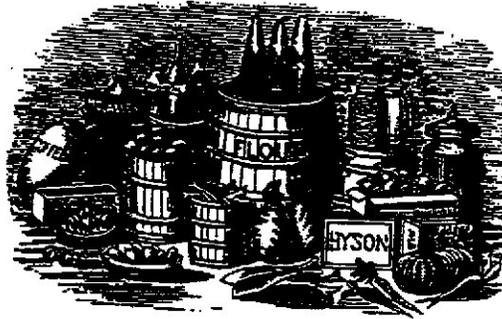


CULINARY HISTORIANS OF ONTARIO

autumn 1995

number 6



- TORONTO REGION -

Niagara hosts a "vicultural revolution"!

It began about 1978, when a few wineries ripped out their native *Labrusca* grapes in order to plant Chardonnay and other ancient European varieties. The revolution continues, for Ontario wines are storming the citadels of international competitions. This year's wines will be the best yet due to ideal climatic conditions.

On Saturday October 14, a mild but rainy day, 15 CHO members and friends joined the thousands who drive each autumn to the Niagara Peninsula for wine tours. Did you know the Peninsula's microclimate is ideal for producing wine? Believe it or not, it's the same latitude as France -- the greatest wine region of all!

Our first stop was **Cave Springs** in Jordan. Since we arrived late, we opted for a tour only. Our guide Carolyn showed us the huge upright stainless steel tanks, but more interesting were the dozens of French oak barrels in the cellars quietly fermenting the reds and whites destined for our dinner tables. Wood imparts flavourful subtleties like vanilla, citrus and licorice, depending on whether the oak is new or aged, toasted (carefully charred by flame) or not, from France or Louisiana.

Although it's a new and still small operation (33,000 cases last year), their cellars are the biggest on the Peninsula. They even store cases for their fellow wineries!

Whatever the competition between wineries, there's co-operation too.

Lunch was at **On the Twenty**, an 1870s fruit

processing plant. We had an excellent meal, well served and presented. Some chose the chicken and risotto, while the rest of us had the vegetarian quiche. It was so light, it seemed like a soufflé. Peach cobbler dessert was light, rich and delicious.

And then on to **Henry of Pelham** in southern St. Catharines, founded in 1984 on land descended through Henry's family. The extant building was originally an inn; in fact the current boutique was the basement kitchen. We joined a public tour, followed by a tasting of our choice of 3 out of 8 wines.

Last, we arrived at the brand new (May 1994) home of **Chateaux des Charmes** of the famous Bosc Family, wine makers for six generations now. Our tour was different again, for we started with an introductory video, *Grape to Glass*, and ended with a tasting conducted by our guide Michael. He served us 3 wines: a 1993 Aligote, a 1994 Riesling and a 1994 Gamay Noir. Madame Bosc herself happened to be present to answer questions.

The Boscs' 3 wineries produced over 200,000 cases last year. We watched a few of them make their way through the bottling procedure, from filling to corking to labelling to casing. It was fascinating.

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.

Whatever the differences between the tours and the wineries styles, one thing they had in common was the fabulous yeasty smell of fermenting wine filling the air!

COOKERY COLLECTION -- HISTORIC RECIPES #8 AND #9

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 or picture.

These recipes are perfect to serve at any holiday gathering!

WINE BISCUIT

Original text:

Mistress Margaret Dods (Christine Isabel Johnstone), *The Cook and Housewife's Manual*, (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd; London: Simpkin & Marshall, 5th ed., 1833), p. 372, no. 1021.

Have a pound of the finest flour, "thrice bolted", dry and sifted. Rub down among it three ounces of butter; add sugar and salt to taste. Make a dough of this with warm good milk, and a spoonful of yeast. Knead it quickly up, and let it repose an hour. Roll out thin, and stamp and prick the biscuits with a dabber. Bake in a quick oven.

Modern version:

1 Tbsp.	15 mL	dry yeast
1 cup	250 mL	warm milk
1/2 cup	125 mL	butter, softened
4 cups	1 L	white flour, sifted
1/2 tsp.	2 mL	salt
1/2 tsp.	2 mL	white sugar

1. Sprinkle yeast into warm milk and let proof for 10 minutes.
2. Rub butter into sifted flour. Add salt and sugar.
3. Blend dry ingredients into yeasty milk.
4. Knead dough until elastic, about 10 minutes. Cover and let rise in a warm place until double in bulk, about an hour.
5. Roll dough about 1/2" (1 cm) thick on a well floured surface. Cut into circles and prick centres 3 times with a fork.
6. Bake at 350 F (180 C) on a baking sheet for 15-17 minutes, until very slightly golden. Makes about 2 dozen round biscuits of 2 1/2" (5 cm).

Historic information:

These wine biscuits require a fine white flour that has been completely sifted (bolted) of its bran and wheat germ. Stone ground flour was

very often slightly damp because it still had some of the wheat germ oil present. Cookery books often suggested it had to be dried by the fire before using, otherwise the bread of cake was heavy. Modern roller milled flour doesn't have this problem.

Yeast was usually a liquid called *barm*, a by-product of brewing beer, either the housewife's own, or purchased directly from a brewer. Since there is less liquid due to the use of dry yeast rather than barm, a greater amount of milk is required to make a good dough.

A *dabber* was like a round or square cookie cutter, but with prongs to prick the centre at the same time. Bake in a quick oven was a typical direction for wood-fired brick ovens. Each cook knew the particular idiosyncrasies of her or his own oven. A good heat is needed to puff the biscuits.

Mistress Dods was the pseudonym of Christine Isabel Johnstone (1781-1857). She adopted the name from the innkeeper in Sir Walter's Scott *St. Ronan's Well* (1824).

These biscuits are a suitable choice for cheese, pate and mulled wine.

TO MULL WINE

Original text:

Anonymous, *The Cook Not Mad; or Rational Cookery* (James MacFarlane: Kingston, Upper Canada 1831), p. 109, no. 295.

Boil some spice in a little water till the flavour is gained, then add an equal quantity of port, Maderia, or sherry, some sugar and nutmeg; boil together, and serve with toast.

Modern version:

1. Use equal parts of water to wine.
2. Spice and sweeten to taste.

CULINARY CONTEMPLATIONS #1

We invite other readers to write about the genesis of their interest in culinary history.

● JO MARIE POWERS ●

My first foray into Canadian culinary history took me by surprise!

Years ago, students in my restaurant operations course at the University of Guelph were researching "L'ordre de bon temps" (The Order of Good Cheer) in hopes of reproducing Samuel de Champlain's feast. I became interested and on the advice of a history professor found Champlain's diaries in the university library. Champlain's notes were filled with descriptions of the plant and animal foods he found in "New France", but his descriptions of the feasts were not about what they ate, just that they had "good fare". Little did I know that this would become a research project that would lead me to the shores of the Bay of Fundy, La Rochelle in France, and even to Paris to find the "rue d'ours". Such is the excitement of food research!

Every research project that I undertake is an adventure. There are hours of tedious work in dusty archives and peering into microfilm until your head aches. But, I walk in the places where the people walked, eat where they ate, and sample the foods of their region. This recreates a feeling -- it's always there for me and necessary.

The spirituality of the Prairies cannot be understood, for example, without travelling on the northern wheat-land roads where silhouettes of villages are highlighted with onion-domed church steeples and grain elevators. There the ancient dependence upon grain for life is still expressed in the many Ukrainian church rituals using women's lovingly prepared and beautifully decorated ritual breads. Every twist, turn and braid on these breads has religious significance. Visiting their churches and cemeteries gave me a sense of oneness with their early Christian traditions and their pre-Christian practices. Talking with these women as they described the *pomana* (a ritual and healing visit to the cemetery bearing ritual breads in the spring) made me realize all we have lost when we moved into cities and became "modern".

Another example is the Mennonite culture. A few years ago I spent several months

in the Conrad Grebel library in Waterloo, Ontario, studying Mennonite foodways. I visited their farms and ate dinner with hospitable and gracious Old Order Mennonites. I visited their bakeries, market gardens -- and even had mint tea with Edna Staebler and her "Eva".

In my studies of foodways, there has been a constant among the ethnic groups I have studied. Again and again the importance of **dinner** is emphasized. It is nearly sacred. Children are not only expected to be at home for dinner, but are expected to plan their activities around the dinner hour. I have learned that an aspect of becoming "Canadian" that emigrants dislike is losing their family dinner. We can learn from this: dinner is the time when family values, mores, beliefs, and history are passed on to the next generation.

Many of us who study food and society recognize the importance of dinner in the traditional family or the restructured family. Perhaps we should begin to talk about "dinner" as quality time. We can certainly learn this from our culinary history too.

On that beautiful but lonely shore at Port Royal in the winter of 1606-07 when Champlain founded the Order of Good Cheer, the French explorers ate dinner together to fight the gloomy and forbidding winter. They invited the Mi'kmaq to eat with them. The result -- many years of friendship between the French and the Mi'kmaq, and as well, a pleasant winter.

We have much to learn from our culinary history.

Jo Marie Powers is Associate Professor at the University of Guelph.



CULINARY COLLEAGUES #6

This ongoing column usually introduces people who are currently researching Ontario's culinary history, but this time we introduce some American colleagues.

In some respects, Culinary Historians of Ontario (CHO) was formed in response to the many similar organizations that have been operating throughout the United States. Some of these groups were established over a decade ago, while others, like CHO, have been functioning for little more than a year.

Generally these sister groups meet on a regular basis to take part in field trips, cooking classes and seminars. Most of the established groups produce a newsletter that keeps members in touch with current activity in culinary history.

To date, there are 7 American culinary historian organizations and CHO exchanges newsletters with several of them. (Apparently, a group has just formed in Sweden too.) You may like to contact these colleagues.

- **Culinary Historians of Boston**
47 Harvard St., #A201
Charlestown, MA 02129-3746
- **Historic Foodways Society of Delaware Valley**
Graeme Park, 859 County Line Rd.
Horsham, PA 19044
- **Culinary Historians of New York**
32 Harvard St., Garden City
New York, NY 11530-4004
- **Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor**
1207 West Madison
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
- **Houston Culinary Historians**
101 Westcott - Suite #1905
Houston, TX 77007-7033
- **Chicago Culinary Historians**
2010 West Chase Ave.
Chicago, IL 60645

And one wonderful quarterly newsletter:

- **Food History News**
HCR 81, Box 354A
Isleboro, ME 04848

CULINARY CURATORS #1

We invite other living history sites to submit a summary of their food history programmes.

● BATTLEFIELD HOUSE ●

Battlefield House Museum in Stoney Creek has been developing an open hearth cooking programme since the 1980s. Staff utilize bake kettles, tin kitchens and griddles in their efforts to accurately represent the period of 1800-1835.

Their open hearth cooking is a main attraction for school visitors and special events. At the "Apple Festival", held in September, staff make apple recipes which includes apple butter. To the delight of our visitors at the "Herb Weekend", samples of herbal cooking such as scones and seed cakes are offered, which bring people back year after year. Another programme entitled "Officers' Luncheon" gathered re-enactors, costumed as officers of the War of 1812, to dine on such early 19th century delicacies as "smoked salmon, [beef] olive pie, dandelion salad, Queen Cakes and raspberry shrub!"

Battlefield House Museum uses a variety of resources that assist staff in their preparation for such gastronomic events. Secondary books regularly used include *The Old Sturbridge Village Cook Book* (1989) and *The King's Bread: 18th Century Cooking at Niagara* (1989). They also use *The Cook Not Mad* (Kingston, Ont., 1831).

The domestic staff take great care to create a warm atmosphere in the kitchen by inviting children to participate in the preparation of historic foods during educational programmes. Also, visitors to the house gain insight into period cooking methods through demonstrations, as well as by tasting samples.

If CHO members have any questions concerning open hearth cooking during the period of 1800-35, you are encouraged to contact Roel van der Meiden or Carol Taylor at:

- **Battlefield House Museum**
77 King Street West
P.O. Box 66561
Stoney Creek, Ont. L8G 5E5

Tel (905) 662-8458
Fax (905) 643-6161

CULINARY CONTEST

● HARVEST HOME at DUNDURN CASTLE ●

"Harvest Home" is our annual baking and preserves contest. The 13 categories range from pickles to cakes to flower arranging. This year we added an "Apple Jelly" contest for historic sites.

Our event has always stressed that entrants use historically accurate recipes, so over time the contest has become more challenging as people become more interested in historic cooking. The judges are local celebrities but don't necessarily have a cooking background. It's amazing how seriously they take the need for historical accuracy in choosing the winners.

This year our grand prizes were Root Pudding, Bakewell Tart and Damson Preserves. A beautiful Marble Cake decorated with candied mint leaves, Sinmel Cake, Elderberry Pie, several raised Pork Pies, and a delicious Cottage Loaf were some of the other winners. The jams and pickles categories always receive the most entries, but they are the ones which have taken the longest to become more historically accurate.

We have several families who enjoy participating, like the uncle/niece team who each enter the same category. This year Linda placed much better than her uncle Jack, which suggests we'll have even tastier treats next year.

As for Apple Jelly, we had two winners. First prize went to Elizabeth Tucker of the John Park Homestead in Harrow. Her *Cook Not Mad* jelly was a pale peach colour and had a delicate flavour derived from the heritage varieties of Stark, Ben Davis and Wealthy. Second went to June Chambers of Black Creek Pioneer Village, whose jelly was firmly textured and sweet. And thanks to CHO co-founder Fiona Lucas for being our specialty judge!

Cathy Masterson is Demonstrator-Cook at Dundurn Castle in Hamilton, Ontario.

● APPLE JELLY ●

The Cook Not Mad, (Kingston, Ont., 1831), no. 171.

"Pare and boil your apples to a pulp, strain, to a pint put a pound of sugar."

CULINARY QUERIES

Melanie Garrison, re-enactor with the King's 8th Regiment, asks: "What is *muscovado sugar*?"

Muscovado is crude, raw sugar. It "is the raw material from which the British sugar-bakers chiefly make their loaf, or refined lump" sugar. (*Chambers Encyclopedia*, 1778-83) First the juice is extracted from the cane, purified, evaporated to a syrup, then crystallized. "[N]ext [it is] conveyed to the curing house, where the treacle is completely drained; in which dry state [it] is called **raw**, or **muscovado**, sugar: thus it is sent to Europe, where it is subsequently refined". (*Domestic Encyclopedia*, 1806)

The earliest shipments of muscovado arrived in Upper Canada during the 1790's via England. As refined sugar decreased in price, low grade sugars like muscovado were less in demand. For example, in its exhaustive sugar essay, the 1911 *Britannica Encyclopedia* mentions it not at all.

Muscovado was sticky and dark brown as some residual molasses clung to the sugar crystals. It was packed into barrels because it was too moist to maintain a cone (loaf) shape. Gravity often pulled the remaining molasses to the barrel bottom, so the lowest layer swam in molasses dregs.

"Muscovado" derives from the Spanish word "mascabado", which means unrefined and low quality.

CULINARY CLUB

Individuals:

Carolyn Blackstock, Doon Heritage Crossroads
 Carol Ferguson, Islington
 Roberta Grosland, Kitchener
 Paula Llamas, Toronto
 Peter Iverson, Toronto
 Eva MacDonald, Toronto
 Cecile M. Renaud, Amherstburg
 Florence Watts, The Grange, AGO
 Bob Wildfong, Doon Heritage Crossroads

Museums:

Beaver River Museum
 Historic Fort Erie

Thanks to those who renewed their memberships!

CULINARY CALENDAR

November

The Gibson House *Christmas and Hogmanay Treats* Hands on hearth workshop for adults. Registration required. Saturday Nov. 4, 10-2 pm. 5172 Yonge St., @ Park Home Ave., just north of North York Subway Station. (416) 395-7432.

Montgomery's Inn *Table Talks* Discover 19th century tablewares & other ceramics through 4 illustrated evening talks. Tuesdays, 8 pm. \$28 series (\$25 seniors), \$8 individual evenings.

Nov 7 *Setting the Scene While Setting the Table*
Brian Musslewhite, ROM

Nov 14 *Blue Willow in any Pattern*
Conrad Biernacki, Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art

Nov 21 *Trowels & Triangulations: Interpreting Household Ceramics through Archaeology*
Dena Doroszenko, Ontario Heritage Foundation

Nov 28 *One Side Dish He Broke: Ceramics in the Collection of Montgomery's Inn*

Kenneth Heaman, Montgomery's Inn
Limited enrollment. 4709 Dundas St. W., Etobicoke, Ont. (416) 394-8113

The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair *Food Day*
Opening day of *Daily Bread Food Bank* Christmas food drive. Bring a food donation to the fair. Food samples and cooking demonstrations. Wed., Nov. 8. Coliseum, Exhibition Place, Toronto.

Montgomery's Inn Patricia Beeson, author of *Macdonald was Late for Dinner* presents an evening of 19th century recipes and table customs in Ontario. Thurs. Nov. 16 @ 8 pm. \$5 in advance, \$7 at door.

Seagram Museum *A Gathering of Glass* Learn how sand, soda and limestone become stems, feet and bowls in this weekend dedicated to drinking glasses. Nov 12 & 13, 11 am.-5 pm. 57 Erb St., Waterloo, Ont. (519) 885-1857.

Invitation to

● THE ROYAL WINTER FAIR ●

Wednesday, Nov. 15 -- 6 pm
Coliseum, Exhibition Place
(Front door)

RSVP to Fiona (416) 534-1405

December

Josef Schneider Haus *Weihnachten* Enjoy festivities devoted to a German Christmas.

Dec 2-3 *Sausage & Scrapple*

Dec 16-17 *Cookies & Pretzels*

Dec 23-24 *Martin's Goose*

466 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ont. (519) 742-7752.

Essex Region Conservation Authority - John R. Park Homestead *Christmas in the Country* Homemade decorations, music & open hearth baking. Sundays, Dec 3, 10, 17. 12-4 pm. Essex Rd. 50, between Kingsville & Cochester, just 45 mins. southeast of Windsor & Detroit. (519) 738-2029.

Ontario Historical Society *Cookbook Caper* Annual recipe & food history book sale. Dec 3, 1-4 pm. 34 Parkview Ave, Willowdale, Ont. (416) 226-9011.

Toronto Historical Board - Spadina & Mackenzie House *Gaslight Tours* Includes seasonal historic refreshments. Reservations required. Tuesdays @ Spadina, Dec 5, 12, 19. Thursdays @ Mackenzie House, Dec. 7, 14, 21. 7 or 8 pm. (416) 392-6827 ext. 265.

May 1996

Ontario Historical Society *Consuming Passions II: Feeding the Multitudes* May 2-4, 1996. Ottawa.

CULINARY CREDITS

- Fiona Lucas (416) 534-1405
- Christine Lupton (519) 748-1645
- Bridget Wranich (416) 690-7062

Thanks for this issue to: Jo Marie Powers, Cathy Masterson, Susan Ramsay.

Deadline for next issue: December 15.

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

\$12 (Cdn) annual subscription.

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