

CHoW Line

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.

April 2008

Volume XII, Number 7

Reference Suggestions by Shirley Cherkasky

The American Woman's Cookbook (especially the 1943 edition) by Ruth Berolzheimer. In the CHoW Culinary History Collection at the Smithsonian

America Eats by Nelson Algren (1930s)

The Service Cook Book by Ida Bailey Allen (1933)

The Boston Cooking School Cook Book by Fanny Farmer (1931 edition and others after)

The Settlement Cook Book by Mrs. Simon Kander (1938 and other editions)

Joy of Cooking by Irma Rombauer (1931 and other editions through 1943)

How to Cook a Wolf by M.F.K. Fisher

Fashionable Food: Seven Decades of Food Fads by Sylvia Lovegren

Spam: A Biography by Carolyn Wyman. No recipes in book but it sets the mood.

Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes

Lots of church fundraising cookbooks from that period.

April 13 Cooperative Supper 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

"Good Food for Bad Times"

Alexandria House
400 Madison Street
Alexandria, Va. 22314

This dinner is an informal potluck during which you have a chance to talk to people, view the D.C. skyline from high above Alexandria, and eat great-tasting food. Plates, cups, bowls, eating utensils, and napkins will be provided but please bring anything needed for serving your contribution as well as any interesting information related to the recipe you have chosen. (For directions and background, see page 6.) **Note: Meeting time is later than usual.**



Photo: A Group of People at a Breadline During the Great Depression. Long lines of people waiting to be fed in New York City during 1932. Photograph from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Calendar of CHoW Meetings

- 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 "Art of Cooking" (*Dell'arte del cucinare*) of 1570 and Italian cookbooks from the 16th-17th centuries
- November 11 **Amy Riolo**, "Incense and Spice: Entertaining in the Arabian Peninsula"
- December 9 **Mark McWilliams**, "From Raw Beef to Freedom Fries: Haute Cuisine, the White House, and Presidential Politics"
- January 13 **Professor Leni Sorensen**, "Cooks and Slaves: Edith Fossett and Frances Hern of Monticello" (see page 2)
- February 10 **Brenda Rhodes Miller**, "If You Don't Want Grits, Why'd You Order Breakfast? Church Ladies as Custodians of Culture and Tradition."
- March 9 **"African Foodways in Books and Art,"** A Field Trip to the Robbins Library at the National Museum of African Art
- April 13** Cooperative Supper. "Good Food for Bad Times" (Note: Time change)
- May 18 (Note: Not the second Sunday.) "What Made You Interested in Culinary History?"

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C. (CHoW/DC)

founded in 1996, is an informal, nonprofit, educational organization dedicated to the study of the history of foodstuffs, cuisines, and culinary customs, both historical and contemporary, from all parts of the world.

www.chowdc.org

What Happened at the February 10 Meeting?

The meeting was called to order by CHoW President **Laura Gilliam** at 2:30 p.m. in the library of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art.

Announcements. **Kari Barrett**, Nominating Committee, gave an overview of the positions open and what they entailed. If you are interested in serving on the Board please contact someone on the CHoW board to get more information.

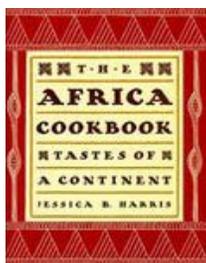
Program. African Food through Books and Art: A field trip to the Warren Robbins Library of African Art at the National Museum of African Art. This field trip provided us the opportunity to explore the holdings of an internationally known reference library, the Warren M. Robbins Library at the National Museum of African Art. This library is considered as one of the major libraries of African Art in the world. CHoW member and Curator **Bryna Freyer** introduced Ms. Janet Stanley who led today's discussion. Janet Stanley has been a Smithsonian librarian since 1979. She lived in Nigeria and traveled extensively in Ethiopia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Ms. Stanley is famous in the field of contemporary art.

Ms. Stanley stated that the library is one of 20 Smithsonian Institution Libraries. She thanked CHoW for the donation of cookbooks to the Smithsonian Institution Libraries. She has been trying to build a collection in African history and culture, which includes books on African cuisine and foodways. The books that they have at NMAFA also cover historical, ritual and social aspects of food (an anthropological perspective).

African cuisine didn't contribute to English cuisine like other colonized areas i.e. India. Ms. Stanley read a passage from a book which highlighted the viewpoint that African food was not considered desirable by the English and Europeans. They were not keen on trying African food. Ms. Stanley drew from her experience while living in Africa. She said the food tends to be starchy and fills you up. Unlike earlier groups of people (English and Europeans) Ms. Stanley grew to like African food.

Stock fish was mentioned as a popular West African dish. This fish is actually cod which is dried but not salted. It is imported from other places. Africans in the U.S. have had to make adaptations in foodways because many items are still not available here.

Ms. Stanley then discussed cookbooks which focused on African food. Numerous cookbooks and books dealing with culinary issues in Africa were on display for CHoW members to look through. Bryna Freyer mentioned that the most historic book on African food is *West African Food in the Middle Ages: According to Arabian Sources* by Tadeusz Lewicki, published in 1974 by Cambridge University Press. Her favorite is *The Africa Cookbook: Tastes of a Continent* by Jessica Harris, published in 1998 by Simon & Schuster.



Cookbooks were not written in pre-colonial times, and most of the first cookbooks were settlement guides written for Europeans. Later cookbooks for Africans were aimed at the change from rural to urban kitchens or for training men to work for pay.

Cooking in Africa was considered women's work and was family based. When Europeans hired cooks, they tended to be men. Apart from Ethiopian and possibly Moroccan food, African cuisine has not had much impact on American restaurant cuisine. Aspects of West and Central African food are so associated with African American or Southern cooking that most Americans do not see them as foreign. There are relatively few African restaurants in America, and this could be attributed to the fact that most of Africa does not have a restaurant tradition, except for casual food in streets or markets. People in Africa prefer to eat at home. If going out to eat they tend to eat food that is not cooked at home, such as Vietnamese and French meals.

Books were then passed around which displayed traditional African cooking implements. Bryna showed a gourd that was used for holding milk and blood. The group at this point was split into two groups. One group stayed with Ms. Stanley to look through the collection of culinary related books and cookbooks acquired by the Warren M. Robbins Library. The other group went with Bryna for a hands-on perusal of selected food related objects. Bryna made a PowerPoint presentation on culinary traditions and artifacts in Africa.

Refreshments.

Food was provided in the common area outside the library. **Bryna Freyer**, **Felice Caspar** and **Francine Berkowitz** brought all the food and drink for the more than 30 attendees. -- **Bryna Freyer** brought Tej and Ethiopian breads. -- **Francine Berkowitz** made Bobotie (South Africa) and Spiced Carrots (Morocco). -- **Felice Caspar** brought Dabo Kola -- crunchy spice bites with berebere (Ethiopia), and made black olives with harissa (North Africa), Green Beans Atjar (South Africa), Bolo Polana -- cashew-potato cake (Mozambique), Minted Carrot Salad (Morocco), and Ananas con Vinho do Porto (Mozambique).

From everyone's reaction the food and program were spectacular. Participants were encouraged to go upstairs to visit the museum before it closed at 5:30 p.m.

Ms. Stanley compiled an 11-page bibliography, "Food, Foodways and Cookery in Africa," that she is willing to e-mail to CHoW members who send her a request for a copy at jstanley@si.edu.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.
Respectfully submitted,
Clara Raju, Recording Secretary

Upcoming Events

CHoW Meeting

May 18, 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

“What Made You Interested in Culinary History?”

Come prepared to share for a few minutes your story of how you became interested in culinary history. One of the many pleasures of CHoW is that members come from so many backgrounds and have such diverse interests.

Peacock-Harper Culinary History Friends Group

Friday, May 23, 9:30 a.m.

“The Romance of Virginia Ham: History and Production”

with **Sam W. Edwards, III**, Owner of Edwards’ Virginia Hams, producer of highly renowned Virginia hams
Edwards’ Virginia Hams
11455 Rolfe Highway, Surry, VA

Enjoy learning about Sam Edwards’s Virginia hams and the history of Virginia ham. Tour his Virginia ham processing facility in Surry, Virginia, and see the production techniques used in the creation of Virginia’s wonderful hams. Includes dinner at the King’s Arms Tavern, James River ferry crossing, lunch at the Surrey House in Surry, and lodging the Hospitality House in Colonial Williamsburg. See website for costs. **Pre-registration required. Deadline: April 22.** To register, go to www.culinarycollection.org or <http://spec.lib.vt.edu/Culinary>

Food-related Films Being Produced

Below is one example of the many food-related films being produced these days.

See also www.dcenvironmentalfilmfest.org for titles of some food films shown as part of The Environmental Film Festival in the Nation’s Capital during March.

“Lunchbreak”

May 19, 3:30 p.m.

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study
Radcliffe Gymnasium
10 Garden Street, Radcliffe Yard
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138
1 (617) 495-8212
www.radcliffe.edu/events

Sharon Lockhart, University of Southern California, current Radcliffe Institute Fellow.

“Lunchbreak” documents the vital social space of the communal meal. As the film moves across New England labor communities, from one lunch break to another, the viewer is immersed in the workers’ lives, politics, and humor. Each of the film’s sequences is determined by the real time span of the workers’ break, beginning and ending with their meal.

Smithsonian Institution: Freer Gallery of Art

Tea for Everyone: Popular Ceramics for Tea Drinking

March 8 through September 7

Representations of ceramics used in the tea ceremony (*chanoyu*) have tended to focus on tea-drinking activities of the Japanese elite – warriors, nobles, and wealthy merchants – and on the early phase of the practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This exhibition turns to a later moment in the history of tea, when enjoyment of powdered tea (*matcha*) became widespread among artisans, townspeople, even farmers. Numerous small, provincial kilns active in the nineteenth century provided attractive, affordable ceramics for preparing and sharing powdered tea. Notably, farmers in northwestern Honshu used large round bowls made at local kilns both for drinking powdered tea and for eating rice. At the same time, another form of tea – steeped tea in the Chinese style, known in Japan as *sencha* – which had been introduced to Japan by a cultural elite, also became an everyday beverage among a wider swath of society. This exhibition presents tea-leaf storage jars, water jars, tea bowls, tea cups, and tea pots used by people of modest means for sharing tea.

www.asia.si.edu/exhibitions/current/TeaForEveryone.htm#



Smithsonian American Art Museum Renwick Gallery



“Consuming Art”

May 11, 3:00 p.m.

Join artist Claudia Crisan at the Renwick Gallery as she explains her edible jewelry and the relationship between it, the wearer, and the audience. Crisan will explore the importance materials play in this

relationship and will offer samples of some of her sugar adornments. This is in connection with the exhibit “Ornament as Art: Avant-Garde Jewelry from the Helen Williams Drutt Collection” which opened March 14.

Renwick Gallery -Grand Salon

http://americanart.si.edu/reynolds_center/event.cfm?key=567&event=2531&date=5/11/2008

News from Other Organizations

From the Culinary Historians of Boston

As many have noticed, the Google book search is slowly adding works from the Schlesinger, so more and more old cookbooks are coming online for free reading. I will be revising our links page to include them.



Culinary Historians of Boston

I will also be linking a new site from Applewood books, publishers of facsimiles of old American cookbooks, who have some money from HP to do a historical cookbooks site with readable and printable cookbooks, and also an online community. (They also sell on-demand printed copies of all the books they have scanned, which is going to be hundreds and hundreds, and lots of other cookbooks for 30% off, including my own American History Cookbook for the cheapest price out there).

So take a look at foodsville.com

—Mark Zanger, Webmaster, Culinary Historians of Boston

CHoW Members Were Featured Speakers at Les Dames d'Escoffier Seminar March 8

The Universities at Shady Grove, Rockville, Maryland, was the site for the Washington, D.C. Les Dames Chapter's sixth biennial seminar "Celebrating FOOD! Cooking * Careers * Communications." More than 220 attended including a sizeable contingent from CHoW.

Headlining six of the 16 sessions were 10 CHoW members. **Shirley Cherkasky**, **Dianne Hennessy King**, and **Goody Solomon** presented "Your History in Food: Writing a Family Memoir." **Renee Brooks Catacalos** spoke on "Leaning Green: Using Local Natural and Sustainable Resources." **Connie Hay** chaired "The Chef and the Butcher" demo while **Lisa Cherkasky** paired with another food stylist to present "Looks Good Enough to Eat: Food Styling for Photographs and Film." The duo of **Sheilah Kaufman** and **Amy Riolo** taught a hands-on cooking class, "Middle East Delights," while in a concurrent session, PBS-TV show hosts **Joan Nathan** and **CiCi Williamson** revealed "Behind the Scenes of TV Cooking Shows: What You DON'T See." Thanks to all, the seminar was a big success.

Welcome, New Members!

Gabrielle Hessman. Interests: foodie tours
Gregory and Penny Hutsell. Interests: Cooking, eating, wine, reading, writing
Courtenay and Brenda Miller. Interests: Creole/Southern/church/regional specialties/utensils
Barbara Vandegrift. Interests: indexing-cookbooks

The following are sponsored by Boston University, Metropolitan College. For more information, see www.bu.edu/foodandwine or call 1 (617) 353-9852

"From the Caliph's Kitchen with Nawal Nasrallah"

April 2, 2008, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., \$60

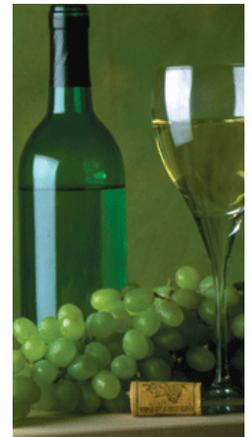
Nawal Nasrallah, author in 2003 of the cookbook *Delights from the Garden of Eden* and translator in 2007 of the tenth-century cookbook *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens: Ibn Sayyar al-Warraq's Tenth-century Baghdadi Cookbook* presents a delightful evening of Iraqi cuisine. While demonstrating typical techniques used in the millennia-old cuisine, Nasrallah will discuss the influences, cultures, and legacies that surround the food. Experience the exotic flavors of Iraq with its savory and sweet dishes.

"Côtes du Rhône with Clive Coates"

April 3, 2008, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., \$75

The Elizabeth Bishop Wine Resource Center

Master of Wine Clive Coates is one of the world's leading experts on French wines, and an award-winning author, teacher, and publisher. Coates returns to Boston University to present an afternoon of good-value Rhône wines from the region's northern appellations—known for Syrah as well as whites from the Marsanne and Roussane grapes—and southern sub-region, where the Mediterranean climate is ideal for Grenache and blends. Participants will be guided through a tasting that includes wines from Crozes-Hermitage, Saint-Joseph, and Saint-Peray (to the north), and Gigondas, Vacqueyras, and Côtes du Rhône Villages (to the south).



"The Story of Tea:

A Cultural History and Drinking Guide"

April 5, Noon to 6 p.m., \$75

Boston University, Metropolitan College

Join Mary Lou and Robert Heiss, tea importers and co-authors of *The Story of Tea: A Cultural History and Drinking Guide* (shortlisted for IACP award), for this educational seminar on tea. Discover the origins, botany, cultivation, and spread of *Camellia sinensis*, as well as its development into the second most popular beverage in the world (after water). Sample the six great classes of tea, learning how they are manufactured and how each should be brewed. Scented and smoked teas will also be covered. The class will conclude with a traditional afternoon tea.

BOOK REVIEW

Gold Rush Grub: From Turpentine Stew to Hoochinoo

By Ann Chandonnet
University of Alaska Press
Cloth, 2005, \$45.00
Paper, 2007, \$24.95

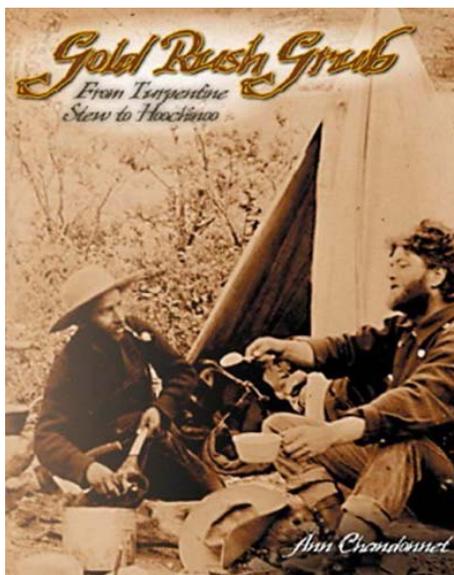
Reviewed by **Jane Mengershauser**

“There’s gold in them thar hills!”

Just looking at the book jacket will make you want to mine the pages of *Gold Rush Grub: From Turpentine Stew to Hoochinoo* by Ann Chandonnet, author also of *Alaska Heritage Seafood Cookbook*. What a gem of a book! Digging through more than 300 pages, you will find nuggets of folklore and culinary history of those who headed for the hills of California, the Klondike, Alaska, and thereabouts, to prospect for gold.

Best of all, this cookbook cum history holds the story behind many of the recipes for the food (“grub”) the prospectors ate for nourishment to dig the precious metal. They “grubbed” for it, foraged for it, begged, borrowed, and no doubt (even though the author doesn’t say it), stole for it. The term “grub” was borrowed from Maritime slang from sailors who jumped ship to prospect for gold along with others, some from Europe.

Life was tough for the stampeder. Familiar foods were often hard to come by. Advice was not. Newcomers to the camps were sometimes warned: “Do not waste a single ounce of anything, even if you do not like it. Put it away



and it will come in handy when you will like it.” Recipe results for Jellied Moose Nose or Caribou Scrapple were perhaps in this category.

Readers, just as I did, will have some searching to do to find directions for making Turpentine Stew, a recipe prominent in the title of this book. They won’t find it. Elsewhere I learned that gold diggers never consumed a stew by that name. When they were ailing with coughs and colds, they rubbed their chests with a homemade liniment containing turpentine. Thus, a “stew” — but not one for consumption.

For Hoochinoo -- homemade booze, amateur brewers aimed for high proof rather than flavor. The drink, they advised, was strong, very strong like a

bear. In fact, the word *hu-che-nu* translated means “fortress of bears” and the so-named rum drink was indeed potent and much enjoyed.

A sin of omission in *Gold Rush Grub* is the short shrift given the story of Molly Walsh, 25 years old when she arrived without much money in Skagway in the fall of 1897. She ran a grub tent and later married a dashing suitor named Mike Bartlett but it didn’t work out and he killed her. After her untimely death, a prospector erected a bronze memorial to her in the Skagway cemetery. It says, “Alone without help this courageous girl ran a grub tent near Log Cabin during the Gold Rush of 1897-1898. She fed and lodged the wildest gold crazed men, generations surely know...”

Gold Rush Grub is a grand and entertaining story book. It’s a volume to savor, to read and re-read, digging each time for more details on the life of a prospector. Perhaps the next time those who have read the book don a piece of gold jewelry, they will appreciate the work of gold miners past and present.

Gold mining fever has never gone out of vogue in spite of its peril and disappointments. Today goldbug hobbyists take to the hills for fun more than profit. At this writing, gold is weighing in for about \$1,000 an ounce. Perhaps modern day optimists will once again head for one of “them thar hills” to find their treasure.



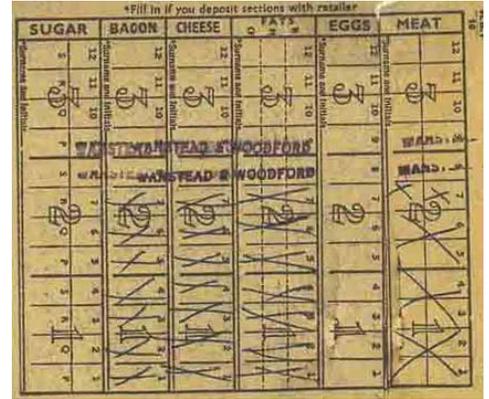
The Yearling Author Honored with U.S. Postal Service Stamp

For the first time, the U. S. Postal Service has issued a stamp in honor of a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer who is also a cookbook author. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings’ *Cross Creek Cookery*, a delightful collection of recipes with reminiscences from backwoods Florida, was originally published by Charles Scribner’s Sons in New York in 1942. It was reprinted a few years ago. Rawlings is probably better known for her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Yearling*. The first day of issue of the stamp was February 21 outside her Cross Creek home in the historic state park named in her honor. Rawlings owned the Cross Creek property from 1928 until her death in 1953.

Background of Supper Theme from Shirley Cherkasky

The period of the 1930s and 1940s was a difficult one for almost everyone in the U.S. Though some were relatively unaffected by the Great Depression (October 1929 - 1942) the loss of jobs, homes, and farms and closing of banks and factories made great changes in how many Americans cooked and ate in order to economize. After World War II rationing began in 1942, there really was an impact on everyone. Meat, sugar, and butter were limited to what one's ration card specified, and there were occasional shortages of other foods needed to feed men in the Armed Forces. People were urged to start Victory Gardens and to can produce.

Usually home canning involved glass jars since steel also was needed for the war effort. Saving used fat and drippings from cooking bacon or other fat meat also was urged to help the war effort; the saved fat also was used in cooking in place of butter. Oleomargarine was a popular butter substitute, though in some dairy-producing states, oleo could only be bought in its original white form, with an accompanying color packet that had to be worked in by hand.



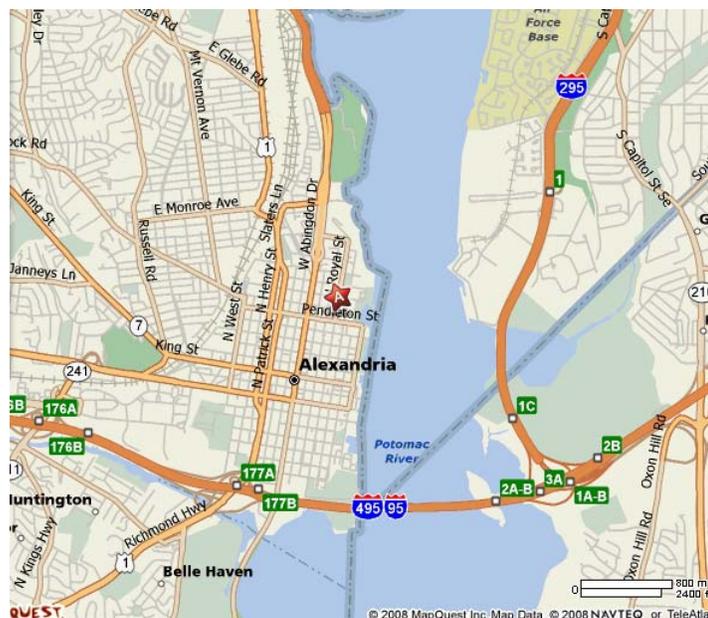
World War II Ration Book

There should be no shortage of sources of recipes from that time and some cookbooks had a special section on Wartime Cookery. See the reference suggestions on page 1.

DIRECTIONS TO ALEXANDRIA HOUSE

Driving from NORTH of Alexandria, VA: Alexandria House (tallest building - 23 stories - in Old Town), is at the intersection of North Pitt and Madison Streets, just five minutes south of Washington National Airport. N. Pitt Street is parallel to and two blocks east of Washington Street (George Washington Parkway), toward the Potomac River. Entrance to the building is on the 700 block of North Pitt Street.

Driving from SOUTH of Alexandria: Madison Street is 7 blocks north of King Street. From the north, enter Alexandria on the Parkway, turn left at Madison St. and go 2 blocks. The entrance to Alexandria House is on the 700 block of North Pitt Street.



Parking:

Park on the street where there should be ample free spaces.

Room at the Top:

You will be met in the lobby, most likely by Shirley Cherkasky, who lives there and arranged for the room. You will be taking the elevator to the top floor of the building.

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.