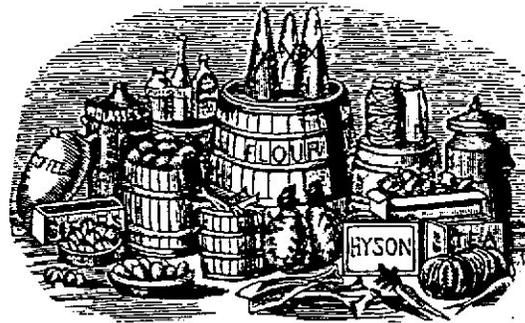


CULINARY HISTORIANS OF ONTARIO

Autumn 1996

number 10



- TORONTO REGION -



Canadian Baker and Confectioner and Soda Fountain Dispenser, Toronto, December 1933, page 27.

Future plans for CHO.

Our conference *From Rations to Riesling: Remembering Ontario's Food Heritage* was so successful and so inspiring, that Culinary Historians of Ontario have to continue the momentum!

We want to get more culinary historians of all flavours involved regularly. This is what we're thinking about:

1. **Quarterly events:** For 1997, we have 4 quarterly events planned in response to requests from so many members. Look for the announcement in the first issue of 1997!
2. **New look for newsletter:** Issue #11 in January will have a brand new format.
3. **Conference cook book:** A cook book will be compiled from all of the period recipes

presented that day.

4. **1998 ALHFAM Conference:** The Association for Living Historical Farms and Agricultural Museums will be holding their annual conference in Ontario in June 1998 at Doon Heritage Crossroads in Kitchener, the same site that co-sponsored *From Rations to Riesling*. Stay tuned for more information.

The *Culinary Historians of Ontario* is an information network for foodways research in Ontario. It is an organization for anyone interested in Ontario's historic foods and beverages, from those of the First Nations to recent immigrants. We research, interpret, preserve and celebrate Ontario's culinary heritage.

CULINARY COLLECTION -- HISTORIC RECIPE #15

The modern version of this recipe is written to be as similar to the original as possible. We invite you to submit recipes to this ongoing column. Please use this format. Historic information can be text or picture.

A BIRTHDAY SYLLABUB

Miss Eliza Acton, *Modern Cookery in All Its Branches*, Philadelphia: John Potter, 1861, page 377.

Original text:

"Put into a large bowl half a pound of sugar broken small, and pour on it the strained juice of a couple of fresh lemons, stir these well together, and add to them a pint of port wine, a pint of sherry, and half a pint of brandy; grate in a fine nutmeg, place the bowl under the cow, and milk it full. In serving it put a portion of the curd into each glass, fill it up with whey, and pour a little cream on top. The rind of a lemon may be rasped with part of the sugar when the flavour is approved, but it is not usually added."

Modern Version:

250	mL	1 cup	white sugar
2		2	lemons, juiced
500	mL	2 cups	port wine
500	mL	2 cups	dry sherry
250	mL	1 cup	brandy
1		1	nutmeg, freshly grated
2	L	2 qts	homogenized milk
125	mL	½ cup	cream

1. In a large bowl, combine sugar and strained lemon juice.
2. Add liquors, nutmeg and mix well.
3. Warm milk on stove to 101°F (38°C).
4. Using turkey baster or teapot, pour warmed milk into liquor mixture. It will curdle, then separate into curds and whey. *See historic info.*
5. Serve in clear glasses. Add a little cream to top off each glass.

Historic information:

This recipe for syllabub is an excellent example of how much fun one can have researching historic techniques and ingredients.

Syllabubs date back to the Tudor period (16th century). They acted as a "bracer" and also provided nourishment. Its basis is either cider, liquor or wine to which lemon, sugar and nutmeg are added. Then one is to "place the bowl under the cow, and milk it full".

When the warm milk hits the alcohol, it immediately curdles. It's important to note that eating a bowlful of curds then could be compared to enjoying a dish of yogurt today.

The dilemma of what kind of milk to use in this beverage took some investigation. British dairy herds of the 19th century were usually made up of Guernseys, Shorthorns and Jerseys. Their milk has a butterfat content between 3 and 5%. If you buy homogenized milk, this adequately reflects the quality of the milk of the period.

When it came to squirting the milk into the liquor mixture, I experimented with a variety of kitchen gadgetry, including a turkey baster, in an effort to recreate the pressure of milk coming from a cow's teat. You'll need to heat the milk to the cow's temperature. I phoned a local dairy farmer and was told cow's milk is about 101°F (38°C).

If a cow isn't readily available, I suggest referring to Hannah Glasse's *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*, 1747. She recommended putting the milk into a teapot and "pour[ing] it in, holding your hand very high". At home, you'll need to pour the milk while a friend agitates the liquor by placing a whisk between their palms and rotating it as the milk is being poured. By doing this, you'll create a fine foam.

Serve the syllabub in round clear glasses so that you can appreciate the pinkish-grey colour, as well as the separation of the curds, liquor and whey. After consuming this fine beverage, I think you will agree with me that syllabub is the "Queen of all Drinks".

Acton's *Modern Cookery in All Its Branches* is an American edition of her *Modern Cookery for Private Families*, first published in London in 1847. The measurements are American, not British Imperial.

Prepared by Christine Lupton.

CULINARY COMMENTARY #2

The following comments arose the morning after the first conference sponsored by the Culinary Historians of Ontario at Doon Heritage Crossroads, on Saturday September 21 1996. As I enjoyed my cup of coffee, I tried to put into perspective what had occurred the day before. These are my personal reflections.

● FROM RATIONS TO RIESLING: REMEMBERING ONTARIO'S FOOD HERITAGE ●

I hate the morning after ... the morning after a great dinner, a great concert, a great vacation or great Often the moments leading up to an event are so exciting that after it happens, one is left a little disappointed. As I sit in my living-room the morning after the conference, I am surprised by how one can get so wrapped up in preparing for a programme. Sometimes you put such intense energy into a project that you begin to lose track of your normal life. Now as I lay exhausted on the couch, I can't seem to remember how I spent those pre-conference days.

In retrospect, CHO probably bit off more than we could chew when we decided to stage this event. Yet it became very clear at each planning meeting that the time was ripe for us and our culinary partners to gather together to celebrate Ontario's culinary heritage. It is inconceivable to me that such a hands-on, experiential conference could have happened 10 years ago. But the renewed interest in our regional foods, combined with research into our culinary traditions, paved the way for such an event.

We did something very important on September 21 1996. Yes, we came together from across our province to remember our food heritage; and yet we did much more than this. In my mind, we also celebrated the creative culinary talents of all the people attending the conference. Indeed, we all became "culinary colleagues" that day.

The highlight of the day, for me, will be the women and men who rolled up their sleeves and got "down and dirty" when they were needed. It became apparent very early in the planning stages, that the words "our conference" were being used to describe a collective effort. So many people contributed to the project that it's hard to imagine holding it without their unlimited energy, heart and soul.

The fact that we will all remember this conference will have a lot to do with the weather and the site. It's no coincidence that CHO chose

to hold the conference during the autumn. What better way to celebrate the fruits of our province than by staging it during the harvest month? As well, Doon Heritage Crossroads was an ideal location to host it. Most registrants commented on the beautiful setting and how enjoyable it was to walk to each workshop in such a lovely historic village.

The evaluation forms provided us with lots of useful information to consider and reflect upon. Most registrants commented that they enjoyed the speakers (especially Sandra Oliver), the hands-on workshops and the location. People requested that at the next conference (heaven help us!) there be less choice in workshops; longer workshops; and more time for networking. One participant noted that she was glad that she had worn loose-fitting clothing to accommodate the large lunch of historic recipes and foods tasted during the afternoon! These comments and many others are helpful and informative to those of us who planned the day. Thanks for the input!

Throughout the early planning stages, I had joked to my colleagues that people should come away from the day feeling that they had attended "the Woodstock" of all conferences. To me, this conference was also about fellowship. If I was being flippant in my analogy for the day, it was because we (the organizers) believed that this conference had to capture the spirit of fun and humour in our culinary traditions. By the amount of hugs witnessed at the end of the day, I feel satisfied that we accomplished this goal.

Sitting on my couch, finishing off the last dregs of my coffee, I begin to realize that something really special occurred yesterday. Hmmm ... I wonder if I have any cordial left from yesterday's workshop?

Christine Lupton is a co-founder of CHO.

CULINARY CUPBOARD #2

● H SPROUTT: GINGER BEER MAKER ●

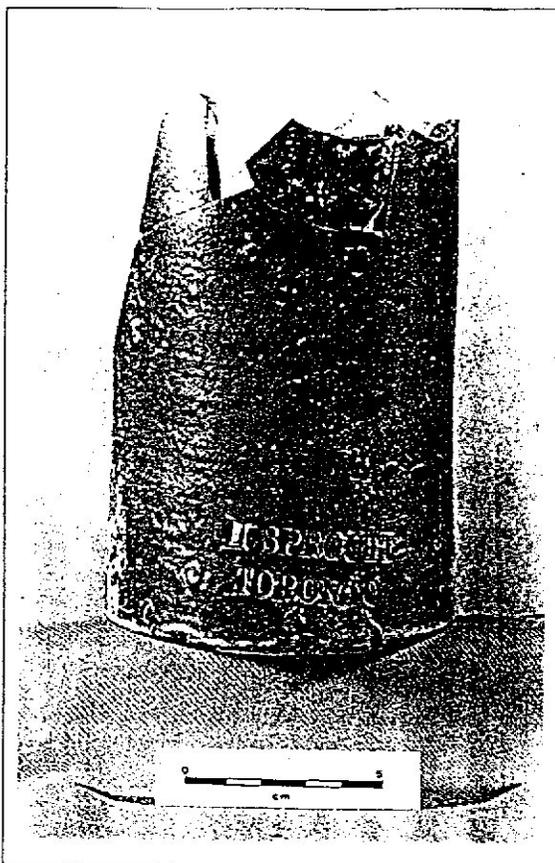
In October 1994, during archaeological excavation of the Log Cabin site, a 19th century farmstead in Richmond Hill, Ontario, one of the most interesting artifacts recovered was the lower portion of a glazed stoneware bottle with the impressed letters "H SPROUTT/TORONTO".

In general, 3 types of marks are found on pottery vessels: those that indicate capacity, the potter's mark, or the mark of the merchant for whom the pottery had been made (Newlands, p 29).

As the name "Sproutt" was not recognizable as that of a Toronto potter, research into the names of Ontario brewers indicated that the bottle belonged to ginger beer maker Henry Sproutt, whose business at various locations on King Street West could be traced in Toronto directories between 1850 and 1862.

Ginger beer is perhaps best known today as a beverage popular in West Indian communities. It is a sweetened infusion of ginger root fermented to produce a mildly alcoholic and naturally sparkling beverage. As such, it is a "small beer" because it has a lower alcohol content than beer made from malted grains such as barley or wheat. In general, small beers were originally brewed as substitutions when grains were scarce or unavailable (Galford, p 68). In Toronto, however, commercial ale brewers were well established before brewers of small beers were first listed in the City Directories. For example, in 1837, 10 brewers were listed in *The City of Toronto and Home District Commercial Directory*, but no listings for small beer makers were found. In 1846, 1 ginger beer maker and 12 brewers were operating in the City of Toronto. By 1850, Sproutt was 1 of 3 ginger beer makers in Toronto, in addition to 1 spruce beer maker, and 17 brewers. In 1856, Toronto boasted 4 ginger beer manufacturers, and 1 sarsaparillas beer brewer, as listed in the professions and trades section of *Brown's Toronto General Directory*. 5 years later, however, only 2 ginger beer manufacturers were listed in the trades section of *Brown's Toronto General Directory*, Thomas Worthey on Bloor Street, and Henry Sproutt at 164 King Street West. The number of brewers listed in the directory had also dropped to 14.

As for the career of Henry Sproutt, prior to 1850 he had been listed in the Toronto Directories as a carter, and as the operator of a



provision store at 69 King Street West. In 1850, however, he was listed as a ginger beer maker at the address of his former provision store. No doubt his experience as a provisions dealer inspired him to start making beer because he believed there was a market for the product. The 1861 census of St. Andrew's Ward, Toronto, further indicated that Sproatt had been born in England, as had his wife, Phillis. They occupied a 2 storey brick building on the north side of King Street along with their son Charles Sproatt, a 24 year old civil engineer born in Ontario, and an Irish servant, Catherine Vaughan, aged 24.

As Sproatt's age was given as 59 in the census, and his wife was 64, perhaps it is not surprising that 3 years later, he had retired from business and moved to Niagara Street, where he was listed in *Mitchell's Toronto Directory* without a profession. The commercial popularity of small beer declined after its peak in the 1850s, and no ginger beer makers were listed in the 1864 directory. Indeed, Charles Sproutt did not carry on the family business, but became the co-proprietor of the "West Toronto Brewery" located on Queen Street West at Niagara.

Strong bottles are needed for ginger

beer as carbon dioxide gas is still released after bottling (Galford p 68). The stoneware beer bottles of the type used by Sproutt were available from Warner & Co. of Toronto for \$0.75 per dozen, according to an advertisement for stoneware pottery in an 1856 business directory. Sproutt may have ordered his to be stamped with his name either for advertising purposes, or so that the empty bottles could be returned to him.

Apparently little else in the way of specialized brewing equipment was needed to make ginger beer, as evidenced by the following recipe taken from the Jones Family Papers (Metropolitan Toronto Library), and reprinted in *The Art and Mystery of Brewing in Ontario: Take 1 oz ginger, 1/2 oz cream of tartar, a large lemon slice, 2 lbs syrupy sugar, 1 gallon water, mix altogether and let it simmer over the fire for half an hour.* (Bowering p 17)

While this recipe does not indicate whether the ground spice or the fresh root was to be used, fresh ginger root was specified in other recipes for ginger beer published in the 19th century. After 1550, ginger was a common export from Jamaica, where it had been adapted from its original home in Southern China and India (Hayes p 91). Modern recipes also advise that once it has been bottled, the beer is ready to drink in 2 days, and its flavour impaired if it stands longer than 3 days (Galford p 68). Older cookbooks, however, do include directions for making the beer so it can be stored for several months. One can only hope that the 20 mile trip up Yonge Street from Henry Sproutt's shop on King Street, to the Log Cabin site where the bottle was found, was timely!

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CULINARY CLUB

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 Gerald Nakell, Toronto
 Judith Roback, Toronto
 Eva Sanz-Sole, Kitchener
 Janet Sinclair, Stratford
 Marc Thuet, Toronto
 Jean Walker, Etobicoke
 Jenni Walker, Innisville

Museums:

Benares Historic House, Mississauga
 Spruce Lane Farm, Burlington

CULINARY CALENDAR

Please send CHO information about your upcoming food history or related events. We are pleased to include them in the newsletter.

November

The Gibson House Museum *Christmas and Hogmanay Treats* Enjoy this hearth cooking workshop and discover delicious Scottish holiday foods. Nov. 2 or Nov. 16, 10:00 - 2:00 pm. Cost \$20.00 (supplies incl.) Pre-registration required. 5172 Yonge St. at Park Home Ave. in the City of York. (416) 395-7432.

The Seagram Museum *The Mystery of Matching Wine and Food* Brush up on your wine knowledge for your Christmas entertaining. Taste 6 premium wines and pair them with 6 food selections. Nov. 10, 12:30 - 2:30 pm. Cost, \$48.62. To register call Conestoga College at (519) 748-3516. 57 Erb St. W., Waterloo, Ont.

Black Creek Pioneer Village *Christmas in the Village* Come and see what made an 1860s Christmas merry. Enjoy evergreen garlands, mulled cider, mincemeat, puddings and glowing fireplaces. Weekdays 9:30 - 4:00, weekends 10:00 - 4:30. 1000 Murray Ross Parkway, North York. (416) 736-1733.

The Seagram Museum *Port Tasting* Come and discover this heart-warming fortified wine. The afternoon will include the history of the port trade, how port is made and the different types of port available. Sample white, ruby, tawny and vintage port. Nov. 17, 2:00 - 4:00 pm. Cost \$39.79. To register call Conestoga College at (519) 748-3516.

Joseph Schneider Haus *Cookies and Pretzels* With the Christmas approaching, the Schneiders prepare traditional Pennsylvania German holiday treats. Nov. 23, 10:00 - 5:00 pm. Nov. 24, 1:00 - 5:00 pm. 466 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ont. (519) 742-7752.

The Gibson House Museum *Mincemeat, Pomanders and Paper Chains* Discover the traditions of a 19th century rural Christmas. Nov. 30 & Dec. 1, 12:00 - 5:00 pm. (416) 395-7432.

Joseph Schneider Haus *Annual Butchering Bee* Talk with fifth generation butcher Harold Snider and watch staff prepare link and summer sausage. Nov. 30, 10:00 - 5:00 pm. (519) 742-7752.

December

Joseph Schneider Haus *Sausage and Scrapple* Meat left over from the November butchering bee is made into sausage and pawns (scrapple). Lard is rendered for baking. Dec. 7, 10:00 - 5:00 pm, Dec. 8, 1:00 - 5:00 pm. (519) 742-7752.

John R. Park Homestead, Essex Region Conservation Authority *Christmas in the Country* Homemade decorations, music and hearth baking. Dec. 8, 11:00 - 4:00 pm. Between Kingsville and Colchester on Essex Rd. 50 at Iler Road. (519) 776-5209.

Toronto Historical Board - Spadina *Christmas Gaslight Tours* For a traditional holiday experience visit Spadina (the elegant 1866 Austin mansion) and enjoy a guided tour. Christmas delicacies served include Walnut Plum Pudding with Sherry Sauce, Ribbon Cake, Brandy Snaps, Almond Cakes and hot mulled wine. Thursday to Sundays, December 12 - 15, and December 19 - 22. 7:00 - 10:00 pm, \$15 per person, 265 Spadina Rd. Reservations required: (416) 392-6827 ext. 265. (space limited)

Toronto Historical Board - Mackenzie House *Christmas Gaslight Tours* Wander through this intimate Victorian townhouse. Enjoy traditional music and sample Twelfth Night Cake, New Year's Cakes, Christmas Cookies and mulled wine. Thursday to Sunday, December 19 - 22. 7:00 - 10:00 pm, \$15 per person, 82 Bond St., Toronto, Ont. Reservations required: (416) 392-6827 ext. 265. (space limited)

Joseph Schneider Haus *St. Martin's Goose* Festive fowl is prepared in the cookstove. Dec. 21, 10:00 - 5:00 pm. Dec. 22, 1:00 - 5:00 pm. (519) 742-7752.

The Gibson House Museum *Preparing for Hogmanay* Discover the special foods and customs of a Scottish New Year. Dec. 27th to Dec. 30th. 12:00 - 5:00 pm. (416) 395-7432.

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