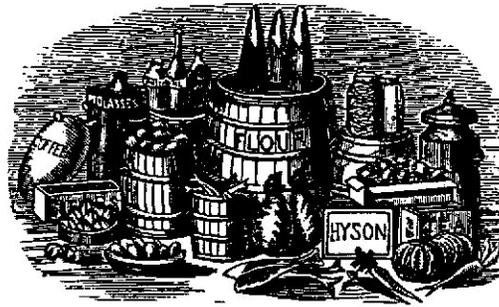


# CULINARY HISTORIANS OF ONTARIO

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## - TORONTO REGION -

### . . . Plans Continue to Unfold for *From Rations to Riesling: Remembering Ontario's Food Heritage*

As September 21 quickly approaches, details for *From Rations to Riesling: Remembering Ontario's Food Heritage* at Doon Heritage Crossroads only gets more exciting. Here is an update on the most recent developments.

We are pleased to announce that our guest speaker for the morning of the conference will be Sandra Oliver, publisher and editor of *Food History News* and author of *Saltwater Foodways: New Englanders and Their Foods at Sea and Ashore in the Nineteenth Century*. Sandy will discuss why peoples should celebrate, remember and perpetuate their culinary traditions. She is a wonderful addition to the conference. For more information about Sandra Oliver, see *Culinary Colleague*, page 3.

We've had a great response from people interested in conducting afternoon workshops. 12 of the 18 workshops are confirmed. All will be practical, hands-on and interactive.

Registration packages will be mailed in June, but here's a preview of some confirmed workshops:

- *Can She Bake a Cherry Pie* presented by Carolyn Blackstock. This workshop will provide a hands-on opportunity to learn how to use an oven in a wood fuelled cookstove.

- *Sauerkraut and Schmieres* will be given by Mara Hollands and Michelle Spencer of Joseph Schneider Haus. Participants will make Pennsylvania-German pickles with produce from a heritage garden.

- *Seed Saving Then and Now* will be offered by Susan Noakes and Shawn Wingate of Sir Sanford Fleming College. They will cover characteristics of heritage seeds and plants by playing a game and exploring artifacts and archival text.

- *Heritage Apple Tasting* will be hosted by Bob Wildfong who will offer samples of heritage apples and a chance to learn and appreciate the differences in flavour and texture which make some apple varieties best for specific uses.

- *Oranges* Joyce Lewis plans to discuss oranges, their history, the different varieties, when they appeared in Ontario and their uses.

- *Sour Dough Starters* Chez Soleil (Liz Mountain and Janet Sinclair) will address the history and versatility of these easy bread makers.

- *Educational Interpretive Techniques in Historic Kitchens* Cathy Masterson, Dundurn Castle, has offered to host this hands-on workshop which will make *Nice Breakfast Cakes* from Mrs. Beeton and cover various interpretive techniques that can be utilized in an historic kitchen.

Now we need your help. We would like to put out an invitation for volunteers to help with the conference. We have 3 committees that you may be interested in joining. They include Registration/Welcoming, Conference Set Up/ Take Down and Food committees. If you would like to get involved there will be a meeting at

**Doon Heritage Crossroads, on Monday, June 10, at 6:30 pm.** If you are unable to attend this meeting but would still like to volunteer, please contact Bridget Wranich at (416) 690-7062.

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.

## COOKERY COLLECTION -- HISTORIC RECIPES #11, #12 AND #13

We invite you to submit recipes to this ongoing column. Please use this format. Historic information can be text or picture.

### MAPLE SYRUP

An early Ontario account of a "sugar season" is in Elizabeth Simcoe's diary for 1794: "[March] is the month for making maple sugar; a hot sun and frosty nights cause the sap to flow most. Slits are cut in the back of trees, and wooden troughs sit under the tree, into which the sap - a clear, sweet water - runs...".

#### MAPLE LEAF COCKTAIL

Trader Vic, *Trader Vic's Bartender Guide*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1947, 1972 edition), page 237.

*Original text:*

1 oz. bourbon  
1 teas. maple syrup  
juice of 1/2 a lemon.

Shake with ice cubes. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass.

#### MAPLE SUGAR CANDY

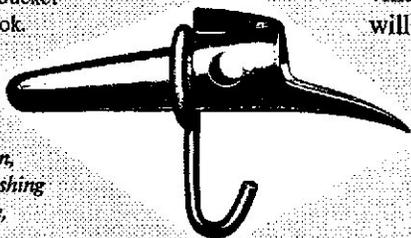
Fannie Farmer, *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, (Boston: Little, Brown & Company Publishers, 2nd edition, 1914), pages 542-543.

*Original text:*

1 lb. soft maple sugar  
3/4 cup thin cream  
1/4 cup boiling water  
2/3 cup English walnut or pecan meat, cut in pieces.

Break sugar in pieces; put into a saucepan with cream and water. Bring to a boiling-point, and boil until a soft ball is formed when tried in cold water. Remove from fire, beat until creamy, add nut meat, and pour into a buttered tin. Cool slightly, and mark in squares.

Hook spout The blunt end is driven into the tree. The spout directs the sap into a bucket hanging from the built-in hook.



James Lawrence & Rex Martin,  
*Sweet Maple, Chapters Publishing  
Co. & Vermont Life Magazine,*  
1993, p. 205.

#### MAPLE SYRUP PIE (NO.2)

*Five Roses Cook Book*, (Montreal: Lake of the Woods Milling Company Ltd., 1915), page 83.

*Original text:*

1 cup maple syrup  
1/2 cup water  
2 eggs (whites for frosting)  
2 tablespoons *Five Roses* flour  
Butter size of walnut.

Cook in double boiler. Bake the crust, then fill up with custard. Cover with meringue.

*Historic information:*

Maple-tapping season usually begins in February and lasts from 4 to 6 weeks. At the beginning of the season, it takes 20 gallons of sap to make 1 gallon of syrup; however by the end of the season it will take up to 50 gallons of sap to make 1 gallon of syrup.

A variety of products can be made from maple syrup such as sugar, honey, cream, butter and molasses, and the sap can be turned into vinegar, beer or wine.

Native Micmac legend tells us of a time when maple trees were filled with a thick syrup that flowed year-round. Glooscap, a native hero, happens upon a unattended village. To his dismay, he finds the villagers lying contented under some maple trees while the syrup drips into their mouths. Angrily, Glooscap changes the syrup to sap and ceases its year-long production. He reveals to the villagers that, as a result of his actions, they will no longer be "fat and lazy" but once again "appreciate the maple syrup the Creator gave them".

All 3 of these recipe books are known to have been used in Ontario.

## CULINARY COLLEAGUE #6

*This time, we feature an American culinary historian, rather than our usual homegrown Ontarian.*

### • SANDRA L. OLIVER •

It is with great pleasure and happy anticipation that *Culinary Historians of Ontario* and *Doon Heritage Crossroads* announce that the featured speaker at our September conference *From Rations to Riesling: Remembering Ontario's Food History* is . . . SANDRA OLIVER!!!

Those of you who read *Food History News* know that Sandy is its founder and editor. She speaks frequently on diverse issues concerning North American foods and culinary history. For this conference, her theme will be about why it's important for peoples to celebrate, remember and perpetuate their culinary traditions.

Recently, Sandy published a book on the foods of her native New England, *Saltwater Foodways*, which CHO recommends as an example of excellent readable scholarship from a cook wise in the ways of down hearth and cook stove cookery, and a scholar wise in the ways of wide-reaching research. It's full of informative text, excellent archival pictures, period recipes and advice on making them today, informative colour

photographs of the food and an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

Sandy lives with her family in Isleboro, on an island off the Maine coast. Much of her historic cooking experience was gained at *Mystic Seaport* in Connecticut, where she went after receiving a history degree from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Sandy said she is honoured to have been asked. We return the compliment by saying we are honoured she accepted. CHO and Doon hope you attend to hear Sandra Oliver.

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• Oliver, Sandra L. *Saltwater Foodways: New Englanders and their food, at sea and ashore, in the 19th century*. Mystic Seaport Museum, Connecticut. 1995. Illustrated, bibliography, 2 indexes, 442 pages.

• *Food History News*, HCR 60 Box 354A, Isleboro, Maine 04848. \$12. American annual subscription.

### COGENT CULINARY COMMENTS from SANDRA OLIVER

① *FHN*, vol. III, no. 1, pp. 1, summer 1991:

"I hear a fair amount of smug 20th century condescension about cooking in the past and even museum staff poking fun at how and what people ate. I have always thought this was a bit impolite, even if the object of our humor is dead; that we would probably not yuk it up to their faces any more than we would make fun of natives in foreign places. But more than that, it is lousy interpretation from which no one can learn. It does not require romanticizing their efforts to present, respectfully and even handedly, those people, their lives and their foodways."

② *FHN*, vol. V, no. 1, p. 6, summer 1993:

"[I] raised questions about the tendency to solve culinary problems in historical cooking by adding tools and gadgets, by the impulse to average up the number of cooking tools at a site when there may not be firm evidence one way or another whether an object should be in a kitchen, and the tendency to dismiss the possibility of a culinary operation because of 20th century perceptions of the tools required to perform it. Among my points was that cooking, historically and in the present, is behaviour, subject to individual skill, experience and even imagination about tool use."

③ *FHN*, vol. V, no. 4, p. 3, spring 1994:

"Food historians need to overcome or, *at the very least*, recognize our modern biases when we work with period sources. ... The great comfort to the food historian preparing an historic dish -- unlike the architectural historian restoring a house -- is that you can eat your mistakes and try again."



## CULINARY CUPBOARD #1

### ● FRESH ORANGES ●

Today, with cascades of affordable fresh oranges available year round, it is hard to remember that throughout the 19th century they were both rare and expensive. Those who could afford to eat oranges might buy special silver spoons and bowls for the purpose as late as the 1870s and it was not until well after the turn of the century that this exotic fruit became more generally affordable.

The first oranges in Ontario would have come from the Mediterranean or the West Indies. Commercial groves began in Florida after 1821, and expanded after the Civil War and the building of a railway there. Oranges begin to rot a month after picking, so the invention of refrigerated cars in the 1870s increased their availability.

The shaddock, an "orange-like fruit", from the West Indies which Mrs. Simcoe ate at Niagara in 1792 (M. Quayle Innis, *Mrs. Simcoe's Diary*, Toronto: MacMillan, 1965) are now called pummelos, and are more like a grapefruit than an orange (Florida Dept. of Citrus Fact Sheet). Oranges were known to her, though, and she notes on Sept. 17, 1796, that she took orange marmalade to cure seasickness.

The earliest mention of fresh oranges I have found is in a letter from Julia Lambert at York (now Toronto) on May 17, 1825. (S. A. Heward & W. S. Wallace, *An American Lady in Old Toronto: The Letters of Julia Lambert, 1821-1854*, Ottawa, 1946). An Oshawa merchant, Edward Carswell, records selling 1 orange on May 23, 1833 at 6d and another on May 18, 1834 at 3 1/2d. On May 17, 1841 Larrett Smith was brought 2 oranges, "the first of the season", which cost 5d. (M. Larratt Smith, *Young Mr. Smith in Upper Canada*, Toronto, 1980). Later, Sophia McNabb bought oranges for her invalid mother in Hamilton on April 1, 1846 (*The Diary of Sophia McNab*, Hamilton, 1967).

It is not until 1850 that an advertisement appears in December for "fresh oranges, lemons and grapes" at Thomas McConkey's store in Toronto (*Banner*, Dec. 19). Earlier ads at Christmas for "fresh fruit" refer to new shipments of dried fruit or candied peel.

In the merchants' account books after

1850 which I have examined, fresh oranges and lemons may appear occasionally in January but they are more usually available between April and October. However, on December 24, 1890, Chin, the Butler at The Grange, bought oranges from "Man at the Door" (Pantry book, vol. 1, Art Gallery of Ontario Archives).

The year before, 1 orange cost 5¢ at Mr. Hunter's store in Barrie on May 23 (Account Book, Baldwin Room, MTRL) - about the time that Chin was paying a labourer 15¢ an hour to dig the garden. If we equate 15¢ to the present minimum wage in Ontario (\$6.85), then the cost of a single orange would be \$2.25, or \$27 a dozen in today's Canadian money! Clearly, even when available, oranges were not for everybody!

*Submitted by Joyce Lewis.*

*With thanks to C. Clay, Dorothy Duncan, Eleanor Darke, Fiona Lucas, Stephen Otto, Jo-Marie Powers and A. Stringer.*

## CULINARY CLUB

### *Individuals:*

Ellen Blauberg, Toronto  
Virginia Careless, Royal B. C. Museum, Victoria  
Michael Izzard, Toronto  
Evelyn Jolly, Etobicoke  
Johana Sevc, Montgomery's Inn, Etobicoke

### *Other Groups:*

Culinary Historians of Boston

## CULINARY QUERIES #14 AND #15

1. **Arlene Bridges**, of "Friends of Battlefield House" in Stoney Creek, wrote to CHO about *Civil War Home Cooking, 1861-1865*, by Robert S. Hill. Arlene would like to order this book through a Canadian distributor, but can't find one. If you have information, contact Battlefield House at (905) 662-8958 or fax (905) 643-6161.

2. **Lise Ferguson** of Spadina (Historic House) in Toronto wonders "Where's the orgeat"? (Forgive the pun!) Orgeat (*or-jee-at*) was a sugared milk beverage with pulverized almonds or originally barley. Brandy was frequently added. The English word derives from the old French, specifically Provençal, for barley: "orjat". Like noyau and punch, it was a "party drink", in fact, "A necessary Refreshment at all Parties" wrote Mary Randolph in *The Virginia Housewife* (1826).

## CULINARY CRITIQUE #1

### • VOICES FROM THE GARDEN •

By the time you read this, some of you may be celebrating the end of a long winter -- with rake and spade in your gardens. For those who also like to read about gardens, there's another reason to celebrate: the arrival of a new anthology of garden writings. It's very welcome because it's the first *Canadian* collection.

Edwinna von Baeyer and Pleasance Crawford have gathered 90 excerpts from a wide variety of English-language sources ranging from Elizabeth Simcoe's 1792 account of clearing land to Marjorie Harris' 1994 plea for quiet in urban gardens. They span Canadian geography as well, from a piece urging "The Improvement of Halifax" to a description of kitchen gardening in the Yukon. They also cross cultural borders, from letters of British pioneers to a reminiscence of Africville. All aspects of gardens are covered, from what vegetables to plant to what to wear to a garden party.

Researchers seeking the definitive gardening history of Canada won't, as the editors admit, find it here. However, this is an excellent primer. Through these pieces, the reader encounters all the concerns and trends that have occupied gardeners over the years. The editors provide background information on each author, as well as setting the articles in the larger context of Canadian gardening. These well-written introductions are an education in themselves. A source list and 2 indexes are also included.

While it may not be "the" history of Canadian gardening as such, this anthology is, in its way, a history of Canada. For there are pieces here that go beyond the usual glowing or humorous descriptions of gardens. Pieces, such as the account of the Japanese internee's garden, that move us to reflect on much wider issues of community and our stewardship of this land.

Von Baeyer and Crawford say they gathered 350 items while researching this book. Let's hope they give us another collection of wonderful garden voices soon.

*Garden Voices: Two Centuries of Canadian Garden Writing.* Edwinna von Baeyer and Pleasance Crawford, editors. Random House, 1995.

*Nancy Luno interprets at Montgomery's Inn in Etobicoke and researches on historic gardens.*

## CULINARY COMMENTARY #1

### • EDIBLE CULTURE •

On March 15, as part of the Art Gallery of Ontario's *OH! Canada Project*, 4 speakers talked about aspects of edible Canadian culture (despite disparagement from John Bentley Mays, *Globe and Mail* art critic!) I left with renewed confidence in Canada's economic future.

As moderator, Anita Stewart, founder of *Cuisine Canada*, extolled the long list of farmers' produce unique to the 12 distinct regions of our vast country: squash, quail, soybeans, sweet onions, wines, white peaches, honey, soft goat cheese. She calls herself a "nationalistic foodie", which showed in the zeal with which she spoke.

Larry Martin of the *University of Guelph* and *Agri-Food Network* bid us celebrate the "waking of the sleeping giant" that is Canada's agri-food sector. As proof, he offered some remarkable success stories, like the small carrot farmer in Port Hope, Ontario, who has become North America's biggest carrot supplier east of the Mississippi because he responded to his customers' suggestions for quality control.

Well-known cook-author Carol Ferguson (see CHO #5, summer '95), persuasively pondered the collective multicultural identity of Canadians, and reminded us that we aren't a "melting pot" like our American neighbours. She talked of regional recipes, like Nanaimo Bars, of contemporary chefs "restyling" local traditions with fresh seasonal produce, of culinary traditions still tucked away in home kitchens, of the excellence of our food writers (like Julian Armstrong of Québec, Marie Nightingale of Nova Scotia), and of today's greater awareness and pride in culinary traditions and trends.

Following Carol was Paul Speck of *Henry of Pelham* winery (see CHO #6, autumn '94) and *Vintners Quality Alliance*. Speaking of success stories, Ontario's renewed wine industry is hugely productive in just 7 years. He noted how Free Trade between Canada and the States has been an unexpected "kick in the pants".

I couldn't attend, but later some people sat down to a 5 course meal created by First Nations chef David Wolfman that exemplified the best of edible Canadian culture today.

*Fiona Lucas is a founder of CHO and Senior Domestic Interpreter for the Toronto Historical Bd.*

