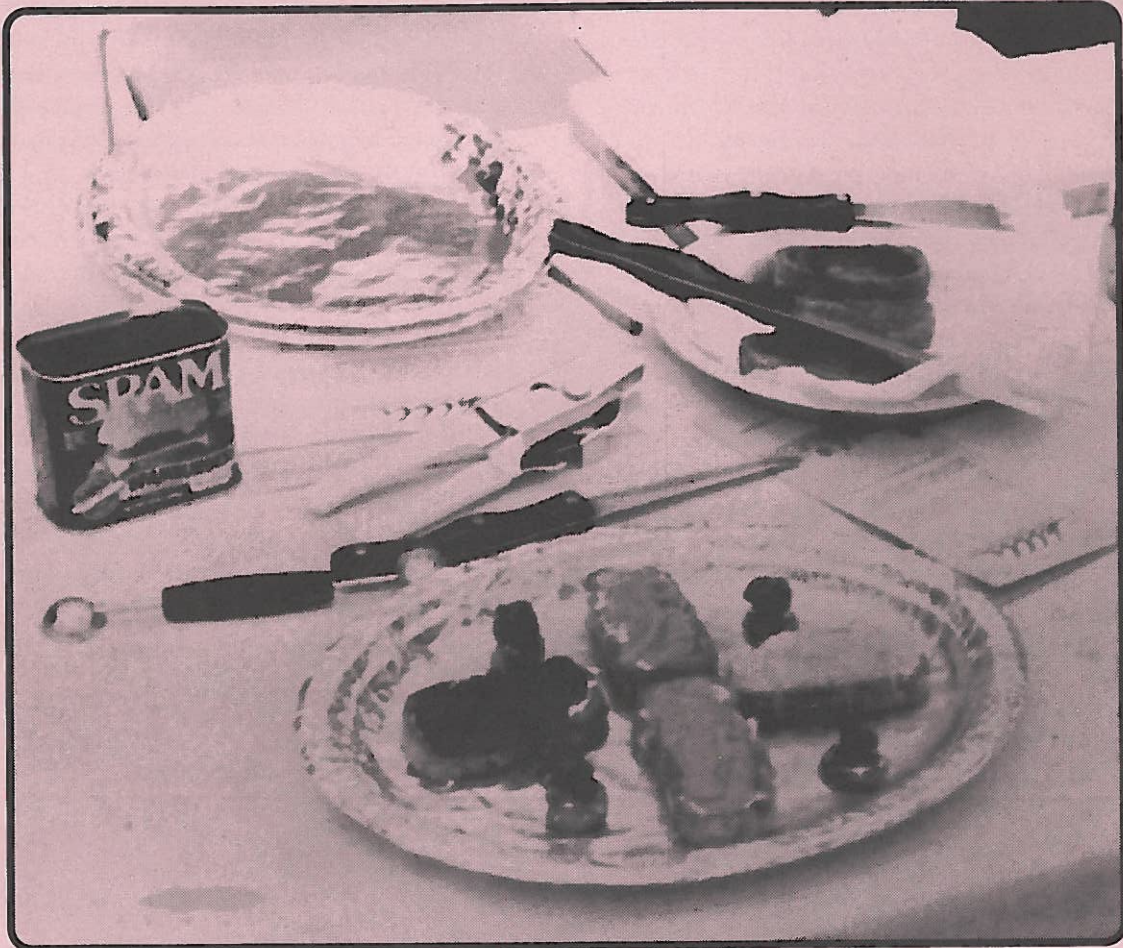


Digest

Vol. 15

1995

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF FOOD AND FOODWAYS



FEATURES IN THIS ISSUE:

Ramen Noodles & Spam: Popular Foods, Significant Tastes

Metabolising Judaism

Koulourákia: A Photo Essay

Our Daily Bread: A Look at Bible Breads

Digest

Letter from the Editor

Following in the footsteps of the former editors, Yvonne R. Lockwood and William G. Lockwood, is a rather intimidating proposition. They have made the *Digest* into a professional quality journal that in its inclusiveness of content has represented scholarship from a variety of disciplines—culinary history, nutritional sciences, cultural and nutritional anthropology, sociology, folklore. It is this inclusiveness that I hope to continue, to provide a forum for the “interdisciplinary study of food and foodways.”

I bring to this study a perspective grounded in folklore. As a graduate student of Don Yoder (among others) at the University of Pennsylvania, I was introduced to a vast array of food cultures, cuisines and ways of thinking about food. Folklore offers a perspective that approaches food and the human activities and meanings surrounding food as aesthetic, cultural, and social productions and communications. Theoretical models in folklore tend to deal with culture as a system of malleable resources for people to manipulate in their creation of meaning in their own artistic and social endeavors. While traditional foods (those having an historical continuity in a community and those whose production tends to be controlled by the individual rather than mass-mediated) have formed the basis of folklore foodways scholarship, these concepts are applicable to any type of food or food behavior.

In keeping with this inclusiveness, this issue contains articles on foods from popular culture as well as from more traditional communities. Spam and ramen, two items that represent the epitome of non-traditional, commercial foods, are examined by Sojin Kim and R. Mark Livengood in a revised version of their paper that won the Sue Samuelson Prize in 1995. Suzanne Waldenberger

explores a commercially produced genre of bread, while Maurie Sacks muses on changing attitudes towards the definition of Kosher foods. Helen Tangires provides a photo essay on an ethnic pastry tradition in the U.S., and Amy Bentley re-examines a classic work in sociology and its relevance to contemporary foodways scholarship. Two syllabi for food courses are also included, and recent publications, conferences, and other food organizations are mentioned in order to keep foodways scholars informed about recent scholarship and activities.

Submissions for the 1996 issue of the *Digest* are now being accepted. In addition to critical and theoretical articles, I am particularly interested in receiving field reports of work in progress and would like to include reviews of exhibits, festivals, museums, and films as well. Course syllabi and book reviews are also invited. And, of course, suggestions for additional subjects and formats are always welcome.

In addition, I would like to thank the various individuals who have worked with me on this issue: editorial assistant, Cheri Goldner, associate editor, Dr. Marilyn Motz, and student assistants Elisabeth Nixon, Julie Clevidence and Marcella Bush. The Department of Popular Culture has provided institutional support, while Yvonne Lockwood has continued to provide well-informed advice and encouragement.

Editor

Lucy Long, Editor
Marilyn Motz, Associate Editor
Cheri Goldner, Editorial Assistant

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Digest: An Interdisciplinary Study of Food and Foodways
Lucy Long
Department of Popular Culture
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43403

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Ramen Noodles & Spam:

Popular Foods, Significant Tastes

Sojin Kim and R. Mark Livengood

The authors are doctoral candidates in the Folklore Program at UCLA.

We begin with the notion that if folklorists are to more fully understand the role of food in culture, they need to consider the significance of mass-produced, commercial foods—items which have been largely neglected by researchers. Two such foods are ramen noodles and Spam. While these products have engendered humorous and often derisive associations, they are frequently eaten with pleasure and even celebrated. By exploring various dimensions of ramen noodles and Spam, we intend to illustrate the necessary inclusion of mass-produced foods in the study of foodways.

In his article "Folk Cookery," regarded as an initial call to the study of foodways by folklorists, Don Yoder closes his essay by noting the changes in domestic cookery brought about by the production of "ready-made" foods. Writing in 1972, Yoder asks: "Whether we are better off with our 'enriched' bread and our often flavorless frozen foods is a question that the historian and the folklife scholar as well as the nutritionist and public health official can help to answer" (1972:347). While we are not certain that the foods we eat today are necessarily "better" than those of the early 1970s, we would argue that the comestibles resulting from mass-production are increasingly more central to our lives in the late twentieth century. Mass-production, however, has not led to the homogenization of the American diet nor to the demise of culinary ingenuity; the preparation, consumption, and even celebration of mass-produced foods are projects undertaken in an array of meaningful and imaginative manners.

Several folklorists have addressed mass-produced foods. Elizabeth Mosby Adler briefly discusses ways of eating the Oreo cookie, in addition to fried eggs, corn-on-the-cob, and layer cake, in her examination of the creative manipulations involved in and sensory experiences characteristic to the act of eating

(1983). In a more recent article, Sarah E. Newton suggests that "the study of popular commercial food products can have value to the folklorist, as well as the student of American culture, in uncovering the intimate, important, and sometimes symbolic relationships people develop between themselves, their world, and the foods they eat" (1992:266). Newton surveys the "cultural and folkloric implications" of another mass-produced food, Jell-O, outlining the narratives, jokes, and other forms of expressive behavior that emerge around this food. Our study complements Newton's by demonstrating how the preparation and consumption of mass-produced products by individuals or groups may be anchored within a complex of personal aesthetics, memories of significant social relationships, and/or ethnic identification.

Ramen Noodles

In 1972, after years of production in Japan, Nissin Foods began manufacturing ramen noodles in Gardena, California. Since ramen's introduction in the United States, the small blocks and Styrofoam cups of dehydrated noodles have become ubiquitous. In 1988, Nissin expected domestic sales totalling \$85 million—a substantial sum considering that in Los Angeles today the noodles can sell for as low as nineteen cents a package (Sanchez 1988:10). Ramen is now available in a variety of flavors, ranging in price up to \$1.50 for "gourmet" noodles. According to one writer, Los Angeles "has become the Oriental noodle-making capital of the United States, with at least six companies in the region" (Sanchez 1988:1). Of course, this says nothing of the many restaurants that serve steaming bowls of homemade noodles throughout the city.

Ramen noodles piqued our research interests when we enrolled in a seminar on foodways in the UCLA Folklore Program.¹ By focusing on this product with which many students are familiar, we hoped to articulate some of the issues folklorists often consider in analyzing eating behaviors while

positioning our discussions in the immediate contexts of students' lives. Therefore, many of the participants in our study were, and in some cases still are, undergraduate and graduate students at UCLA. According to one marketing survey, many people get their first taste of ramen noodles while in college (Shapiro 1989:D1). Indeed, students seem to be one of the populations targeted by the Nissin Corporation. A quotation from the company's brochure suggests how the corporation conceptualizes its market:

The America of the 1980s found young families working harder than ever but unable to afford homes, even as double income households proliferated. People had less time for personal enjoyment, and still struggled to support themselves. The dollar tumbled in both international and domestic value. The college generation faced downward mobility.

These factors all contributed to a hectic pace across the nation. People demanded that what free time and money they did have was to be spent on quality activities and products. Nissin Foods' instant oriental noodle (ramen) products fit perfectly into that environment.
[Nissin Foods Corporation 1989]

Our research corroborates the product's pragmatic appeal suggested by this statement. Students often describe ramen as an inexpensive, convenient, and last-resort staple food. Indeed, one person stated, "It's usually like, 'Oh I don't have any time this week, so I better get some ramen,' or 'Wednesday I'm going to be really busy, so I better get some so I can whip it off real quick.'" Although people offer such explanations, some individuals prepare the product in aesthetically satisfying ways that may be evocative of meaningful past experiences.

The relative ease of preparation—boiling the noodles for three minutes and mixing in the flavor powder from the enclosed tin foil packet—is highlighted by efforts to make the mass-produced product sensorially pleasurable (see Jones 1991:235). People indicated ingredients, utensils, and procedures necessary for the creation of a visually and gustatorily pleasing dish. For example, one person stated that the essential ingredient, pink fishcake, or *kamaboko*, adds color to the dish. She said, "All the different stuff, the

existing stuff that we add on, makes it look good—color and that it just looks cooked, and mostly color." Another commented upon the way her addition of certain ingredients contributed to a more appealing dish: "You can see with the hot dogs and you can see the color the cheese made it . . . sort of a yellow instead of that nasty puce color. And it looks a lot more edible and it tastes better anyway." Still another described his use of two different kinds of noodles as a means of making the dish "prettier." These statements indicate that cooks make aesthetic judgments about the appearance of ramen (see Jones 1993).

For one preparer of ramen, who adds very little to what is provided in the package—soy sauce and sometimes an egg—the utensils with which he eats ramen contribute to pleasant sensory experiences. He said, "You've got to cook this with chopsticks. You can't do it with a fork. The fork gets too hot, plus that metallic taste on the mouth isn't good. I always eat them with chopsticks. Never with a fork. It just doesn't taste the same for some reason." This person further indicated that he customarily eats ramen out of a white bowl, or *chow won*, with a blue design because of the agreeable color contrast with the brown noodles. Upon pouring his noodles into this bowl, he held it up and remarked that no vegetables were needed as there was already "enough color."

Furthermore, preparation procedures may be very deliberate. One person who methodically sautes vegetables before adding them to the noodles commented that he did so because he did not want the dish to be like "the slop like on old Western movies" or "jailhouse food." Another cook discussed his detailed method of mixing the powder with other spices and sauces in order to obtain the optimum flavor:

I like to use a lot of curry . . . I like to stir it up until it's all absorbed into the nut butter. I like to have my curry powder suspended in this nut butter because some of the biochemicals that give these spices their flavor are only alcohol or oil soluble and they're not water soluble. And so if you have a soup broth that has water and no oil in it, then it's harder to taste these biochemicals from these spices. They just won't taste, the curry powder, won't taste right because these biochemicals won't be released as freely as they would be.

Recalling Franz Boas's oft-cited edict that "[all] human activities may assume forms that give them esthetic values" (1955 [1927]:9), such elaborate procedures turn three-minute boil-and-serve operations into half-hour culinary endeavors that create possibilities for pleasurable gustatory experiences. Thus, as various ingredients are added and procedures are enacted, the possible aesthetic aspects of ramen preparation and consumption complement, if not supersede, the product's use as cheap and quick sustenance.

The preparation and consumption of single-serving ramen also may be imprinted with memories of meaningful relationships, thus connecting the maker with past social contexts. For one individual, the social interactions she associated with eating ramen occurred in the context of her eating the noodles with friends in college. She explained that this is where she first began to eat ramen and where she learned to prepare it in the manner in which she still eats it. Asked what memories she had of eating instant ramen noodles, this woman, a graduate student at UCLA from Huntington Beach, California, and a particularly dynamic storyteller, related the following narrative to the researchers who videotaped the storytelling while the woman cooked:

One night I went to visit a friend and she actually served top ramen—my friend Stephanie; I'll never forget that night. We were there and we ended up talking into the wee hours of the morning so maybe it's about 2:30. And I decided to go home; I'm driving through this really bad neighborhood in San Diego to get to my other apartment from hers. I had a great Italian sports car called a Lancia at the time and the thing decided to basically blow up at the time. It was just not such a good night [throws arms in air]. So the thing's smoking and it's dark, and I'm in a very horrible neighborhood. So I go running to this phone. And I'm dialing my apartment and dialing my apartment, and the answering machine keeps picking up and I knew my roommate Leila was home—she said she wasn't going out that night. And I'm freaking out, "Oh my God, she's dead. There must be a reason she's not answering the phone." And then like some drug creature from the street comes up and started bothering me and pulling at my clothes and things. So I was just freaking out. I didn't know what to do. I'm scared to death. And a police car drives up. I'm

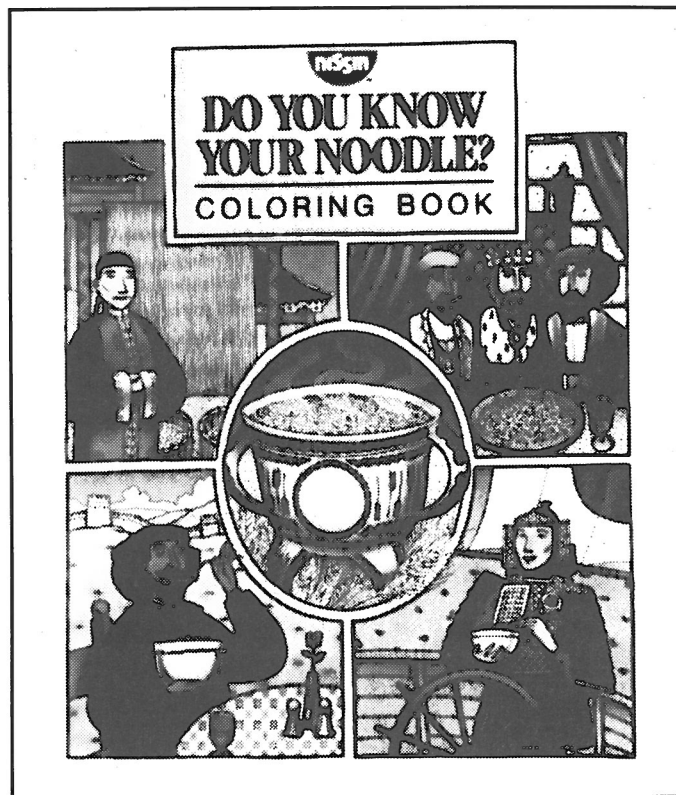


Figure 1. Children's coloring book distributed by Nissin Foods Corporation illustrates the tradition of ramen noodles. Photograph by Sojin Kim.

like "Yea!" This person melts into the woodwork, I go running to the police car, and I'm like "Oh please help me, help me, help me. I don't know what to do. My car broke down." He looks at me and goes, "Oh call Triple A in the morning." And then he drives away. I'm so upset. I'm crying. I'm hysterical. So I go back to the phone and I'm dialing, dialing, dialing. Finally my roommate picks it up. She starts screaming at me what a horrible person I am to interrupt her beauty sleep and all this. So, I was not thrilled to say the least. And so I said, "fine, I hate you" and hung up the phone. And then I called the friend whose house I had just come from. She came and picked me up. And I went home. I was so upset, I never talked to my roommate again until she moved out a couple months later. That was really fun. But the whole point of the thing is that I got home and I was hungry. Not hungry [but] like a nervous kind of hungry you know—there's something that you need to do. And I made myself some top ramen and sat there and ate it [laughs] for like an hour. I just sat there watching TV and eating ramen because I was too upset to think of anything else.

And this was like comfort food.

The content of this story reasserts the important role narrative plays in foodways research. Objects and experiences with objects generate narratives, and narratives in turn become attached to objects. Very often, potential meanings of food and eating are communicated in story form. Foodways researchers, therefore, should be attentive to narrating about food, eating, and cooking, and should consciously document such narrations. Furthermore, this woman's use of the term "comfort food" is an example of culinary cant which suggests a unique category of foods while implying a basic need to have a positive aesthetic experience in daily life, particularly in juxtaposition to the less-than-ideal circumstances she characterizes in the story. For this narrator, ramen recalls a significant, albeit negative, social experience.

Another person associated the dish with communal family eating experiences as a child growing up in Hawaii and now attempts to recreate those experiences by preparing commercially-packaged ramen with her adult siblings who live in the Los Angeles area. Another links the addition of an egg to his ramen with recollections of his grandmother. He said, "I think I learned to do the egg thing from my grandmother, she used to do that sometimes when she used to cook for me. Also when she made seaweed soup. And what she would do when you came home late, she would yell from the back room, 'drop an egg in there, drop an egg in there.'" In this sense, the simple procedure of adding an egg to a mass-produced comestible becomes mnemonic and metonymic, prompting the reconstruction of memorable experiences. In these cases, the preparation and consumption of the mass-produced ramen suggests the veracity of Mary Douglas's assertion that "each meal carries something of the meaning of the other meals" (1972:69). The making and eating of ramen, therefore, may encode memories and associations, both positive and negative, of past culinary experiences.

In addition to sensations and memories, wrapped up in ramen is the complex issue of ethnicity. As packaging and advertising suggest, the origin of the "Oriental" instant noodles is in Asia. In its corporate brochure, Nissin attempts to establish the traditional nature of the mass-produced noodles by outlining the evolution of noodles through time. This effort was un-

derscored by a marketing campaign in 1986 which emphasized ramen's Japanese background and promised customers a means by which to "get authentic oriental taste without spending centuries at the stove" (Nissin Foods Corporation 1989). Interestingly, this discourse attempts to establish the historic continuity and thus the traditionality and authenticity of a mass-produced food item.

Nissin's commercial campaigns have now been expanded to suggest other constituencies via flavors of ramen, such as Picante Shrimp, and recipes which the Nissin company distributes, such as Top Ramen Knockwurst and Veggie Skillet and Rio Ramen. Furthermore, a manager of Maruchan, another noodle manufacturer, was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* as saying, "It's [ramen] definitely an American staple. We feel it's as American as a hot dog" (Sanchez 1988:1). Recent scholarship in folklore and related cultural studies has demonstrated the problems in assuming a straightforward and obvious connection between a particular item and its ethnic association in any given situation (see Theophano 1991). Similarly, our research has revealed how a mass-produced comestible's original ethnic markings are often shed or reinterpreted within individual domestic contexts.

Some people prepared ramen as if it were a Japanese or "Oriental" noodle dish, adding ingredients to it according to their conceptions of what is appropriate to such an ethnic dish. For instance, one cook added what he referred to as a "Chinese trilogy"—ginger, garlic, and soy sauce or oyster sauce. For others the noodles became more a generic starch bed—like rice, bread, or spaghetti—around which individuals created dishes with other ethnic or altogether different models in mind. One person, while acknowledging the Japanese derivation of ramen noodles and her transgression of Kosher laws, adds Hebrew National hot dogs, the kind she "grew up on," and Kraft cheese singles in her preparation of the product. Another person refers to the dish he prepares as *namyun* and explains that this is the way *ramen* is pronounced in Korean. The dish he commonly fixes, however, is a conscious departure from the manner in which noodles are prepared in Korean tradition; he adds almond butter, tahini butter, curry, and avocado. The case of this individual broaches an important question, for the manner in which he linguistically tags the product and the ingredients with

which he prepares ramen do not correspond. Therefore, how ramen may function as an ethnic marker for this person remains ambiguous.

Our informants from Hawaii demonstrated through the ingredients they added to their dish that the model for their preparation was the way in which *saimen* noodles are commonly prepared in Hawaii. They identified certain ingredients as "ethnic" and indicated that they were always included in the *saimen* served in Hawaii, not only in the *saimen* shops, but even at McDonald's. On the mainland they still prepare ramen according to the Hawaiian model. In this instance, ingredients in conjunction with naming suggest ramen is a marker of ethnicity. The particular ingredients these people highlighted were *shoyu*, *kamaboko*, and Spam. This last ingredient presents another example of the unexpected emergence of an ethnic association with a mass-produced food—Hormel's "miracle meat in a can."²

Spam

According to Carolyn Wyman, author of a history of popular foods, *I'm a Spam Fan*, "Americans consume 3.8 cans of Spam every second, or 122 million cans a year" and it is served in nearly thirty percent of American households (1993:64). The meat was developed in 1937. Originally consisting of pork shoulder, ham, and spices, this product was marketed as "Hormel's Spiced Ham," until the name was contracted to the more catchy "Spam." During World War II, Spam became a staple of U.S. service men who reportedly grew to loathe it, yet upon their return to the states created a market that raised and maintained the food's popularity and sales. For many Americans today, Spam often evokes the eating patterns of people of a certain socioeconomic status. Residents of Hawaii, however, as well as those who live in areas of the mainland with concentrations of relocated Hawaiians, are aware that the people of that state consume more Spam per capita than any other state in the union.³ Indeed, many people from Hawaii living in Los Angeles will readily offer statistics confirming the popular place of Spam in the diets of those living on the islands. For example, one person suggested that "20,000 cans of Spam are consumed daily in Hawaii." Another pointed out that "the state of Hawaii consumes half of the nationwide consumption of Spam" (see Chin 1991).

In Hawaii, Spam is consumed in both domestic and commercial realms. McDonald's has been savvy about incorporating items from local cuisine into the menus of regional franchises, and in Hawaii the restaurant offers Spam along side Big Macs and Quarter Pounders. Spam dishes are offered at Hawaiian-Japanese cafes in Los Angeles. And Bess Press of Honolulu publishes a Spam Cookbook (1987). The ubiquity of Spam in Hawaii may be partially explained as the legacy of World War II meat shortages and the presence of U.S. military bases on the islands; the continuing popularity of Spam in South Korea and Guam is another American military legacy.

The Hawaiian Community Center Association's second annual Spam Cookoff Picnic held 3 July 1993 in Torrance, California, provides an interesting context in which to explore the cultural significance of Spam. An all day affair advertised in the *Los Angeles Times*, *LA Weekly*, and Japanese-American newspapers, the event was covered by television and newspaper reporters. The public celebration at the Hawaiian Community Center suggests the complexity of associations that can be affixed to a mass-produced food item.⁴

The Spam Cookoff showcased aspects of contemporary Hawaiian culture. Spatially, the Torrance Community Center was composed of roughly three interior rooms and an outdoor courtyard. In the largest interior space, vendors sold items such as *batiks* and other handmade textiles. At the end of the room

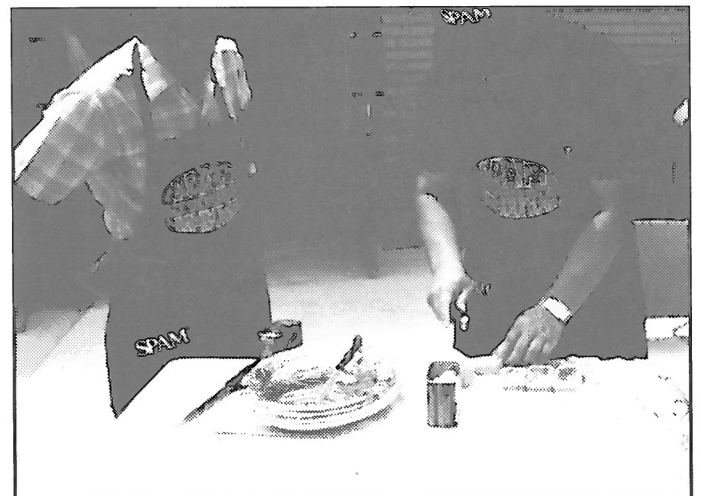


Figure 2. Father and son team creating the Fruity Spam Cup. Hawaiian Community Center Association Second Annual Spam Cookoff, 3 July 1993. Torrance, California.



Figure 3. Stirring-up Spam Fried Rice at the Hawaiian Community Center Association's Second Annual Spam Cookoff, 3 July 1993. Torrance, California.

was a window through which food was sold. Two of the dishes contained Spam; another food served was a large bun filled with a mixture of barbecued pork called *manapua*. In the entry-way interior space stood a main reception table laden with information about the sponsoring organization, a stack of records by a Hawaiian artist that were being distributed gratis, and a variety of "Spam items" for sale; for example, aprons, banks, and T-shirts. The third interior space contained the table on which were set the competing final Spam dishes before judging, as well as an area relegated to craft activities. Children were especially encouraged to participate in printing on textiles as well as making *leis* from fresh flowers.

The exterior space contained tables and chairs, a stage for music and dance entertainment, a booth at which beverages and Hawaiian shaved ice were sold, and the preparation areas of the eight Cookoff contestants. Sitting at the tables, festival-goers could watch the entertainment, including hula dancing, guitar and ukelele bands, and an occasional rendition of the festival's theme song "Spam on the Range," sung to the tune of "Home on the Range." Most patrons took at least some time to inspect the tables of the contestants, watch the food preparation, and chat about Spam.

The eight contestants competed for first place prizes, giant baskets filled with Spam-related products, in two food categories—main dish and *pupu* (appetizer). All of the contestants were either from Ha-

waii or had relatives from the islands, and indicated that they consumed Spam in their daily lives in the past and/or currently. The recipes for entrees were culled from relatives, cookbooks, and last minute inspiration and improvisation, as well as from the cooks' existing repertoires. Competing for the main dish prize were: "Al Chang's House Special," a mix of mushrooms, asparagus, and Spam on a bed of rice; "Spam Fried Rice," Spam, canned corn, scallions, cilantro, and rice; "Sweet Soup Spam," a soupy sauce containing Spam poured over rice. Competing for the *pupu* were: "Bitter Melon Spam," a chunky mixture of baby shrimp, fishcake, Spam, scallions stuffed into one-inch wide slices of bitter melon; "Hawaii Sweet Islands," a variant of "pigs in a blanket" consisting of Spam, dijon mustard, and water chestnuts rolled in a Pillsbury biscuit; "S'potato," baked potatoes stuffed with a mixture of brown sugar, hot mustard, green onions, mayonnaise, and Spam topped with melted cheese; and "The Fruity Spam Cup," hollowed out, deep-fried slices of Spam filled with cream cheese and topped with canned fruit.

Ostensibly created as a charity function, the Spam Cookoff created a context for members of the Hawaiian Community Center Association to highlight various aspects of their expressive culture—dance, crafts, music, and different foods. The public face of ethnicity is a complicated and compelling subject. In public demonstrations of ethnicity, people often attempt to create an impression of their uniqueness by highlighting "colorful" and "exotic" features, while remaining somehow familiar or unthreatening. At festivals and ethnic food restaurants, "traditional" ethnic dishes are highlighted, altered, or even elided in accordance with conceptions about consumer expectation and preference. That Spam emerged as the central component of a festival celebrating contemporary Hawaiian culture justifiably prompted one person to ask, "Why did they choose Spam when they have thousands of years of traditions to choose from?"

The organizers of the Hawaiian Community Center Association's Spam Cookoff indicated that their benefit event was organized around Spam predominantly because for many people from Hawaii, eating Spam is evocative of the years they lived on the islands and is symbolic of Hawaiian culture.⁵ One of the cookoff contestants stated, "Spam is still our

tradition since the baby boomer time." She further compared Spam to *poi*, a dish prepared from taro, an ingredient indigenous to the islands, thus metaphorically linking Spam and *poi* as traditional foods.⁶ Many of the organizers of the Cookoff relayed nostalgic anecdotes about family or childhood memories of eating Spam when they still lived in Hawaii. One organizer stated that the Cookoff provided people who were from the Islands the opportunity to learn and trade different ways of cooking Spam.

It is also important to consider the more ignoble associations Spam engenders in a large number of people when discussing Spam as a potential symbol of identity for people from Hawaii. For instance, several people from Hawaii expressed: "It's embarrassing to buy Spam. Americans don't eat Spam. You know how they are; they go, 'eeeuww—you eat Spam!'" Interestingly, this person clearly draws a distinction between "Americans" and "Hawaiians," a division which, for this person, is reflected in eating behaviors. Another person who made the geographic distinction between people "up here," on the mainland, stated: "Whenever I tell them about it, they'll really cringe, they'll crinkle their nose, they'll say it's gross, why do you eat it . . . stuff like that. But I tell them if you prepare it right . . . They think it's sick, I guess. They associate it with hot dogs where it's just a bunch of junk meat thrown together and compressed into a cube."

These statements which draw distinctions between constituencies based on reactions and eating behaviors related to Spam contrast with other, more positive, comments. At the Spam Cookoff, one woman went so far as to suggest that "Spam is our heritage. And we call it our Hawaiian steak back home. If you go anyplace, they'll ask you, 'would you like me to bring some Hawaiian steak?' And if you didn't know what it was you would get the shock of your life." Another person said, "You know in Hawaii they sell more Spam than they do anywhere else because everyone in Hawaii eats Spam. That's staple for us. Spam—everything is Spam for us. We use Spam everywhere. It's our cheap version of ham." Similarly, when a festival-goer expressed perplexity to one of the judges about the number of times Spam dishes showed up on menus in Hawaii, the judge replied with joking indignation, "Hey, that's Hawaiian steak you're talking about. We eat Spam three times a day."

Although Spam is the central organizing component of the festival, it is one component of a complex of forms and activities consciously displayed to the public as representative of Hawaiian culture. The crafts, costume, and performances included in this event are part of the conventional popular imagining of Hawaiian culture, and they purportedly refer to the culture that is indigenous to the islands. While Spam is not a vestige of the pre-territorial era, and while it is a processed food that was imported to Hawaii during World War II, its inclusion in the public display of Hawaiian culture is not merely hyperbolic or insincere. The public celebration of Spam for the Hawaiian community, as these voices suggest, was a playful performance that also conveyed a sense of cultural pride. The event resonated with the humorous and derisive attitudes directed toward Spam in a hospitable festival context. The Cookoff was at once a conscious inversion of the mainstream disdain of the product while an affirmation of the positive associations of a familiar, indeed traditional, food for the Hawaiian community. Significantly, as the recipes suggested, the festival also highlighted the unexpected and innovative use of this product by a subset of this public.

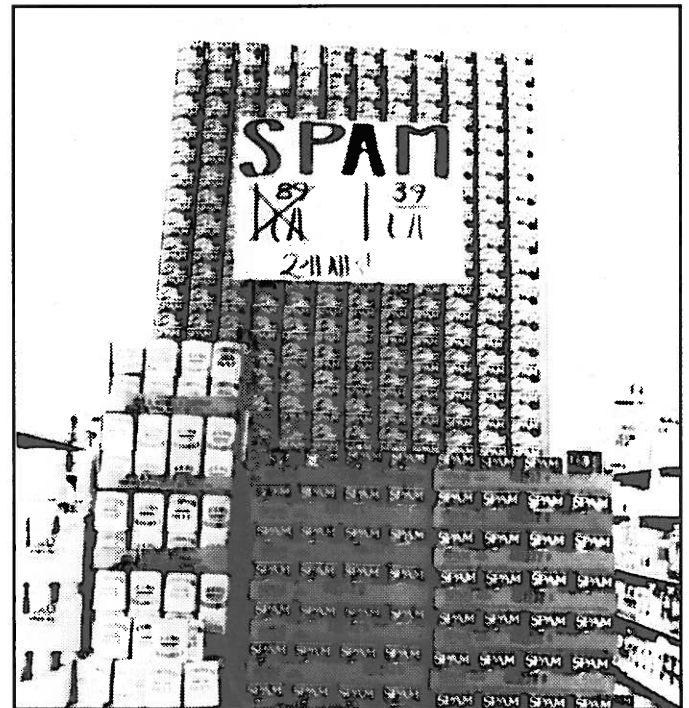


Figure 4. A mountain of Spam on sale at California Market. Koreatown, Los Angeles, California. August 1993.



Figure 5. A handpainted banner announces the Hawaiian Community Center Association's Second Annual Spam Cookoff, 3 July 1993. Torrance, California.

Conclusions

Both ramen noodles and Spam point to a larger issue of foods becoming circumscribed with the status of "poverty foods" or "economy foods." "Poverty foods," like "comfort foods," constitutes a distinguishable category of eating behaviors which are constructed in the minds of individuals and which potentially become codified in a culture at large. Clearly, both ramen noodles and Spam have been considered poverty foods. They were initially developed and distributed during periods of economic distress: ramen in post-World War II Japan; Spam during the depression in the United States. As the quotation from the Nissin corporate brochure reveals, a major appeal of ramen in the United States has been its economic value. Indeed, ramen has been often associated with the status of being a student—a time when, arguably, many do not have sizeable disposable incomes. For example, an editorial by a UCLA student criticizing the salary increases of university administrators at the time when students were being subjected to tuition hikes was titled "Let them eat top ramen: Pay hikes show contempt for students" (Hagstrom 1992:M3). In an article in the *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, the author wryly describes how it is possible to subsist in L.A. for twenty dollars a day. When it comes to eating, the author suggests, "Those packets of ramen noodles and broth can run as low as 19 cents each; two or three will easily dull the desire for food" (Tsing Loh 1991:S19). Spam is often regarded as a cheap substitute for "real meat." One of the organizers of the Spam Cookoff explained

his ideas about the economic reason behind the popularity of Spam in Hawaii: "Grass roots people can't afford prime rib . . . You can feed a whole family on a can of Spam and two heads of cabbage." Similarly, another Hawaiian speculated on the mainstream public's negative attitude towards Spam: "People up here think it's whatever—welfare, depression food. Someone told me that they associated it with the depression up here, which is why people up here look down on Spam I guess."

Essayist Francine Prose has characterized well the regard different social groups assign to certain foods:

Often, the poor and the working class distrust the weird foods of the rich and ethnic: the brains, the sweetbreads, the snails, the bloody duck breast, the nasturtiums and edible flowers . . . Meanwhile, the rich, who flatter themselves that nothing humanly edible is foreign to them, do in fact draw the line at the pitiful, unesthetic, unsavory food of the poor: the white bread, the processed spreads, the rat-tail-pink luncheon meat and the sugary, carnival-colored cereals. [1992:118-19]

Furthermore, Ernest Matthew Mickler's recipe book *White Trash Cooking* is a reverent and humorous reflection on a much maligned category of eating behavior (1986). Mickler's introductory remarks project his empathy and admiration for the people from whom he collected his recipes, instead of the common disdain reflected in the qualifier "white trash." Similarly, ethnic and immigrant groups have been derisively described or labeled by means of referring to their eating habits (e.g., beaner, kraut, watermelon). Eating is such a central aspect of human behavior that folklorist Roger Abrahams, among others, has pointed out that to negatively comment upon what others ingest is to negatively assess their civility: that is, no sane or civilized person would consider eating that (1984).

Similarly, one may also note the negative manner in which popular thought often considers or derides those who subsist regularly on mass-produced foods, which are neither home-cooked nor gourmet. Assumptions do not concern simply the economic necessity or time constraints of the consumers; such a diet is often considered as the result of lack of food

preparation skills, unhealthy lifestyles, or an indiscriminating palette (bad taste), all qualities which reflect the consumer's culinary/dietary ignorance or ineptitude. One person with whom we spoke about his ramen preparation indicated that his past social involvements have left him with an association of ramen as the food preferred by "stoners and fuck-ups," people lacking the ability to prepare more complex foods:

I was anxious to try to do things that would allow me to see myself in a good light. So for that reason I thought I could eat ramen only for breakfast because that was different. If I made it for lunch and dinner that would mean that I was too lazy to cook another meal. I didn't want that and I couldn't live with myself presumably if I did that. But if I ate ramen for breakfast, that was an adequate excuse because breakfast is supposed to be quick.

Another person relayed a rumor he heard at Utah State University in which a "foreign" student is rushed to the hospital after he collapses from malnutrition brought about by his misguided attempt to subsist solely on packaged ramen noodles.

What we have learned in our forays into private kitchens and a public celebration is that many people who rely on such food products do so with ingenuity and much culinary know-how. People from Hawaii repeatedly emphasized the fact that while many Americans are repulsed by Spam and the way it tastes, this is because "they don't know how to cook it right." Several people indicated that their children expressed disdain for Spam, considering it unappetizing and unhealthy. These individuals dismissed the sincerity of such remarks, however, noting that disdain was engendered because the "younger generation" simply did not know the proper way to cook Spam and despite all their negative comments, they would always eat it when prepared well and served to them. Furthermore, the criteria used in judging dishes at the Hawaiian Community Center Association's Spam Cookoff emphasized the imaginative and convenient aspects of the mass-produced food. These criteria were how the dish tasted, how it was presented visually, and how long it took to prepare.

Ramen and Spam are items that many people regularly pick up on their trips to the supermarket

and that share cupboard space with tuna fish, "instant" macaroni and cheese, and bags of rice or pasta. They belong to a class of food whose currency lies in its cheapness, convenience in preparation, and most of all its flexibility. A Spam press release claims: "Spam has endured because of its convenience and versatility. You can eat it hot or cold. You can slice, dice or cube it. You can eat it for breakfast, lunch, dinner or snacks. In fact the only thing that limits your use of Spam is your imagination" (quoted in Chin 1991).

Our research has consistently suggested the ways in which dishes created with little money and/or little time are done so with imagination, taste, and culinary finesse. In those many instances in which the preparer of ramen or "instant" macaroni and cheese utilizes whatever ingredients are at hand, or adds tuna or Spam to enliven an entree, a sense of improvisation characterizes the gastronomic enterprise. This use of ingredients at hand, or "left-overs," and the low price of the products, enable and encourage the repeated preparation of dishes using these products. These repeated experiences, in turn, potentiate the accumulation of associations and memories of social involvements.

By illustrating the places of two mass-produced food items, ramen noodles and Spam, in the individual and collective lives of people, we have attempted to demonstrate the need to more consciously include these types of foods in examinations of food and culture. What we have found interesting in our research is the ways in which individuals, aware of these products' reputations as bland, unhealthy, and/or "poverty foods," create tactics for eating and displaying them in manners that are innovative, personally evocative, and satisfying. What begins as a mass-produced uniform product can serve as a window into a complex network of sociocultural behaviors.

Notes

1. This seminar was taught by Dr. Michael Owen Jones in winter quarter 1992.
2. From the original Spam jingle: "Spam, Spam, Spam, Spam/Hormel's new miracle meat in a can/Tastes fine/Saves time/"komanentlf you want something grand, ask for Spam" (Wyman 1993:63-64).
3. One writer indicates that Hawaiians consume 4.3 million cans of Spam per year (Stone 1994:20).
4. The information included in the following discussion comes from

observations of the Second Annual Cookoff and subsequent conversations with several individuals.

5. Spam cookoffs are not a new idea. Hormel has held a major Spam Jamboree in Austin, Minnesota, the birthplace of Spam. Other locales, including a shopping mall in Maui, have followed suit. One might speculate that Hormel plays a part in encouraging the organization of Spam cookoffs around the country through sponsorship and provision of T-shirts and other Spam products. The organizers of the Hawaiian Community Center Association's Spam Cookoff indicated that they were aware of similar cookoffs when they began planning their own. Furthermore, the context in which food is consumed is important. Hormel's first Jamboree Picnic/Cookoff occurred in 1987 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Spam. But it also followed closely a major strike by Hormel employees. This cookoff, therefore, may have served the purpose of creating a festive atmosphere within which Spam could be consumed in the face of increased concern about health and the bad publicity from striking workers (see Sokolowski and Seter 1987).

6. Interestingly, one writer reports that the traditional manufacture of *poi* has recently taken a place in the cultural heritage movement on Oahu (Essoyan 1994:A5).

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Metabolising Judaism

Maurie Sacks

Maurie Sacks is a faculty member of the Department of Anthropology at Montclair State College in New Jersey.

My brother tells me that we do not need to keep kosher (adhere to Jewish dietary laws) today because we have refrigerators. Refrigerators? What do ancient Jewish laws concerning the handling and eating of categories of food have to do with refrigerators? Of course, the assumption my brother is making is that Jewish dietary laws have something to do with rabbinical hygienic wisdom—an assumption not uncommon among lay Jews today. That folklore, as passed on to me, concludes that in ancient times, when people used wooden dishes (or porous crockery) and didn't have refrigeration, milk or meat would go rancid in the pores of the unrefrigerated plates, and render the other category of food unfit to eat. I am not exactly sure how this worked, but logically it would follow that, once refrigeration appears on the scene, it becomes safe to allow milk and meat into the same crockery or wooden pores because they won't spoil. The "refrigerator construction" of Jewish dietary laws can also be made to account for the requirement that meat be inspected for blemishes if one assumes that blemishes pose no health danger once refrigerated, and for the specification that blood be salted out of flesh before consumption, if one presumes that blood is removed because it poses a health threat (when unrefrigerated). Following this line of logic, even the ban of hindquarters from the kosher table becomes unnecessary once refrigeration mitigates their proximity to vile functions.

Why, then, is there an increased commitment to kosher-keeping in America today by persons who not only have refrigerators, but also Cuisinarts, microwaves, and dishwashers? Kosher-keeping has to have an appeal that transcends hygienic wisdom. This appeal I, along with other anthropologists, Hassids, and ordinary American folk suggest, is symbolic and metaphysical: you are what you eat!

This concept is usually interpreted to mean that

healthy food produces healthy bodies. It also fits the notion that foods like pasta, souvlaki, and bagels contribute to the physical essence of ethnic identity through metaphysical as well as metabolic processes. A Lubavitch (Hasidic) pamphlet on Jewish dietary laws supports the significance of the claim, "You are what you eat." It asserts that the food a mother eats can alter the Jewish essence of her fetus. A pregnant mother, so the *midrash* (oral explication of the text) goes, inadvertently ate a piece of chicken that was blemished and thus not *glatt* (following the most stringent guidelines) kosher. Her son, as a result, showed an inability to study Torah some years later. Presumably, impure food, metabolized into the mother's body, reached the fetus through the umbilical cord, and transformed it into an imperfect Jew. Note the Lubavitch concurrence with American folk beliefs concerning the conversion of ingested food into personal identity, beliefs that happen to be in line with erudite analyses of culinary behavior published by scholars like Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1990).

The most obvious meaning of Jewish dietary laws may be their role in sorting out the essence of Jewish being from the essence of "others." Ongoing social intercourse requires an exchange of hospitality. Kosher-keeping creates an obstacle to free and easy commensality between observant Jews, assimilated Jews, and gentiles, as anyone who has requested "vegetarian" fare (to avoid the issues of kosher meat and the mixing of meat and milk) when invited to a new friend's home for a meal can attest. The request generates anxiety in the host concerning the acceptability of the food to be served. Difficulty in meeting dietary needs of "others" creates a barrier to socializing that can actually impede courtship, intermarriage, and assimilation. This helps to maintain group boundaries. Kosher-keeping Jews are more likely to eat with other kosher-keeping Jews than they are to break bread with non-kosher Jews or gentiles. They are also more likely to pass on Jewish practice to children and grandchildren.

If we were to measure degrees of Jewishness by examining adherence to Jewish religious practice (secular Jews, understandably, object to this definition of "Jewishness"), we could say, "the more kosher the food, the more Jewish the Jew." There is a continuum of Jewish practice between *glatt* kosher-keeper and gentile. Along the way we encounter "ko-

sher" vegetarians, who think kosher but often operate in a *treyf* (non kosher), if carnivorous, social environment, and ethnic bagels-and-lox Jews (who may not produce Jewish grandchildren because there is little content in their "Judaism" to pass along to the next generation) but who still need to fill up with "Jewish" food once in a while.

But the most satisfying aspect of eating kosher food is, for the kosher-keeper, that it casts an ordinary daily function in a spiritual light. Structuring hunger in a Jewish mindset endows every eating experience with meaning beyond the need for nutrition. Gastronomical experience takes on spirituality linking the Jew to God's covenant, Jewish separateness and, hence, continuity. The kosher-keeper metabolises Judaism. The consumption of holy food invests a person with Jewish substance and spiritual essence.

If the ingestion of foods with symbolic significance creates Jewish bodies of identifiable nature, then the preparation and display of Jewish foods, even non-kosher ones, also contribute to the experience of eating what we are. Culinary events take on the role of expressing many aspects of Jewish identity. In some contemporary communities, for example, the up-scale *Gourmet* magazine aesthetic exhibited in *shalach mones* gifts (of food exchanged at the holiday of Purim) marks the upward mobility of many modern Orthodox Jews. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett recently showed that, for American Jews, the very concept of the meal, as well as what foods are served and how they are displayed at table, changes along with the socio-economic situation of families in American society and trends in American cuisine through the years (1990). Furthermore, foodways delineate sub-groups within Judaism:

stuffed grape leaves are Jewish food—for Sephardim (Jews of Spanish descent). Most American Jews are of Ashkenazic (Eastern European) extraction, and therefore do not recognize Mediterranean foods as "Jewish food" right up there with cholent (bean casserole traditionally served on the Sabbath) and gefilte fish (chopped fish balls). Disbelief that the food is "Jewish," outright rejection of tastes and textures, and recognition of the occasion as "exotic" can characterize social situations in which Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews find themselves entertaining each other for dinner.

Although all foodways act, in some manner, to characterize the eaters as members of a group, laws governing the holiness of one's food carry more significance than foods simply marked by preference or custom. In Israel, many observant Jews of European extraction have accepted Mediterranean foods as kosher, and "Israeli." Witness the popularity of falafel. But the barriers between *datim* (religious Israelis), *haredim* (ultra-religious Israelis), and secular Israelis are far deeper and more difficult to transcend socially than regional differences in cuisine, and are characterized by the inability of the progressively Orthodox groups to eat the foods of "others" lower on the scale of orthodox practice. Each time Jews take a bite, they express what kind of person they are, what kind of Jew they are, and what Judaism means in each life.

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Koulourákia:

A Photo Essay

Helen Tangires

Helen is a doctoral candidate in American Studies at George Washington University. The following information and photographs are the result of her study of the Greeks from Karabourna (Asia Minor) who settled in Baltimore, Maryland in the early twentieth century.

Legend holds that the Minoans of ancient Crete were first to make Koulourákia, a Greek butter cookie still popular today. The Minoans made them into the shape of small snakes, and, over the centuries, other shapes have come into use, such as circles, figure eights, twisted wreaths, half-moons, and letters of the Greek alphabet. The shapes are determined by the impulse of the maker, who has learned a repertory of shapes from the previous generation. The malleability of the dough also permits individual creativity and the continuous invention of new shapes. Since these cookies are easy to make compared to other Greek desserts, children sometimes assist in their preparation, particularly with the shaping.

The Koulouráki is a "festival food," served as a dessert on holidays, special occasions, and church festivals, but one can visit the home of a Karabournian at any time and usually be offered a plate of Koulourákia with a demitasse of Greek coffee. This culinary tradition has been brought to the U.S. and can be found in most Greek-American communities. The Karabournians of Baltimore, Maryland are particularly proud of their Koulourákia, do not limit them to special occasions, make them in large batches, and share them with the church community at Sunday coffee hours.

Our primary informant is Theresa Kaludis, an active member of the Karabournian Society of Baltimore, Maryland. This society claims as its membership descendants of Karabourna, a peninsula near Izmir, Turkey, inhabited by Greeks until their expulsion in 1922. Ms. Kaludis was born Chrisanthe ("Theresa") Topaltzas, the daughter of Karabournian refugees, Kyriakos and Irimi Topaltzas, on December 15, 1915, on the island of Chios, Greece. In 1930 the Topaltzas family settled in Baltimore, where Theresa married Steven Kaludis, also a Karabournian, seven

years later.

Ms. Kaludis learned Koulourákia making from her mother, but she is also proud of her own invention—Koulourákia in the shape of half-moons, filled with orange marmalade. When asked about the personal significance of Koulourákia, she replied, "you know, we always loved them . . . , and the grandchildren are crazy about them and insist on having them when they come over." She noted that their popularity may be due to their lack of sweetness compared with other Greek desserts. She also likes making them because they transport well and because they keep for months if kept dry in large tins. These cookies, therefore, as a result of their popularity and practicality, have become a regular feature of her hospitality.

For a Koulourákia recipe and a diagram of shapes, see Anne Theoharous, *Cooking and Baking the Greek Way* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1977), 191-193.

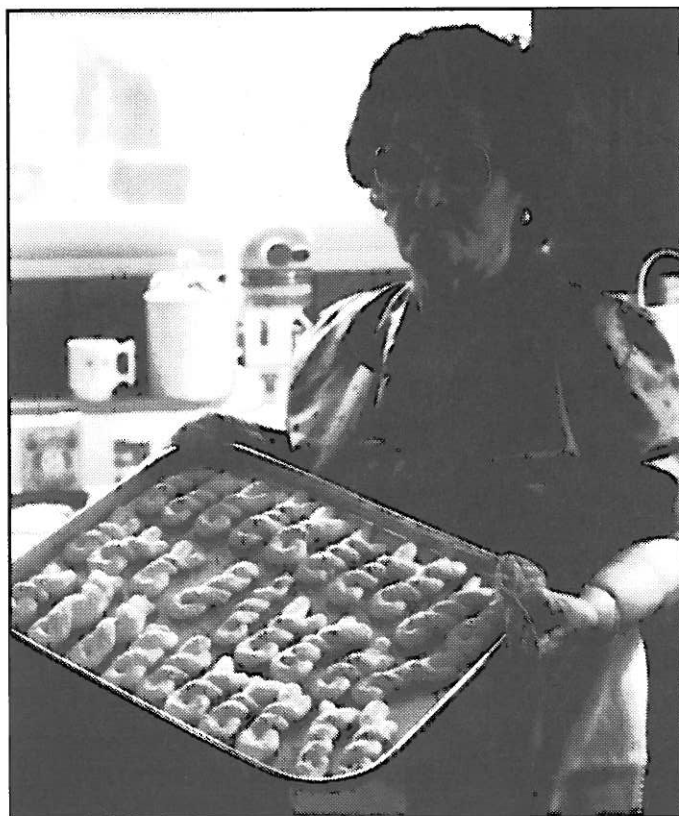


Figure 1. Theresa Kaludis holds a tray of baked Koulourákia in the "Lazarus" shape, named for their likeness of the shrouded figure.

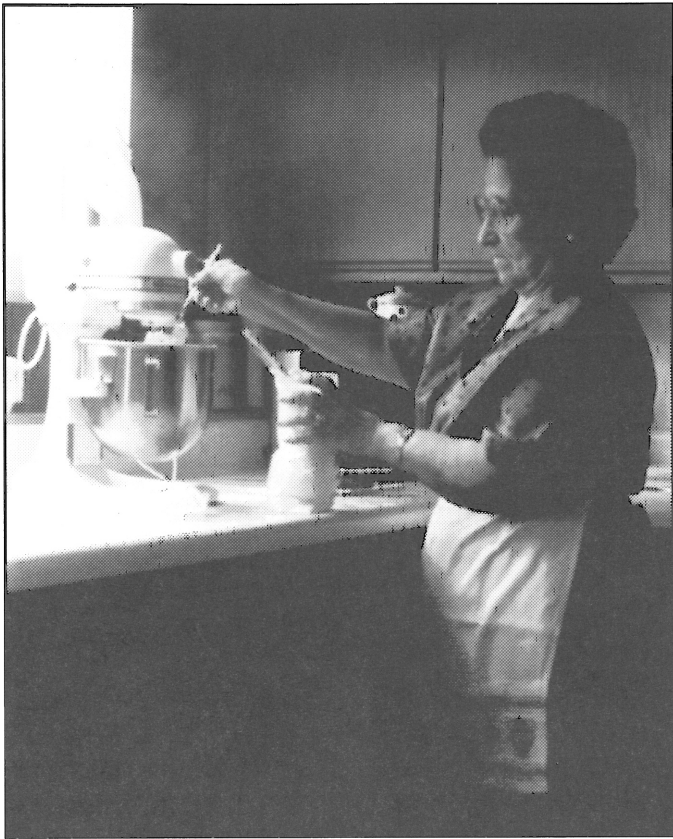


Figure 2. Theresa Kaludis mixes all of the ingredients, except the flour, in an electric mixer. If one flavors the dough with Ouzo, brandy, or cognac, the cookies are called "Methismena," or "drunk," Koulourákia.

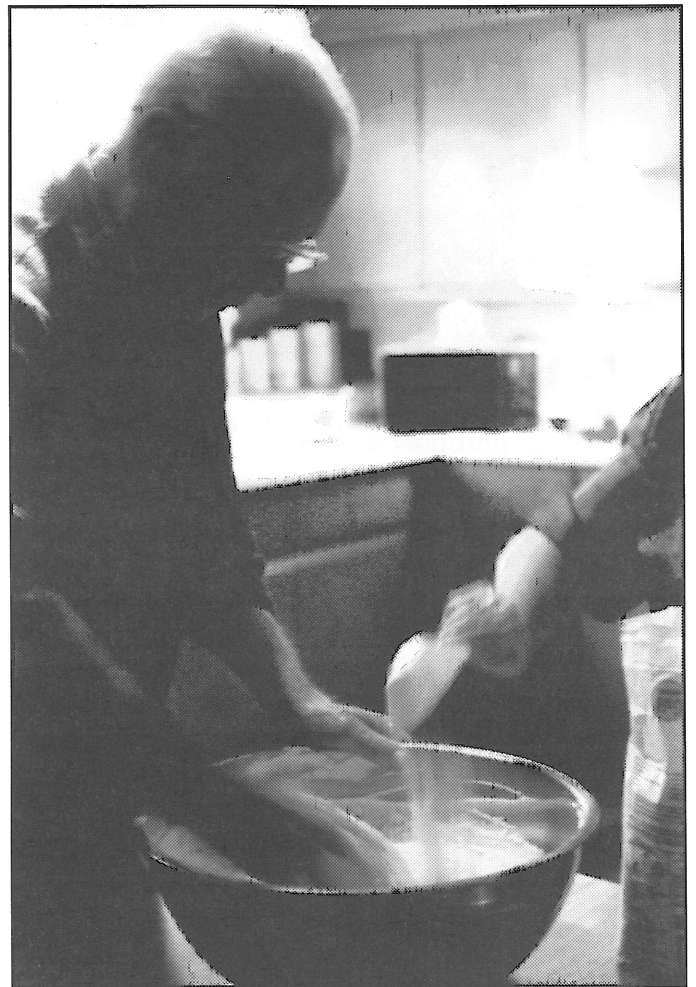


Figure 3. Steve Kaludis folds in flour and kneads the dough. Bits of dough, the size of walnuts, are rolled into 4-inch ropes, then shaped and twisted as desired.



Figure 4. Leftover dough can be shaped into logs.

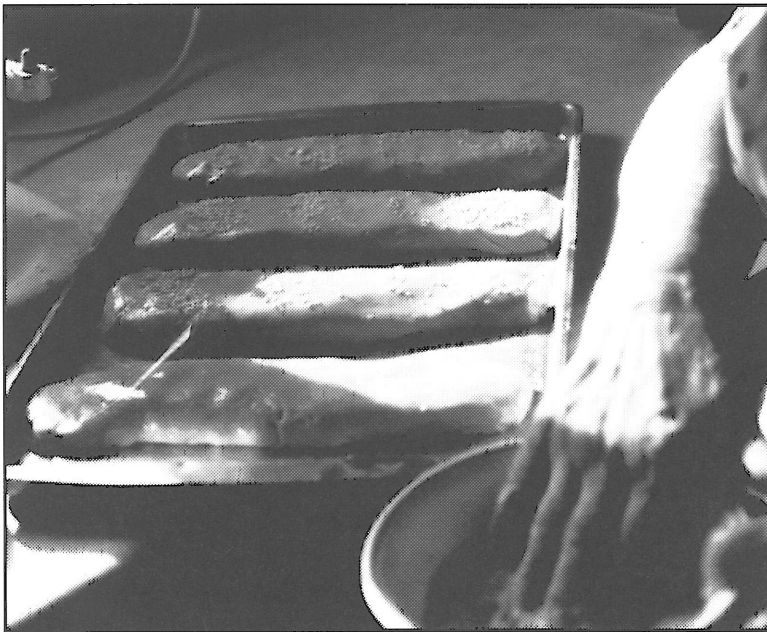


Figure 5. Logs and cookies are brushed with beaten egg, then sprinkled or patted with sesame seeds.



Figure 6. Logs are sliced into bars before baking.

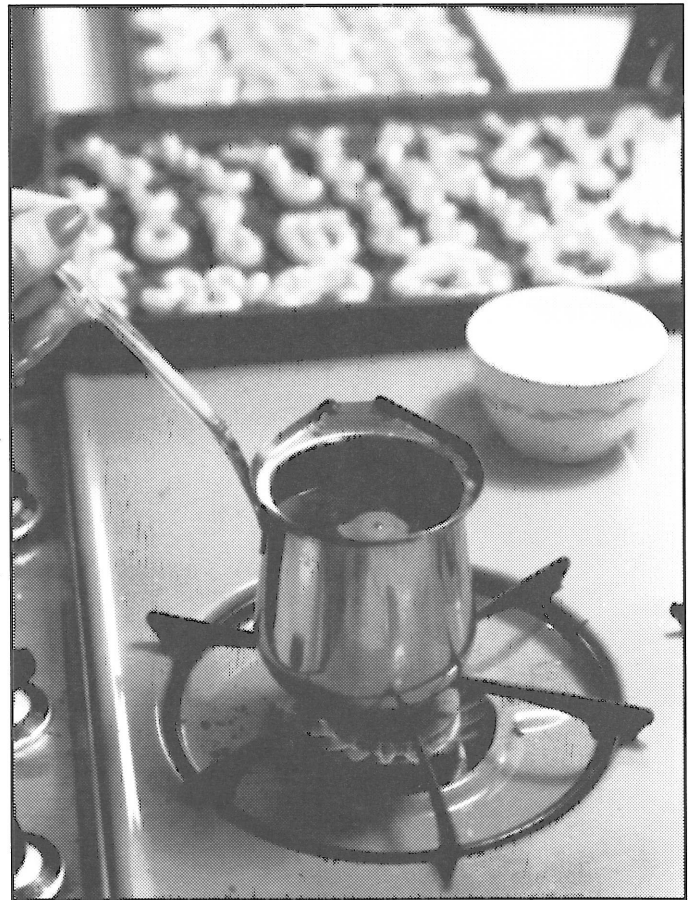


Figure 7. A tray of Koulourákia in assorted shapes, with a breke of Greek coffee in the foreground.

Our Daily Bread:

A Look at Bible Breads

Suzanne Waldenberger

Suzanne Waldenberger is a doctoral candidate in folklore at Indiana University. She currently resides in Tucson, AZ.

From the strictures of Leviticus to the miracle of the loaves and fishes, the stories of the Bible have delineated the relationship between food and sanctity. Bread, especially, has had a long and distinguished place in these stories. In their flight from Egypt, the children of Israel "took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders" (Exodus 12:34, Authorized Version). Elijah was saved from starvation by the miraculous appearance of a cake baked on hot stones (1 Kings 19:6). And, of course, bread was the means by which Jesus demonstrated his divine nature when a few loaves were miraculously made sufficient to feed thousands (Matthew 14:15-21 and 15:32-38, Mark 6:35-44 and 8:109, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-14).

One way in which this connection between the Bible and bread has extended into our modern era is in the guise of commercially marketed "Bible breads." Bible breads are staples of natural and health food stores, and can be primarily identified by the biblical imagery found on the wrapper and in the advertising copy. Regardless of brand name, all of these breads make some claim to reproducing the type of breads eaten by people of the biblical era. The copy on the wrappers of these breads often makes an overt connection with the Bible, usually with Ezekiel 4:9, in which Ezekiel is told to "take thou also unto thee wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, and millet, and fitches, and put them in one vessel, and make thee bread thereof" (AV). For example, Garden of Eatin' brand Bible Bread "recalls the traditional pita breads served for 1,000's of years throughout the Middle East" and Food for Life brand Ezekiel 4:9 is bread "as described in the Holy Scriptures." The information provided on the back of a loaf of French Meadow Spelt Bread begins: "Spelt is an ancient grain dating back 9,000 years and is mentioned in Ezekiel 4:9 in the Bible."

Even when the name of the bread itself makes no overt reference to the Bible, religious connotations still serve to distinguish such products from ordinary breads. A brand name such as "Garden of Eatin'," for example, evokes the Genesis story. Visual imagery, such as the dove on Ezekiel 4:9 Bread or the garden scene complete with apple tree topping the Garden of Eatin' label, also serves to reinforce the connection between these products and the Bible (see Figures 1 and 2).

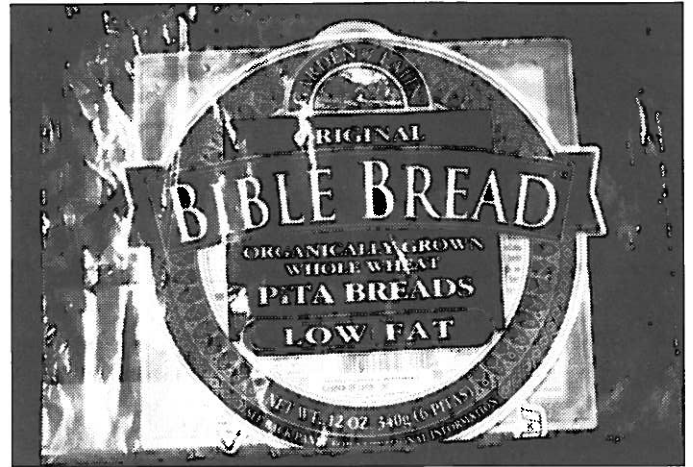


Figure 1.



Figure 2.

That Bible bread is a distinct concept in the health food market is clearly demonstrated by a product that gently ridicules the phenomenon. Trader Joe's, a western chain of specialty grocery stores, has introduced its own variety of pita bread, mockingly entitled Trader Joe's Apocryphal Pita. The image on the bread wrapper is of a comically chubby, robed figure, carrying two enormous books on his head (see Figure 3).



tures God places on Ezekiel. For example, the various Bible bread producers surely do not wish their customers to recall Ezekiel 4:12, in which Ezekiel is commanded to bake over fires made of human dung, thereby rendering his food unclean.

If the makers of Bible bread are not depending upon the religious significance to recommend their product to the consumer, why invoke the Bible at all? A clue can be found by the most cursory examination of the advertising copy for this bread. Repeated on all of these bread wrappers, in large attention-grabbing type, are phrases like "all natural," "preservative free," "low fat" and "organic." These breads are sold almost exclusively through health and organic food stores. Therefore, it seems that the biblical references on the breads serve to hearken back, not to God's time, but to a healthier and purer time.

God, faith and the rules and mores of Bible-based religions have been removed from the biblical references of these breads. Instead, the Bible and the adjective "biblical" are coupled with the rhetoric of twentieth-century health and nutrition, specifically the rhetoric of organic food proponents who have rejected the artificial modifications of food possible in an industrial society. These bread labels invoke the Bible not as the revealed plan of God, but as documentation from a simpler era, in which pesticides, refined flour and processed foods were unknown. Lifestream Natural Foods produces "Essene Sprouted-Grain Loaf," which carries a reputed quotation from a first century Essene Manuscript. "Moisten your wheat that the angel of water . . . will soon make the germ of life to sprout . . . then crush your grain and make thin wafers as did your forefathers . . ." French Meadow Spelt Bread boasts that it "is truly bread from another era!" And Garden of Eatin' Bible Bread (and bagels) recall the type of food served for "1,000's of years." Even the humorous Trader Joe's pita bread evokes that purer, pre-industrialized past. "Apocryphal" pitas are made with 100% whole wheat. Trader Joe's also produces pita bread made with refined white flour. This product is simply called "Trader Joe's Pita Bread." Even a parody of a Bible bread must consist of ingredients that are organic, whole and healthy, unadulterated by products or processes of this century.

The past evoked by these breads is that of an

There is no explanation given on the wrapper to explain the epithet. It is up to the consumer to make the chain of associations connecting Apocryphal Pita to the noncanonical Old Testament writings called the Apocrypha, to the Bible and thus to Bible bread. The entire idea of an "apocryphal" bread only makes sense in reference to Bible bread as a recognizable and coherent concept.

Clearly the makers of these breads perceive a benefit to being associated with the Bible. Just as clearly, this benefit has nothing to do with religious belief. There is no mention on these bread wrappers of God, or Jesus, or any specific religion which counts the Bible as holy. The use of biblical imagery does assume some knowledge of a shared tradition, but the space devoted to explaining those biblical references indicates that consumers are not expected to recognize specific allusions. The wrapper for Ezekiel 4:9 bread, for instance, contains the entire verse for which the bread is named, evidently anticipating that the consumer may be unfamiliar with the exact reference.

Indeed, anyone familiar with the book of Ezekiel, and specifically the verses in which the bread reference occurs, would be sorely puzzled by their use in advertising copy. The combination of grains and beans which Ezekiel is commanded by God to eat is by no means a delicacy in this context. Instead, the bread of wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet and spelt is often considered to be the food of famine, in which there is not enough of any one grain to make proper bread (Greenberg 1983:106). Furthermore, the making of this bread is only one of a number of humiliating stric-

ethnic Other. While the Bible may be a familiar, if vague, icon for American consumers, the Middle East references on many Bible breads allude to an entirely foreign place. The goodness associated with the past is still (presumably) alive and well in the present of Middle Eastern peasants, whose lives are often perceived not to have altered from that of their ancient ancestors. Thus the Bible references serve not only to recall the past but also a particular, though strenuously undefined, ethnicity. Garden of Eatin' markets its Thin-Thin flatbread as both Middle Eastern and Mediterranean, and lists it together with its other "ethnic breads," which includes Bible Bread and Bible Bagels. The adjective "biblical," when applied to these breads, not only refers to the far past, but also to a specific group of people, vaguely Middle-Eastern, who are perceived to continue to live as their ancestors did.

This association with the primitive and the past sometimes clashes jarringly with the up-to-the-minute nutritional information contained on every bread wrapper (see Figure 4).

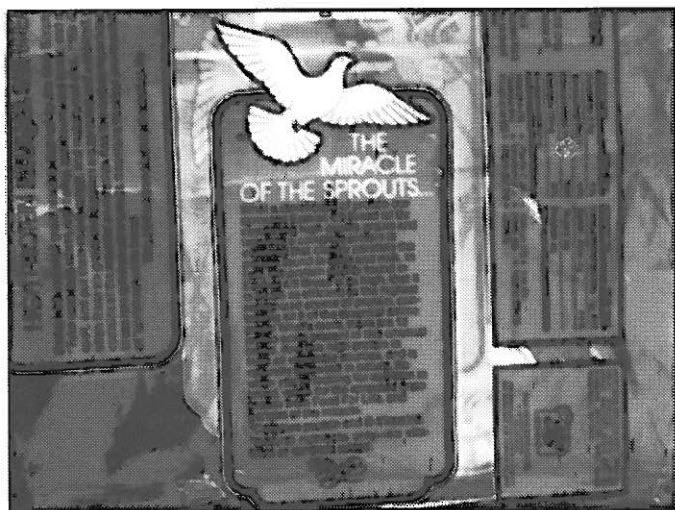


Figure 4.

Ezekiel 4:9 bread is captioned:

The Miracle of Sprouts...

What a storehouse of protein our sprouted Ezekiel 4:9 Bread is! By combining high quality grains and legumes a complete protein is obtained that closely parallels the protein found in eggs and milk. In fact, the protein quality found in Ezekiel 4:9 Bread is so high, that it is 84.3% as efficient as the highest recognized source of protein, contain-

ing all 8 of the essential amino acids! What's more, there are 18 amino acids present in this unusual bread. And this high protein is naturally balanced in nature. So when you're looking for nutrition in a bread, reach for the sprouted grain breads from Food For Life, and partake of a miracle.

This same bread is advertised as being low sodium, with only natural nutrients. Its makers conclude by saying that "this biblical bread is truly the staff of life." This unlikely congruence of science and religious tradition is characteristic of the Bible bread rhetoric. Other brands show the same skill in combining scientific claims of nutrition with references to a simpler past. Garden of Eatin's Thin-Thin bread is advertised as "organically grown, whole wheat, traditional Middle Eastern Flatbread" which is "baked in clay ovens to retain the authentic texture and taste of traditional Middle Eastern flatbreads, as well as "low in fat and sodium, and cholesterol-free." The irony is that the superiority of these "ancient" breads is proven with the latest of scientific data, through the measurement of protein content and the calculation of cholesterol.

It makes sense, then, that this type of bread is offered in a secular rather than sacred setting. The Bible referenced by Bible breads is a talisman of health, not religion. The labels invoke nutritional science, not God, as the ultimate authority. This reinterpretation of the Bible's significance would not be possible among a strongly devout population, whose relationship with the scriptures is deep and personal. But in the setting of a health food store, the adjective "biblical" can be manipulated by advertisers and copy writers to connote purity, simplicity and the wholesomeness of the past, all issues of great concern to the targeted audience, health food shoppers. Clearly Bible breads, ostensibly authentic artifacts from the far past, are actually modern constructions, created from the concerns and currents of the twentieth century.

Reference

Greenberg, Moshe. 1983. *Ezekiel 1-20*. Vol. 22 of *The Anchor Bible*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc.

American Abundance Examined:

David M. Potter's *People of Plenty* and the Study of Food

Amy Bentley

Amy Bentley is on the faculty of the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies at New York University.

Historian David M. Potter's well-known 1954 study, *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character*, is important to revisit for its compelling and still salient insights into U.S. capitalism and consumer culture. Despite its shortcomings, the book contains much that is important and relevant to scholars studying American culture today. For folklorists studying food as a text and as an indicator of the larger culture, as well as those focusing on the production and consumption of food in the United States or internationally, *People of Plenty*, with its focus on the culture of abundance and its far-reaching effects, proves especially useful. In this essay I show how Potter's theory of American abundance as applied to food reveals many important insights, and can provide a useful framework for understanding the relationships between food and society.

In his economic analysis of what used to be unselfconsciously called the "American character," Potter argued that the United States and its citizens have been shaped, blessed, and at times intellectually and socially hindered by inhabiting one of the most resource-rich and economically successful countries in the world. *People of Plenty* was one of the first interdisciplinary cultural studies to connect American abundance to increased mobility, decreased emphasis on community, advertising, individualism, and the distinct nature of American democracy, including the illusion of classlessness. Careful to de-

velop how abundance shapes individuals as well as society, Potter articulated—and saw as related—the enormous impact of abundance in both the public and private spheres. Potter's central thesis is that the United States's long history of abundance—a product of both natural resources and technological innovation—has shaped who we are and how we see the world. For any who might question the prominence of American abundance, Potter describes the country's vast natural resources, its large expanses of seemingly uninhabited land perceived as inexhaustible and available for the taking, impressive industrial and scientific advances, and (at his time) the U.S.'s highest per capita income, caloric consumption, and agricultural output in the world. Noting that the average American consumed 3,186 calories daily, Potter characterizes this as "unquestionably the highest nutritional standard in the world" (83). Potter further describes that while in 1820 Americans were obliged to keep 71.8 percent of the working population engaged in agriculture in order to feed the rest, in 1950 only 11.6 percent of the working population were required to do so—and the percentage is much lower today (89). Although the United States no longer leads the world in per capita income, there is little question that it still is the paragon of material abundance, and for many abroad American abundance is an object of both admiration and disdain.

One example of how abundance has shaped United States culture and society is the character of American democracy. Abundance has given the concept of "democracy" a distinctive meaning which sets it apart from forms of democracy in other countries. According to Potter, abundance "has given a characteristic tone to American equalitarianism [especially compared with that of Europe]." "Essentially, the difference is that Europe has always conceived of redistribution of wealth as necessitating the expropriation of some and the corresponding aggrandizement of others; but America has conceived of it primarily in terms of giving to some without taking from others. . . . The American mind . . . often assumes implicitly that the volume of wealth is dynamic, that much potential wealth still remains to be converted; and that diverse groups—for instance, capital and labor—can

take more wealth out of the environment by working together than they can take out of one another by class warfare" (118). Thus, American democracy is based on the assumption that everyone can reap the material benefits of capitalism through merely making the pie bigger, in part because of the belief in and historical proof of American abundance. There is more than enough for everyone to go around; we do not need to take from the rich to give to the poor; we can "level up," as it were. In fact, many mistakenly equate democracy with capitalism, largely because of this factor of American abundance. Other countries' experiences do not suggest the same equation.

While the world—and the U.S.'s place in it—has changed dramatically since the 1950s, these ideas still hold true to a large extent. Americans may not be so sure that the pie is expanding, but they are still hesitant to "soak the rich" even though they recognize severe economic disparities between rich and poor. (Witness as evidence the ongoing debates in Congress about how to reduce the deficit.) In fact, in support of Potter's thesis, one could argue that Americans' shrinking abundance has deflated somewhat their belief in democracy, for which the current political climate similarly provides evidence. Moreover, Potter argues that when most Americans employ such ideas as "American freedom" and "liberty," they really mean the acquisition and maintenance of material wealth. "We have been historically correct," says Potter, "in supposing that we had a revolutionary message to offer but we have been mistaken in our concept of what that message was. We supposed that our revelation was 'democracy revolutionizing the world,' but in reality it was 'abundance revolutionizing the world'" (134). For proof look at many Americans', and certainly Madison Avenue's, definition of the "American Dream": owning one's own home, two cars in the garage, an annual summer vacation, and so on—not that these things are to be dismissed as unimportant or even unnecessary. While political independence, freedom from political tyranny and religious persecution certainly play a part in immigrants' and native-born citizens' construction of the genius of America (and at some level it is impossible to separate economic from political and physical well-being), America's long-held promise of abundance looms large. The freedoms defined by the Bill of Rights might be mentioned in passing, but by and large the focus is on consumption of material goods equating the

pursuit of happiness.

Consequently, Potter argues, we have failed to export our brand of democracy precisely because it is so closely tied to the condition of abundance; those countries which do not have the same levels of abundance cannot duplicate our terms of democracy. The following lengthy quote explains why:

For a country destined, as ours has been, to play such a role [in world affairs] it was a tragic fallacy that we conceived of democracy as an absolute value, largely ideological in content and equally valid in any environment, instead of recognizing that our own democratic system is one of the major by-products of our abundance, workable primarily because of the measure of our abundance In our own country the promise of equality meant the right to advance, without discrimination, to easily attainable ends. Hence the principle of equality could be upheld with genuine sincerity But in countries where even decency, much less comfort, lay beyond the point of attainability for most people—where the number of advantageous positions was negligible—it seemed a kind of deception to offer the individual as good a chance as anyone to compete for nonexistent prizes or to assure him of his freedom to go where he wished. (137)

Further, Potter notes, "It remains painfully true that we have urged other nations to adopt our democracy as their own, while encouraging them to draw upon our abundance in such a way (by the importation of consumer goods) that it remains distinctively our own" (140). So we offer other countries our form of government to emulate, but fail to provide them with the corresponding economic assets. Thus, as with Mexico, for example, we end up still maintaining economic dominance, only a step removed from the former quasi-colonial relationship that existed before.

It is true that Potter, writing out of the context of post-World War II America, with its economic boom, Cold War mentalité, strong emphasis on consensus history, and preoccupation with American exceptionalism, fails to address the complexities of American society, including the real and possibly permanent divisions of race, ethnicity, class, and gender.

Thus a weakness of *People of Plenty* is Potter's failure to consider seriously that many people have been prohibited from full participation in American abundance, although he does mention that African Americans, originally brought to this country as slaves, have been excluded from the "blessings of liberty" (96). Potter insists nevertheless that the promise of this abundance still affects the culture at large and individuals in particular, even those who do not explicitly partake of its riches. And to a large extent I think he is right. A fundamental fact, I would argue, is the United States's extreme wealth compared to most countries in the world, which has made a difference to those who live here, regardless of their actual level of participation in the wealth. This overarching culture of abundance also helps explain low political activism, the lack of a viable socialist movement, and the American myth of classlessness, despite huge class divisions and barriers.

Food is a central element of this abundance, perhaps best illustrated by Thanksgiving. The major secular holiday in the United States, Thanksgiving is a day for Americans to give thanks for the bounties of life, primarily food, and to gorge ourselves with these blessings. Potter uses the example of World War II to illuminate the idea that for many abroad the promise of America was not its abstract ideals of democracy, but its concrete realities, symbolized by, among other items, food. Potter quotes writer Isabel Cary Lundberg to illustrate the idea that every American overseas between 1941 and 1945 was in some respect a revolutionary agent of social change. What was it, she asks, that "the native populations everywhere wanted of the G.I., the Air Force pilot, the gop, and the Seabee? They wanted what the vast majority of the world's population, European, and non-European wants." Lundberg goes on to list such food items as chocolate bars, chewing gum, and white bread. To war-ravaged Europeans these were not only as much-needed supplements to their meager diets, but profound symbols. "Very few Americans," Lundberg muses, "picking and choosing among the piles of white bread in a super-market, have ever appreciated the social standing of white bread elsewhere in the world. To be able to afford white bread is a dream that awaits fulfillment for billions of the world's population. To afford it signifies that one enjoys all the comforts of life" (136). While mindful of the fact that the United States did not invent white

bread nor the Industrial Revolution, Potter argues that the U.S. has played a greater part in displaying the variety and magic of abundance, and has done more, through Hollywood films, to disseminate the belief that ordinary people might attain this abundance.

In addition to Potter's example of World War II, I would like to briefly suggest other food-related topics that when examined through the prism of American abundance can provide further understanding of the place and meaning of food in contemporary culture. First is the abundance of food as a symbol of winning the Cold War and, consequently, the United States's moral superiority. Television news has long used images of bare, empty store shelves and long bread lines to symbolize Communist bankruptcy. Explicitly or implicitly, Americans are to compare these mentally to U.S. grocery stores bulging with food, giving legitimacy to American foreign and domestic policies. Second, American food and beverages are unarguably symbols of American culture and democracy. The 1970s Coca-Cola jingle, "I'd like to buy the world a Coke" was no exaggeration, as this sugar and caffeine-laden, pleasingly refreshing beverage is internationally synonymous with the United States of America. Similarly, apple pie has long been a symbol of abundance to Americans themselves. During World War II the media characterized why U.S. soldiers fought—and why U.S. citizens supported the war—in individualized and materialistic terms which often included apple pie. In great need of exploration is the cultural impact and meanings of fast food eateries' movement into the former Soviet Union, China, and other communist or developing nations. While scholars of foodways can demonstrate the devastating impact on local foodways, cultures, and even health by such American exports, it is too easy to dismiss the phenomenon as without complexity. To a former student of mine from Russia, for example, a McDonald's in Moscow was both a welcome, reliable (though prohibitively expensive) source of food, and a positive symbol of western efficiency and cleanliness.

Food is also employed as a symbol in domestic American politics, an area that also needs more examination. Commonly cited as evidence of the abuse of the welfare system are the poor who buy "need

less luxuries" with their food stamps when they should be buying fifty pound sacks of oatmeal and bulk pasta. Welfare mothers are demonized as using food stamps to buy steak and fresh raspberries instead of peanut butter and bananas. According to some, the poor somehow do not deserve access to the full range of food abundance provides, and are ungrateful and undeserving if they buy anything but the basics. While in reality most poor people do spend their food money on the "basics," it is not surprising that many do not. For many poor people the disparity between what little they have compared to the unescapable abundance that surrounds them in grocery stores and in the media, is too much to bear. It is common for such parents to give in to their children's desires for expensive, processed, and non-nutritious foods, for example, because they do not have the heart or the energy to deny them the foods that appear at every turn in the United States. Thus we need greater cultural understanding of poverty leading to poor nutrition and eating habits in the larger context of American abundance. How can we reconcile abundance and its mythic status with the fact that one-quarter of American children live in official poverty, and thus suffer nutritionally as a result? We could also interpret the current popularity with gourmet and specialty foods as symbols of domestic politics. Gourmet cheeses, pastas, breads, coffees, and beers can be read as symbols of privilege and class division. Expensive, available in limited quantities, and pitched at the privileged, these specialty items connote sophistication and wealth as well as quality.

Additionally, it can be argued that the abundance of food profoundly affects people from the time they are infants, helping to shape dominant strains of individualism highly valued by Americans. The common notion that infants need their own rooms and should not sleep with parents, for example, indicates a level of wealth nonexistent in most countries, and breeds early on a sense of individuality and privateness, a separation from others. Potter provides the example of bottle feeding as such a shaper of American individualism:

Abundance has already revolutionized the typical mode of his nourishment by providing for him to be fed upon cow's milk rather than upon his mother's milk, taken from the bottle rather than from the breast. Abundance contributes vitally to

this transformation, because bottle feeding requires fairly elaborate facilities of refrigeration, heating, sterilization, and temperature control, which only an advanced technology can offer and only an economy of abundance can make widely available Bottle feeding also must tend to emphasize the separateness of the infant as an individual, and thus it makes, for the first time, a point which the entire culture reiterates constantly throughout the life of the average American. [196]

Formula feeding (now understood to be better than cow's milk for infants) is a prime example of how the United States, in exporting its abundance and way of life, fails to do so completely and fairly. The corporate irresponsibility of pushing infant formulas in developing countries without the necessary technologies required to keep the formula safe and sterile, results not only in death, but contributes to poverty and colonial dependence.

Abundance, of course has dramatically changed our eating habits. We now are a country that eats on the run. The traditional rules of food consumption have broken down, altering the relationship of and interaction with family members, with our food, with ourselves. There is more room for cultural studies that examine the profound paradox of amazing abundance alongside the highest rates of anorexia nervosa and obesity in the culture at large and among subcultures in particular. Moreover, American abundance actually limits food choice in many ways. Although United States grocery stores are replete with aisles and aisles of foodstuffs, choices of thirty different kinds of potato chips, fifty different kinds of cookies, in reality much of our choice of food is narrowing. The varieties of fresh corn or apples, for example, is limited to two or three kinds in most supermarkets, and again, it is those who are willing to pay more who can find more varieties in specialty markets.

These are but a few of the rich possibilities in cultural food studies for which David Potter's examination of American abundance can help provide a framework. In conclusion, I'd like to remind you of the aphorism, "The destiny of nations depends on the manner wherein they take their food." Applied to the United States, American food culture is a telling reflection of the larger society, a society strongly influenced by the culture of abundance. This abun-

dance of food leads to many paradoxes: we are abundant yet psychologically restricted, deficient in spite of great wealth, individualistic in nature yet susceptible to corporate manipulation, both dazzled and blinded by technology, schizophrenic in our habits and preferences, still beholden to a good T-bone steak. The people of plenty continue to grapple with the simul-

taneous blessings and curses of U.S. economic abundance, perhaps manifested best in the entire supermarket aisles of potato chips and soft drinks while ten percent of Americans pay for groceries with government food stamps.

Reference

Potter, David M. Potter. 1954. *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

COURSE SYLLABI

A Singable Feast: Food and Song in Traditional Italian Culture

Luisa Del Giudice
Institute of Italian Culture
UCLA, 1995

This course will examine Italian traditional culture as expressed through song and foodways from historical, geographic, socio-economic and ethnographic perspectives (as articulated through class, gender, occupation, and ethno-linguistic groupings). Through a variety of oral, material and ritual expressions, we will examine such issues as: penury and dreams of plenty; ritual behavior and celebration; occupational sub-cultures devoted to cultivation and preparation of foods (rice paddy workers [*mondarisi*], fishermen, etc.); regionalism; and foodways as a marker of ethnicity. An integrated understanding of Italian folk culture will be offered through a range of media, including several meals and live musical performances.

Required Texts:

- 1) Del Giudice, Luisa, ed. 1995. *Italian Traditional Song*. Los Angeles: Italian Cultural Institute.
- 2) class reader: Westwood Copies, 1001 Gayley Ave.

Schedule of Classes and Reading/Listening
Assignments:

Class 1 : Introduction to Foodways, Folksong
A: *Italian Traditional Song*: introduction, Lullabies 1A:1-6

B: reader: "What do Folklorists Study?"

Class 2 : Food, Song and Ritual

A: *Italian Traditional Song*: Ritual Songs 2B:5-10

B: reader: 1) de' Medici, Lorenzo, "Dance Song," "Song of the Village Lasses," "Song of the Cicadas," "Song of the Seven Planets," "Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne;" 2) Sordi, Italo, "Il Carnevale;" 3) Camporesi, Piero, "Bread and Death: Food and Peasant Rituals in Italy"

Class 3 : Hunger, Abundance and Gastronomic Utopias

DECLARE RESEARCH TOPIC

A: *Italian Traditional Song*: Tavern Songs 2A:5-8

B: reader: 1) Boccaccio, "Calandrino, Bruno e Buffalmacco set off in search of the heliotrope;" 2) Giouannino Il Tranese, *La piacevole historia di Cuccagna*; 3) Calvino, "Jump into My Sack;" 4) Pellegrino, Angelo M., "Abundance"

Class 4 : Concert: **Musicantica**

Guided ethnomusicological "tour" of the southern Italian regions (including slides and presentations) of Puglia, Calabria, Sicily, and Campania, as well as a demonstration of several folk instruments of Sardinia

Class 5 : Video: **Riso amaro (Bitter Rice)**

Riso amaro (Bitter Rice), Giuseppe De Santis, Lux, 1949, 108 minutes.
cast: Raf Vallone, Silvana Mangano, Vittorio Gassman, Doris Dowling

"Walter (Gassman), a thief, and his girl (Dowling) are obliged to hide in the rice fields of the

northern Po Valley. There he meets Silvana (Mangano), a rice girl addicted to cheap luxury and strong men, who tries to steal his loot. Walter tries to flood the rice fields and after a violent gun battle in an abattoir with Mario (Vallone), Silvana leaps to her suicide.

Using a deliberately melodramatic and lurid plot, the young director, De Santis, set out to reveal life in the rice fields in which Italian girls worked every year under appalling conditions. He developed two effective characters in major roles: Mario, a recently demobilized sergeant, generous, chivalrous and full of hate for war and police; and Silvana, a passionate rice worker who adores the "fumetti" (strip cartoons) and Hollywood films and who works in the mud up to her knees while her head is lost in dreams. She was for De Santis "typical of unaware youth, incapable of understanding their condition or changing it because they are diverted towards a synthetic life that condemns them to self-destruction." However, this attack on the "americanization of culture" is too often overstressed.

Bitter Rice was a great commercial success (exceeding even that of *Paisa* and *Sciuscia* in the USA) and made Silvana Mangano and Raf Vallone famous." (from: Sadoul, Georges. 1972 (1965). *Dictionary of Films*. English translation by Peter Morris. University of California Press.

Class 6 : Video: *Una storia di ragazzi e ragazze (A Story of Boys and Girls)*

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM

Una storia di ragazzi e ragazze (A Story of Boys and Girls), Antonio Avati, DUEA Film Unione Cinematografica, in collaboration with RAI Uno, 1989, 92 minutes.

cast: Pupi Avati, Felice Adreasi, Angiola Baggi, Davide Bechini, Lina Bernardi, Anna Bonaiuto, Massimo Bonetti, Lucrezia Lante Della Rovere, Monica Cervini.

The party given for the engagement of Silvia and Angelo during February 1936 takes place in Silvia's home. Angelo's family is from Bologna, Silvia's from Porretta Terme. There is a class difference between the two families which becomes very obvious during the gathering. The dinner is a sumptuous feast of wine, food, sex, and celebration, an intoxicating mix of friends and families who share a delicious twenty-course feast while spilling family secrets and revealing romantic intrigues.

Class 7 : Production and its Cultures

A: *Italian Traditional Song*: Worksongs 1A:7-11, Narrative Songs 1B:1-4, Social Protest 1B:5-11

B: Phillips, "Through the Kitchen Window: Italy Seen from the Pages of a Nineteenth-Century Cookbook"

Class 8 : Concert: *I Giullari di Piazza (from New York)*

Public concert: program to be announced

Class 9 : Food, Song and Italian Ethnicity in America

B: 1) Chairetakis, Anna L., "Tears of Blood: The Calabrian Villanella and Immigrant Epiphanies" (excerpt); 2) Del Giudice, Luisa, "The Archvilla: An Italian Canadian Architectural Archetype" (excerpt); 3) Murray, William, "The Last Italian;" 4) Pellegrino, Angelo, "A Slight Touch of Heresy"

Class 10 : Dinner: *A Country Wedding (Held at La Terrazza Restaurant)*

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE

optional: contribute one (homemade) Italian sweet to the wedding baskets, make enough for entire class (please inform instructor if you wish to participate); there will also be a small display of wedding *bomboniere* at restaurant (please inform instructor if you can lend a *bomboniera* for display)

Class 11 : Diet and Geography

A: *Italian Traditional Song*: Contrasti, 2A:1-4

B: 1) Sorre, Max, "The Geography of Diet;" 2) Anderson, Burton, "Introduction: The Makings of a Feast," "Pizza Napoletana," "Aceto Blasamico Tradizionale;" 3) Camporesi, Piero, "Dietary Geography and Social History"

Class 12 : Dinner: *A Regional Feast in Puglia (Held at La Terrazza Restaurant)*

FIELDWORK PROJECT OR RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Suggested Research Paper and Fieldwork Topics:

The Female Voice in Folksong
 Italian Folklife in Film (choose two): '900, *L'albero degli-zoccoli (Tree of the Wooden Clogs)*, *La notte di San Lorenzo (Night of the Shooting Stars)*, *Riso Amaro (Bitter Rice)*, *Godfather (I)*
 The Italian Broadside Press: Between Orality and

Scriptuality
 An Italian American Festival
 Italian Foodways in America
 Foodways and Proverbs
 Italian Folklore in English-Language Children's
 Book
 Contribution to the Italian Oral History Project
 Italian Folklife in Los Angeles

Selling Italian Culture in Los Angeles: Images
 and Metaphors
 Personal Narratives: Telling Food Stories
 Italian Artifacts in Italian American Lives
 A Photographic Essay of Italian Culture in Los
 Angeles
 Filming an Italian Cultural Event
 Familial Transmissions of Oral Culture

Cultural Aspects of Food

Dr. A. Hauck-Lawson, R.D.
 Department of Health and Nutrition Sciences
 Brooklyn College, 1994

Required Texts:

1) Bryant, Courtney, Marksberry and
 De Walt. 1985. *The Cultural Feast: An Introduction to
 Food and Society*. St. Paul: West Publishing Co.

2) Packet of photocopies available at
 Far Better Copy Center, Hillel Place.

Grade Breakdown:

Midterm	35%
Final	35%
Research Project	10%
Spot Quizzes	20%
	100%

Course Outline:

Session 1: Foodways - Food and Culture Scholarship

Reading: Bryant, chapter 3

Session 2: Perspectives of Food in History

Reading: Bryant, chapters 1 & 2

Don Yoder, "Folk Cookery," in *Folklore and Folklife:
 An Introduction*, ed. Richard M. Dorson (Chicago:
 University of Chicago Press, 1972)

Session 3: Field Trip - Chinese Food Conference

Reading: Charles Camp, "Foodways," in *Hand
 book of American Popular Culture*, ed. M. Thomas Inge,

Vol. I (Westport: Greenwood, 1979), 141-61

Session 4: The Food Supply - Development, Production & Delivery

Reading: Bryant, chapters 4 & 8

Session 5: Ethnic Foodways - A Cross Cultural Survey

Reading: Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett,
 "Studying Immigrant and Ethnic Folklore," in *Hand-
 book of American Folklore*, ed. Richard Dorson
 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 39-47.

Susan Kalcik, "Ethnic Foodways in America:
 Symbol and Performance of Identity," in
*Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The
 Performance of Group Identity*, eds. Linda Keller Brown
 and Kay Mussell (Knoxville: University of Tennes-
 see Press, 1984), 37-65

Willard B. Moore, "Metaphor and Changing Re-
 ality: The Foodways and Beliefs of the Russian
 Molokans in the United States" in *Ethnic and
 Regional Foodways in the United States*, 91-112

Session 6: Research - Case Studies of Family Foodways

Reading: Suzanne Nagorka, Marie Palowski,
 and Kathy Zalucki, "Traditional Polish Cooking" *New
 York Folklore Quarterly* 28 (1972): 271-285.

Eugene Obidinski and Helen
 Stankiewicz Zand, *Polish Folkways in America: Com-
 munity and Family* (Lanham: University Press of
 America, 1987)

Session 7: MIDTERM EXAM

Session 8: Social Mores that Influence Food Choice

Reading: Bryant, chapter 6
 Michael Owen Jones, "Afterward: Discovering the
 Symbolism of Food Customs and Events" in *We*

Gather Together": Food and Festival in American Life, eds. Theodore C. Humphrey and Lin T. Humphrey (Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press, 1988), 235-245

Session 9: Food and Gender

Reading: Bryant, chapter 5
Brett Williams, "Why Migrant Women Feed Their Husbands Tamales" in *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States*, 113-126.

Kay Turner and Suzanne Seriff, "Giving an Altar: The Ideology of Reproduction in a St. Joseph's Day Feast" *Journal of American Folklore* 100 (Oct. -Dec. 1988): 445-50

Session 10: Food Trends and Their Influences

Reading: The Digest: A Review for the Interdisciplinary Study of Food/Seeds of Change

Session 11: Research - Focus on one Foodstuff as a Window in Five Cultures

Reading: Foodtalk
Newsday
Sean Galvin and Annie Hauck-Lawson, "Bread and the Artistic Process: Hand-shaping by Heart," *Digest* 11 (Spring-Fall 1991): 5-10

Session 12: Functions of Food - Nutrition and Culture: Counseling with Awareness

Reading: Bryant, chapter 12
Judy Perkin and Stephanie F. McCann, "Is the Government Trying to Turn the Melting Pot into a One Dish Dinner?" in *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States*, 238-258

Session 13: The Food Voice

Reading: Annie Hauck-Lawson, "Hearing the Food Voice: An Epiphany for a Researcher," *Digest* 12 (1992): 6-7

Session 14: Food as Symbol

This class will focus on the symbolism of food, exemplified by the Obidinski and Zand readings. Your assignment is to explore the symbolism of food on a daily and celebratory basis within your own culture. Please prepare a concise written report to be presented on the last day of class. Reminder: all written reports are to be submitted in duplicate.

TBA FINAL EXAM

RESOURCES

Book Notes

(Book Notes and Reviews have been written by the editor unless otherwise indicated.)

Beer and Brewing in the Inland Northwest: 1850 to 1950. By Herman Ronnenberg. Moscow: University of Idaho Press, 1993. 242 pages, appendices, bibliography, index.

This very readable volume focuses on the state of Idaho for its discussion of the social history of beer drinking and making. Ronnenberg examines the material culture of beer in the northwest as well as the social interaction surrounding it and social attitudes towards it. He also looks at the personalities of individuals central to the brewery industry in this region. In his examination of the contributions the brewing industry made to Idaho life during the cen-

ture it existed, Ronnenberg provides a fuller and richer understanding of the development of this region.

Classical Southern Cooking: A Celebration of the Cuisine of the Old South. By Damon Lee Fowler. New York: Crown Publishers, 1995. 420 pages, index, bibliography; \$30.00 (cloth).

Though published with a non-scholarly audience in mind, Fowler's reliance upon 19th and early 20th century receipt books secures this work's historical veracity. Two hundred plus recipes, most with historical annotations, form the core of this erudite and witty exploration of southern foods.

An extensive bibliographic essay and contextual notes make *Classical Southern Cooking* a worthy addition to the library of academics and curious cooks alike. (*John T. Edge, Univ. of MS, Oxford*)

The Crab Lover's Book: Recipes and More. By Mary Ethelyn Orso. Jackson: University of Mississippi, 1995. 140 pages, index, recipes, references; \$16.96 (paper), \$40.00 (cloth).

As the title suggests, this book offers recipes and more, the more being tidbits of information about crabs, their life cycle, geographic distribution, and habits. Orso also provides bits of crablore drawn from a variety of cultures, including Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Greek, and Native American. Of particular interest to food scholars are descriptions of crab festivals and of crabbing as an occupation. As a Louisiana native of French Creole ancestry, Orso emphasizes recipes from her state, but also offers dishes from other regional and international cuisines. Her own enthusiasm for crabs shows up throughout the book, particularly in her reminiscences of her own experiences with the obtaining and eating of crabs. This book is not presented as a scholarly study of crab foodlore, and no attempt is made to clarify sources for recipes or changes made by the author. It is, however, a fun collection of recipes for anyone interested in crabs.

Eat Not This Flesh: Food Avoidances from Prehistory to the Present. By Frederick J. Simoons. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994. 550 pages; index, references; \$22.95 (paper), \$42.50 (cloth).

This book, a revised and enlarged edition of the 1961 publication, *Eat Not This Flesh: Food Avoidances in the Old World*, is an encyclopedic survey of taboos, prohibitions, and attitudes towards the eating of flesh. The volume is divided into chapters devoted to different "flesh-foods," including pork, beef, chicken and eggs, fish, horseflesh, camelflesh, and dogflesh. Other creatures as possible food are mentioned throughout the book—cats, insects, snakes, pets. The amount of information included is massive, and, as in any such undertaking, is sometimes contradictory. Be that as it may, Simoons provides cultural and historical contexts for many of the avoidances discussed.

In the introductory and concluding chapters, Simoons examines the significance of flesh-food avoidances in the history of human nutritional systems and offers an analysis of the reasons behind such avoidances. His conclusion examines various mod-

els for understanding these prohibitions, recognizing that scholars must take into account a wide range of factors, including the psychology of taste, the economic and social systems surrounding a food, and the cultural meaning it may hold for a group of eaters (or non-eaters). While the entire volume would be of interest to foodways scholars, this last chapter could be particularly useful for a foodways course.

The Foxfire Book of Appalachian Cookery. By Linda Garland Page and Eliot Wigginton, editors. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992. 330 pages, appendix, recipes, recipe index.

Originally published in 1984, this cookbook was the result of student research conducted through the Foxfire program in Rabun Gap, Georgia. Foxfire, now both an educational method as well as an organization and publisher of Foxfire magazine, sent students (high school or junior high school is not indicated) into the homes of mountain residents to collect information and to develop their writing skills by reporting on their findings. The result has been a number of very popular volumes on the folklore and folklife in the southern Appalachians. This cookbook follows the model set by other Foxfire books that offer primarily descriptive accounts, with plenty of photographs and quotations from individuals interviewed. While not scholarly (there is no bibliography, no footnotes, no interpretation or analysis of the data), the book contains a wealth of information on the recipes, ingredients, menus, and material culture of cooking in southern Appalachia as well as on the customs and attitudes surrounding eating. It also nicely blends oral histories of individuals with descriptions of their foodways.

Midnight Sweets. Bette Pesetsky. New York: Atheneum, 1988. 206 pages.

This book is so original, vivid, and engaging, I would recommend it even if it were not about food. Theodora Waite, a creative woman with a troubled past tells her story including the stories of different cookies she baked at various stages in her life. There are no recipes, but each cookie emerges as a character. Some cookies, like Bonitas, named for Theodora's oldest daughter, tell more with their recipes than the narrator might reveal on her own.

"A Bonita was a wreath-shaped, orange-flavored cookie with needles of coconut. One candied cherry half. In the quarterly report—they sold—Bonitas always sold. But they were unprofitable. They cost too much to make."

(Eve Jochnowitz, *New York University*)

Onions Are My Husband: Survival and Accumulation by West African Market Women. By Gracia Clark. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994. 464 pages, appendix, index, references; \$22.95 (paper), \$59.95 (cloth).

Open air marketplaces in West Africa have historically offered women a context for social and economic autonomy. In this anthropological study of the Kumasi Central Market in Ghana, Clark examines both the role of the market in West African everyday life and the variety of social forces involved in the survival of this institution. Focusing on the women traders, she recognizes the complex roles of gender and ethnicity in the seemingly simple activity of selling. Through her "thickly ethnographic description," Clark demonstrates the centrality of food acquisition and selling to larger social, cultural, and political issues. Her work also demonstrates the usefulness (and necessity) of feminist perspectives in gaining a fuller understanding of a cultural activity.

The Public Houses: Drink and The Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts. By David Conroy. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995. 351 pages, bibliography, index, appendix.

This volume is an exemplary social history of taverns in colonial Massachusetts. Along with providing a richly detailed history of the development of these public spaces and corresponding attitudes towards alcohol, Conroy examines their role in the political culture of the day. These establishments provided a meeting ground for men and were central to the development of a popular public culture. Taverns both reflected and challenged the social hierarchies of the time based on gender, race, and wealth. In his analysis, Conroy demonstrates how the study of the material culture surrounding foodways (in this case, drink) can shed new light on not only community life but also political history.

She Flew the Coop: A Novel Concerning Life, Death, Sex

and Recipes in Limoges, Louisiana. By Michael Lee West. New York: Harper Collins, 1994. 390 pages, index of recipes.

This surreal portrait of small-town Louisiana is violent and disturbing, but also gentle and very funny. West uses the voices of all the residents of Limoges, Louisiana to tell their stories of love, pain and food. The language and recipes (cantaloupe pickles, fried potato sandwich) evoke place and people with stark clarity. Here is Israel Adams, an undertaker, making pepper jelly with an abused widow who came to bury her husband.

"The air is tangy with vinegar. I screw on the lids as fast as I can. She wipes down the jars and turns them over. Then she looks all around my kitchen. I try to see it with her eyes, the shelves full of canned fruits and vegetables, all arranged by color. There's a row of tomatoes floating in quart jars like preserved hearts. I reach down and turn the jelly jars upright. If my old mama was here, she'd say what you need is always drawn to you, even if it ain't exactly what you want. You get what you ready to have."

(Eve Jochnowitz, *New York University*)

Food Conservation. Edited by Astri Riddervold and Andreas Ropeid. London: Prospect Books, 1988. 224 pages, introduction, contributors; \$29.95 (paper). Available through Books International, Inc., P.O. Box 605, Herndon, VA 20172-0605, (703) 435-7064, FAX (703) 689-0660.

This volume is a collection of papers read at the Seventh International Ethnological Food Research Conference held at Sogndal, Norway in June 1987. Contributors represent a range of nationalities and disciplinary backgrounds. The topics, though centered on food conservation, are just as diverse. The book is divided into three parts, historical, cultural, and technical, although most of the articles somewhat overlap these divisions. The data discussed here would be of use to most foodways scholars, and the range of analyses and interpretations should be of great interest.

The Melting Pot: Balkan Food and Cookery. By Maria Kaneva-Johnson. Devon, England: Prospect Books, 1995. 384 pages, weights and measures, foreword, acknowledgments, pronunciation and transliteration,

bibliography, indexes; \$19.50 (cloth). Available through Books International, Inc., P.O. Box 605, Herndon, VA 20172-0605, (703) 435-7064, FAX (703) 689-0660.

Much more than simply a cookbook, this book takes its title from the history of the Balkan region and the variety of cuisines found there. Chapter one offers "A Lesson in History and Geography," a concise introduction to Balkan culture, while chapter two, "A Cook's Tour," is an ethnography of the cuisine and foodways of each country in the Balkans. Chapters are also devoted to the material culture of cooking and ingredients common to Balkan cookery but probably unfamiliar to consumers in Britain where the author (who is Bulgarian) resides. The rest of the volume is devoted to recipes, many of which are introduced with brief descriptions of use, history, or cultural associations. The recipes are organized according to form (soups, sauces, drinks), primary ingredient (poultry, game, grains, breads, cheese) or place within the menu or meal system (snacks, desserts, preserves). A bibliography includes references that would be useful to anyone interested in the cultural or historical aspects of Balkan foodways.

Traditional Recipes of Laos. By Phia Sing. Translated by Phouangphet Vannithone and Boon Song Klausner. Edited by Alan and Jennifer Davidson. Drawings by Thao Soun Vannithone. Devon, England: Prospect Books, 1995 (1981). 192 pages, introduction, bibliography, index; (paper) (out of print). Available through Books International, Inc., P.O. Box 605, Herndon, VA 20172-0605, (703) 435-7064, FAX (703) 689-0660.

Laotian cooking is little known in the U.S. even though numerous refugees from Laos have settled throughout the country. This book is one of the very few English cookbooks available on this cuisine. Edited by Alan and Jennifer Davidson, it takes a unique approach in that it is a translation of an unpublished recipe collection with historical and cultural background added. The author of the original collection, Phia Sing, was the Master of Ceremonies and Chef at the Royal Palace in Luang Prabang. Although he died in 1967, Sing's handwritten notebooks of his recipes for traditional Lao dishes were fortunately saved. This volume offers English translations of 124 of these recipes. It also includes useful comments about the social context of the dishes as

well as information on Lao eating habits, utensils, and ingredients. Excellent drawings of ingredients (including varieties of fish and mammals), cooking implements, and containers are very helpful. As a whole, the book is an excellent introduction to a cuisine unfamiliar to many Westerners.

Conference Series: The Annual Oxford Symposium on Food

These volumes are collections of papers read at an annual conference held at St. Antony's College, Oxford, England. Chaired by Theodore Zeldin and Alan Davidson, the conference has a different theme every year (for example, taste, seasonings, travel, feasting). The participants and their subjects are international in scope. They also represent a range of disciplinary approaches, although their interests tend to lean towards the cultural and historical.

The volumes, edited originally by Tom Jaine and more recently by Harlan Walker, have a corresponding diversity of focus. The articles range in length (from 2 to 20 pages) and format (from anecdotal essays to scholarly treatises). Illustrations (drawings and photographs) are frequently included, and some articles include recipes. The quality is varied and most articles tend to be more descriptive than theoretical, but such a wealth of information is offered in these pages that they are a rich resource for any foodways scholar.

Individual volumes are published by Prospect Books in London but can be ordered through Books International, Inc., P.O. Box 605, Herndon, VA 20172-0605, (703) 435-7064, FAX (703) 689-0660.

Cookery: Science, Lore & Books. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1984 & 1985. Edited by Tom Jaine. Graphics by Philip Wills. London: Prospect Books, 1986. 187 pages, preface, introduction; \$25.00 (paper).

This volume is a selection of the papers presented to the two Symposia held at St. Antony's College, Oxford in 1984 and 1985. It contains a one-page introduction and 31 essays which have been arranged in two sections: "Cookery Books and the Transmission of Recipes" and "Foodways, Science & Lore in the Kitchen."

The Cooking Medium. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery 1986. Edited by Tom Jaine. London: Prospect Books Ltd., 1987. 136 pages, introduction; \$25.00 (paper).

This collection includes three discussion papers that were circulated prior to the conference: "Edible Fats and Oils" and "Thickeners" by Alan Davidson, and "Oils, Fats and Dairy Products: notes and Lists of Names" by Jenny Macarthur. These provide scientific data and vocabulary in order to "lend definition to a wide subject and to excite speculation in certain areas." Twenty-three articles follow, most of which address the varieties of oils and fats used throughout history. Other types of cooking mediums are mentioned, including water, lotus, milk and milk products, bread, and thickeners.

Taste. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery 1987. Edited by Tom Jaine. London: Prospect Books Ltd., 1988. 208 pages, introduction, list of participants; \$25.00 (paper).

The 42 papers in this volume examine the scientific and cultural definitions of taste, the historical development of particular tastes, and the concept of taste as an underlying aesthetic forming the basis of a cuisine. Of particular interest to American readers are two articles: "The American Hot Dog: Standardised Taste and Regional Variations" by Bruce Kraig and "A Chronicle of Bad Taste in American Food" by Carolyn McCrum.

The Cooking Pot. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery 1988. Edited by Tom Jaine. London: Prospect Books Ltd., 1989. 184 pages, introduction; \$27.00 (paper).

This volume is an interesting look at the material culture of cooking. The 25 articles include studies of actual types and forms of cooking vessels, their place in the cookery system and culture, and dishes associated with specific types of pots. Plentiful drawings and some photographs illustrate the papers.

Staple Foods. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food & Cookery 1989. Edited by Harlan Walker. London: Prospect Books Ltd., 1990. 248 pages, introduction, list of participants; \$40.00 (paper).

Containing 42 papers, this volume explores the staple foods of numerous cultures during a range of historical periods. Some articles focus on a particular staple (including bulgur, pasta, buckwheat, wheat, date palm, polenta, date palm, potato, rice, bread, beans, corn, meat, fish), while others provide an ethnography of the staples of a cultural region or historical era (the American west coast, middle east, medieval France and England). On the whole, the articles are interesting and provide a wealth of information.

Feasting and Fasting. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1990. Edited by Harlan Walker. London: Prospect Books Ltd., 1991. 230 pages, introduction, list of participants; \$40.00 (paper).

This volume should be of particular interest to folklorists. Its 42 papers cover specific festival foods as well as the use of food and food behavior during occasions for fasting and feasting. Several articles offer an ethnography of feasts in a specific culture, for example, Oregon's Russian Old Believers, medieval France, Jordan, the Netherlands, the Pacific northwest. Among the festivals mentioned are Christmas, weddings, St. Joseph's Day, Ramadhan, and Saturday evening dinner. A model for examining food in these contexts is provided by Astri Riddervold in "Traditional Foodways, Fast and Feast."

Spicing up the Palate: Studies of Flavorings—Ancient and Modern. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1992. Edited by Harlan Walker. London: Prospect Books Ltd., 1993. 297 pages, introduction, list of participants; \$35.00 (paper).

The 50 articles in this volume examine a vast range of flavorings used throughout the world. Some essays focus on specific spices (casomom, chocolate, maple, salmon, salt, paprika), while others examine the use and variety of flavorings found within a specific cuisine. The plenary paper, "Tainted Meat" by Gillian Riley, provides an overview of thoughts on spices and offers an historical look at the use of spices in Europe in connection with meat preservation and preparation. Also included are recipes for the Persian Dinner served at Oxford and a description of an exhibition on "Flavours, Flavourers and Flavourings" organized by Lisa Chaney.

Look & Feel: Studies in Texture, Appearance and Incidental Characteristics of Food. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1993. Edited by Harlan Walker: Prospect Books Ltd., 1994. 246 pages, introduction; \$39.00 (paper).

This volume focuses on food as material object having appearance, texture, shape, and form. Some of the 37 papers also address the relationship of these physical characteristics to the food system and culture in which they appear. Among the specific foods discussed are ice cream, white foods, breads, caviar, potato flour, fish heads, wafers, noodles, and cream for coffee. As with other volumes, a wealth of cultures are described, including Ukrainian-Canadian, Filipino, Assyrian, Mayan, Japanese, and Futurist.

Disappearing Foods: Studies in Foods and Dishes at Risk. Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cook-

ery 1994. Edited by Harlan Walker. London: Prospect Books Ltd., 1995. 242 pages, introduction, list of participants; (paper).

The 34 papers in this volume address a number of foods and food traditions that seem to be disappearing from their cultures. While a wealth of information is offered here, there is little indication of familiarity with theoretical models developed in folklore and anthropology that deal with culture change. The result is that I find some of the commentary rather simplistic. Be that as it may, the volume is still of interest for its historical and ethnographic descriptions. Among the foods and food traditions discussed are Tibetan tsampa, American pit barbecue, salmon, lobster, potatoes, wild rice, whalemeat, British puddings, east African honey wne, offal foods in Cork, tripe, arrowroot, the American soda fountain, and "sexually allusive monastic confectionery in southern Italy."

Periodicals and Newsletters

(Cheri Goldner, Bowling Green State University)

Flavor & Fortune is the 24-page quarterly publication of the Institute for the Advancement of the Science and Art of Chinese Cuisine. Subscriptions are \$18 per year and may be obtained by sending payment to: Flavor and Fortune, Subscription Division, P.O. Box 91, Kings Park, NY, 11754.

Volume 2, Number 1 (April 1995)

This issue features brief but revealing entries on vegetarian practices and beliefs in China, sources of protein in Chinese cooking (complete with diagrams), regional cooking styles, the "Chinese passion" for vegetables and the featured ingredient—sesame oil. Ten recipes, each with a detailed nutrient analysis, are provided. Reviews of several Asian markets in the New York City area, two Chinese restaurants and of Michael Saso's *A Taoist Cookbook* are also included. Letters from readers, a conference announcement, and a notice for a recipe contest round out the issue.

Volume 2, Number 2 (July 1995)

Featured Chinese foodstuffs in this issue include

crack seed (A Hawaiian contribution to American Chinese cuisine), beancurd, rice wine, winter mellow, beef, and soy sauce. For each food, details of its history and qualities, as well as recipes and nutrient analyses, make for interesting and informative reading. Also included are restaurant and cookbook reviews (with recipes) and letters from readers.

Volume 2, Number 3 (September 1995)

A feature on the August Moon Festival provides not only recipes, but also a vivid account of the festival context of these cakes. Other articles discuss the importance of pork to the diet of the majority of Chinese (those who are Han); the preparation, serving, and significance of unusual ingredients like Bird's Nest, shark fin and Bear's Paw; and the differences between Chinese food for Chinese versus western consumption. Reviews include those of two cookbooks by Martin Yan, winner of the 1994 James Beard Award for best television cooking show, and a restaurant in Flushing, New York. Letters to the editor and a news and notes section also appear.

Volume 2, Number 4 (December 1995)

In this issue, the food and festivities of another important celebration, Chinese New Year, are described. Another article addresses the history, preparation and symbolic value of tea. A culinary travel account of Taipei provides insights into Taiwanese specialties, while other features provide information on the history and use of ginger, the meaning of Chinese zodiac, and the selection and proper use of a wok. Restaurant reviews, news and notes and two book reviews complete the issue.

CommuniCator: The Official Newsletter of the Council on Nutritional Anthropology is the semi-annual official newsletter of the Council on Nutritional Anthropology of the American Anthropological Association. Members of the CNA receive the CommuniCator as a benefit of membership. Others can subscribe for \$10.00 per year, payable to the American Anthropological Association, 4350 Fairfax Drive, Suite 640, Arlington, VA 22203.

Volume 19, Number 1 (Fall-Winter 1995)

Much of this issue is devoted to the application of computer technology to the study of nutritional anthropology. Four very helpful reviews cover a range of software that may be of use to CNA members and scholars with similar interests. A note from CNA President Rebecca Huss-Ashmore discusses the establishment of centers to preserve indigenous knowledge, in both the United States and developing countries, and the contribution which nutritional anthropologists can make to these centers. Also included is preview of some of the sessions dealing with food during the American Anthropological Association's 1995 annual meeting, a conference report on the 2nd Annual Interdisciplinary Conference on Food and Culture held at Boston University, May 5-7, and a notes section.

Food Heritage Press is a very useful quarterly catalogue of books on food history. For information on how to receive future mailings, write to publisher Joseph M. Carlin at Food Heritage Press, P.O. Box 163, Ipswich, MA 01938-7625 or call (508) 356-7625.

Volume 1, Issue 2 (Spring 1995)

This second issue of Joseph M. Carlin's mail-order source for works of interest to culinary historians and others interested in the study of food contains

book titles, publication information and brief content summaries of almost 50 books from a variety of university presses. An order form is included. Books included in the catalogue range from historical studies of a particular food, to a variety of cookbooks, to the biography of Brillat-Savarin, the "father of gastronomy."

Food History News is a quarterly newsletter. A year's subscription is \$12 for an individual, \$15 for an institution. Make checks payable to FOOD HISTORY NEWS and send to: FOOD HISTORY NEWS, HCR 60, Box 354A, Islesboro, ME 04848. Please include your name, address, and institutional affiliation and indicate if you would like to receive information about back issues.

Volume V, Number 1 (Summer 1995)

An interesting feature on sugar conservation in Utah during World War I, and its implications for home canning, appears in this issue. An excerpt from an article on Shaker artisanship and cooking that originally appeared in *Simple Cooking* and a historical overview of jams, jellies and marmalades also appear. The issue includes recipes for Welsh cakes and chocolate cake, a reader's exchange (including a section on where to find cookbooks), and a food events calendar as well.

Simple Cooking is published quarterly by John Thorne and Matt Lewis Thorne for a general audience. Issues average about eight pages in length and include essays on food, along with recipes, reader letters and book reviews. A subscription costs \$16 for 4 issues and may be obtained by writing to Simple Cooking, P.O. Box 88, Steuben, ME 04680-0088.

Issue Number 33 (Summer into Autumn 1992)

This issue's feature article focuses on Duffy's Restaurant and mentions a few other Maine coast eateries. The authors also share their favorite recipes for (and personal reminiscences of) such regional favorites as lobster stew, crab rolls, and chowder crackers. Rounding out the issue are an "In Memoriam" piece for food writers Elizabeth David and Mary Frances Kennedy Fisher, an essay recalling "A Trip to Aroostook" in 1947 by one of the author's fathers, and "Table Talk," a notes and queries section.

Issue Number 36 (Autumn 1993)

The majority of this issue is devoted to the Shakers, with a feature essay about a visit to Hancock Shaker Village, the evolution of the Shaker chair, a discussion of Shaker culture and, of course, Shaker cookbooks and recipes. In addition, "Table Talk" features letters from readers and Coleman Andrew's book *Everything on the Table: Plain Talk about Food and Wine* is reviewed.

Issue Number 37 (Winter 1994)

Hash is the featured food in this issue. The main essay includes personal experiences and historical facts about hash, along with a recipe for chicken hash. An essay and recipe for moosehead ginger bread also appear. A letter on South Carolina rich hash and a review of *Clamdiggers and Downeast Country Stoves*, by Allan Lockyer, complete the issue.

Issue Number 38 (Spring 1994)

This issue focuses on the potato and its place within traditional Irish foodways. Also included are a recipe for champ, a brief piece on making sunshine jam, and a review of Claudia Kinmonth's *Irish Country Furniture: 1700-1950*.

Issue Number 40 (Holidays 1994)

The history of cornbread, personal notes on cornbread making and three cornbread recipes are featured in this issue, while letters from readers detail the process of shocking corn and the making of corn pone (two recipes included). A notes and queries section completes the issue.

Issue Number 42 (Spring 1995)

Khichri, an Indian gruel, and its variants are the main subject of this particular issue. The authors include a discussion of the dish in its cultural context, notes on its cooking and ingredients, and several recipes. Also appearing is a brief piece on candy orange slices.

Issue Number 43 (Summer 1995)

This issue's feature is the wild berries of Maine, with the authors sharing historical as well as personal accounts of berry gathering and preparation and two blueberry recipes. "Table Talk" includes letters from readers regarding candy orange slices, khichri, strawberry jam and other topics. *Saltwater Foodways*, by Sandra L. Oliver, is reviewed.

Dissertations

The Folk Artist as Producer: A Behavioral Study of a Sicilian Immigrant Woman's Ceremonial Cooking Style.
By John Allan Cicala. Ph.D.: Indiana University, 1995.

This dissertation analyzes an immigrant Detroit Sicilian woman's regional ceremonial cooking style through a detailed examination of her preparation of one ancient specialty, *cuscuszu*, a version of North African *couscous*, found along the coastal area of the northwest Sicilian region of Trapani facing Tunisia. My purpose is to investigate the motives that prompt the cook to prepare the dish the way she does within the context of an immigrant sample of other ceremonial *cuscuszu* makers.

I approached this problem by deriving from the works of folklife scholars Michael Owen Jones, John Vlach, and Simon Bronner a behavioral paradigm that reveals the processes that produce the artifact. Then I extended the model's premises to include food's ar-

tifactual and spiritual characteristics and qualified the assumptions with the praxis concept that limits the analysis to customary ways of preparing things. Following this plan, I presented the collected field data in two sections. In the first, I chronicled the cook's personal biography within her family history. Together they reveal her upbringing, social life, economic circumstances, personality, motives, desires, rewards, and thoughts that bear her ceremonial cooking practice. In the second part, I examined her *cuscuszu* preparation documenting it with annotated photographs and arranging the information according to steps she considered significant. Then comparing her "way" with the "ways" of her immigrant compatriots, I determined her place within the sample's traditional-modern continuum.

The study concludes that 1) an unobtrusive ancient Sicilian ceremonial food tradition exists within an affluent suburban American environment, 2) the qualitative analysis of this cultural ceremonial food

tradition within the researcher's own family and regional ethnic group behaviors that do not follow mainstream American patterns, and that 3) the examination of the individual cook's conduct, motivation, and rewards explains her ceremonial food style which,

unlike other approaches to traditional analyses, reduces the importance of culture, tradition, art, craft, and aesthetic as viable analytical and interpretive concepts.

Miscellaneous

Foodways Annotation Database from the Indiana University Folklore Archives

While working as archivist at the Indiana University Folklore Archives, I created an annotated foodways holdings list that would function as a finding aid for researchers at the University and other institutions. I identified ninety-six projects prepared by folklore graduate and undergraduate students on topics of food and food-related behaviors, annotated each, and arranged them according to identifying accession number and specific title that stated where the collecting was done, the name of the collector, the collection title, its length (in pages), and data characteristics such as whether or not the information was summarized or transcribed and the varying levels of contextual information the collector provided.

Later I discovered that I could enter these records in ProCite which is a bibliographic database program that exists in both DOS and Windows operating systems. Choosing the Journal, Short Form, I modified it to suit the printed title and annotation format and selected the Chicago A Output Style and arranged the data fields so that the computerized version was identical to the original typed holdings

list. With these electronic records I had the advantage of being able to organize the annotated collections according to the tagged fields such as collector name and the place (and town). Furthermore, ProCite for Windows allows the archivist to create an authority list or keyword index for each collection. If used consistently, it is possible to arrange annotated collections under a variety of headings such as place and subject; place and ethnicity; place and religion; ethnicity and religion; subject and ethnicity; collector, place, and subject; and so on.

The method is time consuming and tedious because it is still necessary to read each collection, write the annotation, and then enter it into the modified user form in the bibliographic database. However, using only a personal computer and an inexpensive bibliographic program the folklore archivist with limited resources can create a single annotated holdings list and other versions keyed on significant data fields that foodways scholars would find useful for their research.

(John Allan Cicala, Indiana University)

CONFERENCES

AMERICAN FOLKLORE SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING, LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA, OCTOBER 11-15, 1995

Papers on foodways comprised two whole sessions and were included in a third. The following descriptions were taken from the conference Program and Abstracts:

Session: **Cuisine of the Gods: Food and Religion** (Chair: Peter Harle; Discussant: Judith Neulander)

John Deal (Indiana University), *Mead, Macrobiotics, and Magic: The Uses of Food among Neopagans*. American neopagans use food spiritually and symbolically as much as do other religious communities. And as with other religious groups whose constituencies are highly diverse, neopaganism exhibits intriguing variety in its understanding and utilization of food in ritual, festival, and everyday life. This paper will attempt to identify and describe some of the common ways in which food functions ritually, ethnically, and socially for members of American neopagan religious groups, especially in terms of the creation, expression, and negotiation of identity.

Suzanne Waldenberger (Indiana University), *Eating in Eden: The Construction of Christian Diets*. From Christian diet books to tabloid accounts of miracle healing foods, the modern obsession with diet, nutrition and health has had an impact on religious thinking. This paper will explore the ways different groups have used Biblical references of food and eating to construct healthy, ethical or distinctive diets. These transpositions of ancient Middle Eastern food references into modern contexts reveal underlying attitudes toward scientific authority, Biblical testimony, nutrition and the purposeful creation of group foodways.

Peter Harle (Indiana University), *Butter and Barley: Religion and Food in Tibetan Exile Communities*. Until recent years, Tibetan foodways were largely centered around a handful of available ingredients. Foods such as barley flour and yak butter were incorporated into a wide range of religious practices,

as offerings, artistic media, and means for divination. Within exile communities, Tibetans have been presented with a wide range of new ingredients, but have also lost access to some traditional staples. This paper will examine Tibetan responses to these new situations and their effect on religious uses of food materials.

Session: **Foodways and Identity** (Chair: Timothy Lloyd)

Gwendolyn Leick (University of Glamorgan, U.K.), *The Mark of the Green Bush: Open Air Drinking and Consumption in the Vineyards of Southern Austria*. Within the general framework of a current project that focuses on the two main regional products, wine and pork (Schwein und Wein), this paper deals with the locus of consumption, the traditional "Buschenschank," where locally produced wine is drunk in wayside stations. It is a locale of local conviviality but also attracts customers from further afield. Tourist marketing has declared certain areas as "Wine routes," with a string of such establishments. They also form points of convergence for the consumption of high status goods and low status goods and symbolise the overall structure of their cultural significance within this region.

Carol K. Oakey (University of Richmond), *Why the Pasta Has No Sauce: Food as a Religio-Symbolic Vehicle in Contemporary Muslim Egypt*. Muslim Egyptians utilize food as a vehicle to articulate ideal relations both among humans and between believers of Allah through such practices as observing food taboos, fasting, feasting, performing ritual slaughter, giving food to the needy, and offering generous hospitality. Etiquette surrounding eating reflects the religio-symbolic meanings of these foodways. Ultimately, even introduced foods are brought into conformity with the religio-symbolic system.

Polly Russell (Louisiana State University), *The Silver Moon Cafe: An Analysis of Foodways and Identity*. When food is seen as an event it may be regarded as a tool through which to understand the cultural values and self-image of a person. This paper is based

upon the life history of Seabel Thomas, an African American woman who runs a Soul Food cafe in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It will focus upon Ms. Thomas's life narrative in conjunction with analysis of the food she cooks and the way her cafe functions.

Timothy Lloyd (Cityfolk), *The Hot Texas Wiener Tradition in Paterson, New Jersey*. Each year, the polyglot residents of the Paterson, New Jersey area, a dozen miles northwest of midtown Manhattan, consume hundreds of thousands of deep-fried Hot Texas Wieners, topped with spicy mustard, onions, and a distinctive chili sauce. Hot Texas Wieners, created under legendary circumstances in the mid-1920s, have customarily been cooked by Greeks in family restaurant businesses, and are prepared for a clientele of working people, to many of whom this food has come to mean home. As this description suggests, in addition to its local significance, this tradition has many

connections with that of Greek-made chili in Cincinnati, Ohio. What is the Paterson Hot Texas Wiener tradition? What are its connections with the chili tradition in Cincinnati? What does it mean that the world contains both?

Session: **Louisiana Literature and Folklore**
(Chair: Frank de Caro)

Courtney Ramsay (University of Southwestern Louisiana), *The Significance of Foodways in Ernest Gaines's A Lesson before Dying*. In all 31 chapters of *A Lesson before Dying*, Ernest Gaines significantly uses a reference to foodways. The meanings attached to specific foods, to the ritualistic events associated with them, and to the eminence of the kitchen—the room where food is prepared, served, and shared—assist the reader in understanding both the characters and the culture of the area in which this novel is set.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Other Organizations

The Association for the Study of Food and Society (ASFS): The ASFS is an interdisciplinary international organization dedicated to the complex relationship between food and society. It was founded in 1985 by Bill Whit and Yvonne Vissing, two sociologists who sought to increase interest in the study of social aspects of food and nutrition. Activities include an annual meeting in conjunction with the Food, Agriculture, and Human Values Society, a bi-annual newsletter, a journal and other special projects. For membership and subscription information, contact Professor Mary Wallace Kelsey, Dept. of Food and Nutrition, Milam Hall 108, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331-5103, phone: 503-737-0968, fax: 503-737-6914, e-mail: kelseym@cmail.orst.edu.

The Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society (AFHVS): The AFHVS is an organization of professionals dedicated to the study of values issues associated with the production, distribution and consumption of food, fiber and natural resources. AFHVS promotes open discussion of such questions as the sustainability of modern food production practices, the benefits and risks of biological technologies, and food security in developed and developing countries. Activities include annual meetings and publication of *Agricultural and Human Values: Journal of the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society*. For membership and subscription information, contact Agriculture and Human Values, Inc., P.O. Box 14938, Gainesville, FL 32604.

Prizes and Awards

The Foodways Section of the American Folklore Society announces the Sue Samuelson Award for best student paper on traditional food or foodways. Submissions should include original fieldwork or research and should utilize current folkloric approaches to interpretation of food systems, items, behaviors, cultures, beliefs, or any other aspect of foodways. This \$100 award is open to any undergraduate or graduate student. Deadline for submission of papers is October 1, 1997. To submit papers, send three typed, double-spaced copies to : Dan Peterson, AFS Foodways Section, 1156 Castle Kirk, Baton Rouge, LA 7088, (504) 766-8952.

Entries for the Sophie Coe Prize are also still being accepted. This £1,000 prize will be awarded to an essay, article or paper on a food history subject. The deadline for submitting entries is 11th June 1997. Five copies of entries must be submitted by that date. The winner for 1997 will be announced at the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, Fish: Food

from the Waters, held at St. Antony's College, 18-20 July 1997. The terms and conditions of the prize are slightly different from previous years. To submit an entry or receive further details, contact Symposium organizer Harlan Walker at 294 Hagley Road, Birmingham B17 8DJ, England, telephone and fax 0121 429 1779.

The book *Cajun Foodways* by C. Paige Gutierrez was selected as recipient of the 1995 Award for Best Publication in Foodways Scholarship. This award is given every two years by the Foodways Section of AFS and includes a \$100 honorarium. This book examines food as a deeply artistic and meaningful subject in itself and as a powerful symbol of Cajun identity. In her analyses of a variety of Cajun food events and of the impact of contemporary social and economic forces on traditional foodways, Gutierrez provides a model for future research and writing in foodways scholarship.

Conference Announcements

Holidays, Ritual, Festival, Celebration, and Public Display

Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, Ohio
May 29-31, 1997

A multidisciplinary conference on holidays, ritual, festival, celebration, and public display, sponsored by the Bowling Green Center for Popular Culture Studies and the Department of Popular Culture, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio 43403. Conference will be held May 29-31, 1997, at Bowling Green State University.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS IS FEBRUARY 15, 1997

Areas might include both emergent events as well as long-standing traditions, such as contemporary holiday celebrations in industrialized states; ritual, festival, and public display for special occa-

sions; celebrations as modes of conflict as well as solidarity; the uses of tradition in consumerist societies; issues of commodification, hybridity, polysemy, and so on.

Proposals for individualized papers and panels as well as film-video presentations are welcomed. Proposals should show original research and/or new theoretical perspectives and familiarity with existing scholarship.

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS: A publication consisting of articles selected from the conference proceedings is anticipated. Information will be provided at the conference.

FOR INDIVIDUAL PAPERS AND MEDIA PRODUCTIONS: Send three copies of a one-page vita and a proposal that includes your name, department/program, institution, mailing and e-mail addresses, telephone and FAX numbers, title of paper, and 300-word abstract. Please do not FAX or e-

mail proposals.

FOR PANELS: Send three copies of a one-page vita for each participant; a 150-word abstract of the session's theme including the title of the session; a 300-word abstract for each participant including their name, department/program, institution, mailing and e-mail addresses, telephone and FAX numbers, and title of paper; contact data for the session coordinator (please include home and office telephone numbers and preferred mailing and e-mail addresses, especially if different from institutional addresses).

Please do not FAX or e-mail proposals.

AUDIO-VISUAL REQUIREMENTS: Please specify your audio-visual equipment needs within the proposal. Slide projectors, overhead projectors, audio tape players, and VCR are available.

SEND 3 COPIES OF YOUR PROPOSAL TO: Jack Santino, Department of Popular Culture, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0226

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jack Santino, Department of Popular Culture, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0226, Telephone/Voice Mail: (419) 372-2983, FAX: (419) 372-2577, e-mail: jsantin@bgnet.bgsu.edu

or

Thomas Zimmerman, Department of Popular Culture, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0226, Telephone/Voice Mail: (419) 372-0384, FAX: (419) 372-2577, e-mail: thomasz@bgnet.bgsu.edu

Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery

Fish: Food from the Waters

Saint Antony's College

Oxford, England

July 18-20, 1997

Subject

The subject—Fish—was chosen at the last Symposium. It is subtitled Food from the Waters as fish would include crustacea, which we will certainly wish to discuss, and seafood would not have included river fish. However, the subtitle could lead us down waterways that perhaps we shouldn't follow; I would

say that beavers and hippopotami and all birds (even penguins) are out, but that sea mammals,(whales, dolphins, even seals) and reptiles (turtles, alligators) are in. What about amphibia? Why not? And who will argue about seaweed? Pretty arbitrary and not very logical! We don't want to be too rigid, but not too vague or wide-ranging either; we might have fun in Oxford, but the published papers need some sort of order if they are to be useful and comprehensible.

It is also important to have papers on general subjects: the effects of pollution in rivers and seas, the depletion of species, introduction of foreign species whether into African lakes, English rivers or the Eastern Mediterranean, various aspects of fish farming, political problems past and present. As usual there is no lack of choice.

Papers

We need to know as soon as possible not only if you want to come, but also whether you are considering submitting a paper. If you do, please ensure that it reaches me not later than 1st June. Otherwise, there will not be time to prepare the text for advance circulation. This gives symposiasts the chance to inform themselves beforehand about the contents of papers and is a highly important aid to good discussion, particularly as symposiasts do not read out their papers; they should talk about their subjects, commenting, illustrating and perhaps adding further information.

Delivery of papers at the proper time is very important. Dealing with late papers is certainly the most difficult and frustrating task involved in running the event. Such late delivery not only carries the risk that the papers on which you have labored may fail to secure proper attention, but may also mean that they will not be presented at all.

Sophie Coe Prize

The winner of the Sophie Coe Prize for 1997 will be announced at the symposium.

The prize of £1,000 for an essay, article or paper on a food history subject was awarded for the first time at the 1995 Symposium, in the presence of Professor Michael Coe who set up the prize to commemorate his late wife, a valued and much loved participant in the Oxford Symposia.

The fund is now sufficient to guarantee the £1,000 prize, which will not be split, but the trustees

may find it possible on some occasions to make smaller subsidiary awards.

The terms and conditions of the prize are slightly different from previous years. If you would like to receive details, please get in touch with me. In any case the award will be announced at the symposium in July and the deadline for submitting entries is 11th June 1997. Five copies of entries must be submitted to me by that date.

Fees

We have decided to raise the basic fee for an individual to £50 and for two people to whom we send only one set of documentation, £80. For a whole-time student it remains at £25. This increase will enable us to send out papers in advance, as we used to do, but only to addresses abroad, inevitably by air, will necessitate an extra charge. The fee also covers secretarial costs, reproduction and subsequent editing of papers, college services and refreshments.

Reservation and Deposit

The deposit will remain at £25, so those intending to come are asked to pay this sum to secure their places; £40 should be paid for two people who require one set of documentation and £10 for a student. These deposits will be refunded, less a small administration charge, if you cancel before 1st June. Checks should be payable to "Oxford Symposium," please.

We appreciate that sending small sums of money from abroad can be very expensive and we make the following suggestions for those who do not have a bank account here:

- a sterling check drawn on a London branch of a foreign bank
- a Eurocheck expressed in sterling
- a regular U.S. (not Canadian) dollar check for £25 (\$42)/£40 (\$67)/£10 (\$17)

If none of these methods is practical for you, the deposit need not be paid by those coming from abroad, provided that you make it clear to me that you plan to attend and also, please, tell me if you wish to cancel your reservation.

Programme

As in 1996 the arrangements will be as follows:

-Opening for registration on Friday evening was very successful. With the higher numbers that attended it would have been very difficult to deal with everyone on Saturday morning. It also gave those arriving on Friday or earlier a focus for meeting one another. We will continue with this arrangement. More details in the next symposium circular.

-We will continue to examine the arrangements for lunch on Saturday, but will not be reverting to the Do-it-yourself lunch. Details in the next symposium circular.

-Otherwise it is the mixture as before: plenary and group work sessions on Saturday and Sunday, a light lunch on Sunday, and a dinner at extra charge on Saturday evening.

A list of guest houses and hotels can be provided to anyone interested.

A further symposium circular will be sent in due course to those who reply positively to this announcement.

For answers to any questions or further information, contact organizer Harlan Walker, Oxford Symposium, 294 Hagley Road, Birmingham B17 8DJ, England. Telephone and fax: 0121 429 1779.

Digest SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

A subscription to *Digest: An Interdisciplinary Study of Food and Foodways* includes two issues per year and costs \$10.00 per volume, domestic; overseas subscription is an additional \$3.00 for postage.

Members of the American Folklore Society will be billed directly for membership in the Foodways Section when it is time to renew their AFS membership. For back issues and regarding subscriptions from individuals who are not AFS members, contact: Lucy Long, Bowling Green State University, Department of Popular Culture, Bowling Green, Ohio 43403.

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