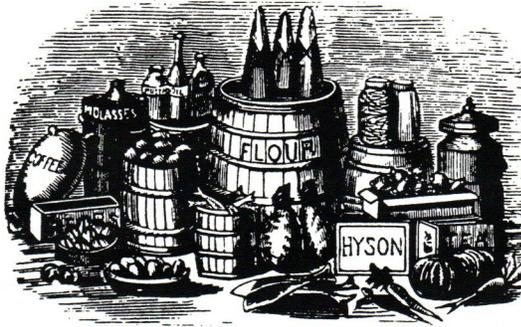


# CULINARY HISTORIANS OF ONTARIO



Autumn 1994

number 2

## - TORONTO REGION -

### Thanks for the enthusiastic response!

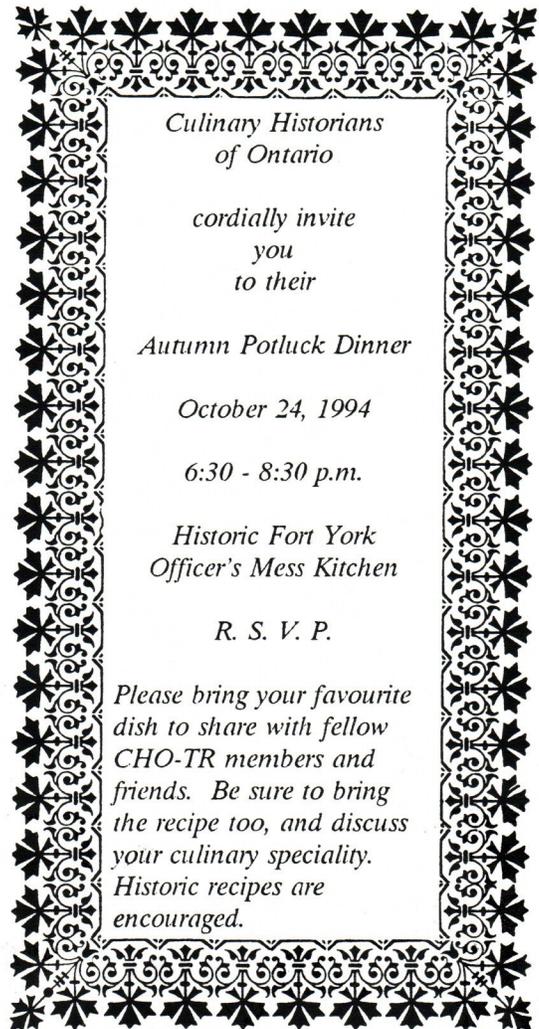
Wow! Your response to the inaugural newsletter of the newly formed *Culinary Historians of Ontario* is very gratifying. Not only do we have 48 members currently signed up (as of early September), but each week brings in several more. Also, we received many letters and phone calls expressing encouragement and interest. We (Fiona Lucas, Christine Lupton and Bridget Wranich) realize even more how much this association is needed and wanted in Ontario.

If you are reading this newsletter without seeing the first issue, please let us send you a complimentary copy. And if you know of a colleague, friend, cultural or business group who may be interested, we'll send one to them too. All subscriptions start with this second issue.

October 24 will be our first meeting. It'll be a potluck "bring-your-favourite-food-along-with-the-recipe" dinner, followed by a discussion about the future development of the Culinary Historians of Ontario - Toronto Region. We'll share our foods first, then share our ideas. We encourage everyone to bring suggestions and questions. Everyone welcome! Bring a friend too, if you want.

We also encourage interested people to contribute to future issues of the CHO-TR newsletter. Some of you have stated this interest already, so the "Writer's Guidelines" are included for you. As said in number one, this is a forum to share information and ask questions about Ontario's historic foods and beverages.

Look for issue number three at the end of January. Oh yes - and thanks again for the tremendous response!



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 #2

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

### SOFT GINGERBREAD WITH FRUIT

Anonymous, *The Cook Not Mad; Or, Rational Cookery*,  
James MacFarlane: Kingston, Upper Canada 1831, page 39, no. 127.

#### *Original text:*

One pound and a half of flour, half a pound of sugar, half a pound of butter, one pint of molasses, four eggs, one teacup of milk, two teaspoons of pearlsh, one ounce of ginger, one of cinnamon, one nutmeg, one pound of currants.

#### *Modern version:*

1 lb. 2 cups 500 mL currants, plumped  
 ½lb. 1 cup 250 mL soft butter  
 ½lb. 1 cup 250 mL white sugar  
 4 4 4 medium eggs  
 1 pt. 2 cups 500 mL molasses  
 2 tsps. 2 tsps. 10 mL pearlsh\*  
**OR**  
 2 tsps. 2 tsps. 10 mL baking soda  
 1 oz. 5 Tbs. 65 mL ground ginger  
 1 oz. 4 Tbs. 50 mL ground cinnamon  
 1 oz. 4 Tbs. 50 mL ground nutmeg  
 1½lbs. 6 cups 1.5 L white flour  
 1 teacup 1 cup 250 mL whole milk

\* dissolved in 2 tsps. (10 mL) milk

1. Cream butter and sugar until very light.
2. Separate eggs. Whisk egg yolks to a pale yellow cream. Blend yolks into butter and sugar.
3. Add molasses, pearlsh or baking soda, spices and plumped currants.
4. Blend in flour, one cup at a time, alternating with milk.
5. Whisk egg whites until stiff. Fold whites into batter.
6. Turn into two well-buttered or greased 9" x 9" (23 x 23 cm) cake pans or two 8 cup (2 L) turks' head cake moulds or about 30 muffin tins.
8. Bake in a moderate oven, 180°C (350°F), for about 1 hour for pans or about 40 minutes for muffins tins (or until a toothpick inserted in centre comes out clean).

#### *Historic information:*

*The Cook Not Mad*, although credited with the status of being the first cookery book published in Canada, was not Canadian written. It was a copy of an American book with the same title published in 1830 in Watertown, New York.

This recipe for **Soft Gingerbread** follows an American innovation of the late 18th century in which milk and eggs were added to the traditional European hard gingerbread biscuit doughs to make a cake batter instead.

Like most receipts in this book, the author assumed the cook was knowledgeable about basic baking techniques, such as separating the eggs so that the yolks and whites could be beaten separately to incorporate as much air as possible for a lighter texture. Prior to the invention of chemical leaveners it was common to use at least eight eggs and often more for even a basic cake. Since this recipe uses chemicals to supplement the eggs, fewer eggs are necessary for the final result.

**Pearlash** (refined potash, or potassium carbonate) was the first chemical leavening agent. It is still available in some delicatessens specializing in German foods, because the Germans still use it extensively. It needs to be thoroughly dissolved in milk or water, otherwise it is not distributed through the dough well.

*Turk's head  
cake mould*



*Recipe submitted by Fiona Lucas.*

## CULINARY COLLEAGUE #2

*This ongoing column features people who are currently researching Ontario's culinary history.*

### • EDNA STAEBLER •

*In 1968, a Canadian Mennonite cook book titled **Food That Really Schmecks** appeared on the literary stands and was greeted with enthusiastic response. Twenty-five years after its publication, CHO-TR thought it appropriate to visit the author at her cottage on Sunfish Lake in Waterloo County to discuss her writings on food.*

**You became, almost by accident, a special ambassador for Waterloo County cooking. What are its special and unique elements?**

Well, for one thing it's simple and it tastes good. Most of the materials are already in your kitchen cupboard, so that you don't have to run into town. The keynote is simplicity.

**At the end of each cook book, you include your address so people can write with suggestions. Why did you include this?**

There is so much space for error in a cook book. If you make a mistake in the printing of a novel so what if a word is wrong. But a cook book is entirely different. For example, there's a recipe for *Mother-in-Law Salad Dressing* in one of my books and a woman phoned me and said that she had been making that dressing for a long time with success, but recently she made it and her son said it was too salty. So she reviewed the recipe and saw that it called for a *tablespoon* of salt. Without thinking, she must've used a *teaspoon* in her previous dressings, but did what the book said this time. Now how many printings have gone by without anyone noticing?

**Over the years you have received thousands of letters from people who admire your writings. Did you ever expect that kind of response when your first cook book was published?**

Oh never! It took me a couple of years to write *Food That Really Schmecks*. The publisher said that it was going to be a best seller because it was so different. People seemed to like it because of the writings and the recipes. Some even took it to bed to read. My friends say my books aren't cook books but folk literature, because they give the lifestyle of the Mennonites and of my own family. I really enjoy

getting letters from people because they're so grateful. It makes me glad I did it.

**Do you think people would have responded so enthusiastically to your cook books if you had written about another regional cooking style?**

Well, no. I think the word *Mennonite* suggests good, tasty food; I think that word has helped to interest people in the books. But you know, a couple of years ago, I was given the Waterloo-Wellington Hotel/Motel Association Award and they said that I won because next to Oktoberfest, my books brought tourists into the Waterloo Region. People read my books and want to visit the area with all its markets. So it's had that kind of effect. But if there hadn't been any writings with the recipes, there wouldn't have been the same interest. They are very personal. People identify with the friends I talk about.

**How did you get involved in writing a cook book?**

I did an article for *Maclean's [Magazine]* on Mennonite food. I lived with them and wrote about their lifestyle. Shortly after the article was published, I got a call from Ryerson Press; they wanted me to do a cook book based on my involvement with this group. I think the only cook book I owned at the time was one by Betty Crocker. Food wasn't a main interest in my life. I mean I like to eat, but I didn't spend a lot of time experimenting. I didn't know how I was going to write this book so I kept visiting my Mennonite friend and I'd eat and copy out her recipes. Then I was invited to speak at the Canadian Authors' Convention in Winnipeg to tell how I did research for my magazine articles. The Managing Editor of Ryerson Press heard me speak and afterwards he came up to me and said that if I wrote the book in the same manner that I gave my speech, we'd have a best seller. I was a little confused by his comments. Then I thought, well, maybe I should make the cook book personal and talk about my Mennonite friends and of my mother's cooking.

**My mother commented that when she moved to a rural community in the early 1960s, many of her friends purchased factory produced pickles, cakes, etc., when they entertained. It was generally assumed that country cooking was less than satisfactory; however, when *Food That Really Schmecks* appeared, she and others began to develop a new sense of pride in their cooking and**

began to serve it to both country and city guests.

I am so glad to hear that. But, you see, I did the same thing. When the Bertons [Pierre and Janet] and others came to dinner, I would say, "What am I going to give them?" My neighbour said, "Why don't you give them some of your *Bean Salad* and other local foods". They were delighted because they had never been treated to these foods before. I then realized 'this food is something really special.

**In 1988, in *Schmecks Appeal*, you wrote that it was the last cook book you were going to write.**

Yes, you bet! Well, I did give about three cartons of recipes to a friend. However, I said that before I did the series on vegetables, pies. However, I still have people saying, "Aren't you going to do another one?" And I say, "Haven't you people got enough?" Surely three cook books and the series should satisfy people for a while. You know, I have three other books that are being taught in English literature classes at universities. Right now, I'm working on a book about my sister, who lives in Peterborough, and her letters to me during the 1950s. I'm very excited about this project because these letters are so funny and poignant.

**Do you receive calls from potential food writers who ask for advice?**

Oh, constantly. So many cook book writers aren't writers, but they are good food people. I was the opposite. I was a journalist for twenty years before I wrote my first cook book. So I can't answer all questions about food. I was a panelist on a TV show and a lady in the audience asked, "Why does the meringue on my lemon pie weep?" "Well," I responded, "maybe it's because you aren't eating it fast enough." That wasn't the answer she wanted!

**Is there one recipe that people have repeatedly made favourable comments about?**

Oh yes! It's my *Speedy Pat-In Pastry*. I haven't made pastry any other way since I was given this one.

**Edna Staebler.**

- *Food That Really Schmecks*. 1968.
- *More Food That Really Schmecks*. 1979.
- *Schmecks Appeal*. 1988.

*Submitted by Christine Lupton.*

## CULINARY CONTRIBUTION

CHO - TR graciously acknowledges the recent donation of two cookery books from Dr. David Wallace of Maryland, USA.

- Marion Harland. *Common Sense in the Household: A Manual of Practical Housewifery*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881.

This book was sent to Mr. Wallace's grandmother, Joy Wilson Wallace, by her American sister in 1881. Mrs. Wallace lived in the Toronto area for many years until her death in 1918.

- *Wimodausis Club Cook Book*. 2nd ed. Toronto: 1922.

The Wimodausis Club was composed of the wives, mothers, daughters and sisters of the faculty members of Victoria College in Toronto.

CHO - TR is wondering where to place these volumes so members may have access to them. Should we donate them to a library in our name or keep them within our organization? If you have any suggestions, please phone or write to one of the editorial team. Or bring your ideas to the potluck dinner. We'll let you know the decision in the next newsletter.

### EDNA'S SPEEDY PAT-IN PASTRY

1 1/2 cups sifted flour, all purpose or white  
 1 1/2 teaspoons sugar    3/4 teaspoon salt  
 1/2 cup corn oil    3 tablespoons cold milk

Sift the flour, sugar and salt directly into a 9-inch pie plate. Combine the oil and milk in a measuring cup and beat with a fork until it is creamy. Pour all at once over the flour in the pie plate. Mix with a fork until the flour is completely dampened. Push the dough with your fingers to line the bottom and sides of the plate. If you're fussy press it down with another pie plate to get it even. Flute the edges and fill with whatever filling you've chosen. If you are making a baked shell to be filled later, prick the entire surface of the pastry with a fork and bake at 425°F for 15 minutes, but watch it.

*Used by permission of Canadian publishers McClelland and Stewart, Toronto.*

## CULINARY QUERIES

*This ongoing column allows CHO-TR readers to participate in an open dialogue. We invite you to send us your questions so that we can all discuss and discover the answers to culinary history mysteries.*

**1. When were fresh lemons available for purchase in Ontario, and how common was this fruit?** Carolyn Blackstock, Historic Interpreter at Doon Heritage Crossroads

CHO-TR would like to address this question in a more specific manner than this column will allow. So, we plan to include in our next issue an entire article devoted to this topic. We invite members to send any interesting facts about lemons to add to this information.

*Engraving of lemon  
from unidentified  
19th century source*



*Answer from our last issue:*

Our thanks to Cynthia David, Food Editor at the *Toronto Sun* for answering our query about the Women's Culinary Network. This organization was founded in 1990 by five women chefs in the Toronto area. The group meets five times a year, most often on Monday evenings, every two months from September to May. Meetings may include potluck suppers, demonstrations, and discussions. Their membership is open to women in any area of the food industry. Membership cost is \$25.00 per year and may be sent c/o Nettie Cronish, 11 Dunloe Road, Toronto. M4V 2W4. (416) 483-7114.

## CULINARY CLUB

### *Founding members:*

Fiona Lucas, Historic Fort York  
Christine Lupton, Kitchener  
Bridget Wranich, Historic Fort York

### *Individuals:*

Katherine Barnes, Gibson House  
Patricia Beeson, author, Toronto  
Carl Benn, Historic Fort York  
Karen Black, Toronto Historical Board  
Cindy Brouse, registrar, Parks Canada  
Marilyn Connell, Toronto  
Elayne Dobel, archivist, Salvation Army  
Dorothy Duncan, Ontario Historical Society  
Lise Ferguson, Spadina  
Helen Hatton, home economist, Toronto  
Alison Henry, teacher, Stratford  
Melanie Garrison, King's Regiment  
Rosemary Kovac, Black Creek Pioneer Village  
Susan Lapell, Gibson House  
Felicity Leung, historian, Parks Canada  
Joyce Lewis, social historian, Toronto  
Clare Long, Waterdown  
Nancy Luno, Montgomery's Inn  
Margaret Lupton, Embro  
Elizabeth Nelson-Raffaele, Gibson House  
D. J. Marlowe, Pickering Museum Village  
Kim Nesbitt, real estate agent, Brampton  
Margeurite Newell, Montgomery's Inn  
Jo Marie Powers, Un. of Guelph, Hotel School  
Joanna Lynn Repka, Historic Fort York  
Mya Sangster, teacher, Toronto  
Edna Staebler, Waterloo County  
Jean Steckle, Steckle Heritage Homestead  
David Wallace, Maryland, USA  
Claudia White, Toronto  
Betty Wise, teacher, Hillsburgh  
Bette Lou Wranich, Bothwell

### *Museums:*

Doon Heritage Crossroads, Kitchener  
The Gibson House, North York  
The Grange, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto  
Historic Fort York, Toronto  
Inverarden Regency Cottage Museum, Cornwall  
John R. Park Homestead, Essex  
Joseph Schneider Haus Museum, Kitchener  
Montgomery's Inn, Etobicoke  
Seagram Museum, Kitchener  
Timmins Museum, Timmins  
Woodside National Historic Site, Kitchener

### *Other groups:*

Houston Culinary Historians  
International Wine and Food Society, Toronto  
National Library of Canada

## CULINARY CALENDAR

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

### October

**The Joseph Schneider Haus Museum** *The Schneiders Prepare for Winter* During October the museum hosts a number of theme weekends full of activities related to the harvest and preparations for winter.  
466 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ont. (519) 742-7752.

The themes are:

- Oct. 8-10 *Bringing in the Sheaves*
- Oct. 11 *Preserving the Harvest*
- Oct. 12 *Corn Husks and Kernels*
- Oct. 13 *Trail of the Black Walnut*
- Oct. 14 *Friday is Bake Day*

**The Seagram Museum** *Canadian Whisky Blending Workshop* Tour the special exhibit "200 Years of Tradition: The Story of Canadian Whiskey". Then Art Dawe, former Chief Blender of Joseph Seagram and Sons Ltd., instructs you in the art and science of blending whiskies. Test your senses and create your own blend as a memento of the day. Pre-registration required. \$27.50 (GST incl.) Oct. 22, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. 57 Erb Street W., Waterloo, Ont. (519) 885-1857  
Contact: Michelle Douglas-Mills.

**The Seagram Museum** *Spirit Walk* Travel back through time on Seagram's Museum first ever Spirit Walk. Meet characters such as distiller Joseph Seagram, a 19th century miller, and a 1920's Temperance Movement supporter. Special children's activities throughout weekend. Oct. 29 - 30, 11:00 - 5:00 p.m. See above for additional information.

### November

**Historic Fort York** *Historic Cooking Class* In the fully restored officer's mess kitchen discuss and prepare late 18th and early 19th century recipes for pickles, chutneys, vinegars, mustards, and ketchups. Pre-registration required. \$39.00 (GST incl.) includes ingredients, lunch, course materials and samples for home. Nov. 6, 11:00 - 4:30 p.m. Garrison Rd. off Fleet St., Toronto, Ont. (416) 392-6907.

**The Seagram Museum** *Wine Appreciation II* Henry Moore, noted wine columnist, lecturer and founder of the International Wine and Food Society, leads this advanced study of wine appreciation. Explore the latest methods of viticulture and viniculture, learn more about the components of wine, and taste an excellent selection of premium products. Pre-registration required. \$87.46 (GST incl.) Nov. 8 - Dec. 6 (Tuesdays), 7:00 - 9:30 p.m. For information on how to register, call Conestoga College at (519) 748-3516. See above for additional information.

**Montgomery's Inn** *The Good Earth* Share in growing interest in heritage gardening and roots of our agricultural past. Lecture series, four Tues. in Nov. Pre-registration required. \$28.00 series (GST incl.) \$25.00 seniors. 4709 Dundas St. W., Etobicoke (416) 394-8106.

The themes are:

- Nov. 1 *Where have all the farms gone?*  
Randall Reid, Montgomery's Inn
- Nov. 8 *Gentlemen and their Gardeners*  
Pleasance Crawford, landscape historian
- Nov. 15 *From Forest Clearing to Pleasure Ground*  
Nancy Luno, historian
- Nov. 22 *Down on the Farm*  
Peter Ledwith, Ontario Agricultural Museum

### December

**Essex Region Conservation Authority - John R. Park Homestead** *Christmas in the Country* See homemade decorations, hearth baking, a live nativity scene, listen to traditional music. Dec. 4, 11 & 18, 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. Essex Road 50, between Kingsville and Colchester on south shore of Lake Erie, just 45 mins. southeast of Windsor and Detroit. 360 Fairview Ave. W., Essex, Ont. (519) 738-2029.

## CULINARY CREDITS

### EDITORIAL TEAM:

- **Fiona Lucas** (416) 535-1405
- **Christine Lupton** (519) 749-1645
- **Bridget Wranich** (416) 690-7062

Thanks for this issue to: Edna Staebler.

Our address is: c/o C. Lupton, 60 Church Street East, Apt.# E, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 2S2

\$10 (Cnd.) annual subscription.

Deadlines for entries for January 1995 issue:  
November 30.

ISSN 1198 9270 All rights reserved.  
Written permission is required to reprint articles.