

From Lunch Wagons to Grand Restaurants

## Dining Out in America

Part 1



An old photo of a lunch wagon converted to a semi-permanent eatery on U.S. Route 9 south of Lake George, NY. Two motorists, Mr. and Mrs. William Todd, are purchasing an "Auto Lunch" there during their excursion to Lake George. The photo is from the collection of Michael Engle of Troy, NY, who writes about the history of lunch wagons on pages 6-9 inside.

# MORSELS & TIDBITS *continued from p. 19*

Americans. She refers to that cover-up as “the Jemima code” because its central myth is that of ignorant Black cooks who were kitchen wonders through instinct rather than intelligence, acquired skills, and creativity. An excerpt from the book, focusing on Robert Roberts’s 1827 *House Servant’s Directory*, was published in *Repast* (Spring 2013).

**Jennifer Jensen Wallach**, an associate professor of history at the Univ. of North Texas, was the editor of *Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African-American Foodways from Slavery to Obama* (Univ. of Arkansas Press, 2015). The 15 essays collected there challenge the notion that African Americans, even under slavery, were passive actors in the creation of their foodways, devoid of ingenuity or the means to resist their oppression. They also question the centrality of stereotyped Southern “soul food” within African-American cooking traditions. Wallach received the 2013 Scholar’s Grant from the Culinary Historians of New York to support her research, and she spoke to CHNY last year

about Black food reform in the Progressive Era. Her previous works include *How America Eats: A Social History of U.S. Food and Culture* (2012) and *American Appetites: A Documentary Reader* (2014).

If you slap a couple of Kraft singles between two slices of Holsum white bread, you’re not only creating a sandwich of dubious nutritional merit— you’re also marking a double anniversary. J. L. Kraft & Bros. processed cheese and Holsum bread were both introduced in Chicago 100 years ago, in 1915.

In addition to the “Dining Out” exhibit (see p. 3), we make note of four museum shows:

- The Dinnerware Museum has two pop-up exhibits curated by its director, CHAA member **Margaret Carney**: “A Place at the Table” continues through Dec. 15, 2015, at the Gifts of Art Gallery (Elevator Alcove, Level 2) in the Univ. of Michigan’s Comprehensive Cancer Center, 1500 E. Medical Center Dr., Ann Arbor; and “Thirst Quenchers”, featuring beverage-related items, will run in Jan.-Feb. 2016, at the Ann Arbor District Library, 343 S. Fifth Ave., Ann Arbor.
- Still running through Dec. 31, 2015, is “A Salute to Advertising’s Greatest Icons”, a multimedia exhibit at the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago. The museum’s Television Curator, **Wally Podrazik**, has traced the birth and evolution of top consumer brand symbols and their creators, including many food icons such as Poppin’ Fresh, the Pillsbury Doughboy (General Mills); the Keebler Elves; Snap, Crackle & Pop and Tony the Tiger (Kellogg’s); the Jolly Green Giant; Charlie the Tuna (StarKist); and Ronald McDonald. **Rudolph Perz**, the ad executive at the Leo Burnett Agency in Chicago who created Poppin’ Fresh 50 years ago in 1965, passed away earlier this year on April 2 at age 89. Poppin’ Fresh was filmed with the stop-motion technique, in which 30 seconds of action required 720 photographs. The Burnett Agency also created the character Cap’n Crunch for Quaker Oats in 1963.
- Museum of Food and Drink (MoFaD) Executive Director **Peter Kim** announces “Flavor: Making It and Faking It” as the inaugural exhibit at the museum’s recently opened 5000-square-foot space in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, NY. The show, starting Oct. 28, examines the inner workings of the \$25 billion/year flavor industry, including the science of flavor simulation and the meanings of the industry terms “natural” and “artificial” when it comes to flavors such as vanilla, strawberry, and *umami*. The museum hopes to eventually move to a space six times as large, sufficient for three simultaneous exhibits and a restaurant.

The Third Amsterdam Symposium on the History of Food is scheduled at the Univ. of Amsterdam on Jan. 15-16, 2016, with the theme “Fire, Knives and Fridges: The Material Culture of Cooking Tools and Techniques”. The topic is inspired by the renewed interest in traditional cooking and preservation techniques, such as baking and fermenting, but also by such newer innovations as *sous-vide* cooking and molecular gastronomy. For more information, visit the web page <https://www.aanmelder.nl/ashf2016>. ■

# Repast

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# “DINING OUT” EXHIBIT FROM THE JANICE BLUESTEIN LONGONE CULINARY ARCHIVE

by Mae E. Sander

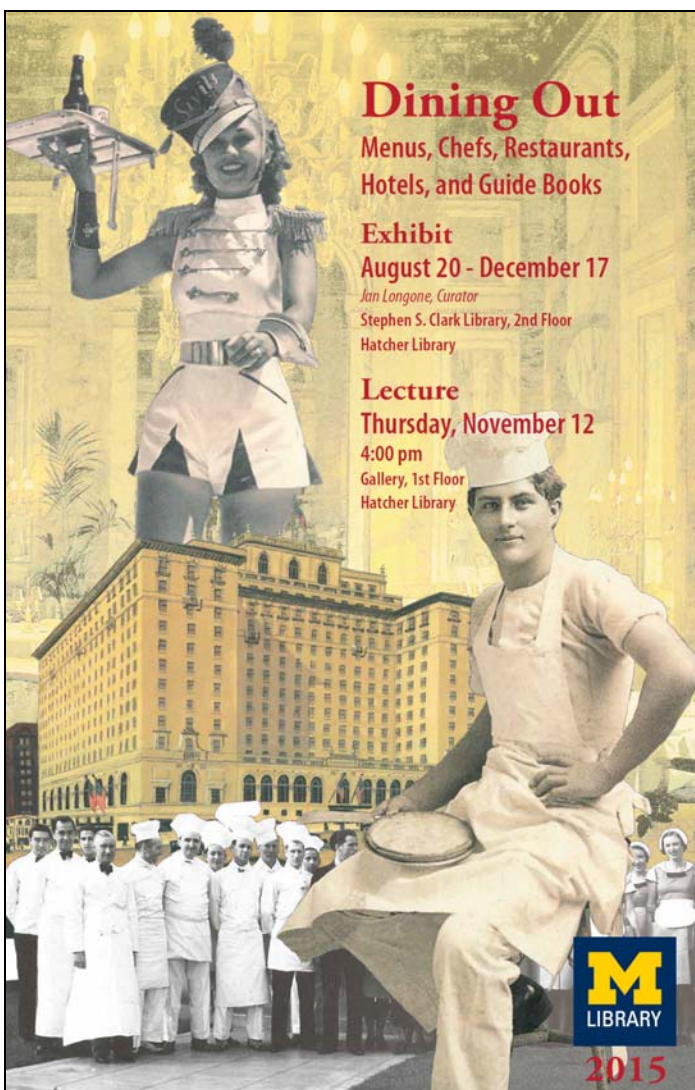
*Mae Sander, a CHAA member and long-time Ann Arbor resident, frequently blogs about food (<http://maefood.blogspot.com/>), travel, and Jewish culture. Her article “Édouard de Pomiane, Gastronomer” appeared in our Fall 2014 issue. Mae is also active in the Culinary History Reading Group, which meets monthly at Motte and Bailey Bookshop.*

Would you like to learn about the last dinner served on the Titanic? Or would you like to see a dinner menu from Windows on the World, the restaurant atop the World Trade Center until 2001? Can you imagine eating a unique fixed-price meal created and cooked by chef Jeremiah Tower and served in the 1970s at the famous Chez Panisse owned by Alice Waters in Berkeley, California? Or eating at the famous Café des Artistes in New York? What would you have ordered while traveling cross-country in the dining car on the California Zephyr? Maybe you're nostalgic about menus from former Ann Arbor dining places like Drake's, Maude's, or even Leo Ping's. Until December 17, 2015, you can view menus and memorabilia from these venues and hundreds more at an exhibit at the University of Michigan Hatcher Graduate Library.

“Dining Out: Menus, Chefs, Restaurants, Hotels & Guidebooks” is the name of this exhibit. The Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive (JBLCA) provided the documents on display. Exhibit organizer and JBLCA founder Jan Longone is adjunct curator of culinary history at the library; readers of this newsletter know her as the founder and honorary president of the Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor.

“One function of the exhibit is to suggest the broad scope of the culinary archive: we set out to display as much variety as possible to as wide an audience as we could imagine. We tried to appeal to scholars, to food lovers, and to the general public”, Jan says. “The wide range of menus provide insight into changing foodways and regional differences. Guidebooks on display indicate many trends of interest to historians as well as to anyone who's curious about food history. For example, the ‘Roadfood’ guidebooks support efforts to get away from the homogeneous food offered along the interstates and help diners find local tastes.”

Menus from all 50 states, from Alaska to Wyoming, arranged in a long line of display cases, reflect this diversity. “Around America”, another section of the exhibit, shows cookbooks and other items representing American dining options: “Restaurants, diners, drive-ins, carts, lunch rooms,



coffee houses, tea rooms, delicatessens, cafés, soda fountains, bistros, cafeterias, trattorias, fast-food, fast-casual, chains, clambakes, barbecues, department stores, dormitories, hospitals, prisons, spas, bars, taverns, saloons, and more.” Other exhibit themes include fine dining on ships and railroad dining cars, the lives and accomplishments of important chefs, guidebooks to important dining places and hotels, and much more.

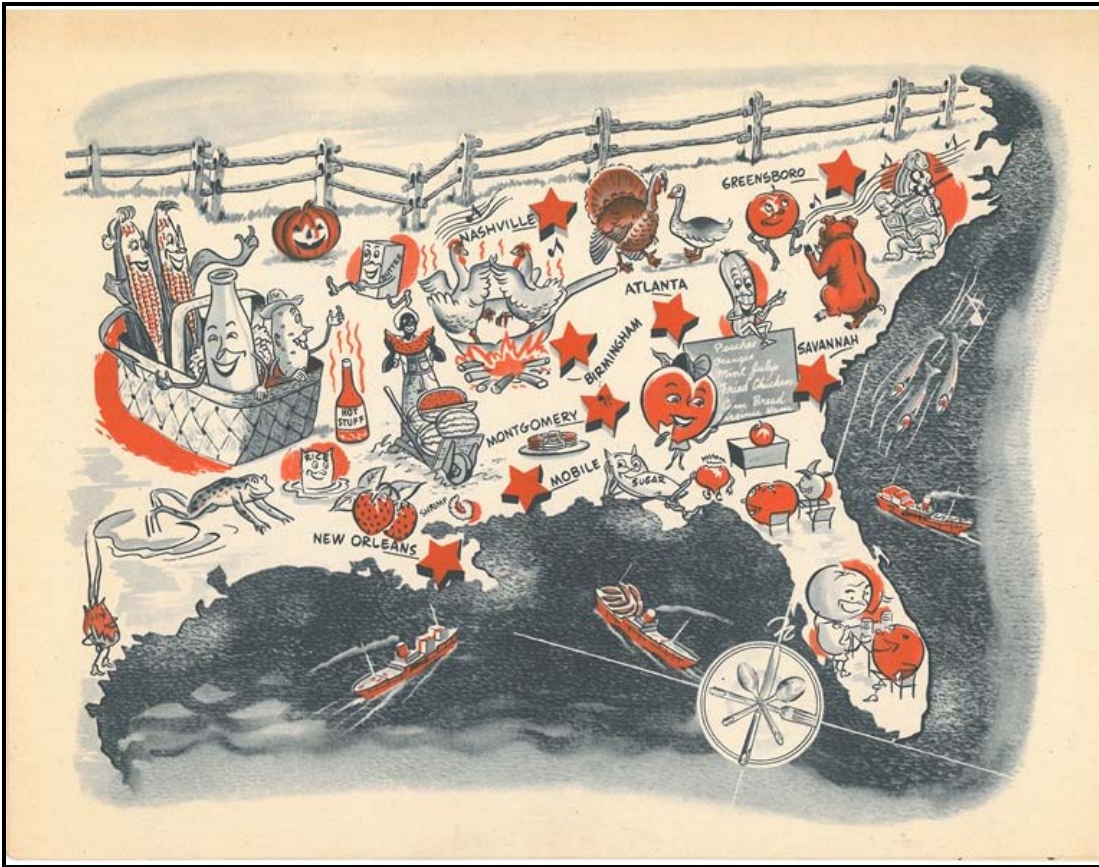
In an interview in her office at Buhr Library a week before the exhibit opened, Jan was surrounded by archival boxes of documents and preliminary printouts of the exhibit panels. Jan demonstrated her enthusiasm for the materials by constantly opening boxes and showing items that were to be on display. Talking about the topic of chefs and how they are portrayed in the exhibit, she retrieved an advertising pamphlet from Campfire Marshmallows dating to the 1930s in which the chefs at famous restaurants offered recipes incorporating marshmallows. As Jan's collection demonstrates, such ephemera can deliver unexpected insights into culinary history.

“The oldest American menus on display date from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century”, says Jan, showing several old books about restaurants, chefs, and menus that were on their way to the exhibit. “Old menus frequently offered dishes that are no longer available, such as game, especially many types of game birds, or dishes that have gone out of style such as rabbit.”

*continued on next page*



"DINING OUT" EXHIBIT *continued from page 3*



Left, a 1947 menu from The Jefferson Davis Hotel in Montgomery, AL, is one of the exhibited menus representing all 50 states in the U.S.

Below, a Tuesday dinner menu from a 1933 cruise on The Great White Liner North American.

Both images from Special Collections Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive.

From BUFFALO, CLEVELAND, DETROIT, MARY SOUND and MACKINAC ISLAND

**The Great White Liner  
NORTH AMERICAN**  
(OIL BURNER)

Commander: WM. T. BRIGHT      Chief Steward: GEORGE W. LAWRENCE

**TUESDAY  
DINNER**

CRABMEAT COCKTAIL  
CREAM OF TOMATO SOUP  
ASSORTED OLIVES      DILL PICKLES  
BROILED WHITEFISH, LEMON BUTTER  
CHEESE OMELETTE  
ROAST LAMB, MINT JELLY  
BROILED TENDERLOIN STEAK, MUSHROOM SAUCE  
HASHED BROWN OR WHIPPED POTATOES      GARDEN PEAS  
COMBINATION SALAD  
LEMON MERINGUE PIE      PEACH PIE      CHOCOLATE SUNDAE  
TEA      CAMMEMBERT CHEESE, SALTINES      COFFEE      BOTTLED MILK

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Cape Wind Light

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S. S. SOUTH AMERICAN**

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**A Week's Cruise on Four Lakes \$59<sup>50</sup>**

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MESSAGE



As restaurant conventions developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, menu writers used the example of banquets for nobility and kings, which listed the dishes and presentations of the events. Several exhibit panels honor early chefs of note: Bartolomeo Scappi, Antonin Carême, Alexis Soyer, Escoffier, Fernand Point, and others. Another panel includes books about how to design effective menus.

A compilation of menus published in 1915 documented the formal dinners that had recently been displayed at the Pan Pacific exhibit in San Francisco. Because World War I was heating up by the book's publication date, the author, J. C. Lehner, who called himself "The American Gastronomer", suggested that well-intentioned food professionals should organize a Peace Banquet. This event would bring together heads of state, international business leaders, politicians, artists, the press, clergy, and other figures. Under the influence of good food and wine, he thought, they could find a way to end war. He even included a seating chart that would facilitate the best interactions among the participants. (The event didn't happen, but you can see its plans in the exhibit.)

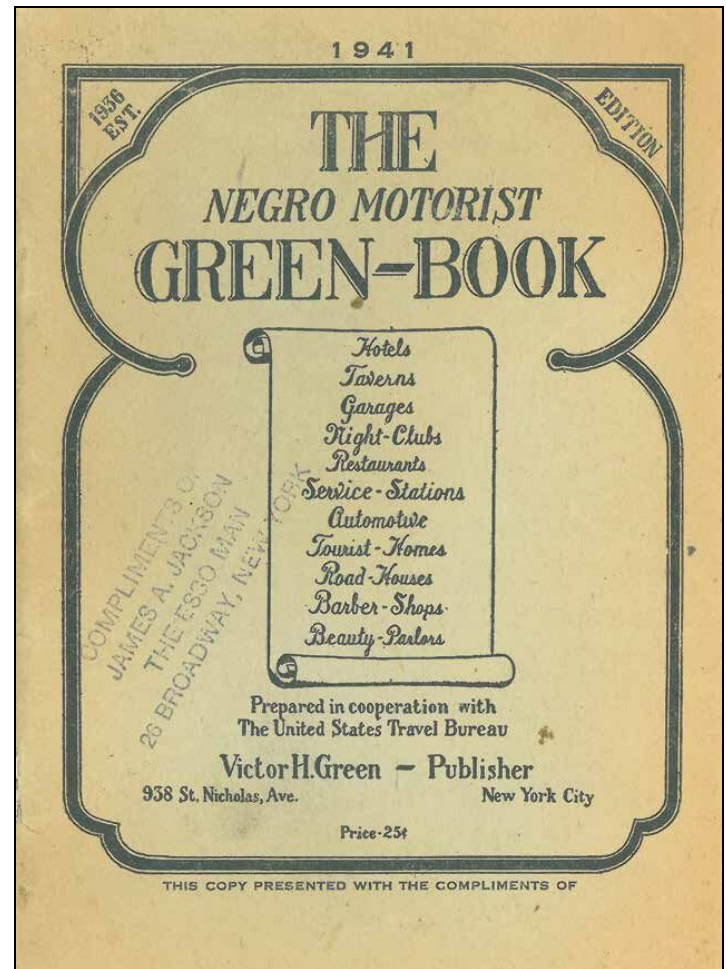
"We've also presented menus that are still available, such as the intriguing menu from the Leku Ona Basque restaurant in Boise, Idaho, or the menu from the widely-advertised Wall Drug in Wall, South Dakota, with its buffalo hot dogs and 'Red-Ass Rhubarb Wine'", Jan says while walking across the room, pulling out manila folders, and showing these menus, which would soon appear in the exhibit's display cases.

"Some of the American menus represent local cuisines; others illustrate the tendency of Americans to adopt specialties from many areas of the country and the world", says Jan. "Today, ingredients like Maine lobster, kale, or lemongrass can appear almost anywhere!"

A number of guidebooks shown in the exhibit provide additional information about both hotels and eating places of the past. Jan described a particularly rare and valuable item, *The Negro Motorist Green Book*. At a time when segregation was the norm, the "Green Book" listed accommodations in which African-American travelers would be welcome and safe. Editions of this guide were published from 1936 to 1964, originally by New York resident Victor Hugo Green.

According to a recent article in the *New York Times*, interest in the *Green Book* is currently inspiring preservation efforts to save the establishments described. Documentary filmmakers have been visiting the sites of these hotels and restaurants and interviewing people who remembered them. To quote the article:

Mr. Green, who died in 1960 ... lived in Harlem, near his "Green Book" publishing office, and commuted to a day job delivering mail in Hackensack, N.J. He modeled his listings after Jewish publishers' guidebooks for avoiding restricted places, where only gentiles could stay, and his Postal Service colleagues across the country helped him research [Eve M. Kahn, "The 'Green Book' Legacy, a Beacon for Black Travelers", *New York Times*, Aug. 7, 2015, page C23].



The Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive includes this 1941 edition of *The Negro Motorist Green Book*.

Another area that's represented in the Longone collection is the revival and preservation of Catalan cuisine in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The sample menus from several Catalan restaurants, particularly that of El Motel Hotel and Restaurant in the town of Figueres, are not only valuable because of their culinary interest, but also worth seeing because some of them were designed and illustrated by the artist Salvador Dalí, whose hometown was Figueres. Jan and her husband Dan Longone often dined in these Catalan restaurants, especially those owned by three generations of the Subiros family. Photos of a historic commemoration of the restaurant and its owners, which took place in 2011, are included in the exhibit, along with menus, Christmas cards from the chefs, food books by Dalí, and other items, some donated by the Subiros family.

As a long-time collector and book dealer, Jan has been a pioneer in assembling menus, pamphlets, advertisements, magazines, cookbooks, travel books, and many other examples of culinary history. Beginning in the 1980s, she dealt in a wide variety of materials that sometimes seemed trivial and might have been thrown away if she hadn't realized their value—menus are a prime example. Having donated much of her collection to the JBLCA, Jan has taken a leading role in cataloging the documents for the UM library system, innovating

*continued on page 9*

# A BITE TO EAT

❧

## LUNCH WAGONS IN AMERICAN RESTAURANT HISTORY

by Michael Engle

*Michael Engle lives in Troy, NY. He was the author of New York (Upstate) in 1905 (self-published, 2005) and co-author, with Mario Monti, of Diners of New York (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2008); this last treats all of New York state. For the past dozen years, Michael has been working on a book on the history of diners in the Great Lakes states. See his website at <http://www.nydiners.com/>.*

As America was becoming more urbanized after the Civil War, the lunch wagon became the country's first "fast food" option. For the first time in American history, significant numbers of city dwellers were out and about at night. From employees working night shifts to people starting to return home after an evening on the town, there were enough of them to support a lunch wagon trade in the cities. Previously, the only other dining option at night had been bars, since restaurants at the time did not stay open late into the evening. And for many people, a bar was not a desirable place to get a meal or especially a snack.

Although diners of today are stereotypically of Greek-American ownership, when the lunch wagon trend began many

of the proprietors were Irish, Jewish, or (in New England) French Canadian. Entering the lunch wagon trade was well-suited to poor but ambitious immigrants such as these, since it did not require as much startup capital as with regular restaurants. Often one could rent a lunch wagon for \$5 a week from one of the manufacturers, and procure a city permit for \$50-\$100 a year.

Lunch wagons became common in cities of the Northeastern U.S. in the 1880s. In the 1890s, enterprising men brought the wagons to large communities throughout the North. An 1899 article in a St. Paul, MN, newspaper began:

The "red hot" man, the tamale peddler, the cigarette and all-night lunch wagons are evolutions of the past twenty-five years in the northern portions of this country. In the Southern states all of them, with the possible exception of the night lunch wagons, have flourished profitably a much longer period than is spanned by a quarter of a century. To this list the South adds the chili con carni man, one seldom met in Northern cities, and who deals in a pungent, highly-spiced concoction, of which black beans form the body and red pepper the stimulating condiment.<sup>1</sup>

Chicago had a very brief run with the tamale, which was a hit for a few months before fading from the city's culture.

### Social Roots of the Lunch Wagon

The lunch wagon boom coincided with three broader phenomena in American society: the Industrial Revolution and the Temperance and Bohemian movements. All three movements came together in different ways, and in different cities at different rates.

FEBRUARY 19, 1899.

### ALL-NIGHT LUNCHES.

Where Those Who  
Are Out After  
Midnight Go to Get  
Something to Eat.

The "red hot" man, the tamale peddler, the cigarette and all-night lunch wagons are evolutions of the past twenty-five years in the northern portions of this country. In the Southern states all of them, with the possible exception of the night lunch wagons, have flourished profitably a much longer period than is spanned by a quarter of a century. To this list the South adds the chili con carni man, one seldom met in Northern cities, and who deals in a pungent, highly-spiced concoction, of which black beans form the body and red pepper the stimulating condiment.

In almost every Northern city of over 10,000 inhabitants the all-night lunch wagon is a feature. For a number of years they have been familiar sights to St. Paul residents. Thousands more people have seen than have patronized them. Yet they are not devoid of profit, else why should they exist?

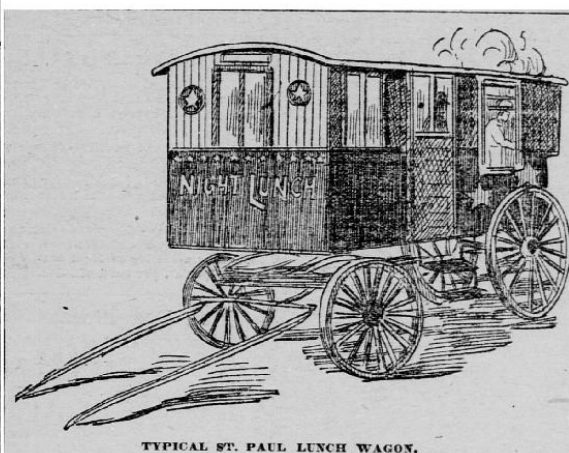
It is much easier to comprehend an all-night lunch wagon in midsummer than during such weather as providence has purveyed us the past fortnight. Having survived such a Klondike atmosphere, they may be justly considered invincible. The cosmopolitan picturesqueness of their patrons is in itself a study, not only for the habitual slummer, but for all interested in characteristics of the under world. In the earlier hours of evening business is slack with the lunch wagon. By midnight it is picking up, and from then on to daylight it is advisable to go early to avoid the rush. By 3 o'clock a. m. frequently stocks are cooked up, sold out, and the wagon hauled away to quarters. The menu is about the same in all of them. Coffee, ham, tongue, beef and egg sandwiches, baked beans, doughnuts, pie, fried chickens and can-

panies own ten or fifteen of these wagons each. They are located in different parts of the city. The crew consists of a cashier and a cook.

The question as to why these portable lunch counters are not patronized earlier in the evening has been answered several ways. One explanation is that the average bum, or hoodlum, does not acquire money until late in the night. As a rule tramps, who, in cities, almost invariably turn beggars. And the tramp has sufficiently studied human nature to ascertain the fact that an intoxicated person is more likely to "cough up," "loosen up," or "yield" than he is when sober. By midnight the habitual saloon rounder turns a much more sympathetic ear to the tramp's importunity. Another explanation is that the man, forced by stress of circumstances to go hungry for long periods, does not divide the time of his meals so regularly as one well-fed. One square meal at midnight, followed by a sleep lasting until noon the next day, enables him to survive on two meals per diem. But whatever the reason, the fact is indisputable that the night lunch wagon thrives best in the wee sma' hours. This is equally true of the all-night lunch counters, of which there are two or three in St. Paul. But the latter are largely patronized by night workers, people who require something to stay the stomach before retiring in the morning. Consequently, the reason for a brisk trade with them in the early dawn is more obvious.

Cosmopolitan to the last degree is the crowd at the night lunch wagon. The hobo is numerous and he eats with his fingers, standing at the tail-board, on the cold ground. In the frosty night, temperature 39 degrees minus.

"Hully gee! But this chucken's



TYPICAL ST. PAUL LUNCH WAGON.

ned meats are staples. Most of the wagons serve small steaks, chops, and some of them small oyster soups. Prices are low. They must be so to induce custom. Generally a nickel is good for a cup of coffee and three doughnuts, or a brace of rolls. A fried "drumstick," a cup of coffee and slice of bread go for a dime.

As illustrative of the increase in the night-lunch business, it may be said that the carriage industry throughout the country is now manufacturing large lines of wagons especially designed for this business. They are conveniently fitted up in the interior and gaudily decorated on the outside, circus style. Some of them are nearly as large as a street car, and cost as much. In the larger cities com-

tougher'n er Klondike sleepin' bag," says one.

Then there are cases of humor in deserts of misery.

"Say, pard," observed one bristled-faced man the other night on Wabasha street, "give us er nickel's worth of embalmed beef."

"Shove erlong a triffl, will yer?" demanded another. "I wants ter give me tape worm a lunch."

Very coarse; but realism in St. Paul is fully as profound as ever. Zoia found it in Paris. Some times the lunches crawl up into the wagon and dine at a bench in the friendly warmth. If he tries too long, however, he is promptly bound by the cashier.

And the old saying that "one-half the world does not know how the other half lives" still holds good.

Portions of an article from the *St. Paul Globe* (Feb. 19, 1899) on all-night lunch wagons, which noted that "coffee, ham, tongue, beef and egg sandwiches, baked beans, doughnuts, pie, fried chickens and canned meats are staples", and that most of the wagons offered "small steaks, chops, and some of them small oyster soups. Prices are low."





These two photos from Saratoga Springs, a wealthy spa/resort town in upstate New York, show how the lunch wagon evolved from a pushcart in the street (left, 1870s) into a large wheeled enclosure (right, around 1910). Photos courtesy of Saratoga Springs Public Library.

As the Industrial Revolution renewed steam after the Civil War, and more Americans moved to the cities and started working night shifts, vendors took to the streets with baskets of ready-to-eat food to sell to the numerous nighttime workers, such as newspaper men. The first of these might have been Walter Scott, who sold food from a horse-drawn wagon to employees of the *Providence [Rhode Island] Journal* beginning in 1872.

In New York City, which was the epicenter of a Temperance movement that sought to curb alcohol consumption, one Temperance organization bought a few lunch wagons to serve food to nighttime workers. They had noticed that many night workers had no other choice than to go to a bar and order what they called a “trap meal”. Barkeepers believed that if they offered their customers free or cheap meals, they would partake in libations at the same time. Lunch wagons were often seen as a godsend to night workers who did not wish to have a drink. In 1914, a local newspaper noted that the Long Island Church Temperance Society was bringing a lunch wagon to Brooklyn:

The Right Rev. Frederick Burgess, expressed the warmest commendation of the plan to start the lunch wagon and build the drinking fountains, as he considers it one of the best departments of temperance work—the removal of the causes which lead to intemperance—because “The best way to fight the saloon is to provide a good substitute.”<sup>2</sup>

According to Wikipedia, it was during and after the Civil War that journalists began to take up the moniker “Bohemians”. The term also carried a connotation of being different, or counter to mainstream culture: indeed, lunch wagons were the new kid on the block. I was able to find contemporary news accounts from both New York and Minnesota that mentioned Bohemianism as one of the reasons for the popularity of the lunch wagon. For example, a Buffalo newspaper commented:

However, the lunch wagon owner does not depend on reduction in prices for his trade. His principal confidence lies in the whims of his patrons who tend toward Bohemianism or unconventionality. Those who patronize

the lunch wagon night after night are recognized as men who prefer not to sit in restaurants.”<sup>3</sup>

An 1894 article, “Chicago at Night”, gave a picturesque description: “The public is accommodated, and the lover of the quaint and curious takes delight in watching the motley crowd which buys its meals from the gutter, and eats them, seated, proud as Trojans, on the curb stone.”<sup>4</sup>

#### Lunch Wagon Fare and Clientele

What were these meals served in a lunch wagon, and how did they compare to those served in a restaurant?

Mr. A. P. Low, the pioneer of the lunch wagon trade in St. Paul, MN, was interviewed by the *St. Paul Globe* in 1902. He commented, “In the first place, the restaurants are not catering to the 10 cents trade, and then again they cannot do the work as quickly as we can.”<sup>5</sup> The article was a little more specific about the preferred meal at a lunch wagon: in a word, it was the sandwich. People of all different lifestyles wanted a sandwich, and many people got it from the lunch wagon:

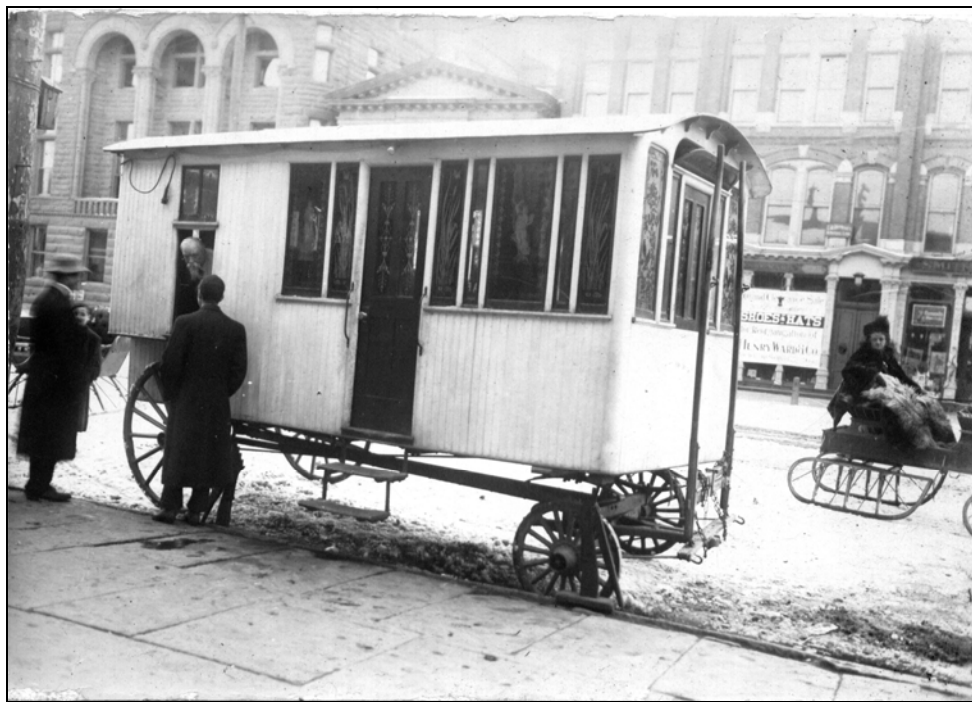
They sell nothing but sandwiches, but there are enough of these sold in St. Paul to demonstrate that pie is no longer the national edible. There may be many devotees that worship at the shrine of the apple and custard, but the new cult of sandwich has had an unparalleled growth, as can be seen by watching the pilgrims that nightly adjourn to their Mecca, the lunch wagon.<sup>5</sup>

The sandwich was in such high demand at lunch wagons that Chicago newspapers called the wagons “sandwich cars”. Many types of sandwiches were available—even the hamburger was mentioned in the 1902 *St. Paul Globe* article.

Who was eating at these lunch wagons? It was mostly a man’s realm:

Rich and poor, fashion and rags meet at the lunch wagon on the common basis of five cents for an egg sandwich,

*continued on next page*



A lunchwagon in Schenectady, NY.

Photo courtesy of Don Rittner, former Schenectady County Historian.

## LUNCH WAGONS *continued from page 7*

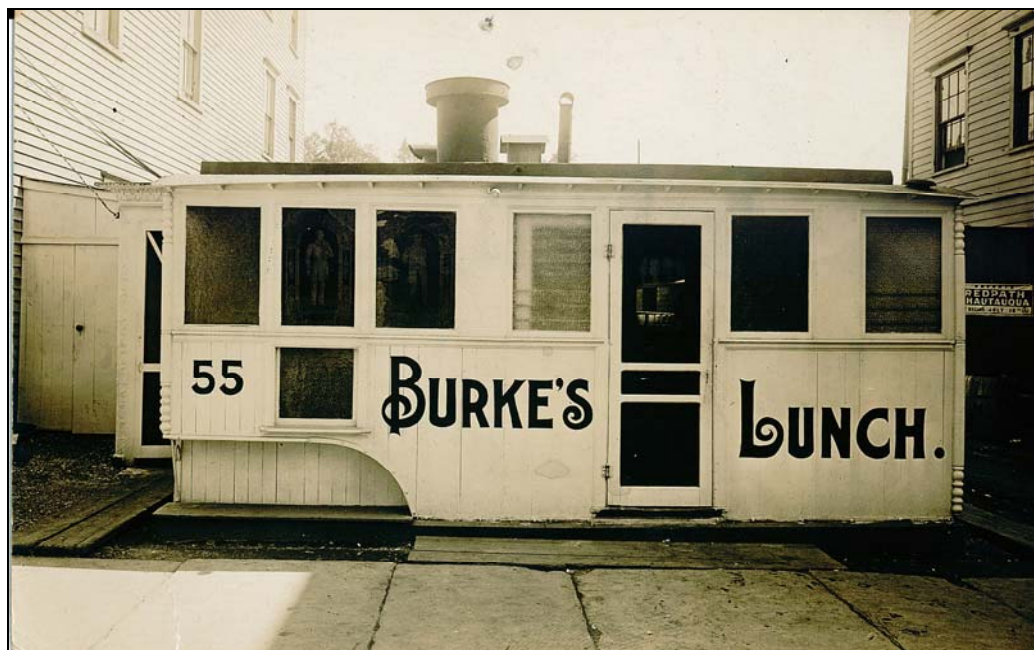
and the man in the dress suit and the bootblack nondescript eat their purchase to the last onion with the same satisfaction and contentment. ... About 7 o'clock every night, each lunch wagon is surrounded by a crowd of newsboys and bootblacks, who long ago learned that their nickel or dime cannot be expended to any better purpose than in purchase of a sandwich. ... As the theater hour draws near the class of trade that patronizes the lunch wagon changes. The newsboys have all slipped away to wherever they sleep and the theater-goer begins to appear with his hunger for a sandwich. ... When the crowds surge out of the Opera Houses, there is a line drawn up in front of the narrow window of the lunch wagon, like at a country post office. This is where the swiftness and the dexterity of the chef comes into play. He listens to the clamoring of the line outside for chicken

sandwiches, ham and egg turned over, oyster sandwiches, without deigning to look upon them. From the range there arises a medley of culinary odors and the air is filled with somersaulting sandwiches of every description, while the skillets sizzle and sputter with every movement.<sup>5</sup>

After midnight, the "night owls" would begin to show up—people looking for a bite and some conversation. These might just be the denizens who helped to give the diner the notion of being the place to go for a cup of coffee and some gab. Thrown in are the hack-drivers, party-goers, drunks, and vagrants, each looking for a warm place to sit down for a while. By 1902, most lunch wagons had a few stools or benches where one could get out of the elements.

This example in Oneonta, NY, shows how some lunch wagons were made more or less permanent by being set on a foundation, with the wheels removed.

Postcard from the author's collection.





The lunch wagons of the 1880s had basically been pushcarts. They couldn't even keep the proprietor out of the rain. Then wagons were built in which the cook was protected from the elements, and a few years later larger and larger wagons in which the customer could also get out of the cold and precipitation. After the turn of the century, many lunch wagons were being built to a length of 30 feet and a width of 10 feet.

### Decline and Transformation of the Lunch Wagon

Because of their connection to vagrants, the reputation of lunch wagons began to suffer at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1899, the *St. Paul Globe* commented harshly:

As a rule, tramps, when in cities, turn into beggars. And the tramp has sufficiently studied human nature to ascertain the fact that an intoxicated person is more likely to "cough up," than he is when sober.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, lunch wagons were pushed out of eyesight in many cities. In Chicago and elsewhere, the lunch wagon was relegated to street alleys and the odd lot by 1901. No longer could someone walk by a major street corner and see a wagon plying its trade.

Another bad break for lunch wagons was the change from the horse-drawn trolley to the self-powered trolley. Just about anyone could buy a used horse-drawn trolley car and turn it into a cheap version of a lunch wagon for half the price of a factory-built wagon— but used motorized trolley cars were a different matter entirely, requiring a sizeable investment. On the other hand, the horse-drawn conversions were often dimly lit and looked the worse for wear, confirming stereotypes that hurt the lunch wagon's image. Even a single lunch wagon that attracted unsavory owners or customers played a role in shaping opinion on the street, to the effect that that every lunch wagon was a shrine to the seedy underworld.

It wouldn't be until the early- to mid-1920s that the lunch wagon would reemerge in popularity, and in a new form. As lunch wagons got bigger, their daily movement had become increasingly difficult, and in the vast majority of cases each was relegated to one fixed location that was found to be affordable and prosperous. This change from "lunch wagons" to "lunch cars", "dining cars", and eventually "diners" coincided with the rising popularity of the personal automobile in the 1920s. While the lunch wagon had been exclusively a creature of commercial districts, lunch cars and diners could now plausibly be located on the outskirts of a town, catering to travelers. However, the majority of the trade remained situated in the urban business districts, directed at workers and other denizens of the city. ■

### References

1. *St. Paul Globe*, Feb. 19, 1899.
2. *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Nov. 7, 1914.
3. *Buffalo Courier*, Oct. 19, 1902.
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5. *St. Paul Globe*, Mar. 23, 1902.

**"DINING OUT" EXHIBIT** *continued from page 5*  
methods for describing various ephemera in a catalog designed for conventional books and printed matter. Recruiting volunteers was one of her big accomplishments— readers of *Repast* will be aware that many members of the CHAA have participated and continue to participate in the endeavor, as well as donating material from their own collections to the archive.

Jan has participated in a number of food symposia and contributed to the development of food history as an academic and cultural discipline. Chefs and scholars relied on her to find historic materials and specialized cookbooks to meet their professional needs— that is, in the days before the Internet changed everything! As a result, she became a friend and colleague of many important figures in the food world.

"We were thrilled when the well-known chef Jeremiah Tower donated his collections to the archive", she says. "I had helped him years ago when he needed to find cookbooks representing American local recipes for his restaurant, so he thought of us when he decided to donate his collections. His contributions include unique items from the early days of the Berkeley restaurant Chez Panisse, where he worked with Alice Waters, as well as memorabilia from his own restaurant, Stars, in San Francisco. Tower's donation included his personal and annotated kitchen notebook from Chez Panisse, a unique item, and the rare set of *Beyond Tears*, a limited edition (11 copies) of the first eight years of life and menus at Chez Panisse."

International menus of historic value that once decorated the walls of Stars are featured, along with the Chez Panisse materials, in the exhibit panel titled "The Revolution that Started in California: Jeremiah Tower and Alice Waters". These documents have already been of use to scholars working with the JBLCA material. "This is a unique and priceless heritage for any understanding of American culinary history", states the panel documentation.

"I've organized over a dozen exhibits at the library, as well as others in different places", says Jan, "but this is the first time I've presented material on restaurants and other similar institutions. 'Dining Out' represents an important part of the overall historic experience of food. Each former exhibit has illustrated one important aspect of the archive such as charity cookbooks, Jewish cookbooks, cooking as part of domestic life, or the history of *Gourmet* magazine. This is the last exhibit I plan to organize— happily, a very significant one."

"Dining Out: Menus, Chefs, Restaurants, Hotels & Guidebooks" runs from Aug. 20 through Dec. 17, 2015, at the Clark Library on the second floor of Hatcher Graduate library. A related lecture by Jan Longone takes place on Thursday, Nov. 12 at 4:00 pm in Room 100 (The Gallery) at Hatcher Library. ■

# MANUFACTURERS MADE NEW JERSEY THE “DINER CAPITAL OF AMERICA”

by Michael C. Gabriele

*Lifelong New Jersey resident Michael C. Gabriele has worked as a journalist for over 35 years, including eight years as Editor and Associate Publisher of The Catholic Advocate. He is a graduate of Montclair State University, a member of the executive board of the Nutley Historical Society, and a member of the advisory board of the Clifton Arts Center. He has published two books with The History Press, The Golden Age of Bicycle Racing in New Jersey (2011) and The History of Diners in New Jersey (2013). The text and photo here are excerpted from the latter book, available from the publisher online at <https://www.arcadiapublishing.com/Products/9781609498221> or by calling 888-313-2665.*

New Jersey is the “Diner Capital of America”, a title rightfully bestowed on the Garden State by various publications. It refers to the vast number of diners (an estimated 600) that populate the state, as well as how diners, during the last 100 years, have become a distinct part of New Jersey’s roadside culture and “built” landscape.

But that’s only half the story. The title also is a tribute to the major diner builders that once were based in New Jersey: a cluster of independent companies that created the stainless-steel architectural gems that are admired throughout the world. The Garden State was the factory that produced diners— icons of American 20<sup>th</sup>-Century industrial design.

There were more than 20 diner manufacturers and renovators that operated throughout New Jersey. They’ve vanished and, except for the vintage diners they left behind, are long forgotten. These diner builders pioneered the concept of modular, prefabricated design and construction. The list included Swingle, Paramount, Mountain View, Master, Fodero, Manno, and others. This article will profile three companies— O’Mahony, Kullman, and Silk City— to provide a snapshot of the halcyon days of factory-built diners in New Jersey.

O’Mahony

July 3, 1912, marks the start of New Jersey’s diner manufacturing history. On this date, a man named Michael J. Griffin purchased a lunch wagon— the horse-drawn precursor to modern diners— for \$800 from Jerry O’Mahony. Jerry, with the help of his younger brother, Daniel, along with master carpenter and family friend John Hanf, built the wagon in the backyard of Jerry’s Bayonne, New Jersey, home.

At the time there already were other builders of lunch wagons outside New Jersey, such as The Patrick J. Tierney Company of New Rochelle, New York, and the T. H. Buckley

Car Manufacturing Company and the Worcester Lunch Car and Carriage Manufacturing Company, both of Worcester, Massachusetts. Richard J. S. Gutman’s 1979 book *American Diner*, the first history of the diner industry ever published, traced the humble beginnings of lunch wagons to Westminster Street in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1872, and to a horse-drawn wagon owned by Walter Scott, who sold sandwiches, boiled eggs, pies and coffee to passersby.

The December 1921 edition of the *American Restaurant* magazine featured an article written by O’Mahony titled “Eating on Wheels”, which described how the lunch wagon was a flexible, efficient way to deliver quality food to customers. O’Mahony also provided details of the construction of his wagons:

In the construction of our cars, we use the best material and build each car to meet the build-code requirements of the locality in which they are to be operated. Our car is all tile and quartered oak, interior finish furnished with skylights, screens and steps and mounted on a heavy running gear. Equipped with a combination set of three, four-gallon coffee urns, one eight-inset steam table, one four-burner with griddle attached short order cooker, one double oven range, three German silver hoods, one exhaust fan and rheostat, two ceiling fans, one tiled interior refrigerator, cutting boards, pie racks, closets and drawers...systems for hot and cold water, gas and electricity...countertop marble and all-white enamel stools with foot rail brackets attached.

Due to their popularity, lunch wagons grew larger and became stationary fixtures on roadways and in cities. The term “diners” evolved in the early 1920s. By 1925, Jerry O’Mahony Inc. had outgrown four different Bayonne locations, and moved to a factory in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Business was strong and the Elizabeth facility served as a springboard for a prosperous decade of diner production during the 1930s. Three jewels from this vintage era, still thriving today, are the Summit Diner, Summit, New Jersey; the Road Island Diner, Oakley, Utah; and Mickey’s Diner, St. Paul, Minnesota. These survivors are examples of the Streamline Moderne industrial design movement, noted for characteristic features such as extended horizontal lines, “aerodynamic” curved corners, and glittering stainless steel. It was a design concept that captured the public’s fascination with high-speed cars and planes.

Jerry O’Mahony, in the fall of 1950, retired and sold the company to a group of investors. *The New York Times*, in a September 23, 1951 article, quoted a spokesman for the new owners, who estimated that there were 6,000 diners in the United States (most located east of the Mississippi River), serving 2.4 million customers on a daily basis.

New Jersey’s diner builders were in search of a lucrative “export” market—states west of the Mississippi River. The new O’Mahony owners acquired other manufacturing operations in a diversification strategy that anticipated a strong postwar boom for diners. Car-happy Americans filled with wanderlust were “getting their kicks on Route 66” and elsewhere. A headline for an August 31, 1952 *New York Times* article noted that “many new diners are due to appear, manufacturers eye Western sites to meet the demand of prospective owners.” The story reported that





The Summit Diner, located in downtown Summit, New Jersey. Photo by M. Gabriele.

diners, well established in the East, were expected to “spread westward like a prairie fire.”

However, ambitious plans for a western expansion did not pan out. Andrew Hurley, Ph.D., a history professor at the University of Missouri–St. Louis and the author of the book *Diners, Bowling Alleys, and Trailer Parks: Chasing the American Dream in Postwar Consumer Culture* (2001), said diner builders faced stiff competition from established drive-in restaurants, highway truck stops and California “coffee shops”. Hurley also cited a strong cultural push back to East Coast diners, which, at the time, had a negative reputation.

The O’Mahony business, with 60 employees, was shuttered in May 1956. Jeremiah O’Mahony died on March 3, 1969, at the age of 89.

#### Kullman

In 1927, Samuel Kullman founded the Kullman Dining Car Company in Newark, New Jersey. Over a period of 78 years that spanned three family generations, Kullman became a prolific builder of diners with a reputation for high quality over a broad spectrum of sizes and styles.

Samuel’s son, Harold, joined the company in 1946. “Selling diners was a word-of-mouth business”, Harold Kullman said, recalling his years on the road, following sales leads, during the 1940s and 1950s. He said the sales pitch involved negotiating with owners of small, older diners, explaining the advantages of moving up to a larger, modern diner car, which meant more customers and larger profits. Kullman took the old diner as a trade-in allowance and then designed and built a new diner. The old diner was refurbished and then recycled to someone just starting out in the business.

During the 1960s and 1970s, diners kept getting larger and more expensive to build. It became difficult to find takers on the trade-ins of the old diners. Because the trend was shifting toward larger “restaurant-like” diners, dedicated as permanent structures, the preference was to build the eateries on site rather than inside a factory.

Samuel Kullman retired in 1968 and died on April 6, 1973, at the age of 74. Robert Kullman, Harold’s son, joined the company in 1969, and as his managerial responsibilities grew, he led Kullman’s shift to explore business in non-diner markets. His strategy involved taking the prefabricated, modular manufacturing concept for building diners and applying it to other markets— schools, dormitories, telecommunications shelters, and prisons.

Robert Kullman became president and chief executive officer in 1989 and by the early 1990s, his vision for the company’s diversification strategy began to pay dividends. Despite the success in new markets, Kullman said the company never abandoned the diner business. “We never stopped building diners”, he declared. “Diners became one of our markets, not our only business.”

One Kullman masterpiece is the Tick Tock Diner, located on Route 3 in Clifton, New Jersey, which opened on June 1, 1994. Kullman built its last diner in 2005— the Silver Moon, which was shipped to Baltimore. Robert Kullman sold the family business in February 2006, and the new owners stopped building diners. In December 2011, the Kullman Building Corporation ceased operations and sold its production equipment.

*continued on next page*

## NEW JERSEY DINERS *continued from page 11*

### Silk City

The origins of the Silk City Dining Car Company date back to 1886, when it was founded by Everett Abbott Cooper as a wagon-building business in Suffern, New York. Cooper, in the late 1890s, relocated the business to historic Paterson, New Jersey (America's first industrial city, envisioned by Alexander Hamilton), establishing it as the Paterson Wagon Company. An article in the September 30, 1905 edition of *The New York Times* reported that Paterson Wagon had filed for bankruptcy protection in U.S. District Court in Elizabeth. The following year, it reorganized and re-emerged as the Paterson Vehicle Company, retooling its factory to produce bus, car and truck bodies. Five of Everett Abbott's sons (Abbott Everett, William, Fred Everett, Irving Brooks, and Everett Reynolds) held executive positions with the company.

Company treasurer William Cooper led the effort to explore diner manufacturing. After serving in World War 1, William rejoined the business and set aside a section of the Paterson plant for a diner pilot project. In 1924 the first Silk City prototypes went into production. Full commercial manufacturing of Silk City diners began two years later as a dedicated division within the Paterson Vehicle Company. The company title, "Silk City", was inspired by Paterson's nickname, due to the many silk mills in the city.

Taking a cue from its experience in vehicle production, Silk City's diner manufacturing techniques were engineered to minimize variation and reduce cost while maximizing consistent, efficient workflow. In the mid-1950s, the company drafted a form letter for prospective customers, predicting that by 1960 the nation's restaurant business would be a \$20-billion market. The letter identified lifestyle trends for the burgeoning American middle class:

Twenty five out of 100 meals served in this country are served outside the home. Every year more people are eating out. There is an actual shortage of eating places today. Working people are earning more money, have shorter hours and more time for relaxation, sports and travel. Today people are on the go. They are restless. They eat more than ever because their energy requires more food. New roads are being built for the millions of cars that are going to be needed in the near future. These roads require eating places and many new diner owners will get their share of the national travel dollar. More industries are moving into rural areas near good highways and, with higher pay, workers do not take their lunches. They eat in diners or restaurants.

The letter ended by inviting those interested in the pitch to call the Silk City sales team and "reverse the charges".

Family patriarch Everett Abbott Cooper died at age 92 on January 4, 1953. His oldest son, Abbott Everett, took the helm of the business until he died on March 26, 1964. A company memo to "all directors or their agents" on April 20, 1964, stated the Paterson Vehicle Company decided to "discontinue the manufacture" of its Silk City Diners. There was an attempt to

sell the business to Otto C. Pehle, the shop foreman, and John Grinwis, the top sales representative, but the transaction was never finalized. Stockholders met on December 28, 1965, and the Paterson Vehicle Company initiated liquidation proceedings, which were completed in January 1966.

A classic Silk City car, the Historic Village Diner, built in the early 1930s, can be found in upstate New York on Route 9 in the town of Red Hook. ■

## Angelo's Diner

by Marvin Brandwin

*CHAA member Dr. Marvin A. Brandwin is an Asst. Professor Emeritus of Psychology in the Dept. of Psychiatry, Univ. of Michigan Health System. This poem is from one of his collections, A Taste of Rhyme: Second Helping (2011). Originally from Brooklyn, NY, Marvin is a longtime Ann Arbor resident, and he has fond memories of eating at Angelo's when it was still new. Located just off-campus at the corner of Catherine and Glen, it was established in 1956 by a Greek immigrant, the late Angelo Vangelatos, and his wife Patricia Verames. Now owned by their son Steve and his wife Jennifer, Angelo's will be celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year.*

Among the pictures that are in the album of my mind  
Is a memory of a restaurant which I was pleased to find.  
It was a corner diner where I would often go to eat,  
For an early morning breakfast was for me a special treat.  
I always sat so I could see the kitchen in the back  
Where the cook prepared the orders without ever losing track.  
His spatula in constant motion was like a conductor's baton  
Keeping the rhythm of breakfast orders that were coming on.  
I've tried at times to recall his name and now I know  
It was... it was... yes, I'm sure his name was Angelo.  
He'd flip the eggs and pancakes on both sides of the griddle  
With sausages, bacon strips, and hash browns in the middle.  
And on each plate as he prepared a tasty breakfast spread  
He'd add a slice of his delicious, fresh-baked raisin bread.  
I've heard the corner diner's breakfasts still are rated best,  
But with the passing years Angelo may have earned his rest.  
If so, I think the words, "Maestro of the kitchen staff"  
Would be for his remembrance a true and fitting epitaph.



# C.H.A.A. THEME MEAL

❧

## UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

It's a stunning statistic: in the Southern Hemisphere today, only 5% of the population has sufficient food and shelter, compared to 95% in the Northern Hemisphere.

For hundreds of years, the peoples of the South have been generally neglected and downtrodden. During that time, food crops characteristic of the Southern Hemisphere became mainstays of world cuisine: rice and sugar and yams, citrus fruits and bananas and coconuts, tapioca and sorghum, New World squashes and beans, peanuts and maize, potatoes and tomatoes, cacao and chili peppers, coffee and tea. But how much do we in the North know about the actual ways of eating that prevail below the Equator?

To reduce this awareness gap was one of the goals of CHAA's participatory theme meal last July 19, "Under the Southern Cross: Foods from Countries on the Equator or Below". Some 25 members gathered at the Ladies' Literary Club in Ypsilanti, pooling together into one grand meal the foods that they'd researched and prepared from the traditions of four continents: South America, Africa, Asia, and Australia (we didn't quite make it to Antarctica!). We're grateful to member Phil Zaret for organizing the event, and to facility caretaker Susie Andrews and others for all of their assistance.

Herewith, a summary of the feast.



### Maize and the World of the Living

Some of the South American dishes at our meal were based on maize, or "corn", the most important single foodstuff from the Americas. Maize was domesticated from a rather unpromising grass in the Oaxaca region of Mexico, but by around 2500 BCE the cultivation of this bountiful grain was being spread through much of the Western Hemisphere, where it would sustain the Inca, Aztec, and other advanced civilizations. One of the leading Inca diets was Apu Illapu, the rain god, as rain was so important to growing maize and other crops. The Andean rainy season was associated with the prominence of the Southern Cross constellation in the skies during those months, December to February. The Quechuan (Inca) word for what we call the Southern Cross is *Chakana* or "stair", representing the three tiers of the world: the underworld, the world of the living, and the world of the heavens.

On the Pacific Coast in pre-Columbian times, maize was cultivated as a native food staple in small plots as far south as Chiloé Island, about 770 miles south of Santiago, Chile. That spot has the same latitude south of the Equator (42°) as we have north of the Equator in Ann Arbor, Michigan, home of Maize (and Blue) sports!

A corn dish much loved in Chile is the *pastel de choclo*, contributed to our meal by Judy Steeh. This is a baked pie that Judy layered with chicken, beef, olives, and hardboiled egg, and topped with a purée of corn and basil. She accompanied this, as per tradition, with fresh tomato slices. In its original form, the dish is meatless and made with kernels of *choclo*, which is the Quechuan term for tender or green corn. This type of kernel was often used in the local variety of *tamale*, called *humita* (from Quechuan *humint'a*), which consists of corn kernels mixed with *masa de maíz* (dough made by grinding white hominy into flour), then slowly steamed or boiled in corn husks. *Pastel*, on the other hand, is a category of European baked dish, either savory or sweet, akin to the *empanada* and similar types of pie and cake that reflect the settled Spanish presence to the north.

Thus, the *pastel de choclo*, which arose in Chile in the early 1800s, is a *mestizo* (mixed-culture) dish that marries the Hispanic *empanada* with the native Mapuchan Indian *humita*.

Another corny marriage begat the *arepa con pollo adobado* [Bob and Mariella Zorn] in Colombia and Venezuela, just north of the Equator. An *arepa* is a moist flatbread or cake of *masa* corn dough that is either grilled, baked, deep-fried, boiled, or steamed. Often, especially in Venezuela, it's then split open like a pocket bread for stuff-

*continued on next page*

Bob Zorn introduces his *arepas con pollo adobado*. Foreground, left to right, *gado-gado* with peanut sauce, and Vegemite sandwiches.

Photo: Mae Sander

# SOUTHERN CROSS *continued from page 13*

ing. For centuries this bread was humble daily home fare, eaten in the style called *viuda* (“widowed”, i.e., unaccompanied) or else *rellena* (“stuffed”). Later, in the 1950s, the *arepa* burst from its domestic setting with the rise of public *arepera* eateries and street vendors. For our meal, Bob fashioned mini-*arepas* from *masa harina*, grilled them in butter, and served them in pairs sandwich-style enclosing shredded chicken that he’d sautéed with paprika, turmeric, garlic, and oregano, then garnished with fresh cilantro and shredded *queso blanco* (fresh cow’s-milk cheese). The herbs and spices, the *adobo* style of spicy marinated meat, and the *queso blanco* are all Latin American adaptations of Iberian cuisine.

With galloping inflation this year in Venezuela, and its government halting the publication of inflation index data, financial analysts have become creative in developing their own indices. On Aug. 17 the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Miami-based Miguel Octavio developed the Hyperinflated Arepa Index, which is the sample-average cost of one *arepa* with cheese in his native Caracas. The index rose from about 105 to 470 bolivars between Nov. 2014 and Jul. 2015, where a bolivar equates to about 15% of an American penny.

Seven-fruit haroset [Marvin Brandwin and Eleyne Levitt] is a cooked version of *charoseth* (the Passover Seder dish) as made in Suriname, a former Dutch colony lying about 6° north of the Equator. “Six Degrees of Suriname”, the July-August 2015 cover story of *Saudi Aramco World* magazine, depicted the country— independent since 1975 and considered a Caribbean nation— as one of the most culturally diverse in the Western Hemisphere:

- About half of the inhabitants are Christianized descendants of African slaves, most of whom worked on colonial sugar plantations in Suriname.
- During early colonial times many persecuted Sephardic Jews in Europe migrated to the more tolerant Netherlands, then to Dutch-ruled northern Brazil, then Suriname.
- There are large Hindu and Muslim populations descended from contract laborers who were brought in from colonial India and Indonesia after the abolition of slavery.
- In January 1943, Suriname announced that it welcomed Jews fleeing fascism in Europe, and it built housing for them in advance. Many came and settled successfully, but most of these eventually emigrated to Israel and other countries, and only about 200 Jews remain.

Using a recipe from Joan Nathan’s *The Jewish Holiday Kitchen* (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), Marvin stewed dried apple, raisins, prunes, apricots, fig (his substitute for dried pear), and chopped coconut and walnut in boiling water, together with sugar and cinnamon. After this thickened and cooled, he stirred in cherry jam and sweet red wine. According to legend, the sweet-sour *charoseth* arose as a symbol of the mortar that Jewish slaves used when building structures for the Pharaoh prior to Pesach (Passover), when God led Moses to deliver them out of Egypt.

*Zanahorias al miel de abejas, au gratin* [Jan and Dan Longone] is a European *haute-cuisine* dish of cooked young

carrots topped with bee’s honey, spearmint, and melted Swiss cheese. It appears in a work by Florida-born author, traveler, and *bon vivant* Charles H. Baker, Jr., *The South American Gentleman’s Companion: Being an Exotic Cookery Book; or, Up and Down the Andes with Knife, Fork & Spoon* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1951). Baker acquired the recipe from a place where he’d dined, the Hotel Villarrica, situated in the city of Villarrica in the Switzerland-like Lake Region of southern Chile. This book was one of a series that collected many of the columns written for *Gourmet* and other magazines by Baker, whose work was also supported by Pan American Airways.

## A Prayer for the Yam Harvest

African peanut soup [Marion and Nick Holt] was a dish made with peanuts and peanut butter, yams, kale, and plum tomatoes, as well as herbs and spices such as onion, garlic, ginger, and cayenne pepper. Marion adapted a Mark Bittman recipe from the Cooking Channel website, which is labeled West African but is of a type that can also be found southeast of there in the Congo region straddling the Equator. Marion omitted the chicken in her meatless version, which she served with white rice.

The peanuts found in Marion’s dish are native to South America, but the plant was brought to Africa early in post-Columbian times. Peanuts reminded Africans of their native Bambara groundnut and were widely accepted. The alternate name “goober” derives from the term *nguba* used in Kongo, Kimbundu, and other Bantu languages.

Meanwhile, “yam” derives from the word *nyami* (“to eat”) in Fulani, a language of Central and West Africa. The yam was domesticated there perhaps as early as 4000 BCE, and was typically cultivated by the slash-and-burn technique. In much of that region it became the caloric staple and the basis for advanced cultures, since it was more reliable than grain crops such as millet, sorghum, and rice. Yams were also common provisions on slave ships across the Atlantic. When the slaves encountered sweet potatoes in the Americas, they often called them by the same name as yams, although they are biologically unrelated. Even today, people often call sweet potatoes “yams”.

Yam harvest festivals were a widespread tradition in Africa. At the yam festival of the Ewe people in what are now Benin and Togo, participants would pray to Mawu— the creator goddess, associated with the Sun and Moon— for another plentiful harvest the following year, then partake of some of the harvested yams. In his great novel *Things Fall Apart* (1959), set in the 1890s, Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe described the central role of yams in traditional Igbo culture:

[There were also] women’s crops, like coco-yams [taro], beans and cassava. Yam, the king of crops, was a man’s crop.... Yam stood for manliness, and he who could feed his family on yams from one harvest to another was a very great man indeed.... The Feast of the New Yam was held every year before the harvest began, to honor the earth goddess and the ancestral spirits of the clan. New yams could not be eaten until some had first been offered to these powers. Men and women, young and old, looked forward to the New Yam Festival because it



began the season of plenty—the new year. On the last night before the festival, yams of the old year were all disposed of by those who still had them. The new year must begin with tasty, fresh yams and not the shriveled and fibrous crop of the previous year. All cooking pots, calabashes and wooden bowls were thoroughly washed, especially the wooden mortar in which yam was pounded. Yam *foo-foo* and vegetable soup was the chief food in the celebration. So much of it was cooked that, no matter how heavily the family ate or how many friends and relatives they invited from the neighboring villages, there was always a large quantity of food left over at the end of the day.

For more on *foo-foo* and other such dishes, see the cover story by the late Univ. of Michigan staff member Dr. Apollos N. Bulo, “Out of Africa: Historic Soups and Stews from Nigeria”, *Repast*, Fall 1999.

Baked fish with eggplant and tomatoes [Phil and Barbara Zaret] is a layered casserole. Using an online recipe adapted from Ed Gibbon’s *The Congo Cookbook: African Food Recipes* (self-published, 2008), Phil made his dish with a fileted white fish and diced tomato and eggplant, spiced with red and black pepper and oregano. Gibbon was formerly a Peace Corps volunteer in Central Africa.

#### The Sweetest Peanut Sauce of the Indies

The only part of Asia that juts below the Equator is the Indonesian archipelago. Our meal included three dishes from that region.

*Gado-gado* [Gwen and John Nystuen] is a celebrated Javanese dish, essentially a composed salad eaten at room temperature, but accompanied with steamed rice and a bowl of tangy-sweet peanut sauce. In Bahasa Indonesian, the term *gado-gado* means “mixed”, “consisting of many elements”. Gwen adapted recipes from Rafael Steinberg’s *Pacific and Southeast Asian Cooking* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1970) and Christine Ingram’s *Rice and Risotto* (London: Hermes House, 2002). She cooked the various ingredients well or lightly or not at all: large shrimp; sliced hard-boiled eggs and new potatoes; whole cherry tomatoes; bean sprouts; snow peas and green beans; slices of papaya, cucumber, and celery; minced coconut, onion, and garlic; and pepper and other spices. Indonesia, by the way, is currently the world’s leading producer of coconuts, which are believed to have originated on coral atolls of either the Pacific or Indian Ocean. It ranks #3 in production of the papaya, which originated in South America.

Peanut sauce, called *pindasaus* in Dutch or *bumbu kacang* in Bahasa, is also commonly used on *satay* sticks. It’s made with ground peanuts, coconut milk, tamarind water, sugar, shrimp paste or soy sauce, chilies, and a range of other spices and ingredients (Spanish colonists first introduced the peanuts and chili peppers). The sweetest version comes from Central Java, which is the part of Indonesia most characterized by the use of sugar (traditionally palm-sap sugar) as a basic cooking ingredient. The sweet (*manis*) exquisitely complements the sour (*asam*) and/or spicy-hot (*pedas*) flavors in a dish.

What the Indonesians call “plantation white sugar”, which is pure granulated sugar refined from sugarcane for home consumption, is highlighted in confections such as the Dutch-colonial *spekkoek* or spice cake [contributed by Laura and Dan

*continued on next page*



Laura Gillis’s  
Dutch-colonial  
*spekkoek*  
(spice cake).

Photo: Mariam Breed

# SOUTHERN CROSS *continued from page 15*

Gillis, who had just visited Holland and Germany in May]. This is an elegant, pound-type cake with a rich, moist interior, still prepared in Indonesia for special occasions such as Ramadan feasts. The key ingredients are cake flour, baking powder, eggs, butter, nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon, and vanilla. Laura used a recipe that calls for baking in a Bundt pan, from James Oseland's *Cradle of Flavor: Home Cooking from the Spice Islands of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore* (New York: Norton, 2006). Oseland also describes a grand version called *lapis legit*, "layered stickiness", which is made with as many as 25 layers: each layer of batter is added atop the previous one, and the whole is baked for another 5-10 minutes before the next layer is added.

Plantation-based cultivation of spices and cane sugar, products that are combined in the *spekkoek*, were probably the two leading factors in establishing the Dutch East Indies colonies. Today, the Indonesian sugar industry consists of about 30 firms, mostly state-owned, employing a total of over 60,000 people. The center is the city of Tegal in Central Java; Tegal is also the birthplace of Ann Arbor resident Eric Van Deventer, who is CHAA member Mariam Breed's father.

*Patjeri nenas* [Randy Schwartz and Mariam Breed] is a dish from Borneo consisting of slices of lamb and pineapple that have been braised together in a coconut-milk curry sauce. *Patjeri*, sometimes instead transliterated as *pacri*, is the name for the sauce, while *nenas* or *nanas* means pineapple, a loan word based on Dutch *ananas*. Using a style of presentation suggested in the Time-Life book mentioned earlier, the cooks alternated the braised lamb and pineapple slices, arraying them flush with one another in a horizontal stack capped with a leafy-green pineapple top. Then they mounded basmati rice on either side, and drizzled extra sauce over the whole platter.

Centuries of influence from the Asian mainland is responsible for the popularity of curry and lamb in the East Indies. Traders and Hindu missionaries from India introduced curry sauces to the islands before 100 CE. By the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, Islamic culture had brought lamb, goat, and yogurt-based sauces, although the last are now usually replaced with coconut-milk sauces, as in this recipe. In the 16<sup>th</sup> Century the pineapple, native to South America, was brought under plantation-based cultivation by Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch settlers in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Indonesia is now the world's leading pineapple exporter, although this is mostly in canned products.



## The Land of the Vegemite Sandwich

Australia and New Zealand were "discovered" by Dutch navigators in the first half of the 1600s, but European settlement began there in earnest only with the British founding of New South Wales—essentially a penal colony that would become the city of Sydney—on Jan. 26, 1788, still celebrated annually as Australia Day. Quite unlike the story in North America, in Australia and New Zealand native foods have historically had little influence on modern foodways. But in the last several years, a few mainstream chefs have pursued campaigns to recover and adapt the wild foodstuffs that are part of aboriginal traditions. For information, see:

- "Eat Like an Aussie", David Prior's set of vignettes of eight indigenous ingredients, in *Bon Appétit*, May 2015, p. 122.
- "How to Eat Australian", Jay Cheshes's profile of the Scottish-immigrant chef Jock Zonfrillo, in the *Wall Street Journal Magazine*, July-August 2015, pp. 90-95.

A few of Nancy Sannar's Australian-style appetizers.

Photo: Mae Sander



Chef Zonfrillo, just mentioned, is an example of how immigrants from Europe, as well as China and Indonesia, are responsible for much of the innovation in Australian cuisine during the past 40 years. They have helped transform what were meat-and-potato appetites into sophisticated palates. To take one small example, local fish-and-chip shops now routinely provide Thai sweet chili sauce as a condiment.

Some of the drinks and starters brought to our meal were Australian:

- Foster's ale and beer [Phil and Barbara Zaret] seems to reflect the working-class character of the early British colonists of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Foster's was established in Melbourne in 1888 by American brothers William and Ralph Foster of New York. They owned a refrigeration plant, which was crucial for brewing and storing lagers in such a hot climate.
- Shiraz wine [Nancy Sannar] comes from the juice of the Syrah grape, nowadays the most popular red grape in Australia, where it is usually called Shiraz. Admiral Arthur Phillip, the first governor (1788-1792) of New South Wales, was also the first to plant grape vines in Australia— in his own garden. In 1832 James Busby, a Scottish immigrant and viticulturist in Sydney, introduced important varieties from France and Spain, including the Syrah. Today the nation boasts a world-renowned wine industry spread across the southern tier of the continent, with Adelaide a leading center.
- eight Australian appetizers [Nancy Sannar] including cucumber and radish pickles (from a

cookbook by a Melbourne chef) and shrimp with mango-lime mayo dip.

- pumpkin scones and banana bread [Rich Kato] were made using *The Food of Australia: Contemporary Recipes from Australia's Leading Chefs* (Singapore: Periplus Editions, 1996), compiled by Stephanie Alexander, Wendy Hutton, Ashley Mackevicius, Hilton International Australia, and others. In Australia and New Zealand, "pumpkin" refers to any of the New World winter squashes, which have always been extremely popular there. Both of these recipes were contributed by German immigrant Werner Kimmeringer, who was Executive Chef at the Cliveden Room restaurant in the Hilton Melbourne during 1991-1996.

Sunday lamb roast served with lamb gravy and mint sauce [Fran Lyman] is a national dish of New Zealand. For the recipe, Fran telephoned the family with whom she lived in Wellington in the 1960s— she was on a Fulbright teacher-training scholarship in conjunction with Victoria University there. Owing to their British heritage, New Zealand and Australia have very meat-oriented culinary traditions. The colonials introduced sheep very early on, mainly for the purpose of wool production, but as a side-effect mutton and lamb were eaten almost as commonly as beef. Today, young lamb— traditionally rubbed with rosemary, oven-roasted for hours, served with its own gravy and with mint sauce or orange-juice sauce— is almost always preferred over mutton. Both countries are now world leaders in the production of meat from sheep, but in Australia beef still gets the nod in popular preference, whereas in New Zealand it is lamb that is #1.

*continued on next page*



Mae Sander's photo of her Pavlova topped with lemon curd and strawberries.

## SOUTHERN CROSS *continued from page 15*

There were two snacks at our meal that arose in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, both reflecting the growing Down Under sense of national unity and independence from Britain:

- ANZAC biscuits [Pam Dishman] were developed as a type of oatmeal cookie that could be shipped to soldiers of the Australia and New Zealand Air Corps (ANZAC) who were fighting in Europe in World War 1. The bloody 1915-16 campaign at Gallipoli in Turkish Thrace underscored the birth of national consciousness in Australia and New Zealand, and ANZAC Day, which annually commemorates the Gallipoli landing date on April 25, remains the most important military commemoration in both countries. Adapting a recipe from Mimi Sheraton's *1000 Foods to Eat before You Die: A Food Lover's Life List* (New York: Workman Publishing, 2014), Pam used flour, baking soda, rolled oats, coconut flakes, butter, sugar, and golden syrup, a form of inverted sugar syrup. She dropped tablespoons of this batter onto a buttered sheet and baked large, crisp cookies at 300° for 20 minutes. They're reputed to keep fresh for three weeks.
- Vegemite sandwiches [Margaret Carney and Bill Walker] were invented in Australia to compete with a popular British import, Marmite. Marmite is a dark-brown, salty, malty, *umami*-rich spread or paste, packed with B vitamins, and enjoyed on bread, crumpets, and crackers. It was developed from excess yeast extract involved in beer brewing, and until the 1920s it was sold in small earthenware pots shaped like the French *marmite* cooking vessel. In the aftermath of World War 1, British imports of Marmite were disrupted in 1919, and the food concern Fred Walker & Co. launched a rival Australian product, Vegemite, in 1923. The two products have a similar color and taste, are made in the same way, and are both vegan. Margaret, whose father was stationed in Australia during World War 2, consulted a book by Graeme Newman and Betsy Newman, *Good Food from Australia* (NY: Hippocrene Books, 1997). She and Bill made tea-type sandwiches by removing the crusts from untoasted slices of white and whole-wheat bread, using cookie cutters to form shapes of kangaroos and koala bears, and spreading these with butter and Vegemite.

Tea-time traditions inherited from England left Aussies and Kiwis with a fondness for scones, biscuits, cakes, and pastries. A famed original contribution is the Pavlova [Mae and Len Sander], a vanilla egg-white meringue, baked like a cake until it is soft and marshmallow-y inside and slightly tan and crisp on the surface, then garnished with fresh fruit such as passion, kiwi, or mango. Instead of the more common topping of whipped cream, Mae frosted the top of her Pavlova with a lemon curd (which made use of the leftover egg yolks), then garnished it with inverted whole strawberries. The invention of this heavenly-light dessert was inspired by the Russian prima ballerina Anna Pavlova, who came to Australia and New Zealand in 1926 as part of the first world performance tour ever made by a ballerina. But in which of the two countries was the

first Pavlova made? That's been the subject of much debate. In researching her book, *The Pavlova Story: A Slice of New Zealand's Culinary History* (2008), culinary anthropologist Helen Leach at the Univ. of Otago found several different light cakes, all called "Pavlova" but varying in size and ingredients (gelatin or meringue, etc.), and all appearing in one or the other country in the first several years after 1926. ■

## Member Pam Dishman Compiles Midwest Cookbook

CHAA member Pam Dishman was the Editor for a fundraising cookbook, *Treasured Recipes of AAUW* (American Assn. of University Women, LaPorte, IN, Branch), just issued in September. Pam has been collecting and creating recipes for decades, but this was her first cookbook project.

The paperback, spiral-bound, 162-page work is a compilation of more than 250 recipes, many of them created by Pam herself, and others contributed by other members and friends of the AAUW LaPorte chapter.

An example of one of the interesting recipes supplied by Pam is the Maid-Rite Sandwich (p. 37). Based on it, a butcher in Muscatine, Iowa, launched the successful, still-running Maid-Rite restaurant chain in the Midwest in 1926 (the same year, by coincidence, that the AAUW chapter was chartered in LaPorte, IN). The Maid-Rite is a particular version of the "loose meat" Tavern Sandwich of Iowa; in this genre of sandwich, the beef isn't formed into a patty but is loose, as in a Sloppy Joe. To make this "rite", Pam calls for combining ground round, sugar, yellow mustard, and seasonings, cooking these in the top of a double boiler for three hours, and serving this on a warm bun with melted cheese and sliced dill pickle.

"Port-a-Pit" Chicken (p. 55) is a type of barbecued chicken popular in the LaPorte area and other parts of Northern Indiana for outdoor fundraisers. There, the chickens are cooked on a huge covered grill, with a conveyor belt that moves them back and forth between the grilling section and the marinade-dipping section until the meat has a vibrant flavor and is ready to fall off the bone. Pam's marinade includes butter, cider vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, and garlic powder, and her adaptation for backyard grills calls for the chicken pieces to be cooked over charcoal, turned and basted every 10 minutes.

Besides the sections on Soup & Sandwiches and Main Dishes, there are others on Party Foods, Side Dishes (including salads), Desserts, and Breakfast & Brunch Dishes. Other sample recipes: cheeseburger soup, fish tacos, lemon chicken romano, shrimp and grits, bleu cheese potato gratin, and chocolate cinnamon buns.

All proceeds from sales of the book will go toward AAUW scholarships. To order copies, write to Pam Dishman at 305 Plummer Street, LaPorte, IN 46350. The price is \$10, plus \$3 for shipping; make checks payable to "AAUW Fund".



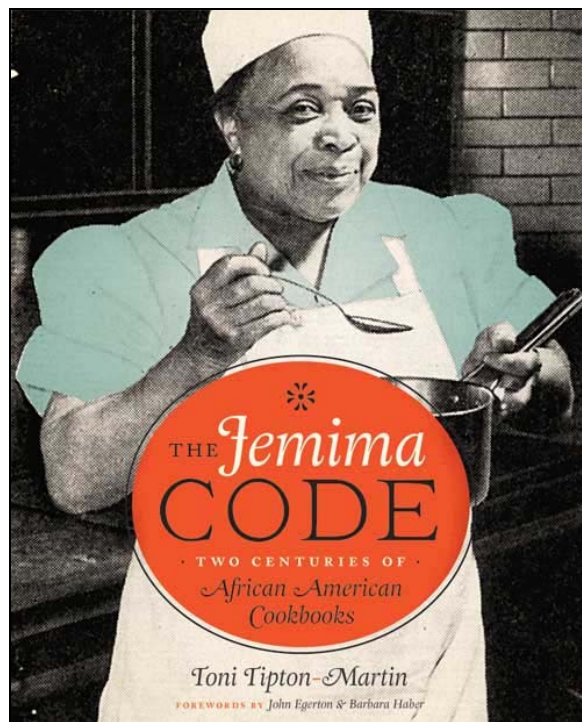
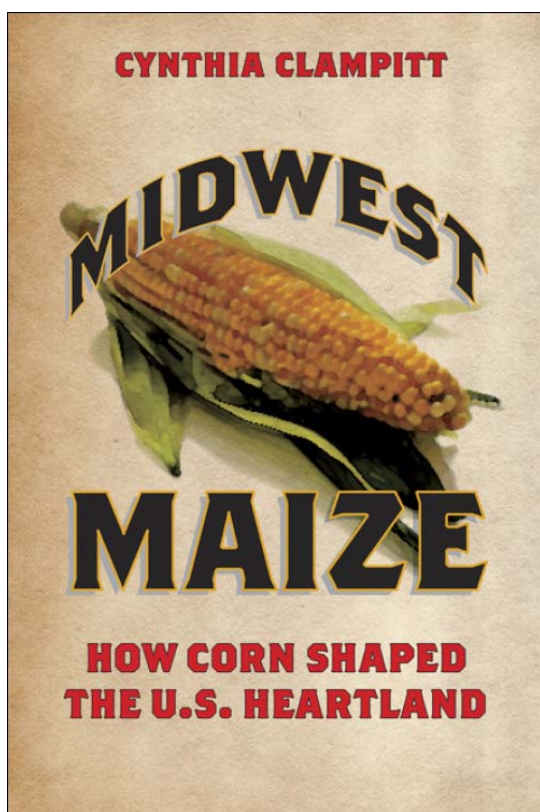
# MORSELS & TIDBITS

Has **Pam Dishman**'s cookbook (page 18) whetted your appetite for the Midwest? You might also appreciate the following:

- **Kathleen Flinn**'s latest memoir is called *Burnt Toast Makes You Sing Good: A Memoir of Food and Love from an American Midwest Family* (Viking, 2014). There, she tells a three-generation story of the modest family in which she was raised on a semi-rural farm in Davison, MI, by parents who were Flint GM workers. Flinn's cooking-school experiences at Le Cordon Bleu in Paris and at her own informal school in Seattle were recounted in her earlier award-winning books from the same publisher, *The Sharper Your Knife, the Less You Cry* (2007) and *The Kitchen Counter Cooking School* (2011).
- **Cynthia Clampitt**, a writer, geographer, food historian, and member of the Culinary Historians of Chicago, has written *Midwest Maize: How Corn Shaped the U.S. Heartland* (Univ. of Illinois Press, 2015). Hers is a detailed cultural history of corn, from its origins in Mesoamerica to its rise as the most important crop in the Midwest. She considers the past and future uses of corn, not only as one of our raw or processed foods but also as animal fodder and ethanol. Corn becomes a window through which to view the interpenetration of taste, technology, geography, economics, and politics.

Acclaim for some recent writings by three friends of the CHAA:

- Amid renewed public interest in agriculture for inner-city Detroit, Ann Arbor author **Bill Loomis** examined an earlier chapter of Detroit urban farming in his article



"Pingree's Patches" (*Hour Detroit* magazine, April 2015, available at <http://www.hourdetroit.com/Hour-Detroit/April-2015/Pingrees-Patches/>). During the economic depression that followed the financial Panic of 1893, progressive Detroit Mayor Hazen S. Pingree launched a program of city permits for potato patches and other vegetable gardens in vacant lots. It was especially successful with destitute Polish immigrants, many of whom were only a few years removed from peasant farming in the Old Country. In the first year, 65,000 bushels of potatoes alone were harvested; within two or three years, there were more than 1700 plots. Bill, who spoke to CHAA in Sep. 2014 about his book, *Detroit's Delectable Past: Two Centuries of Frog Legs, Pigeon Pie and Drugstore Whiskey*, has since published *Detroit Food: Coney Dogs to Farmers Markets* (2014).

- **Hanna Raskin**, Food Editor and chief food critic for *The Post and Courier* (Charleston, SC), won a first place award for her blog, "Raskin Around" (<http://www.postandcourier.com/blog/raskin-around>), from the Assn. of Food Journalists in September. Hanna, an Ann Arbor native, wrote "Gebhardt and La Choy: Making Ethnic Food Safe for Middle America" in *Repast* (Summer 2007).
- **Toni Tipton-Martin** of Austin, TX, who was one of the first Black food editors in the U.S., has worked for many years since then to compile her groundbreaking new work, *The Jemima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks* (Univ. of Texas Press, 2015). Arranged chronologically, the book includes many profiles of cooks, chefs, and cookbooks whose names had been virtually forgotten. Toni's thesis is that American culture has systematically hidden the most important contributing factor in the historical formation of its cuisine: the role of African

continued on page 2

# CHAA CALENDAR

(Unless otherwise noted, programs are scheduled for 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. and are held at Ann Arbor Senior Center, 1320 Baldwin Ave.)

Sunday, October 18, 2015

Ann Arbor Distilling Company  
(220 Felch Street, Ann Arbor),  
Ari Sussman, partner,  
“Preview of the Ann Arbor Distilling Company”

Thursday, November 12, 2015

4-6pm, Room 100 (The Gallery),  
Hatcher Graduate Library, Univ. of Michigan,  
Jan Longone (Adjunct Curator, Janice Bluestein Longone  
Culinary Archive, Special Collections),  
Lecture in conjunction with the exhibit “Dining Out: Menus,  
Chefs, Restaurants, Hotels and Guide Books”

Sunday, November 15, 2015

Dick and Diana Dyer (Dyer Family Organic Farm),  
“Garlic is Divine”

Sunday, November 22, 2015

4-7pm, Ladies’ Literary Club of Ypsilanti  
(218 North Washington St., Ypsilanti),  
Members-only participatory theme  
meal, “Spice of Life”

Sunday, January 17, 2016

CHAA Co-chair Joanne Nesbit,  
“Cookbooks from A to Z”, a tour of cookbook follies.

Sunday, February 21, 2016

TBA

Sunday, March 20, 2016

Rob Hess, founder of the artisanal  
company Go! Ice Cream (Ypsilanti)

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

- Winter 2016: Dining Out in America, Part 2
- Spring 2016: Reminiscences of Food Professionals.

REPAST

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Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

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*First Class*