“How to Cook a Husband”

Household Management in the Culinary History Collection

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Special Collections

- Rare Books
- Manuscripts
- University Archives
- Historical Maps
- Historical Photographs

So Pickle Great Cucumbers
Take 12 Cucumbers before they are ripe and slice them pretty thin then take 6 onions & parsley on them & take one handful of salt & then put them. Let them stand 2 hours then put them into a pot or earthen jar & take one quare of white wine & 6 whole cloves 6 blades of mace & 6 cloves then pour it & let it stand on youricum. Let it stand very still & cover it well. When you have done fishing them when they pickle is Cold put in some

So Pickle French beans
Take some beans lay if them in salt & water of Days you must change them once in the time into fresh & put them in. Oak & ripe very dry in cold vinegar & boyly if there poor if into a crock & let them stand till they are Cold then boyly some more vinegar with spice let it stand till cold then drain & other vinegar is put from them then put ye vinegar with spice to them

So Pickle Kidney Beans
Take 12 great melons & a little piece of garlic & a little

Put if melons with these spices put ye spices on again & keep it very close then 4 Quarts of dry Vinegar 2 Quarts of water & some full of salt put in some of this some spices & garlic. Boyle it in the sun & Scum it. Every Clean let if melons be put into a pot then pour the sugar boiling hot upon if. Make if pickle.
Culinary History Collection

- Currently contains more than 3,700 volumes
- 2,400+ of these are housed in Special Collections
- Almost two dozen manuscript collections
- Includes two subsets: The Peacock-Harper Collection and Ann Hertzler Children’s Cookbook and Nutrition Literature Collection
Collection Development

• Emphasis on:
  – Regional and community cookbooks and materials
  – Brand-name pamphlets and product publications
  – Menus, nutrition education, and kitchen planning
  – Books documenting social, domestic, and economic history; changes in food behavior; food-related processing and technology
  – Faculty papers
  – Manuscript receipt (recipe) books
What are Manuscript Collections?

- Handwritten and/or unpublished materials including:
  - Receipt books
  - Household accounts and ledgers
  - Faculty papers
  - Professional papers
  - Papers from groups or organizations
Acquiring Materials Through Donation

• Form the majority of the collection to date
• Method of acquisition upon which the department is dependent
• Most donations are books

“Wish list” for the collection: http://spec.lib.vt.edu/culinary/va_cookbooks_bib.html
Culinary Resources for Circulating Collections

Or, Why Some Donations End Up in the Stacks
A few policies guide interactions with donated or gifted materials:

- We ask to see an inventory of the items you’d like to donate before you bring the actual items over (http://www.lib.vt.edu/collmgmt/policies/donors.html)

- We endeavor to collect and maintain items in that support the University’s programs, offer timely/current information, represent historical value, and are in good physical condition

- More information and specific policies are available: http://www.lib.vt.edu/collmgmt/policies/
What Ends Up in the Stacks

• Unfortunately, we are limited by space and other economic factors, and must select books that add direct value to the circulating collection.
  • Books must be:
    – In good condition
    – Not a duplicate of materials already in the stacks, or sometimes, in Special Collections as well
    – Relevant to Virginia Tech’s programs
    – Relevant and of interest to the wider community served by Virginia Tech
If You Want to Donate

- Rebecca will be happy to look at an inventory of items

  - Considerations:
    - Current holdings
    - WorldCat (a union catalog of over 71,000 libraries worldwide) to see if other libraries nearby may have the item(s)
    - Related University programs/Do item(s) support the University’s mission
    - Shelf space
Acquiring Materials Through Purchase

• No dedicated fund or endowment for general culinary materials in Special Collections

• Endowment for Children’s Literature and Nutrition Collection materials

• Example: “How to Cook a Husband,” purchased from a dealer specializing in Culinary materials
Recent Additions to the Culinary History Collection

• Culinary, appliance, and food-related company pamphlets
• 3 handwritten household accounts/recipe books
• More than 130 cook books, manuals, and children’s titles
• Large collection of materials relating to seafood processing (in progress)
After Acquisition

Once we acquire culinary books and manuscripts, what happens next?

It’s Decision Time!
Creating Access to Books

• Books and other publications are cataloged in Technical Services, then returned to Special Collections stacks

• Catalog records in the library’s catalog, Addison

• Catalog records in OCLC’s WorldCat
Creating Access to Manuscripts

- Materials are
  - Accessioned and added to the processing queue
  - Physically arranged and organized
  - Intellectually organized and described
  - Finding aids (Collection guides) created
Creating Access Online

- Digitized books via Digital Library and Archives
- Digitized manuscripts
- Finding aids (collection guides) for manuscript collections on the Virginia Heritage Project website
  - Ms2010-079
- Short description on the Special Collections website
  - Ms2010-079
HOUSE, STEVEN AND CATHI, ARCHITECTURAL COLLECTION. 1.3 cu.ft. Collection contains nine sets of architecture plans from House + House Architects. Projects cover work from California and Mexico, including the Auerbuch Residence, the Dos Iguanas Residence, the Walden Residence, Casa Sullivan, and others. Unprocessed. Acc2008-062

HOW TO COOK A HUSBAND MANUSCRIPT BOOK. 0.1 cu. ft. This collection contains a hand-made book called, A Novel Recipe "How to Cook a Husband," c. 1880. The book has no known creator and contains a version of the popular story for newlywed women that compares treating a husband well to cooking a good meal. Finding aid available on the Virginia Heritage database. Ms2010-079.


HSIEH, ALICE LANGLEY (1922-1979). PAPERS, 1943-1978. 8.0 cu. ft. Political scientist specializing in the field of nuclear weaponry and military capabilities of the People's Republic of China. Educated at Queen's College,
Reference/Instruction/Outreach

• Recent Reference Requests
  – Approaches to children’s nutrition through cookbooks in the mid-20th century
  – Preservation methodologies (pickling)

• Recent Exhibits
  – Common Book Project

• Future Possibilities
  – Getting to classes to us!
Potential Research

- Changing approaches to cooking, nutrition, and health over time
- Depictions and expectations of gender roles
- History of food processes and technologies
- Relationships between food and economy
The Culinary History Collection really is more than “just” cookbooks...

Especially if you want run your household and kitchen the “right” way...

As long as you keep in mind that there are as many “right” ways as there are publications.
“Management is an art that may be acquired by every woman of good sense and tolerable memory.”

Introduction to

The Virginia Housewife: or, Methodical Cook, 1820
From the 17th to 19th Centuries

• Emphasis on
  – Recipe books with household tips
  – “How-to” manuals and advice
  – Detailed information about how food affects people
  – Managing household staff and resources for the family’s best interests
“Bean taffy easily takes first rank among all the taffies—vegetable or otherwise. The taste is good beyond words, and the consistency is pleasingly ‘chewy’ without being tenacious to the point of teeth pulling! Lima beans are the best to use...”

From Mary Elizabeth Hall’s Candy-making revolutionized; confectionery from vegetables. New York: Sturgis & Walton Co., 1912
Through the World Wars

- Emphasis on
  - Economy, economy, economy
  - Stretching limited food supplies
  - Preservation
  - Community
"Twenty years ago everybody ate pie and nearly everybody had dyspepsia. Jell-O had not been heard of. Now there is scarcely a housewife in America who does not make and serve Jell-O desserts, and stomach-ache is not so common as it used to be."

Jell-O and the Kewpies: America’s Most Famous Dessert, 1915
The Rise of the Modern Kitchen
(Post WWII)

• Emphasis on
  – Entertaining
  – New appliances
  – Getting out of the kitchen!
  – Convenience/Speed
  – Increasing numbers of “how-to” pamphlets and publications
  – Diet/Nutrition
“Waiting is a department of woman’s work which is capable of being greatly improved and raised to a higher standard.”

**Men? In the Kitchen?**

- **Number of Roles:**
  - As authors
  - As audience/readers
  - As cooks at home
  - As household managers
  - As parents
“I would say to housewives, be not daunted by one failure, nor by twenty. Resolve that you will have good bread, and never cease striving after this result until you have effected it. If persons without brains can accomplish this, why cannot you?”

Housekeeping in Old Virginia, c.1879
Show & Tell

Please join us in the Special Collections Conference Room to view some of our recent and/or favorite acquisitions!

This is a wonderful opportunity to see the variety in the collection!
Questions?

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Background Image: Pages from Ms2008-024, “Book of Receipts” Recipe Book, 1731. Recipes in this manuscript book include those for picking and preserving, baking, drinks, and several household remedies.