

CH W *Line*

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.

Dec. 2008 - Jan. 2009

Volume XIII, Number 4

Meeting Note:

This is a combined December-January newsletter. Please see page 2 for a description of the January meeting.



Inclement Weather Advisory

Call any Board member for possible program cancellations due to weather. Any decision to cancel would be made the night before, if possible, or no later than 10 a.m. on the day of the meeting.



Keep Those Refreshments Coming!



“Festive Food”

Sunday, December 14, 2008
2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Panel: CHoW Members Speak about Celebratory and Symbolic Foods from Around the World

(See page 2 for descriptions)

Please share food memories from your heritage as well.



Calendar of CHoW Meetings

- September 14** John Martin Taylor, “Food and History in the Carolina Lowcountry”
- October 12** Bee Wilson, “Swindled: The Dark History of Food Fraud from Poisoned Candy to Counterfeit Coffee”
- November 16** Andrew Smith, “Hamburger: A Global History” (Note: third Sunday)
- December 14** “Festive Food” Panel composed of CHoW members who will speak about celebratory and symbolic foods from around the world.
- January 11** Michael Twitty, “Afro-American Foodways of the Historic Chesapeake Region”
- February 8** CiCi Williamson, “The ZIP Codes of Our Food: A Quick History of Global Cuisines”
- March 8** Patrick Evan-Hylton, “Wine in Virginia”
- April 5** Cooperative Supper (Note: first Sunday and time change)
- May 3** Ann Chandonnet, “How Argonauts Ate: Details from Gold Rush Diaries” (Note: first Sunday)

December 14 Panel: CHoW Members Speak about Celebratory and Symbolic Foods from Around the World

Dianne Hennessy King will moderate a panel of CHoW members and, in addition, we hope to hear from all of you in the audience about festive and symbolic foods that interest you. We are going to leave plenty of time to share stories and a buffet of food from CHoW members. You might have a food that is always on your Thanksgiving table or a food that always has to be at an Italian wedding, a Southern funeral, a coming of age or rite of passage ceremony, be it a celebration for a baby's naming or *La Quinceañera* (for turning 15 years old). Perhaps you have a food that symbolizes a country's political Independence Day or a literary event such as the publication of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The choice is broad and up to you. Bring your story and, if possible, the food to share.

Claudia Kousoulas reminds us that there are few more symbolic meals than the Greek Easter dinner. It marks the most important holiday of the Church calendar and from its shifting dates based on natural and liturgical laws to the traditional dishes of lamb and spring greens, every element of the meal has meaning. But it is not surprising to find that those same elements are used by many cultures to mark the earth's seasonal return to life.

Amy Riolo's written presentation will be about four holidays which many people in the United States know little about, but that are very important holidays to her personally. While the celebrations may seem to be very different at first glance, the importance of traditions, good food, and community are at the heart of each one.

The first holiday is that of La Befana or the "Italian Witch" as she is sometimes called. The second is that of the Eid al Adha, or the Feast of the Sacrifice, a four-day holiday that comes at the end of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. The third holiday is the Islamic New Year or the 1st of Muharram which will be celebrated on December 29 this year. The fourth holiday, Ashoora, will be celebrated January 7, 2009.

Elisabetta Castleman's presentation title is "Winter Holiday Foods and Customs in the Northern Italian trilingual region of Alto Adige and How Some of These Italian and Northern Customs Might Have Made it to America." She will be talking about customs and foods that are related to festivities that celebrate characters such as the Middle Eastern and Italian San Nicola; the Germanic heilige Nikolaus and Krampus or Knecht Ruprecht; the Dutch Swarte Peter and St. Klaus; the Pennsylvania Dutch Bellsnickler; the Germanic Christkind or Christkindl; the American Santa; the regional American Saint Nick; the regional American Bellsnickler, and the regional American Krisskindle.

January 11, 2009 Program

Michael Twitty: "Afro-American Foodways of the Historic Chesapeake Region"

Last year, **Michael Twitty** finished the first of several self-directed projects on the community life and foodways of African Americans in the colonial and antebellum South. The first volume is *Fighting Old Nep: The Foodways of Enslaved Afro-Marylanders 1634-1864*.

He wanted to put everything he had learned together from reading about slavery and the African experience, watching documentaries and cooking and gardening shows, visiting museums and the Library of Congress, classes, visits to twenty plus living history sites, doing his own interpretation, the [Smithsonian] Folklife festivals, and new found skills — wildcrafting (identifying and collecting edible wild plants and animals), open hearth cooking, heirloom gardening, and learning about heritage breeds — into one effort.

He says, "Now I am pursuing it with all the passion I've got—getting my fingers dirty every spring and fall, cooking at the hearth, gathering in the woods and seeking out critters, and beginning to find out how to take care of livestock. Although I'm starting with the Upper South, I intend to spread my research interests across the South —

from Maryland to Texas — I want to tell the story of how African foodways moved from one continent to the other, and from one person to another, and changed the world."



His next two books are already completed and on the way: *I'm Gwine to Leave You: Sixteen Narratives by Former Maryland Slaves*; and *Simmons, Cymilins and Sweet Potato Pumpkins: The Foodways of Enslaved African Virginians 1619-1865*.

This biographical information is taken from Michael's Web site www.afrofoodways.com




What Happened at the November 16 Meeting?


GENERAL MEETING MINUTES


CHoW President Laura Gilliam called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m. People introduced themselves and, if this was their first visit, told how they had heard about CHoW/DC.


Whatzits: There were two whatzits this month: A shrimp sheller and a radish rose maker (see page 5).

Announcements:

 **CiCi Williamson** announced that there will be a champagne brunch at the new cooking school CulinAerie in D.C. on Sunday, December 7, 12-2 p.m. The brunch will feature cooking demos by D.C. Dames showing culinary tricks from their recipes in the new *Cooking with Les Dames d'Escoffier* cookbook. A tasting of the dishes will follow the demos. Tickets are \$70 per person and proceeds benefit LDEI-DC's grants and culinary scholarships for women in the Washington DC area. Autographed cookbooks will be available for purchase. For more information, email: lesdamesdc@aol.com.

 **Shirley Cherkasky** announced that Helen Tangires will be speaking at the Library of Congress on December 3 at noon on her new book *Public Markets*.

 **Andrea Meyerhoff** recommended a bookstore called Salt and Pepper that specializes in cookbooks. Its location is 125 Mill St. #6, Occoquan, Virginia 22125 (703-491-4411). **The Museum of American History** will open its doors to the public on November 21.

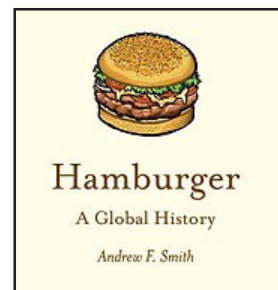
 **Dianne Hennessy King** reminded everyone that the December 14 meeting's topic is food with festive and symbolic meaning. You are encouraged to bring in a food item that is something you grew up with or is from another culture that you are interested in. Be prepared to give a one to two minute description of the meaning that the food has for you (See page 1).

Refreshments: **Kari Barrett** brought Cranberry Walnut Bread; **William Jonach** brought Sweet Yeast Raisin Stollen; **Claudia Kousoulas** brought Chocolate Malted Cookies; **Jane Olmsted** brought Bacaro Style Venetian Meatballs. **Zina Pisarko** brought Pumpkin Whoopie Pies in the shape of hamburgers; **Clara Raju** brought Chakali, an Indian savory snack; **Amy Riolo** brought Cream Filled Pumpkin Roll; and **CiCi Williamson** brought Root Beer Float Cake because when she was growing up, Saturday was always hamburger and root beer float night.



Left to right: CHoW Vice President Randy Clarke, speaker Andy Smith, Reggie Newport, and Judy Newtown. Photos by CiCi Williamson

Program: Vice president Randy Clarke introduced today's speaker, Andrew Smith, a freelance writer and speaker on culinary matters. He teaches courses on culinary history, professional food writing and food studies at the New School in Manhattan, and serves as the Editor for the Edible Series at Reaktion Press in the United Kingdom. He has authored and edited 17 books, including *Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*, which was a James Beard finalist in 2005. Today his talk is on his new book, *Hamburger: A Global History*.



Andrew Smith began his talk by asking CHoW members what stories they had heard about hamburger. Numerous responses were given:

1. The Tartars, an Asiatic group who loved horses, prepared their meat by putting it under their saddle. After riding long distances, the meat would be ready.
2. It was invented in Hamburg, Germany.
3. Meat grinders were invented in the 1830s so hamburger couldn't have existed before then.



Bacaro Style Venetian Meatballs, Cream Filled Pumpkin Roll, Sweet Yeast Raisin Stollen, Chocolate Malted Cookies, Root Beer Float Cake

4. Hamburger was introduced at the St. Louis Fair in 1904.
5. Jewish immigrants chopped meat to bring over on their voyages.
6. Wisconsin claims to be the real “Home of the Hamburger” and has a Hamburger Hall of Fame in Seymour, Wisconsin.
7. Delmonico’s Restaurant had hamburger on their menu in 1836.

Mr. Smith pointed out that each of these responses has one thing in common -- there is no real evidence to support them. No one really knows who invented the hamburger. He defined the hamburger sandwich as a hot ground-beef patty served between two pieces of bread. He believes that it was invented in the nineteenth century which would have been after the creation of the sandwich. Even though the hamburger sandwich started in the United States, there were foods that were similar. In Hannah Glasse’s *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (1758 edition) there is a recipe for hamburger sausage that she suggested should be eaten with bread. We also have to remember that the Earl of Sandwich was probably the first person who had beef put between bread so that he could eat and gamble at the same time.

The sandwich came to America around 1800. The sandwich traveled in two different directions. Tiny tea sandwiches (one inch by one inch) with no crusts were made for the wealthy. Upper-class women preferred these delicate sandwiches which could be eaten in one bite because they left no teeth marks on the sandwiches. The lower-classes preferred big, hearty sandwiches that would fill them up. These large sandwiches were originally given away free in bars to encourage patrons to order more drinks.

In the 1840s there was a revolution in Germany, out of which came the *Communist Manifesto*. When the revolution was put down, many Germans thought it best to leave the country. Immigrants who poured into the U.S. had to find jobs and many of the lower class jobs had already been taken by other immigrants. German immigrants found employment in various fields: service to the wealthy, farming, brewing lager beer, and opening up both restaurants and what we know today as delicatessens.

German restaurants were the first to have hamburger steak –chopped meat. This was for the lower class. The meat that was left over from the better cuts that were sent to places like Delmonico’s Restaurant was used for hamburger. Hamburger at that time was eaten with a fork and knife. It soon spread from the German restaurants to restaurants everywhere and became very popular. In the late 19th century, street carts became able to serve heated food. The Night Owl Wagon started in 1893 in Chicago to serve grilled hamburgers to working

class people at night. This pushed the hamburger into greater popularity, but with the popularity came a negative image of the hamburger as an unsanitary and poor quality food item.

In 1916, Walter Anderson, a short-order cook in Wichita, Kansas, started the first hamburger stand which evolved into White Castle. The patties started out as small sandwiches and were really cheap. Anderson and his partner, Edgar Ingram, were able to change the negative image that people had regarding the hamburger. White Castle set the stage for the fast food revolution. Anderson used the Ford model of assembly line to produce his food items. The assembly line philosophy of making hamburgers increased production. The Depression had a great impact on White Castle because they were dependent on the working class people in the cities. When urban factories began to close, people no longer had disposable income.

The McDonald brothers, who opened a hamburger stand in California to sell hamburgers, found their niche in the suburbs and other places that could only be reached by cars. White Castle survived the Depression but declined during WWII when beef was rationed. McDonald’s shifted into offering potatoes because there were no restrictions on that food item and they were low cost. With the right machinery, McDonald’s was able to make great fries and prosper from it. Ray Kroc bought out the McDonald brothers and began to franchise the chain at a great pace. Other places like Burger King and Kentucky Fried Chicken would check out McDonald’s to understand its success.

McDonald’s was the first hamburger stand outside of the U.S. After WWII, American soldiers who remained in France opened up restaurants that sold hamburgers. McDonald’s success was due to various factors: consistent menu, clean bathrooms, clean restaurant, speed of service and it was economical. In the 1950’s McDonald’s realized that kids were a prime target for their products. Resultingly, toys were included as a magnet to attract families with children.

The presentation concluded with Mr. Smith signing copies of his book.

Respectfully submitted by **Clara Raju**, Recording Secretary.

Welcome, New Members!

Sheila Crye

Interest: *Youth culinary education*

Zora Sapir Hopkins

Regina and Ian Newport

Interests: *Teaching/cooking demos; historical studies of international cuisines*

Judith Newton

Fred Czarra

Whatzits

From November 16 Meetings

Whatzits are the culinary objects that members can bring to the meetings to be passed around and puzzled over. Sometimes the experts are stumped, but it is always fascinating to try to discover the purpose and history of these curious and mysterious articles.

-- Photos by CiCi Williamson



Radish rose maker



Shrimp sheller

Culinary Web Sites

Association for the Study of Food and Society (ASFS) www.food-culture.org

Culinary Historians of Ann Arbor(CHAA) www.culinaryhistoriansannarbor.org

Culinary Historians of Boston www.culinaryhistoriansboston.com

Culinary Historians of Chicago www.culinaryhistorians.org

Culinary Historians of New York www.culinaryhistoriansny.org

Culinary Historians of Ontario www.culinaryhistorians.ca

Culinary History Enthusiasts of Wisconsin

(CHEW) www.chew.wisconsincooks.org

Historic Foodways Guild of Maryland

www.marylandfoodways.org

Historic Foodways Society of the Delaware Valley(HFSDV)

www.historicfoodways.org

New Orleans Culinary History Group

www.tulane.edu/~wclib/culinary

Slow Food www.slowfood.com

Southern Foodways Alliance www.southernfoodways.com

Upcoming Events and Podcasts

DISHING DESSERTS

Holiday Treats of the Presidents

By author **Sarah Hood Salomon**

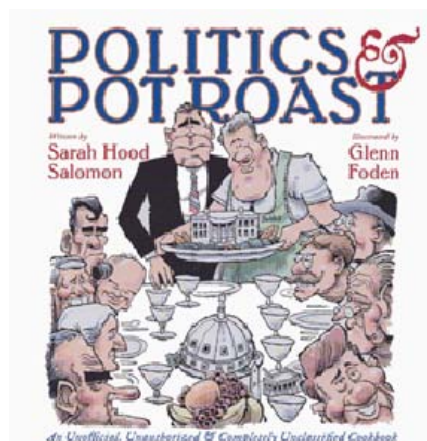
Thursday, December 11, 2008, 10:00 a.m.

Woodrow Wilson House

2340 S Street NW Washington, DC 20008

www.WoodrowWilsonHouse.org

Reservations: 202-387-4062 ext. 18



Are you in need of inspiration for your own Holiday or Inauguration Party in Presidential style?

Join our Friends of Wilson House for a lecture by the author of **“Politics and Pot Roast”** in our exhibition of presidential china, **The Presidential Dish** followed by a

sampling of presidential favorite desserts in the Woodrow Wilson House Kitchen. The author will sign copies of her book, just in time for holiday gift giving.

This program is FREE and open to members and visitors.

SEASONS OF LIGHT

December 1-25, Monday-Friday, 10:15 and 11:30 a.m.; Wednesdays, 1 p.m.; Family Special: Saturday, December 13, noon

Discovery Theatre, Ripley Center, Smithsonian
1100 Jefferson Drive, SW Washington DC 20560

Fee: Children \$5, Adult \$6, Family Special: \$10
For children age 5-10 Tickets: 202-633-8700

In light of CHoW's December multicultural program theme, “Symbolic and Festive Foods,” you may want to take your children or grandchildren to the 10th annual multicultural celebration of global winter holidays rooted in the warmth and wonders of light: Devali, Chanukha, Santa Lucia, Kwanzaa, Las Posadas/Christmas, and a First Nations tradition of Winter Solstice.



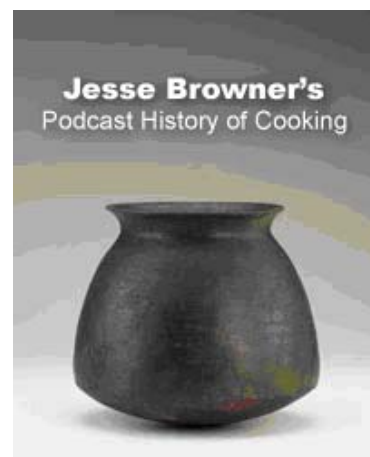
The Podcast History of Cooking

Sponsored by Oxford University Press

The Podcast History of Cooking began as a labor of love, but now that Oxford University Press has generously offered to sponsor the series, I'm pleased to be able to bring it to an even wider audience. The focus of the *History* is the Western World. It begins with a speculative inquiry into prehistoric recipes and will end in 21st century America – from the Stone Age to Stone Barns, so to speak. Along the way, we'll stop in on ancient Mesopotamia, Greece and Rome; pass through Europe's Dark and Middle Ages, the Renaissance and colonialism, and the evolution of the great national cuisines; and end with the sometimes tragic and always fascinating rise and fall and rise of cooking in the United States.



I'll be posting new episodes every six weeks or so; be sure to check in here or subscribe on iTunes to receive each one as it becomes available.



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Go to: www.jessebrowner.com (and click on Podcasts: History of Cooking) or download from iTunes