



Repast

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THE ACCEPTANCE OF GREEK FOODS IN AMERICA

by Robert Theodoratus

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The basic features, the availability, and the degree of acceptance of Greek foods in America have dramatically changed over the past century. First I wish to describe the foods in the Greek immigrant communities prior to 1940. Next I'll discuss the changes in these communities after 1950, and how and why Greek foods achieved an increasingly popular appeal within the larger American population. Finally I will describe the vast changes in the availability of Greek foods in the Colorado city in which I have lived since 1966.¹

The Period 1900-1940

The Greeks who immigrated to America before 1940 primarily were poor, minimally educated men who came from the villages of Greece and Asia Minor. Most of these men settled into urban "Greektowns" where their lives centered around their work, the rooming houses in which they lived, their coffee houses and small shops (including food stores), and eventually a Greek Orthodox church. The foods prepared and eaten by them were based on low cost and simplicity. The most common were soups, stews, simple meat and vegetable dishes and, increasingly, American fried foods and pancakes. Bean and lentil dishes were common, as was the heavy use of olive oil. By the 1920's, many made return visits to Greece, married and brought their wives to America. These

Brought to These Shores



Stories of Ethnic Foodways

wives in particular brought village-style foodways to their new communities.

In the early homes, the most usual foods were carry-overs from each family's village of origin. The commonest dishes were baked casseroles or stews because they could be reheated for the next day. Other common dishes were stuffed bell peppers, and tomato-flavored rice pilafs with beef, chicken or pork added. Most of the milk delivered to their homes was made into yogurt. Both brined and oil-cured olives were served with the main meals. For special occasions, a pan of *pastitsio* made with the long straight macaroni was baked. Glasses of wine, often homemade, were served with the main meal. In addition on special occasions, they ate *tiropitias* (savory cheese pies), *spanakopitas* (spinach pies), *dolmades* (stuffed grape leaves), and a variety of Greek pastries such as *baklava*, *halvah* made with farina, *diples* or *theples* (curls of pastry deep-fried and coated with honey), and *koulourakia* (egg-glazed butter cookies, shaped into twists). Most wives baked their own heavy round loaves of Greek-style bread. However, after a few years in America they turned to baking lighter American-style loaves of bread. Until the 1950's, most wives still stretched their own *phyllo* dough (paper-thin pastry sheets).

The Greek Grocery Store

The Greek grocery store was a core community institution. It was the source for food and culinary information and a center for information and gossip for the Greek community. The stores' shelves were filled with tins, boxes, and jars of foods and other items and, with rare exceptions, the labels were in Greek. The

continued on next page

GREEK FOODS *continued from page 1*

cooler had large pans of pastries, various Greek cheeses, and other perishable foods. Along the walls and walkways there were large burlap bags of fava beans (*koukia*), white beans, chickpeas, lentils, walnuts, almonds, and *bulgar* (cracked wheat). Another row consisted of barrels of *feta* cheese in brine, and olives (both in brine and oil-cured). Shelves were stocked with Greek honey, Greek coffee, Greek oregano, half-gallon and one-gallon tins of various olive oils, tins of fish, and boxes of *loukoumi* (Turkish delight) from Greece or New York City. The special kitchen utensils included brass *brikis* to prepare Greek-style coffee, brass mortars and pestles, demitasse cups and other ceramic wares.

The owner and his wife, if he was married, were major sources of information for the customers. He or she knew what every family or individual usually purchased or needed. For example, if a husband came and selected a large tin of a particular brand of anchovies, the owner might tell him, "I will not sell you that type. Your wife does not like it! She will tell you to bring it back and get this other type!" I saw and listened to many such encounters when I was a student. Many of these stores also supplied a mail-order service for Greek customers who lived in distant towns.

Before 1942, the use and knowledge of Greek foods and food products were essentially confined to the urban Greek communities. During World War 2, there were many Greek War Relief fund-raising cam-

paigns. In these, Greek dancing and music, folk costumes and foods were featured. Americans who went to these functions ate and began to acquire a taste for the Greek pastries and other foods that were served. This was a small prelude to the trends seen after the 1950's.

Changes After World War 2

After World War 2, most Greek immigrants came from the cities, especially Athens, and not the villages. They brought a more sophisticated set of foodways that had been influenced by the larger pan-European culinary culture. These individuals and the Americanized children of the earlier immigrants entered the business and professional world. Many of them established restaurants that served food that appealed to both urban Greek-Americans and the larger American populace. They were the ones who became the leaders of Greek food festivals, owners of Greek import businesses and purveyors of modern Greek culture to Americans. As a part of this new Greek-American world, the following activities have been important in acquainting Americans with Greek foods: travel to Greece, cookbook writing, travel books on Greece, Greek food festivals, the popular media, and even dietary fads.

Tourism, Travel, Films and the Popular Media:

Before 1970, most authors of travel books on Greece told horror stories of travel and eating in Greece. Culinary horrors included food ordered in cafés being delayed and served cold or swimming in olive oil, or "assassinated with garlic" or *retsina*, the wine tasting of turpentine. Slowly a new set of images began to occur. New modern hotels and beach resorts were developed in Greece. The foods in these were modified or Europeanized to suit non-Greek tastes. The travelers' tales increasingly became more positive and laudatory. In the movie "Never on Sunday", there were many scenes of eating and drinking. These helped foster a more "romanticized", positive image of Greeks and their ways of life. Other films shot in Greece did much the same.

Increasingly over time, the "food pages" in daily newspapers and popular magazines featured glowing descriptions and recipes for special Greek foods, especially meat dishes, salads, and desserts. All these provided new, positive images of Greek food.

Annual Greek Community Festivals: After 1960, and especially after 1980, each Greek community's annual festival has become both a source of income and a public relations event. These are usually held at the local Greek parish church grounds, during the summer or early fall so as not to conflict with the times

continued on page 8

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THOUGHTS ON ETHNIC FOODWAYS AND IDENTITY

by Teagan Schweitzer

Repast subscriber Teagan Abigail Schweitzer grew up in Ann Arbor and lives in Philadelphia. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in anthropology and historical archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania, focusing on the archaeology of American foodways.

To help provide some context for this issue of *Repast*, I thought that it would be beneficial to discuss the issue of ethnicity. How are ethnic groups formed and how are they maintained through time? Ethnic groups are essentially a form of social organization and a dynamic social process.¹ Hence ethnicity can only exist within a larger social system. Ethnic-group distinctions involve a process of both self-ascription and ascription by others, which organize and categorize interactions between people and are typically based on an ability to exclude or incorporate people.² Thus, the formation and maintenance of ethnic groups is both an internal and an external process, one in which group associations and cultural differences are highlighted.

Research on food and foodways can be a useful and productive way to explore ethnicity. In order to sustain boundaries, cultural groups often assert their identity through the mobilization of foods and other kinds of cultural materials.³ Studying such foods allows us to gain a greater understanding of the boundaries between groups (whether fluid or rigid) and of the identities that groups create for themselves as well as those that are ascribed to them, e.g. through stereotypes. Think about some of the ethnic stereotypes that you know which relate people to particular foods: the French are sometimes referred to as “frogs”, the Germans as “krauts”, the Mexicans as “beaners”, and so on. Clearly, there exists a strong association in our minds between foodways and ethnicity, such that we define groups by what they eat and what we imagine them to eat.

American society today is a hodgepodge of many different ethnic groups. Diversity of cuisines has always been a trademark of the American experience, dating back even to the colonial period when British settlers arrived in the New World. Though these colonists tried to directly import their foodways from Europe, the different ecological conditions forced them to adopt some of the native crops and even some of the foodways of the Native Americans.

Over the centuries, our country has attracted immigrants from all over the world, oftentimes as a result of the sheer abundance and vast opportunities available here. With so many people from different backgrounds in one place, ethnicity has become a primary means of distinguishing groups, and foodways play a very visible, universal, and long-lasting role within this, alongside other factors such as styles of clothing, housing, music, and religious rituals.

Although many ethnic foodways have continued to endure, in America the trend over time has been a general decline in ethnic traditions. This should not be viewed as a loss of ethnicity—there is no such thing as “authentic” or “pure” ethnicity—but rather as part of a process.⁴ Pure ethnicity does not exist, because there is no single origin from which each member of a given group derives his or her identity, and because America presents an entirely different landscape for expressing cultural identity. Ethnic groups are both formed and maintained when boundaries between the groups are upheld through the use of symbols of cultural identity. One very powerful cultural symbol is a group’s foodways.

Because of the diverse groups of people who have come into contact with each other throughout our history, a plethora of ethnic cuisines is available to the consumer in America today. Many new immigrants opened stores and restaurants because it was a viable way of sustaining themselves and maintaining their cultural connections. Although they were perhaps not initially concerned with feeding or provisioning anyone outside their own cultural groups, their businesses eventually attracted the attention of others. The commercialization of ethnic cuisine has led to the perpetuation of cultural symbols and hence boundaries between ethnic groups. America is not so much a melting pot as it is a multi-ethnic montage. Through studying and learning about the various ethnic cuisines in our country, we can gain an understanding of how people create and have created their identities through the foods that they eat. ■

Endnotes

1. See p. 10 of Fredrik Barth’s Introduction (pp. 9-38) to a collection of papers that he edited, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969); and p. 299 of Geoff Emberling’s article “Ethnicity in Complex Societies: Archaeological Perspectives” in *Journal of Archaeological Research* 5 (1997), pp. 295-344.
2. See Barth, pp. 10-13, and Emberling, p. 310.
3. Arjun Appaduari, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 15.
4. Susan Kalcik, “Ethnic Foodways in America: Symbol and the Performance of Identity”, pp. 37-65 in Linda Keller Brown and Kay Munsell, eds., *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1984).

TAKING CARE OF THEMSELVES



FOOD PRODUCTION BY THE ENSLAVED COMMUNITY AT MONTICELLO

by Leni Sorensen

Leni Ashmore Sorensen of Crozet, VA has worked as a consultant and public presenter at the Monticello and Ash Lawn Highland estates near Charlottesville, at Colonial Williamsburg, and at other historic sites, farms and museums in the mid-Atlantic for 20 years. In 1999 she was the historical technical consultant for the CBS miniseries "The Memoirs of Sally Hemings", and during 2003-4 she was research coordinator for the exhibit "And Still We Rise" at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit. Her recent writing and current research have focused on foodways and garden ways in African/African American history. For her doctoral work at The College of William and Mary, she is completing a dissertation on fugitive slaves in antebellum Richmond, VA.

By the 1790's and the first decade of the following century, the members of the enslaved population at Thomas Jefferson's Virginia plantation, Monticello, were people born in the Americas, mostly in Virginia, English-speaking, nominally Christian, and in many cases of mixed racial heritage. Numbering 126 souls in 1810, all had deep roots at Monticello, either having been born there or on neighboring plantations, or having served at Monticello for the 40 years of its operation. Some had even served Thomas Jefferson's father.

Among their many duties, both agricultural and domestic, were the care and cultivation of Jefferson's gardens and orchards, the preparation and serving of his food, and the care of his livestock meant for the Jefferson family table. Jefferson had a richly deserved reputation of hosting a fine table, and his black cooks, Peter Hemings, Edith Fossett, and Fanny Hern, were experienced and talented.

There was, however, a definite difference between the foods those cooks served at the master's table and common fare in their own family's diets. We know this because, for three years, Jefferson's young granddaughter kept a written record of foodstuffs purchased by the Jefferson family from members of the slave community. It is in these records that we are offered a look into the foods the black community raised for themselves to supplement the rations handed out by Jefferson. In this record, we have a birds-eye view into their own gardens and poultry yards, and some idea of how they chose to dispose of the fruits of their labor.

The slightly more than one-month record for the period from Sunday, August 25 through Sunday, September 29, 1805 is impressive.¹ In those five weeks are noted 9 watermelons, 36 cabbages, three quarters of a bushel of potatoes, 138 cucumbers, and 24 cymline squashes (a.k.a. cymling or pattypan). In addition, and even more impressive, were the 47 dozen eggs and 117 chickens on the list. Miscellaneous items that stand out are the "fish" supplied by Bartlet (amount, type, and pay unspecified), and the six pounds of hops from Squire.

The entries seem to invite questions.

One – How much of the food produced was sold or bartered to folks other than the Jefferson household? Was this practice discouraged? Did the black residents of Monticello do it anyway? Did they sell produce, chickens or eggs just down the mountain in Charlottesville, where a number of Monticello slaves had both enslaved and free kinfolk?

Two – How much of the produce was not offered for sale at all, but used for feeding the slaves' own families? Patricia Gibbs, a food historian at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, has speculated, "It is likely that the best tended gardens were kept by elderly persons with few or no work assignments."² Given the common practice wherein slaves no longer able to perform a full day's work only received half rations, I would argue that gardening would have been of particular importance to the older people in the community. So "best tended" may be a relative term of comparison— all the gardens were well tended, but some even more than others. More than half the black adults at Monticello sold produce to the Jefferson household, and all but three adults among them also sold chickens. In fact, it is likely that all adult slaves at Monticello kept personal gardens, but that only those individuals who sold produce had occasion to appear in the records.

The records only chronicle three years of purchases. The same rates of production surely must have been the case in the years preceding 1805 and following 1808. These were prolific gardens, and the Monticello black community contained skilled gardeners. In addition to producing food for the Jefferson family table, the gardeners also had the task of producing dried peas and shell beans, winter squashes, sweet potatoes, cabbages, snap beans, and turnips for their own households to supplement the corn meal and dried fish that were the common ration items handed out weekly by the overseer. The records represent only those people who chose to dispose of some part of their garden truck or eggs or chickens rather than feed the produce to family, eat it themselves, or sell or barter it elsewhere.

Three – Did selling the produce, eggs and chickens reduce the overall nutrition available to the black community? “Jefferson’s records”, it has been noted, “indicate that a Monticello slave could expect to receive each week a peck of cornmeal, a pound of meat, some salted herring, and, occasionally, salt and milk.”³ These amounts were for working adults, and certainly cannot meet the daily calorie requirements for agricultural laborers, especially women who were pregnant or lactating. Children and young adolescents—quarter, half and three-quarter hands—received correspondingly less. Bagwell and Minerva with their family of five children received 16 dried herring, seven pecks of cornmeal and two pounds of beef during the month of October 1799.⁴ A peck is equivalent to a one-gallon glass jar full of ground meal. Quite clearly, a garden was an absolute necessity if this family of seven were to be adequately nourished year-round. This would have been true for all the Monticello slaves, including those who worked in the house. Thus, each decision to sell produce and poultry had potentially serious health ramifications.

Four – How much garden space was used to produce corn or other fodder for the many chickens? At this point in my ongoing research I have no answer to this question.

Five – How many hen houses, nest boxes, and brood cages were necessary to raise the number of chickens owned by the community, and who built them?

Peter Hemings was paid 12 shillings for 11 pullets one April day in 1807.⁵ In order to ensure a steady supply, the chicken-raisers among the slave community had to build and maintain nest boxes, food and water containers, brooding cages, and fenced chicken yards. Did they do this as a group? Were there experts among them who bartered their services in exchange for other desired items? How were the chickens protected from predators such as black snake, opossum, raccoon, dogs or cats?

Six – And finally, the question remains: How did the individuals and the larger slave community allocate time to achieve all this production? Was the labor of children and adolescents incorporated into the food production process by the adults in the community? Children may have played an important role.

We have little information on the layout of slave gardens. In the various written references to slave gardens by white observers, it seems that little attention was paid to the design of the plantings, although sometimes fences are briefly mentioned. Individual gardeners at Monticello likely raised the plants that interested each of them the most, or were the most profitable. Clearly, many of the Monticello entrepreneurs must have allotted some significant part of their garden spaces to fodder for

chickens. Others likely focused on winter-storage vegetables or on summer crops. Most of the adults at Monticello, and I would argue by extension, most bondpeople working on mixed-farm plantations in the Upper South, were expert gardeners as well as raisers of domestic fowl and hunters of small game, and quite capable of planning ahead for the coming seasons.

Raising cattle and swine; butchering, salting and smoking meat; planting, harvesting, drying and preserving grain and vegetable foods for winter; making butter and cheeses; baking bread; processing corn into hominy using wood ash; brewing both beer and distilled liquor—these were all part of the knowledge that black people used in their daily work in white plantation and farm households. The demands of the master and the master’s household necessitated that blacks know a good deal about many things, particularly farming. Certainly such a wealth of skills flew in the face of Thomas Jefferson’s opinion that a major impediment to freeing the slaves was that “For men probably of any color, but of this color we know, brought from their infancy without necessity for thought or forecast, are by their habits rendered as incapable as children of taking care of themselves, and are extinguished promptly wherever industry is necessary for raising young.”⁶ ■

Endnotes

1. Gerard W. Gawalt, “Jefferson’s Slaves: Crop Accounts at Monticello, 1805-1808”, *Journal of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society* 13:1-2 (Spring/Fall 1994), pp. 19-38.
2. Patricia A. Gibbs, “‘Little Spots allowed them’: Slave Garden Plots and Poultry Yards”, *The Colonial Williamsburg Interpreter* 20:4 (Fall 1999), p. 11.
3. *Monticello: A Guide Book* (Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, 1997), p. 102.
4. Robert C. Baron, ed., *The Garden and Farm Books of Thomas Jefferson* (Fulcrum, 1987), p. 299.
5. A pullet is a young hen that has not yet begun to lay eggs.
6. In a letter to Edward Coles, dated August 25, 1814, and despite the evidence of his long life as a slave master and the records kept by his grand-daughter testifying to the contrary, Jefferson wrote the following concerning a possible method of gradually ending slavery: “I have seen no proposition so expedient on the whole, as the emancipation of those born after a certain day, and of their education and expatriation after a certain age. This would give time for a gradual extinction of that species of labour & substitution of another, and lessen the severity of the shock which an operation so fundamental cannot fail to produce. For men probably of any color, but of this color we know, brought from their infancy without necessity for thought or forecast, are by their habits rendered as incapable as children of taking care of themselves, and are extinguished promptly wherever industry is necessary for raising young.” *Thomas Jefferson: Writings* (The Library of America, 1984), p. 1345.

FOOD AS CULTURAL EXPRESSION



THE NORWEGIAN KRUMKAKE

by Emily K. Pfothenhauer

Emily Katherine Pfothenhauer is an M.A. student in art history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has worked at the Wisconsin Historical Museum, and her senior honors thesis examined food as an expression of ethnic and cultural identity. In July 2003, she addressed the Culinary History Enthusiasts of Wisconsin (CHEW) on "Norwegians in the American Midwest: Foodways, Identities and Ethnicities".

What can a cookie tell us about cultural history? The Norwegian *krumkake* cookie, a delicate, crisp wafer often flavored with cardamom, may seem mundane and simple, but a closer examination of this object reveals complex stories of identity, ethnicity, art and cultural change. For example, *krumkake* (pronounced "croom-kaka") is not only a food; it is an example of Norwegian-American folk art. The changing form of the *krumkake* iron, used to bake these cookies, illustrates changes in American domestic cooking technology from the 19th to the 20th Century. And *krumkake*'s continued presence in America today reveals the importance many Norwegian-Americans place on the maintenance of tradition and the expression of ethnic identity into the 21st Century.

Krumkake is one of several types of traditional Norwegian Christmas cookies. Immigrants from Norway originally brought *krumkake* recipes, techniques and tools to America in the mid-19th Century, and *krumkake* is still made and eaten in America today, particularly in the Upper Midwest, home to a significant number of Americans of Norwegian descent. *Krumkake* is a thin, crisp, circular cookie, baked on an iron and formed in a cylinder or cone shape while still hot. Its simple recipe of eggs, flour, sugar and butter (with the spice cardamom sometimes added) has remained consistent since its introduction in America.

To make *krumkake*, a special tool is required: the *krumkake* iron. This is a small, circular waffle iron inscribed with decorative patterns that are transferred to the cookies as they are baked. This tool is unique to *krumkake* baking, as the iron is required to make the *krumkake*, and at the same time can be used only for that purpose. The cookie and the tool are so closely linked that they should be analyzed together. *Krumkake* irons are some of the only material evidence still available to tell the history of *krumkake*.

Although the *krumkake* cookie and iron represent a distinctly Norwegian food, other cultures and countries also feature waffle-style cookies baked with special irons. Waffles were popular for religious feast days in medieval Europe, and French waffle, or *gaufre*, irons from the 15th Century were decorated with religious symbols or family crests.¹ Examples of German and German-American wafer irons are similar to *krumkake*, but the irons are square or heart-shaped, not circular, and the cookies are left flat instead of rolled. The Italian *pizzelle* iron typically features star or basket-weave motifs. The American ice-cream cone is also based on this style of thin, rolled wafer.

Because of its decorative emphasis and its retention of form across time and space, Norwegian *krumkake* may be considered a folk art. Ethnic foods like *krumkake* are folk arts because they are typically handmade, regionally defined, and represent ethnicity to both group members and outsiders. The decorative motifs of the *krumkake* cookie are similar to the forms of other Norwegian folk arts. *Krumkake* iron patterns, which have changed little over time, feature stylized leaves, scrolls and flowers in a circular format. These curvilinear designs are also seen in chip carving, a form of decorative woodcarving, and in rosealing, a traditional method of painting on wood. The use of these characteristically Norwegian designs on the *krumkake* iron defines this object as uniquely Norwegian.

However, the *krumkake* iron is a cooking tool, not a decorative object. These designs are not visible elements of the iron but are intended to decorate the finished product, the cookie. The *krumkake* cookie is not only decorative in its surface patterns but in its delicate thinness and conical or cylindrical shape. Other traditional Norwegian baked goods are similarly decorative in form: for example, the flower or star shapes of rosettes, the thin fluted cups of *sandbakkles*, and the crimped edges and diamond shapes of *fattigmans*. All of these cookies are made from the same staple ingredients: flour, sugar, eggs and butter. This reveals that variety in decoration is more important than a wide range of flavors.

Evolution of the *Krumkake* Iron

Although the recipes and designs for *krumkake* have remained consistent across time, the form of the *krumkake* iron has undergone considerable development. At least three distinct stages are visible in the changing form of the *krumkake* iron. These phases correspond with the modernization of cooking technologies in 19th- and 20th-Century America. The same patterns of change are seen on a larger scale in the history of waffle irons in general.

The history of cooking technology starts with the open flame. Cooks used outdoor fire pits or, later, indoor fireplaces for all types of food preparation. In the era of fireplace cooking, waffle irons were equipped with long handles, called reins, by which the cook could hold the

iron in the fire without burning herself.² The handles worked like tongs in order to open and close the baking surface. This type of *krumkake* iron was heavy and awkward to use. Timing and practice were necessary to avoid burning the cookie, and fireplace cooking was dangerous, difficult work.³

An example of this early style of *krumkake* iron is found in the collection of the Wisconsin Historical Society. This particular iron was the property of a Mrs. C. A. Morterud, who emigrated from Norway to America in 1885 or 1886. She brought the baking discs with her from Norway and a Wisconsin blacksmith added the handles.⁴ This iron features an unusual decorative pattern: the twelve apostles and a Bible verse encircle a lion, with the date 1767 at the center. The story behind this design is unknown. However, the early date on the iron and the fact that Morterud carried these heavy iron discs with her from Norway in her likely limited immigrant luggage suggest that this iron may have been a family heirloom, or at least held a personal significance for its owner.

While some *krumkake* irons were brought from Norway as precious family possessions, others were manufactured and purchased in America. For example, another iron from the Wisconsin Historical Society features a maker's mark, cast prominently on the lid, which reads, "Alfred Andresen, M'P'L's".⁵ The Alfred Andresen Company of Minneapolis marketed *krumkake* irons and other types of cooking irons throughout the Upper Midwest in the 1890's and 1900's.⁶ The manufacture of this traditional Norwegian object in America indicates an established market for *krumkake* irons among the large population of Norwegian-Americans eager to continue this food custom.

The Alfred Andresen iron also represents the next phase in the development of domestic cooking technologies: the introduction of the cast-iron stove. Fueled by wood or coal, cast-iron stoves were available in America in the mid-19th Century and were nearly universal by the end of that century.⁷ Waffle irons of all types were adapted for use with these stoves. The long handles were removed and a circular stand sized to fit a stove burner was created. The stove lid on the range top could be lifted out and the waffle iron stand set in.⁸ The baking discs fit in the stand and could be rotated to heat both sides of the iron evenly. This new style of stovetop iron had several advantages over the older fireplace irons. Less exertion was required of the cook, as the heavy iron tool did not have to be lifted and moved frequently. Less concern with weight also meant that waffles could be larger. Baking was quicker and more efficient because the iron could remain hot, as it was not removed from the heat source after baking each cookie.⁹

Even greater ease and efficiency were found in the third phase of the waffle iron: the development of gas and

electric stoves. Gas stoves were introduced in America in the early 20th Century and were widely used by the 1930's.¹⁰ The first waffle and *krumkake* irons for gas stoves were similar to the cast-iron stove form, but the circular stand was taller in order to provide more space to rotate the iron over the burner. Electric stoves, introduced in 1910, could also handle a similar form of iron.¹¹ The first electric waffle iron was introduced in 1918 and had even more advantages.¹² Lighter and easier to use, the electric iron was also faster because both sides of the waffle could be baked at the same time.

Helping Preserve Norwegian Heritage

In 21st-Century America, both electric and stovetop models of waffle and *krumkake* irons are widely available. The presence of *krumkake* irons in the mass market and the modernization of their technology indicate the long-term retention of the *krumkake* tradition in America. *Krumkake* is still made and eaten today, especially in the Upper Midwest. The maintenance of this custom is a part of a larger phenomenon of Norwegian-American cultural preservation and ethnic pride found among many people in modern America. This attachment to Norwegian heritage is expressed throughout the Upper Midwest in cultural events such as the Syttende Mai festival in Stoughton, Wisconsin, institutions of cultural preservation like the Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum in Decorah, Iowa, and the widespread revival of traditional Norwegian folk arts and foodways.

The foundation of this maintenance of Norwegian-American heritage lies in the history of Norwegian migration and settlement in the Midwest. The first Norwegian immigrants to the Midwest arrived in Chicago in 1832. Norwegian settlers established communities throughout Wisconsin, Minnesota, and upper Michigan in the 1860's and 1870's, the period of heaviest migration.¹³ The immigrants' goal was a conservative one: to reestablish the traditional rural farming lifestyle they had known in Norway in a new place with more available land.¹⁴ As one of the largest and closest-knit immigrant groups in the Midwest, the Norwegians kept themselves isolated.¹⁵ The Norwegians in America were one of the first groups to organize institutions of cultural preservation, for example the Sons of Norway.¹⁶ Together, these elements facilitated the long-term retention of traditional values and customs brought from Norway.

Foodways are a part of material culture that is often maintained longer than other markers of ethnicity. Because eating is generally a private activity and food is consumed in the home, food traditions are less exposed to criticism from outsiders than other more visible ethnic symbols such as language or dress.¹⁷ Personal, emotional attachments to foods, especially the foods of childhood, also encourage

continued on page 9

GREEK FOODS*continued from page 2*

of religious fasting. They are widely advertised via newspapers, TV interviews, and local radio stations.

Large numbers of local Greeks and non-Greeks attend these festivals in order to enjoy Greek music, dancing, and the various foods that are sold. The usual foods served include *souvlakia* (skewered meat, similar to shish kabobs), chicken egg-lemon soup (*kota soupa avgo-lemono*), *tiropitas*, *spanakopitas*, *baklava*, and other pastries. Commonly one or more Greek cookbooks are for sale as well as foodstuffs. These often serve as inducements for non-Greeks to try to prepare Greek foods in their own homes or to visit local Greek restaurants. Many large cities also hold multi-ethnic food festivals today. The local Greek community always has a prominent section at these where they sell different types of Greek finger-foods that can be eaten either sitting down or while strolling through the fair. A sizable line is usually found at the Greek booths.

Greek-American Cookbooks: The earliest two English-language Greek cookbooks to have a wide circulation were first published in 1950. One was *Greek Cookery* by Nicholas Tselementes, who was a chef for many years at the St. Moritz Hotel adjoining Central Park (recently renamed the Ritz Carlton New York). Since it was published by a Greek-American publisher, it circulated primarily among Greek-Americans and in Greece (in a Greek-language edition), where it was widely used by chefs in Greek hotels and restaurants. The second was *Can the Greeks Cook!* by Fannie Venos and Lillian Prichard. Through many printings, the latter has had a wide circulation among both Greek-Americans and Americans in general. Most of its recipes were obtained from Aegean-island Greeks inhabiting the sponge-fishing community of Tarpon Springs, Florida. Probably the most influential Greek-American cookbook, *The Art of Greek Cookery*, was compiled by the women of St Paul's Greek Orthodox Church in Hempstead, New York and published by Doubleday and Company in 1963. The book has gone through several revisions and is the most widely circulated Greek cookbook in America.

In general, there have been two main categories of Greek-American cookbooks: those produced by local Greek communities and those published by commercial publishing houses. The cookbooks compiled by local churches are important because they feature recipes from specific regions of Greece from which the local people originated. The commercial cookbooks, even though more Americanized, are also important because their wider circulation has introduced Greek foods to more people. Many of these cookbooks contain an appendix of Greek grocery

stores in various states where interested individuals can obtain imported Greek foodstuffs not obtainable in local grocery stores.

The Mediterranean Diet: Another recent influence that has helped popularize Greek foods has been the popularity and claims of the "Mediterranean Diet", featuring traditional foods of Greece, Italy, Spain, and other regions. Because of their low amounts of meat and a focus on fish, vegetables, whole grains, and olive oil, various claims of healthfulness have been made, including reducing heart disease, lowering cholesterol levels, and increasing longevity. Even though indirect, this influence has been important in increasing awareness of Greek cuisine.

Fort Collins, Colorado: A Microcosm of Change

Originally, Fort Collins, located some 65 miles north of Denver, was an agricultural market town with a small land-grant college. Since about 1950 the town has grown to a small metro area of 130,000 people with an increasing population of professionals, academics, and business people as many large companies located here. When my family arrived in Fort Collins in 1966, the population numbered about 25,000 people with very few Greek families, and we had to drive to Denver to buy the foodstuffs we were accustomed to eating. At present there is a small community of Greek-Americans and immigrants, mostly professionals, who are currently trying to form a local church rather than travel to Cheyenne, Wyoming, or Denver or Boulder for services. They can't support a Greek market on their own, but they no longer have to. Greek foods are found both in conventional (Safeway, Kings-Kroger, and Albertson's) and natural food markets (Wild Oats, Whole Foods, and Sunflower).

This March (2005) I decided to do a quick survey of the Greek foods available in our local markets. In the traditional/conventional grocery stores, the types and varieties of Greek foods were limited. All stocked several varieties of *feta*, olive oils from California and Italy, *Kalamata* and other Greek olives in small jars, frozen *phyllo*, and *bulgar* in small boxes. Other Greek foods were mostly absent from their shelves.

I was not quite prepared for the numbers and diversity of Greek foods that I saw in the natural food markets. One stocked 16 different types and brands of Greek olives in jars and in bulk at their "olive bar". All carried several varieties of olives as well as mainland and island Greek olive oils. All stocked seven to ten varieties of *feta* cheese from Greece, some specifically made with goat and sheep milk, as well as other Greek cheeses such as *kasseri*, *mizithera*, and *manouri*. One

continued on next page

NORWEGIAN KRUMKAKE *continued from page 7*

the continued maintenance of food habits.¹⁸ This emotional connection to foods is often particularly strong in the case of holiday foods like Christmas cookies. Many people associate Christmas cookies with pleasant memories and special tastes and smells.¹⁹ Traditional foods like *krumkake* may be seen as not only special but in fact necessary for the recognition of a holiday or event. When foods carry this kind of significance, they are more likely to be valued and maintained for future generations.²⁰

Krumkake is a holiday food that contributes to an important part of Norwegian-American Christmas traditions: an abundance of baked goods to share with family and guests. *Krumkake* is also connected to a specific ethnic heritage and thus eating and making *krumkake* is an expression of ethnic affiliation. Today, when ethnic heritage plays a minor role in the daily lives of most Norwegian-Americans, a special holiday food enables an engagement with ethnic identity and an immigrant past. Foods like *krumkake* are a popular way to express this heritage because they also fulfill so many other human needs, including ritual celebration, sociability, nourishment, and the pleasure of the senses.

The form of the *krumkake* cookie plays an important role not only in expressing but also in maintaining this ethnic identity. Food traditions in general, and especially complex ethnic foods, are most often transmitted via direct demonstration and interaction between two generations. *Krumkake* baking is a delicate operation requiring skill and experience in order to achieve good results. Yet most recipes read, “bake in *krumkake* iron”, or even, “bake in iron used for these cakes”; the iron itself and how to use it are not explained. This assumes that the preparer is a member of the Norwegian-American community and already knows what form this food should take. Because most *krumkake* recipe instructions are so minimal, the best way to learn to make *krumkake* is from an experienced cook familiar with this technique. The passing of the *krumkake* tradition from mother to daughter, or grandmother to granddaughter, may encourage further retention of this food because it acquires more personal value through these social interactions. On the other hand, if the *krumkake* tradition is not passed on in this manner, it may also die out more quickly because it cannot be replicated simply by following a recipe.

But the fact that *krumkake* irons are still manufactured in America today indicates that *krumkake* baking is still a viable, living tradition and that many people still choose to engage in this custom. The means for making *krumkake* have changed, but the cookie itself has remained remarkably consistent over time. Although the *krumkake* cookie is ephemeral, destined for the stomach, not the museum, as long as the act of *krumkake* baking goes on, this object will continue to play an important role in the expression of Norwegian-American identity. ■

Endnotes

1. Prosper Montagné, *New Larousse Gastronomique: The World's Greatest Cookery Reference Book*, 4th ed., edited by Janet Dunbar (London: Hamlyn, 1981), p. 971.
2. Linda Campbell Franklin, *America in the Kitchen: From Hearth to Cookstove* (Orlando, FL: House of Collectibles, 1978), p. 218.

3. Nancy Carter Crump, *Hearthside Cooking: An Introduction to Virginia Plantation Cuisine* (McLean, VA: EPM Publications, Inc., 1986), p. 20.
4. Wisconsin Historical Society collection, “Krumkake Goro”, accession number 48.714.
5. Wisconsin Historical Society collection, “Wafer Iron or Krumkake”, accession number 51.2027.
6. Personal communication, Tova Brandt, curator, Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, Decorah, Iowa.
7. Susan Strasser, *Never Done: A History of American Housework* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), p. 66.
8. Erna Oleson Xan with Sigrid Marstrander, *Time-Honored Norwegian Recipes Adapted to the American Kitchen* (Decorah, IA: Penfield Press, 1990), p. 34.
9. Richard H. Shaner, “Waffles and Wafers”, *Pennsylvania Folklife* 12:4 (1962), p. 21.
10. Jane Celehar, *Kitchens and Kitchenware* (Lombard, IL: Wallace Homestead Book Company, 1985), p. 20.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Jon Gjerde, *From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway to the Upper Middle West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 9.
14. Odd S. Lovoll, *The Promise of America: A History of the Norwegian-American People* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1984), p. 44.
15. Gjerde, p. 140.
16. Marion John Nelson, ed., *Material Culture and People's Art Among the Norwegians in America* (Northfield, MN: The Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1994), p. 10.
17. Elaine McIntosh, *American Food Habits in Historical Perspective* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), p. 156.
18. Alan Warde, *Consumption, Food and Taste: Culinary Antinomies and Commodity Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), p. 50.
19. Dena Kleiman, “The Spirit of Christmas Past Lives On in Traditional Cookies”, *New York Times*, 19 December 1990, p. C1.
20. Simon R. Charsley, *Wedding Cakes and Cultural History* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 135.

GREEK FOODS *continued from page 8*

store even had *haloumi* cheese from Cyprus. All had *dolmades* in jars and bulk, jars of grape leaves, Greek oregano, *bulgar* in different grades of fineness, and dried Greek figs. The Sunflower Market had an entire display of sweets and snack foods from Greece: Oreo-type cookies, circular-style *baklava*, soft biscuits in different flavors, and sticks of sesame and honey candy.

In short, the availability and acceptability of Greek foods in America has come a long way during the past century. Originally they were confined to immigrant urban enclaves and almost totally unknown beyond these. Today they have entered the mainstream in urban America. They have become one of the more common components in the complex pattern of ethnic foods available in the contemporary United States. ■

Endnote

1. For earlier studies of changing Greek-American foodways, see my essay “Greek Immigrant Cuisine in America: Continuity and Change”, in Alexander Fenton and Trefor M. Owen, eds., *Food in Perspective: Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Ethnological Food Research, Cardiff, Wales, 1977* (Edinburgh, Scotland: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1981), pp. 313-323; and my more detailed report “The Changing Patterns of Greek Foodways in America”, in Alan Davidson, ed., *Food in Motion: The Migration of Foodstuffs and Cookery Techniques (Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery, 1983)*, vol. 2 (Leeds, England: Prospect Books, 1983), pp. 87-104.

CHAA PROGRAMS EXAMINE COOKBOOKS AND ARTISANAL FOODS

Despite late substitutions for cancelled talks by Alice Arndt and Joan Reardon (these might be rescheduled), our Winter series of programs shaped up as delightful and information-packed, with an emphasis on various types of down-home cookbooks and artisanal foods.

CHAA member **Pat Cornett** and a panel of four guests shared their experiences regarding “Family Cookbooks, Then and Now” at our January 16 meeting. A family cookbook is one written by, for, and about a specific family for the purpose of preserving its cooking traditions. They’re usually made by hand as family projects, not for sale or profit. Although they’re personal rather than public records, they often have great value for the culinary historian, because they reflect actual cooking practices in recipes that were used over and over again. Such collections tell the story of one family across several generations, and have sometimes been passed down for centuries, generally from one female relative to another. The U.S. Bicentennial (1976) and the TV miniseries “Roots” (1977) stimulated interest in family heritage and cooking traditions, while technologies such as photoduplication, desktop publishing and the Internet have increased the feasibility of compiling recipe collections and reproducing them in small quantities, typically about 20. Jan Longone has called the family cookbook “the manuscript cookbook of the 20th Century”.

Pat’s work with family cookbooks has included the production of her own *Macaroni and Cheese: Mom’s Home Cooking* as a wedding gift for her oldest son (see *Repast* Winter 2000, p. 11), and teaching a successful class on “Cooking Up a Family Cookbook” (see *Repast* Fall 2004, p. 15). Bunny Carlson and Diane Fishman, two of Pat’s students currently producing their own cookbooks, were also part of the panel. Shneen M. Coldiron, an administrative associate at the UM Clements Library, produced *Recipes Remembered* (2003) to mark a brother’s 40th birthday, using scanned family recipes and photos, a color printer, some hand-stamped embellishments, and a copy shop to spiral-bind the pages. Janet Governatore Broos produced her spiral-bound, professional-looking *Gracie’s Soup and Other Favorites* (2004) as a tribute to her mother and other loved ones. She included family stories and traditions as well as many recipes from friends.

“Coffee: From Yemen to Starbucks in 1400 Years” was the topic addressed by **Allen Liebowitz** on February 20. Liebowitz, managing partner of Zingerman’s Coffee Company (est. 2004), said the most important factor in making good coffee, or any other artisanal product, is to really care about it. His company roasts beans in a drum in 25-lb. batches, while some producers use batches as large as 1,000 lbs. He also showed us some antique roasters,

many hand-cranked, and we tasted the company’s Guatemalan Antigua and Ethiopian Sidamo roasts.

Coffee is a perennial, evergreen woody shrub. Allen explained that each ripe red fruit contains two green seeds or “beans”, extracted by milling or by pulping and drying. Of the two main species, *arabica* and *robusta* (now called *canephora*), the latter tends to be less expensive because it’s hardier, can be grown more densely, and the flavor is generally of lower quality. After the plant was first discovered by Yemenis in Ethiopia in the early Middle Ages, its fruits would be roasted, ground, and rolled in fat for use as a stimulant or a medicinal, and its pulp was fermented into a wine. The first European coffeehouses appeared in Constantinople in 1554, followed about a century later by others in Italy, France, England and Holland. Although they excluded women, cafés were otherwise relatively egalitarian places where men engaged in discussion and debate. In the late 1600’s and early 1700’s, coffee became an important colonial source of wealth when the plants were smuggled out of the Muslim world and introduced to plantations in India, Indonesia, the West Indies, and Brazil. Until the 1800’s, people generally roasted the green coffee beans at home; later, it became more common to buy “shop-roasted” or commercially roasted coffee, whose grounds were often packed in tin. Brewing methods evolved through the use of jugs (France, 1711), percolators, vacuum systems, Italian *espresso* machines, and French press and drip techniques (early 1900’s). Specialty coffee establishments arose with Peet’s (Berkeley, 1966) and Starbucks (Seattle, 1971).

Monique Deschaine spoke to us on March 20 about “Al Dente and the American Pasta Revolution”. Monique is founder and co-owner of Al Dente Pasta Co. (<http://www.aldentepasta.com>) in Whitmore Lake, MI, producing what some have named the best specialty pastas in the U.S. With support from Sandy Cooper of Complete Cuisine (Ann Arbor), Deschaine founded the company in 1981 when Americans’ sophistication about pasta had taken a leap. Marcella Hazan and other Italian food experts in New York taught her the importance of making noodles by the time-consuming “sheeting” process (rolling the dough repeatedly and then cutting, as opposed to extruding), which can nevertheless be done by machine. Al Dente’s 19 types and flavors of flat dried noodles, sold in all 50 states, use locally milled durum and semolina flour, with fresh eggs added for tenderness. Some are traditional Italian pastas such as spinach linguine, while others, like spicy sesame linguine or curry fettuccine, are fusion-style products with near-cult followings. The company also invented Carba-NadaTM, a low-carb pasta in which much of the semolina is replaced with soy flour, gluten, and maltodextrin.

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MORSELS & TIDBITS

Preparations and publicity have gone well for the First Biennial Symposium on American Culinary History. Many prominent speakers and other participants plan to attend the conference on May 13-15, 2005 at the University of Michigan's William L. Clements Library. The symposium, and a related exhibition (May 16-Sept. 20), will introduce the public to the **Janice Bluestein Longone** Center for American Culinary Research. Complete information and registration forms are available at the webpage <http://www.clements.umich.edu/culinary/symposium.html>. The next Biennial Symposium, in 2007, will focus on Regional and Ethnic Cuisines.

The March 2005 issue of *Food Arts* magazine, in a column entitled "Putting America's Best Food Forward", featured news about the Longone Center and about this summer's 39th annual **Smithsonian Folklife Festival**, which will have a "Food Culture USA!" theme. Regionally and nationally known food producers, cooks, and enthusiasts will be exhibiting on the National Mall in Washington for more than a million visitors during June 23-27 and June 30-July 4. **Joan Nathan**, renowned food writer and guest curator for the festival, commented: "Over the last 30 years, the United States has undergone a food revolution. This program looks at the current state of this revolution, including models for sustainable food production and use; the union of tradition and innovation in contemporary cuisine; and corporate cultures that are based on social and environmental responsibility."

We extend our warm congratulations to editor **Darra Goldstein** and others who produce the quarterly magazine *Gastronomica*, which won the "Gourmet Voice d'Or" award at the Gourmet Media World Festival in Cannes, France on Nov. 16, 2004. Five years after its launching, most of our readers need no introduction to this smart, colorful, and multidisciplinary journal, which covers the culture, technology, and history of food and cuisine. (In addition, our Jan Longone is an Advisory Board member and a frequent columnist.) Goldstein is also General Editor of the book series California Studies in Food and Culture (University of California Press). She is Professor of Russian at Williams College and author of three cookbooks: *A Taste of Russia*, *The Georgian Feast*, and *The Winter Vegetarian*.

"History on a Plate" was the headline of a March 2005 story carried by many newspapers across the U.S. The article was written by **David Bario** for the Columbia News Service, based at the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University. "Cooks interested in foods of the past are recreating dishes that kings and composers might have enjoyed", one teaser stated. Bario interviewed such luminaries as **David Friedman** (a.k.a. "Cariadoc of the Bow"), a member of the Society for Creative Anachronism

whose website on medieval cuisine has been much appreciated (<http://www.davidfriedman.com>); food historian **William Woys Weaver** and chef **Fritz Blank** of the Deux Cheminées restaurant in Philadelphia, who once collaborated in recreating a 1735 meal as a fundraiser; and historical cookbook writer **Francine Segan**. ■

CHAA PROGRAMS

continued from page 10

"'In Close Fraternal Conjunction': Canadian Cookbooks in a North American Context" was the title of our April 17 talk by **Elizabeth Driver**, President of the Culinary Historians of Ontario. Driver has just written *Culinary Landmarks: A Bibliography of Canadian Cookbooks, 1825-1949*, the first such general bibliography, due out from the University of Toronto Press in 2006. Fifteen years in the making, featuring 2,269 book entries along with author profiles, this work will be of great use to scholars and will increase awareness of Canadian culinary history. It is organized by province and, within that, chronologically.

"In close fraternal conjunction", a phrase celebrating the friendship between Canada and the U.S., is taken from *The Canadian Economist*, a fundraising cookbook produced by an Ottawa church congregation in 1881. Driver observed that while Canadian cookbook publishing followed its own path, it was greatly influenced by cookbooks issued in the U.S., Britain and France, due primarily to cultural affinities and secondarily to the relative weakness of the Canadian publishing industry as a whole. As occurred in the U.S., the first cookbooks published in Canada were local editions of books from the home country (England and France). The first two Canadian-produced cookbooks both appeared in 1840: *La Cuisinière Canadienne* by Louis Perrault of Montreal, and *The Frugal Housewife Manual* by an otherwise unknown "A.B." of Grimsby, Ontario. Also very influential was Catharine Parr Trail's *The Female Emigrant's Guide* (Toronto, 1854), which introduced pioneer immigrant women to Canadian, British, and American dishes. The number of cookbooks published in Canada, including the western provinces, increased markedly after 1896. In most provinces, on the order of 40% of these books were of the community (fundraising) type. Also important were cookbooks from province Departments of Health, and promotional cookbooks from food companies. Exemplifying the rise of cookbook writers as celebrities is *Kate Aitken's Canadian Cook Book*, which appeared in successive editions from 1945 through the 1970's.

CHAA CALENDAR

May 13-15, 2005

First Biennial Symposium on American Culinary History
William L. Clements Library,
University of Michigan
(see page 11 for information)

Summer gathering (date and time TBD)

A meal at Zingerman's Roadhouse
with emphasis on American Barbecue
2501 Jackson Road
Ann Arbor

REPAST
1044 GREENHILLS DRIVE
ANN ARBOR, MI 48105-2722



Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor

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First Class

BBQ Comparing American barbeque to our sad British version (sloppy ribs out of a packet from Morrisons) is like weighing Italian food against a jar of supermarket Ragu sauce. In the U.S., grilling is the way serious meat eaters cook their fare. But depending on where you are, the rules change. Cooks in some states like to rub their brisket and ribs with a dry spicy mix, while others baste their slabs of pig and cow for hours, giving them a thick, sweet and sticky crust. Youâ€™ll fall in carnivorous love with all of it. And youâ€™ll know youâ€™ve integrated when you spend hours fighting about which c...Â What have been your other fabulous food finds in America? [Read More.](#) Filed Under: Editor's Picks. Greek Food. Finding a great meal in ancient Greece would have been very easy. They ate a variety of delicious dishes, some of which are still around today. Most Greeks were farmers and they ate the food that they grew. Since Greece had a mild climate, they were able to grow many different fruits and vegetables as long as they got enough rain. Vegetables were a huge part of the Greek diet. Most Greeks ate a diet that was almost vegetarian.Â Perhaps the most important food to the ancient (and modern) Greeks was the olive. It was not simply a food. It was also a big part of Greek history. Greeks believed that the goddess Athena gave the first olive tree to Athens before it eventually spread to the rest of Greece. Olives were used in many recipes.