

CHoW Line

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.

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Renew Your Membership in CHoW NOW!

The membership year runs from September 1 to August 31. Annual dues are \$20 for an individual, household, or organization and \$10 for a student. Individual and household members are eligible to vote, hold office, and serve on committees.

Benefits include the newsletter *CHoW Line*, all meeting notices and a membership list.

CHoW/DC publishes *CHoW Line* nine times each year. More information can be found at www.chowdc.org.

An annual subscription to the newsletter is \$10. No other membership benefits apply.

SEE LAST PAGE to join or renew your membership.

Articles for CHoW Line

The newsletter editor will be pleased to receive contributions to the newsletter from members and subscribers, although we regret we cannot pay for articles.

October 14 Meeting 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. Stefanie Walker

CHoW member **Stefanie Walker** taught art history and curated exhibitions at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts in New York for ten years before moving to Washington in 2005.

Her main areas of interest include Roman Baroque decorative arts, jewelry history, and European gold and silver. While preparing the catalogue and exhibition for "Life and the Arts in the Baroque Palaces of Rome: Ambiente Barocco" (1999) she became especially involved in the elaborate dining traditions and table decorations of Italy during this period.

Stefanie will speak about Bartolomeo Scappi's *Art of Cooking (Dell'arte del cucinare)* of 1570 and Italian cookbooks from the 16th-17th centuries.



Calendar of CHoW Meetings

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| September 9 | Tyler Cowen , "Every Meal Counts: How and Why an Economist Became Obsessed with the Quest for the Perfect Meal" |
| October 14 | Stefanie Walker , Bartolomeo Scappi's <i>Art of Cooking (Dell'arte del cucinare)</i> of 1570 and Italian cookbooks from the 16th-17th centuries |
| November 11 | Amy Riolo , "Incense and Spice: Entertaining in the Arabian Peninsula" |
| December 9 | TBA |
| January 13 | TBA |
| February 10 | TBA |
| March 9 | TBA |
| April 13 | Cooperative Supper |
| May 18 | Note: Not the second Sunday |

Everyone is welcome to bring food or beverage to serve at CHoW meetings. If you have questions, contact Felice Caspar at 703-560-7191 or chowdcmembers@verizon.net.

Cooking in the White House

Journal Review by Pat Reber

White House Kitchens and Cooking, issue number 20 of *White House History*, published by the White House Historical Association, Spring 2007.

The White House Historical Association, a nonprofit chartered in 1961, publishes its journal, "**White House History**," twice a year. This ninety page issue, costs \$6.95, plus postage (\$5.50). Contact the Association at 740 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20006 or www.whitehousehistory.org

From State Dinners to family meals, the basement kitchens have prepared a huge variety and amount of food since President Adams moved into the White House. The original kitchen, one observer noted, with its two huge hearths was "large enough to hold the house of representatives of the Congress, and that the Senate may find room to sit in the chimney corner." Later Presidents would add a range [Jefferson], Rumford Roaster [Jackson], cookstove [Fillmore] and a twelve foot French Coal Range [Taft]. Over the years the kitchen would be moved and completely renovated several times. One chapter covers the most recent renovation, the 2006 relining of the "Cold Storage" room. The removal of the FDR lining revealed a portion of the 1807 tradesmen's passageway under the North Portico.

The fascinating chapter on the changes in the White House kitchens, by Lydia Barker Tederick [assistant WH curator], is available on-line at the webpage: www.whitehousehistory.org/08/subs/whitehousehistory_a.html Also on the site is another article of interest, "A Well-Ordered Household: Domestic Servants in Jefferson's White House."

Noted food historian Alice Ross discusses the process of hearth cooking by listing cooking utensils from sources such as Jefferson and Monroe inventories. After quoting a visitor's list of dishes at a meal during Jefferson's time in the White House, Ross states "For a cook who knew how, clearly it was possible to cook very ambitiously on the hearth."

Using cookbooks, particularly those by Mary Randolph and Henrietta Nesbitt [FDR], famed culinary historian Barbara Haber writes about "Home Cooking in the White House." In that chapter she also discusses housekeepers, cooks and stewards. "In a memo to his wife, President Roosevelt said about Mrs. Nesbitt's monotonous food: 'I am getting to the point where my stomach positively rebels and this does not help my relations with foreign powers. I bit two of them today.'"

Past and current White House chefs write about their experiences. Roland Mesnier, known for his elaborate gingerbread houses, served from the Carter to the current administration. The number of guests to be fed could be huge. "The State Dinner for Japan: six hundred people. The State Dinner for India: eight hundred people. The NATO dinner: nine hundred people. Receptions were up to twelve hundred people. The Millennium dinners and receptions: four thousand people." Cristeta Comerford gives the steps to prepare a dinner for the Prince of Wales in 2005.

The selection process for the wines is discussed by Daniel Shanks, assistant usher since 1995. Since "...a formal meal of four courses, three wines, and toasts to be allocated approximately an hour...what a steward wishes for are wines of youth and vigor that carry a strong impression of their presence, yet balance and purity on the palate."

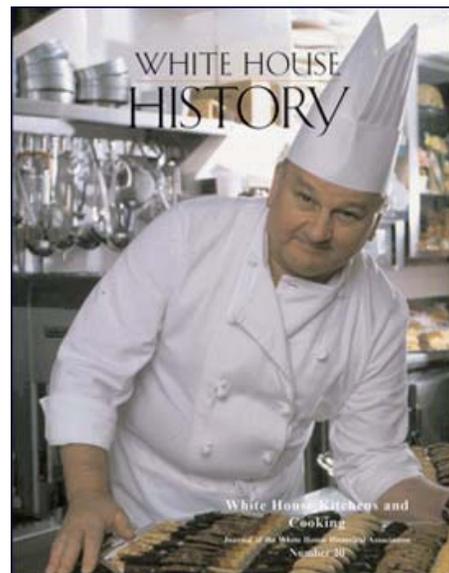


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- "White House Wines." Daniel Shanks
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Presidential Recipes

Various White House chefs have written cookbooks covering their own term of office and other authors have compiled recipes that span the ages. A few titles are:

- Hugo Ziemann [Arthur] and F.L. Gillette. *The White House Cook Book*. 1877
- Rhodes, Susie Root. [Wilson] *The Economy Administration Cookbook*. 1913
- Henrietta Nesbitt. [FDR] *The Presidential Cookbook*. 1951
- Rene Verdon [Kennedy-Johnson] *The White House Chef Cookbook*. 1968
- Henry Haller [Johnson-Reagan]. *The White House Family Cookbook*. 1987
- Walter Scheib [Clinton-Bush] *White House Chef*. 2007
- Poppy Cannon. *The Presidents' Cookbook*. 1968

Many first families have passed down hand written recipes while others have had their recipes submitted in books of printed compilations, such as Julia Grant in *Our Own Cook Book*. The Washingtons owned an edition by Glasse, the Adams had *Housekeeper's Pocket book*, and Mrs. Lincoln bought Leslie's *Directions*.

Numerous recipes have been named to honor the Presidents, including Washington Cake, Washington Pie, Madison Cake, Tyler Pudding, and Jackson Jumbles. Martha Washington Cake and even a Martha Washington's Crab Soup [Nesbitt] celebrate the first First Lady.

WASHINGTON CAKE

One pound of sugar, one of flour, half pound butter, four eggs, one pound of raisins, one of currants, one gill of brandy, tea cup of cream, spice to your taste.

Author Unknown. *Cook Not Mad*. Watertown, NY: Knowlton & Rice, 1831



White House kitchen 1890

MADISON CAKE

Pick clean two pounds of sultana raisins, (those that have no seeds,) and cut them in half. If you cannot procure the sultana, use the bloom or muscatel raisins, removing all the seeds. When the raisins are cut in two, dredge them thickly on all sides with flour, to prevent their sinking or clodding in the cake while baking. Sift into a pan a pound and three quarters (not more) of flour. Cut up a pound of fresh butter into a deep pan. Mix with it a pound of white lump-sugar finely powdered; and stir them together till they become a thick, white, cream. Have ready a teaspoonful of powdered nutmeg, and a table-spoonful of powdered cinnamon, and mix these spices, gradually, with the butter and sugar. Beat fourteen eggs (not fewer) till very light and thick. Then stir them, gradually, into the beaten butter and sugar, alternately with the flour and a pint of rich milk, (sour milk will be best.) Add at the last a very small tea-spoonful of pearlsh, or of bi-carbonate of soda, dissolved in a large wine-glass of brandy. Give the whole a hard stirring, and then put it immediately into a deep circular tin pan, the sides and bottom of which have been first well greased with fresh butter. Set it directly into a well-heated oven, and let it bake from five to six hours, according to its size. It requires long and steady baking. When cool, cover it (top and sides) with a thick icing, made in the (continued on facing column)



White House kitchen 1901

TYLER PUDDING

Four eggs, 3 coffee cups of sugar, 1 teacup of butter, 1 teacup of cream. Season with lemon and bake in a paste.

Frazer, Mary Harris. *Kentucky Receipt Book*. Louisville: Bradley & Gilbert Company, c1903

JACKSON JUMBLES

Three tea-cups of sugar, one of butter, five of flour, one tea-spoonful of salætatus in a cup of sour cream and two eggs; bake in a quick oven; season them with the peel of a fresh lemon grated, and half a wine-glass of brandy.

Lea, Elizabeth Ellicott. *Domestic Cookery*. Baltimore: Cushings and Bailey, 1869.



White House kitchen 1904

(*Madison Cake, continued*) usual way of beaten white of egg and sugar, and flavoured with rose-water or lemon.

If the above directions are closely followed this will be found a very fine cake, and it will keep soft and fresh a week if the air is carefully excluded from it.

It will be still better, if in addition to the two pounds of raisins, you mix in two pounds of Zante currants, picked, washed, dried before the fire, and then well floured. Half a pound of citron cut into slips and floured, may also be added. Leslie, Eliza. *The Lady's Receipt Book*. Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1847.