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Applying Concepts from Historical Archaeology to New England's Nineteenth-Century Cookbooks

Anne Yentsch

This article describes a study of New England cookbooks as a data source for historical archaeologists. The database for this research consisted of single-authored, first-edition cookbooks written by New England women between 1800 and 1900, together with a small set of community cookbooks and newspaper advertisements. The study was based on the belief that recipes are equivalent to artifact assemblages and can be analyzed using the archaeological methods of seriation, presence/absence, and chaîne opératoire. The goal was to see whether change through time could be traced within a region, and why change occurred; whether it was an archetypal shift in food practice, modifications made by only a few families, change that revolved around elite consumption patterns, or transformations related to gender and other social forces unrelated to market price. The role of technology, as seen through the adoption of kitchen stoves and new modes of cooking, was a concern. Seriation highlights times and places in which ideas change and new ones emerge in novel forms. Its employment revealed changes among the nuts, fruits, and vegetables used in desserts. Analysis based on the chaîne opératoire approach indicated that the number and sequence of steps in food preparation changed as women became familiar with stove cooking. The influence of domestic reformers and physicians became evident; but it was also clear that many of the changes within New England foodways percolated throughout the region from the bottom up after appearing among lower socioeconomic levels of society.

Cet article décrit une étude portant sur les livres de recettes de la Nouvelle-Angleterre en tant que source pour les archéologues de la période historique. La base de données utilisée pour cette recherche consistait d'éditions originales de livres de recettes rédigés entre 1800 et 1900 par une auteure unique –toutes de femmes de la Nouvelle-Angleterre– ainsi que d'un petit ensemble de livres de recettes communautaires et de publicités provenant de journaux. L'étude repose sur la croyance que les recettes étaient l'équivalent d'un assemblage d'artéfacts et qu'elles peuvent être analysées grâce aux méthodes archéologiques de sériation, de présence/absence et d'une approche dite de chaîne opératoire. Le but était de vérifier si les traces des changements au fil du temps pouvaient être suivies dans une région donnée, et de tenter de comprendre pourquoi le changement avait eu lieu : s'agissait-il d'un changement archétype dans la pratique alimentaire, de modifications apportées par quelques familles uniquement, de changements liés aux pratiques de consommation de l'élite ou encore, de transformations liées au genre et à d'autres facteurs sociaux sans relation avec les prix du marché? Le rôle de la technologie tel qu'on a pu le voir avec l'adoption des cuisinières et les nouvelles façons de cuisiner constituaient une inquiétude. La sériation nous permet d'identifier quand et où les idées ont changées ainsi que d'observer les nouvelles idées émerger sous des formes inhabituelles. L'usage de cette méthode a révélé des changements au niveau des noix, des fruits et des légumes utilisés dans les desserts. Avec l'approche de la chaîne opératoire, les résultats de l'analyse ont indiqué que le nombre et la séquence des étapes dans la préparation des aliments avait changé au fur et à mesure que les femmes s'habituèrent à la cuisinière. L'influence des artisans de la réforme domestique et des médecins ne faisaient plus aucun doute. Par contre, il était aussi clair que plusieurs des changements dans l'alimentation en Nouvelle-Angleterre avaient été initiés par les classes populaires de la société pour ensuite faire surface chez les gens des classes supérieures.

Introduction

As a child who learned to cook at her grandmother's knee and was given free rein in the kitchen, cooking inevitably became an abiding interest for me, as did cookbooks. But it took 50 years for me to begin to think of the texts in archaeological terms, to see them as assemblages, with dates and contexts, *terminus post quem*s, chronologies, or genealogies, and to realize that the books themselves were agents

of change as much as sources of information. While trying to untangle their intricacies, what came to mind was that the texts shared elements in common with New England gravestones. On the one hand, like gravestones, cookbooks can be analyzed and reanalyzed using different approaches. On the other, their numbers are few, and they are more complex artifacts, speaking to all rites of passage in a community's life, rather than simply to death. Cookbooks

contain information that speaks to seasons of the year, days of the week, and hours of the day; to age, health, gender, ethnic identity, fantasy, ideology, local markets, and global distribution networks. Their contents also convey popular methods of cooking food, and conventional or favored foods, as well as what is considered unpopular or impure.

Early gravestone studies, by and large, looked at two elements—design motif and epitaph—and their distribution within a small area (Dethlefsen and Deetz 1966; Deetz 1968, 1977). Deetz and Dethlefsen drew not only the concept and application of seriation from archaeology, but also the approach, which placed attention on the makers (stone carvers) and the symbolic designs above the epitaph. The research was akin to Deetz's earlier study of Arikara pottery, in which decorative motifs on pots were seen as emblematic of individually and/or culturally patterned behavior. There Deetz attempted to discern whether individual choice or tradition governed the outcome (Deetz 1965). Deetz also saw in gravestones evidence of how design motifs changed as religious beliefs shifted. A goal of the research reported here was to see whether changes in food preparation through time could be traced within the same geographic area, and if seriation, used to establish chronologies, would reveal useful regional histories of foodstuffs. This broad topic was subsequently narrowed to desserts—first, cooking method, and, second, ingredients—to show how cooking methods changed with 19th-century technological innovation. To some extent, this inquiry was successful; cooks did do more baking and less boiling as the century progressed. Hearth cooking almost disappeared. Yet, it also became apparent that the focus on method was reductionist and male oriented. The soul of cooking lay elsewhere. Once changes in ingredients were charted, the scope of change was far greater than technology warranted.

The idea that cookbooks are texts that share common attributes with cemeteries is basically sound, I think, but the customary archaeologist's concern—the focus on highly visible traits or readily inferred steps in production, or *chaînes opératoires*—creates an etic comparison that can overlook meaningful, structural changes within a community. There were visible changes in cooking methods that

might be useful in considering ethnic or socioeconomic variation, or be linked to a metanarrative. But the analysis skirted the heart of the matter: what a new way of cooking meant or implied for individual families; what it signified in terms of women's attitudes and behaviors; and whether the change was representative of a shift in food practice among a significant segment of the population, or only among a few (Yentsch 2011).

Culture and Food Systems

Knowing that recipes are cultural entities, it was still a leap to see that, while cooking itself might comprise a strong, stable, highly materialistic institution, food is akin to language: fluid, mutable, easily creolized, and ideational. When one considers kinship systems, forms of governance, market systems, and social organization, the possibilities are finite, as are the number of possible ways to butcher an animal or cook food. On the one hand, many steps in food preparation (peeling fruits and vegetables, cracking nuts, boiling, baking, roasting, etc.) are limited in terms of technique. Similar limitations can be found in social institutions. For example, kinship institutions fall into three broad schemes: bilateral, patrilineal, or matrilineal; economic exchanges also fall into several basic, broad patterns. On the other hand, foodstuffs and their possible combinations, like language, offer almost infinite permutations. Each culture selects a range of edibles from a spectrum, yet infants are born with the ability to taste and devour the entire array. No group uses all its available food resources. Similar to language use, dietary choices reflect cultural preferences. Older people teach the younger generation specifically about "their" food and "their" style of cooking. Bring up a child in France and he will enjoy croissants. Raise him in Bali and he won't believe it is a meal without rice.

Other cultural influences—religious, moral, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and familial—are embedded in food preferences and taboos. While texts associated with food or cooking may express these other influences, they do so in different ways than materials found at archaeological sites. For example, oyster shells and pig bones are present in faunal assemblages from Jewish sites well before

documents discuss the covert consumption of these foods and the dissolution of the taboo among Jewish American families (Hirschler 1908–1909; Stewart-Abernathy and Ruff 1989; Koerner 2004; Yentsch 2009). Clear outlines of African American cooking can be seen in assemblages from slave quarters well before published recipes appear (e.g., Yentsch 1994, 2008; McKee 1999; Franklin 2001). British food scholars also have found archaeology a useful way to research kitchen and dining practice, because the evidence in faunal and floral assemblages is chronologically earlier than information in the written record (Hammond 1993: 120–126, 167; Brears 2008). One has to believe that more nuanced treatment of food-related artifacts, from kitchen tools and stoves to tablewares, glasswares, and food remains, might be highly productive in historical archaeology. The types of information that sites yield complement those found in cookbooks; they are coexisting data sources that could readily be interwoven (Scott 1997).

Cookbooks as Sources

The cookbooks used here are basically 19th- and 20th-century successors to a long line of culinary treatises. Cookbooks pertaining to European foods emerged first in classical Greece and Rome and were followed by medieval chefs and Renaissance writers. Literate, noble Englishwomen initially kept personal receipt books that contained family knowledge on food preparation, as did professional chefs (Baillie 1911; Jakeman 2006). Since only a few women knew how to write, personal receipt books showcased elite needs, desires, and pass-along recipes (Mason 2004). With the growth of literacy, women who cooked in aristocratic homes offered their wisdom in self-published texts. Professional men with similar experience also addressed elite or upwardly mobile households.

Women continued to compile personal, handwritten receipt books, but few American examples have survived, and even fewer have been printed or made available in e-format. One example from Boston—Mrs. Anne Gibbons Gardiner's book—is filled primarily with recipes from Hannah Glasse (Glasse 1747; Gardiner 1938). Glasse's books were marketed widely, imported, or republished in the colonies;

Boston, New York, and Philadelphia booksellers advertised them frequently in the 1750s and 1760s. In 1761 Hugh Gaine issued, in New York, versions of British books by Martha Bradley, Sarah Jackson, and Elizabeth Smith (Smith 1729; Jackson 1755; Bradley 1760). Edes and Gill, Boston publishers, also brought out a 1772 edition of Susannah Carter's work (Carter 1772). Carter added an appendix of American recipes in 1803, but these were so limited that it is hard to imagine American housewives bought Carter's book because of its appendix (Carter 1803). In considering these books, one must be aware that writers copied each other's recipes; copyright laws were negligible and frequently circumvented by Dublin printers, as well as printers in England and Scotland.

Nineteenth-century cookbooks are more plentiful and rich sources, dated and identified by author, and published for use in specific places. Few were mass produced; their authors did not intend constancy. While created by educated women, the texts bespeak a wide range of family backgrounds and kitchen activities. These include the work required to measure and blend, specialized techniques and prosaic tasks, cooking methods, food preservation, acquisition and disposal, configurations of ingredients (recipes) blended into a dish, and sets of foods that could be served together (meals and menus).

For this study, books by New England women, published from 1800 to 1880, were analyzed first. Next, a second set, consisting of charity or community cookbooks, brought the late 19th century into focus. Books whose recipes appeared to be primarily copied, more compiled than creative, were set aside and consulted occasionally. Colonial Revival cookbooks obviously filled with nostalgic recipes were not included because they attempted to recreate an earlier time. While professionally written books aimed at national readers (e.g., Sarah Hale's later works) and newspaper compilations were consulted, their sweeping coverage argued against their use. Books whose authors were known to have been born and raised outside the region were also excluded. Each book has its own personality and expresses its author's identity and worldview. Yet, taken as a set, the texts contain within

them a New England attitude toward regional values, lifestyles, and approaches to food.¹

Many of the early books were written by women who were or became established writers. Their books may speak more to literary talent and ideological zeal than to cooking skill. Only a few were by women who obviously enjoyed cooking. The earliest writers began to cook using a fire, as stoves were not popular as cooking appliances until mid-century. The more recent community cookbooks were written by an eclectic group of women who had first learned to cook, either as girls or young wives, using a stove. Almost all the authors, however, were raised in Anglo-American families and thus were familiar with New England foodways. Some of these cookbooks have been used in earlier studies of New England's regional cooking; others have not (e.g., Bowles and Towle 1947; Mosser 1957; Oliver 1995, 2005; Stavely and Fitzgerald 2004, 2011; Friedman and Larkin 2009).

It is difficult to capture the profiles, or essence, of these women in a few short phrases. They were born at different times in different places

1. More 19th-century cookbooks have come to light as research has progressed. Future publications will incorporate these data; the quantitative analyses presented here should be considered as indicative rather than absolute.

(TAB. 1). Many were closely linked in one way or another with newspapers or the publishing trade (e.g., Sarah Buell Hale [Okker 1995]). There were those whose families were among the religious elite, who were activists, teachers, and also able to earn small sums of money by writing fiction, religious literature, and cookbooks (Lydia Maria Child, Catharine Beecher, Mary Hooker Cornelius, Mary Peabody Mann). Some were Quakers, others were Universalists, while Frances Green joined a number of different churches before becoming a Spiritualist (O'Dowd 2004: 82).

Both Phebe Hart Mendall of New Bedford and Susan Glover Knight of Marblehead were married to mariners subsequently lost at sea. The difference between Mrs. Mendall and Mrs. Knight was that the former baked and sold cakes to order from her home, whereas Susan Knight published extensively and eventually, in midlife, went to Jerusalem as a missionary (Anonymous 1888; Campbell 1938). Adeline Train Whitney was a wealthy woman who wrote for a young audience well before she compiled her cookbook (Dall 1906). Ann Francis Webster's book was definitely a money-making venture begun with family support; my research

Table 1. New England cookbook authors including birthdates, childhood residence, date of first cookbook, and author's approximate age when book was published.

Birthdate	Name	Childhood residence	Cookbook date	Age
1788	Hale, Sarah Josepha Buell	Newport, NH	1839	51
1788	Webster, Ann L. Francis	Hartford, CT	1844	56
1792	Cornelius, Mary Hooker	NY & Goshen, CT	1853	61
1800	Beecher, Catharine	Litchfield, CT	1846	46
1800	Howland, Esther Allen	Plymouth, MA	1845	45
1802	Child, Lydia Maria Francis	Medford, MA	1829	27
1803	Mendall, Phebe Hart	Rochester, MA	1858	54
1805	Green, Francis	Smithfield, RI	1838	33
1806	Mann, Mary Peabody	Cambridge, MA	1857	51
1819	Knight, Susan Glover	Marblehead, MA	1864	45
1824	Whitney, Adeline Train	Boston, MA	1879	55
1835	Shaw, Almira McLaughlin	Weld, ME	1878	43
1840	Lincoln, Mary Bailey	Attleboro, MA	1883	37
1843	Parloa, Maria	New Hampshire	1880	37
1857	Farmer, Fannie	Medway, MA	1896	39

indicates her husband, who eventually became a publisher and traveling book salesman, hawked the book in the South from New Orleans, Charleston, Richmond, into the Mid-West, and as far north as Quebec (*Richmond Whig* 1846; *Illinois Weekly State Journal* 1849; *Times-Picayune* 1849; Field 1863). The ever-lengthening addenda in later editions indicate Webster collected recipes wherever he went while newspaper notices indicate he always gave a free copy to local newspaper editors.

Some cooked professionally in public establishments (Maria Parloa at Appledore House on the Isle of Shoals, and Almira McLaughlin Shaw [Mrs. O. M. Shaw] at her family's hotels in Maine); others taught cooking (Mary Bailey Lincoln and Fannie Farmer). Nellie E. Ewart, who edited *Daily Living* (Ewart 1908), was a 1898 graduate of the Boston Cooking School. Some writers and compilers remain anonymous. The woman behind *Hood's Practical Cook Book* (1897) has not been identified. Absolutely nothing is known about the woman who wrote the marvelous text that Hezekiah Howe published (*New England Cook Book* 1836), and much that is known about Amelia Simmons is supposition or inferred from the book (Hess 1996; Ridley 1999). Details of the lives of other authors also remain shadowy (J. Chadwick, E. Putnam, S. D. Farrar, M. Woodman). The housekeeper who published anonymously as the "The American Matron" (1851) lived in Salem and possessed a knowledge of the emerging field of chemistry that would have delighted a Harvard professor. Various hints within Mrs. Chadwick's book imply a connection to one of the Massachusetts North Shore's seafaring families.

Esther Allen was born and raised in Plymouth where she wed Southworth Allen Howland, Jr., in 1823 (*National Aegis* 1823). The family lived in Worcester where Southworth became a printer/publisher and ran a bookstore/stationary. The Howlands' daughter, Esther, named after her mother, created the first commercial American valentines which her father printed and her brother sold; they were astonished when the cards were immediately and astoundingly profitable (*Springfield Republican* 1889, 1908).

The family relinquished the top floor of their home for her office and production facility (*Worcester Daily Spy* 1903). The extended family was an inventive, adventuresome one: in 1829, his father, Southworth A. Howland, Sr., sold the first wooden legs for amputees; his brother Joseph became an abolitionist and active in the women's suffrage movement; brother Wm. Ware Howland was a missionary in Ceylon; and the oldest brother, Henry, was also a well-known Worcester publisher (*Trumpet and Universalist Magazine* 1829; *Worcester Daily Spy* 1889). There seems little doubt that Mr. Howland and some members of the extended family were supportive of women's creative business endeavors (*Worcester Daily Spy* 1882).

Braxton, the only man within the original sample, was an African American who possibly migrated north before the Civil War. He left his position as chef de cuisine at Wellesley College to attend cooking school in Paris and gained a reputation for fine meals prepared at a Bar Harbor resort (*New York Freeman* 1887; *Boston Herald* 1889).

Not all cookbooks were indexed or well organized. Some cooks simply kept the focus on food, whereas others presented detailed rationales—what one might term the metaphysics of food—and based their content on frugality, health, or religious beliefs. Recipes for discrete types of food—breads, beverages, soups, sauces, puddings, pies, jellies—appeared in most books, and within these groups ingredients provided insight into dietary choices. Menus suggested appropriate dishes for various events and spoke to guiding principles that promoted harmony and integration.

Taken as a group, the books seemed disorganized and highly individualistic, despite widespread copying, i.e., there was no overarching method of grouping and presenting recipes. But their surface "noise" was muted by applying Mary Douglas's food categories: the overarching opposition between unstructured food events (snacks, i.e., self-contained foods with few rules concerning when, where, and with whom they might be eaten) and structured food events (rule-bound meals). The latter were organized by a



Figure 1. The sparse interior of a 19th-century one-room Irish cottage as depicted in *Sketches of Irish Character* by Mrs. S. C. Hall (1843: 274).

sequence of three courses of decreasing importance: (1) a hot and savory main course; (2) a sweet dessert course, either hot or cold, based on a grain dish containing some wisp of fruit, or a fruit dish with a sauce made of liquid custard or cream; (3) a hot beverage and a cold biscuit (i.e., a cookie) (Douglas 1972; Douglas and Nicod 1974; Douglas and Gross 1981). An aesthetically pleasing decorative appearance was an important element of the second course; this practice appeared in 19th-century British texts imported into New England, where it was initially adopted by upper-class families. Although these rules were in flux in 19th-century Massachusetts, one can discern their presence within New England cookbooks, as dessert instructions call for a range of embellishments. Recipes capture the rules in moments of transition, as market availability, improved cooking methods, new tools, and metamorphosing beliefs worked upon older food traditions.

New England's Anglo-American Culinary Roots

Historical archaeologists rarely analyze the food system characteristic of a site in terms of its articulation with architectural features, yet architecture plays an unexpectedly important role. Some differences in Anglo-America's regional cuisines can be traced to British house styles with heating systems centered on fireplaces and stoves. According to Nancy Cox (2000), fireplace type and placement established many practicalities for cooking. The dishes one could prepare using well-built ovens or skillfully built fireplaces were not possible for peasant women who cooked over small, smoky, hearth fires where temperatures were hard to control. A central "down-hearth" and its fire (i.e., a hearth with a roof vent, but no chimney) precluded easy suspension of cooking vessels over the fire and allowed little control of the heat (FIG. 1). Some pots were strung from rafters;



Figure 2. The kitchen fireplace at the Daniel P. Higgins home on Higgins Hollow Road in Truro is small (Historic American Buildings Survey [HABS] 1933). Its size restricted the range of cooking accomplished at a single time and suggests why the 'pots and pans' assemblages in Truro inventories were minimal, often no more than a skillet and a pot (Brewer 2000: 79-82). (Photo courtesy of the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.)

others rested on three legs or hung from tripods. All had rounded bottoms, the better to absorb the heat (Cox 2000). New England's cold, damp climate forced settlers to adopt a style of housing that facilitated forms of cookery impossible on an open, central hearth (FIGS. 2, 3). The brick and stone foundations of early New England homes, with their well-built chimneys, large fireplaces, and frequent bake ovens, gave women an opportunity to fine tune their cooking techniques.

Another important factor affecting cooking skills derived from the demography of New England's first settlers. Both the Pilgrims and Puritans migrated as families, often as extended families; their ancestors were a middling class of farmers that emerged in the 1500s (Bailyn 1986: 134-147). English yeoman wives and daughters had advantages not available to poorer families with little or no land. Yeoman wives kept herb gardens, kitchen gardens, and orchards; they raised dairy cows, chickens,



Figure 3. Large fireplace with brick oven at the James Barnaby House, North Main Street, Freetown, Massachusetts, as photographed by Arthur C. Haskell (HABS 1934). (Photo courtesy of the Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.)

geese, ducks, and pigeons or doves. Income from grain harvests also provided money for pots and pans, spices, or occasional exotic fruits such as figs, dates, oranges, lemons, apricots, and nectarines (Norwak 1996: 4). Such women knew how to blend herbs and spices, distill essences, flavor vinegars, make confections, preserve fruits and vegetables, smoke meat, create condiments, and use herbal medicines. Their knowledge passed from generation to generation through oral tradition and in handwritten receipt books (Mason 2004). Their way of cooking came to New England with the Pilgrims and the Puritans (Baker 1984). Its lineage is visible in four books that clearly conveyed these skills: *New England Cook Book* (1836), Webster (1844), *The American Matron* (1851), and Chadwick (1853).

Traditionalists, Domestic Reformers, and Cookery

Domestic-reform cookbook writers often abridged or omitted coverage of traditional skills that they believed were unnecessary, if not harmful (Hale 1839: 57). Domestic reformers viewed flavoring warily for a number of reasons; a difference in the use of flavorings that made dishes more appetizing or teased the palate was apparent. Esther Howland (1845) advocated temperance and used no liquor in her recipes. Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Hale, and Catharine Beecher were not quite as thorough (Child 1835; Hale 1845; Beecher 1848). Their rationale may have been similar to that of Mary Mann, who felt that liquor used for flavoring in a boiled dish, a process that dissipated the alcohol portion of a brandy or wine, was permissible (Mann

1858: 31). Domestic reformers also used fewer herbs and spices; they gave fewer directions for making a wide variety of condiments or preserves. Their texts encouraged a blander, simpler diet, i.e., one that satisfied “a natural or healthy appetite” (Horner 1835: 117–118). They argued that variety in food could be dangerous and rejected highly seasoned food, rich soups and gravies, condiments, and fermented or alcoholic beverages, all of which, they claimed, heated the body or excited the nervous system (Alcott 1838; Hale 1839: 4–6).

Many New England women initially paid little attention to the health concerns of domestic reformers, and some never did so, although with time these concerns became a more popular stance. Women who lived in the artisan and seafaring communities of Massachusetts, such as Mrs. Mendall (1862) in New Bedford, published old-fashioned recipes requiring brandy, special wines, and other liquors; they offered recipes for pickled oysters, walnuts, fruit, and a few vegetables (Cornelius 1846, 1850; Putnam 1849; *The American Matron* 1851; Chadwick 1853; Mendall 1862; Knight 1864; Grier 1887). They used almond, lemon, and vanilla essences and extracts; different types of hot peppers; and a variety of herbs, spices, and aromatics. Sarah Knight captures the difference in two recipes for applesauce: (1) a plain version, favored by domestic reformers, flavored with sugar and nutmeg; and (2) “Salem Applesauce,” flavored with sugar, nutmeg, butter, and rosewater, that fell within the older tradition (Knight 1864: 101). Variation has often been explained as an essential characteristic of a folk community. Archaeologists assumed that the regional variation seen at 17th- and 18th-century sites collapsed in the 19th century as industrialization gave rise to a less-differentiated mass society, or one anchored to the politics underlying consumer consumption (Deetz 1977, 1996: 63; Mullins 2004). Although often distinguished by decorative detail, ceramics did become more uniform, but the cookbook content suggests the predictability of patterning among pottery and porcelain assemblages does not carry through into meal preparation.

The Role of Stoves

Nineteenth-century New England factories poured forth a wide variety of kitchen stoves, but stoves were not originally a household

device. According to Albert Bolles, people first used them for heating “school houses, court rooms, bar rooms, shops, and other public and rough places,” which gave them a masculine dimension (Bolles 1878: 276). Bolles also claimed that the thought of using one in the home induced “feelings of unutterable repugnance” among all social classes (1878: 276). Yet, stoves eventually became the consummate symbol of 19th-century domesticity because they acquired a reputation for easing the chores associated with cooking (Brewer 2000). Jahaziel Jenny pointed this out in his ad for Hoxie cookstoves on 27 March 1813, in the *New Bedford Mercury*: “for those who wish to save half the time spent in the old way of cooking in the chimney and soot.” Stove ownership numbers began rising by 1815, more quickly among middle-class city dwellers than in rural communities (Brewer 2000: 81–82). J. H. Riddell auctioned off “one elegant stove” (*Nantucket Inquirer* 1822), but there were none listed in Cape Cod inventories until 1826, when they appeared in probate documents for wealthy estates; by mid-century, stoves similar to the one shown in Figure 4 were seen in all wealth classes

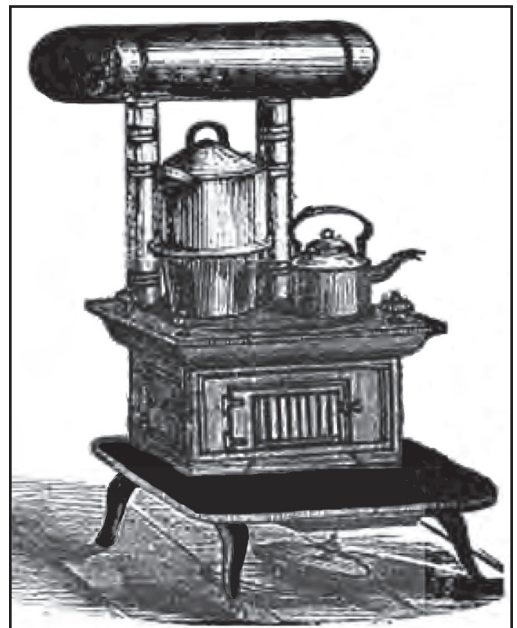


Figure 4. Sitting room cook stove designed for small, economical families by Henry W. Miller of Worcester (*National Aegis* 1840).

(Brewer 2000: 80–83, 124). By 1876, factories in the Northeast produced more than a million stoves annually, and Yankee women viewed them as a common and essential, if not always honorable, kitchen appliance (Jewett 1884: 21).

Traditional-minded men, however, begrudged the stove and expressed nostalgia for the old fireplace and the better-tasting foods cooked there (*Dwight's American Magazine* 1847: 323; Bolles 1878: 278; Jewett 1884: 21). Some were quite vocal, pronouncing the Thanksgiving baked turkey tasteless, and oven-roasted meat inedible (Greene 1888: 77). Some women held similar views, as an article

consisting of "Wholesome Hints for Housekeepers" in the 11 March 1859 *San Francisco Bulletin* demonstrates: "The invention of cook-stoves is of questionable usefulness. Meats and poultry can never have the [same] fine flavor roasted in their ovens." Nor, the writer concluded, could one escape the odor of burnt fat. An anti-stove movement developed. Some went so far as to claim stoves were responsible for higher mortality rates (*Newport Mercury* 1860). Domestic reformers and many physicians touted an aversion to stoves based on new beliefs about health, air purity, morality, femininity, and appropriate use of time (Brewer 2000: 96–99).

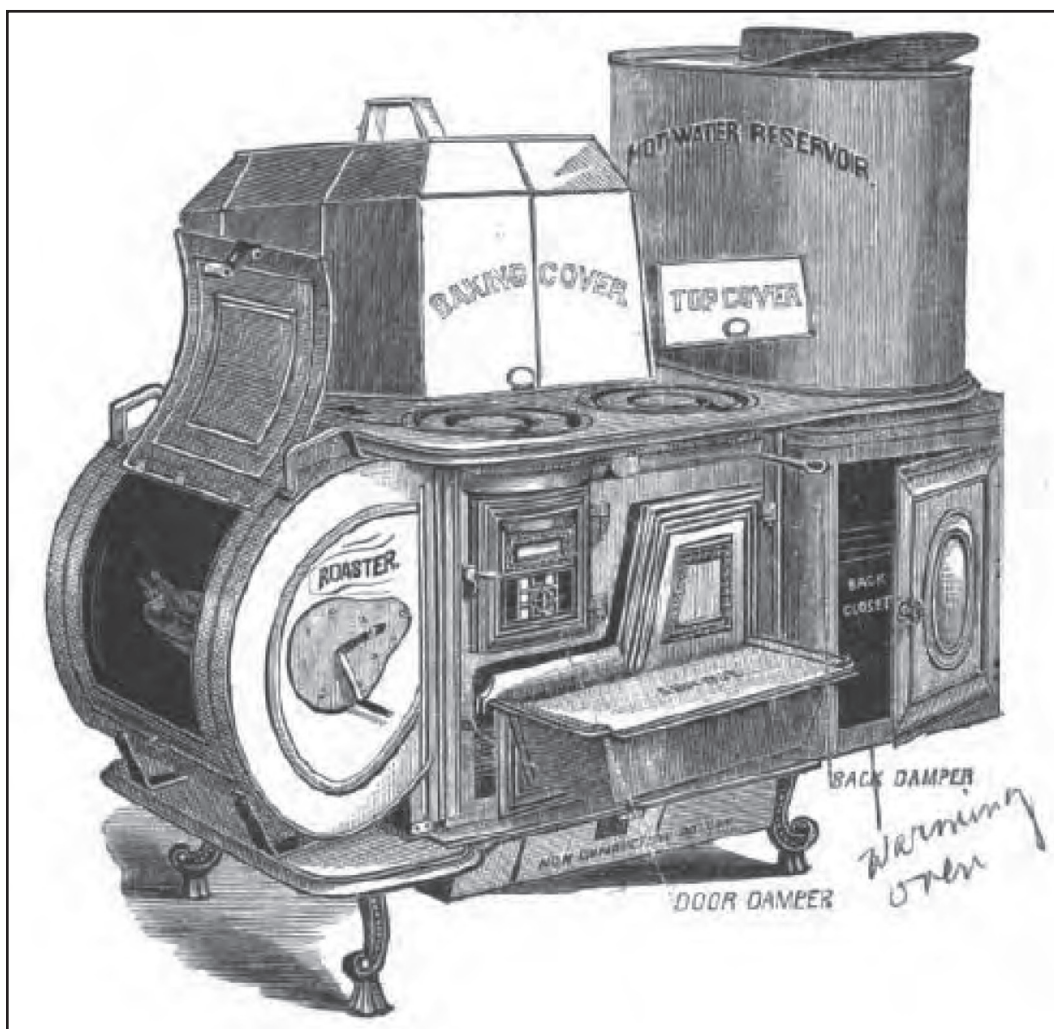


Figure 5. The 'scientific' stove recommended by Catharine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe in *The American Woman's Home* appears intimidating, as do their complex instructions for its use (Beecher and Stowe 1869: 74, Fig. 37).



Figure 6. Royal Hub model range manufactured by the Smith and Anthony Company of Boston and used in cooking schools in Boston, Worcester, Springfield, Providence, New Haven, and Hartford (*The Metal Worker* 1899: 10).

Significantly, few of Massachusetts's first cookbook authors ever addressed the cookstove or new kitchen tools (Brewer 2000: 113). Their avoidance of this topic is quite remarkable. One knows where Phebe Mendall baked her wedding cakes because Marion Campbell described the stove in her essay about this remarkable woman (Campbell 1938). Mrs. Putnam did not mention a stove in 1849, but noted in 1860 that if a reader had a range, utensils to go with it were also needed (Putnam 1849, 1860: 224). Catharine Beecher's intricate instructions on how to use a complex, formidable stove seem meant to intimidate, as do the instructions for the stove she recommended (FIG. 5) (Beecher 1874: 81–88). Mrs. Lincoln (1896) suggested questions for teachers that centered on differences between stoves, but did not discuss the stoves directly. This odd task, or so it would seem from New England texts, was left to Maria Parloa, who did so nicely in a paragraph late in the century when stoves, such as the reasonably elegant and workable

appliance seen in Figure 6, were popular (FIG. 6) (Parloa 1895: 11).

Trends among Puddings and Pies

The earliest Massachusetts cookbooks imprecisely list the types of fires appropriate for various dishes: bright, brisk, sharp, slow, hot, clear, quick, slack, not furious, etc. To control heat, women kept some pots close to the fire and placed others farther away, worked with embers and ashes that they placed above or around a pot or pan, used cranes and pot hooks, and performed tasks that kept them near the fire, making cooking a potentially hazardous activity. Clearly, to be a good cook required experience in the craft.

The one-pot dish ruled in many homes because it was difficult to cook several dishes at once in a small fireplace, such as that shown in Figure 2 (FIG. 2) (Cowan 1983: 62). Stovetops offered a wide, flat place to work at waist height, on a surface that could hold 3–4 pots; thus, it became easier to make a pudding that needed to be stirred and heated simultaneously. Wood stoves required time to heat, but later gas and electric models decreased this time. It also became easier to remove a dish from the stove and finish it in the oven. Taking a pudding or pie from the oven, topping it with a meringue, and returning it to the oven for gentle browning became second nature for a generation of late 19th-century cooks. Composite dishes, defined for this study as dishes that required two or three cooking phases, became popular, making it difficult to keep the analytic categories short and simple, and to separate stovetop dishes from oven baked. The idea of a composite dish, one that required discrete cooking stages, made sense when analyzing recipes based on hearth cookery, in which each step took conscious decision-making and organizational skill, but when the steps in making such a dish became

easy tasks that required less coordinated effort, the distinction became less relevant.

Understandably, recipes for pies and other baked goods increased in number (FIG. 7). Stoves gained pragmatic value as engineering advancements made them more efficient, cleaner, and more affordable. As oven temperatures could be more finely controlled, one could rely on a pie to turn out well. The experience-based skill of scheduling when a dish should enter an oven, using the time when it held the highest heat for bread as a standard, became less important because oven heat could now be raised as well as lowered. Women changed their ways of thinking about preparation and planning for baked goods.

For centuries women had wrapped cereal mixes with suet, and different fruits with pieces of cloth, strung them from a pot edge or laid them on a pile of twigs and branches inside the pot to simmer. Throughout the first

half of the 19th century, recipes give instructions for boiled puddings filled with apples, cherries, all sorts of berries, dried fruit, and damson plums. Phebe Mendall (1862) cut her recipes for “boiled” dishes to apples and berries, a sign of their ensuing demise among fruit-based desserts. Boiled puddings, with their unrefined shapes and sizes, began to disappear, except during winter holidays and when turned into steamed puddings made in tin molds (FIG. 8).

Advances in engineering produced more and more sophisticated cooking instruments, tools, and gadgets. The composition of pots and pans followed suit: porcelain-lined kettles, graniteware, agateware, and aluminum vessels became common. New vessel forms appeared (double boilers, bain-marie pans, tin molds, better cake pans, pie pans, and cookie sheets). Oven-roasted meat grew in popularity until it became the norm for Sunday dinners. Boiled-pudding recipes were primarily found in the

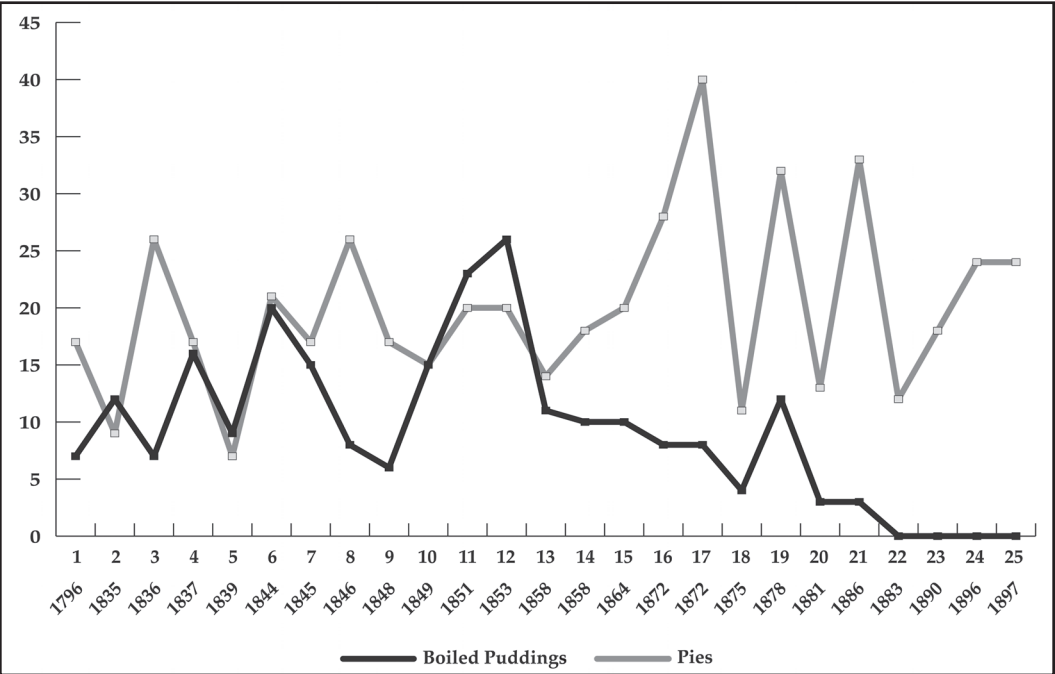


Figure 7. Recipes for boiled puddings decrease as those for pies increase throughout the 19th century in New England cookbooks. Time is measured from left to right (1835-1897) at the bottom of the chart. Numbers of recipes are indicated on the vertical axis. Sources: 1. Simmons ([1796] 1798); 2. Child (1835); 3. *New England Cook Book* (1836); 4. Green (1837); 5. Hale (1839); 6. Webster (1844); 7. Howland (1845); 8. Cornelius (1846); 9. Beecher (1848); 10. Putnam (1849); 11. *American Matron* (1851); 12. Chadwick (1853); 13. Mann (1858); 14. Mendall ([1858] 1862); 15. Knight (1864); 16. Parloa (1872); 17. Farrar (1872); 18. Woodman (1875); 19. Shaw (1878); 20. Whitney (1881); 21. Braxton (1886); 22. Lincoln ([1883] 1896); 23. Ladies of the Congregational Society (1890); 24. Farmer (1896); and 25. *Hood's Practical Cook Book* (1897).



Figure 8. Recipes for boiled puddings decreased while those for steamed puddings increased in New England cookbooks. Time progresses from left to right, from early 19th century to early 20th century, at the bottom of the chart. Numbers of recipes are indicated on the vertical axis. Sources: 1. Simmons ([1796] 1798); 2. Child (1835); 3. *New England Cook Book* (1836); 4. Green (1837); 5. Hale (1839); 6. Webster (1844); 7. Howland (1845); 8. Cornelius (1846); 9. Beecher (1848); 10. Putnam (1849); 11. *American Matron* (1851); 12. Chadwick (1853); 13. Mann (1858); 14. Mendell ([1858] 1862); 15. Knight (1864); 16. Parloa (1872); 17. Farrar (1872); 18. Woodman (1875); 19. Shaw (1878); 20. Whitney (1881); 21. Lincoln ([1883] 1896); 22. Ladies of the Congregational Society (1890); 23. Farmer (1896); 24. *Hood's Practical Cook Book* (1897); and 25. Ewart (1908).

nostalgia-based, quasi-heirloom texts reflecting the colonial-revival movement. The number of recipes for steamed pudding decreased in the 20th century, as those for baked puddings increased, but, overall, puddings lost much of their popularity. Puddings form only a small segment of the dessert category in most 21st-century cookbooks.

The techniques Dethlefsen and Deetz (1966) used to measure seriation in gravestones, borrowed from James Ford's work on southwestern ceramics, were helpful in delineating the transformation in dessert preparation and suggested other avenues to explore. For example, in their work on outer Cape Cod gravestones, the two men encountered an incongruity in their data—the brief resurgence of old-style designs—that they explained as a consequence of the commercial growth of the Cape's fishing fleet, and its subsequent removal from Plymouth to the new market

port of Boston (Deetz 1968; 1977: 86–87). In other words, they found an anomaly they could not explain using seriation and had to seek other sources of information to make sense of their observations. They had to turn from the gravestones themselves and look at broader patterns in the market. Marketing was always a subterranean element in the analysis of recipes reported here. It emerged as a more visible, even critical, element at various turns. For example, the knowledge that stoves were initially marketed to men and seen as polished, virile, masculine contraptions, like the shining Maine example in Figure 9 (FIG. 9), helped to explain the reluctance of domestic reformers to wholeheartedly endorse their use. Both the cost and availability of ingredients were understood as a consistent constraint, a difficult one to assess without considering advertisements. Here, historical myths and 19th-century reality collided.

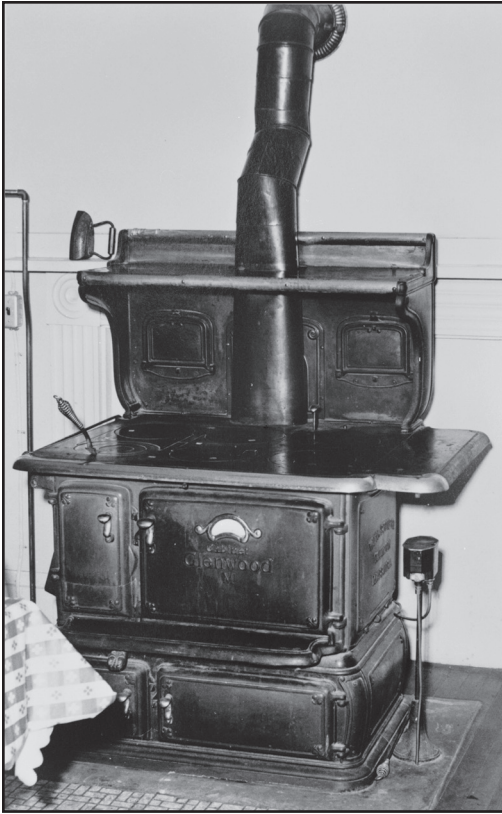


Figure 9. Stove at the Henry Tallman House, Bath, Sagadahoc County, ME, photographed by S. E. Cobb (HABS 1971). The house was built ca. 1840. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.)

Ingredients

Attention to core components revealed that New Englanders participated in the broad trend, initiated by the French in the 18th century, that separated sweet and savory dishes (Flandrin, Montanari, and Sonnenfeld 1999). This pattern could be seen in pudding recipes that began to separate sweet and savory ingredients. Cold mashed potato dressed with frosting, as seen in Table 2, became a contradiction and an inappropriate sweet pudding; ditto for macaroni or vermicelli. Squash and pumpkin, both fruits, continued on as pies in the Northeast, and rice became a common medium for pudding. The rules, one might say, became more discriminating with time, undoing earlier irregularities. Simultaneously, some entities passed across the beverage/medicinal lines and became suitable

elements in a dessert (i.e., coffee and chocolate, occasionally tea).

Other recipes evolved. Puddings that were once cooked in a single step (i.e., boiled) rose in popularity and then sharply declined. Among these were fruit puddings that were possibly easier to bake as pies, once women became familiar with and learned the intricacies of their stove ovens. Steamed puddings, in terms of popularity, took over the role once held by boiled puddings, but were less often made with fresh fruits. Single-step recipes also devolved into more complex, multiphase preparations. For example, puddings were thickened first using the stove top, then baked in the oven. As the century progressed, these puddings were often removed from the oven, covered with a meringue, and then returned until the meringue was tipped with golden brown. By the 20th century, a whipped-cream topping might substitute for the meringue (Yentsch 2012).

What occurred with other ingredients, their use, and preparation was more complex and of special relevance to those involved with archaeological interpretation. The etic framework based on preparation methods shattered. Fruits, especially, were multivocal; some dimensions were readily visible (e.g., price and seasonality), and some avenues of exploration provided more straightforward information about their role within social discourse. These included the avenues of analysis archaeologists commonly find informative: market networks and consumption patterns. Digging deeper opened up new vistas, however, because it revealed lines between beverage (liquid) ingredients and desserts, and between various forms of

Table 2. Decrease in vegetable-based puddings within sample.

Main ingredient	Pre-1870	1875–1899
Carrot	3	0
Macaroni or vermicelli	6	2
Potato	15	0
Pumpkin	3	0
Sweet potato	7	0
Winter squash	4	1
Total	38	3

appropriate use (medical) vs. inappropriate (desserts). There were also ethnic divisions, social divisions, gendered beliefs, and ideas that resonated most closely with the notions of cleanliness and contamination described by Mary Douglas (1966). Written and unwritten understandings bespoke values that helped place fruit uses within an ideological framework.

The introduction of new nuts and fruits, plus innovation in the ways these ingredients were used, were a significant feature of cookbooks starting in the 1850s and increased as the century progressed (FIG. 10). These changes should be visible in botanical remains from a range of sites, although the way ethnobotanists

report their findings blunts their importance. The classification of seeds and nuts into exotics, condiments, fruits, vegetables, edible plants, and those now seen as weeds does not correlate with food recipes from period texts or with information available in newspaper archives. Dependence is placed on well-known authorities, e.g., Ann Leighton (1976, 1986, 1987), who had to work without the largesse of digital archives. Looking at the data, contrasting the frequency of newspaper advertisements for specific fruits or vegetables (including imports) with their sparse presence in the cookbooks, suggests that the books themselves speak to a select portion of New England

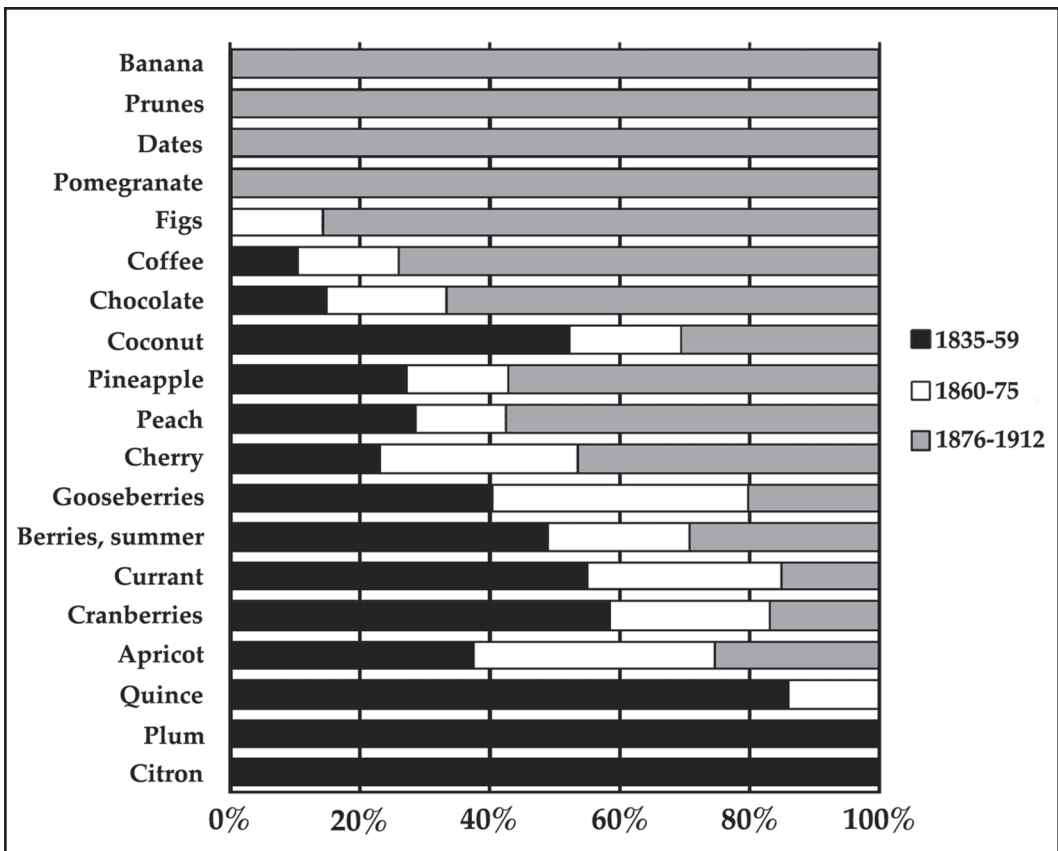


Figure 10. Fruits used to make hot puddings (boiled or steamed) between 1835 and 1912. Cookbook sources include Child (1835); Hale (1839); Webster (1844); Howland (1845); Cornelius (1846); Beecher (1848); Putnam (1849); *American Matron* (1851); Chadwick (1853); Knight (1864); *The Cuisine* (1872); Parloa (1872); Melrose Committee of the Congregational Society (1877); *Eliot Cook Book* (1880); Lincoln ([1883] 1896); Ladies of the Congregational Society (1890); *A Collection of Tried Receipts* (1893); *Dorchester Woman's Club* (1897); *Hood's Practical Cook Book* (1897); Allen (1899); Ladies Benevolent Society of the First Congregational Church ([1871] 1905); First Church Mission Circle (1904); *North Adams Cook Book* (1905); Ladies Aid Society of the Norwood Baptist Church (1907); and Neighborhood Club (1912).

residents, rather than to the population as a whole. For example, few of the pre-1874 books contain recipes using exotic fruits. Most, in fact, do not do much with lemons or oranges, either.

Citrus Fruits

Oranges and lemons are prime examples of fruit that was taxed and thus costly, gradually becoming less expensive as markets expanded and transportation improved. Initially citrus imports were modest; a mere four chests of Lisbon oranges were offered, by a merchant, in the *Boston Gazette* on 24 November 1741. Figs, plums, and prunes are listed in a table detailing American imports in 1807, but citrus crops are not shown (Pitkin 1816: 218–219). Lemons and bitter oranges appeared in Boston markets in fall and winter as a Mediterranean import, along with sweet Havana oranges from the West Indies; eventually both Caribbean and South American produce arrived on a regular basis. By 1856, New England imports of oranges, lemons, and limes were worth approximately \$131,000, with the bulk (approximately 98%) entering through Boston or Charlestown; fig imports, on the other hand, were worth more than \$200,000 (Department of the Treasury 1856: 480, 1857: 226–229, table 5). Prices for oranges decreased as Florida growers shipped citrus north in the 1880s, while California orchards became productive sources by the turn of the century (Hume 1911: 3–4). Prior to the Civil War, with the notable exception of orange pudding, most recipes for citrus-based desserts were published by women living in seaports and/or north of Boston (*New England Cook Book* 1836: 75). Mrs. Chadwick and Salem's anonymous American Matron layered fresh slices with sugar and let them set for several hours before serving them, one with and the other without a brandy infusion, in an adaptation of an orange salad recipe served in France (Merle and Reitch 1842: 164; *The American Matron* 1851: 155; Chadwick 1853: 64). In line with aristocratic medieval cookery, as imports increased, women added oranges to fools, creams, custards, soufflés, preserves, and dessert jellies for the holidays. Recipes published after the Civil War show an expanded repertoire

that includes orange trifles, orange sherbets, orange snows, orange charlottes, molded orange charlottes, orange sponges, orange ices, orange baskets, and orange floats. Lemons followed a similar pattern, but, at half the price of oranges, had more frequent use. Cost, availability, access, and fashionableness were all at play.

Pineapples

The situation with pineapples was somewhat different; the fruit and its preserves were significant New England imports many years before recipes using pineapple were in general circulation. Pineapples themselves were simultaneously distinctive, a novelty, an artistic motif, and a Regency-era luxury that Caribbean women turned into sweetmeats and syrups (Ude 1815: 432, 444). John Erving sold "elegant preserved pineapple" at his Marlborough Street shop (*Columbian Centinel* 1792). A decade later, George Johnson published M. B.'s recipe for the same in his *Cottage Gardener* (Johnson 1801: 267). Yet, Eliza Leslie's recipe did not appear until the second quarter of the 19th century (Leslie 1830: 88). Shortly afterwards, a Connecticut writer provided a more complicated recipe that mitigated pineapple's fermentation (*New England Cook Book* 1836: 83). Next, Catharine Beecher described how to preserve sliced pineapples in sugar (Beecher 1848: 156). Recipes moved forward in 1849 when Mary Putnam offered grated pineapple custard, and in 1853 Mrs. Chadwick gave directions for fresh pineapple fritters and Ude's Regency-era iced pineapple jelly (Putnam 1849: 87; Chadwick 1853: 57, 70). Gradually pineapples turned up in fashionable desserts served at the very best tables and in commercially sold ice creams (*The Cuisine* 1872: 103, 107–109, 117). Transport and ripeness dictated their availability, prompting one merchant to caution customers not to expect pineapple ice cream if the fruit was out of season (Quincy 1881: 10). By 1901 New England women used pineapples in different cold desserts: traditional creams, Bavarian creams, whips, sherbets, snows, ices, and mousses. Their use was seasonal except within those homes where cooks, like a woman in Roxbury (*Eliot Cook Book* 1880: 51), used canned varieties.

The quantity of pineapples imported in the 19th century was staggering. Sea captains had loaded their ships with pineapples from the Bahamas and West Indies for generations; sailors ate them as a cure for scurvy (Sumner 2004: 158). In 1816, a Boston merchant advertised "Pine Apples ... Just received and for sale ... probably the only chance this season—going cheap" (*Repertory* 1816). Writers noted the reasonable price for pineapples in Boston substantially undercut London prices (Merryat 1839: 44; House of Commons 1866: 39–41). A British tourist supposedly bought one in Boston for 10¢ (Bane 1824: 467). In 1833, the *Chariot* arrived from Eleuthera with more than 30,000 (*Newburyport Herald* 1833). For years, the aroma of egg-pop, cooked lobster, orange peel, and pineapple pervaded Boston Common during Fourth of July celebrations, according to a Boston-born journalist (*The Knickerbocker* 1844: 586). New York immigrants enjoyed pineapples sold by peddlers on street corners and during parades (Ziegelman 2010: 149).

New York fruit dealers were advertising the fruit by 1801 (*New-York Gazette* 1801, 1802; *Daily Advertiser* 1802; *Morning Chronicle* 1803; *Mercantile Advertiser* 1804). In the 1860s, a *New York Journal of Commerce* reporter wrote that his study on fruit imported through the port of New York revealed half a million individual pineapples entered the port annually (*New York Daily Reformer* 1865). A single Boston dealer sold more than 100,000 in a week (*Boston Daily Advertiser* 1871). According to the same paper, few realized the vast growth of the West Indian trade in luxury fruit—pineapples, bananas, coconuts—or knew that cargoes "are scarcely received before they are disposed of" (*Boston Daily Advertiser* 1871). The fruit was used in the distillation of rum and was indispensable for mint juleps and punch (Vose 1852: 18; Thomas 1862). Nathaniel Patterson thought that if pineapples were as cheap as potatoes, "no family would ever be done with the physician," while others wrote that the fruit could create an "extraordinary" effect in the human body (Patterson 1800: 129; Graham 1828: 29). When considering why New England's domestic-reform cookbooks contained so little evidence for pineapple use, one must keep in mind the omissions may be related to the fruit's association with the relatively impure (immigrants, Mexicans,

Cubans, liquor manufacturers, and devotees of rum), more than to market factors (Pereira 1842: 36; White and Pleasants 1846: 27; Douglas 1966: 127).

Exotic Fruits

Some of the rarer fruits in American cookbooks—guavas, mangoes, pomegranates, and tamarinds—came from exotic locales and were hard to transport. Others were known primarily for their medicinal uses, and one would infer from the evidence that well-educated families kept stringent boundaries between food and medicine. A Boston doctor advertised pomegranate jelly to cure headaches, dizziness, heart palpitations, oppression of the breast, and other disorders, but the fruit itself was not generally available (*Salem Register* 1841; *Boston Courier* 1846). The pretension of pomegranate appeared in a sherbet recipe and a recipe for *bombe glace*, but blood-orange juice provided the true flavor and color (Ladies of the Congregational Society 1890; Lincoln 1896: 367–368).

Mariners brought West Indian tamarinds north by the 1760s (*Pennsylvania Gazette* 1767). Providence apothecaries sold tamarinds by 10, 20, and 50 lb. weights (*Providence Gazette* 1770); a Haverhill market advertised 300 pounds; and the fruit was sold in Boston, Salem, Nantucket, and Newport, Rhode Island, stores (*Boston Gazette* 1773; *Newport Mercury* 1773; *Nantucket Inquirer* 1830; *Haverhill Gazette* 1836). A number of authors suggest their primary use was in hospitals for treatment of tapeworms and diarrhea (Sumner 2004: 82). Tamarind whey or water had medicinal applications in domestic recipe books (Poole 1890: 126). The fruit, however, had a sweet-sour flavor and a tartness that exploded with the first bite; New England children ate them whole, a dangerous endeavor since the stones sometimes got caught in their throats (*New Bedford Mercury* 1820; *Gloucester Telegraph* 1834; *Boston Daily Advertiser* 1891a, 1891b). Tamarind popularity waned; by the 1890s, journalists wrote of them as curiosities sold only in major cities (*Springfield Republican* 1892). With tamarinds, a combination of health concerns, medicinal use, and consumption by inner-city youngsters may have caused well-to-do families to see the fruit as a pollutant.

Coffee and Chocolate

Coffee and chocolate houses, similar to those that opened in London in the 1650s, quickly appeared in New England. In 1670 two women obtained licenses to sell "chuchaletto" and "chucallette," i.e., Spanish *chocolate*, and coffee. Cacao's transformation into chocolate and its subsequent resale became a vigorous artisanal trade. From ca. 1775 to 1860, departing ships carried both Boston-made chocolate and Boston confections. One economic historian wrote: "Boston takes the lead ... in chocolate she reigns supreme" (Hunt, Kettell, and Homans 1855: 646–647).

Boston's earliest chocolatiers ground their own beans, hired apprentices, or bought slaves to do the arduous grinding, using the same procedure as the ancient Maya. They built their own engines and engineered new processes (*New England Weekly Journal* 1727a, 1727b; *Boston Gazette* 1730, 1737; *Boston News-Letter* 1733, 1736, 1773d). Many were involved in different facets of the trade, but the artisans themselves were secretive and exuded an air of superiority in talking about cocoa (Newhall 1888: 409; Grivetti and Shapiro 2009: 817–836). Chocolate mills were located in Saugus, Dorchester, Milton, Charlestown, Malden, Needham, and Boston's South and North Ends; some became substantial firms. The Walter Baker Company, opened in 1764, was one of the few mills that successfully challenged European manufacturers; it is still in business. Chocolate was readily available in New England stores, yet slow to cross the boundary between beverage constituent and worthy dessert (*Boston-News Letter* 1773a, 1773b, 1773c). Six recipes (1835–1859) tripled to at least eighteen (1876–1912) as the century progressed. My research shows that there were few recipes for chocolate in early New England cookbooks, but in the last quarter century chocolate was routinely present in beverages, puddings, cakes, ice creams, and finally, pies.

Mrs. Chadwick stipulated French chocolate in recipes for chocolate cream and custard, but Mary Putnam did not for her custard (Putnam 1849: 100; Chadwick 1853: 63). They were among the first to adopt chocolate as an ingredient in desserts. Mrs. Bliss gave directions for a chocolate ice cream, an icing in which barely enough was added to whipped sugar

and egg whites to make the frosting appear café au lait, and two creams that differed from both Chadwick's and Putnam's (Bliss 1850: 200, 213, 222). In other words, each cook worked from a different tradition, as did the Salem woman who gave a recipe for small chocolate puffs, cousins to French macaroons and meringues; three chocolate drinks (French, Italian, and common); and a "Racahout des Arabes" for convalescents (*The American Matron* 1851: 21, 27, 152).

Coffee, unlike chocolate, was both a public beverage and a gendered one. To become an ingredient in desserts, this hot liquid drink had to (1) obtain a dual public/private identity, (2) become a legitimate domestic beverage, and (3) appear less dangerous in terms of health. Then it became a safe flavoring, edible if served in a cold semisolid or solid state, one transformed by cooking, as opposed to brewing. Coffee imports rose from 19 million pounds in 1821 to 88 million in 1838, which suggests American coffee consumption quadrupled in a quarter of a century (Alcott 1839: 167–168). By the Civil War, Americans drank more coffee, both at home and in public, than the people of any other Western country (Weinberg and Bealer 2002: 112). Despite this fact, coffee made its way into dessert recipes at a snail's pace. The first recipes, coffee custard and a cold coffee cream, came from the same innovative women who provided recipes for chocolate desserts (Putnam 1849; Chadwick 1853). Twenty years later, a caterer also gave directions for coffee custard, while a Boston shopkeeper advertised coffee ices (*The Cuisine* 1872: 56, 106). Mrs. Woodman's coffee cream, Roxbury's coffee jelly, Wellesley's cake and parfait, plus Hood's coffee frappe improved the selection, but it was not until the first decade of the 20th century that the gamut grew to include coffee soufflés and mousses (Woodman 1875: 116; *Eliot Cook Book* 1880: 50; Ladies of the Congregational Society 1890: 130, 156; *Hood's Practical Cook Book* 1897: 268; Ewart 1908; Boston Traveler 1916). Ida Bailey Allen (1917), in her thick, 816-page treatise, offered a more extensive selection, one in which coffee's exuberance might be seen and tasted in an array of dishes that included traditional and more recent recipes, even blending chocolate and coffee together into mocha cakes and puddings. By World War I, one could finally

say that coffee had become a respectable ingredient anyone might use, but it took over 200 years to make the grade.

Why did it take so long? Coffee's role in the health system was one factor. Decoctions made from coffee had been put to use in Islamic and European medicine centuries earlier (Percy 1834: 148; Alcott 1839; Ukers 1922: 181–182, 694, 727; Hattox 2000). An English physician noted its beneficial use in treating diseases such as smallpox and measles, alongside his concern that coffee could cause insomnia, headaches, melancholy, and leprosy (if drunk with milk) (Ukers 1922: 12). Samuel Hahnemann wrote of its unseemly effect on sexuality, on passion, and other emotions (Hahnemann 1876: 21–23). Little wonder that it gained a reputation as a potent drug, one that stimulated the nervous system, whipped up energy, and improved endurance (Alcott 1839; Weinberg and Bealer 2002). Nineteenth-century medical men viewed it in terms of positive or negative attributes and held mixed opinions about how much could be taken with safety or when it became habit forming. Some viewed it as a medicine to be used for the heart, for narcotic overdoses, malaria, typhoid fever, yellow fever, cholera, even diabetes; others saw it as a toxic poison (Alcott 1839: 133–141; Ukers 1922: 175–176). While chocolate, too, had a medicinal role within the home, it neither had as wide a range of applications as coffee, nor the same associated controversy.

Douglas notes that the distinction between food and drink was almost sacrosanct in Britain, which suggests it was seen similarly in New England (Douglas and Gross 1981: 8). But different rules governed the consumption of chocolate and coffee; coffee was a thoroughly public drink served to unidentified men in public places where strangers, American and foreign, met for business. Women co-opted chocolate for home use shortly after its introduction, whereas coffee retained its public, masculine connotation. Thus, rules governing public and private space, plus gendered ideals, were mitigating factors. Drinks were a malleable category of sustenance, but they were cognitively separated from solid foods, which meant that coffee and chocolate, as long as they were beverages, had to stand apart from foods served during meals or contradict the organizational scheme: “Meals

are a mixture of solid foods accompanied by liquids. With drinks the reverse holds true” (Douglas 1972: 65). Each was a visually sequestered beverage with its own distinctive pot and drinking vessel that, as it was being served, distanced it from other beverages.

In an orderly home, food and drink were served on or in appropriate plates, dishes, and beverage containers. Both had the potential to breach the cultural boundaries defining the domestic sphere. The temperance movement reflected this dilemma; temperance families, through rejection and avoidance, set liquor apart from the family circle, whereas coffee and chocolate remained anomalies.

Dried Fruit: Figs, Dates, and Prunes

Dried fruit, including figs, was commonly found in jam, marmalade, and conserve recipes. Early 19th-century English texts also included recipes for fig puddings or tarts, and sometimes treated dates and prunes as interchangeable. Despite the fact that fig seeds were present in 82% of the botanical samples from Faneuil Hall (Meyers 2011: 33), few recipes in early New England cookbooks called for this fruit until well after the Civil War (TAB. 2). Sarah Hale offered a fig paste for constipation, a concoction recommended in many medical books and readily purchased at grocers, apothecaries, and confection shops as an import (*Springfield Republican* 1848; *Salem Register* 1852; *Boston Evening Transcript* 1854; Hale 1854: 174). As a folk medicine, figs were seen as a cure for worms. One indication of their popularity is a notice that the barque *L & A Hobart* had arrived from Smyrna with 312 drums of fig paste on board; by 1857, 300,000 drums of figs were among the city's imports (*Boston Evening Transcript* 1851; Boston Board of Trade 1857: 95).

Figs and dates were both medicinally beneficial and popular over the winter holidays. At most archaeological sites, it is impossible to determine which role they held; a bottle for fig syrup recovered from a 1890s deposit, however, testifies to figs' medicinal use (Poulsen 2011). Historical archaeologists have recovered fig seeds from 18th-century nightsoil in Boston and Philadelphia latrines (Taylor 2006; Landon 2007: 122). Figs' appeal to New England families is evident in newspaper advertisements; one Nantucket Island grocer stocked over a dozen

drums of figs at New Year's (*Nantucket Inquirer* 1830; see also *Newburyport Herald* 1830). Yet, Boston physician, educator, and reform advocate Dr. William A. Alcott hesitated to recommend figs for two reasons: their frequent infestation by microscopic organisms and their common consumption among the lower classes in Mediterranean countries (Alcott 1838: 260–261).

The season for prunes, i.e., dried Bordeaux plums, began in March, a season when few other fruits were available (*Repertory* 1804; Ruffin 1840: 292). Two grades existed: ordinary and “splendid prunes” packed in fancy boxes (*Gloucester Telegraph* 1840). Dr. Alcott wrote disdainfully of plums, saying a person should spend his or her time eating any other fruit, or, if one had to eat a plum, to eat it by itself unaccompanied by any other food; he doubted its wholesomeness and extended this opinion to prunes too. Prunes, he believed, were suitable for invalids when boiled or stewed, but overall were apt to cause “too much relaxation and irritation to the bowels and stomach.” His conclusion: “The prune is by no means the worst possible food. ... I do not mean that it is as good as a raw apple or uncooked strawberry; but only that when no better fruit can be had, it is tolerable” (Alcott 1838: 253–254). Other contemporaneous medical texts were also clear that prunes were a cure for constipation.

Ideas about hygiene and bodily functions gradually changed, as running water, indoor plumbing, and municipal sewer systems spread. Medical texts began to promote prunes. The U.S. Bureau of Statistics assured Americans that “no more *healthful* or toothsome dried fruit is to be found [emphasis in original]” (Vivian 1891: 309). Domestic reformer and writer Martha Poole told her readers their laxative ability was mild (Poole 1890: 113). With the growth of California's dried-fruit industry, prunes shed their Mediterranean identity. Dried fruits were now American fruits. By the late 19th century, community cookbooks indicate housewives were serving prunes on toast, in whips, soufflés and sponges, parfaits, or baked. Prune puddings too were a 1890s innovation, missing, with few exceptions, from almost all cookbooks up to that decade. Housewives served dates in similar ways and

also added them to tapioca puddings, covered with whipped cream, or hidden beneath golden meringues.

Neither cost nor accessibility regulated the use of dried fruits in the 19th century. Their reputations were questionable because of their market origin, possible contamination, use by southern Europeans, and their linkage to issues of health and personal hygiene (i.e., cleanliness). In other words, they were a potential source of domestic pollution until advertising and promotion by California's fruit industry altered the way Anglo-Americans viewed dried fruit. Mary Douglas (1966, 1972) points out that different beliefs prompt people to view foods as acceptable or unacceptable, easy to accommodate, or best to avoid. This seems evident in the use of dried fruits; a similar situation existed with bananas.

Bananas, Sexuality, and Masculinity

Most histories of the banana trade start with Capt. Lorenzo D. Baker of Wellfleet, and his ‘lucky’ profitable haul of bananas in 1869 or 1870. Baker was a master mariner who made large profits importing and selling a sweet yellow variety of Jamaican banana through Boston commission merchants, and began, with his associates, what would become the United Fruit Company (Chapple 1904: 326; Jones 1919: 277; Reynolds 1927: 47). He has been eulogized, made into a mythical hero, a lord of the tropics, and the founder of the commercial banana trade in more than a dozen accounts of the trade. Part of Baker's fame derives from the fact that he industrialized their production, setting up Caribbean banana plantations with funding from other venture capitalists (Casson and Buckley 1983: 184). This forced out small-scale, Afro-Caribbean growers who were responsible for the informal trade in the first half of the 19th century. Economic historians tend to forget the latter banana growers and give Baker credit for introducing Americans to the fruit. This is incorrect. Bananas were a fruit that trickled up from the working class, including ships' crews and factory workers, until they became socially acceptable to status-conscious consumers.

Historians have implied the opposite: that the fruit was a rare luxury eaten first by the

rich and percolating down to other classes. In 1846, the New York price was four cents apiece, but recipes using bananas as an ingredient were rarely found in texts until 1888 when instructions for a banana cake appeared in *Family Living on \$500 a Year* (Boston *Evening Transcript* 1846b; Corson 1888: 168). At that time, Poole gives their price as an affordable 12-25 cents a dozen in season (Poole 1890: 51). A mythical history asserts the fruit was first introduced at the 1876 Philadelphia Exposition and unknown in American markets beforehand (Adams 1914: 21; Striffler and Moberg 2003: 51; Koeppel 2007: 52). However, a Boston grocer's ad in 1846 explained they were "excellent fruit when in a right state and when properly cooked a luxury" while they were advertised as a "good Christmas dessert" in the mid-Atlantic in 1830 (*Rhode-Island American* 1831; *Boston Evening Transcript* 1846a).

Bananas appear in newspaper ads by 1805 when Grant & Forbes listed the contents offloaded from a schooner arriving from the Bahamas, which included 600 dozen pineapples, 20,000 limes and a quantity of bananas, plantains, etc. (*Morning Chronicle* 1805). Advertisements and lists of merchandise imported through the ports of New York and Philadelphia reveal shipments of bananas in small, but ever-increasing quantities (*Grotjans Philadelphia Public-Sale Report* 1813, 1818). Most ships seem to have brought bananas in rates of 50 to 100 bunches, but some deliveries were larger: Stanton and Suydam advertised 561 bunches of bananas/plantains in 1825 (*New York Daily Advertiser* 1825). Grocers in the 1840s sold "elegant large, red, ripe bananas" brought north with turtles and watermelons on swift ships from Eleuthera (e.g., 5-day voyages) (*Boston Courier* 1840; *Daily Atlas* 1842; *Salem Register* 1866b). By mid-century there was an established trade between Baracoa, Cuba, and Boston; Bahamian banana exports were growing (House of Commons 1866: 38; Van Deman 1887: 326). By 1869, Springfield grocers advertised bananas (*Springfield Republican* 1869a, 1869b, 1869c, 1869d). Lowell grocers sold the fruit cheaply while Boston merchants charged outrageous prices (Brigham 1868b: 52; *Lowell Daily Citizen* 1869a, 1869b). In a Boston speech, Oliver Wendall Holmes evoked "heaps of bananas" on city

street corners. A news reporter watched a Boston crowd munch on bananas as they welcomed General Grant (Holmes 1863; Upton 1869). Bananas were a public fruit, sold by street vendors, on trains, to holiday throngs, and at large public events where ladies could eat them without removing their gloves (Poole 1890: 52). Some indication of this use can be seen in numerous cautions and accounts of people slipping and falling from discarded banana skins. They also held a reputation as a "poor man's fruit" and one whose easy accessibility was blamed for keeping primitive men "lazy and intolerably shiftless" (*Daily Constitution* 1876). Bananas thus had a disreputable air about them, a lack of virtue, a taint of immorality.

Many fruits were seen as tempting and provocative. According to Victorian etiquette, unless a gentleman knew a lady desired him, he should not touch the skin of any fruit he prepared for her, nor pare her an apple or a pear (Louis and Ruth 1883: 99). One doubts he could have handled a shameless banana in her presence. Bananas were also inappropriate in dining-room fruit paintings. Bananas were peeled and sliced into small, non-phallic-shaped portions in the kitchen, preferably by the kitchen maid, or, beginning in the late 19th century, cleverly wrapped in tinfoil to mask their suggestive nature (Adams 1914: 21-23; Snodgrass 2004: 61).

It took a male naturalist to publish instructions in 1868 for eating one. Bananas could be eaten or prepared in many simple ways, according to W. L. Brigham: peeled and fried; peeled and eaten raw; or peeled and sliced with orange juice, sugar, and cream. One could bake them in their skins, turn them into a pudding or a pie, or make a dried paste (Brigham 1868a: 276-277). Many medical experts believed no one should ever eat a raw banana, but others saw them as a good foodstuff for typhoid patients and other invalids (*New York Medical Times* 1896: 223; *Georgia Journal of Medicine and Surgery* 1897: 115). Banana recipes are absent from most 19th-century New England cookbooks, and the fruit itself only appears in a few: Mrs. Woodman's exquisite recipes, Rosalie Benton's inexpensive dishes, a Roxbury booklet, and a regional compilation (Woodman 1875; *Eliot Cook Book* 1880: 52; Benton 1886; *Hood's Practical*



Figure 11. Buying bananas. Early banana importers and distributors were mostly Italian immigrants. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, 1900.)

Cook Book 1897). Celebrated food writers Maria Parloa and Juliet Corson first ignored bananas and then tentatively published a recipe or two, as did Sarah Frost (Parloa 1880: 49; Frost 1883: 169; Corson 1885: 227). Mary Lincoln covered them in one sentence, while Sarah Rorer noted bananas were “difficult to digest” and should never be given to children uncooked unless they were soft and dark with blackened skins (Lincoln 1896: 392; Rorer 1898: 25). Hester Martha Poole, who devoted an entire book to fruit, was the only woman to pay bananas full attention, with more than a dozen ways to prepare them (Poole 1890: 51–54).

One issue with bananas may have been common knowledge of their consumption by “Others” (Pacific Islanders, Africans, Asians, etc.) and by common sailors. Bananas were shipboard fare wherever they could be found. One traveler reported bunches swinging from the mainstay of a passing ship (Upton 1869). Another saw bananas adorning masts and

rigging (Bessey 2010: 167). Bananas were also eaten by common folk, including immigrants, who pawed through carts to find the best fruits (FIG. 11). However, by 1900 cooked bananas were a respectable fruit in many New England homes; they had successfully crossed gender, ethnic, class, and age divisions. The process was lengthy, though not as extensive as with coffee or chocolate; but suspicion still lingered. In 1917 Mrs. Allen felt fresh bananas should not be served whole and offered only four ways to cook them (Allen 1917: 146–147, 153, 553). Clearly, bananas were not fully integrated into New England foodways. As fresh fruit, they might pollute because of their association with people of dubious status, their metaphorical link to male genitalia, and their behavioral association with laziness. Bananas had physical proximity to marginal individuals in society, as well as metaphorical intimacy. Mary Douglas would say women perceived them as impure.

Conclusion

This paper began with the premise that cookbooks had elements in common with gravestones that might enable one to look at them using archaeological concepts such as seriation, *terminus post* or *terminus ante quem*, and presence/absence. The initial focus, drawn from the work of James Deetz and Edwin Dethlefsen, was on seriation, which highlights times and places in which ideas have altered, and new ones are seen in fresh styles or shapes. Thus the proposition that seriation could be as usefully applied to other material assemblages as it has been to New England gravestones. The steps involved in seriation also disclosed the presence/absence of specific items within a food class. Absence is a forceful category, not an empty one, based on beliefs, decisions, and behavior (Yentsch 2011). Absence is akin to negative space in architecture. It requires commitment and agency; it has an active voice. And it appears with clarity once objects are classified and quantified for seriation (TAB. 2) (FIGS. 8, 9, and 10).

Deetz applied a normative view of culture in which personal decisions were typically based on collective notions of relevant designs, and what a gravestone maker chose for decoration on a stone reflected the larger society rather than his individual choice (Flannery 1967). The reasons behind the presence or absence of a particular gravestone motif were thus read as related to broad patterns in religious beliefs or rational economic choices (Deetz 1977). Logic related to the latter was what I expected to see in the acquisition and use of stoves in New England households, and, over the long term, it was decisive. I expected to see early evidence of this in instructions provided in recipes for specific dishes, notably a shift in the preparation of meats from fire-roasted to oven-roasted, i.e., baked, and from boiled puddings to baked versions. However, what was most obvious over a shorter period of time was “old attitudes of thought and action, resistant frameworks dying hard, at times against all logic” (Braudel 1958: 732). Surprisingly, these attitudes were apparent in works by well-educated domestic reformers and physicians who classified themselves as forward-thinking women and men.

The contrast between sales, as seen in advertising and market reports, and the contents of cookbooks suggests the presence of

a substantial group of women, mere shadows in cookery books, who learned by experience or through informal, cooperative teaching, and held a vital role in food markets. That is to say, grocers made sure they stocked the foodstuffs these women desired, whether or not they were commonly found in recipe books. The women came from artisan or craftsman families, from wage-earning households, and from the lower middle class, and included immigrants. They comprised the ordinary, less-educated, and poorer housewives sometimes targeted by domestic reformers and later by home economists (Levenstein 1988: 103–108; Spencer-Wood 1991: 269–274, 1994; Biltekoff 2002; Handlin 2002: 252).

For several decades, archaeologists have viewed decisions about what to buy and what to use as simple choices determined, in hierarchical societies, by socioeconomic conditions. In this view, the basic premise is that material things “serve envy and pride through rivalrous display” (Douglas 1984: 5). It is a materialist perspective. But envy, pride, and contests involving social rank are not the only bases for human behavior; there are multiple causes, as well as widely varied artifacts (Purser 1992; Cook, Yamin, and McCarthy 1996; M. Smith 2007). This fact is often overlooked. Ceramic artifacts, because of their intimate connections to food and beverages, have, like clothing, “no [intrinsic] meanings in themselves, only in their sequencing and assembly” (Douglas 1997: 1; Wall 2000). The principles guiding acquisition are convoluted; the basis for buyers’ cognitive appraisal of possible pots,

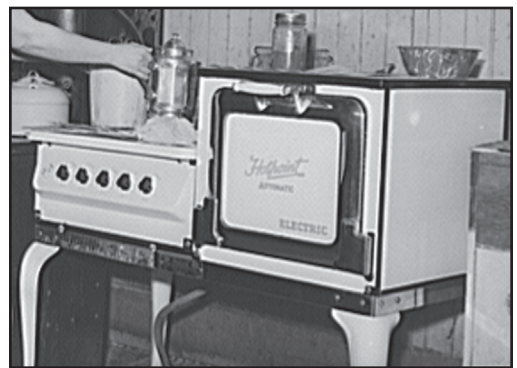


Figure 12. An early 20th-century electric stove with Queen Anne style legs, manufactured by General Electric, was designed with feminine users in mind (McCormick 1922: 487).

pans, and suitable fruits rests on a variety of factors, including their ability to convey membership in a social group. Hadley Kruczek-Aaron's study of reformer Gerrit Smith indicates that ideas about morals and metaphysics guided his household's use of liquor, teacups, and plates, and thus archaeological investigations present two contradictions: the presence of alcohol-related items in his houseyard, and his daughter's inclusion of wines and liquors in her published cookbook (Kruczek-Aaron 2013). The adoption of stoves, as discussed here, rested on various beliefs about health, gender, machines, and space; the strength of these can be seen in the anti-stove movement. Stylistic changes in stoves accompanied their transition to the feminine realm, first with flourishes, such as decorated the stove shown earlier (FIG. 6), and then in less robust, almost dainty stoves on Queen Anne style legs (FIG. 12).

It is worth noting that stoves are durable, more expensive than other household goods, less amenable to fashion trends, and tightly tied to technological advances. Changes of the *longue durée*, it is suggested, require a substantial length of time before they become visible in comparative materials, whereas evanescent trends are more visible within the relatively short time in which a well, privy, or cellar foundation is filled. Yet, the synergy between the need for fine-tuned chronologies and the determination to discern social difference, social rank, occupation, ethnic identity, and different segments of the population—dominant, subordinate, marginal, resistant, etc.—favors analytical attention to fleeting, transient, short-lived fashions. These are oftentimes taken as indications of significant social change (Shackel 2000: 234, 240). Exclusivity is a key element among the socially conscious; once an item loses limited access, it is no longer as useful in conferring status as it was when access was highly restricted. Recipes in New England cookbooks assuredly reveal changing fashions as shown by the trends in desserts based on oranges, dates, and prunes. But it would be a mistake to assume that all change is a response to the rules of status, fashion, and market-driven objectives. Recipes were added to the regional repertoire with each new wave of immigration; and with technological innovation, such as temperature-regulated ovens and heat gauges, improved cooling devices, new utensils

(e.g., rotary eggbeaters and double boilers), and with increased understanding of diet and nutrition.

The gradual demise of puddings made from macaroni, carrots, sweet and white potatoes, pumpkins, and squashes represents refinements of the organizational schemas restricting vegetables and other savory dishes to the main course, and the necessity for distinction and contrast between puddings and pies. As women discontinued the use of vegetables in puddings, they also shifted their emphasis to pies (TAB. 2). Recipes for the latter proliferated during the late 19th century, and, according to English travelers, America became a nation of pies that cooks mounded with meringues after the invention of the rotary eggbeater.

Although it seems unimaginable, one popular food writer claimed that summer berries were designed for the digestive organs of birds, and, hence, humans should avoid them, while “strawberries were certainly made for those reptiles that keep close to the ground” (Rorer 1898: 25). This statement exemplifies a belief in shared “fitness” brought about through spatial contiguity, i.e., a strawberry growing low to the ground was fit for varmints roaming the same low spaces. Victorians considered this reasoning a “disinfecting principle” (Shapiro 2008: 33). One might also see such guides as guilt by association and often as indicators of racial or ethnic prejudice. If a fruit was a snack eaten by common folk at public events (i.e., the “poor man’s fruit,” or bananas and pineapples), and its route into the home passed through less-than-pristine hands (immigrants, multiracial ship crews, heathen “Others”), it had the potential to “dirty” a home, degrade its status, or defile it. Note here Dr. Alcott’s intertwined criticism of figs as sometimes infested by tiny, foreign organisms and as a common food of lower-class southern Europeans (Alcott 1838: 260–261); consider also the cant of other nativist writings.

Mary Douglas (1966, 1972) stressed the importance of different belief systems and their role in establishing criteria for edibility. Children are, essentially, taught to eat the foods deemed as edible and to avoid any others. Rules for food bespeak time of day, day of the week, age, gender, ordinary or extraordinary events, and guidelines governing the use of

space (Douglas and Gross 1981: 17). They indicate the health of the cook and her family, and reveal beliefs about nutrition, medicine, hygiene, sexuality, social status, and decorum. They are intertwined in an intricate web of beliefs that is culturally specific. This brief survey, focused on stoves, fruits, and puddings suggests that it would be a useful endeavor to find ways to analyze artifacts that show how all pieces of the puzzle fit together, what is present and what is not, and how other domains of daily life, apart from economic and power structures, leave archaeological imprints for one to discover.

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