

# Culinary Historians of Ontario

Summer 1998 Number 17



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.



## Creating Your Family Recipe Book

Do you wish you'd asked your Grandmother for her recipe for \_\_\_\_\_ before she died, because you'd love to make it today for your children? Do you have nostalgic conversations about good meals at the family dinner table?

Perhaps you have inherited a precious manuscript recipe book from your family. But have you ever thought about creating one for your family? The late Madame Jehane Benoit, Canada's great recorder of family culinary traditions, said that her granmère's manuscript inspired her culinary awareness and subsequent career.

After thinking about it for several years, I finally started to compile a family recipe book last Christmas. It's stalled in the computer entry stage, but I'll finish it eventually. We can all help preserve our culinary heritage by compiling family recipe books. Maybe this will be your inspiration!

We are connected to our ancestors and our descendants by our food. Margaret Fraser and Carol Ferguson, in *A Century of Canadian Home Cooking*, remind us that "home cooking is a direct reflection of social and cultural history, of regional and family ties and our collective identity as Canadians". Community cook books and church cook books have the similar purpose of saving, sharing and safeguarding this heritage.

Your family recipe book doesn't need to be scholarly, flashy or impeccably presented.

But it does have to be a truthful recollection of your family. It can be anything from a simple collection of recipes arranged in basic categories like cakes and soups, all the way to the culinary story of your family, complete with photos of festive meals.

Another example is the Reynolds Family recipe book which was created in 1989 when 1 of the 4 daughters was at home with her first born and took it on as a project. It was so successful with her large family that a second was compiled. Both their family recipe books are serlox bound, and full of little memory statements. The Kettle Family recipe book was published as *Grandma Kettle's Pies and Cookies*.

Something else you may want to consider: do you ever photograph your messy kitchen while cooking is in progress?, or open a cupboard drawer or refrigerator door to photograph the innards? Future culinary historians will love you.

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# COOKERY COLLECTION



## Steps to Creating Your Family Recipe Book

### First step: MAKE YOUR RECIPE LIST

Talk to your siblings, parents, cousins, grand- parents, aunts and uncles. What dishes do they remember? Do the dishes invoke any memories and feelings? The conversations will lead you into many nooks and crannies of your family history. Together you can compile the list of recipes. The instigator of this venture (you!) is likely to do the most work.

### Second step: COLLECT YOUR RECIPES.

Where did the recipes come from? Ask Aunt So & So if you can look at her handwritten recipe cards or perhaps your mother still has cook books from the 60s on her shelf. I found as I looked for specific recipes that I often came across others, and instantly remembered them too. They were also added to the list. Transcribe them into the computer or photocopy them. What to do if a recipe can't be found because it's maker has long died? Look at similar recipes, experiment with them; maybe one of them will be close. Or, write a story associated with it, lament it's passing and regret it's non appearance in your compilation. But don't forget to mention it.

### Third step: DECIDE ON YOUR FORMAT.

How will you arrange your recipes? – alphabetically, thematically, seasonally? If you're using a computer, play with the fonts and layout. Add a title page, an introduction, credits (thanks Aunt So & So), a table of contents and/or index, depending on size. Maybe your cousin wants to add a great culinary story or Uncle Tom has a memory he wants recorded. Edit thoroughly, and get other family members to check it too. Will the final version be put into a binder or a duotang? Or do you intend to bind with serlox?

### Fourth step: PRINT IT.

But only after you are completely sure it's exactly how you want it to be. Work from a clean master and use a good quality photocopier.

### Fifth step: DISTRIBUTE IT.

Proudly. Members of your family will want their copies, of course, but maybe your friends are interested too. How about donating one to the local archives, maybe even along with photographs and other relevant material?

From the Lucas Family Recipe Book, unpublished

#### RICKY'S HONEY-RICE KRISPS

6 ozs. sugar      3-4 heaped tbsps. liquid honey  
8 ozs. butter      1/2 large package rice krispies

Melt first 3 ingredients altogether, stirring all the while. Bring to a boil, then turn down heat and simmer 6 minutes, still stirring. Pour in rice krispies and mix thoroughly. No runny bits. Press hard into pans. Cut into bite sized pieces before hard. Cut right through. Leave in cold place to harden before removing from pan.

*Fiona's note:* Way better than rice krispie squares made with marshmallow. A personal favourite of my brother and me.

From the Kettle Family Recipe Book

*Grandma Kettle's Pies and Cookies*, Phil and Leslie Kettle with help from Grandma (Erin, Ont: Boston Mills Press, 1992), page 22.

#### CHERRY CAKE

1 cup	butter	250 mL
1 3/4 cups	sugar	425 mL
5	eggs	
3 cups	Five Roses flour	725 mL
3/4 tsp	baking powder	3 mL
3 cups	maraschino cherries	725 mL

- Cream the butter and the sugar.
- Add the eggs.
- Mix the sifted flour with the baking powder
- Add to the butter mixture
- Fold in the whole cherries.
- Bake in a greased and floured loaf pan at 300°F/ 150°C for 2 1/2 - 3 hours.

#### Recipe Hints

*At one time soda crackers were sold in tin boxes. Grandmother used one of these boxes as the size for her cherry cake. A square cake pan is best.*

*Be sure to drain the juice off the cherries before using. Do not put the cherries into the mixer. Drop them into the finished batter and mix by hand or they will all go to the bottom."*

☺ If you decide to create your own family recipe book, let CHO know how it goes!

# SWEET, SAVOURY AND SOUR: Seated at Ontario's Dinner Table

Perhaps in the past couple of Issues of the newsletter, you've read the above mentioned title but didn't really know what we were talking about.

*Sweet, Savoury and Sour: Seated at Ontario's Dinner Table* was a selection of recipes from 20<sup>th</sup> century cookbooks that we, CHO, catered to guests on the first evening (June 21) of the ALHFAM conference held at the University of Waterloo. Our objective when choosing these recipes was to create a tapestry of foods served on dinner tables over the decades in Ontario.

The recipes we chose covered the decades between the 1900 to 1960 and the taste sensations of sweet, savoury and sour. Our final selection was, Maple Sugar Candy, Chicken Goulash, Pickled Onions, Butter Tarts, Iced Cocoa for Thirty, Scotch Eggs, Sauerkraut, Chinese Chews, Economy Jelly Roll, Blue Cheese Dip, Pickle Puffs, and Mustard Pickles.

It was clear by the end of the evening that three of these recipes were favourites and we have included them below.

## Butter Tarts

Five Roses Company, *Five Roses Cookbook* (Lake of the Woods, Manitoba, 1915) pg. 76.

"1 egg  
1 cup brown sugar  
1 cup currants  
Butter size of a walnut.  
Flavour to taste

Beat all until full of bubbles.  
Drop from teaspoon into lined patty tin, and bake in quick oven. One cup of dates may be added if desired."

## Rich Short Pastry

(For Tarts, Etc.)

pg. 72  
"4 cups *Five Roses* flour  
½ tsp. Baking powder  
¼ tsp. salt  
½ cup butter  
½ cup lard  
Cold water to make stiff paste.

Mix all dry ingredients together in a bowl. Rub in butter and lard with the tips of the fingers until a fine as bread crumbs. About 3 tablespoons of water or cream are sufficient. The yolk of an egg added with the water improves the colour."

## Iced Cocoa For Thirty

J.A. Watkins Company, *Watkins Cookbook* (Winona, Minnesota, The J. A. Watkins Company, 1938) pg. 240.

"3 cups boiling water  
6 quarts milk  
1 pint whipping cream (or more)  
1 ½ cups Watkins cocoa  
2 ½ cups sugar  
1 tbsp. Watkins vanilla

Stir water, cocoa, and sugar until well dissolved. Place in double boiler, cook 30 minutes, bring to brisk boil over flame, add scalded milk, stirring well. Cool, add 1 tablespoon Watkins vanilla. Chill, add more sugar if desired. Serve in chilled glasses with ice cubes. Add cocoa, top with whipped cream. Serve at once."

NOTE: Cocoa and vanilla from other companies may be substituted.



## Pickle Puffs

Elaine Collett, *The Chatelaine Cookbook*, (Toronto: Maclean-Hunter Publishing Company Ltd., 1965) pp. 51-52.

*These bite size nibbles won first-prize in the fourteenth annual Family Favorites recipes contest organized by this quintessential Canadian magazine.*

"¼ cup soft butter  
½ tsp paprika  
1 cup grated Cheddar cheese  
24 small pieces of various pickles (stuffed olives, pickled onions, sweet gherkins, dill pickles)  
½ cup unsifted all-purpose flour  
¼ tsp salt

Blend grated cheese into the soft butter. Stir in flour, salt and paprika. Mix well. Place dough on a square of waxed paper and form into a 6 inch roll. Dry pickles on absorbent paper. Slice roll into ¼ inch slices to make 24. Wrap a slice of dough around each pickle, covering it completely. Arrange on an ungreased baking sheet and keep in the refrigerator until your party is in full swing. Bake puffs at 400 F. for 10-12 minutes. Serve hot. Makes 24 appetizers, or enough for 6 or 7 people".

NOTE: Pickle Puffs may be frozen uncooked, ahead of time, and then baked as required.

# "A Sunday Herbal" at Steckle Heritage Farm

To "borrow" a line from the movie *A Field of Dreams*, "if you feed them, they will come. . .". Surely this defines *A Sunday Herbal* which was held at the Steckle Heritage Homestead in Kitchener on June 21, 1998. ALHFAM's annual conference got off to a rousing start when thirty, quite diverse, individuals gathered to participate in this CHO sponsored event. The event will be remembered for its rustic setting, great food, informative speakers and, again, the variety of food enjoyed by all who attended.

The setting for the event was, to say the least, ideal. Workshops were held in and around the 1833 barn (which has rafters that seem to reach to the sky), honey house and surrounding gardens. The atmosphere was relaxed as participants were encouraged to investigate this Kitchener landmark during their visit to the homestead.

As people stepped off the bus from the University of Waterloo, they were greeted to a breakfast of fresh strawberries, violet scones, calendula-orange muffins, herbal butters, jellies and iced peppermint tea. Many of the recipes were courtesy of Pat Crocker's terrific cookbook, "*Riversong - Using Herbs in Lean Green Cooking*".

The morning began as Bob Wildfong, Head Gardener at Doon Heritage Crossroads, took the group back in time to appreciate the mentality behind "*Herbal Folklore*". We examined the relationships between plants and people and how the cultivation of herbs provided security to earlier settlers.

Marilyn Edmison-Driedger is the proprietor of The Herbal Touch, a family herb business in Otterville, Ontario. Her workshop entitled, "*The Language of Herbs*", inspired participants to discover how herbs can enrich our lives. Marilyn encouraged us to open up our senses by touching, sniffing and tasting the wonders of these plants. A highlight of this presentation was the sampling of a tasty lavender wine.

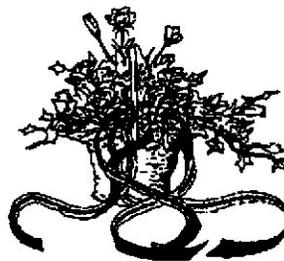
Lunch was provided by Chez Soleil of Stratford. We were treated to Orchietta Pasta with Fresh Herb Butter, Parmesan and Caramelized Onions, Pagnotta Rolls, Fresh Herb Salad with Rhubarb Cider Dressing, a selection of local cheeses and freshly

pressed Apple Cider. As the group ate, Liz Mountain of Chez Soleil entertained us with her thoughts concerning the culinary use of herbs that were presented in the lunch.

The afternoon began as Pat Crocker of Riversong Herbs & Naturals investigated "*The Pioneer Medicine Chest*". Pat carefully prepared the setting to her presentation by explaining that Canadian pioneer medicine was prompted by three distinctive influences: First People's herbology, the Shaker medicinal plant industry and European medicinal heritage. A tour of the herbal gardens of the farm and the preparation of a medicinal salve, complemented this session.

The last workshop of the day focussed on the use of herbs in museum programming. Before the session began, we enjoyed sampling Cock-a-leekie (see pg. 5) and Blanc Mange prepared by Elizabeth Nelson-Raffaale of The Gibson House Museum. Elizabeth proposed an interesting query to the group: "*Everyone Used Herbs, Didn't They?*". Participants were asked to question the use of herbs among people from different backgrounds and time periods. Elizabeth wondered if the proprietors of the Gibson farm, a 1851 rural farm in Willow Dale, actually prepared herbal medicines, as the staff and its programming had broadly interpreted.

The day ended with many of us not wishing to leave the heritage farm. Many thanks are extended to Jean Steckle, the Steckle staff, workshop leaders, Chez Soleil and participants for providing such a delightful day.



Christine Ristma, co-founder, Culinary Historians of Ontario

## Everyone Used Herbs, Didn't They? A Journey Through Herb Programming at The Gibson House Museum

When I was asked by the CHO to present a session on using herbs in museum programming at a *Sunday Herbal* for the ALHFAM Conference I immediately decided to prepare some receipts from The Gibson House Museum Hearth Cooking Workshops.

Hearth Cooking Workshops at The Gibson House explore the foodways of a Scottish Canadian family living on their farm in rural Willow Dale in 1851. Eliza Gibson's housekeeping papers have been lost or, as we prefer to think, are yet to be re-discovered, so our receipts are taken from books available to her from her girlhood until the 1850s. One of the most useful books we have is Mistress Meg Dods' *The Cook and Housewife's Manual*, an extensive book of receipts whose 5th edition was published in Edinburgh in 1833 and sold in Toronto in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Although Mistress Dods' *Manual* contains many receipts perhaps more suited to Mrs Gibson's most elegant meals, there is also a section of Scottish National Dishes that one can imagine are reflective of the fare that covered the dining table at the Gibsons' for many family dinners.

When I reviewed our Hearth Cooking Workshop files I discovered a small list of receipts that call for herbs. The dish that seemed to be the most obvious choice to reflect Scottish foodways was Meg Dods' *Cock-a-Leekie*, one of the family of wonderful broths and broses that are key to Scottish cookery and a dish that relies heavily on potherbs for flavour. This, it seems, was an inspired choice because not only did it illustrate my theme of remaining true to your site's particular story, it tasted delicious and everyone wanted the recipe. So, for all of you unable to attend *A Sunday Herbal* here is the recipe for *Cock-a-Leekie* for you to enjoy, although perhaps not until we get cooler weather.

### Cock-a-Leekie

"Boil from four to six pounds of good shin-beef, well broken, till the liquor is very good. Strain it, and put to it a capon, or large fowl, trussed as for boiling, and, when it boils, half the quantity of blanched leeks intended to be used, well cleaned, and cut in inch-lengths, or longer. Skim this carefully. In a half-hour add the remaining part of the leeks, and a seasoning of pepper and salt. The soup must be very thick of leeks, and the first part of them must be boiled down into the soup till it becomes a green lubricious compound. Sometimes the capon is served in the tureen with the cock-a-leekie. This makes good leek-soup without a fowl.- *Obs.* Some people thicken cock-a-leekie with the fine part of oatmeal. Those who dislike so much of the leeks may substitute shred German greens, or spinage and parsley, for one half of them. Reject the coarse part of the leeks. Prunes used to be put to this soup. The practice is obsolete."

### Notes

☛ Cock-a-Leekie is one of the many broths and broses that are so suited to hearth cookery. A review of the chapters on Broths, Soups and Gravies and Scottish National Dishes in

Dods gives a good feel for the breadth of this element of the Scottish diet. C. Anne Wilson's *Food and Drink in Britain*, especially the chapter on Cereals, Potherbs and Pottages, help place these broths in the culinary history of Britain, and give an explanation for those prunes.



☛ The broth used to cook the chicken should be rich and well flavoured. Add sufficient salt and reduce the broth well. Meg Dods' *Plain Stock Broth* has added carrots, turnips, onions, cloves, herbs and leeks. If you don't feel you have enough bones the addition of some roots and herbs will enrich your stock.

☛ Leeks - the amount varies with the bird's size. I used 4 large bunches for a 5 pound hen, since I used kail as well. As Dods advises, clean them well to remove all traces of sand.

☛ Capon - use a good quality free range bird for best flavour.

☛ German Greens (Kail) - one of the loose headed cabbages. Kail was the basic green of the Scottish lowlands - kail-yard is a term used for cottage gardens in the lowlands. Watch the age of your kail, grocery store kail can be quite rank and tough. The kail I used at *A Sunday Herbal* was the tender new growth from the Gibson House garden. Using Kail is optional.

☛ Simmer your *Cock-a-Leekie* gently for 2 to 3 hours - you want the flavour of the broth and herbs to permeate the flesh of the capon. When you're ready to serve remove the bird from the broth - as the recipe indicates it can either be served separately on a platter or pieces can be returned to the broth. Beware that your capon may break apart as you remove it from the pot - this is not a concern, just warn your guests to watch for bones.

Two other receipts using herbs were also served at the *Sunday Herbal*: Mrs Beeton's *Cheap Blancmange*, a molded milk-based dessert flavoured with laurel leaves and lemon, and Dods' *An English Salad and Salad-Sauce*, a delicate salad of young salad herbs. If you would like copies of either of these receipts please contact me, Elizabeth Nelson-Raffaele at (416) 395-7432.



### For Our Next Issue...

In the autumn issue of the CHO newsletter we want to take a close look at the effects of WWII on food in Ontario/ Canada. We hope to include articles about rationing and the recipes that resulted, the experience of War Brides, soldiers rations, and any other topics you may find of interest.

If you would like to contribute a personal remembrance, recipe etc. or know someone who might, please contact us. We would be pleased to include your articles or information.

# Culinary Calendar

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

## August

### Weekends in August

*The Gibson House Museum (416) 395-7432*

August 1 & 2 12 - 5 pm

Measles, Medicine & Mother: Keeping the Family Healthy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

August 8 & 9

Vegetables: Dried, Pickled & Sweetened

August 22 & 23

Preserves: Potted Beef and Smoked Fish

### Toronto's Festival of Beer

*Historic Fort York*

August 7 - 9

With over 30 brewers offering over 100 types of beer, local restaurants serving gourmet fare, cooking demonstrations, lectures on the history of beer ...

For more information call (416) 698-3125 or [www.realbeer.com/torfestbeer](http://www.realbeer.com/torfestbeer)

### The Hot & Spicy Food Festival

*Harbourfront Centre, 410 Queens Quay, Toronto*

August 14 - 16

Learn tips to help spice up your grill at home and learn the history and uses of spices. Sample creations of local and celebrity chefs, see foodie films...

For more information call (416) 973-4000.

## September

### Fall Lecture Series - Aspects of Toronto's Industrial History

*Tadmorden Mills Heritage Museum & Arts Centre (416) 396-2819*

Sept. 15 7:30 pm

The Art and Mystery of Brewing

Speaker: Ian Bowering

Sept. 29 7:30 pm

Sweetness on the Waterfront: A Story of Redpath Sugars

Speaker: Richard Feltoe, Curator and Corporate Archivist, Redpath Sugar Museum

Pre-registration required.

\$5.00 member, \$6.00 non-members



### Apple Days

*The Gibson House Museum (416) 395-7432*

Sept. 19 & 20 12 - 5 pm

Enjoy apple treats from the historic kitchen.

### Harvest Festival

*Tadmorden Mills Heritage Museum & Arts Centre (416) 396-2819*

Sept. 27 12 - 5 pm

19<sup>th</sup> century festival featuring 3<sup>rd</sup> annual apple pie baking competition and 1<sup>st</sup> harvest festival vegetable contest.

## October

### Bread and Preserves

*The Gibson House Museum (416) 395-7432*

Oct. 3 10 - 2 pm

This hearth cooking workshop covers two favourite tastes of the harvest season. Cost \$25. Pre-registration required.



### Harvest Festival

*Colborne Lodge (416) 392-6916*

Oct. 4 12- 4:30 pm

Purchase items from The Victorian Picnic Tent which uses some Mrs. Becton's 1860 bill of fare, including pickled tongue sandwiches, cabinet pudding and chicken patties. The market features a local honey producer, homemade pumpkin pies, pickles, corn roast, hot cider and more.

### A Cold Bite

*Montgomery's Inn (416) 394-8113*

Oct. 17 1 - 4 pm

Participants will prepare 19<sup>th</sup> century tavern food and drink in the open hearth kitchen, tour the Inn and enjoy their samples of food in the bar room.

Cost \$30. Pre-registration required.

### Dinner at The Gibsons'

*The Gibson House Museum (416) 395-7432*

Oct. 24 10 - 1:30 pm

Hotch-Potch to Howtowdic - Scottish Cookery

Cost \$25. Pre-registration required.

## Culinary Credits

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Deadlines for entries for October issue —  
September 15, 1998

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