Once Upon a Literary Sandwich
By Walter Levy

Sandwiches briefly emerged from obscurity in 1762 when Edward Gibbon remarked in his private journal that he ate sandwiches at the Cocoa Tree Tavern in London. Four years later, Jean-Pierre Grosley remarked in *A Tour of London* (1770) that sandwiches were fashionable in London. The sandwich briefly passed into the mainstream of gastronomy and then submerged until about the turn of the nineteenth century. Writers quickly adopted the culinary concept for its food value, but also for its value as a metaphor or image.

Whatever its practicality and convenience, the sandwich quickly moved from being fashionable to being established. By the 1790s, sandwiches were being sold in the House of Commons to help stave hunger during long sessions. And gaining a quirky if not amusing reputation, Jane Austen ate “sandwiches on mustard” (1800), but took her time adding one to her fiction. In *Mansfield Park* (1814), the sandwich is used as comic metaphor for romantic love: “Everything will turn to account when love is once set going, even the sandwich tray . . .” What kinds of sandwiches there are, or if closed or open, is unknown; however, Maggie Black’s *The Jane Austen Cookbook* (1995) avoids the sandwich issue, and suggests oyster loaves, the recipe for which calls for spooning stewed diced oysters into a roll — a filling that has a faint whiff of an aphrodisiac, but not one that Austen might have intended.

The humor never abated.

Woody Allen’s ham and mustard sandwich is pure humor. He says that this sandwich is the product of the Earl of Sandwich, a crackpot inventor who has a eureka moment on the night of April 27, 1758. But sandwich humor is also satirical, especially when Charles Dickens turns his withering charm on the English sandwich. These range from *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840) in which the likeable but uncouth Kit, who never stops talking, eats “a most prodigious sandwich at one bite.” (1840); *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1842) in which Mr. Pecksniff’s parsimony is visualized as long very thin sandwiches; and *Great Expectations* (1861) in which Lawyer Jagger’s belligerence is conveyed as he stands at lunch eating a sandwich, as if to assert his superiority while Pip looks on (1861). By the 1860s, Dickens was so annoyed with English sandwiches he set out to reconfigure them, and so free the national gastronomy from the awful stuff served in Railroad Refreshment shops.

Continued on page 23.
From the Editor's Plate...

With this issue of *The Virginia Culinary Thymes*, the reader will see some changes that make it different from previous issues. The Peacock-Harper Culinary History Friends invited writers and scholars from across the country to submit their work.

Pace University professor emeritus Walter Levy begins with an erudite discourse on the role of the sandwich in society and in literature, in "Once Upon a Literary Sandwich." Cookbook author Lucy Vasserfirer follows with "Ode to the Egg," a clever summing up of the joy of eating and cooking with eggs. In honor of this year of Civil War remembrances, Peacock-Harper member Ann Hertizer contributes an examination The Confederate Receipt Book, as well as an analysis of the impact of the profession of home economics in the United States between 1909 and 2009. Nicole Muise-Kielkucki, a graduate student in NYU's Food Studies program, presents a most interesting introduction to the issues involved in the study of fermentation in American history. Virginia Tech archivist Kira Dietz penned an update on the activities in Special Collections at Newman Library and, with Rebecca Miller, another VT librarian, shares information about the exciting upcoming Edible Book contest. Because cooking is so identified with women throughout history, Maria McGrath examines the assumptions and presumptions about women as portrayed in American culinary literature since the 1960s counterculture movement to the present day, as reflected in the work of Michael Pollan and other food writers.

Note that the photo of thyme on the cover is from Marie Richie (2003), Wikimedia Commons.

We hope you enjoy this issue and will be inspired to become more involved with the culinary collection at Virginia Tech.

*Cynthia Beetelsen, Editor*

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**Calendar of Upcoming Events**

The newsletter is published only two times a year, so please check the Culinary Collection website – [http://spec.lib.vt.edu/culinary](http://spec.lib.vt.edu/culinary) - often for news and updates.

**November 16, 2011:**

Culinary historian, Joseph Carlin, RD, LDN, FADA: Illustrated lecture entitled “From Plum Pudding to Pad Thai: The Untold Story of the American Cookbook”

**March 21, 2012:**

University of Maryland Professor Dr. Warren Belasco: “The Future of Food.” Time and place to be announced.

**March 27, 2012:**


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**ABOUT Our Speakers**

Joseph Carlin, MS, MA, RD, LDN, FADA, received his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the Academy of Food Marketing at St. Joseph’s University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as well as a Master of Arts degree from the Critical and Creative Thinking Program at the University of Massachusetts. Carlin has been the Regional Nutritionist with the U.S. Administration on Aging for the past 34 years and has previously served as Associate Director of the New England Gerontology Center at the University of New Hampshire, culinary historian for Graham Kerr’s television series “The Gathering Place,” and the associate editor and contributing editor of the *Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* and *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink*. Presently, Carlin is a member of the Board of Editors of *Nutrition*, an instructor on Food History at the Cambridge School of Culinary Arts, Boston University, and the University of Massachusetts (Boston). In 1995, He received the ADA foundation Award for Excellence in Community Dietetics. Carlin was also the recipient of the Kit Clark Award in 2002 from the Massachusetts Meals on Wheels Association and the Medallion Award from the ADA in 2003.

*Continued on page 3...*
Warren Belasco


Jackie Newgent

Jackie Newgent, RD, CDN, is a New York City-based chef, registered dietitian, and media personality. She’s the award-winning author of *The All-Natural Diabetes Cookbook* and *Big Green Cookbook*. Newgent is a recreational culinary instructor at the Institute of Culinary Education and nutrition consultant for the “Healthy Children Healthy Futures” program. As a recipe developer and freelance writer, her work is routinely seen in national publications, including *Health* and *Cooking Light* magazines, plus she’s on the *Fitness* magazine advisory board. A former national media spokesperson for the American Dietetic Association, Newgent regularly appears on TV and radio as a food industry spokesperson and culinary nutrition expert. For more: [http://jackienewgent.com](http://jackienewgent.com). Follow Jackie on Twitter: [@jackienewgent](https://twitter.com/jackienewgent).

KUDOS TO ...

Congratulations to Dr. JoAnn Emmel. Peacock-Harper’s treasurer, for recognition of her recent achievements. Named Scholar of the Week by the Office of the Vice President for Research, Dr. Emmel also received a certificate from FCSRU for the Best Paper in Housing, Equipment, and Interior Design in the Family & Consumer for an article titled, “Low Income Households’ Response to Higher Home Energy Costs.” Dr. Emmel works closely with the Center for Real Life Kitchen Design programs, which also incorporate concerns for energy efficiency and consumption patterns.

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Peacock-Harper editor Cynthia Bertelsen just returned from a month-long research trip to France, sponsored by a grant from the International Association of Culinary Professionals where she spent time at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris and the Archives Nationales d’Outre-Mer in Aix-en-Provence, researching the question “Poulet Yassa and Preserved Lemons: The Future of French Cuisine?”

NEW BLOG!

There’s a new blog devoted to the Culinary History Collection, “What’s Cookin’ @ Special Collections?!” ([http://whatscookinvt.tumblr.com](http://whatscookinvt.tumblr.com))! Each week, usually on Wednesday, we highlight a book or manuscript item, offering a bit of humor and a bit of historical information. In addition, throughout the week, short postings share quotes, links, new acquisitions, commentary, or events that may be of interest to readers.
Ode to the Egg
by Lucy Vaserfirer

The humble egg I must praise,
Its versatility does amaze,
No food is more delicious,
Or so highly nutritious.
If your pockets aren’t deep,
You can dine well on the cheap,
One full carton that you buy,
Will a dozen eggs supply,
Always select AA grade,
These have longest before they fade,
Large ones are best,
Do not choose any of the rest,
Recipes are always tested,
And this size is what’s requested.
Farm-fresh eggs in all their splendor,
Are so rich and so tender,
With yolks gold as the sun,
Cook in no time till done,
Fragile white and brown shells,
Also different colors pastel.
We owe many thanks to the chicken,
Eggs expertly clarify, bind, and thicken,
Then there’s duck egg and quail,
If only you can find them for sale,
Egg wash as a glaze or dip,
Browns and won’t let a crumb coating slip,
As a leaver eggs act,
So many possibilities once cracked.
For the first meal of the day,
I’ll take my eggs any way,
Scrambled or over-easy,
It’s not hard to please me,
Boiled soft or hard,
Fried, preferably in lard,
Vegetable frittata,
Or breakfast sandwich on ciabatta,
Even sunny side up,
As long as there’s coffee in my cup.
I like breakfast tacos so spicy,
Truffled eggs though pricey,
Omelettes with mushrooms and Swiss,
Coddled eggs I won’t miss,

With sausage or bacon on the side.
And I haven’t even mentioned yet,
Morning quick breads, don’t forget,
Eggs are a must,
Without them crêpes would go bust,
There would be no pancakes or waffles,
How to make muffins would baffle.
Not just for breakfast or brunch,
Equally satisfying at lunch,
For a snack any time,
An egg is so sublime,
Even for late dinners,
Eggs are definitely a winner.
Serve a quiche with crust brown,
A poached egg with frisée and lardons around,
Egg salad on rye,
Scotch eggs deep-fried,
Homemade pasta knead,
Deviled eggs with dill weed.
So many Asian dishes,
Also fulfill my egg wishes,
Egg drop soup is nice,
My favorite part of fried rice,
Pad Thai noodles with stir-fried eggs please,
As does egg foo yung, omelette Chinese.
Eggs go on green salad sliced,
As a mimosa garnish diced,
Eggs sauces too make,
All of these examples take,
Over eggs Benedict hollandaise,
Everything's better with aioli or mayonnaise,
On the sweet side sabayon,
Or in Italian zabaglione.
Necessary no matter what you bake,
For genoise or sponge cake,
Angel food light as air,
Any custard you prepare,
Crème anglaise frozen till ice,
Pudding, chocolate, bread, or rice,
Cinnamon-scented French toast,
Pot de crème worthy of boast,
Crème brûlée, crème caramel, and flan,
Eggs are critical in the plan.
Without eggs you cannot do,
Perfect tasting pâte à choux,
Popovers filled with cheese,
Buttercream from pastry bags to squeeze,
Vanilla bean pastry cream,
Mousse as fluffy as a dream,
Marshmallows and divinity candy,
So many ways eggs are handy.
If floating islands you will create,
You don't use whole eggs straight,
Separate yolk from white,
But be sure to do it right,
With a single drop of fat,
The foam will certainly go flat,
Whip whites and sugar together,
Your meringues will be light like a feather,
Soufflés savory or sweet,
Whites to stiff peaks you must beat.
Who cares what the name,
Eggs, oeufs, or huevos, they deserve acclaim,
The ovum is a wonder to behold,
Of this I have now much told,
Any cook must conclude,
Eggs are the perfect food,
It's the generosity of the hen,
That can sustain the race of men.
No matter how many I ate,
The next with great anticipation I await,
Don't make me beg,
For any meal, please cook me an egg.

Lucy Vaserfirer is the author of Seared to Perfection: The Simple Art of Sealing in Flavor and the entertaining and educational food blog Hungry Cravings (http://www.hungrycravings.com/), an online resource demystifying complicated cooking and baking techniques and offering delicious, foolproof recipes. She is an Adjunct Instructor of Cooking at Clark College in Vancouver, WA, and has taught home cooks and bakers for years. She holds Le Cordon Bleu associate degrees in both culinary arts and pâtisserie and baking, as well as a Bachelors degree in Business Administration in marketing. (Photo courtesy of Lucy Vaserfirer, 2011.)
Library News

Special Collections on the Menu: News from the Culinary History Collection
By Kira Dietz

I thought I’d take a moment to share two new books and one news item from the Culinary History Collection. Every new acquisition is exciting for us here at Special Collections, but these two stood out in the last few months. Both of the books below, as well as the rest of the collection, are available for viewing in the Special Collections reading room, Monday-Friday from 8am to 5pm.

Earlier in 2011, with the help of funds from the Peacock-Harper Culinary Friends, Special Collections acquired a cookbook titled Kentucky Receipt Book. Written by Mary Harris Frazer and published in Louisville, Kentucky (1903), this book is one of nine copies cataloged for academic or public institutions, and Virginia Tech is the only library in Virginia with this title. In addition, it is available online through the Internet Archive (http://www.archive.org/details/kentuckyreceiptb00fraz) in a number of formats.

The Kentucky Receipt Book features a collection of standard recipes, sometimes in several variations. Not surprisingly, the book contains entire sections devoted to pickling, jellies, preserves, canning fruits and vegetables, and candies, as well as soups, salads, meats, poultry, and fish. A short section on tea includes not only basic directions for hot and iced beverages, but also two variations of Russian Tea enhanced with rum!

It also includes more unique recipes, for adventurous eaters and entertainers. Notably, you can find directions for “squirrel pot pie,” “caviar sandwiches,” “smothered figs,” and “pineapple and tomato salad,” and whole sections for oysters and catasups of various types. In addition, the book includes three different recipes for a “lettuce sandwich.” The desserts section contains directions for banana pudding. Despite Nabisco’s development of a cookie resembling the contemporary vanilla wafer in 1901, this particular delectable, commonly associated with banana pudding, is remarkably absent from Frazer’s variation. Rather, she presents us with a dish of banana slices, baked in custard and topped with meringue. Tasty? No doubt. Expected? Hardly!

Many of the recipes contain measurements like "one and one-half teacups" or "I dessert spoon of butter." For the uninformed or those unwilling to guess as what size teacup or dessert spoon, the back of the book contains an explanation.

Like many receipt books of its time, the Kentucky Receipt Book also includes household recipes and hints for all sorts of disasters and maladies. One treatment suggests using ground horseradish and sour milk to remove freckles. Another proposes lemon slices on the forehead to cure headaches. A household hint recommends the use of green tomatoes and salt to remove mildew from fabric.

In September 2011, after months of anticipation while on back order, Special Collections received its copy of Modernist Cuisine: The Art and Science of Cooking! This six volume set includes information on the history and basics of food, techniques and equipment, animals, plants, ingredients, new approaches to preparation, and recipes combining all the knowledge together. Recipes and techniques range from basic to the complex (French fries vs. ultrasonic French fries’?); the unique (mussels in mussel juice spheres) to the well, frankly, bizarre (foie gras cherries, anyone?); and include a range of ingredients from the household common (sugar) to the uncommon (black summer truffles) to the chemical (super methylcellulose SGA 150). Intimidating as this series seems, with a willingness to acquire a few unusual items, many of these recipes are not beyond the capabilities of the adventurous home cook.

The volumes took several years and an entire team of people to produce. Detailed color photographs show a whole cooked lobster, painstakingly unshelled; a charcoal grill complete with hamburgers, sliced clean in half, to explain the grilling process; and pears cooked by different processes. Detailed recipes include directions for foods like Seafood Paper, Ham Consomme with Melon Beads, Bacon Mushroom Cappuccino, Watermelon Chips, Olive Oil Gummy Worms, and Gel Noodles. Learn how to make ice cream in seconds or cook a meat over the course of three days. Come by to look at these books and you might just start to think about food in a new way!

*Kira Dietz is the Acquisitions and Processing Archivist in Special Collections at Virginia Tech.*
Play With Your Food!
Newman Library’s First Edible Books Contest
By Kira Dietz and Rebecca K. Miller

Over the summer, Newman Library staff and faculty took a new approach to books: eating them! In July 2011, Virginia Tech’s University Libraries experienced its first Edible Books Contest. Just what is an Edible Book Contest? It’s a chance for food lovers and readers alike to show off their creativity by creating something that represents, interprets, or pokes fun at a book or element of a book, made mostly out of edible materials.

For the July 2011 Edible Books Contest, our pilot project, we did not have too many ground rules. We were primarily interested to see what kind of response we would get and see what kinds of entries would come from the imaginations of our staff. In the end, we had 12 different submissions, ranging from the sweet to the savory. Some people chose to highlight a single book, others a series—everything from popular children’s and young adult literature to mysteries, short stories, and even non-fiction!

We planned to award two prizes: a “People’s Choice” and a “Judges’ Choice.” In addition to co-organizer Kira Dietz, we enlisted the library’s dean, Tyler Walters, and Department of Health, Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise professor, Heather Cox, to serve as judges. The “People’s Choice” award went to Technical Services staff members Rosemary Bowden and Andi Ogier Pedersen for their amazing representation of the children’s classic, Madeline. Their cake, constructed with the help of fondant and royal icing, included a model of the Eiffel Tower, Madeline and her classmates, and Ms. Clavel (see photo above). The “Judges’ Choice” went to librarian Kiri Goldbeck, for her gingerbread interpretation of the Cat Who...series of mysteries by Lilian Jackson Braun.

Pictures from the July 2011 event are available on the Newman Library Flickr site: http://www.flickr.com/photos/vtnewmanlibrary/sets/72157627279496995/.

Following the success of the pilot event, Newman Library staff members are planning for another Edible Books event in the spring of 2012. Traditionally, Edible Books Contests are held around April Fools’ Day. Our program will be open the university community at large, and we encourage anyone to attend or submit an entry. The First Annual Edible Book Contest at Virginia Tech currently set for March 30, 2012. Information about how to register, a list of categories, and rules will be available soon, so save the date now!

A number of other institutions have made their Edible Book Contest photos available online for inspiration or just to get a better idea of what contests are all about!

- Duke University (http://library.duke.edu/about/depts/preservation/edible.html)
- University of Florida (http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/readathon/ediblebook.html)
- Seattle Edible Book Festival (http://www.flickr.com/photos/frybooks/)

People’s Choice Winner, “Madeline” by Rosemary Bowden and Andi Ogier
The Confederate Receipt Book
by Ann Hertzer


The only cookbook published in the South during the Civil War, it supplied "useful and economical directions and suggestions in cookery, housewifery, &c, and for the camp." The cover design was printed on wallpaper.

The book is also available on Google Books at: http://books.google.com/books?id=-kLXitwU630C&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

The Confederate Receipt Book contained new remedies appearing in newspapers or recipe books:

- Culinary Receipts: biscuits, breads, yeast, pudding, paste (pastry), cottage cheese, and artificial food substitutes (potato crust, apple pie without apples, artificial oysters);
- Beer, Vinegar, &c: beer, wine, cider, and vinegar;
- Soap and Candles:
- Remedies: dysentery, chills, diphtheria, asthma, croup, camp itch, burns, etc.
- Miscellaneous Receipts: preserving meat without salt, curing bad butter; clarify molasses, coffee substitutes, and recipes for ink, charcoal tooth powder, and many more.

An Appendix contains hints for Ladies to freshen up a dress and a dozen recipes for making bread from Rice Flour. Some of the Rice Flour bread recipes appearing in the Confederate Receipt Book appear in Mrs. Stoney's Carolina Rice Cookbook.

Other wartime manuscript collections provide a similar overview of difficult times in the Confederacy and food substitutions. The Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond boasts a manuscript for newly developed Civil War receipts. A comparison of the two books indicates that butter, salt, leavening, meat, soap, and dyestuffs were in shortest supply.


Ann Hertzer is a retired VT Professor Emeritus with extensive research in food habits of college teens and preschoolers. Her history research publications include Children's Cookbooks, Home Economics food science and nutrition, Civil War nutrition, and more currently African-American foodways in the Wilmington coastal area of North Carolina. Dr. Hertzer was a Fulbright Scholar to Australia and has received numerous recognitions from the American Dietetic Association.
ABSTRACTS & SUMMARIES

By Nicole Muise-Kielkucki

Historical Questions
Today kiefer, kombucha, yogurts, and kimchi are everywhere. Once thought of as health-nut, ethnic, or obscure, these fermented or cultured products have in the last ten years become "all the rage." Inspired by this surged interest in cultured and fermented foods, this research prospectus seeks to discover the origins of these foods in American cookery.

Although now gaining popularity, especially among those in holistic health circles, fermentation is still linked to ideas about the "old way" of doing things, or heritage lost. Were fermented foods in fact ever common in American kitchens prior to the twenty-first century? If so, when, and where did these traditions originate?

Furthermore, were there certain cultural groups among which they were popular in America? If so, how were these groups, and therefore the foods they ate, perceived within American culture more broadly?

Lastly, which types of foods did early Americans choose to ferment? When did fermented foods cease to be a regular feature of American cookery, and why did they fall out of favor? This prospectus explores these questions, answering them from the research of previous scholars and clues from primary sources, and provides additional, original explanation for these phenomena.

Introduction
Cookbooks from the period between 1800 and 1950 reveal the frequency with which American home cooks fermented products during that period. Recipe books from 1800 to 1900, for instance, indicate that pickling cucumbers and other vegetables by fermentation was relatively common during the mid-1800s, although less common than pickling by other means (vinegar). Furthermore, fermented vegetables appear to be still less popular than sauerkraut, which at the time was made frequently in German immigrant and Pennsylvania Dutch homes, though it also seen in more general-use recipe books from the era.

From these sources it also seems that fermenting vegetables fell out of favor in the late nineteenth century. For example, by the 1880s, recipes for pickling by fermentation become much less common in cookbooks, almost disappearing from them altogether. When it is mentioned, even as early as 1869, it is implied as an outdated technique or referred to as "the old way." Then from the 1950s on, cookbooks and reference books discuss fermentation in one of two ways. They either refer to it as an old, Pennsylvania Dutch or German tradition that needs to be preserved. Or they laud it as a long-lost art that needs to be saved and taught given its various health benefits.

So what happened in the 1800s that led to a decrease in the amount of fermentation happening in American kitchens? Could it have been the advent of new technologies, such as refrigeration, that made food storage through fermentation unnecessary? Or was it the fact that a trend toward new, time-saving technologies discouraged time-consuming processes like fermentation? Ruth Schwartz Cowan surveys housework in America from the nineteenth through the twentieth centuries in her publication, More Work for Mother. In 1850, Cowan reasons, a homemaker needed several servants to do all of the work that would produce a middle-class semblance of cleanliness, health, and comfort. By the 1870s, with industrialization in full force, America enjoyed the benefits of many time, labor,
fabricated clothes. These inventions should have decreased the workload of many mid and late nineteenth-century housewives. However, Cowan maintains, although much household work became more streamlined and efficient with the introduction of these technologies, they did not ever cut down on the amount of work done by homemakers. In the century following 1870, therefore, home-labor saved by new technologies was simply replaced with new tasks. So, Cowan proves that although efficiency in housework may have improved between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, this trend alone cannot account for the decline in the preparation of slowly prepared and unrefrigerated fermented foods. Another explanation then is required.

The mid-1800s marks the beginnings of the home economics movement in conjunction with the other social and material changes brought on by industrialization. Catharine Estes Beecher, one of the founders of the movement, explained its principles in the third edition of her book, Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book: Designed As A Supplement To Her Treatise On Domestic Economy (c. 1846). These principles included thrift, modernity, cleanliness and hygiene, and seriously influenced how and what American homemakers cooked from that time on. I will argue that the introduction of home economics and its principles consequently had significant bearing on the downfall of fermented foods in American kitchens in the decades following the 1850s.

Literature Review

Much has been written about the geographical origins of fermented vegetables, their arrival in North America, their association with certain immigrant groups, and the ensuing stereotypes that became attached to such foods. In particular, Sue Shepard, William Woyes Weaver, Sandor Katz, and Jane Ziegelman contribute to this general cultural and social history of fermented foods in America.

Sue Shepard, in Pickled Potted and Canned, covers the vast geographic history of ferments, especially of cabbage, which she said has been made in China since 500 A.D. She explains that fermentation of certain types of foods has been popular in the Hawaiian Islands, Korea, New Zealand, Ancient Rome and Greece, Medieval Europe, parts of Africa, Japan, Poland, Russia, Southeast Asia, and included fish in Scandinavia and Iceland, meats in Denmark and Italy, and butter in Ireland and Scotland. She also clarifies the European history of such foods. "Sauerkraut was being made in most rural homes across central and northern Europe until well into the 1950s," she explains.

Sandor Katz, in his book, Wild Fermentation: The Flavor, Nutrition, and Craft of Live-culture Foods, offers a similar history of fermented cabbage, or sauerkraut. He says, "Sauerkraut is generally believed to have been brought to Europe by nomadic Tartars, who are said to have encountered fermented cabbage in China, which has an extremely ancient and varied fermentation tradition."

From there, fermented foods' introduction to the New World is well-documented. Fermented vegetables became a part of American immigrant foodways starting in the early 1800s with the waves of immigration to North America. For example, Shepard explains, "Sauerkraut traveled to the New World with the Germans, Dutch, Moravians, Romanians, Russians, and many other peoples." Fermenting cabbage for sauerkraut, for instance, was most well known as a German tradition. Sauerkraut was extremely pervasive in New York City, where many German immigrant families initially settled.

Also popular in New York were the fermented pickles, or brined "sours" of the Jewish American community in the mid to late nineteenth century. Katz references his own experience growing up eating these foods in the city. "Growing up in New York City, experiencing my Jewish heritage largely through food, I developed a taste for sour pickles...fermented in a brine solution." He says these pickles could be
found at most food stands in the Lower East Side, Upper West Side, and today, in upscale health food stores.

William Woys Weaver covers a separate historical, cultural, and geographical location of fermented foods in America, which was in the homes of the Pennsylvania Dutch. "At one time, sauerkraut was viewed as one of the identifying foods that separated the Pennsylvania Dutch from their neighbors," he explains. However, he also delves into the labels given to the people who ate this food, clarifying that "it was the Southerners during the Civil War who called the Pennsylvania Dutch Sauerkraut Yankees." 

Katz too recalls similar kinds of stereotypes associated with fermented foods and the people who consumed them in America. "Germans are so strongly associated with sauerkraut that they are known, in derogatory slang, as 'Krauts,' and when the United States was at war with Germany, sauerkraut was temporarily dubbed 'liberty cabbage,'" he explains. 

Shepherd attributes this kind of negative stereotyping of fermented cabbage and the people that ate it to their historical socioeconomic place within the larger culture. For example, she says that cabbage "has always been regarded as a country food or a poor man's sustenance." Therefore, many English-Americans seemed to categorize sauerkraut as a foreign and immigrant food, and believed it to be below them, at least according to historian Brigid Allen.

Jane Ziegelman describes in vivid detail the resonating odors of fermenting sauerkraut, and the pungent tastes of the homemade Jewish pickles. She explains the disdain that English-Americans commonly held for these foods due to their rich, tangy and tart features. Dorothy Wordsworth, for instance, kept a journal of her and William Wordsworth's journey to Hamburg in 1798. She had this to say about the pickles she encountered on that trip: "The first impression that an Englishman receives on entering Hamburg inn is that of filth and filthy smells...a party of waiters were preparing plumbs for preserving or bottling...When I returned below I found the party eating cold beef--no cloth spread--no vegetables, but some bad cucumbers pickled without vinegar." Given Mrs. Wordsworth's tone, it seems clear that during this time period, (1800-1850) while many people were still fermenting pickles, it was seen as lower class to do so, and that those in the upper echelon thought themselves above this kind of food. Furthermore, many English-American writers also indicated that they thought of the whole process of fermentation as altogether unsanitary, unhygienic, and smelly.

Not coincidentally, fermentation as a preservation method appears to have never developed in the regions of the British Isles or most of Italy due to the climates there. Therefore, many English-Americans generally believed that fermented and pickled vegetables were unsuitable to their palates. Nevertheless, Shephard accounts for these Americans' preference for bland foods, as opposed to the acidic and highly flavorful pickles and sauerkrauts of immigrant communities, explaining, "An Italian, writing in the 1950s, poured scorn on [Dr. Johnson, the Englishman], saying that...'even today his compatriots [are] incapable of giving any flavor to their dishes.'"

**Historical Arguments & Significance**

My argument will build on the secondary works of Shephard, Weaver, Katz, and Ziegelman, who provide an overview of the history of fermented foods in America. I want to use that history to explain why fermented foods fell out of favor in American cooking culture. I will also synthesize the many primary sources, including cookbooks, USDA recommendations, and scientific reports from the era that I found concerning this topic, in order to form another conclusion about a possible reason for their decline.

I propose that there were two main reasons for fermented foods' near disappearance from American cookery. The
first was the negative ethnic stigma associated with these foods. Shephard, Weaver, Katz, and Ziegelman argue that older American immigrants negatively associated the tastes and smells of sauerkraut and pickles with the more recent immigrants to the country, the Germans and the Jewish.\textsuperscript{xviii} Their research reveals that these negative attitudes toward fermented foods existed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I want to build off of this argument, providing a cultural explanation for these foods' subsequent decline within American households. I argue that it was partly these attitudes that caused fermented foods' demise in popular American cookery and culture.

The other reason for fermentation's downward trend in the late 1800s, I argue, was the new standards of cleanliness, efficiency and hygiene that spread through the country after the advent of home economics. According to these standards, new value was placed on convenience and efficiency, as well as on the kitchen's health and hygiene.\textsuperscript{xix} This meant that homemakers of the time were subtly discouraged from engaging in the messy and time-consuming practices of home fermentation, just as recipes for fermenting foods were becoming absent from popular cookbooks.

For example, Catharine Beecher was one of the founders of the home economics movement in the late nineteenth century and was thus very concerned with economy, handiness, health, and tradition. She therefore took into consideration the situation of the American housewife, who, she said, had less money and well-trained servants than homemakers in the past.\textsuperscript{xx} Her cookbook, Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book: Designed As A Supplement To Her Treaties On Domestic Economy, 3rd ed., was intended to be practical, with "language that is short, simple, and perspicuous," and designed to "be used by any domestic who can read."\textsuperscript{xxi} Beecher includes "healthful" recipes with those that are "rich and elegant."\textsuperscript{xxii} She also warns against foods that are too spicy, strong, bitter, etc., advocating instead for plain and simple foods.\textsuperscript{xxiii}

The pickles in this volume (over fifteen are listed) are all of the vinegar variety. She gives extensive safety information regarding the cooking, cooling, and storing of pickles in vinegar, which reinforces the notion, common in the nineteenth century, that fermentation was unsafe.\textsuperscript{xxiv} However she does mention pickling as a proper method for storing food, which, "By little skill and calculation," may be achieved "without violating the rules of either health or economy.\textsuperscript{xxv}

Juliet Corson, another influential woman in the home economics camp, also stressed thrift, economy, and cleanliness in the kitchen. However, she continued to incorporate recipes for fermented foods in her 1886 publication, Miss Corson's Practical American Cookery and Household Management.\textsuperscript{xxvi}

Lydia Maria Francis Child's The Frugal Housewife, by contrast, included none of these recipes. Written in 1830, it strongly emphasized frugality, thrift in both time and money, self-reliance, and the honor in utility. For example, she states her motto "usefulness is happiness."\textsuperscript{xxvii} She mentions pickling with vinegar, indicating that preservation by fermentation was too slow of a process.\textsuperscript{xxviii} Child, then, represents the complete departure of nineteenth century home economists from those who still practiced fermentation.

In response to the hostility surrounding fermented foods, scientists in the late 1800s began to investigate the health and scientific properties of fermented foods. For example, biologists like Professor William Henry Brewer began to study fermentation as a process, noting its chemical properties and possible health benefits.\textsuperscript{xxix} In an 1880 lecture given before the Connecticut Board of Agriculture, Brewer defended fermented foods, which he said had been around for thousands of years but that contemporary science was just beginning to understand in its intricacies. He explained that fermented breads and vegetables may be more digestible than non-fermented, since
"digestion itself is analogous to fermentation."xvi Brewer gave examples of fermentation's household applications, including making sourdough bread and fermented cider, and noted its process. "Add yeast to sugar water (juice) and it becomes vinegar: if you stop the process half way you have alcohol," he explained.xvii Brewer also included his hypothesis on why fermentation as a food preservation technique had fallen out of favor in the mid-1800s. He explained that leavening bread without yeast, and thus by fermentation, was done only in country or pioneer settlements where yeast was not available for purchase.xviii This reinforces Shephard’s claim that fermented foods were "country food or a poor man's sustenance."xix

In addition, in the 1930s the United States Department of Agriculture began a campaign that promoted fermentation as a safe, healthy, and convenient way to preserve and store agricultural bounty. xiv Harry Edward Gorseline, associate bacteriologist, and Lawrence H. James, senior bacteriologist at the USDA’s Bureau of Chemistry and Soils in the agency’s Food Research Division published a report on this subject in 1936. The paper was based on a yearlong experiment in which the agency grew turnips as well as other root vegetables at the Arlington Experiment Farm of the USDA, and then fermented them using a variety of methods.xv Their findings included observations about the best and worst varieties, sizes, cutting and storing methods, as well as the ideal acidity and sugar levels, etc., for preparing the fermented turnip products. By usurping the role of the home economist they also suggest that their "saucr rüben is not only a means of preserving a staple crop for winter use, but it also adds variety to the daily fare."xvi They endorsed their experiment, ensuring Americans that fermentation "offers an economical means of utilizing a portion of the vegetable crops that were widely grown on farms in the United States."xvii

Both of these were attempts to counter the backlash against fermented foods encountered from the home economics and ethnic superiority camps during the 1800s. However, they appear to be unsuccessful and unaccepted by the public, since fermented and cultured foods have only in the last decade come back into fashion.

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**Notes:**

2. Shephard, Pickled, Potted, and Canned, p. 147.
8. Ibid., p. 41.
9. Ibid., p. 178.
19. Ibid., p. 171.
25. Ibid., p. 223.
27. Ziegelman, 97 Orchard, p. 151.
by Ann Hertzler

[Ed. note: In the following discussion, Hertzler summarizes the major themes and trends occurring in the field of home economics between 1909 and 2010.]

The American Home Economics Association (AHEA), now American Association – Family Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) summarized their first 75 years in 1984. Hertzler reported three main themes in the Food and Nutrition chapter—nutrition science, food science, and nutrition education. These themes were evident in research, text books, government publications, standards of care, formation of national policies, information for families, community issues and outcome, and opportunities provided for women.

Quality of Life was always of utmost priority in issues studied, programs delivered, and population served. In the first decades, themes in the 20s to 40s were meatless days, fat cures, and victory gardens for war time food supplies; in the 30s, Depression programs focused on Peace Gardens.

Convenience foods reflect the stage of food science. In the 20's, convenience meant canned tomatoes and bakery bread; in the 40s, frozen juice and vegetables; in the 80's heat and serve.

Nutrition education in the early 1900s was directed to women and children, a time when women were just beginning to vote. Still a priority, programs have expanded to all stages of the life cycle.

Members have provided guidance since the beginning 1900s. The Peacock-Harper Culinary Collection at VT contains research,
publications, cookbooks, magazines, and texts by many of these famous names. Do you recognize these from your studies?

Names: Serving as Officers: Charles F Langworthy, Isabelle Bevier, Lafayette Mendel, Maria Parloa, A.C. True, Henry C. Sherman, Caroline Hunt.

Area of Emphasis during AHEA's first 75 years Just as AHEA defined itself in terms of Families and Quality of Life, AAFCS has continued to define itself in the same way. But focus has grown in many different ways.

Nutrition Science

Nutrient needs: 1909 digestibility of foods, calorie needs; 1920s and 1930; "vitamines" and minerals, especially iron, calcium, vitamins A, B, and C; 1980s, trace nutrients and interrelationships; and 2000, molecular levels and interactions.

Food Tables: Atwater Tables; 1926, Sherman's text for >200 foods; 30s and 40s, Bowes and Church; 1950s, Watt and Merrill's Composition of Foods - Raw, Processed and Prepared, became the first computer data base in 1959. Data banks continue to be refined for food assessment and institutional food service.

Food Science

Food and Nutrients Early 1900s, cookbooks emphasized standardized procedures for nutrient retention in foods grown and prepared under different conditions.

Food Quality 1920s & 30s developing scientific methods and techniques to measure food qualities, palatability of food, and properties of ingredients.

Food Preservation and Safety 1920, Safety of the Pressure Cooker, USDA bulletins on Canned Fruits, Preserves and Jellies; 1980s UHT milk (ultrahigh temperature), freeze drying, and low moisture foods.

Nutrition Education: Pre1900s, translating for the public with reading courses for farm wives; Rose, Roberts, and Gillette were publishing nutrition education materials.

Nutrient Density Themes - 100 calorie portions of food by Rose.

Food Guides - Pre 1900s: Atwater Guide and Ellen H. Richards for the Chicago World Fair, Five Food Groups of the 1920s; 1940s, Recommended Dietary Allowances and guides of 7 to 10 groups including the Basic 7; 1950s, Food for Fitness, Basic 4.

Food habit studies: Needs assessment, dietary survey methodology, and program evaluation. An intercultural framework is especially important as home economists work with groups different from themselves varying by income, family structure, lifestyles, and ethnic patterns.

1909 - 2009 100 years have passed and many more changes haves occurred.

Underlying themes of AHEA-AAFCS Food and Nutrition Programs still relate to Nutrition, Food Science, and Nutrition Education. But outreach grows and expands with the time to include updated information and outreach to new groups. In 2010, new standards appeared for food preservation, updated food guides (MyPlate), a great array of fad diets, emphasis on child nutrition and obesity, school gardens, and high school training (child care, food service and hospitality). The goal is still to impact families and help people to improve their quality of life.

Dr. Ann Hertzler is a retired University Professor Emeritus with extensive research in food habits of college teens and preschoolers. Her history research publications include Children's Cookbooks, Home Economics food science and nutrition, Civil War nutrition, and more currently African-American foodways in the Wilmington coastal area of North Carolina. Dr. Hertzler was a Fulbright Scholar to Australia and has received numerous recognitions from the American Dietetic Association.
Food Revolution Anti-Feminism: From 1960s Countercultural Cooking to Michael Pollan Punditry
by Maria McGrath

In his 2009 *NY Times* article “Out of the Kitchen, Onto the Couch,” food pundit Michael Pollan puzzled over the rise of television cooking shows and the simultaneous decline of American home-cooking. Pollan’s explanation? The postwar increase of working women, processed food marketing, and cooking appliance innovations.

While these factors certainly explain cooking transformations since the 1940s, Pollan interpreted these facts with much prejudice. Contrasting Julia Child, the grand mistress of food television, with Betty Friedan, the feminist iconoclast, he found second-wave feminism at fault for America’s downward spiral into unhealthful and aesthetically deplorable foodways. As Pollan saw it, Friedan’s *Feminine Mystique* “taught millions of American women to regard housework, cooking included, as drudgery, indeed as a form of oppression.” Child, on the other hand, “tried to show the sort of women who read *The Feminine Mystique* that, far from oppressing them, the work of cooking approached in the proper spirit [my emphasis] offered a kind of fulfillment and deserved an intelligent woman’s attention. (A man’s too.)”

Pollan does not stand alone in making the women’s movement and working women responsible for America’s food deterioration. Contemplating the sunset of home-cooking, Barbara Kingsolver, in her 2007 *NY Times* bestseller *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, lamented what women of her generation lost in the name of liberation. “We came a long way, baby,” she sardonically opined, “into bad eating habits and collateral impaired family dynamics.”

Pollan and Kingsolver’s regrets could simply be explained as boomer nostalgia. With women of their class and generation irrevocably enmeshed in the rough-and-tumble public sphere, they long for a rosier, simpler world — a place of intact families with mother at the helm, dinner-table conversation, and “healthful” connections to cooking and eating. Yet, one can find anti-feminist rhetoric in the late 1960s/early 1970s natural foods movement, the period Pollan and Kingsolver mark as the beginning of the end of authentic American cooking.

Amidst the sound and fury of second-wave feminism’s birth, 1960s Berkeley activists and whole foods cookbook authors Laurel Robertson, Carol Flinders, and Bronwen Godfrey (of *Laurel’s Kitchen*) described women’s return to homemaking as an act of counterculture resistance. They warned, “any woman about to take a job should think carefully about the pressures compelling her choice... she should consider what her home and family and neighborhood stand to lose.” Home and family care, they argued, allowed women to foster more penetrating social change than “business or professions, which tackle life’s problems from above, from outside, [not] in the home and community, where problems start.”

The analytical agreement — from early-1970s countercultural cookbooks to contemporary food writing — indicates a resilient anti-feminist reflex ignited by the postwar uncoupling of American women from home-cooking. On close examination, this natural foods reaction seems to be built on an anti-industrial, “farming U.S.A.” reminiscence and on some unexamined generalizations about feminism and American food and cooking.

Pollan and others presume a late twentieth-century twenty-first century decline in American cooking skill and interest from a static and cohesive, grandmotherly from-scratch past. In *Omnivore’s Dilemma*, Pollan outlined the now popular historical account of America’s food decline. According to *Omnivore*, the post-World War II “industrialization of the food chain” created “Our National Eating Disorder” (the book’s introduction title). According to this narrative, the mixture of WWII chemical innovation and government crop supports resulted in chemically-dependent agriculture
and a glut of farm products (particularly corn and soy) that the food industry funneled into processed edibles, much to the detriment of the planet, the nation, and the individual.’

Key cookbook authors of the early-1970s natural foods movement imagined the fall roughly in the same time frame as Pollan—during their postwar youth and young adulthood. In 1972 Vegetarian Epicure author, Anna Thomas, advised her cookbook readers: “In these strange 1970s ominous and dramatic new reasons are compelling people to reexamine their eating habits... [with] more and more foods becoming the products of factories rather than farms.” In resistance to this unwelcome industrialization, Thomas hoped vegetarian natural foods would revive a confessedly, “romantic” vision of “old world” ways with “kitchens filled with rich fragrances of foods prepared slowly and lovingly—before the time of instant, no-mess, no-fuss, no-meal packages.”

Other early 1970s natural foods cookbook writers adopted or modified this declension model. Jean Hewitt, the author of the 1971 New York Time Natural Foods Cookbook, pushed food industrialization a bit further back to “around the turn of the century, before the advent of large scale mechanized farming and modern food production methods.” In her pseudo-historical reverie, Hewitt imagined that “chemical fertilizers, pesticides, sprays and dusts were almost unknown, and farm animals were allowed to roam and develop without man’s interference... sacks and barrels at the general store were filled with unrefined and unprocessed ingredients.”

This variety of pre-machine nostalgia is not limited to twentieth and twenty-first century alternative foods advocates. If we wander even further back in American history, we can find the very same anti-modern fixations amongst antebellum health reformers. William Alcott, Catherine Beecher, and Sylvester Graham all worried over America’s degeneration from what they believed to be the physical and moral vigor of the founder’s era. For Catherine Beecher, not their own period, so coveted by later postwar food activists, but pre-industrial colonial days stood as a “Golden Age” for the America family and society.” To stave off further social debilitation, antebellum reformers named the body, health, and eating as critical locations for national rejuvenation. In his 1837 Treatise on Bread and Breading, Sylvester Graham waxed melancholic for the “blessed days of New England’s prosperity and happiness, when our good mothers used to make the family bread.” For Graham the social significance of bread could not be underestimated. Accordingly, he insisted that all conscientious housewives must use his unmilled, whole-bran flour. Graham bread, kneaded, shaped and baked by the hardworking hands of a home-cook would, according to this vegetarian, health devotee, resuscitate the primal connection between mother and child and save the nation from the slide into over-civilization and civic dissipation.

Obviously, this story of the nation’s perfect food past that has been forwarded by generations of culture critics is appealing and narratively compact. Yet historical scholarship on the family meal, the American kitchen, and food production undermines the post-WW II fall that more recent food writers propose. There is no doubt that World War II petrochemical research fostered the explosion of postwar chemical agriculture; the rate, quantity, and kinds of chemical use, from the 1940s forward, dramatically pales in comparison to pre-war chemical treatments. That said, fairly wide spread arsenic-based pesticide use, supported by federal and state agricultural agencies, began in the mid-nineteenth century, the period often cited in recent prescriptive food literature as the untainted, “natural farming” past. Secondly, modernization and science infected middle class kitchens not in the second wave feminist 1960s or the processed-food 1950s or even the dawning consumerist 1920s, but from the mid-1800s on. As Laura Shapiro shows in her investigation of progressive era domestic
science, *Perfection Salad* (2001), nineteenth century social reformers proclaimed that for the good of the nation and the family, a domestic modernity which valued efficiency, sanitary rigor, and nutritional exactitude must override “handed-down” cooking tradition.\(^\text{xix}\) This domestic science did not unsettle the housewife’s responsibility for family food. But as middle-class women attempted to fulfill progressive instructions and ideals, they upended antebellum cooking styles. And, in the process, some American cooks reconfigured the goals of cooking from creating tasty and pleasurable meals to putting science and morality on the daily menu.

In addition to sanitizing and organizing their kitchens, progressive-era women suffused their kitchen and cooking with scientific and technological sophistication by trying out the many processed foods introduced throughout the nineteenth century including: Underwood canned fruits, pickles, and condiments, Pillsbury white flour, the U.S. Dairy Co.’s margarine, Eagle condensed milk, Kellogg breakfast cereals, Jell-O dessert, Heinz condiments, Campbells soups.\(^\text{xx}\) Thus as far back as the 1850s, modernity entered the kitchen, breaking culinary customs, introducing machine-made edibles, and re-configuring the family meal along the way.\(^\text{xxi}\) The history of mid-nineteenth-century domestic science demonstrates that the kitchen and cooking have long been flexible platforms for social and commercial influences like all other facets of the family and home.

Further evidence undermining the culinary history espoused by many food critics can be found in Katie L. Turner’s consideration of turn-of-the-twentieth-century urban, working class eating habits. In *Good Food for Little Money* (2006) Turner challenges the notion that post-World War II food industrialization and mass marketing destabilized the sit-down dinner. Instead she demonstrates that decades before the world wars, nineteenth-century working class Americans willingly and consciously abandoned home-cooking for bakery, saloon, lunchroom, and pushcart fare. They did so due to the pressures of high cooking fuel prices, inconsistent home stoves and, very simply, to increase the family income with mother working outside the home. Turner argues that local foods businesses and working Americans, not solely the new “national food processing industries with mass advertising,” remodeled and industrialized eating. In so doing, Turner suggests that the working class “asserted their adherence to a new consumption-oriented family economy rather than the more traditional (and morally fraught) middle-class view of women’s duties as home manager.”\(^\text{xxii}\) Turner’s thoughtful on-the-ground study of working class ready-made eating shows that some American families abandoned home-crafted cooking for fast food well before the onset of agribusiness and mass food marketing.

Natural foods literature not only falls back on a romanticized and historically inaccurate vision of America’s cooking past, it depends on the unverified assumption that housewives of previous generations were more fulfilled, dedicated, and happy in the domestic sphere than today’s American women. Before processed foods (and later, feminism) tromped into the kitchen and in Pollan’s words “redefine[d] what is commonly meant by the verb ‘to cook,’” American women, according to Pollan, felt they had “a moral obligation to cook, something they believed to be a parental responsibility on par with child care.”\(^\text{xxiii}\) According to this scenario, cooking proved a mother’s love and competence, and it filled her with a sense of social significance and purpose.

Pollan’s idol, Julia Child, with her elite culinary standards and cooking artistry, may not have seen herself as a moral messenger. But from Pollan’s perspective, she certainly found fulfillment and happiness in the kitchen, unlike contemporary foods network mavens (Paula Dean, Rachael Ray, and Sandra Lee) who, Pollan says, “stress quick results, shortcuts and superconvience” in their quest to “please a husband or impress guests.”\(^\text{xxiv}\) Pollan claims that Child’s joie
de vivre encouraged his mother and women of her generation “not only to cook but to cook the world’s most glamorous and intimidating cuisine” and to thus find that making food “was gratifying, even ennobling sort of work, engaging both the mind and the muscles.”

On board with Pollan, Barbara Kingsolver, in Animal, Vegetable, Miracle, worried that when American women discarded gender traditionalism and “traded homemaking for careers,” they trashed the simple satisfactions prized by decades of pre-second wave American women. Sounding very much like Sylvester Graham, she mused, “We gave up the aroma of warm bread rising, the measured pace of nurturing routines, the creative task of molding our families’ tastes and zest for life; we received in exchange the minivan and the Lunchable.”

Like Pollan and Kingsolver, 1970s countercultural cooks agreed that the steamrollers of technology, modernity, and science had negatively transformed all facets of American society. Most significantly, whiz-bang gadgetry and a post-war convenience ethos outmoded women’s homework and decimated the cornerstone of social continuity: the family with mother at the helm. The author’s of Laurel’s Kitchen argued that throughout human history women were the “keeper of the keys...a position of great responsibility...and honor.” When American women abandoned the kitchen, the keeper’s wisdom went missing with grave implications for all. “The world is suffering,” they warned “having forgotten the frugal practices, the wise use of resources, that the keeper of the keys represented.” The most radical and empowering step a countercultural woman could take, the step that would pose the greatest threat to the global capitalist technocracy — to the dreaded and invasive “system” — would be to revive women’s role as the “Keeper.”

Despite natural foods advocates’ unanimous longing for the return of the “happy housewife,” the success and cultural resonance of The Feminist Mystique (with 1.3 million copies sold between 1963 and 1967) and second-wave feminism reveals that a sizable percentage of the American public have had little use for natural foodists’ domestic idealism. If cooking meals and keeping the keys of the household was so entrancing and life-affirming, why have married women from the 1960s forward exited this realm of super-satisfaction?

The answer cannot simply lie in economic necessity and opportunity. Nor can it simply lie in feminist indoctrination. Perhaps a certain segment of American women never found pleasure and contentment through cooking. They may have seen family provisioning as a task to be accomplished, but not as an art or an act of self-actualization. Maybe Friedan did not have to teach women to scorn kitchen work; perhaps many who responded to her feminist treatise chafed under the routine obligations of cooking already. Stephanie Coontz’ recent survey of The Feminine Mystique’s influence on American women shows that Friedan’s readers weren’t brainwashed; they were eager recipients of her message. Interviewee Glenda Schlitz remembered, “I felt as though Betty Friedan had looked into my heart, mind and psyche and...put the unexplainable distress I was suffering into words.” Laura M.’s experience with the book echoed Schlitz’s as she recalled, “My most vivid memory is that I finally realized I wasn’t crazy. I was still part of a generation expected to embrace family life as the ‘end all and be all.’ To subsume my ambitions to my husband’s goals. But I didn’t want to! What was wrong with me?”

Even before Friedan put into words “the problem that has no name,” some American women must have resented the gendered ordering of domestic labor and women’s consequent exclusion from the public sphere. The long history of the women’s rights and suffrage movements certainly supports this contention. Perhaps as World War II cracked open the job market for American women, many leapt at the opportunity to place their energies and imagination into activities that they found
fulfilling and empowering. Some certainly sprinted out of the kitchen with little regret or guilt. As food manufacturers responded instantaneously to women’s double-duty obligations with new-fangled, ready-made foods, cooks who had little or no interest in the culinary arts sang hallelujah to the microwave, the TV dinner, and instant rice.

And again, the historical record indicates that women’s discontent with kitchen conscription began well before 1960s feminist activism. Mary McFeely, in Can She Bake a Cherry Pie (2000), uncovers nineteenth-century ambitions to socialize housewifery in the name of women’s liberation. Leaders of the housewife cooperative movement, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Melusina Fay Pierce (wife of pragmatist philosopher Charles Pierce), strove to institutionalize and socialize domestic labor to free women to become full citizens, professionals, and human beings. As Perkins Gilman remarked in her important feminist commentary, Women and Economics (1898), being the “queen of the cook-stove throne” was simply not enough for the modern American woman. The socialist utopian colony, Ruskin, founded in 1896 in Tennessee, created a communal kitchen and collectivized domestic work, à la Perkins Gilman and Pierce.\textsuperscript{11}

Despite natural foods advocates’ glossy portraits of the pre-processed, cooking past monitored by grateful housewives, historical scholarship shows that the food system, the sit-down dinner, and “from-scratch” cooking are complex social entities constantly under surveillance. They are historically contextual, symbolic, gendered, political, and protean phenomena — not only since the tumultuous social and economic shifts of the second half of the twentieth century, but throughout American (and human) history. Natural foods advocates are weak on these complexities because details undermine their clear division of the contaminated and commercial food present from the chaste homemade food past.

Countercultural food revolutionaries got the ball rolling as they turned to “nature” and “tradition” for an alternative to what they saw as the cultural vacancy and ecological disasters created during their 1950s consumerist childhoods. Some “hippie” women believed they could take a stand against the gaping maw of consumer capitalism by connecting to family and mother earth through whole foods cooking. In this schematic, “traditional” kitchen culture, and by association traditional femininity, presented a bulwark against the rapid satisfactions, depthlessness, and fragmentation of industrialized postwar life. Pollan, Kingsolver, and others in the recent iteration of alternative foodism are treading on the same ground as 1960s natural foods devotees (who themselves were following the lead of nineteenth century naturalist health reformers).

The solutions forwarded by current prescriptive food writers are steeped in the same flabby, anti-industrial tropes (the rejection of everything factory-made and global and the dewy-eyed crush on everything homemade and local) informing their critiques. Pollan’s own attempts to eat outside the supermarket food system take on a bourgeois foodie tenor. In Omnivore’s Dilemma, he concludes by recounting the “perfect meal” found, shot, or grown by his own hands. Backed by a rather simplistic evolutionary argument for hunting, he concludes that this hunter-gather provisioning is the most genuine and honest food work. In another New York Times article “The 36-Hour Dinner Party,” (October 6, 2010), Pollan delves into Do-it-Yourself, locavore hedonism in a weekend of backyard brick-oven cooking with his son and a crew of Berkeley chefs, bakers, and food aficionados.

In hopes of reviving a more authentic way of life, Kingsolver engaged in a year-long experiment in seasonal food self-sufficiency (based on the precepts of the 100-mile diet) on her family’s Virginia farm. In that year, her clan grew, hunted, or found much of their food, or bought local. A fine alternative for a woman with a flexible writing career and the financial means to “drop out” and repair to the
kitchen to cook from farm-to-table every day, but what about the working mothers and fathers with limited time and energy to feed a family three times a day, while also carting children to the doctor, soccer practice, etc.? What either of these examples of “anti-establishment” cooking and eating have to do with regular Americans who shop at supermarkets for quick and easy foods to prepare after a day’s work is unclear.

Recent food writers feel they’ve discovered a direct connection between waning female domesticity and the decay of postwar America, yet this angle has a long legacy in the nation’s gender history. Early America’s Republican motherhood politicized the home by charging its mothers with instilling “Republican virtue” in their sons. Nineteenth-century American women endeavored to morally “cleanse” the public sphere as they did their homes with their social housekeeping reform program. And now as the rhetoric of contemporary natural foods advocates demonstrates, the model of wifely and motherly dedication has been variously portrayed as women’s patriotic, economic or cultural duty throughout the nation’s history. Feminism intentionally ramm ed up against this cultural icon and gave it a strong shake hoping to crack its glassy veneer and reveal its oppressive underbelly. It is no wonder that a women’s liberation that attacked the pillars of social traditionalism — mother and housewife — would later be held responsible for the ills of late twentieth-century America. To wit, since the 1960s, feminism has been blamed for rising divorce rates, student apathy, teenage pregnancy, female fertility issues, gang violence, and now the nation’s health troubles and shattered cooking culture. It is doubtful that natural foods writers in the early 1970s or the present would want their critiques to be grouped with America’s long-standing anti-feminist inclinations. Yet, Pollan and other food writer’s un-reflexive wistfulness for a pre-Friedan kitchen of motherly commitment and cooking zeal, of liberation through gastronomic derring-do, creates a reactionary climate in which working womanhood becomes responsible for America’s “food crisis”. A more evidence-based analysis would reveal the nation’s layered cooking past and would evenly weigh the benefits and deficits of feminism and women’s careerism in relation to changes in American cooking and food. It would at least give a nod to feminism’s role in advancing women’s public power and expanding their life possibilities. Rather than clinging to an imagined past, it would question why American society didn’t construct a new gender-equal method of feeding itself when the old model — at-home mother and from-scratch cooking — became less tenable. Moreover, it would not demand a single retroactive solution to the manifold issue of eating within an industrialized, global food system. And it would use history, not comforting mythologies, to understand the food past, present, and future. Such analytical thoroughness might, and this is a big “might”, lead to more nuanced solutions that actually attend to the true needs and realities of American women and cooking.

8 Harvey Green, Fit for America (1986), 7-21
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Dr. Maria McGrath is Assoc. Prof. of History & Humanities at Bucks County Community College in Newtown, PA.

\[x\] Ibid. 62-63
\[\text{xI}\] Laura Shapiro, Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 35.
\[\text{xI}\] Ibid., 67-8
\[\text{xxI}\] Ibid., 4-5.
\[\text{xxII}\] Ibid., 5
\[\text{xIII}\] Kingsolver, Animal, Vegetable, Miracle, 127.
\[\text{xV}\] Mary McFeeley, Can She Bake a Cherry Pie (Amherst, Ma.: University of Mass. Press, 2000), 21-27.
Once Upon a Literary Sandwich
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*Mugby Junction* (1866), a collection of satires about a fictional train station that is windy, cold, comfortless, and dreary, makes the case that “the Universal French Refreshment sangwich” is impossible, at least according to Our Missis, the proprietress of a refreshment shop who has gone off to France to scout the opposition. Her report delivered with “dilated nostrils” and “gleeful animosity” is damning: “Well,” she says, “. . . Take a fresh, crisp, long, crusty, penny loaf made of the whitest and best flour. Cut it longwise through the middle. Insert a fair and nicely fitting slice of ham. Tie a smart piece of ribbon round the middle of the whole to bind it together. Add at one end a neat wrapper of clean white paper by which to hold it. And the universal French Refreshment sangwich busts on your disgusted vision.”

In Dickens’s hands, the “sangwich” is a symbol of the national gastronomy, and it took another century before his sarcasm registered, and the English “sangwich” achieved some integrity, but by then it had to compete with McDonald’s and the like.

Raymond Chandler satirized American taste (besides morality, criminal justice, and wealth) in *The Long Goodbye* (1954). Chandler’s sandwich metaphor suggests that Americans will eat anything that has lettuce sticking out of the sides and toothpicks holding it together. “I went down to the drugstore and ate a chicken salad sandwich and drank some coffee,” says his detective character, Philip Marlowe, “The coffee was overstrained and the sandwich was full of rich flavor as a piece torn off an old shirt.” For a final slap, Chandler says that the lettuce is “preferably a little wilted.”

As if to prove Chandler’s point that Americans (at least) will eat any sandwich, Hemingway creates a sandwich straight out of Ernest Mickler’s *White Trash Cooking* (1986). In his fiction, Hemingway’s tough guys eat ham sandwiches, sometimes cold, sometimes hot with fried eggs, and usually served up in “greasy spoon” diners that are symbols of the American working class. Personally, Hemingway preferred onion and peanut butter sandwiches washed down with cold tea. This revelation appears only in his posthumous novel *Islands in the Stream* (1970). The idea of Papa Hemingway scarfing peanut butter and onion sandwiches provides a glimpse into a man at odds with his public stoicism. If anyone needs the recipe, A.E. Hotchner provides it in his biography, *Papa Hemingway*:

- “2 slices white bread
- Peanut butter
- 2 thick slices onion
- Spread one piece of bread thickly with peanut butter. Lay onion slices on top. Cover with second slice of bread.”

Hotchner says it was always accompanied with red wine, an incongruous match. But the next time you think of the gruff, laconic, stoical Hemingway, think peanut butter and onions on a hard roll.

Though M. F. K. Fisher may sometimes be satirical, about her favorite sandwich, she’s delightfully humorous about the “railroad sandwich” she loves. It is a living memory for and a star of her food memoir *Gastronomical Me* (1943). The best sandwich, she says, is the simplest: “Split a fresh long or round loaf of French bread, preferably the sour type, and remove every possible crumb of its middle. Spread hollowed halves generously with sweet butter. Lay thinly sliced boiled ham on the bottom half, four or five slices thick. Put the loaf together, wrap firmly in a large clean cloth, and then fifteen minutes before it is to be eaten, have someone sit quietly upon it. It will be squashed quite flat and pressed firmly into a loaf that can be cut into generous slices (or wedges if it is a round loaf) and eaten even by people who are sometimes daunted, dentally at least, by tackling a thick crusty piece of bread and ham.”
Though sandwich aficionados rule, there are sandwich haters, among whom Osbert Sitwell and Philip Guston stand out: Sitwell because he views sandwiches as being "slimy layers of paste" and Phil Guston, who got anxious about sandwiches, especially with bacon and eggs. (There must be a hidden long story here.) On the happy side, Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas saved their sandwiches for picnics. And though they were iconoclastic about many things, their sandwich menus are rigid and traditional — chicken salad or chopped roast beef. According to Toklas the picnic destination was not always planned; they would pack sandwiches and then drive either "Aunt Pauline" or "Lady Godiva," both Fords, without knowing where they might stop to eat "First Picnic Lunch" or "Second Picnic Lunch."

Sandwiches and War are not inimical, especially because of their portability. Ford Madox Ford's sandwich in A Man Could Stand Up (1926) is a metaphor for the absurdity of war. Capt. Christopher Teitjens has stopped for lunch prepared by a Lance-Corporal, a chef's assistant in peacetime, while German artillery is systematically shelling the area. The sandwiches are set on napkins on a flat stone, but Teitjens is not thinking of them; instead, he is considering how he will seduce the daughter of his father's oldest friend. The sandwiches are an absurd concoction of the officers' mess: foie gras, bully beef paste with margarine, anchovy paste, and minced onion, seasoned with Worcestershire sauce. If this menu isn't ghastly enough, just after lunch an artillery shell explodes in the trench and the Lance-Corporal is killed; luckily Teitjens survives — a grim incident that accelerates Teitjens's already wobbly psychological instability and messy love life that ends badly.

The absurd metaphorical sandwich on the battlefield is reiterated in Fernando Arrabal's Picnic on the Battlefield (1960). Arrabal's sandwich is a metaphor for the stupidity of war. It's served by Mr. and Mrs. Tépan, who decide to bring a picnic to their son Zapo who is fighting in a battle. When Zapo reminds his parents that this is a war, Mr. Tépan says, "I don't give a damn, we came here to have a picnic with you in the country and to enjoy our Sunday." With characteristic obtuseness, the parents unpack the picnic basket, spreading sausage, hard-boiled eggs, ham sandwiches, salad, cakes, and a bottle of red wine on a cloth. The war is suddenly forgotten as they relax and listen to a phonograph — until they are killed in a sudden barrage of bullets. If there is a moral here, it's "Don't eat sandwiches on the battlefield."

The aftermath of war is suggested by the gluttony of sandwiches that are Sophie's choice that she eats while picnicking in New York's Prospect Park. A survivor of Auschwitz, Sophie Zawistowska, the hero of William Styron's Sophie's Choice (1979), gorges herself on sandwiches in Prospect Park, Brooklyn. The sandwiches are a symbol of the contrast between her new and old life; one of superficial pleasure and the other of privation. The memories of her old life prove impossible to overcome, and they eat away at her until she commits suicide. Stingo, Styron's narrator, calls these episodes a "fête champêtre," an allusion to Watteau's elegant outing in an aristocratic French park. But this is romantic illusion, for the reality is that the picnics in the park and the sandwich are only a "pleasant game" that takes her mind off the horrors of her previous existence. Sophie's sandwiches are purchased at one of the "glorious delicatessens" on Flatbush Avenue. There was so much to eat, such variety and abundance, that each time she visited these delis, her breath stopped, her eyes actually filmed over with emotion. Because "the privilege of choice gave her a feeling achingly sensual." Among her favorite choices are: pickled eggs, salami, pumpernickel, Bratwurst, Braunschweiger, sardines, hot pastrami, bagel and lox. The joy of picnicking and the mounds of sandwiches momentarily mask Sophie's despair. The sandwiches in the brown paper bags satisfy her body, but they do not satisfy her psyche.
The sandwich has been used to signify situations that can only be described as being variations of the battle of the sexes from adolescent romance to hard-boiled antagonism.

Everyone remembers Marcel Proust’s madeleines, but few remember his sandwich and memory metaphor “Within a Budding Grove” (1914). In a previous book, Swann’s Way, Marcel, Proust’s fictional self remembers madeleines, triggering many deep and superficial memories. But in “Within a Budding Grove,” Marcel, now an adolescent, shifts to more substantial fare. At first, it’s comical; for instead of eating sandwiches with his friends, he eats chocolate cream cake with icing, and apricot tarts to impress the girls. It’s a sign of his immaturity without social penalty. The girls seem not to mind and eat their cheese sandwiches. For Marcel, the cake-eating is a juvenile means for forging relationships which change over time, so that by the end of summer when they are on friendlier terms, Marcel sits among them like a painter admiring their “fleshy surfaces” while eating sandwiches simply offered. He feels only as if he “had been playing in a band of nymphs.” Ironically, Proust casually mentions for the first time croque-monsieur, the crunchy toasted cheese and ham sandwich served hot. The name is literally “crunchy mister,” and it’s not the kind of food Marcel needs or can take to a picnic. (For the record, Alexandre Dumas had nothing to do with the naming of the Monte Cristo sandwich.)

Edith Wharton’s Summer (1917) takes Proust’s sandwiches and summer romance a step further. Charity Royall, a pubescent girl of sixteen, falls for Lucius Harney, an architect, who innocently hires her to drive him to see the local houses. On the day Charity takes Harney to a ruined house, she prepares a picnic lunch: cheese sandwiches, buttermilk, and slices of apple pie. Her seduction works; eventually she becomes pregnant and is jilted. This is a heavy price for a romantic picnic lunch of cheese sandwiches and apple pie.

Less traumatic and very unromantic is the sandwich of cold liver pudding in Carson McCuller’s bleak The Heart is a Lonely Hunter (1940). At thirteen, Mick Kelly, the hero, is initiated into sex at a picnic. She chooses Harry Minowitz and they endure a brief picnic on a spring Sunday. For lunch, Mick takes jelly sandwiches and Nehi, a popular orange drink. Since Harry is Jewish, Mick wonders if Harry will bring something strange and Jewish to eat. He does: “cold liver pudding and chicken salad sandwiches and pie.” He also has hard-boiled eggs with separate packages of salt and pepper, blackberry jelly and butter sandwiches. Harry’s mother even remembers to pack napkins. Lunch over, the couple swims and engages in sex; it’s tender but without any romance or lust. Perhaps, if Harry’s mother had provided something other than liver pudding, a romance might have been sparked, but as it is, this sandwich is among the dullest sexual metaphors imaginable.

Sandwich choices at a lovers’ picnic play a pivotal moment in W. Somerset Maugham’s The Razor’s Edge (1944). In an effort to bring together Larry Darrell and Isabel Bradley, the practical-minded Mrs. Bradley and the effete Elliot Templeton argue over what to pack in the basket. Mrs. Bradley suggests “stuffed eggs and a chicken sandwiches,” but Templeton insists on something outré and elegant; “Nonsense. You can’t have picnic without pâté de foie gras. You must give them curried shrimps to start with, breast of chicken in aspic, with a heart-of-lettuce salad for which I’ll make the dressing myself, and after the pâté if you like, as a concession to your American habits, an apple pie.” Though Mrs. Bradley prevails, the lovers never connect and the picnic lunch marks the long unhappy slide of their disaffection. Though the day is brilliant, the landscape is dull, and the good solid sandwiches and the American apple pie fail to produce the desired effect. Larry Darrell is indifferent to the sandwiches and so unsure of his feelings for Isabel that the event is a disaster. Darrell leaves Chicago.
for Paris in a quest for his sense of self and place in life.

And there’s nothing romantic about the sandwich that Dashiell Hammett serves up in *The Maltese Falcon* (1931). Here the metaphor suggests a predatory battle of the sexes. While Sam Spade cuts French bread into ovals and spreads them with liverwurst or corned beef, Brigit O’Shaunessey sets the table. When she puts down her pistol and begins to eat, they talk about the falcon. She eats and he listens; “She chewed the beef and bread in her mouth, swallowed it, looked at the small crescent its removal had made in the sandwich rim and asked: ‘Suppose I wouldn’t tell you?’” As they banter, O’Shaunessey says, “I’m afraid of you and that’s the truth.” To which Spade, replies, “That’s not the truth.” Everything is calculated, and there is ever present a sly suggestion that Spade is sandwich meat to her. It is inconceivable to imagine someone as tough as Spade in a food market, let alone to realize that his kitchen is well enough stocked for a quick evening meal with fresh French bread.

Social criticism is sandwiched by Émile Zola, D. H. Lawrence, George Orwell, and Allen Ginsberg. Émile Zola makes the simple bread and butter sandwiches a metaphor for working class subsistence among miners in *Germinal* (1885). It’s called a *briguet*, or brick, because it was made with thick stale bread with cheese and butter, if there was enough butter. Conditions are so primitive that the miners carry their *brigues* on their backs between their jacket and shirt, and eat it (moistened with cold coffee) squatting on their buttocks. Bread sandwiches are standard miner’s fare in D. H. Lawrence’s *Sons and Lovers* (1913). Every morning Paul Morel’s father gets up at 5:45 a.m. and eats a rash of bacon on bread for breakfast, then cuts two thick pieces of bread with butter and puts them in a white calico bag. He fills a tin bottle with tea without milk, which he will drink cold. For a treat there might be an apple or an orange. George Orwell’s *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) indicates that sandwiches were limited to bread, butter, and bacon drippings. The Orwell sandwich is so basic it’s not more than “a hunk of bread and dripping,” washed down with a bottle of cold tea. It seems a dietary marvel how miners managed on such subsistence meals. Orwell’s sandwiches, particularly, are an attack on middle class social and economic indifference to the plight of the working classes. For Orwell, the meager lunchboxes of the Wigan miners are symbols of “the physical degeneracy of modern England.” But Orwell and Lawrence are kindly towards the working class, especially miners, who take on an almost heroic stature in their works.

In another time period, Allen Ginsberg’s sandwich imagery is a rant about what he finds disgusting in mid-twentieth-century American society and his place in it. The collection, *Reality Sandwiches 1953-1960* (1963) is derived from a metaphor in “On Burroughs’ Work” (1954):

“A naked lunch is natural to us,
we eat reality sandwiches.
But allegories are so much lettuce.
Don’t hide the madness.”

The metaphors “naked lunch” and “reality sandwiches” are evocative and promise more than they can deliver, for much of Ginsberg’s intentions are meant to be superficial, like Pop Art. Ginsberg’s surly intention is to attack the middle class from which he is disassociating himself in order to find a new reality. The process is unpleasant and filled with self-loathing, which is symbolized by the sandwich he describes in “In Society” made of human flesh. It’s a depressing diatribe, especially of the artsy crowd he was also rebelling against:

“I was offered refreshments, which I accepted.
I ate a sandwich of pure meat; an enormous sandwich of human flesh.
. . .”

If it matters at all, along the way
Ginsberg became a vegetarian. Ginsberg
means to be disgusting and his "meat" sandwich achieves his goal, and reveals a limited gustatory repertoire.

Sandwiches suggest emotional highs and lows, sometimes innocently and sometimes despairingly. Stephen Crane's "Shame" imagines what a boy of eight will do to get a sandwich for a picnic. Ironically, it is a growing-up story written by Crane when he was in the last stages of dying of tuberculosis. Instead of being maudlin, Crane reveals his amusement as the boy gets his comeuppance when his friends make fun of him for bringing his sandwich in a workman's lunch pail. The sandwich is a work of art (and economy of food writing) as the family cook seizes a loaf of bread: 

"... and, wielding a knife, she cut from this loaf four slices, each of which was as big as a six-shilling novel. She profusely spread them with butter, and jabbing the point of her knife into the salmon-tin, she brought up bits of salmon, which she flung and flattened upon the bread. Then she crushed the pieces of bread together in pairs, much as one would clash cymbals. There was no doubt in her own mind but that she had created two sandwiches." When Jimmie comes home and hides the uneaten sandwich under a blanket in the barn, and when he's found out by the stableman all he can stammer is "I don't know. I didn't have nothin' to do with it." Though he is indignant, Jimmie is shamed by his evident sense of being caught in a lie and his immaturity.

What is surprising is the range of how sandwiches fit into the scheme of literary narrative and imagery. It's not the food — ham, cheese, tuna, salmon — that really matters but how a sandwich metaphor is adapted to social and anti-war satire, national gastronomy, love and the battle of the sexes, and emotional highs and lows. Since these applications are unexpected, they have been overlooked, perhaps until now. From its appearance, first recorded in Gibbon's private journal (1762), and its public debut in Grosley's Tour of London (1769), the sandwich quickly became a popular and convenient meal or snack, easily made, infinitely variable, and extremely portable. So portable, in fact, that it has made it into space when Virgil "Gus" Grissom and John Young rocketed N.A.S.A.'s Gemini 3 spacecraft into Earth's orbit in 1965. The astronauts smuggled a corned beef sandwich on their spacecraft for a picnic in space, but when Grissom began to eat it, it fell apart. NASA controllers were amused and suggested that next time the astronauts might try fried chicken.

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Within the Southwest Virginia Counties Collection housed in Special Collections at Virginia Tech, an extensive study began in October 2009. This study was initiated by interest in the two hand-written recipe books in the Collection. Gail McMillan, Director of Digital Library and Archives at Virginia Tech, and Jean Robbins, retired Virginia Tech Extension Dietitian, and both active members of the Peacock-Harper Culinary History Friends Advisory Committee, began their search of primary and secondary documents related to two Fincastle Families, the Godwins and the Figgats.

They located a wealth of information. McMillan and Robbins have reported their researched study in several historical society newsletters; they have given two presentations to two large groups in the Roanoke area; they have been interviewed by a journalist for a newspaper story; and they have submitted a journal article for publication.

Presently, the two researchers are working to complete their interpretative research study for publication by the Botetourt County Historical Society Museum Board. Also, all their findings will be available to students and the public online at Virginia Tech. Watch for an announcement soon!

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