiborne famously declared, was his favorite meat, and so much the better if prepared in a French way.

## Go Out and Find the Great Chefs

Craig Claiborne abhorred what he viewed as the lazy habits of food columnists who preceded him. He judged that even though the postwar U.S. culinary scene was in a dismal state, this was no excuse for despair or passivity. There was exciting and authentic cooking to be found in America, if only one exercised the energy and initiative to go out and find it. Claiborne used his writing as a way to reveal and popularize these pockets of culinary talent.

Nearly every one of his columns championed at least one innovative cook, cooking trend, or food establishment that he'd gone out and discovered. An example was Ruth Adams Bronz, the Texas-born owner of Miss Ruby's Café in the Chelsea district of Manhattan. She served regional American foods, which was unusual for big-city eateries at the time. One of Bronz's dishes, made from a family recipe, was Julia Harrison Adams's Pimiento Cheese Spread. Kentucky-born CHAA member Sandie Schulze prepared this Southern recipe for our meal, using aged cheddar and Pinconning cheeses, scallions, Tabasco brand pepper sauce, and other ingredients, and served it with zwieback and Town House-style crackers.

In his 1983 and 1987 books Claiborne reprinted Bronz's recipes for the pimiento spread, Texas barbecue sauce, and Fudge Pie, and the pimiento spread even "made the cut" in Amanda Hesser's compendium, *The Essential New York Times Cook Book* (2010). Because of the resulting fame, Bronz was able to publish her own two books of regional American cooking with Harper and Row in 1989 and 1991, and she released two videos in 1990. In fact, there is a long list of other food writers who came to prominence thanks to Claiborne, including such big names as Victor and Marcella Hazan, Diana Kennedy, Penelope Casas, Virginia Lee, Paul Prudhomme, and Madhur Jaffrey.

Detail of the Bread-and-Butter Pudding baked by Laura Gillis.
Photo: Mariam Breed.

Claiborne also championed the few established chefs and restaurants in the U.S. that maintained very high standards of quality and innovation. The leading example is Pierre Franey, whom he met in 1959 when Franey was a little-known chef at Le Pavillon in Midtown Manhattan. The two had an instant respect and liking for one another, and Claiborne began routinely hanging out in the Pavillon kitchen to observe Franey's cooking. They would become lifelong collaborators (Franey passed away in 1996, barely three years before Claiborne).

At least two dishes at our meal reflect Franey's influence:

- *Salade de betterave et thon* [Randy Schwartz and Mariam Breed], a main-dish salad of beet, potato, and tuna, in a mustard vinaigrette.
- Bread-and-Butter Pudding [Laura and Dan Gillis], a dessert made with French bread, dried currants, Cognac, and other ingredients.

Both of the above were reprinted in *Cooking with Craig Claiborne and Pierre Franey* (1983), a collection of recipes they'd developed for their long-running joint column in the *Times*. Launching this collaboration was easy: they were already regularly cooking together in one another's homes, Franey often bringing his wife and children (by contrast, Claiborne, a gay man, was single his whole life). Claiborne would stand at his typewriter taking notes and peppering Franey with questions while the latter cooked.

The two co-authored *Classic French Cooking* (1970) for the Time-Life Foods of the World Series. And then, having clarified Classic French, in the 1970s they became America's leading defenders of French *nouvelle cuisine* and harsh critics of the mummification of French cooking traditions.

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## CRAIG CLAIBORNE *continued from page 21*

It was one thing to encourage Claiborne to visit and to review restaurants in his adopted city, but the *New York Times* also stepped up and supported his journeys all across the U.S. and around the world in search of the most noteworthy chefs and home cooks. Of course, he made an untold number of trips to France and Europe, but he also sallied forth to every other continent. In the April 28, 1970 entry in his menu book (a sort of culinary journal that he kept), he noted that in the previous six weeks alone he had visited Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, New Delhi, and Paris. Over the years, among his eye-opening dispatches for the *Times* was a description of a home cook's highly regarded dish of moose liver with kelp chutney in Juneau, Alaska (August 1965), and his meal at a restaurant located in a lotus pond on the outskirts of Saigon (December 1974) only five months before the city fell to the Vietcong!

Some of his globe-trotting found its way into Claiborne's *The New York Times International Cook Book* (Harper and Row, 1971), a work, however, heavily tilted toward French cuisine. Although it has recipe chapters for 55 countries, the chapter for France takes up 214 of the 565 pages!

### Home Cooking for 200 Guests

Designed to cap off a Chinese feast, New Year's Eve Fruit Compôte [prepared for our meal by Robin Watson] was one of several recipes that were included in a big spread of an article by Claiborne and Franey. "Home Cooking for 200 Guests" appeared in the October 24, 1982 issue of *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*. The piece described the awe-inspiring New Year's theme meals presented by a couple at their spacious apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan; over the years, these bashes had grown in size from 35 to 200 invitees. "Leslie Newman is one of the most dedicated and talented home cooks we have ever encountered", the story reads. "There are very few cuisines about which she cannot speak with authority, including Indian, Creole, Thai, French, Tex-Mex and the one for the menu here, Chinese."

Leslie Newman, the home cook pulling off this feat, is a University of Michigan alumna who is probably best known as the screenwriter for the "Superman" films. Her husband, David, is a film director. With the help of the well-deserved exposure in the magazine article and in Claiborne and Franey's book the following year (1983), Newman went on to write her own cookbook, *Feasts: Menus for Home-Cooked Celebrations* (HarperCollins, 1990).

At least three other dishes at our meal were also made with recipes from home cooks in New York:

- Málaga Gazpacho [Mary Rack] is a tomato-based gazpacho recipe from Manola Dominguez Drozdoski, an immigrant from Málaga, Spain. This was one of three Andalusian dishes featured in the *Times* (Feb. 22, 1968) after Claiborne watched Manola make them "in the miniscule kitchen of the Manhattan apartment she shares with her husband, Elias." As an accompanying photo confirms, Manola's kitchen was so small that she had to keep the blender for making gaz-pacho on top of the fridge, necessitating that she stand on a ladder while operating it!
- Tabbouleh with parsley and mint [Ginny Weingate and John McCauley] is a recipe from Mrs. John Fistere, wife of an American business consultant living in Beirut. This was one of her four *mezza* recipes that Claiborne wrote up in the *Times* (Jul. 10, 1961) after meeting with the couple, who were back in New York for a brief visit. Ginny recalled that she first saw the recipe in a paperback that she bought in 1963 or '64, when she was still single. These were the dark days when hardly anyone in the country knew about Lebanese food, and Claiborne (along with a liberalized immigration law in 1966) helped bring that era to a close.
- Laura Benson's Gingerbread [Margaret Carney and Bill Walker] was one of 13 recipes included in a feature article by Claiborne in the *Times* Real Estate section (Oct. 15, 1975), "Transplanted Yankee Surmounts Culinary Challenges of South". Laura, a Long Island native, and her husband, the artist Robert Benson, together with their Southern cook, Phenas Manuel, would divide every year between their home in New York and their geodesic-dome residence perched on the beach at Nag's Head, NC. Claiborne arranged to visit them in Nag's Head to observe how well they had adapted to the Southern culinary landscape. Four of the 13 recipes were reprinted in Claiborne and Franey's *The New New York Times Cook Book* (1979): she-crab soup, steamed rutabaga, trifle, and this gingerbread.

Consider the legwork that Claiborne did to uncover these excellent but often unsung home cooks, from Anchorage to Nag's Head, and to place them right in the pages of the "newspaper of record". As a food journalist, he could have sat in the newsroom, or simply worked from his home telephone, banging out tired and uninspired columns. He refused to accept, as many of his predecessors had accepted, mediocre cooking, inconsiderate service, or claptrap written out by PR workers.

And that's what characterized his professional work as a whole for over 30 years. He went the extra mile— often literally— to seek out and bring to public attention the most excellent cooks and dishes that he could find. For his public this meant not only much more expansive and interesting reading, but also a noble cause for them to enlist in!

As Claiborne aptly but modestly summed up his life in the Preface to one of his last books, the 1990 Revised Edition of *The New York Times Cook Book*, "In my long career as a food writer, I have always thought of myself as a food diarist, a historian who has been able to communicate his enthusiasm for good food and food preparation." To put it less modestly, in doing so Craig Claiborne contributed greatly to the revolution that has taken place in American culinary consciousness. ■

# MORSELS & TIDBITS

Toni Tipton-Martin, a culinary historian in Austin, TX, will be making three appearances in Ann Arbor this January, as detailed below. Ms. Tipton-Martin is in the final stages of preparing for publication her photo album/ cookbook, *The Jemima Code: A Gallery of Great Cooks Share Their Secrets* (Univ. of Texas Press, February 2014). The book brings to light the ingenuity and contributions of unsung African-American cooks and servants. Toni was one of the first African-American food editors in the U.S. Some readers of *Repast* will recall that she was one of the presenters at the Second Symposium on American Culinary History, held in May 2007 at the Univ. of Michigan.

- On Jan. 22 at 2-3:30 pm, Toni will give a free public lecture at the Univ. of Michigan's William L. Clements Library. She will survey findings from her 10 years of research for the book. Attendees will also be able to view the Clements Special Exhibition on African American Foodways, detailed further below.
- On Jan. 22 at 7 pm, Toni will be the featured speaker at the eighth annual African-American Foodways dinner at Zingerman's Roadhouse. She and Chef Alex Young have created the menu for this meal, using some of the cookbooks that form the core of Toni's research. Toni will share biographies of key figures in African-American cooking history, as well as recipes taken from previously undiscovered sources. Tickets for this event are $45; to reserve a spot, call 734-663-3663.
- On Jan. 23 at 7 pm at ZingTrain, Toni and Zingerman's co-founder Ari Weinzweig will jointly present a talk and tasting, "Deliciousness and Diversity", on the vibrant history of ethnic contributions to the food industry. Tickets are $25, $10 for students.

The transcript of Ari's interview with Ms. Tipton-Martin, conducted in Mississippi just before Christmas, is posted at http://www.zingermansroadhouse.com/2012/12/22/aris-interview-with-toni-tipton-martin.

As part of the Univ. of Michigan theme semester "Understanding Race", Jan Longone and JJ Jacobson have curated a Special Exhibition at the UM Clements Library, "Making Their Own Way: African Americans in the Culinary World". The curators wrote about the exhibit as follows:

> With a selection of the Longone Archive's African American-authored works from the early 19th to the late 20th Century, this exhibit presents the voices of household employees, restaurateurs, chefs, caterers, teachers, ministers, and other unsung heroes who shared their expertise in print. These stand in for the countless cooks and other accomplished individuals whose experience has not come down to us (or come only indirectly), but who have been an essential part of the American culinary experience since Colonial times. What they have to tell us, whether forthrightly and in so many words, or cautiously and between the lines, shows us the integration of food into African American lives as art, livelihood, sustenance, pleasure, celebration, community, religious expression, and identity. Each voice is unique, and yet together they build a story, just as each cook's dishes are unique, but together they constitute a cuisine.

Check out Henry Voigt's weblog of historical meals and menus, http://www.theamericanmenu.com, which he's been writing for about three years now. Voigt, who lives with his wife Julie in Wilmington, DE, views his large collection of menus as a window on the evolution of American society, customs, and eating habits. His recent New Year's Day blog entry, "Dining at a Love Hotel in the Gilded Age", presents and discusses a menu from The Palette Hotel. This intentionally-obscure establishment, housed in a double brownstone in Manhattan in the late 1800s, catered to wealthy, adulterous gentlemen who wished to remain discreet in their rooming and boarding habits.

Should you find yourself in Manhattan you won't, alas, be able to locate The Palette— but instead, you might like to take in an exhibit at the American Museum of Natural History. "Our Global Kitchen: Food, Nature, Culture" runs there through Aug. 11, 2013. Visitors are treated to a geographically and historically broad view of the subject of food, with displays on such topics as the physiology of taste, an ancient Roman feast, an Aztec market, the domestication and breeding of plant and animal food sources, the importance of diversity in agriculture, the dispersion of various tastes and dishes, cookbooks of the world, food waste, and global sustainability. There is also a film about food festivals in diverse cultures. The exhibit is corporately sponsored by J. P. Morgan, and co-curated by Eleanor J. Sterling, director of the museum's Center for Biodiversity and Conservation, and Mark A. Norell, chairman of its Division of Paleontology.

Running through Mar. 31, 2013 at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts is an exhibit, "Supper with Shakespeare: The Evolution of English Banqueting", guest curated by the world-renowned English culinary historian Ivan Day. Day has turned the museum's Tudor Room into an intimate banquet hall, complete with full table settings and glistening replicas of sweets from the time (in 17th-Century England, the term "banquet" referred to the dessert course). Other displays at the exhibit present objects from the period relating to food and dining.

Get ready for three upcoming conferences in England:

- April 27, 2013: 28th annual Leeds Symposium on Food History and Traditions, with the theme of "Fruit". Friends Meeting House, Friargate, York. For more info, see http://www.historicfood.com/leeds.htm.
- July 5-7, 2013: 32nd annual Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, with the theme of "Food and Material Culture". St. Catherine's College, Oxford. For more info, see http://oxfordsymposium.org.uk.
- July 11-12, 2013: 82nd Anglo-American conference of the Institute of Historical Research, with the theme "Food in History". Senate House, Malet Street, London. For more info, see http://www.history.ac.uk/aach13.

**On the Back Burner**: We invite ideas and submissions for *Repast*, including for these planned future theme-issues: Historical African-American Cooking (Spring 2013); American Cookery at the Turn of the Century (Summer 2013); Formative Food Experiences (Fall 2013); Jewish Baking (Winter 2014); Quadricentennial of Dutch-American Cooking (Spring 2014). Suggestions for future themes are also welcome. ■

# CHAA CALENDAR

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

Sunday, January 20, 2013
Sherry Sundling, owner of
Sherry's, Caterer of International Cuisine,
"Sweet 'n' Sour: 30 Years of Recipes,
Memories and Adventures in Catering"

Sunday, February 17, 2013
CHAA Co-President Joanne Nesbit,
"Who Did the Dishes at the Last Supper?"
(featuring audience-participation aspects
of washing dishes through the years)

Sunday, March 17, 2013
Ari Sussman,
Distillery Manager of Red Cedar Spirits,
home of the Michigan State Univ. Artisan
Distilling Program Research Facility,
"The Rise of Craft Distilling in America"

Sunday, April 21, 2013
Michelle Krell Kydd, flavor and
fragrance expert and award-winning blogger,
"Smell and Tell: An Olfactory Journey
in Storied Flavors and Aromas"

Sunday, May 19, 2013
Emily Jenkins,
Owner and baker at Tanglewood
Bakery (Plymouth, MI),
"Heirloom Strawberry Varieties"

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*First Class*