

Culinary Chronicles

The Newsletter of the Culinary Historians of Ontario

Autumn 2005

Number 46



Pitcher Belonging to Frances Stewart, Genteel Pioneer of Douro Township

This hand-painted pitcher is about 21 cm high, with a blue floral- and vine- motif. The base, which might have provided a maker's marking, is absent. In a letter of August 1823, Frances Stewart stated her husband Thomas's intentions "to have our cellar finished this autumn, and he has already commenced to excavate a place about five feet deep under the house in which to keep our potatoes."

During an archaeological excavation of the Stewart homestead, Auburn, near Peterborough, undertaken by Mary Lucyk Heaman in the summer of 1973, the crew located the root cellar Frances described. In the thousands of artifacts unearthed from the 5 x 5 x 5 foot cellar was this fragmented water jug. Carefully restored by Clayton Smith of the Collections Conservation and Management Programme of Sir Sanford Fleming College, it is now part of the collection of the Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives.

(Photo courtesy of Mya Sangster;
caption courtesy of Mary Lucyk Heaman.)

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President's Message

Saturday 24 September, the date of our Peterborough culinary history symposium, **“Celebrating the Culinary Heritage of Peterborough and Area,”** and **AGM**, was a glorious autumn day and an auspicious start for CHO's new year of programming and for the 2005–7 mandate of the new CHO executive, pictured below. You will find reports about the symposium and AGM later in this newsletter; however, I would like to draw your attention here to the support by members at the AGM for increased annual fees to ensure the continued quality and expanded page-length of *Culinary Chronicles*. Members clearly indicated their willingness to pay an annual fee of \$30 (more than the increase announced in the summer newsletter). Accordingly, at the October board meeting the executive approved the following new fees, due next January:

Individual or household membership: \$30, one year; \$55, two years

Supporting membership: \$55, one year; \$75, two years

Membership renewal notices will go out in the winter issue of *Culinary Chronicles*.

CHO's fall programming continues with a lecture by Craig Heron called **“Tavern in the Town: A Look Back at Drinking in Toronto,”** at Montgomery's Inn Museum, November 10, at 7 pm. There will be a cash bar for beer in the Inn's 1838 bar-room and 19th-century-style “bar snacks” for your delectation prepared by CHO members. On Sunday 20 November, 1–4 pm, join other CHO members at **“Cookbook Caper,”** an annual sale of secondhand and antiquarian cookbooks and old kitchen equipment as a fundraiser for the Ontario Historical Society. I suggest you arrive at 1 pm to catch the best items, then enjoy a relaxing cup of tea, again featuring baked delights by CHO cooks.

Liz Driver, President, CHO



2005– 2007 Executive of Culinary Historians of Ontario

Left to right: **Fiona Lucas**, Co-Founder, returned Past President and new Chair of Newsletter Committee; **Bob Wildfong**, returned Treasurer; **Liz Driver**, returned President and Chair of Website Committee, holding the official CHO meeting wooden spoon; **Maggie Newell**, returned Secretary; **Amy Scott**, returned Vice President, new Chair of Membership Committee and new Chair of Outreach and Education Committee.

(Photo courtesy of Amy Scott)

Culinary Themes in the Writings of Frances Stewart, Genteel Pioneer of Douro Township

Jodi Aoki

Jodi Aoki's paper was presented at the "Celebrating the Culinary History of Peterborough and Area" symposium co-sponsored by the Culinary Historians of Ontario and Hutchison House Museum on 24 September 2005, held at St Andrew's United Church, Peterborough.

Jodi is a student in the Canadian Studies and Native Studies MA Program at Trent University. The working title of her thesis is "Frances Stewart and the Production of Our Forest Home." She is also Archives and Special Collections Co-ordinator at Trent University. Our thanks to Jodi Aoki for permission to publish her paper.

Here we are at last safe & sound after a passage of exactly 7 weeks & one day. We reached this new world at about eight o'clock this morning.¹

These words were written by Irish immigrant Frances Stewart on July 21, 1822. Frances and her husband, Tom, had left their impoverished homeland for Upper Canada earlier that summer, traveling together with their three small daughters, their two servants, and Tom's sister's family, the Reids. We have glimpses of Frances' thoughts and experiences through the extraordinary legacy of letters that she wrote while crossing the Atlantic and while living in Cobourg and Peterborough during the 50 years that followed her immigration. My paper will focus on the culinary references in those writings, and I will contextualize them in relation to the curious silences and omissions around the subject of food.

As the Stewart and Reid families journeyed inland through Quebec and on to Upper Canada, they spent their nights at farmhouses where "they had always enough of bread to spare us two or three large loaves, & we got always from 6 to 9 quarts of milk at a time." The milk and bread procured this way, along with fresh eggs and butter, supplemented cold ham that they had brought with them from Ireland, and they gathered nuts and caught fish as well when opportunity allowed. The travelers were warmly received at every stop, except at one, a few days east of Cornwall, where they met with "such cross people" who "seemed quite angry at our

going in the way of their teamaking & Venison Frying, which occupied the entire attention of the very old dame & her maid. They pushed us away from the fire whenever they wanted the kettle, & did nothing but complain of the dirtying of the floor & the noise of so many children."² At another stop, however, "a young English woman, without asking any questions, made a great potfull of "Sessanne" or Indian corn stir about - & laid out a nice tidy table for the childrens supper. Her cows had not come in - so she had not much milk & when one of the little ones asked for more milk she emptied her own cream over which she had laid by for her tea."³ Luckily for Frances, the family was able to draw upon the agricultural resources of established farms as they traveled inland. Food, although very limited in variety, seemed to have been available and in enough quantity to sufficiently supplement the ham that they had brought with them. The Stewarts had money to purchase their way, and this combined with the willingness of strangers to share their food, assured their survival.

Settling temporarily in Cobourg over the fall and early winter of 1822-23, the Stewarts acquired land and arranged for their log home to be built in what is now known as Peterborough, in a location along the Otonabee River a few miles north of the present-day downtown core. On February 24, 1823, two years before Peter Robinson brought his first contingent of Irish settlers to the area, the Stewarts arrived in Douro Township by horse-drawn sleigh from Cobourg. The gentry family was ill equipped for life in the

as-yet unsurveyed township, which to this point was inhabited solely by a small native population. They had little direct knowledge of the duties and tasks that they were soon to perform in order to survive. For Frances, managing the household and feeding a family must have been a formidable responsibility. Raised in the company of accomplished relatives and acquaintances, the likes of author Maria Edgeworth and the knighted Sir Francis Beaufort, Frances was highly educated and strictly reared to Church of England principles. During her childhood and adolescence she received tutelage in French and Italian, music, chemistry, botany, mathematics, classical and contemporary literature, and the Bible. Household tasks were allocated to servants, and Frances had nothing to fall back on when faced with these daunting responsibilities.



Frances Stewart

(Photo courtesy of Trent University Archives)

We know, however, that she was soon taking up the duties of her new role. On learning to make bread, she writes on October 30, 1822, that “[Mrs. Bethune] & [Mrs. Henry] have been very kind initiating me in the method of making barm & baking. They have the best bread in this neighbourhood & always make their own Barm.”⁴ This is the first indication in her writings, three months after having arrived in Upper Canada, of Frances having undertaken to

learn a new task related to food preparation. Evidence shows that women most often learned to prepare food through conversation with each other and seldom wrote the details of such discussions. Frances may have considered the food plain and uncomplicated and thereby of little interest to her middle-upper class correspondents, whereas descriptions of the family’s Atlantic journey and adventures in setting up in the new world would unquestionably ensure a captive audience. We find that she very seldom elaborates on food preparation methods. Her discussions on household matters revolve more around divisions of labour and the availability of food rather than its preparation, although food preparation and eating had to have been of paramount importance and part of the daily ritual.

Even Frances and her close friend, Catharine Parr Traill, who, as we know, in *The Canadian Settler’s Guide* elaborates upon dozens of culinary recipes, never discuss food preparation methods with each other in their many letters back and forth.⁵ This may, in part, be explained in a roundabout way by evidence that shows that Catharine held Frances in high esteem and looked to her as mentor and a source of spiritual and emotional support. For example, she writes to Frances, “your loving kindness in word and deed has ever been a balm to my spirit . . . Your nice letters are so precious to me that I feel happier for having read them for days afterwards.”⁶ One might hypothesize that the silences in regard to food preparation by one so obviously knowledgeable about them are attributable to the fact that Catharine regarded her older genteel friend with deep respect, choosing topics of mutual interest, and avoiding, perhaps intentionally, topics such as food, knowing that this would be of little appeal. The connection between the two women was important and spilled over to extended relations with each other’s daughters who provided labour and assistance in times of need.

Frances’ letters reveal that the family had access to food that would most certainly not have been available to everyone. Early on, Frances writes

that the son of Mrs. Bethune has taken it upon himself to help the family by ensuring that they have easy access to the available supply of food items. According to Frances, the son is “proprietor of the largest store here & is unusually kind to us, is always sending us things & insists on supplying us with provisions for winter such as Salt Pork, Butter, Pease, &c at the same price he buys them himself.”⁷ That the Stewarts had money to purchase food, especially in the years before they were able to adequately provide for themselves through farming was crucial to their survival. Frances refers to local purchases of barley and rice, potatoes, beef, mutton, bacon, buttermilk, milk, and bread.⁸ Indeed, faunal remains found during an archaeological dig directed by Mary Lucy Heaman in 1973 of the initial log house confirm pork, beef, fowl, and wildlife consumption.⁹ The family was well off by local standards, and from the beginning, was able to augment the locally available food with imports from Great Britain purchased in the shops in Cobourg, and later, Peterborough, and thereby contributed to the local exchange economy. Further supplements to their diet included venison and fish received through trade with the native aboriginals, and additional farm produce through an arrangement with their tenant farmers. There is only one occasion referred to in the writings that points to the “bitter trial” endured by the absence of a food item, flour. Sadly, in October 1823, the youngest of the three Stewart children succumbed to dysentery. During the days before her death, two-year old Bessy asked only for bread. Unfortunately, Frances had none to give her, writing, “she asked for bread and of this we had none fit to give her, having for some time been unable to procure good flour. It was a bitter trial not to have what she seemed to crave for.”¹⁰ Time and place conspired heavily, the absence of one food item adding so significantly to a mother’s sorrow. This indeed must have been a bitter trial.

Happiness and excitement abounded, however, each year when the eagerly awaited BOX [emphasis mine] arrived from Ireland. Prepared by relatives and friends, its arrival meant a few food items not normally available in Upper Canada. Items received included chocolate,

arrowroot, and lozenges, and seeds, to grow vegetables and fruit thus far unknown in the colony. Regarding chocolate, Doug McCalla found that although the cookbooks available to early pioneer women all had recipes calling for chocolate, not once did there exist a sale of chocolate in the Upper Canadian merchants’ daybooks that he examined.¹¹ This factor points to the elitist status of the Stewarts, in that they were able to acquire chocolate by means other than the local economy provided for.

Ellen Dunlop has mentioned in her published edition of her mother’s letters, *Our Forest Home*, that Frances had a cookbook. Unfortunately, we do not know what cookbook she had, but we know at least that it was published prior to 1822 and can likely assume that it was brought from Ireland. Ellen says that while in Cobourg in 1822, “as the maid was laid up for some time, [my mother] had to cook and, never having done so before, she was obliged to refer to her cookery-book for directions.”¹²

Over time, Frances became more and more knowledgeable about the many arduous and physically demanding tasks that had previously been so unfamiliar to her. She seemed always, however, to view these tasks in sharp contrast to the pursuits that she enjoyed most. One might reasonably assume that food preparation was a duty, perhaps competently performed over time, but never embraced. Indeed, in 1826, four years after arriving in Upper Canada, Frances was struggling with deep depression and viewed herself as being entirely incompetent as a farmer’s wife. She writes:

I sometimes feel a little melancholy, for I am not half clever enough for a farmers wife.... You know I never saw that mode of life at all so that I am very ignorant. . . . Indeed latterly I dont know why I feel great deadness over me . . . a sort of stupidity and compression of mind which I used not to have at all.¹³

It is evident that the sense of despair that Frances felt is, at least in part, attributed to her feelings of inadequacy at performing her household duties, which would, of course, have included ensuring that her family was

adequately and healthily fed. According to Gloria Troyer, pioneer kitchens “were primitive, cooking utensils required a lot of care, and the fire had to be built long ahead of meal time.”¹⁴ We get a picture from evidence taken both from Frances’ letters and from the Heaman report that helps us to envisage the physical layout of the first Douro kitchen. Frances describes the design as such: “Our kitchen is 24 feet by 18, our sitting room 17 by 15, little bedroom inside 12 by 8 & a tiny storeroom within or rather between it & the kitchen.”¹⁵ Heaman’s dig has revealed a root cellar in the parlor and a chimney hearth also in the parlor that accommodated 8-foot logs and would have been used for cooking prior to the addition of the kitchen proper in 1830. A conveniently placed well was discovered in close proximity to the house location. Although not an insurmountable task, the responsibility of feeding a family in a primitive setting for a woman of gentry background may have contributed to the overwhelming sense of inadequacy that Frances felt. Luckily, letters show that a few years later, Frances had regained her objectivity. She writes:

...all my pursuits are so completely changed that I scarcely can help thinking I have been changed by some Evil Fairy – for no people could be so totally different as Fanny Browne of Dublin & Fanny Stewart of Douro... though my employments are of necessity so much changed my tastes are the same - & I still enjoy reading – music &c &c as much as I did 20 years ago.¹⁶

We are only able to learn about Frances’ culinary experiences in roundabout ways. For example, she says:

One night my poor little maid Betty slipped on the ice at the back door, fell & broke one of her ribs in two places as her side came against the handle of a tub.... I was able to get a Scotch lassie to come to cook & finish the washing – but she could only stay two days, & after that I was cook, nurse, & everything myself for a few days – We had luckily a fine round of Beef which lasted cold for almost the whole time, so I had no cooking except boiling potatoes, & I got on

finely & had neither fatigue or hurry of any consequence.¹⁷

From this passage, we can deduce that the division of labour in the household was such that Frances normally did little cooking or baking.

Occasional descriptions of food prepared for important family events, minus the details about the preparation itself, intersperse the letters. For example, the narrative of the elaborate cuisine prepared for the wedding celebration in 1848 of one of Frances’ daughters is worth relating, even though the methods of preparation are absent. Frances writes:

Then came tea... – in the middle was a table with bread & butter – buttered buns – plum cake – little Shrewsbury cakes & some other kind – all made by Bee – Anna Hay & Anna Falkner – The Brides cake was cut up – it too was home made & excellent & nicely iced & ornamented with coloured comfits – it was made by Anna Hay & Bessie - & just as good & rich looking as any bought plum cake – All this kept us busy till candle light... we had a little supper – cold fowl - & lamb & ham & salad & some tarts - & Raisin-Almonds & Apples - &c...¹⁸

Obviously, through time, the family had found the wherewithal to present a spread of surprising variety and quantity. It is revealing that Frances makes no mention of having prepared any of the food herself but credits rather her daughters and their friends with several of the items.

Interestingly, we learn far more about food preparation in the Stewart family in a letter written by Frances’ husband, Tom, than we ever learn through Frances. The letter written in 1828 to Captain Basil Hall is interspersed with descriptions of hardship and shortage of food. Tom writes:

In April, we tried to make some sugar; but as we had nobody to tell us how to set about it, we did not succeed at all... It has occurred to us more than once, in the two or three first years of our residence here, to be in danger of starvation, from the extreme difficulty of procuring any sort of provisions in this

neighbourhood, and from the uncertainty of conveyances from Cobourg... The first year, we had no potatoes until August, and were glad to gather any wild plants which we were told could be safely used as greens, to make a little variety. Salt pork, pease soup, and bread, being but bad food for children; sometimes for weeks together, we have used tea made of the young shoots of the hemlock-pine, or burnt Indian corn for coffee... The most interesting time had now arrived, when we saw our first crops appear above ground. I had the honour of planting and sowing the first seeds in Douro... Our provisions occasionally ran short for the first three years; and at times we have literally used plain bran made into cakes, and used Indian corn boiled, when we could not procure flour. In the winter of 1824 we had four Scotsmen employed; and, in order to supply them with bread, we were obliged to grind our wheat in a small hand-mill, which, fortunately, we had brought with us for grinding coffee, pepper, &c. Every evening, after a hard day's work, these four young men ground as much wheat as was sufficient for supplying bread for each day.¹⁹

That the family was short of food and nearing starvation was never revealed in Frances' letters. The difference in the accounts may well be due to several reasons. Frances had a very close and loving relationship with her correspondents in Ireland, the learned relatives and acquaintances who had raised her from childhood and who were extremely uneasy about the family having relocated to Upper Canada in the first place. She would keep from them any notion that the family was near starvation. Tom, on the other hand, wrote a more factual account, describing the early years as family head in a manner that best portrayed the state of affairs as he saw it. Sydney Bellingham, a visitor to the Stewart home in 1824, gives a picture somewhere in the middle. He states, "our food consisted mainly of pork and pea soup and home made bread. We never saw fresh meat for months, but, as the season advanced, we had excellent potatoes, Indian corn, and a few vegetables."²⁰ He complained about the milk saying that it tasted like onions, as the cows fed "ravenously"²¹ on

the wild onions that grew in the forest. Fortunately, by taking into consideration the Bellingham account along with Tom's account, we are able to shore up our knowledge of the daily culinary fare in the Stewart household. We have had to draw entirely upon fragmentary references with regard to Frances' own writings, and to reflect upon the meaning of the silences and omissions around the subject of food. We have glimpsed Frances' role in the household and we can only wonder at the struggles of this genteel pioneer to reproduce and maintain her traditional life style in the vastly different context of Upper Canada. †

Endnotes

- ¹ Frances Stewart Fonds, Trent University Archives (TUA), 78-008 Letter #91, 21 July 1822.
- ² Stewart, TUA, 78-008 Letter #92, 11 Sept 1822.
- ³ Stewart, TUA, 78-008 Letter #93, 18 Sept 1822.
- ⁴ Stewart, TUA, 78-008 Letter #94, 30 Oct 1822.
- ⁵ Catharine Parr Trail, *The Canadian Settler's Guide* [1855]. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart: 1969.
- ⁶ Frances Stewart correspondence, Toronto Reference Library, Baldwin Room, S215A Letter 17 Sept [1844].
- ⁷ Stewart, TUA, 78-008 Letter #94, 30 Oct 1822.
- ⁸ Stewart, TUA, 78-008 Letter #97, 14 Jan 1823.
- ⁹ Mary Lucyk Heaman, "Auburn Excavation Preliminary Report," Peterborough: Borden Site Designation: BbGn-1, unpublished paper, 1973, 65.
- ¹⁰ Stewart, TUA, 78-008 Letter #277, manuscript by Charles Stewart, 1871.
- ¹¹ Douglas McCalla, "A World Without Chocolate: Grocery Purchases at Some Upper Canadian Country Stores, 1808-1861," *Agricultural History*, 79.2 (Spring 2005), 168.
- ¹² Stewart, *Our Forest Home*, 2nd ed., 1902, 19.
- ¹³ Stewart, TUA, 78-008 Letter #269, 27 May 1826.
- ¹⁴ Jarvis, *Every Comfort in the Wilderness*, 1994, 7.
- ¹⁵ Stewart, TUA, 94-1001 Letter #1, 11 Mar 1823.
- ¹⁶ Stewart, TUA, 78-008 Letter #131, 6 Apr 1829.
- ¹⁷ Stewart, TUA, 78-008 Letter #98, 24 Feb 1823.
- ¹⁸ Stewart, TUA, 78-008 Letter #205, 31 May 1848.
- ¹⁹ Hall, *Travels in North America*, vol. 1, 315-320.
- ²⁰ Sydney Bellingham fonds, TUA, 69-1003, 6.
- ²¹ Bellingham, 7.

If you would like a copy of Jodi Aoki's Bibliography for this paper please email the Editor at culinaryhistorians@uoguelph.ca.

CHO's Annual General Meeting 2005

CHO's AGM was held on 24 September as part of the "Celebrating the Culinary Heritage of Peterborough and Area" symposium. The CHO Board for 2005–2007 was acclaimed as follows, and the committee chairs were subsequently confirmed before the first board meeting.

2005–2007 Executive:

President: Liz Driver
 Vice President: Amy Scott
 Treasurer: Bob Wildfong
 Secretary: Maggie Newell
 Past President: Fiona Lucas

2005– 007 Committee Chairs:

Newsletter: Fiona Lucas
 Programme: vacant
 Membership: Amy Scott
 Website: Liz Driver
 Outreach/Education: Amy Scott

Thank you to the members who signed up to be on the five committees.

Committee Reports:

If you would like a copy of the following 2005 documents, please contact CHO's Secretary, Maggie Newell, at culinaryhistorians@uoguelph.ca.

- President's Report
- Newsletter Report
- Website Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Outreach and Education Report
- Programme Report
- Membership Report
- 2004 AGM Minutes (approved at 2005 AGM)

CHO Financial Report for 1 September 2004 to 31 August 2005 Balance Statement

Culinary Historians of Ontario Inc.		
Balance Statement Aug 31, 2005		
Assets		
		Year end 2003-04
Cash in bank	1593.75	1777.27
Cash in hand	0.00	0.00
Accounts receivable	-14.72	884.09
Total assets	1579.03	2661.36
Liabilities		
Loans	0.00	0.00
Deferred membership fees	630.00	507.50
Total liabilities	630.00	507.50
Equity	949.03	2153.86
Equity + Liabilities	1579.03	2661.36

CHO Financial Report for 1 September 2004 to 31 August 2005 Revenue Statement

Culinary Historians of Ontario Inc.			
Revenue Statement Sept 1, 2004 to Aug 31, 2005			
Revenue			
		2003 – 2004	Notes
Membership fees	2367.36	1800.00	incl \$507.50 carried forward from last year
Deferred fees	-630.00	-507.50	
Donations	50.00	37.50	
Events	306.00	958.21	
Miscellaneous	2.27	60.88	
Gross Revenue	<u>2095.63</u>	<u>2349.09</u>	
Special Projects Expenses			
Miscellaneous	10.00	437.69	
	<u>10.00</u>	<u>437.69</u>	
Event Expenses			
Travel	0.00	172.54	
Honoraria	17.99	100.00	
Other	269.81	00.00	half of Biting Satire proceeds donated to AGO
	<u>287.80</u>	<u>272.54</u>	
Direct membership Expenses			
Newsletter production	0.00	0.00	
Newsletter printing	1611.92	571.32	
Newsletter mailing	573.36	502.08	
Directory	301.88	00.00	
Membership overhead	26.69	107.31	
Total Membership Expenses	<u>2513.85</u>	<u>1180.71</u>	
Net Revenue	-716.02	458.15	
Operational Expenses			
Meetings	25.60	60.00	
Post Box	90.25	90.25	
Postage	153.67	33.38	
Telephone	13.94	35.23	
Office supplies	3.07	104.88	
Promotion	24.38	00.00	
Bank fees	177.90	104.78	
Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00	
Total Operational Expenses	<u>488.81</u>	<u>428.52</u>	
Surplus (Deficit)	-1204.83	29.63	

“Celebrating the Culinary Heritage of Peterborough and Area”

Maggie Newell

Maggie is CHO's Secretary. She often reports on CHO events for Culinary Chronicles.

On Saturday 24 September, over sixty fans of food history gathered at St Andrew's United Church in Peterborough, Ontario, for the symposium “Celebrating the Culinary Heritage of Peterborough and Area.”

The Culinary Historians of Ontario were invited to Peterborough by Gale Fewings, Curator of Hutchison House Museum. The concentration of famous pioneer authors in the Peterborough area gave the symposium organizers and speakers a lot of material to consider, in the form of published books, personal correspondence and recipes.

Our day began with refreshments based on recipes from Catharine Parr Traill's *Female Emigrant's Guide* (1854/55). After sampling Plum Jam, Damson Jam, and Melons Preserved spread on Common Bush Tea-Cakes, Plum Cakes, Abernethy Biscuits (like hardtack), and Potato Bread, all washed down with tea, coffee and apple juice, we settled in the wooden pews of the 120-year-old church for a morning of intellectual nourishment.

Our keynote speaker was Michael Peterman, Professor of English at Trent University, and Principal of Catharine Parr Traill College at Trent. His talk was “Better Bread or Better Books: or Why Our Pioneer Writers Matter.” His title was based on an incident described in Susanna Moodie's *Roughing It in the Bush*, in which Tom Wilson, a failed emigrant staying with Susanna and J W Dunbar Moodie in 1832, encouraged Mrs Moodie to make leavened bread for the first time. There is a

great fuss – acquiring the yeast and the instructions for making the bread from a neighbour, and employing the bake kettle. The resulting bread was a decided failure, at which Tom Wilson said, “Oh, Mrs. Moodie, I hope you make better books than bread.” Writing about this incident Mrs Moodie says “For myself, I could have borne the severest infliction from the pen of the most formidable critic with more fortitude than I bore the cutting up of my first loaf of bread.”

Mrs Moodie's misadventure highlights a theme recurrent throughout the symposium: the parallel endeavors of these early Canadian women as writers, domestic managers and cooks. Their literary pursuits had to be fitted in around their domestic duties, and their domestic duties informed their literary pursuits.

Professor Peterman went on to discuss Anne Langton's journals, not written for publication beyond her family circle at home in England. When she feels she has run out of other material to write about, Anne expresses regret at being “reduced to” telling her audience about dinner. Culinary historians are happy to read her descriptions of dinner, how ingredients were

procured, and how it was prepared. For her contemporary audience Anne feels it is necessary to apologize, perhaps with a twinkle in her eye, for the

unworthiness of the topic.

This contemporary ambivalence about food as a topic for



Speakers Shelley Boyd, Jodi Aoki, Liz Driver, Fiona Lucas and Michael Peterman. Gale Fewings at right. (Alison Norman absent.)

(Photo courtesy of Mya Sangster)

serious writing was also reflected in the day's second paper, Jodi Aoki's "Culinary Themes in the Writings of Frances Stewart, Genteel Pioneer of Douro Township," reprinted on pages 3–7 of this issue of *Culinary Chronicles*. And, shown on the front cover, is the jug recovered from an archaeological dig at the Stewart homestead, Auburn, that we were fortunate to see, on loan for the day from the Peterborough Centennial Museum.

Alison Norman, PhD candidate at York University, presented a paper titled "It is fit for the table of the most fastidious epicure': Culinary Exchange between Natives and Settler Women in Mid 19th Century Upper Canada." She explored the fascinating topic of the cultural and culinary exchange between settlers and the native people they encountered. Backwoods women sometimes found they were physically closer to Native women than their European neighbours. First contact with the indigenous people did not always create a positive initial impression for our pioneer authors. Anna Jameson and Mary O'Brien sought out their first contact like tourists seeing the sights of the New World. However, with continued contact they adopted many Native tools, foods, and cooking methods. Moccasins, canoes and snow shoes enhanced their movement around the country. Fish, wild rice, berries, venison, duck and maple sugar enriched their diets. Catharine Parr Traill collected recipes using native ingredients such as corn, squash, and pumpkin, and published them for the use of new settlers.

Before lunch, CHO President Liz Driver presented "Eating History: The Meaning Behind Today's Lunch." Liz described the process of meeting with representatives of St Andrew's United Church Women to select recipes for our lunch. Meeting these volunteers led to an exchange of ideas, and the recovery of two recipe books produced at St Andrew's. Among the lessons learned the UCW ladies discovered that food history does not need to be about recipes from the distant past. Symposiasts learned that potluck suppers are a significant part of the social life and fellowship at St Andrew's.



Front cover of the rare first edition of Traill's *Female Emigrant's Guide*, 1854. Recipes for the morning's refreshments came from this text, which was also the focus of Fiona Lucas's paper.

(Image courtesy of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto)

Our lunch featured Easy Oven Stew, Tea Biscuits, Cabbage Salad with Cooked Dressing, and Gingerbread with Apple Sauce from local apples. Delicious! During the lunch break some participants took advantage of the opportunity to tour Hutchison House, while others lingered over their tea and coffee, and conversation. Co-Founder and Past President of CHO Fiona Lucas presented "A Mini Reassessment of Catharine Parr Traill's *Female Emigrant's Guide*, 1854." Fiona presented the idea that the *Guide* uniquely combines four genres in one: an emigration guide, a housekeeper's manual, a cookbook, and a kitchen garden guide. She alluded to the special status that Traill enjoys among historical interpreters when she stated that Mrs Traill "taught" her to make candles. She taught *me* how to make pumpkin pie and gave me new ideas on flavouring an apple pie. *The Female Emigrant's Guide* represents an accumulation of knowledge drawn from Traill's years of experience, and her conversations with other women. It is the first cookbook written by a self-identified Canadian for other Canadian women.

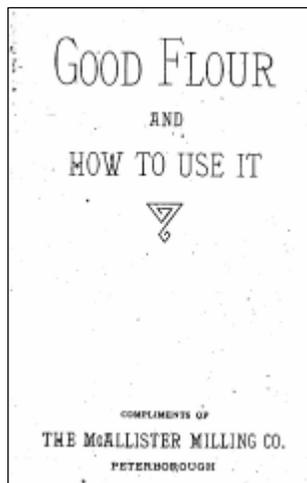
Shelley Boyd, a PhD candidate at McGill University, presented the final paper of the day: “‘The Change in Soil and Situation’: Catharine Parr Traill’s Kitchen Garden.” Mrs Traill declared a garden indispensable. Her *Guide* defends the significance of the kitchen garden and gives many practical suggestions for establishing a garden, with seeds from the old country and transplants from the bush. Shelley observed that gardening is a collaborative enterprise between culture and nature. Perhaps the best symbol of this collaboration is “Mrs Traill’s fence,” a “bush fence” made of stumps planted with climbing vines.

As children, the Stricklands, later Catherine Parr Traill and Susanna Moodie, had chores to do in the garden. *Gardening for Ladies*, published in 1840, presented the benefits of working in the flower garden while recognizing that vegetable gardening might be too much. In the *New World* Mrs Traill grew onions, herbs and potatoes, and traded this produce with the Native peoples for

venison, fish and baskets. Her book prepared the groundwork for the female emigrant, making the case for clearing land for a garden when the men of the household were preoccupied with clearing the land for crops.

Culinary historian Dorothy Duncan summarized the day’s presentations and introduced us to the delights yet to come. Dorothy reflected that the pioneer authors often teach lessons based on their failures. These authors also inform us about the contacts between newcomers and the native peoples, and the lessons learned through this exchange. Quoting an 1872 source, Dorothy quipped that it is “much better to talk scandal in the garden than over the tea table.”

Gale Fewings had the final word, inviting us to a garden party at Hutchison House Museum. The weather was exquisite, perfect for a garden party that concluded a thoroughly enjoyable and educational day. †



The first cookbook to be compiled by a flour company in Canada was published in Peterborough in 1898 by the McAllister Milling Co. This copy is in the Una Abrahamson Collection in the Archival and Special Collections of the University of Guelph Library.

(Image courtesy of the University of Guelph Library)



Front cover of the second edition of the earliest known Peterborough community cookbook: *My Favorite Recipes: A Cookbook of Over 300 Well Proven Recipes Compiled by the Ladies of the Autumn Booth of the Peterborough Summer Fair, 1912*, Peterborough: F.H.S. Class of George Street Methodist Church Sunday School, 1915.

(Image courtesy of Mary Williamson)

Dean Tudor's Book Review

CHO member Dean Tudor is Journalism Professor Emeritus at Ryerson University, Toronto; his wine and food reviews can be accessed at www.deantudor.com.

Margaret MacMillan, Marjorie Harris and Anne L. Desjardins. *Canada's House: Rideau Hall and the Invention of a Canadian Home*. Knopf Canada, 2004, 254 pp, ISBN 0-676-97675-1, \$55.

Although put together by well-known Canadian authors MacMillan, Harris and Desjardins, it's a bit of a curate's egg: some parts are good and some parts are bad (mainly by omission). This is the history, both inside and out, of Rideau Hall, the home of Canada's Governors-General. Here are the specs: 250 colour and black/white present day and archival photos, mainly from Library and Archives Canada (LAC), but also Rideau Hall's archives and library; 60 pages devoted to the history and architecture of the house by MacMillan; 90 pages on the gardens, including the organic kitchen garden, by Harris; and 100 pages for food and wine and recipes by Desjardins, with more recipes from executive chef Oliver Bartsch and sous-chef Louis Charest. Almost half the text comes from Their [now former] Excellencies Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul via sidebars (different typefaces and ink colours). Over the years, since 1999, the G-G team of Clarkson and Saul has transformed Rideau Hall into something more Canadian, with a Northern Garden, including Canadian flowers, plants and trees, plus organic vegetables, a service of indigenous foods and wines, and by adding a Canadian wine cellar of 4,000 VQA wines, on which Saul has a sidebar. While Harris covers a history of the gardens and horticulture (e.g., Lady Byng, 1921-6, was an

accomplished gardener, leading the way), Desjardins writes little on the history of Canadian food at the Hall. Rather, she concentrates on current dining, and how it brims with indigenous foods, with a stress on First Nations foods. From Ontario she indicates black walnuts, hazelnuts, almonds, apples, peaches, plums, figs, organic greens, goat cheese, aged cheddar, and wild ginger.

What I don't like about this book: Well, there is no index, which to my mind is a grievous sin, nor much on the Canadian wine cellar, and only one picture. Since the wine section is not specific to Rideau Hall it goes on for too long (almost 20 pages!). There is nothing on fruit wines, less than one page on Canadian cheeses, and no menus, neither historical nor contemporary. And there are no notes (foot, end or bibliographical), except for photographic credits.

What I do like about this book: The recipes, all with Canadian wine recommendations: cured salmon salad, pickerel salad, squash and pemmican flan, BBQ caribou, bannock pudding, Alberta lamb chop, fiddleheads and lobster chowder, cod cake.

Editor's Note: Anyone interested in earlier dining at Rideau Hall may enjoy Jill Downie's *Storming the Castle: The World of Dora and the Duchess* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1998). Dora Lee, an English scullery maid trained as a French cook, rose to become head cook at Rideau Hall when the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire were the vice-regal court in Canada.

Archives of Ontario www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/exhibits

Whether living and working in a farming community, or watching a harvest sunset while travelling a rural highway, Ontarians take pride in their agricultural heritage. The Archives of Ontario is proud to hold an important key to the province's agricultural heritage through the documents it acquires, preserves, and makes accessible to the public. This exhibit celebrates the farming way of life, focusing on the settlement of the land, its use, and the people who made agriculture one of the Province's greatest assets.

“Flavours of Perth” Outreach and Education Committee’s First Official Event

Amy Scott

Amy is Chair of the newly formed Outreach and Education Committee, and CHO’s Vice President.

At the invitation of the Stratford-Perth Museum (www.stratfordperthmuseum.ca), on Saturday 13 August members of CHO’s Outreach and Education Committee attended the *Flavours of Perth* event in Monkton, Ontario. Eva MacDonald, Mya Sangster and I spent five hours staffing a table. We went well armed with baked goods prepared by the tireless Mya and Rosemary in the kitchen at Montgomery’s Inn Museum. In between talking to visitors, we took turns visiting our fellow exhibitors, who had interesting and delectable wares to sample and purchase. A steady stream of visitors came by our table; some only stayed a moment, but many others stayed to chat, sample the baking and look at the recipes.

The recipes for the baked goods all came from a small cookbook printed by the North Perth Women’s Institute in 1909, which included the name of the contributor under each recipe. Many visitors were interested to discover that the recipes were local. One home economics teacher commented on the importance of knowledge about food and “Home Ec” today, and copied out one of the recipes. We plan to take copies of recipes to our next event. A few visitors picked up membership forms and our website cards. Although we don’t seem to have acquired any new members from the event, we certainly made progress in our goal of raising awareness about the fascinating field of food history.

A small display has been created with assistance from Liz Driver and Mary Williamson. Currently our plan is for the display to travel with a committee member from Toronto to local events in Southern Ontario. We are also giving thought to creating a display that can be sent out to members for use at events farther afield.

The Outreach and Education Committee is looking for additional members, particularly those who are enthusiastic about promoting food history in their areas. And if you know of a local food or agricultural event, or if your local museum would like us to attend one of its events, please let us know by sending an email to culinaryhistorians@uoguelph.ca or by calling me at (416) 421-3363 (evenings). We would appreciate as much notice as possible (at least a month but preferably longer), so that we can tailor our exhibit to local foodways.

**Committee members Mya, Eva and
Amy smiling for the camera!**

(Photo courtesy of Mya Sangster)



CHO Events

As of this newsletter, the more extensive calendar that includes events hosted by other organizations is on the CHO website. Please send information about upcoming food-history or related events to Liz Driver, Chair of the Website Committee, at culinaryhistorians@uoguelph.ca.

November 2005

**CHO's Beverage Series continues:
TAVERN IN THE TOWN: A LOOK BACK
AT DRINKING IN TORONTO**

A Lecture with Craig Heron

Montgomery's Inn Museum

4709 Dundas Street West, Toronto
416 394-8113, montinn@toronto.ca

Thursday, November 10, 7 to 9 pm

From the earliest days of Toronto, citizens gathered in taverns to enjoy a drink and socialize. You are invited to Montgomery's Inn, site of one of the city's oldest bar-rooms, to attend a lecture on the subject, co-sponsored by CHO and the Inn. Craig Heron is Professor of History and Labour Studies at York University, Toronto. His most recent book, *Booze: A Distilled History*, was reviewed in *Culinary Chronicles* 43, and will be available for sale during the event. \$5, CHO and Friends of Etobicoke's Heritage; \$8, non-members. No pre-registration required. 19th-century-style "bar snacks" included in admission. Cash bar for beer. Free parking.

COOK BOOK CAPER

Ontario Historical Society

John McKenzie House, 34 Parkview Ave, Toronto
(416) 226-9011, ohs@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

Sunday, November 20, 1 to 4 pm

The Ontario Historical Society's annual cookbook sale features hundreds of old and new books on a variety of topics, food magazines, and collectible kitchen equipment. Every year new treasures are available! For the third year in a row, the Culinary Historians of Ontario contributes to this popular OHS fundraiser by offering a tearoom, where bargain hunters can relax with a pot of tea and delicious homemade scones and sweets while looking over their purchases. Free admission. Cookbooks or cooking equipment that you would like to donate to this year's sale would be appreciated. Also, volunteers are needed for the day, for which they receive a first look at the

books. Please contact CHO co-organizer Eva MacDonald at (416) 534-9384 if you can help.

Spring 2006

NEW! ANNUAL SPRING LECTURE

Ontario Historical Society

John McKenzie House, 34 Parkview Ave, Toronto
416 226-9011, ohs@ontariohistoricalsociety.ca

Date TBA

CHO is launching an annual spring lecture at the Ontario Historical Society. Our first guest speaker, Dr Lynette Hunter, Professor of the History of Rhetoric and Performance at the University of California Davis, will tell us about her experiences gathering the food stories of Inuit women on Baffin Island. More details to follow in the winter issue of *Culinary Chronicles*.

1880S BANQUET WITH THE ONTARIO WINE SOCIETY

Location and Date TBA

CHO is joining the Ontario Wine Society for its spring banquet. Don't miss purchasing tickets for this memorable dinner, which will feature an 1880s menu created by CHO and wines selected by OWS. Information to follow in the winter issue of *Culinary Chronicles*.

August or September 2006

EXPLORING FOOD HISTORY AT RUTHVEN PARK

Ruthven Park National Historic Site

Hwy 54, Cayuga

(905) 772-0560, ruthven.park@sympatico.ca

Weekend date TBA

Enjoy an autumn day at Ruthven Park National Historic Site, exploring more than a century of food history at the home of the Thompson family, from the 1840s to the 1960s. Directions at www.ruthvenpark.ca. More details to follow in the winter issue of *Culinary Chronicles*.

Members' News

CHO members are invited to send their news to the editor of Culinary Chronicles.

FROM ANN TUDOR:

Tales from My Table; Food for Thought. Molten Gold, 2005, ISBN 0-920003-04-4, audio-book CD with 13 "opinionated" recipes, 75 minutes, \$17.50 includes taxes.

Composed and narrated by Ann Tudor, a Toronto writer of creative non-fiction, this is the first in a series about food in her life. It is a collection of 12 true stories exploring the way food influences our lives and our memories, the thrill of eating what you love to eat and cooking what you love to cook: Anne Lamott meets Garrison Keillor. Each piece is bracketed by a short musical sketch that reflects the story's mood. The suggested audience includes anyone who likes spoken-word CDs, especially cooks listening in the kitchen while working and drivers motoring through traffic. The CD-ROM portion of the disc includes 13 recipes related to the stories, such as guacamole, pea salad, dried tomatoes. Order from ann@anntudor.ca or www.anntudor.ca.

FROM SHELLEY BOYD:

Shelley Boyd, one of the speakers at the recent CHO and Hutchison House symposium in Peterborough, and doctoral candidate in the English Department at McGill University, has an essay scheduled to appear in the Winter 2005 edition of *Essays on Canadian Writing*. It is titled "'Transplanted into our gardens': Susanna Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill." Shelley examines how Moodie and Traill became gardeners of accommodation by combining picturesque aesthetics, women's 19th-century gardening ideals, pioneer pragmatics, and the wilderness environment within the hybridized space of their Upper Canadian gardens.

Submissions to *Culinary Chronicles*: We welcome items for the newsletter; however, their acceptance depends on appropriateness of subject matter, quality of writing and space. The Editor reserves the right to accept or reject submissions and to edit them.

Doris Ludwig Dies, Age 95

Doris Ludwig died on 6 October. She was featured in an article called "Depression Era Cooking" written by Ed Lyons for *Culinary Chronicles* 43 (Winter 2005). Doris and her sisters, Mary Moore (the subject of *Culinary Chronicles* 45, summer 2005) and Sally Pearl, were syndicated columnists who specialized in women's topics, especially cookery. One of Doris's friends wrote: "She was hospitalized last Monday and died of pneumonia and congestive heart failure on Thursday morning. She was 95 and still driving to church at times. We will all miss her."

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.

Members: Enjoy the quarterly newsletter, may attend CHO events at special member's rates, and receive up-to-date information on Ontario food-history happenings. Join a network of people dedicated to Ontario's culinary history.

Membership fees:

\$30 Cdn for One-Year Individual and One-Year Household
\$55 Cdn for Two-Year Individual and Two-Year Household
\$55 Cdn for One-Year and \$75 for Two-Year Supporting
(American and international members may pay in American dollars.) *Please note that the fees will rise in January 2006.*

Website: www.culinaryhistorians.ca

Email: culinaryhistorians@uoguelph.ca

Mailing address: Culinary Historians of Ontario,
260 Adelaide Street East, Box 149, Toronto, Ontario,
Canada M5A 1N1

Board: President: Liz Driver; Vice President: Amy Scott;
Past President: Fiona Lucas; Secretary: Marguerite Newell;
Treasurer: Bob Wildfong; Programme Chair: [vacant];
Newsletter Chair: Fiona Lucas; Membership Chair: Amy
Scott; Website Chair: Liz Driver, Outreach and Education:
Amy Scott.

Newsletter Committee: Fiona Lucas, Ed Lyons, Liz Driver.
Special thanks for this issue to Jodi Aoki, Mary Lucyk
Heaman, Maggie Newell, Mya Sangster, Dean Tudor, Mary
Williamson.

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