



CULINARY • HISTORIANS • OF • NEW • YORK

A True History of Popcorn in America by Andrew F. Smith

Have you ever looked at a food product and wondered about its history? I must admit that curiosity launched me into culinary history. My subsequent endeavors have been stoked by the joy of exploding culinary myths, the fun of solving mysteries, and the satisfaction of enjoying uncommon insights into common foods. My latest culinary voyage was triggered by a mundane question: How did popcorn arrive in movie theaters?

The answer to that question begins in prehistory. Popcorn was probably the earliest variety of corn to be domesticated. New World archaeologists have found popcorn kernels dating back several thousand years. Pre-Columbian corn poppers have been found in South America. In North America Native American groups, such as the Iroquois, heated corn in the embers of camp fires and used sieves to remove the ashes from the kernels. Popped corn was ground into corn meal, which was more digestible and weighed less than the original corn. It could then be mixed into porridge, converted into bread, stored in pottery, or carried in pouches providing sustenance for long journeys.

Almost every school child knows the story of how Native Americans introduced popcorn to the Pilgrims at the first Thanksgiving feast, purportedly held at Plymouth in 1621. At the end of the feast Quadequina poured upon the table "a bushel of popped corn - a dainty hitherto unseen and unknown by most of the Pilgrims." Or so the American novelist Jane Adams wrote in *Standish of Standish: A Story of the Pilgrims* (1889). It was a good story which intended to show how kindly Native Americans treated the recent immigrants from Europe. School textbooks picked up the story, and popular magazines regurgitated it in annual descriptions of the proverbial first Thanksgiving.

Unfortunately neither the Pilgrims nor other American colonists "crunched" true popcorn. No evidence has surfaced indicating that popcorn was even grown in Massachusetts or Virginia prior to the 19th century. Colonists did parch or heat other varieties of corn. Under certain conditions, other varieties will occasionally explode to about half the size of popcorn. However, as the 19th

century Virginia farmer John Jay Janney reported, "popcorn was not known in the neighborhood till about 1825."

The first cookbook reference to popcorn that I located was published in Russell Trail's *New Hydropathic Cookbook* (1854). Trail reported that popcorn was sold in fruit stands everywhere, but was not impressed with the commercial product which he referred to as "dyspepsia corn," because it was heavily seasoned with salt and was very greasy due to the fact that it had been popped in hog's lard.

Whatever Trail may have thought about the commercial product, popcorn increasingly became a food fad in America. New York cookbook author E.F.Haskell published recipes for "Pop Corn Balls" and "Pop Corn Cakes" in her *Housekeeper's Encyclopedia* (1861). For years Mrs. Goodfellow's *Cookery as it Should Be* included a recipe for

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A SPECIAL PULL-OUT FOR CULINARY HISTORIANS

This issue of the Newsletter contains a special pull-out, a listing of food-related museums that have been compiled by your editor with the help of members, other culinary groups, and interested non-members.

We hope it's of value to you in your travels and research, and we intend to add to it periodically.

If YOU know of any food-related museums, we'd appreciate your sending complete information to Editor Millie Delahunty, 32 Harvard Street, Garden City NY 11530-4004. If you'd like to FAX it, the number is 516/437-8160 (you **must** call first as it is not a dedicated FAX line).

Enjoy the list and your visits to these museums!

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Culinary History Programs in Manhattan

Food culture and history is a prominent topic this fall at both The New School and New York University.

The Culinary Arts Program at The New School will offer three courses in Culinary History with registration open to anyone with a serious interest in culture and cuisine. The course may also be taken for undergraduate credit in the Social Sciences.

From Marcus Apicius to Julia Child: Introduction to Culinary History will be taught by Andrew Smith. The course is an overview of Western culinary history from antiquity and the civilizations of the Mediterranean Basin through the Renaissance and the confluence of New World and Old World foods to the multiculturalism and global cuisine of today.

Andrew will also teach Culinary History: New World Foods and Their Influence on Cuisine, exploring the history and lore of New World foods such as the potato, sweet potato, chili pepper, and turkey. He will cover their use in pre-Columbian civilizations and the colonial period through their impact on Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Michael Krondl will present Culinary History: Cooking and Eating in America. Topics range from the culinary heritage of American, English, and African-American foodways to the role of women, both as professional and home cooks, and the paradoxical growth of both fast food and "gourmet food" industries.

New York University's Department of Nutrition and Food Studies, Continuing Education, lists eight classes in food culture, history, and flavors. As with the New School classes, these are open to those with an interest in culinary history.

Joanne Lamb Hayes will present American Pies: Traditions and Techniques with a discussion of how centuries-old European pastry recipes brought to America by generations of immigrants evolved into regional specialties starring on dessert menus across the United States.

In *The Magic of Chinese Ingredients* Ed Schoenfeld will take the mystery out of a variety of Asian ingredients, showing the flavoring adjustments required based on the ingredients used.

Lidia Bastianich will address *Border Cuisine: Converging Cultures*, and what makes the food of a particular country unique and what happens to unique cuisines when different cultures meet at the borders.

Discussion and tasting of the *Farmhouse Cheeses of Great Britain* will be presented by Rob Kaufelt and Avice Wilson, featuring a variety of rare farmhouse cheeses.

Betty Fussell will help students to discover the Culinary Roots of American Cookery as her discussion travels from

the 4,000-year-old origins of current American cuisine in the food of Mexico and Central American to the philosophical differences between American and French cookery.

Elizabeth Rozin, in *Flavor Principles: Ethnic Cuisines and Flavor Systems*, will discuss how various cuisines use characteristic flavoring ingredients to create an ethnic "sensory label."

For information about The New School programs, contact Gary Goldberg, Executive Director of the Culinary Arts Program (212/255-4141). To register, call 212/229-5690.

For information about the New York University classes, contact NYU Continuing Education in Food Studies (212/995-4194).

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Susan Asanovic was a First Prize Winner in the Campbell's Soup Golden Ladle Foodservice Recipe Contest. Her Fiesta Corn Muffins using Campbell's Fiesta Tomato Soup as the key ingredient won her a week of cooking lessons at Lorenza de Medici's La Villa Table near Siena, Italy. Susan is very interested in Signora de Medici's knowledge of Italian culinary history.

In Memory's Kitchen: A Legacy from the Women of Terezin, a collective memoir in the form of a cookbook manuscript, was produced by women who were imprisoned in a ghetto/concentration camp in Czechoslovakia. The introduction is by **Cara De Silva** and the translation by **Bianca Brown**.

The three Culinary History courses at the New School this fall will be taught by **Michael Krondl** (Cooking and Eating in America) and **Andrew Smith** (From Marcus Apicius to Julia Child: Introduction to Culinary History and New World Foods and Their Influence on Cuisine).

Andrew Smith's newest book *Pure Ketchup: A History of America's National Condiment, with Recipes* is being published by the University of South Carolina Press this fall.

Susan Baldassano organizes very special tours/classes where small groups of students travel to an ethnic neighborhood, shop at the local markets, and then go to "grandmother's" kitchen where they are taught her traditional food and cooking techniques.

Congratulations to **Alice Ross**, who has completed her Ph.D. Alice continues to present open-hearth cooking classes, as well as other historically-oriented programs.

FOOD-RELATED MUSEUMS

Museums are listed alphabetically by state, and information as to focus is included, together with other information as known.

Please check visiting hours with museums before visiting.

UNITED STATES

The Nut Museum

303 Ferry Road
Old Lyme, CT 06371 203/434-7636
Nuts

Delaware Agricultural Museum and Village

866 N. Dupont Highway
Dover, DE 19901 302/734-1618
Delaware farming, general farm life, farming technology

The Potato Museum *(viewing by appointment)*

704 N. Carolina Avenue S.E.
Washington, DC 202/544-1558
Potatoes

Tupperware Museum of Historic Food Containers

South Orange Blossom Trail
Kissimmee, FL 32741 407/826-5050
Collection of food containers, featuring 6,000-year-old Egyptian jar

The World of Coca-Cola

55 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
Atlanta, GA 30303
Coca-Cola memorabilia

Hawaii Bottle Museum

P.O. Box 1635
Honokaa, HI 96727-1635 808/775-0411
Antique bottles (including whiskeys, gins, medicines, foods, sodas) showing the history of the Hawaiian Islands from 1776 to 1900

Blackberry Historical Farm-Village

P.O. Box 591
Aurora, IL 60506 708/892-1550
Agricultural history of Northern Illinois, ca. 1830

The Szathmary Collection of Culinary Arts

The University of Iowa Libraries, Special Collections Dept.
University of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242
Collection includes works in classical and modern languages, ranging from 15th-century printed books and manuscripts of the 17th-20th centuries to current issues of Gourmet magazine

The following listing of museums is admittedly an incomplete one, and we ask that members aware of unlisted museums send the information to the editor to be published in future issues. Thanks to those who have helped in putting together this listing. May you all enjoy and use it!

UNITED STATES

Schmidt's Coca-Cola Museum

1201 N. Dixie Avenue
Elizabethtown, KY 42701
502/737-4000
Coca-Cola artifacts

Coca-Cola Memorabilia Museum of Elizabethtown

P.O. Box 647
Elizabethtown, KY 42702-0647
502/737-6665
Coca-Cola history from 1897 to 1970

The Rice Museum

P.O. Box 1176
Crowlet, LA 70527-1176
318/783-6842
Rice industry

New Orleans Pharmacy Museum

514 Rue Chartres
New Orleans, LA 70130
504/524-9077
History of 19th-century pharmacies, medicine and health care

Hadley Farm Museum

147 Russell Street
Hadley, MA 01035
413/584-1139
Housed in 1872 barn, farming equipment, etc.

Cranberry World Visitors Center

225 Water Street
Plymouth, MA 02360
617/747-1000
Cranberry production

Maritime and Seafood Industry Museum

P.O. Box 1907
Biloxi, MS 39533
601/435-6320
Objects and implements used in the seafood industry

FOOD-RELATED MUSEUMS

UNITED STATES

Biedenharn Candy Company and Museum of Coca-Cola Memorabilia

1107 Washington Street
Vicksburg, MS 39180 601/638-6514
Coca-Cola; reproduction bottling works, 1900 soda fountain, etc.

New Sweden Farmstead Museum

50 E. Broad Street
Bridgeton, NJ 08302 609/455-9785
Farming tools, blacksmith shop, household implements

Campbell Museum

Campbell Place
Camden, NJ 08103 609/342-6440
Soups and soup tureens

The Museum of Early Trades and Crafts

Main Street at Green Village Road
Madison, NJ 07940 201/377-2982
Tools and products of 18th- and 19th-century home and farm life

The New Jersey Museum of Agriculture

P.O. Box 1978
New Brunswick, NJ 08903 908/249-2077
Agricultural history, household technology

Cayuga County Agricultural Museum

East Lake Road
Auburn, NY 13021 315/252-7644
Dairy processing, agricultural history of Cayuga County

The Farmers' Museum, Inc.

P.O. Box 800
Cooperstown, NY 13326 607/547-5431
Agricultural history

American Maple Museum

P.O. Box 81
Crogan, NY 13327 315/346-1107
History of maple products and production systems

Salt Museum

P.O. Box 146
Liverpool, NY 13088 315/453-6767
19th- and 20th-century salt industry

UNITED STATES

Old Bethpage Village Restoration

Round Swamp Road
(Long Island Expressway, Exit 48)
Old Bethpage, NY 11804 516/572-8400
A "living" pre-Civil War village; restored homes, farm buildings, inn, and general store; cooking and other demonstrations periodically; period agricultural fair in October

Museum of the Albemarle

(Northeastern branch of the NC Museum of History)
Elizabeth City, NC 27909
Permanent collection includes items from exhibit of foodways of the Albemarle, with elements from the native American diet, African-American, and European settlers in 1991

Tryon Palace

New Bern, NC 28560
Restoration of the first "king's" office and living quarters, herb and kitchen gardens. Palace was built before the Revolution, destroyed in a fire, then restored over foundations discovered in digs by descriptions found in papers of the time

Stagville

P.O. Box 71217
Durham, NC 27222-7217 919/620-0120
One of largest plantations in the South at time of Civil War (30,000 acres, now 19,000 acres). Located 10 miles north of downtown, has house restored to pre-Civil War period, gardens planted in heirloom vegetables. Education center, with historical food demonstration and tasting once or twice a year

Duke Homestead

2828 Duke Homestead Road
Durham, NC 27705
Shows how a tobacco farming family lived; grounds have tobacco barns and other farm building, herb gardens. Main tour is on tobacco drying and production, but twice yearly the staff conducts cooking demonstrations

Wyandot Popcorn Museum

Heritage Hall
169 E. Church Street
Marion, OH 43302 800/WYANDOT (ext. 2221)
Popcorn history and making or 614/387-HALL

FOOD-RELATED MUSEUMS

UNITED STATES

Candy Americana Museum
Wilbur Chocolate Company
48 N. Broad Street
Lititz, PA 17543 717/626-1131
Candy/chocolate

National Apple Museum
P.O. Box 656
Biglerville, PA 17307-0656 717/677-4556
Apple production, processing, and utilization

Culinary Archives and Museum
Johnson & Wales University
315 Harborside Boulevard
Providence, RI 02905 401/455-2805
Culinary and gastronomy museum; over 300,000 items related to the field of culinary arts and hospitality, including many from the Szathmary CulinaryCollection

The Rice Museum
Front and Screven Streets
Georgetown, SC 29440 803/546-7423
Rice

The Rice Museum
P.O. Box 902
Georgetown, SC 29442 803/546-7423
South Carolina rice industry

State Agriculture Heritage Museum
P.O. Box 22207C
Brookings, SD 57007 605/688-6220
Agricultural history

D.C. Booth Historic Fish Hatchery and Museum
413 Hatchery Circle
Spearfish, SD 57783 605/642-7730
Historic fishery and fish culture

Imperial Sugar Refinery
Sugar Land, TX
Guided tours of sugar production

Dr. Pepper Museum
300 E. 5th Street
Waco, TX 76710 817/757-1024
Story of entire soft drink industry

New England Maple Museum
US Highway 7
Pittsford, VT 05763 801/483-9414
Maple syrup production

UNITED STATES

Honey of a Museum
Honey Acres, Highway 67
2 miles north of Ashippun, WI 53003 414/474-4411
Honey

Hoard Historical Museum and National Dairy Shrine
407 Merchant Avenue
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538 414/563-7769
Indian culture and dairy history

CANADA

Battlefield House Museum
77 King Street West
P.O. Box 66561
Stoney Creek, Ontario L8G 5E5
Canada
Contact: Roel van der Meiden (905/662-8458;
or Carol Taylor fax 905/643-6161)
*Open hearth cooking program, utilizing bake kettles, tin
kitchens and griddles in an effort to represent the period
of 1800-1835 accurately*

Seagram Museum
57 Erb Street
W. Waterloo, Ontario
Canada (519/885-1857)
*Museum dedicated to the history of milling, one of
Canada's founding industries*

Black Creek Pioneer Village
1000 Murray Ross Parkway
North York, Ontario
Canada (416/736-1733)
*Pioneer village restoration; demonstration and other
programs*

EUROPE

Alte Backstube (Old Bakery)
8 Langegasse 34
Vienna, Austria
Historic bakery

The Bramah Tea & Coffee Museum
The Clove Building
Maguire Street, Butler's Wharf
London, England SE2 071-378-0222
History of tea and coffee

FOOD-RELATED MUSEUMS

EUROPE

Museum of Garden History
Lambeth Palace Road
London, England SE 7071-261-1891
Large section on history and uses of tea

Musee de Pain
Charonton-le-Pont
Paris, France 33-1-43-68-43-60
Baking equipment through the ages

Le Musee Francais du Pain
25 bi Rue Victor Hugo
Charenton-le-Pont, France
French bread museum

Le Mason de la Truffe
Sorges, France
French truffle museum

Societe des Caves et Des Producteurs Reunis de Roquefort
(Association of Roquefort Cheese Producers)
Roquefort-sur-Soulzon, France
History of Roquefort cheese, equipment, etc.

Musee du Vin
Rue des Eaux
Paris (16th Arrondissement), France 45-25-63-26
Wine museum

Musee du Camembert
10 Avenue du General de Gaulle
Vimoutiers (Normandy), France
History of Camembert

Musee du Vin de Champagne
13 Avenue de Champagne
Epernay, France
Champagne production

Europaisches Brotmuseum
(European Bread Museum)
3403 Mollenfelde
Friedland, Germany
History of breads and grains

Deutsches Brotmuseum
(German Bread Museum)
17 Fursteneckerstrasse
Ulm, Germany
History of breads and grains

EUROPE

Bakkerimuseum de Grenwachter
Kappellweg 13
Luycksgestel, Holland
Baking museum

Stichting Banket-Bakkersmuseum
Flevohof, Holland
Baker's and confectioner's museum

Museo Storico Degli Spaghetti
Pontedassio, Italy
(write to: Eva Agnesi, Paolo Agnesi e Figli, Via Tommaso Schiva 1, Imperia 18100, Italy)
Spaghetti museum

Marienhof Culinaire Museum
Kleine Haag 2 (hoek Stadsring)
3811 HE Amersfoort
Netherlands 033-4631025
Utensils, equipment, foods

Alimentarium
1 Rue du Lemane
Vevey, Switzerland 21-9244111
Originally conceived by Nestle corporation; contains some hands-on exhibits

Alimentarium
Quai Perdonnet
Vevey, Switzerland
General culinary history

ASIA

Tobacco and Salt Museum
1-16-8 Jinnan
Shibuya-ku, Japan 476-2041
All exhibits somehow connected with salt and tobacco. One floor of this small museum shows several ways that have been used in Japan to "harvest" salt, ranging in level of technology from low to high

The Ramen Museum
(Ramen Hakubutsukan)
Tokyo 045-471-0503
A short walk from the Shin Yokohama station (take either Tokaido or JR Hokohamasen train; maps available at Takashimaya counter in station)History and manufacture; displays have limited information in English

DATES TO NOTE

All Culinary Historians of New York programs are bold-faced for your convenience. Watch for flyers with information on those programs. Please share information on other events of possible interest to other CHNY members. We include out-of-state (or country) information for the benefit of our traveling members.

Just contact Millie Delahunty (516/437-8160) with news of events. If you wish, you may FAX information (516/437-8160) but you must call first to alert us of your intention (it is not a dedicated FAX line).

Until November 1

American Cookery: The Bicentennial
1796-1996 Exhibition
The Clements Library
University of Michigan
909 S. University St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1198



November 1-2
Friday-Saturday

Northeast Popular Culture Association
Annual Meeting
Quinnipiac College, Hamden, CT
David Cole, NEPCA Program Chair
Department of English,
Quinnipiac College
Box 214, Hamden, CT 06518



November 8-10
Friday-Sunday

History in the Making: 200 Years of
American Cookbooks Symposium
Colonial Williamsburg, VA
Brown and Whiting
1113 M Street NW
Washington, DC 20005
202/371-8126 or 202/333-3442
FAX 202/842-3867



December 1
Sunday

Deadline for CHNY Newsletter
Millie Delahunty (516/437-8160)

A True History of Popcorn in America

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frying the kernels in lard and added orange or lemon juice flavorings to the popped corn. During the 1870s many cookbooks included recipes for "Popcorn Pudding," ground-up popcorn in cream, and "Corn Candy," popcorn with molasses and sugar, a forerunner of Cracker Jack.

By 1876 popcorn was one of America's most popular snack foods. Attendees at the Centennial World's Fair in Philadelphia waited in long lines to purchase a nickel-bag of popcorn. It was sold regularly at fairs, election rallies, circuses, and other large gatherings. With Americans popping corn in their homes and at festive affairs such as picnics, sales increased. With the advent of spectator sports such as baseball, popcorn sales soared even higher.

It would be logical to assume that popcorn was also sold from the beginning when movie theaters came along at the end of the 19th century, but such was not the case. When moving pictures came along, theater owners refused popcorn admission due to the mess made by spilled (or tossed) popcorn. Not until the 1920s was popcorn sold in small quantities in some theaters. The shift toward the sale of popcorn greatly accelerated during the Great Depression as movie theaters faced financial doom. Today, most theater owners make more money from sales at their concession stands than they do from admissions to the movies.

About the author: Andrew Smith, a Culinary Historians of New York member, is the author of The Tomato in America: Early History, Culture and Cookery and the recently published Pure Ketchup: A History of America's National Condiment. He is currently writing a history of popcorn.

The **CHNY Newsletter** welcomes letters to the editor, food history articles, news of upcoming food-related events, and book reviews from readers. Submissions will be published at the discretion of the editors, and may be edited for clarity and/or space limitations. All material must include the name, address and telephone number of the writer. Please type and double-space submissions if possible.

We will try to respond to all submissions, and will return unpublished material if an SASE is enclosed. You may wish to query the editors first. Send queries or copy to Millie Delahunty, 32 Harvard Street, Garden City, NY 11530-4004.

Deadline for the Winter 1997 issue is
December 1, 1996.



Contributor to this issue are:

- > **Andrew F. Smith**
- > **and all those who shared information for the Food-Related Museums listing.**

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