

#8 The Nativity Story: 150 years of Loaves and Fishes

In our archives we have five cookbooks published over the last century. The first cookbook is titled: *Kirk Kookery Kinks: Containing Tried Recipes*. Now, there must be a story behind that name!!! The cookbook was compiled and published in 1921 by the Chancel Committee of the Episcopal Church. You will recall that Nativity was served by Rev. D. J. W. Somerville in the years 1904 to 1924. What did Mrs. D. J. W. Somerville cook to feed body, mind and soul?

Mrs. D.J. W. Somerville's recipe is the first recipe listed in the 1921 book.¹ It is for vegetable soup. (Everyone raised a garden.) She had recipes for "French Beets" which combined vinegar, beets, beet broth, sugar, butter, corn starch, salt and pepper. Then she submitted a very British/Irish Sunday recipe for Yorkshire pudding, a side dish made from a batter of eggs, flour and milk poured cold into very hot baking cups and cooked at a high heat. (Looks a lot like popovers.) This Sunday dinner staple was served with beef and gravy. Also, she submitted a Russian Salad dressing recipe where peppers, pimentos, onions, vinegar, olive oil, sugar, salt, Worcestershire sauce and red peppers are put through a met grinder and then served on salad.²

Kirk Kookery Kinks cookbook, published by The Morning Tribune in 1921 had commercial sponsors. From the Tribune advertising, one finds the following: "The Tribune is food for thought. Make it a part of your meal"³ We old-timer valley folks recognize some of the sponsors: Whites Hospital, Lee Morris Company, and Echterbachs, among others.

Our second cook book from 1948 is titled: *Cooking Round the World and at Home*. The choice of a title reflects the different ethnicities represented in our parish families. One recipe that many of us remember from our grandmother's table is "Wilted Lettuce," from NORTHERN RECIPES. It included fried bacon (retaining the fat), vinegar, and onions, all seasoned to taste and poured hot over lettuce leaves—thus wilting them.⁴ Another favorite was Sauerbraten, "Famous German Dish." The recipe instructs: "Have your meat larded with larding pork, it is called *spick* in German. Your butcher will know. The larding is put through the meat with a *spicking* needle by the butcher."⁵ Could a butcher still do it?

This book has a ham loaf. Was it the one served for years at the Christmas Bazaars? We have found at least three other ham loaf recipes—Barb Campbell, Mary Lou Gregory and Pat Johnson have others. There is even one using SPAM. The 1948 recipe book prints ham loaf ingredients: lemon Jell-O, vinegar, Worcestershire, mustard, ground ham, mayonnaise, horseradish, pimento, onion cayenne, cloves, and nutmeg.⁶ We understand that there was a committee of four ladies who always made the Christmas ham loaf. Which ham loaf do you remember? Who would like to make one for our coming history lecture dinner—just for history's sake?

The 1948 book has a Miscellaneous section which includes "Beauty Hints for Madam": Removal of Warts, Smelling Salts, Removal of Freckles, etc. Did you know that "Strong tea drunk regularly, will, after a while, give the skin the appearance of leather." Or "A pinch of salt, an egg broken in two, or a raw prune will add to the flavor of coffee." Further, "A bottle of pennyroyal left uncorked in your bedroom at night will keep the room free of mosquitos and other insects."⁷ Book priced at \$1.00.

The 1965 book, *Episcopal Cook Book* has a "Caloric and Diet Section." It suggests an eighteen day reducing diet and a "SODA FOUNTAIN OR RESTAURANT REDUCING DIET: FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO ARE UNABLE TO EAT AT HOME." The 1965 book has recipes for the ubiquitous Jell-O salad—be it made with lemon Jell-O or lime Jell-O.⁸ During those years, were any of us ever at a Sunday buffet, a family picnic or a church potluck where we didn't find a bowl of Jell-O salad with fruit cocktail, pineapple, cottage cheese and little baby marshmallows, topped with heavy whipping cream?

The 1965 book has a section called "Food Quantities for Serving 25, 50, and 100 Persons." Be it known that for 100 people one needs the following quantities: Ham: 55 pounds, Potato salad, 4 ½ gallons; Spaghetti, 5 gallons; Watermelon, 150 pounds.⁹

Then came the 1980 cook book, *Favorite Recipes: Chancel Guild and Women of the Episcopal Church of the Nativity*. The preface to the volume tells the reader that "The years from 1920 "Kirk Kookery Kinks" to this edition cover a great change in our life styles, from preparing everything "from scratch", to "thrusting one's hand in the gas or wood stove oven to test the temperature." From take "five cents worth of beef, to boxed beef, microwave ovens and measurements in grams and centiliters."¹⁰ Things have changed, but Episcopal cooks DO still make things from scratch. Potlucks and Saturday night suppers attest to that.

Since most of us were alive in 1980, this story will report only one use mentioned in the MICROWAVE COOKING APPLICATION SECTION: “ #15 Dry girdle or panty hose in the microwave.” The fifth cook book, compiled in 1990, has stories for another day.

To close, dear reader, please reflect on Nativity’s version of the Loaves and Fishes: our Food Pantry, Saturday Supper, Clinic meals, Family Promise, Tuesday video study soup, our weekly Eucharist, and coffee hour. Our chef hats are off to cooks, Maxine, Rose, Rosemary, Pat, Anita, Gretchen, all the other cooks and bottle-washers and especially to “Knock-out-Turkey-Dinner Chef” Harold Crook for the Saturday Supper meals. Thanks be to God.

This 150-year-old feeding story needs to end with a blessing:

Bless the fruits of the earth. Bless the hands of farmers. Bless the hands of workers. Bless the texture and colors of my food. Bless those who gather. Bless the breaking of bread. Blessed Be! Blessed Be! Blessed be!

*Christ at every table, Christ beside me, Christ behind me, Christ around me, In the breaking of the bread.*¹¹

End notes:

- 1 Chancel Committee of the Episcopal Church, *Kirk Kookery Kinks* p.7
- 2 *Ibid*, p. 16 This recipe was reprinted in the 1980 cookbook on page 5
- 3 *Ibid*, p. 79
- 4 Chancel Guild, Church of the Nativity Episcopal, *Cooking Around the World and at Home* p. 9
- 5 *Ibid*, p. 30
- 6 *Ibid*, p. 62-19
- 7 *Ibid*, p. 58-61
- 8 Women of the Church of the Nativity, *Episcopal Cook Book*, un-paginated section following p. 66
- 9 *Ibid*, p 34
- 10 Chancel Guild and Women of the Episcopal Church of the Nativity Lewiston, Idaho 1980, *Favorite Recipes* appendix h
- 11 Fitzgerald, William John *A Contemporary Celtic Prayer Book* ACTA Publications Chicago, IL 60640 1998

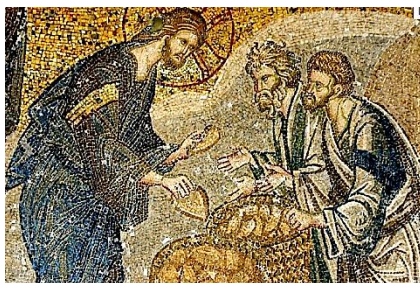
Works cited:

- Chancel Committee of the Episcopal Church, *Kirk Kookery Kinks* 1921 The Chancel Committee included Mesdames: Hoyt, Harris, Murray, Pauley, Eaves, Dick, Thompson, Baskett, McCormack, Madison, Kennedy, Eaves and Morton
- Chancel Guild, *Cooking Around the World and at Home* 1948 The Chancel Guild included Mesdames: Lipps, McGregor, Brill, Lorenz, White, Madison, Modie, Bratton and Clements
- Chancel Guild and Women of the Episcopal Church of the Nativity Lewiston, Idaho 1980 *Favorite Recipes* Women’s Clubs Publishing Co., Inc. Chicago, Illinois 60606
- Fitzgerald, William John *A Contemporary Celtic Prayer Book* ACTA Publications Chicago, IL 60640 1998
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-- Deloris Jungert Davisson and Margaret Cole 2015



Yorkshire Pudding



Loaves and Fishes



Ham loaf