

Georgia State University

ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

English Dissertations

Department of English

Summer 8-8-2023

Recipe for a New Republic: Foodways, Fiction, and American Identity in Selected Works of Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Josepha Hale, and Harriet Beecher Stowe

Gina Blankenship Flowers
Georgia State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/english_diss

Recommended Citation

Flowers, Gina Blankenship, "Recipe for a New Republic: Foodways, Fiction, and American Identity in Selected Works of Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Josepha Hale, and Harriet Beecher Stowe." Dissertation, Georgia State University, 2023.

doi: <https://doi.org/10.57709/35867741>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of English at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

Recipe for a New Republic: Foodways, Fiction, and American Identity
in Selected Works of Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Josepha Hale,
and Harriet Beecher Stowe

by

GINA BLANKENSHIP FLOWERS

Under the Direction of Reiner Smolinski, PhD

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2023

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the intersectionality of food and fiction in the formation of a uniquely American identity from approximately 1820-1860. The burgeoning nation of America was seeking its destiny as a democracy, and its people were trying to decide what “good” citizens should eat—and what they should read. Critical case studies of cookery books and novels by three well-known early American tastemakers—Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Josepha Hale, and Harriet Beecher Stowe—illuminate how the rhetorical spaces of the cookbook and the novel act as indicators and agents of early American views on gender, class, and race.

A rhetorical analysis of the cookery books reveals that Child, Hale, and Stowe urged American women to build patriotic values and agency in their private sphere by maintaining orderly Christian homes, practicing constant industry, and avoiding what Child refers to as the “false and wicked parade” of excessive luxury (*Frugal Housewife* 5). These authors enrich their themes through the depiction and meaning of food in their novels: Child in *Hobomok* (1824) challenges the gendered pillars of True Womanhood; Hale in *Northwood* (1827) promotes the natural aristocracy of the class of the yeoman farmer; and Stowe in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) utilizes the domestic praxis of various kitchens, cooks, and foods to differentiate race and morality, and to build a Christian pathos appeal for the end of slavery. Child, Hale, and Stowe published popular domestic texts *and* employed food in their novels as key ingredients in shaping views of gender, class, and race in the formation of a uniquely American identity.

INDEX WORDS: Food in literature, Early American cookery, American literature--

19th century--History and criticism, Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Josepha Hale, Harriet Beecher Stowe

Copyright by
Gina Blankenship Flowers
2023

Recipe for a New Republic: Foodways, Fiction, and American Identity
in Selected Works of Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Josepha Hale,
and Harriet Beecher Stowe

by

Gina Blankenship Flowers

Committee Chair: Reiner Smolinski

Committee: Mark Noble

Lynée Lewis Gaillet

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Services

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

August 2023

DEDICATION

To my parents, Margie and Gene Blankenship, who always believed in me and taught me the importance of gathering friends and family around your dinner table, as my grandparents and in-laws did, too. To my husband, Wesley, who experimented with indigenous crops in our garden, willingly sampled nineteenth-century recipes, and encouraged me when my brain began to reel from my literary labors. To my children, Will and Rachel, who bring great joy to my life and always make the world a brighter and better place. To my students, past and future, who motivate me to learn more. To my friends and family, who patiently understood when I had to disappear yet again into my writing hole. It was worth it. Thank you all for the support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the preface to her 1839 first edition of *The Good Housekeeper*, Sarah Josepha Hale admits that her cookery book “has been several years in contemplation; various circumstances have retarded the publication, but the times seemed now to call for its appearance” (Hale, *The Good Housekeeper* 5). Hale’s sentiment resonates with me as this dissertation now makes “its appearance.”

I express heartfelt thanks to my director, Reiner Smolinski, who gave so generously of his time and offered steadfast support and wise insight throughout this project. I sincerely thank my committee, Mark Noble and Lynée Gaillet, for guidance that challenged and strengthened this dissertation and helped me see what future projects may come of it. My gratitude goes to my professors, librarians, mentors, and colleagues at Georgia State University and Perimeter College, who provided support, just the right amount of nudging, and a touch of humor when I needed it most.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	V
LIST OF FIGURES	VII
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 COOKERY BOOKS AS SHAPERS OF TASTE	17
3 CASE STUDIES: DOMESTIC TEXTS OF CHILD, HALE, AND STOWE	29
3.1 Lydia Maria Child and <i>The Frugal Housewife</i> (1829).....	29
3.2 Sarah Josepha Hale and <i>The Good Housekeeper</i> (1839).....	44
3.3 Harriet Beecher Stowe and <i>House and Home Papers</i> (1865)	62
4 CASE STUDIES: FOOD, FICTION, AND AMERICAN IDENTITY	80
4.1 Gender in Food and Fiction: Lydia Maria Child's <i>Hobomok</i> (1824)	81
4.2 Class in Food and Fiction: Sarah Josepha Hale's <i>Northwood</i> (1827).....	98
4.3 Race in Food and Fiction: Harriet Beecher Stowe's <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> (1852)	117
5 CONCLUSION	135
APPENDIX.....	138
We Are What We Ate: A Brief History of Food in the Americas.....	138
WORKS CITED.....	148

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Front cover of <i>The Frugal Housewife</i> , 1 st ed., November 1829.....	32
Figure 2 Front Cover of <i>The Good Housekeeper</i> , 1 st ed., September 1839.....	46
Figure 3 <i>The Drunkards Progress: From the First Glass to the Grave</i> . Lithograph by Nathaniel Ives.1846.	57
Figure 4 <i>House and Home Papers</i> by Harriet Beecher Stowe, (1865) 1st Edition Hardcover.....	64
Figure 5 Oakholm, home of Harriet Beecher Stowe from 1864-1870. Hartford, Connecticut	67
Figure 6 House of the Seven Gables, inspiration for Hawthorne's 1855 novel, built in 1668. Restored in 1908. Salem, Massachusetts	67
Figure 7 The Lyman Beecher Family, 1859	118
Figure 8 Harriet Beecher Stowe House. Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine.....	120
Figure 9 "Uncle Tom at Home" Illustration by George Cruikshank	130

1 INTRODUCTION

In June 2023, Chef Sean Sherman, a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe, was selected as the recipient of the Julia Child Award for his work in honoring and preserving Indigenous foodways and what he terms “decolonized” food. Sherman shares that in researching his own culinary ancestry, he “discovered that neither the local cuisine nor the broader North American food landscape adequately represented the Indigenous heritage of the land or its native people” (Julia Child Foundation). Indigenous activists like Sherman signal the crucial link between food and cultural identity, and they specifically celebrate the foods that were cultivated in North America long before European explorers and British colonists arrived.¹ These foods—including beans, pumpkins, and corn—became part of the colonial diet, and because food is an integral part of any culture, they found their way into early American cookery books² with dishes such as Boston Baked Beans, Thanksgiving Pumpkin Pie, and Hasty Pudding. These and other foods were served up on fictional tables, as well, and those culinary depictions helped early American authors reflect and shape American values.

This project explores the intersectionality of food and fiction in the formation of a uniquely American identity from approximately 1820-1860, the antebellum period when America had finally separated itself from England and was striving to craft an identity of its own in all cultural areas including food and literature. Critical case studies of cookery books and novels by three well-known early American authors—Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Josepha Hale, and Harriet Beecher Stowe—illuminate how the rhetorical spaces of the cookbook and the novel

¹ For an overview of American food history, see Appendix: “We Are What We Ate: A Brief History of Food in the Americas.”

² In this project, the nineteenth-century term “cookery book” will be used interchangeably with other terms including cookbook or domestic text or household manual.

helped challenge and shape early American views on gender, class, and race. As a starting point, this project analyzes selected cookery books of Child, Hale, and Stowe. After establishing a backdrop of authentic recipes and foods of the period, this study examines selected novels from these same three authors: Child's *Hobomok*, Hale's *Northwood*, and Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, analyzing how these authors employed food in their fiction as a key ingredient in formulating a uniquely American identity.

The field of food studies has greatly expanded in the last few decades; however, given the extensive role that food and fiction play in defining any culture, the field of food studies within American literature remains largely under-examined. For American fiction in general, critics such as Nina Baym and Elaine Showalter laid the foundation for the re-discovery of many previously dismissed works by early American women. Layering food studies onto fiction, critics like Mark McWilliams and Kyla Wazana Tompkins have turned an analytical eye to the symbolic and culture-defining use of food in early American novels. However, few critics have simultaneously explored foodways in both fiction and non-fiction works by authors like Child, Hale, and Stowe, who demonstrated expertise in both the private sphere of domestic writing and the public sphere of fiction writing. This dissertation adds to the extant scholarship by seeking to heighten awareness of the contributions that Child, Hale, and Stowe—through their cookery books *and* novels—made to the evolution of the early American identity.

During early to mid-nineteenth-century America, the sphere of the woman was almost exclusively private, and centered within the home. Women were not encouraged to pursue publication, an innately public endeavor. In many ways, cookery books—especially popular ones such as those included in this study—facilitated the blending of the public and private spheres for women writers of nineteenth-century America. At one point, Thomas Wentworth Higginson,

a mentor of female nineteenth-century authors, remarked, “It seemed to be necessary for American women to work their passage into literature by first compiling a cookery book” (qtd. in Showalter 47). Cookbooks offered a safe and acceptable entrance into the publishing world. Eliza Leslie, the prolific author of conduct books and cookery books including *Seventy-Five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes, and Sweetmeats*, followed this cookbook-then-novel sequence and was always more recognized for her food than for her fiction; however, that sequence was not followed by Child, Hale, or Stowe.

Why, then, would already established authors of fiction choose to publish cookery books? In addition to the obvious financial motives, perhaps these women—especially Hale and Stowe who did not suffer the immediate financial struggles that plagued Child—shared a belief in the function of the kitchen as a shaper of society. As one of their French contemporaries, now referred to as the father of gastronomy, Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, wrote, “The destiny of nations depends on the manner in which they are fed” (*The Physiology of Taste* 9). As the young nation of the United States of America sought its destiny, it was indeed fed by the ubiquitous Hasty Pudding, baked beans, pumpkin pies, clambakes, and other recipes like the ones in these authors’ popular cookbooks. These women did not, however, limit themselves to publishing cookery books. Child, Hale, and Stowe went on to establish a powerful presence in the realms of education, politics, society, business, religion, and of course—literature.

Each of their novels in some way facilitated their entry into shaping America’s early identity. Child’s *Hobomok* was her first foray into bringing the Native American question into the spotlight, Hale’s successful *Northwood* garnered the attention of the publishing world and positioned her for long-running editorships at the *Ladies’ Magazine* and *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, and Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* helped ignite the flame of Civil War. Since these authors

published not only acclaimed fiction, but also widely read cooking manuals, I am particularly interested in how the private, domestic sphere of foodways is invested with meaning in the public sphere of their novels. Through careful analysis of these authors' cookery books and Child's *Hobomok*, Hale's *Northwood*, and Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, I will argue that food and foodways operate not only as straightforward literary tools for plot devices and characterization, but as both indicators and agents of nineteenth-century roles of gender, class, and race in the formation of a uniquely American identity.

Much scholarly work has already been done to define antebellum American identity and to reclaim American history and literature of the nineteenth century. However, the definition of any nation's identity is complex and ever-changing. No nation is born fully formed, bursting forth Athena-like from the land. As historian Frederick Jackson Turner remarked in 1893, "The American character did not spring full-blown from the Mayflower . . . it came out of the forests and gained new strength each time it touched a frontier" (Robbins 18). While some historians now question this "Turner thesis" of American identity being shaped primarily by encounters with the frontier, certain components of this theory demand attention. The early seventeenth-century colonists encountered an unfamiliar and rugged landscape. There were no artificially constructed geographical boundaries, nor were there any long-established hierarchies of politics, religion, or society in their New World settlements. Understandably, these primarily Anglo-European transplants crafted their first societal constructs to largely reflect British values. But as the colonies expanded, these settlers encountered the cultures of Native Americans, enslaved peoples from West Africa, and colonists from non-Anglo European countries including the Netherlands, France, and Germany—all of which helped form the consciousness of this new

land. Over time, these colonists developed stronger political and religious differences with England, and as we know, in 1776 the colonists declared their independence.

Certainly, the separation of The United States of America from England is thoroughly documented from the historical and political aspects. So, too, has it been analyzed from the literary perspective. As American citizens achieved their full independence from England after the War of 1812, American writers also began to break away. By the 1820s when Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper were creating uniquely American stories through use of New World landscapes and characters who represented the pioneering American spirit, a now under-examined literary genre was also developing: American cookery books. While logically these books were modeled on British cookbooks (much like Cooper's historical novels could be said to follow the adventure format of Sir Walter Scott's novels), they also incorporated distinctively American material. For example, these recipes used abundant native ingredients, such as corn and turkey, and they required only the kitchen tools and spices that were available in early America.

As tastes and diets are dynamic, some of these early American foods have decidedly lost their popularity. Calf's foot jelly, anyone? Well, perhaps not. While Child does not explicitly state which malady this gelatinous concoction cured, she does give detailed preparation instructions for it in the "Simple Remedies" section of her 1829 *The Frugal Housewife*. A recipe, or "receipt,"³ for an aspic such as Calf's Foot Jelly was imitated from the longstanding British culinary tradition that pervaded most Colonial and early American kitchens. However, as America continued to distance itself politically from England following the War of 1812, its culture—including American foodways—also began to distance itself. For example, corn, a

³ During the discussion of nineteenth-century American cookery books, the contemporary term "recipe" will be used interchangeably with the more modern term "receipt."

native and abundant crop, became so prevalent in American cookery that it soon earned its own cookery book. Eliza Leslie's *The Indian Meal Book* (1847) gave recipes for everything from the drab but filling Indian Mush to a Kentucky Sweet Cake that mixed corn meal with flour, sugar, butter, eggs, cinnamon, nutmeg, wine, and brandy. While this sweet cake would still likely appeal to both British and American tastes, Child provides a rather unappealing—at least to the average modern American palate—example of native food in her 1833 edition of *The American Frugal Housewife*, as she instructs that salted buffalo's tongue “should soak a day and a night, and boil as much as six hours” (43). In the 1800s, American buffalo were seen as an unlimited resource, and the tongue was a popular piece of meat.⁴ While the sheer size of the animal (up to 2,500 pounds) and lack of refrigeration technology prohibited most of the meat from being used, the hides and the salted or smoked tongues could easily be transported to the growing cities. This extensive use of buffalo tongue is an example of American resourcefulness and willingness to incorporate unfamiliar, non-European food sources into the nineteenth-century diet.

Other authors offer similar recipes that use cuts of meat or fish that have largely fallen out of favor in our modern day. Hale includes and embellishes a popular British dish of “Cod's Head and Shoulders, to Boil” in her 1839 *The Good Housekeeper*. Hale directs cooks to wash and tie up the cod, boil it in salted water for thirty minutes, and serve it with “the roe [eggs] and milt [sperm sacs] parboiled, cut into slices and fried,” garnishing the dish with parsley, horseradish, and melted butter (65). This detailed presentation of an easily available New England fish, incorporating the (then) inexpensive roe and milt, matches perfectly to Hale's stated intent of her cookery book. In her introductory chapter, Hale claims that the object of previous American cooking manuals has been the “art of good living, or of cheap living” and

⁴ In 1840, the city of St. Louis “received the pelts for 67,000 buffalo robes, and in 1848, 25,000 buffalo tongues found a market in that city” (McCrum 151).

gives the example of Child's *The American Frugal Housewife* as a guide to cheap living (11). Hale goes on to clarify that her aim is to "combine the excellences of these two systems [good and cheap living], . . . and thus teach how to live well, and be well while we live" (11). By offering a healthy and "cheap" dish such as boiled cod's head and shoulders, and garnishing it for "the art of good living," Hale meets both requirements. While some of these recipes may not tantalize modern palates, the use of indigenous American resources made by American cooks for American tastes created new foodways, distinct from those of the motherland. The culinary writings of Child and Hale helped to propagate and standardize the early canon of American recipes. Stowe, a couple of decades later in *House and Home Papers*, would add her domestic advice promoting industry, order, and economy to create comfortable—and Christian—American homes.

These cookery books provide much more than lists of recipes. They also serve up a veritable salmagundi of practical information including medicinal cures, social etiquette, family roles, household tips, and economic advice. Many of these topics were covered in the ever-popular conduct books of the time, many of which were written by Eliza Leslie. Researcher Alexandria Peary, in her analysis of Leslie's *The Behaviour Book* (1854), suggests that Leslie sometimes provided more than just conduct advice to her middle-class female readers, as when Leslie sandwiches two chapters of advice on how to become a writer into *The Behaviour Book*, an act that Peary refers to as "rebellion camouflaged as convention" (233). Domestic texts like conduct and cookery books often offer more of this "rebellion" than scholars realize. While cookery books have largely been under-studied, critics have long recognized the role of other mainstream literature—essays, poetry, drama, short stories, and novels—as a lens into the past. The cookery books of the early to mid-nineteenth century offer another worthwhile view into the

everyday ways and values of the early American people, and they serve as repositories of the collective memory during the literary period we now call the American Renaissance.

The widely agreed upon American Renaissance of literature was famously defined by F. O. Matthiessen in his 1941 *American Renaissance*. Matthiessen claimed that the works of Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman served as the pinnacle of a distinctively American Literature during the mid-nineteenth century. A few decades later, during the 1970s, literary scholars began to expand this five-member, all-dead, all-white, all-male canon. Literature by contemporary authors, African Americans, Native Americans, women, and other formerly marginalized groups began to be discovered and reclaimed. By the 1980s, works by diverse authors including Joy Harjo, Toni Morrison, and Amy Tan were finding their way into American Literature courses and anthologies. For several decades now, the work of reclaiming the forgotten writings of women has steadily increased. Elaine Showalter was among the first to promote female British authors, with her *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (1977). This movement was accompanied by a host of feminist critics touting the moral obligation of literature scholars to recover and re-discover the nearly forgotten works by women. In 1979, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar furthered this literary recovery with their seminal work *The Madwoman in the Attic*. Though they did include Emily Dickinson, their work is primarily focused on British literature (Gilbert and Gubar). During this same feminist wave, Baym pioneered the recovery of American women authors with her 1978 *Woman's Fiction*.

While these works and others opened a window to women's writing, specifically to British and American women's fiction, they deny any serious treatment of domestic writing. Etiquette handbooks are belittled, and cookery books are all but ignored. These domestic works,

regardless of the prejudice some literary scholars hold toward them, deserve to be reappraised based not only on their historical importance, but also for their cultural importance in helping to document, shape, and define the national identity of America. In this spirit of recovery, critics like Baym have reclaimed many of the previously dismissed “sentimental novels” of 1830-1850 American women authors by recognizing that these works are not merely simple, predictable stories, but that they serve as a meaningful snapshot of the time, a long-lasting view into nineteenth-century thought and social mores of what was expected of women—both the characters in the novels, and by extension, the readers of those novels. No “lost” literature genre is ever completely reclaimed, but in the area of nineteenth-century women’s literature, substantial reclamation has been spurred by the foundational studies of well-known critics including Gilbert and Gubar, Baym, and Showalter.

More recently, critics such as Mark McWilliams have also done significant work in this American genre. These scholars have explored not only nineteenth-century American fiction by women, but they have focused on nineteenth-century foodways and its connection to American literature. McWilliams, in his *Food and the Novel in Nineteenth-Century America*, applauds those critics who have labored to recover important nineteenth-century American texts, but claims that they have dismissed key tropes and scenes, and have “too often failed to consider the centrality of food to the everyday lives not just of fictional characters, but also of writers and readers” (xiii). America was in a culinary identity crisis, and readers turned to conduct books,⁵ novels, and cookery books to try to negotiate simplicity versus sophistication. They wanted to

⁵ An in-depth exploration of nineteenth-century conduct books lies beyond the scope of this project. However, Jane Donawerth explores the rhetoric of conduct books and finds that they “helped establish the middle class as a group with shared interests by emphasizing gender roles and the domestic ideal of women’s sphere” (5). Also see the Library of Congress “Research Guides: American Women: Resources from the General Collections: Specialized Resources” for collections of Cookbooks & Home Economics and Etiquette & Advice Books.

understand what “good” Americans should eat. Overall, the field of food studies has expanded during the last few decades; however, given the extensive role that both food and literature play in defining a culture, the field of food studies in American literature remains largely under-examined.

This dissertation seeks to enrich the contribution that cookery books and novels made to the early American identity by reevaluating the food and fiction of selected authors depicting various regions. While Child, Hale, and Stowe are all considered New England writers, they did learn and write about experiences beyond that part of the country. Accordingly, these three novelists offer glimpses into the regionalism of food and foodways. Their novels range geographically and temporally from Child’s seventeenth-century Wampanoag-inhabited “frontier” outside of Salem, to Hale’s contrast of New Hampshire and South Carolina, to Stowe’s Mason-Dixon line of Kentucky and Quaker Ohio and the slave markets of New Orleans. Each work describes food unique to its geographic setting, and thus sheds light on the regionalism of both food and cultural identity. Child, Hale, and Stowe not only penned fiction that was popular in its time, but they also possessed the audience awareness and depth of domestic knowledge that licensed them to create cookery books that were, for the most part, equally popular. The plots and characters of their novels explore areas of the nascent American identity, and the deliberate inclusion of food and foodways draws attention to the entrenched symbolism and identity that the food of any distinct region conveys. Food and foodways serve not only as a means of defining a certain region, but also as a broader indicator of evolving values of gender, class, and race in early America.

As for the scope of this project, the focus is narrowed to case studies of selected works of Child, Hale, and Stowe primarily because of their prominent influence on the cultural identity of

the time. The parameters of this project required works by authors who wrote both cookbooks *and* novels, to leverage the authors' kitchen expertise with their fictional portrayal of food. These authors fit the parameters of this project in that they were established novelists who later decided to publish cookery books or domestic texts, thus demonstrating their prowess in first the public and then the private sphere.

The methodology of this study relies on close reading and analysis of the primary texts, secondary research from food historians, feminist critics, and American literature scholars, along with a bit of archival research. This introductory chapter sets the table by establishing which texts will be used as case studies for Child, Hale, and Stowe. It also provides an overview of the scholarship and methodology of the project, and it narrows the scope of the project to approximately 1820-1860 with selected cookery books and novels by Child, Hale, and Stowe.

Chapter Two, "Cookery Books as Shapers of Taste," serves up information on some of the cookery books available in early nineteenth-century America and a discussion of the rhetorical and gendered space of those domestic texts. It then assesses the complex framework of Colleen Cotter's rhetorical approach to recipes and instead chooses to apply the straightforward methodology of food critic and historian M.F.K. Fisher, who forthrightly claims that any "good" recipe requires three essential ingredients (name, ingredients, method) and should employ a direct and casual tone, as if "one is discussing, between peers" (21-23). The chapter concludes by analyzing the rhetorical purposes behind the cookery books of Child, Hale, and Stowe.

Chapter Three, "Case Studies: Domestic Texts of Child, Hale, and Stowe," opens a conversation on how the evolving American values concerning gender, class, and race are reflected in and constructed by selected cookery books: Child's *The Frugal Housewife* (1829), Hale's *The Good Housekeeper* (1839), and Stowe's *House and Home Papers* (1865). Building

on the scholarship of Carolyn Karcher, Ruth Finley, and Joan Hedrick, this chapter features a brief rhetorical analysis of each text. Then Fisher's framework for recipe analysis is applied to actual recipes in each of the three primary texts. The themes of frugality, industry, temperance, and simplicity emerge as goals for true American values.

Chapter Four, "Case Studies: Food, Fiction, and American Identity," will explore foodways in the novels of Child, Hale, and Stowe. Working from Baym's definition of Woman's Fiction, and Barbara Welter's four "cardinal virtues" of "True Womanhood," this discussion of *Hobomok* challenges the expectations of women to be pious, pure, domestic, and submissive (Baym 22, Welter 152). Child's historical novel *Hobomok* (1824) provides an example of how seventeenth-century Native Americans and colonists, as well as early nineteenth-century authors and readers, viewed and challenged gender roles as part of the American character. As historical novels often do, *Hobomok* presents a bit of a palimpsest, with the base layer of history being obscured by, or at least viewed through, the overlay of an early nineteenth-century American mindset. For example, in her 1824 historical novel *Hobomok*, set 200 years earlier in 1629 around Naumkeak (later named Salem), Child describes Native American domestic roles as depicted through the procurement, preparation, and consumption of a typical meal:

His squaw, in the mean time, had taken her coarse, roasted [corn] cakes from the fire, and placed some cold venison before her visitors, and pointed to it with a look of pride, as she said, "The arm of my sanup is old, but you see his arrow is yet swifter than the foot of the deer . . ." (32)

This description serves as a historical indicator of seventeenth-century division of labor along gender lines in the Wampanoag tribe of Massachusetts. Clearly, men are the swift-arrowed hunters who provide the meat, and women serve the private, domestic role of expertly preparing

the food for its ultimate consumption. However, through a New Historicism lens, perhaps the “look of pride” and a Wampanoag woman speaking out in front of a group of strangers—white British men, nonetheless—may be more fitting for a woman of 1824 than for “his squaw” of 1629. This meal-time vignette offers a glimpse into the evolving and expanding role of women as part of the antebellum American consciousness.

Then the discussion will move to how food can also serve as an indicator of social class, with an argument based on the Jeffersonian ideal of a natural aristocracy, and on McWilliams’s theory of the “myth of republican simplicity” (1). The primary text used in this section is Hale’s *Northwood: Life North and South* (1827). Hale, best known as the editor of the *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, served as an influential American tastemaker through her careful selection of literature, essays, recipes, fashion plates, sheet music, and other miscellanies that reflected, shaped, and propagated the domestic mores of the mid-nineteenth century. *Northwood* features descriptions and distinctions of class, from New Hampshire to South Carolina. Well-known for her determined campaign to have President Lincoln declare Thanksgiving as an official American holiday, Hale dedicates 4 of her 34 chapters of *Northwood* to describing the flurry of people, preparation, and presentation of the Thanksgiving meal. In both life and art, food is often viewed as an indicator of class. However, in *Northwood*, Hale sometimes employs food (or the production thereof) as an organic way to elevate one’s social status—much like the Jeffersonian idea of natural aristocracy.

In the novel’s opening pages, Hale describes the “industrious cultivator” of New Hampshire and claims that the yeoman farmer’s esteem is born more from his “merit and usefulness, than rank and wealth” (7-8). Through their diligent work, Hale asserts that these New Hampshire farmers, much like the fictional James Romelee—father to the protagonist of

Northwood—were able to garner a level of respect similar to that of gentleman of the upper social class. Later in the novel, as the Romelee women begin their week-long preparation for the Thanksgiving meal, Hale notes the lack of servants in the home: “No domestics appeared, and none seemed necessary” (65). To Mrs. Romelee, the menial labor of preparing this lavish meal for her son, who is returning to New Hampshire from South Carolina, was “a pleasure she would not have relinquished to have been made an empress” (65). The satisfaction derived from personally preparing her son’s Thanksgiving feast of roasted turkey, stuffing, beef sirloin, mutton, goose, chicken pie, gravy, preserves, wheat bread with butter, cakes (plural), pies (plural), plum pudding, currant wine, cider, ginger beer, etc. seems dearer to her than a castle of servants and a high social status. Once again, Hale has used the democracy of foodways to challenge the importance of social class in nineteenth-century America.

Depictions of food and foodways percolate throughout Child’s *Hobomok* and Hale’s *Northwood*, but Stowe places food as a literary tool at high boil, right on the front burner. This section will be anchored by an exploration of Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly* (1852). The scholarship of Kyla Wazana Tompkins serves as a guide for this section, specifically her five representational strands that she claims “create the complex of food, orality, and African American bodies” in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (103). Stowe depicts food or foodways in 40 of her 45 chapters, often several times per chapter. Perhaps the reader should get a foretaste of what is to come by Stowe’s very first sentence of her novel, in which Stowe paints an image of two mannerly gentlemen “sitting alone over their wine, in a well-furnished dining parlor, in the town of P-----, in Kentucky” (11). Often, Stowe’s descriptions of food augment the obvious social and racial differences of the characters. In addition to titling her novel *Life Among the Lowly*, Stowe uses her first sentence depicting two white gentlemen “over their wine” to

establish early on the divide in social class, based on the race of the enslavers versus that of the enslaved.

Just a few pages later, the focus on racial differences becomes even clearer—first in the seeming admiration of little Harry, the five-year-old quadroon house slave in the Shelby home, who has “glossy curls” and “large, dark eyes, full of fire and softness” (13). This admiration quickly turns to mockery (at least through the critical lens of the modern reader), as Harry is repeatedly called “Jim Crow” and summoned to sing and dance for Mr. Shelby and Mr. Haley, a visiting slave-trader. Stowe describes Harry as being “petted” and “patted” as he “scampered” around the dining room, singing “wild, grotesque” songs (13). This dehumanizing animal imagery is solidified through the use of food: “‘Hulloa, Jim Crow!’ said Mr. Shelby, whistling and snapping a bunch of raisins towards him, ‘pick that up now!’” (13). The degrading act of forcing Harry to retrieve food from the floor continues as Mr. Haley joins in, shouting “Bravo!” and throwing a quarter of an orange at little Harry. In several passages in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Stowe uses oranges to evoke positive notions of luxury or leisure, but here the fruit acquires a darker symbolism. The orange wedge becomes a thoughtless reward tossed at a lowly animal performing a trick for its owners, a clear depiction of the intense racial injustice of the time.

In Child’s *Hobomok*, Hale’s *Northwood*, and Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, food and foodways enrich the themes and help establish gustatory and aesthetic tastes. Given the family backgrounds of these writers—Child’s father was a baker; Hale’s father was an innkeeper; and Stowe’s oldest sister introduced the science of home economics—it is not surprising that each author blends domestic life with fiction. Furthermore, one can see why these women would show an interest in publishing best-selling cookery books, even after they had become established authors. Obviously, these cookery books should not topple works like *The Scarlet Letter* or

Leaves of Grass from the top shelf of the American literary canon, but these texts and their authors deserve a reappraisal for their role in molding the American character. Just like the first wave of American writers like Cooper and Irving were utilizing uniquely American landscapes, history, and characters in their works, these women writers paralleled that same American originality. They standardized and popularized the use of uniquely American ingredients, such as wild turkey and corn. They portrayed contemporary American traits and values, such as frugality and industry in their cookery books, and they carried that rich domestic world into their fiction, as well. Therefore, an in-depth study of the use of food and foodways in the cookery books and selected novels of Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Josepha Hale, and Harriet Beecher Stowe will help secure the place of these selected texts in American literature and further recognize the work of these authors in shaping the cultural values of gender, class, and race in the early American identity.

2 COOKERY BOOKS AS SHAPERS OF TASTE

Three of the most well-known women novelists of the Early Republic—Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Josepha Hale, and Harriet Beecher Stowe—also authored three of the most well-known cookbooks of the era. Why would the authors of such successful novels as *Hobomok*, *Northwood*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, respectively, turn to the kitchen as a source of inspiration and content? Through our modern lens, it seems like an odd choice.

However, for most women writers—and readers—during the early nineteenth century, cookbooks operated as one of the few acceptable literary genres within the female sphere. Etiquette books, diaries, journals, letters, mother's books, and of course, the bible, were also deemed acceptable. The increasingly popular British novels of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century were considered dangerous for women to read, as they could excite the imagination and dysregulate passions. Who knew what havoc that could wreak? Cookbooks, receipt books, domestic texts, or cookery books (this project uses these terms interchangeably) seemed like a much safer option for women to create and consume.

In the realm of academia, cookbooks have often been dismissed as too quotidian to be a topic of serious scholarly investigation. In *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote*, social historian Janet Theophano asserts that it is precisely the ubiquitous nature of cookbooks that supports their value as part of human social history. Theophano claims that these texts provide a rare glimpse into the routine lives of women because they help rebuild an archive of “women's actual, everyday lives by focusing on some of the only available documents that women, many of them barely literate, have written,” and that the content in these cookbooks reveals “the visions they have of society and culture” (qtd. in

LaRoche 3). The dishes and tastes these women created in the kitchen and the home affected the tastes of larger society, as well.

Although the sense of individual gastronomic taste has long been acquainted with the aesthetic value of collective societal “tastes” and values, the way cookbooks were practically used and how they affected the societal role of women in America changed significantly from the colonial period through the first Industrial Revolution. Early colonial cookbooks were mostly reprints of British cookbooks like Gervase Markham’s *The English Huswife* (London, 1615), or they were manuscript versions of family recipes, passed down through several generations.⁶ As dutiful colonists, the first cooks in New World locations like Jamestown (except they originally neglected to bring women), Plymouth, and Massachusetts Bay tried to mirror the mores and menus of England, but these cooks quickly learned that gastronomic adaptation was necessary for survival. As the years went on, perhaps the lack of support and supplies from the motherland left a bad taste in their mouths when the colonists thought of England, too. Regardless, the only domestic manuals they had were from England, and they must make do. These Colonial era receipt books offered some domestic advice, but they were focused primarily on medicinal cures and instructional recipes, vague though they often were, and they focused mostly on the care of an individual household. Much like the role of the British middle- and lower-class housewife, the colonial woman’s primary goal was an internal one: to prepare food and care for her own husband and children. External society would have to figure out its values and tastes on its own.

After the American Revolution, the character of the cook as a shaper of the larger society becomes a more prominent feature in the Early Republic, but there is still little didacticism in the

⁶ For an impressive sampling of 500 years of digitized print and manuscript cookery books from England, France, Germany, America, and around the world, see the Katherine Golden Bitting Collection on Gastronomy at the Library of Congress. www.loc.gov/rr/rarebook/coll/028.html

admittedly limited number of domestic texts. Food history scholar, Jan Bluestein Longone, claims that by 1839, the “number of original American cookbooks was quite small, fewer than thirty” (viii).⁷ These early American domestic texts were fairly limited in advice. For example, Amelia Simmons’s *American Cookery*, touted as the first “American” cookbook, was published in Hartford, Connecticut in 1796. Simmons includes only a brief one-and-a-half-page preface that provides no practical domestic advice on caring for a family. She does, however, claim that the “rising generation of females in America” must help “establish the female character, a virtuous character” and it is “immensely important, therefore, that every action, every word, every thought, be regulated by the strictest purity” (Simmons 3-4). Obviously, this unassuming forty-seven-page cookery book sets a lofty goal for itself. As America and its American cookbooks evolved, the female focus expanded from the care of a single home to include the much broader care of the nation. Women were expected to embrace and continue Republican Motherhood, the civic duty of each mother to raise sons who would fight for and serve the new republic and daughters who would, in turn, continue to educate the next generation to effect the desired collective virtues including independence, self-sacrifice, hard work, and strong morals for the nascent United States of America.

By the time Lydia Maria Child publishes her *The Frugal Housewife* in 1829, approximately one-third of the book provides advice that demonstrates the sense of importance Child places on American values such as industry and frugality. The all-in-one wife, mother, cook, nurse, and housekeeper role within the home was becoming one of a guardian of societal

⁷ Among these thirty American-authored cookery books before 1839 were *American Cookery*, *A New System of Domestic Cookery*, *The American Frugal Housewife*, *The Virginia Housewife*, *The House Servant’s Directory*, *Seventy-Five Receipts*, and *A Treatise on Bread, and Bread-Making* (by Sylvester Graham, who promoted whole grain bread and crackers as a way to avoid the dangers of “self-pollution” or masturbation). For a complete list of cookery books published in early America, see Waldo Lincoln’s “Bibliography of American Cookery Books, 1742-1860” published by the American Antiquarian Society.

values extending beyond the home. A decade later, in 1839, Sarah Josepha Hale writes *The Good Housekeeper*, and clarifies in the first sentence of the Preface that her aim, motivated by her Christian belief, is to identify the bountiful foods “provided by the wise and benevolent Creator for the sustenance of his rational creatures,” and she goes on to claim that “[s]uch rational and Christian views of domestic economy have never before been enforced in a treatise on housekeeping” (Hale, *Good Housekeeper* 5). Nearly half (70+ of the 143 pages) of *The Good Housekeeper* offer domestic advice; the other pages offer recipes. As the first Industrial Revolution continued and America and its hungry workforce expanded, the patriotic emphasis on building republican character inside *and* outside the home became a moral and religious calling, a Christian imperative of sorts, also informed by the advent of domestic science. By 1841, Catharine Beecher, the one of the early founders of domestic science, would publish her popular *A Treatise on Domestic Economy, for the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and at School*, dedicating it to “American Mothers,” despite the fact that she had no children of her own. Historian of women and gender in Early America, Jeanne Boydston, argues that domestic texts like Beecher’s *Treatise* and her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *House and Home Papers* (1865) “comprised an extended paean to American womanhood and to woman’s special role in determining the character of American society” (117). This tribute to women included a charge to them to act as educators to their children in the home *and* to equip themselves to become teachers outside of the home in order to benefit society.

Although the aforementioned texts were professionally printed, some homemakers in early America still did not have easy access to new books. Instead, these guardians of the home and society relied on passed-down copies of hundred-year-old British cookery books or informal, handwritten commonplace books that held collected domestic wisdom (and the occasional bible

verse, shopping list, etc.) from previous generations of their family. One such example is the commonplace book of Mrs. Sarah H. Wood of Medway, Massachusetts from around 1829 (Keenan Research Center). In it, Mrs. Wood writes a \$4 shopping list that includes 25 pounds of flour, 7 ½ pounds of sugar, 3 pounds of butter, 1 pound each of tea and raisins, and a few other items. Perhaps 25 pounds of flour would not last long in the Wood household because also recorded in the book are receipts for a Sweet Cake that requires 5 pounds of flour, and a Bride Cake that calls for 3 pounds of flour. As an example of the norming of American recipes at the time, that handwritten Bride Cake recipe is nearly the same recipe as the Wedding Cake in Lydia Maria Child's 1829 cookbook (Child, *AFH* 72).⁸ If a housewife did not own *The Frugal Housewife* (but many did), perhaps she could jot down this cake receipt from a neighbor who did have a copy on her shelf. Or perhaps provenance went the other way, and this receipt was already so popular among American housewives and cooks that Child chose to include it in her cookbook. Either way, based on popular contemporary recipes, Americans were creating and consuming Wedding Cake as well as a larger, yeast-leavened Election Cake on a regular basis in 1829 (Child, *AFH* 71). These inclusions in commonplace books and in Child's domestic text demonstrate that Americans of 1829 were continuing the British societal approbation of marriage, as well as establishing and celebrating the American practice of holding democratic elections on regularly scheduled days.

In European countries including England, literate families had kept ancestral archives of manuscript recipes for generations, and they passed these receipts as well as societal values down from mother to daughter—or sometimes to a daughter-in-law. One well-known recipient of such a book was Martha Dandridge Custis Washington, who received a handwritten English

⁸ Parenthetical references to both *The Frugal Housewife* (1829-1832) and *The American Frugal Housewife* (1832 and following) are denoted by *AFH*.

cookbook from her less well-known first husband, Daniel Custis, and his wealthy colonial plantation family in Virginia. Food historian Laura Schenone claims that this particular compilation of handwritten recipes probably dates back to the early 1600's of Stuart England (48). After Martha's first husband died, she met and married in 1759 her far more famous second husband, George Washington, and the couple moved to Washington's Mount Vernon plantation, taking with them 150 slaves as part of Martha's dowry (Kimball 17). At Mount Vernon, Martha Washington oversaw the activities of the kitchen, and instructed the Mount Vernon kitchen servants, some of whom were slaves including the famed Hercules, to use both Hannah Glasse's 1747 *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* as well as the Custis family manuscript cookery book she had been given (Kimball 34). Although Martha Washington's handwritten cookbook would not be printed and available to the public until 1940, the recipes she chose to serve from that text and the styles of dinners for forty years at Mount Vernon—and later at the President's house in New York City (1789-1790) and then Philadelphia (1790-1797)—are indicative of the culinary identity crisis America would go through over the next century or so.

As they established a unique identity, wealthier early Americans wrestled with the expectations of industrious, plain living (and eating) versus the leisurely, luxurious meals of their imperial European forefathers. In household letters, President George Washington often asked his stewards to consult with Mrs. Washington in order that the “table be handsomely but not extravagantly furnished” and for cookery, “seeing that everything appertaining to it is conducted in a handsome style, but without waste or extravagance” (Kimball 30-31). At the highest table in the land, tension existed between mimicking the extravagant dining styles of England or France, or establishing an intentionally frugal and economic culinary style unique to America. The microcosm of printed early American domestic texts or their handwritten commonplace book

cousins can inform our view of the larger macrocosm of early American society and the inherent friction as a new country worked to establish a unique identity and system of values.

The question of European vs. American identity is further complicated by the widespread reprinting of British texts in Boston and New York, primarily. New Americans had a steady diet of old British texts. Why wait for James Fenimore Cooper to turn out another installment of *The Leatherstocking Tales* when a printer could churn out hundreds of Sir Walter Scott's latest *Waverly* novel? During the early Republic, there were no international copyrights; publishers in America could reprint entire British books freely, and they often filled shop shelves or a book hawker's cart with these pirated editions including cookbooks. Cookbook authors tended to liberally borrow content from each other, as well. Amelia Simmons, a self-professed "American orphan," is credited as the author of the first American cookery book in 1796, with the laborious title *American Cookery, or the art of dressing viands, fish, poultry and vegetables, and the best modes of making pastes, puffs, pies, tarts, puddings, custards and preserves, and all kinds of cakes, from the imperial plum to plain cake adapted to this country, and all grades of life*. Social rhetorician Sarah Walden emphasizes that this overblown subtitle "is a common feature of British cookbooks from the 17th and 18th centuries, and its presence and Simmons's text belies its stylistic and culinary origins despite its use of American in the title" (20). In addition to a verbose title, Simmons borrowed recipes and even pagination freely from Susannah Carter's 1765 English cookery book, *The Frugal Housewife, or Complete Woman Cook. Wherein the art of dressing all sorts of viands, with cleanliness, decency, and elegance, is explained in five hundred approved receipts ... to which are prefixed various bills of fare, for dinners and suppers in every month of the year; and a copious index to the whole*, which had been reprinted freely in Boston since 1772, and even included a few plates engraved by Paul Revere. With wide

availability of British books and cookbooks, it is no wonder that Americans were struggling to claim uniquely American fiction and food.

Cookery books of the early nineteenth century in both England and America were written in prose form, included a variety of domestic advice, and rarely included structured lists of recipe ingredients, clear measurements, or exact cooking times—the latter due primarily to the temperature variances of cooking over a hearth or on a wood-burning stove. Anyone who has ever attempted to toast a marshmallow over an open fire can attest to the volatile nature of flame or embers as a cooking medium. In 1845, another British cookbook author, Eliza Acton, did include a simple table of weights in *Modern Cookery in all its Branches, Reduced to a System of Easy Practice for the Use of Private Families. In a Series of Practical Receipts, All of Which are Given with the Most Minute Exactness*, which was at least “revised and prepared for American housekeepers” by Sarah Josepha Hale from the second London edition (Lincoln 154). This revision “for American housekeepers” and the table of weights and measures were steps in the right direction for 1845. Inclusion of these standards indicates a willingness on the part of the reading public to begin to embrace the sciences as part of the domestic realm. However, it wasn’t until half a century later with the advent of Fannie Farmer’s Boston school for “domestic science” and her *Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* in 1896, that measurements and recipe formats became truly standardized into teaspoons, tablespoons, and cups (Cognard-Black 67).

Much like recipes follow a formula to obtain a desired outcome, rhetoric also uses its modes and appeals to help reach an end result. Rhetoric is practical; it does not exist solely in a theoretical realm. Through casual conversations, heated debates, and occasional philosophical discourses—often at the dinner table—rhetoric operates daily in society, with one of its purposes being to define and challenge individual tastes and societal values. Recipes possess their own

distinct rhetorical relationship between ethos/writer (or cook), logos/text (or recipe), and pathos/reader (or eater). Rhetorician Jennifer Cognard-Black argues that the rhetoric of recipes “demands an adaptation of the rhetorical triangle, with the dish becoming a sensuous and sensory “text” mediating between writer and reader—not a metonymic substitute for the text but, rather an organic, three-dimensional version of that text . . . waiting on the kitchen counter to be “read” (76). Cognard-Black’s notion of the cooked dish *becoming* logos/text imbues recipes and cookbooks with even more rhetorical capacity. Although cookbooks are often overlooked as rhetorical works, they were one of the few acceptable literary platforms for women of nineteenth-century America. In his famous definition of rhetoric, Aristotle asserts that one must identify and utilize “the available means of persuasion.” The “means” available to early American women were limited, and without the ability to freely orate, preach, or voice their opinions via a vote, these means largely relied on domestic print literacy to reach a larger public audience.

Rhetorician Elizabeth Fleitz points out that during the early nineteenth century, practices of literacy were still gendered. Women were limited to the appropriate topics of “diaries, letters, recipes, housekeeping and parenting advice, and needlework. As long as their literacies supported the duties assigned to them in the domestic sphere, they were more or less free to practice their skills of reading and writing” (Fleitz 10-11). This concept of the limited domestic sphere was well-established in the Anglo-European world. As early as 1765 in London, painter and printmaker Robert Dighton had popularized the image of “Keep Within Compass,” which featured in the center of a compass-drawn circle a prudent, peaceful, apron-adorned lady near her home, complete with land, livestock, riches, a religious book, and even a happy little dog at her well-shod feet. Circumscribed around the center circle was the moralistic advice “Keep within

compass and you shall be sure, to avoid many troubles which others endure,” and outside the circle were depicted those troubles caused by the vices of cards, liquor, prostitution, or folly (Dighton). As one of the approved literacy topics within this domestic compass or sphere, recipes were written (usually by women), gathered into cookbooks to be published (usually by men), and then read and used (usually by women). As evidenced by the contents of Sarah Josepha Hale’s *Godey’s Lady’s Book* or the plentiful domestic advice books of the time, most women writers kept within the sphere of these approved topics of the publication world. However, a methodical analysis of the contents of cookery books often reveals underlying messages, as women used these rhetorical spaces to establish themselves as the public authoritative voices on all things private and domestic and therefore, helped to define and resist early public American values.

For the methodology in approaching the recipes themselves, this project calls for a simple approach. For modern recipes, food historian Colleen Cotter’s framework for analysis would prove useful. Cotter breaks a recipe down into six components, each with a rhetorical role: the title presents an abstract, the ingredients list the material needs, the orientation components (both author’s printed content and the ongoing marginalia from readers) give context, the directions outline physical procedures, the evaluation assigns quality, and the coda provides details on outcome--serving size and yield (Walden 17). However, Cotter’s framework often proves too finicky for this project because these early receipts do not follow the standardized format of modern recipes. Perhaps a more appropriate and timeless lens is that provided by the prolific and ever clever food writer M.F.K. Fisher in her chapter “Anatomy of a Recipe.” In her characteristic style, Fisher claims that most cooks have prepared enough food to know how even a vague recipe should come together, but “as a spoiled idiot-child of the twentieth century I want to be *told*” (Fisher 17). She then traces the evolution of using exact kitchen measurements from

English “eccentric” Dr. William Kitchiner in *The Cook’s Oracle (Apicius Redivivus)* (1816) to Mrs. Isabella Beeton in her English house servant-focused *Book of Household Management* (1861) to finally arriving at precise measurements in Miss Fannie Farmer’s *The Boston Cooking-School Book* (1896), which lists eight ounces to a cup and “five grams or one-half tablespoon to a teaspoon, not ‘some of this’ and a ‘pinch of that’” (Fisher 18-19).⁹ Fisher takes a no-nonsense approach and claims that the anatomy of any “good” recipe must have three essential components: name, which should give a bit of description (e.g. Election Cake instead of Cake); ingredients, listed in order of use and preceded by the exact amount required (early American cookery books were still honing this practice); and method, which should indicate the needed equipment, number of portions, cooking time, and temperature (not so easily done with an open hearth or wood cook stove) (23). Fisher insists that the tone should be direct and casual, as if “one is discussing, between peers” (21). In the following chapter, this methodology will be applied to the rhetorical space of our three case study domestic manuals: Child’s *The American Frugal Housewife* (1829), Hale’s *The Good Housekeeper* (1839), and Stowe’s *House and Home Papers* (1865).

These three authoritative voices for early American cookery writing had previously become three of the most successful novelists of the Early Republic: Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Josepha Hale, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Why would the authors of *Hobomok*, *Northwood*, and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (respectively) choose to follow their novels with cookbooks? Perhaps it was due to the domestic influence of their families. Lydia Maria Child’s father, Convers Francis of Medford, Massachusetts was a skilled and innovative baker. Sarah Josepha Hale helped her

⁹ M.F.K. Fisher neglects to mention that Sarah Josepha Hale includes a “Table of Weights and Measures” in her 1839 *The Good Housekeeper*, explaining quarts, pecks, and bushels as well as gills, pints, quarts, and gallons (Hale *Good Housekeeper* 6).

father run a boarding inn and tavern in frontier New Hampshire for several years (Finley 30). Harriet Beecher Stowe was raised primarily by her older sister, Catharine, from the age of five when their mother died, and Catharine Beecher came to be known as the mother of domestic science. Steeped in baking, boarding, and study of domestic life from an early age, each of these three women must have valued cooking manuals and advice about the home.

Or perhaps it was financial pressures that led them to write cookbooks. All three women ended up supporting their families solely through their writing and editing. Child's beloved husband, David, was more of an intellectual activist than a practical provider. Hale's husband, also named David, was a country lawyer who died in 1822, leaving her with four young children to raise on her own (Finley 37). Stowe came from a family of Beecher preachers and teachers, and after the extreme success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe was the most financially secure of these three authors. Perhaps *because* of those financial resources—she and her husband Calvin embarked on building a “gorgeous Italianate mansion” in Hartford, Connecticut and incurred annual household expenses of \$2,890 (Hedrick 311, 316). This amount is extreme, compared to Child's advice—albeit a few decades earlier—in *The Frugal Housewife*, which claims a man should be able to “keep house, and comfortably, too, with a wife and children, for six hundred [dollars] a year” (7). For decades, in a time when most women worked as teachers, cooks, or seamstresses (if they worked outside the home at all), the Child, Hale, and Stowe families relied entirely on these women and their writing to support the expenses of the households. Through their writing including the publication of cookbooks and successful novels, these three authors helped define and shape the emerging values of America.

3 CASE STUDIES: DOMESTIC TEXTS OF CHILD, HALE, AND STOWE

As a methodology for approaching the selected domestic texts of Child, Hale, and Stowe, this project relies on historical and cultural contexts, critical analysis from foodways scholars, the recipe framework of food writer M.F.K. Fisher, fundamental rhetorical analysis, and close reading of recipes and accompanying text. Because recipes were still referred to as “receipts” in the early national period, those two terms will be used interchangeably in this chapter. Similarly, cookbooks were commonly called “cookery” books, and both terms may be used. Each of these three authors—Child, Hale, and Stowe—had already published well-known novels (and other works) before they entered the culinary world of the cookery book, so they did not need, as Thomas Wentworth Higginson once quipped, “to work their passage into literature by first compiling a cookery book” (qtd. in Showalter 47). Instead, each author approaches food as a vital cultural ingredient in the shaping of America’s gustatory and aesthetic tastes and values.

3.1 Lydia Maria Child and *The Frugal Housewife* (1829)

In the five years immediately preceding the publication of *The Frugal Housewife*, Child had published two historical novels, *Hobomok* and *The Rebels*, and two works for a juvenile audience, *Evenings in New England* and America’s first magazine for children, *The Juvenile Miscellany*, along with several other short stories, sketches, and at least two novellas. With this body of work and considerable income to her name, Lydia Maria Francis Child was beginning to move within the literary and social circles of Boston.¹⁰ Why then would Child feel the need to publish a cookbook in 1829? Perhaps her background as a Medford, Massachusetts baker’s

¹⁰ The scope of this project prohibits an in-depth biography of Child. For book-length biographies, see *The First Woman in The Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child* by Carolyn Karcher, or *Lydia Maria Child: A Radical Life* by Lydia Moland.

daughter played a role in her interest level. Or maybe she was leaning into her patriotism and wanted to democratize cookery for the common American tastes instead of perpetuating the imperial foods of the upper class. Or perhaps the reasons were primarily financial.

Lydia Maria Francis married lawyer David Lee Child in October of 1828, and he proved to be more of an idealist, working for social justice and even spending six months in prison for a libel charge, which was later dismissed (Karcher, 126). Although he was an editor and lawyer by trade, he mounted some legal debt and was unable to provide a stable income for the couple. That duty fell mostly to his new wife. The past successes of *Hobomok* and *Juvenile Miscellany* were not enough, but maybe *The Frugal Housewife* would be. Sales of Child's 1829 cookbook netted over \$2,000 by 1831, which was three times more revenue than Child had made on her popular *Juvenile Miscellany* (Karcher 127). According to Child's advice in *The American Frugal Housewife*, a man during that era should be able to "keep house, and comfortably, too, with a wife and children, for six hundred [dollars] a year" (7). With profits from the cookbook continuing to roll in over multiple editions, Child could now provide a steady income for the couple.

Despite the cookbook's success, critics both then and now demeaned Child for moving into the realm of the kitchen manual. Even Carolyn Karcher, who wrote the 1994 definitive biography of Child, *The First Woman of the Republic*, belittles Lydia Maria Francis Child for becoming a cookbook author: "But the 'brilliant Miss Francis' was no more, and the author of *Hobomok* was about to give way to the author of *The Frugal Housewife*" (Karcher 124). Karcher, perhaps operating from a feminist stance, celebrated only the truly 'literary' achievements of Child, and was unimpressed by a domestic manual. Yet that little 1829 cookery book was indeed a popular and commercial success. It went through fourteen printings by 1834,

and throughout the early Victorian period—decades before domestic economy was formally taught to women in schools—it found a place on most kitchen shelves as “one of the most treasured books of the average New England household” (Edwards 243). Through its receipts and domestic advice, this compact and widely available cookery book helped shape the early diet and tastes of America.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The first edition of *The Frugal Housewife* was published in Boston in 1829 by Marsh & Capen and Carter & Hendee. It was a plain, compact book, measuring 4” x 7 ½” with only 98 pages, but it held ample advice and receipts (see figure 1). In 1832, Child changed the name to *The American Frugal Housewife* to avoid confusion with Susannah Carter’s *The Frugal Housewife*, first published in London around 1765 and thereafter frequently reprinted in Boston, because as Child writes, “it has become necessary to change the title of this work to the ‘*American Frugal Housewife*,’ because there is an English work of the same name, not adapted to the wants of this country” (Child, *AFH* 2). By the eighth edition (1832), Child included a few new receipts involving yeast, added a 24-page section on “Hints to Persons of Moderate Fortunes,” created a welcomed index, and included a 10-page Appendix that gave tips for drying pumpkins, making cranberry jelly, and carving a turkey—items all native to the Americas, not to England.

Throughout the editions, Child provides no Table of Contents, and the overall organization of the book is not what modern readers would expect, either. A five-page “Introductory Chapter” includes no recipes, but much advice, from keeping children (i.e.

“daughters”) busy braiding straw hats to inventorying kitchen spoons to saving scraps of paper and twine for reuse. The introduction repeatedly lauds values that many claimed as particularly

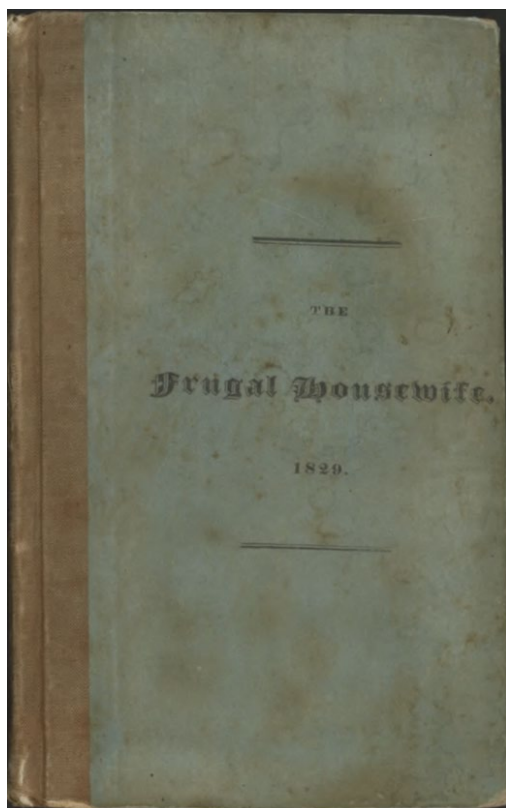


Figure 1 Front cover of *The Frugal Housewife*, 1st ed., November 1829.

(Source: American Antiquarian Society)

“American” during the early nineteenth century (and earlier, as in Ben Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanack*), specifically the virtues of “honesty and prudence...industry and economy” (Child, *A FH* 6). The next section continues the freeform organization and is fittingly titled “Odd Scraps for the Economical,” a catchall with advice as varied as storing eggs in lime water for up to three years, to washing one’s hair with New England rum, to using ox gall to keep calico fabric from fading. The subsequent sections are a bit more in keeping with content divisions of modern cookbooks: vegetables, herbs, meat, common cooking, puddings, cheap custards, common pies, common cakes, bread, and preserves &c. Following the recipe sections, Child

concludes with a two-page section on General Maxims for Health, ending with the advice “Do not make children cross-eyed, by having hair hanging about their foreheads, where they see it continually” (Child, *AFH* 88). Even though cookbooks of the nineteenth century were not held to the same organizational standards and marketplace competition as cookbooks of our modern era, Child’s *The American Frugal Housewife* still seems rather disorderly compared to other contemporary cooking manuals.

Regardless of its somewhat haphazard organization, the unifying factor in most entries of *The American Frugal Housewife* is the concept of frugality, a critical component given the economics of many American households of the time—and many even in modern times. Child encourages the use of economic foodstuffs the American public today may find unsavory, such as how to boil a calf’s head, providing the practical yet gruesome detail of leaving the windpipe attached, for if it “hangs out of the pot while the head is cooking, all the froth will escape through it” (Child, *AFH* 48). Once cooked, the calf brains could be crafted into Mock Turtle Soup, a popular dish of the nineteenth-century middle and upper classes in Europe and America, but Child does not include that recipe in *The American Frugal Housewife*. Perhaps that dish was not working-class “American” enough for her taste or that of her readers.

Most of the 35 editions of *The American Frugal Housewife* contain less than 135 pages including a one-page diagram (labeling cuts of mutton, pork, veal, and beef), a ten-page Appendix covering methods on how “To Preserve Green Currants” to “White-washing,” and a welcomed alphabetized Index of approximately 300 items from “Advice, General” to “Yeast.” Some of the receipts and advice seem out of fashion in our modern day: Child calls for boiling most vegetables for over an hour, and she suggests placing dried fish skin in boiling coffee to clarify it (Child, *AFH* 82). Other advice seems applicable, even now. For example, to cleanse

teeth, Child advises mixing “honey with pure pulverized charcoal” to make teeth clean and white. In our modern day, activated charcoal toothpaste has again become a popular teeth whitener and can easily be purchased at most retail stores. With advice like this, perhaps this nineteenth-century cookery book has more modern guidance than one imagines.

The cookbook remained much the same through its remaining printings, at least thirty-five in total, from 1829 to 1850 (*Feeding America / MSU Libraries*, Introduction to *Frugal Housewife*). After 1850, *The American Frugal Housewife* went out of print, likely due to more modern cooking techniques and stoves, an emerging middle class with more financial resources, and perhaps due to decreased demand from a domestic audience who did not fully share Child’s outspoken advocacy for enslaved people, Native Americans, and women outside of the domestic sphere.

PURPOSE

From a practical viewpoint, Child’s purpose in writing *The Frugal Housewife* was largely financial, due to the legal debts her husband had amassed. However, Child demonstrates a rhetorical purpose, too. In *The Frugal Housewife*, Child promotes “American” values and urges American housewives to practice self-denial, frugality, and industry in the home. In her introductory chapter, Child condemns extravagance as a “false and wicked parade” that is “morally wrong... and injurious beyond calculation to the interests of our country” (*Am Frugal* 5-6). Child states that she “has no apology to offer for this cheap little book of economical hints, except her deep conviction that such a book is needed,” and she confidently adds that any “ridicule is a matter of indifference” (*Am Frugal* 6). Child will say what she thinks America needs to hear, regardless of public opinion.

Child's purpose was not religious in nature. In contrast to the other two authors in this study, Sarah Josepha Hale and Harriet Beecher Stowe, Child does not couch her argument for plain living in religious terms—but not for lack of exposure to religion. By her late teen years, Child had explored Unitarianism and the teachings of Swedenborg, been baptized and chosen the name “Maria” (pronounced /məˈɹɪə/), and rejected her father's staunch Calvinism, much like her heroine of *Hobomok* did (Moland 41-43). Indeed, the words “God,” “Christian,” or “Bible” do not appear in Child's cookery book recipes or advice at all. However, within the 98 pages of the early editions, the words “economy” or “economical” appear at least 36 times, the words “work” or “working” appear at least 12 times, and the words “money” or “dollar/s” appear at least 11 times. The concepts of frugality, self-sacrifice, industry, and economy are described or prescribed on nearly every page. For example, the term “flour” appears 47 times, as expected in an Anglo-centric diet, but the term “Indian” (corn meal, native to America and much less expensive than flour) appears an impressive 27 times, paying homage to the indigenous roots of that foodstuff, as well as demonstrating the economy of corn meal and its ubiquitous use in American cooking of the 1830s. Child's intent in writing this cookery book was to instill in American home cooks the values of frugality and industry, while including distinctly American ingredients as opposed to only those of European flavor and favor.

Child wanted to ensure that the extravagant tastes of the wealthy did not come to define American identity. Rhetorician Sarah Walden claims that the rapid increase in early nineteenth-century “print, industry, and geographic mobility introduced a growing variety of leisure and consumer options to those wealthy enough to afford them” and those Americans “of impecunious means nevertheless desired them as public indicators of status” (43). As the voice of America's conscience, Child warns that “the good old home habits of our ancestors are

breaking up” and she questions whether Americans are in danger of “departing thus rapidly from the simplicity and industry of our forefathers” (*Am Frugal* 99). Echoing the moral campaigns of the antebellum period, Child reminds her readers that the stamps of simplicity and industry are central to expressing good taste individually, and to achieving the goals of the republican project of America collectively.

AUDIENCE

On the front cover of *The Frugal Housewife* (1829), Lydia Maria Child forthrightly identifies her target audience by the “Frugal” title and a brief, morale-boosting subtitle: “Dedicated to those who are not ashamed of economy.” While other cookery books echoed extravagant British or French recipes or costly, unavailable ingredients, Child claims that she has “said nothing about *rich* cooking; those who can afford to be epicures will find the best of information in [Eliza Leslie’s 1828] ‘Seventy-Five Receipts.’ I have attempted to teach how money can be *saved*, not how it can be *enjoyed*” (Child, *AFH* 6). Some of Miss Leslie’s recipes do indeed require expensive ingredients for desserts such as meringue-based “Floating Island,” “French Almond Cake,” “Cocoa-nut Macaroons [*sic*],” or “Preserved Pine-apple” (Leslie 37, 54, 55, 88). Frugal cooks could not afford to create those dishes.

Child establishes her literary ethos by reminding her audience that this cookery book is written by the established “Author of *Hobomok*.” Child would have built her ethos through ample real-world experience in frugal times, too. After her mother’s death in 1814, Child lived with her sister’s family for several years at their home near the frontier settlement of Norridgewock, Maine (Karcher xix). Far away from the immediate luxuries of store-bought soap or candles, Child would have assisted her sister with the demanding work

of rural domestic duties. Born in 1802, she would have also experienced the Panic of 1819 and its ensuing years of depression as she returned to the Boston area in 1821. Informed by her life experiences, beliefs, and personal financial challenges, Child unabashedly highlights frugality as a desired value for her American audience, especially for American housewives.

The cookbook's primary audience was working-class housewives in and around Boston, New York City, and Philadelphia—women who cooked their own food and kept their own homes. While an emerging middle class did sometimes secure the services of a kitchen maid, there is no mention of “servants” in the text. There is no mention of instructing others to assist the housewife, except for prescribing that every family member should do their part in the operation of a home: “Where there are children or aged people, it is sufficient to recommend knitting [stockings], that it is an employment” (Child, *AFH* 3). While Child was an advocate of women's rights, she still allows traditional gender roles within the home to seep into her domestic manual. For example, she suggests that “it is a good plan to teach children to prepare and braid straw for their own bonnets, and their brother's hats,” thereby indicating that the “children” doing the braiding were only the daughters (Child, *AFH* 3). In keeping with the mores of the time, one can assume that the “aged people” who were knitting stockings were also limited to those of the female persuasion. Child does acknowledge the intrinsic societal value of women, however, and includes an eight-page sub-section on the “Education of Daughters,” arguing that the “prospects of a country may be justly estimated by the character of its women,” and further enquiring, “Is the present education of young ladies likely to contribute to their own ultimate happiness, or to the welfare of the country?” (Child, *AFH* 91). Child encourages her audience to choose the latter, and to provide “*domestic education*” for daughters, specifically meaning “two or three years spent with a mother, assisting her in her duties, instructing brothers and sisters, and

taking care of their own clothes. This is the way to make them happy, as well as good wives” (Child, *AFH* 92). More formal domestic education for women was still decades away, with schools that would be organized by Catharine Beecher or Fannie Farmer. Child argues that intentional domestic education *at home* can promote the welfare of America at large, and she encourages her reading audience to embrace that tenet as well.

The audience for *The Frugal Housewife* had a broader geographic range, too. Food historians speculate that “the trim, compact size as well as the subject matter made this a convenient and helpful volume for pioneer families to carry on their westward migration” (*Feeding America / MSU Libraries*, Introduction to *Frugal Housewife*). In addition to helping feed hungry New Englanders in the east, the westward migration of this cookbook would continue to inculcate the tastes and values of frugality, industry, and economy into pioneer cooks and their families. Frontier life must necessarily exhibit these sturdy traits, but at least pioneers could be reminded that other true Americans near the eastern seaboard of their young republic were striving to live a frugal lifestyle, too. It was their national democratic duty, after all.

TONE

Child’s tone is neutral and direct, as befitted her intended working-class audience of housewives who kept their own house without the luxury of servants. Her advice sections are didactic in nature, reflecting her sincere beliefs that economy and frugality should be foremost in the home—and by extension—in the nation. Child also uses the rhetorical technique of moralistic storytelling to exemplify desired American values. In “Hints to Persons of Moderate Fortunes,” Child recounts the story of a farmer’s daughter she claims to have visited a few weeks earlier. This new bride had spent all \$2,000 of her dowry on furnishing the lower floor of their

house with “Brussels carpets, alabaster vases, mahogany chairs, and marble tables” instead of using half that amount for furniture and investing the remaining \$1,000 at “six per cent” interest, which would have provided an ongoing annual income for other home needs and clothing; instead, the couple chose extravagance, and “their foolish vanity made them less happy, and no more respectable” (Child, *AFH* 90).

In keeping with the style of cookbooks of the early republic, Child employs prose paragraphs for her recipes, with many of them consisting of ten lines of print or less. Child’s recipes begin with an appropriate name, and—rather than a neat list—the required ingredients and method for cooking are disclosed within the paragraph. As expected for the 1830s, Child addresses her gendered audience within the gendered space of her cookery book. Long before the advent of prefab foods and microwaves, Child offers several quick recipes to women in case “your husband brings home company when you are unprepared” (Child, *AFH* 62). For example, this “Rennet Pudding” can be made “at five minutes’ notice; provided you keep a piece of calf’s rennet [calf’s stomach, the enzymes of which curdle milk] ready prepared soaking in a bottle of wine” (62). And who wouldn’t? The receipt continues: “One glass of this wine to a quart of milk will make a sort of cold custard. Sweetened with white sugar, and spiced with nutmeg, it is very good. It should be eaten immediately; in a few hours, it begins to curdle” (62). Hopefully, the unexpected guests will depart before the curdling begins. Overall, Child’s tone throughout her recipes and domestic advice is direct and practical, though some of the content seems odd to modern palates.

METHODOLOGY OF RECIPES

For analyzing recipes, this project employs the utilitarian framework outlined by food historian M.F. K. Fisher in her “The Anatomy of a Recipe.” After many clever culinary anecdotes and opinions, Fisher simply states that a “good recipe . . . should consist of three parts: name, ingredients, method” (23). Although Child and other cookery book writers of her time did not use the modern, sectioned format that includes number of servings, preparation and cooking time required, list of ingredients, and numbered steps of preparation, Child does cover the basic “anatomy” of a recipe as outlined by Fisher.

Many of the foods depicted in Child’s fiction are also listed in her cookbook, such as some of Child’s recipes for breakfast items she describes in *Hobomok*. The story begins in June of 1629 in Massachusetts. As the weary English visitor from The Isle of Wight disembarks from his ship near the rustic settlement of Naumkeak (later to become Salem) and enters the home of the struggling colony’s leader, Roger Conant, the visitor recalls, “Breakfast was on the board when I first entered . . . It consisted only of roasted pumpkin, a plentiful supply of clams, and coarse cakes made of pounded maize. But unpalatable as it proved, even to me, it was cheerfully partaken by the noble inmates of that miserable hut” (Child, *Hobomok* 9). A literary analysis of food and fiction in *Hobomok* appears in a later chapter of this project. For now, we will focus on some recipes highlighting these “breakfast” items, which, true to gender roles, had been prepared by Mary, the grown daughter of the Conant family.

As a work of historical fiction set two centuries earlier, *Hobomok* (1824) employs characters and a plot informed by historical events, people, and settings. Child had learned some of this history firsthand through her interactions with Native Americans. Though unaware that she was conducting primary research as she lived with her sister in Norridgewock, Maine (then

still part of Massachusetts) from 1815 to 1820, Child later recalls in one of her *Juvenile Miscellany* entries: “I used to go to the woods [outside Norridgewock], and visit the dozen wigwams that stood there, very often” and take small gifts, observe as the Penobscot women would cook meals and weave or dye baskets, admire their “tall, athletic youth,” and listen to their stories (Karcher 11-12). Perhaps Child had also observed the ways the Penobscot would preserve or dry squash and pumpkins. In *Hobomok*, for the Conant family to serve “roasted pumpkin” in the summer month of June 1629, they had likely observed from their Narragansett neighbors how to cure and store whole pumpkins or how to dry strips of pumpkin for later use. Child includes similar information in her “Appendix to *The American Frugal Housewife*”: “Some people cut pumpkin, string it, and dry it like apples” for use all year around (115).

In *The American Frugal Housewife*, Child includes at least seven references to pumpkin. In addition to dried pumpkin (above), stewed pumpkin (the first part of the recipe below), and pumpkin mixed into bannock or Indian cake, Child meets Fisher’s basic requirements for a recipe by providing the name, ingredients, and method for common family “Pumpkin and Squash Pie”:

. . . three eggs do very well to a quart of milk. Stew your pumpkin, and strain it . . . Take out the seeds, and pare the pumpkin or squash, before you stew it; stir in the stewed pumpkin . . . Sweeten it to your taste with molasses, or sugar; two tea-spoonfuls of salt; two great spoonfuls of sifted cinnamon; one great spoonful of ginger . . . The outside of a lemon grated in is nice. The more eggs the better the pie; They should bake from 40 to 50 minutes, and even 10 minutes longer, if very deep. (Child, *AFH* 66-67)

Although some steps are out of order—one must seed and pare the pumpkin *before* stewing it—a frugal housewife following these instructions would produce a pumpkin pie, using a food native

to the Americas and still an emblem of fall harvest and Thanksgiving. In 1830s America, it was understood that a custard-like pie, such as this pumpkin pie, would require only an undercrust; fruit or mince pies would still follow the British tradition and require both an undercrust and an overcrust, originally intended to help preserve the pie. For the novice housewife, Child includes a receipt for “pie crust for common use” at the end of her section on Common Pies (Child, *AFH* 69).

The next item, a “plentiful supply of clams,” may not fit the modern American concept of “breakfast,” but in many countries, fish or cold meats regularly appeared on the breakfast board. Of course, the actual Massachusetts colonists in 1629 were focused on survival and ate whatever was available to them at the time; hence, clams are served for breakfast. Child again meets Fisher’s parameters of providing the name, ingredients, and method for “Clams” in her cookery book:

Clams should boil about fifteen minutes in their own water; no other need be added except a spoonful to keep the bottom shells from burning. It is easy to tell when they are done, by the shells starting wide open. After they are done, they should be taken from the shells, washed thoroughly in their own water, and put in a stewing pan. The water should then be strained through a cloth, so as to get out all the grit; the clams should be simmered in it ten or fifteen minutes; a little thickening of flour and water added; half a dozen slices of toasted bread or cracker; and pepper, vinegar and butter to your taste. Salt is not needed. (Child, *AFH* 66-67)

As in the pumpkin pie receipt above, Child gives fairly clear directions for a housewife to follow. Anyone who has cooked fresh clams will especially appreciate the advice to strain the cooking water through a cloth to remove grit. Nobody wants gritty clams, especially for breakfast.

The final items Child's fictional English visitor in *Hobomok* writes about are "coarse cakes made of pounded maize" on the breakfast board. He was likely referring to "Indian Cake," which is made of sifted cornmeal. In cookery books of the early republic, the word "Indian" by itself, referred to cornmeal, and Child provides receipts for several variations of "Indian Cake" in *The American Frugal Housewife*. Since Native Americans and early colonists (like the Naumkeak settlers of 1629) had little or no access to milk, we will choose the dairy-free version of Indian Cake:

Indian cake, or bannock, is sweet and cheap food. One quart of sifted meal, two great spoonfuls of molasses, two tea-spoonfuls of salt, a bit of shortening half as big as a hen's egg, stirred together; make it pretty moist with scalding water, put it into a well greased pan, smooth over the surface with a spoon, and bake it brown on both sides, before a quick fire. A little stewed pumpkin, scalded with the meal improves the cake. (Child, *AFH* 75)

The word choice "bannock," is fraught with meaning in this recipe, perhaps intentionally by Child. Every culture has its own version(s) of bread. It nourishes both the body and the soul of its people. By using a simple appositive to conflate the maize-based fry bread "Indian Cake" of the First Nations of the New England region with the "bannock" European settlers brought to that same area, Child is using food to subtly interrogate the replacement of Native American culture with European American culture. As early as 1824, Child was already advocating for the rights of Native Americans through *Hobomok* and passages of her children's book, *Evenings in New England*. Native American Literature scholar, Laura Mielke, argues that in *Evenings in New England*, Child's alter ego, Aunt Maria, explains to her young nephew that "'for several hundred years after America was discovered, it was inhabited only by Indians. Now the country is mostly

filled by Europeans, and we look back to the savage state as to what we have been,” and Mielke claims that this idea “embodies the progressive narrative of history wherein the civilized European figuratively and literally takes the place of the savage Native American” (172). In Child’s 1829 recipe, bannock begins to replace Indian Cake, much like Euro-Americans begin to replace Native Americans in the lead-up to the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

Contemporary politics is certainly not the primary focus of Child’s *The American Frugal Housewife*. Instead, Child is striving—in addition to creating another financially successful book—to inculcate the qualities of frugality and industry in young American housewives who operate within the gendered space of the domestic sphere. If the private household can practice virtues such as these, then by extrapolation, the public space of America can, too. Throughout two decades of publication, the roughly 130 pages of Lydia Maria Child’s *The American Frugal Housewife* taught housewives of the early republic what to cook, how to cook it, how to manage a home, and what to value in that American home: self-denial, frugality, and industry. Much like Child’s later fiction, non-fiction, and essays focus on distinctly American topics for a distinctly American audience, *The American Frugal Housewife* plainly and proudly proclaims that American virtues should express a republican simplicity, and these virtues should begin within the sphere of the American home.

3.2 Sarah Josepha Hale and *The Good Housekeeper* (1839)

In September 1839, Mrs. S. J. Hale published her first cookery book, *The Good Housekeeper: or The Way to Live Well and To Be Well While We Live: Containing Directions for Choosing and Preparing Food, In Regard to Health, Economy, and Taste*. It was an instant success. As an advertisement in *The New-Yorker* noted, “nearly two thousand of this work were

sold within two weeks of the time of publication” and just two months later, in November 1839, the publisher issued a second printing (“Advertisement, Hale’s *The Good Housekeeper*”).

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The first edition of *The Good Housekeeper* (1839) features on the front cover an image of three youthful, perhaps Baroque-inspired cherub-like figures preparing and cooking food outdoors in an iron kettle over an open fire (see figure 2). Upon closer inspection, one sees in the background (just beneath the flume of smoke) the head of a shadowed lady with a bonnet and clothing more in keeping with the early nineteenth-century style. The cherub-like figures are unclothed (as cherubs are); however, the judicious placement of a wooden support for the kettle, or a curled piece of cloth, or the lady’s skirt hem preserves modesty and cherubic androgyny. The woman seems to observe as the three figures carry rabbit and fowl, clean fish with a large knife, and lift the lid off a steaming kettle—with one bare hand. In religion and mythology, cherubs often serve a deity, so perhaps these cherubs are serving the woman in the background. Is Hale implying that early Victorian “good housekeepers” could be compared to Hestia, the goddess of hearth and home? Is she glorifying the concept of housekeeping along the great American frontier? Whatever the reason, the style of Hale’s intricate front cover diametrically opposes Child’s plain front cover, with only text and no shadowed goddesses or cooking cherubs in sight (see figure 1). Even from the cover art, readers can begin to infer that Hale’s cookery book may contain more elaborate and refined receipts. After all, Child simply dedicates her book “To Those Who Are Not Ashamed of Economy.” Hale more loftily dedicates hers to “Every

American Woman, Who Wishes To Promote the Health, Comfort, and *Prosperity* of Her Family” (Hale, *GH* 1st ed. ix).¹¹

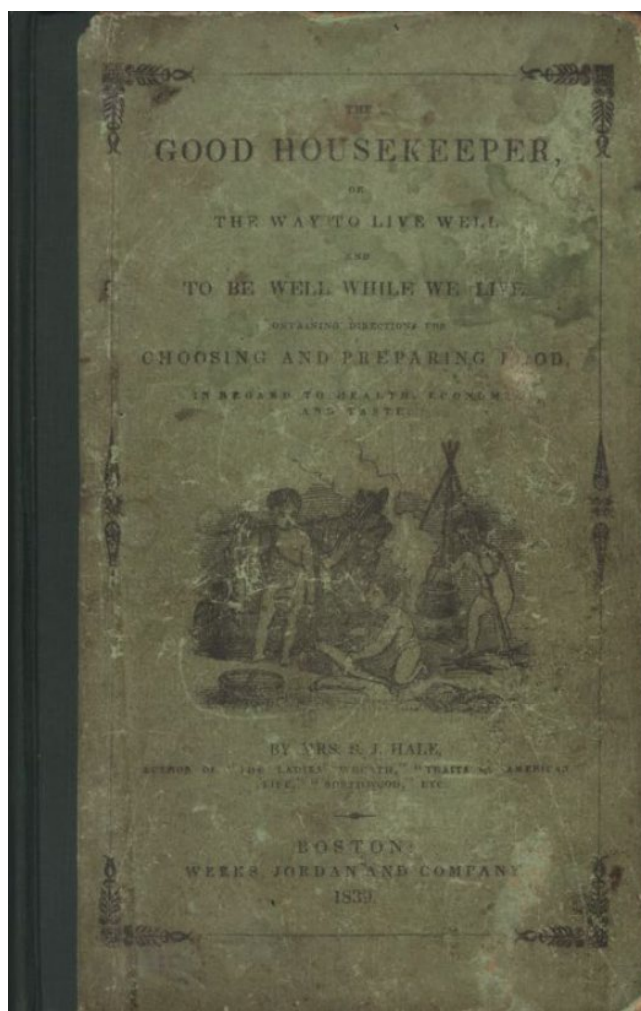


Figure 2 Front Cover of *The Good Housekeeper*, 1st ed., September 1839.
(Source: MSU Libraries Digital Collections / Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project)

A concise 132-page book, the first edition of Hale’s *The Good Housekeeper* (1839) was published in Boston by Weeks, Jordan and Company. Collectors may know they have a genuine first edition by noting erroneous page numbering: page 131 is numbered 151, and page 132 is numbered 132-144 (Hale, *GH* 1st ed. 131-132). On the title page, the publisher builds Hale’s

¹¹ Parenthetical references to *The Good Housekeeper* are denoted by *GH*.

authorial ethos by reminding readers that she is also the author of “The Ladies’ Wreath,” “Traits of American Life,” “Northwood,” etc. (Hale, *GH* 1st ed. iv). Although she had been editor of *Godey’s Lady’s Book* for two years by this point, her editorial post is not mentioned. Perhaps she did not need to; the readers of Boston, Philadelphia, and New York knew her already. Below the authorial reminder, appears a brief epigraph: “‘Temperate in all things.’—BIBLE.” This biblical quote choice—along with ten direct mentions of either “God,” “Bible,” or “Christian” in her text—establishes that Christian principles will be a significant part of her work.

Even when Hale does not use those exact religious terms, she repeatedly implies that service in the American home is a heavenly duty. For example, in her “Hints to Help” chapter, she charges house servants, “Act, in all things, as you would if your employer was looking on you; and forget not that One, to whom you are more responsible than to any earthly master or mistress, is constantly watching you” (Hale, *GH* 126). In contrast, on the title page of *The Frugal Housewife* in 1829, Lydia Maria Child uses a secular aphorism from Ben Franklin: “A fat kitchen maketh a lean will.” Child’s choice of epigraph—along with only one reference each to “God” and “Bible,” and no mention of the word “Christian” in her text—demonstrates that Child’s book will focus more on building the body politic, rather than on building the body as a temple of God. Hale includes a half-page Preface, a practical Table of Weights and Measures for common foodstuffs including Indian meal, loaf sugar, and eggs, and a detailed Table of Contents for her sixteen-chapter cookery book. In the brief preface to her first edition (1839), Hale urges Americans to refrain from “using *animal food* [meat] to excess, eating *hot bread* , and swallowing our meals with steam-engine rapidity;” she furthermore claims that her book is intended for both rich and poor, and that “[s]uch rational and Christian views of domestic economy have never before been enforced in a treatise on housekeeping” (Hale, *GH* 5).

Hale allots nearly half of her pages to receipts, and the other half to household advice including how to clean “paper walls” (i.e., wallpaper) by wiping the walls with stale bread crusts, how to preserve fresh eggs for one year by standing them “*upright* on the large end” between layers of coarse salt in a tub, and how to always follow the rules of a “proper time, proper place, . . . proper purpose” for all household work (Hale, *GH* 116, 119, 125). Hale sometimes contradicts Child’s domestic advice from a decade earlier. In *The Frugal Housewife*, Child claimed that the best way to store eggs (in their shell) was in limed water for up to three years; Hale opts for arranging them in layers of coarse salt for only one year. Child claims that New England rum was useful for washing hair; Hale posits that women should “decidedly and entirely banish ardent spirits from the household arrangements,” claiming that “it is a very mistaken notion that these heating, drying liquids will make the hair grow—except it be to grow gray” (Hale, *GH* 130). Then as now, many women tried to avoid prematurely gray hair, so Hale’s advice likely took root with her domestic audience.

In approximately seventy pages of prose-format receipts, Hale includes chapters on bread, meats, soups and gravies, fish and condiments, vegetables, puddings and pies, fruits, preserves, creams, etc., cake, cheap dishes, and drinks. Many of Hale’s receipts would appeal more to the middle or middle-upper class, but—true to her dual purpose—she includes pointers and recipes for economical living for the working class, too. Also included are recipes for all the dishes served in the multi-page Thanksgiving dinner scene in Hale’s 1827 novel, *Northwood*. (A fuller analysis of the food and fiction in Hale’s *Northwood* appears in a later chapter of this dissertation, as part of the case studies to demonstrate how novels and cookery books shaped perceptions of gender, class, and race in the early American identity.) For now, let us focus on a

brief analysis of some of the rhetoric and recipes in Hale's cookery book, *The Good Housekeeper*.

PURPOSE

In the preface to the 1839 first edition of *The Good Housekeeper*, Hale admits that her cookery book “has been several years in contemplation; various circumstances have retarded the publication, but the times seemed now to call for its appearance” (Hale, *GH* 5). Perhaps “the times” Hale refers to are the years following the Panic of 1837, a financial crisis that caused high unemployment and the start of soup lines in American cities for several years. By claiming that her cookery book will address both “good living” and “cheap living,” Hale proposes to assist those housekeepers struggling through difficult financial times. Regarding the “various circumstances” that delayed publication, Hale had indeed been busy during the previous years. Between 1827 and 1839, Hale had published *Northwood* and several other books, served as the first editor of *The Ladies Magazine* from 1828-1837, and—at his behest—relieved W. A. Godey of editorship of the fast-growing *Godey's Lady's Book* beginning in 1837. She had published *Poems for our Children* that included the famous “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” founded The Seaman's Aid Society, started the first women's fundraising campaign for the completion of the Bunker Hill Monument (a second campaign would also be needed), and—as a widow—raised her five children, the youngest of whom was now seventeen. What reason could motivate Hale to spend time publishing a cookery book?

Perhaps she had a nostalgic purpose and was fondly remembering the clam chowders or baked beans of her youth at her father's Rising Sun Inn in Newport, New Hampshire. Her practical purpose could have been that she required extra income to pay for her youngest son's

Harvard tuition. Or perhaps—emboldened by the publishing boom in America—she understood that over the past twelve years she had cultivated a following of readers and could carry out her rhetorical purpose of promoting female education by getting any willing would-be-goddesses of the hearth and home to read her cookery book.

In her introductory chapter, Hale sets forth her stated purpose in writing *The Good Housekeeper*:

The main object of those who have prepared works on cookery, has been to teach the art of *good living*, or of *cheap living*; the “Cook’s Oracle” [Kitchiner, England 1817] is one of the best examples for the first purpose, the “Frugal Housewife” [Child, America 1824] of the last. My aim is to select and combine the excellences of these two systems, at the same time keeping in view the important object of preserving health, and thus teach *how to live well and to be well while we live*. (Hale, *GH* 11)

For those working-class housekeepers who require “cheap living,” Hale promotes industry and economy. She reminds housekeepers to conscientiously tend to the mending while their home-made bread rises. She offers economical receipts such as Boiled Ham, Indian Bread, Turnips, Cabbage, and an additional seven-page chapter on “Cheap Dishes” (Hale, *GH* 103). However, Hale also includes many elaborate dishes more suited to those of the middle class, who can afford “good living.” Such receipts include Stuffed Loin of Mutton (below), Rice Blancmange (a cold rice mash served from a shaped mold with raspberries), Pickled Salmon, and Cod Sounds, which are cod swim bladders that are parboiled, fried, and served with a catsup butter gravy and, in Hale’s own words, “reckoned a great delicacy” (Hale, *GH* 65). In addition to receipts, she proffers plentiful middle-class advice, such as “Hints for Help,” on how to train house servants, a luxury that working-class or rural families would likely not have. Cooks,

servants, and a developed sense of gustatory and aesthetic tastes were luxuries “only available to middle-class families with income for food beyond the bare necessity for bodily survival” (Blankenship 179).¹² In keeping with Hale’s stated purpose from the preface, she strives to provide a range of receipts and advice, to combine the art of “good” living and “cheap” living in her 1839 cookery book, but careful readers may find that she provides more tips for “good” living than “cheap” living.

An example of how Hale seems to cater more to her middle-class housekeepers is a receipt for “A Stuffed Loin of Mutton,” recipe below:

Take the skin off a loin of mutton with the flap on; bone it neatly; make a nice veal stuffing, and fill the inside of the loin with it where the bones were removed; roll it up tight, skewer the flap, and tie twine round it to keep it firmly together; put the outside skin over it till nearly roasted, and then remove it that the mutton may brown. Serve with a nice gravy, mashed turnips and potatoes. Currant jelly is eaten with mutton. (Hale, *GH* 46)

Hale’s footnote reveals that the “nice veal stuffing” (also used for mutton or poultry) is crafted with breadcrumbs, butter, parsley, nutmeg, lemon peel, allspice, salt, and eggs. Hale’s obligatory Currant Jelly receipt calls for a ratio of roughly one part currant juice to *two* parts sugar (Hale, *GH* 91–92). In contrast, Child frugally calls for one part juice to only *one* part sugar in her Currant Jelly and states that “economical people will seldom use preserves, except for sickness. They are unhealthy, expensive, and useless to those who are well” (Child, *AFH* 81). While Hale provides nearly twenty receipts for preserves or jellies, Child offers only five receipts, mostly in

¹² Avery Blankenship also examines a manuscript cookbook of wealthy Mrs. Catharine Flint of Boston, which includes details of over a dozen supper parties hosted by the Flints during the 1850s and 1860s. Several of Hale’s recipes appear in Mrs. Flint’s manuscript cookbook including “blance mange,” indicating that some of Hale’s recipes were popular in middle- and even upper-class Boston homes during this time.

her section “Simple Remedies” for the sick: Arrow-root, Calf’s Foot, Tapioca, and Sago jellies. In other areas of her book, she provides only one: Currant Jelly. A variety of jellies seems compulsory at Hale’s middle-class table; even one jelly is an unhealthy extravagance at Child’s working-class table.

With only approximately thirty American cookbooks on the market at the time, Hale believed that her cookery book filled a lacuna in the marketplace *and* provided solid, Christian-based advice for young housekeepers. Hale defines a “good housekeeper” as one who will “thoroughly understand the nature of food and the effect of its various combinations on the health of those for whom her table is spread” (Hale, *GH* 92). Furthermore, this “good housekeeper” should also recognize that food is “provided by the wise and benevolent Creator for the sustenance of his rational creatures” (Hale, *GH* 5). Not only must one learn how to create healthful dishes for her table, but one must also acknowledge the original creator of that food.

AUDIENCE

With business acumen, Hale understood that any publication without buyers would not succeed in its mission. A decade earlier in 1828, when she had established and edited America’s first “female periodical,” *The Ladies’ Magazine*, she had identified her *readers* as female, but her *buyers* as male. Ever the diplomat, Hale stayed true to her rhetorical purpose of advocating for female education, while appealing to the ones with 1830s purchasing power: men. In her initial issue of *The Ladies’ Magazine* (1828), Hale flatters the “men of America”:

In this age of innovation perhaps no experiment will have an influence more important on the character and happiness of our society than the granting to females the advantages of a systematic and thorough education. The honor of this triumph, in favor of intellect over

long established prejudice, belongs to the men of America . . . The work [*The Ladies' Magazine*] will be national . . . American . . . designed to mark the progress of female improvement. (Finley 40)

Hale appeals to their manly spirit of innovation, intellect, and patriotism to “grant” to women “the advantages” of education. Incidentally, Hale also assured these husbands that no content in *The Ladies' Magazine* would cause any wife “to be less assiduous in preparing for his reception” or for her to “usurp station, or encroach on the prerogatives of men” (Finley 39). A diplomat, indeed.

By 1839, having established her ethos as proven by a decade of successfully editing *The Ladies' Magazine* and *Godey's Lady's Book*—mostly for women to read, although men also read *Godey's*—Hale dedicates her first cookbook, *The Good Housekeeper*, “To Every American Woman Who Wishes To Promote The Health, Comfort, and Prosperity Of Her Family” (Hale, *GH* 3). The men, in turn, would also reap these benefits of “health, comfort, and prosperity” in their own homes. Hale's ethos paid off. The first edition of 2,000 copies (September 1839), sold out it under two weeks (“Advertisement_Hale's The Good Housekeeper_Aug 1840”). Hale's intended audience and end consumer was “Every American Woman.” Well, *nearly* every American woman. As did her novel *Northwood*, discussed at length in a later chapter, Hale's cookbook had certain geographic and class inclinations for audience.

In her preface to the second printing of *The Good Housekeeper* (November 1839), Hale claims that her “Manual of Cookery . . . by its cheapness . . . clearness, simplicity, and adaptation . . . [is] practical for all classes—for the rich and poor, the dweller in the city, and the country household” (Hale, *GH* 4). Hale's manual was popular in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and throughout New England; however, rhetorician Sarah Walden believes that Hale “draws

community boundaries, juxtaposing the tastes of her [northern] audience with the ‘unhealthy’ tastes of southerners” (Walden 79). For example, in the “Fruits, Preserves, Etc.” section, Hale cautions her reader: “Peach skins are very unhealthy, and should never be eaten. In the southern cities, many bowel complaints are caused by the use of this fruit” (88). At first glance, this statement seems innocuous enough. Peaches can be difficult to peel, and some Southerners have been known to eat a fresh, ripe peach as one eats an apple. However, in Victorian-era thought, poor taste in food, resulting in indigestion is associated with poor taste in the broader culture of life, resulting in immorality. According to Walden, Hale is suggesting that poor education regarding food leads to “the inability (or unwillingness) to control one’s appetites, and finally, one’s incapacity to live a moral life. . . . Moreover, [Hale’s] critique demonstrates the marginalization of southern texts by a northern authorship and audience” (Walden 79). Walden’s argument implies that sophisticated Northern readers may not value Southern cookbooks, like Mary Randolph’s 1824 *The Virginia Housewife*, the first regional cookbook of America. It included the first published recipes for uniquely Southern dishes like ochra [*sic*], Apoquiniminc cakes [beaten biscuits], turnip tops [greens], and gumbo (Randolph v-viii). Due to their assumed moral superiority and tastes, Northern readers may have missed out on those recipes.

Because of the intrinsic link between earthly diet and heavenly virtue during the Victorian period, Hale hints to her Southern audience that because they express poor gustatory tastes (e.g., eating peach skins), they do not yet possess proper aesthetic tastes and moral values. But ultimately, education is Hale’s rhetorical purpose for her audience, so perhaps they could learn. Through *The Good Housekeeper*, Hale provides female education through domestic advice and receipts for both “cheap living” and “good living” for working-class and middle-class Americans.

TONE

Beginning with the front cover (see figure 2), Sarah Josepha Hale establishes a slightly elevated tone to convey her point of simultaneous “cheap living” and “good living.” Adding to the effect of the front cover, Hale follows the English tradition of a verbose title: *The Good Housekeeper: or The Way to Live Well and To Be Well While We Live: Containing Directions for Choosing and Preparing Food, In Regard to Health, Economy, and Taste*. Even Hale’s intentional choice of the titular “Housekeeper” implies one who maintains a home through the employ of one or more servants, as opposed to Child’s “Housewife,” which infers that the bulk of domestic work falls solely on the housewife. Hale’s diction is generally neutral, but occasionally she will drift toward the formal, as she does in the preface to the first edition when she writes, “It has been the aim of the author . . . to point out . . . the nature of the different kinds of *aliments* provided by the wise and benevolent creator for the sustenance of his rational creatures” (Hale, *GH* 5; emphasis added). A quick search of Google Ngram shows that even in 1839, “aliment” was not a widely used term for food, nourishment, or sustenance. These choices in tone indicate that Hale was writing more for the middle- or even upper-class housekeeper, and not necessarily for the rural dweller or working-class housewife, some of whom had limited vocabulary or no reading skills at all.

Driven by the imperative of female education, Hale sometimes adopts an unapologetically didactic tone. Readers can sense Hale’s palpable disdain for the following foods and foodways:

It is a savage custom to eat meat in a half-raw-half-roasted state . . . Rich soups are injurious to the dyspeptic . . . Food should never be eaten when it is hot—bread is very unhealthy when eaten in that way . . . Animal food [meat] should never be given to the

sick . . . people [should] eat their delicious summer fruits with good light bread instead of working up the flour with water and butter into a compound that almost defies the digestive powers . . . still [fruit pies] are harmless compared with *meat pies, which should never be made* . . . this rich, expensive and exceedingly unhealthy diet [mince pies] will be used very sparingly by all who wish to enjoy sound sleep or pleasant dreams. (*GH* 16, 17, 33, 81, 83, 85)

Although Hale denounces these “exceedingly unhealthy” foods in 1839, most of them eventually became as American as that most emblematic of pies, the Apple Pie—which, by the way, is more British than American.

Hale’s moralistic tone continues in her advice concerning alcoholic beverages as she contends that “[d]istilled spirituous liquors should never be considered drinkable—they may be necessary, sometimes as a medicine. . . . So important does it appear to me to dispense entirely with distilled spirits, as an article of domestic use, that I have not allowed a drop to enter into any of the recipes contained in this book” (Hale, *GH* 17). Hale’s strong opinions echo those of the temperance movement. Temperance may have been a needed reform for Americans, who brought their cider-drinking habits and cider-making skills with them from England and began planting apple trees as early as the 1620s in the Plymouth colony. The colonists of the late seventeenth-century drank hard apple cider regularly, but outright drunkenness was uncommon. As German and other European immigrants came to America’s shores, beer eventually surpassed hard cider as the alcoholic beverage of choice by the early 1800s. Although Hale eschews distilled spirits including beer, Child claims in 1824 that “Beer is a good family drink” and gives receipts for several varieties including spruce, boxberry, horseradish, and ginger beer for families to enjoy (Child, *AFH* 86).

However, statistics support Hale’s concern over the liquor drinking habits of Americans. Many who shared her sentiments became part of the temperance movement that lasted most of the 1800s in America. Daniel Okrent, in *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*, describes early nineteenth-century Americans as existing in an “alcoholic miasma” and notes that by 1830, Americans were drinking nearly seven gallons of pure alcohol per person per year, “even with abstainers [...] factored in” (qtd. in LaRoche 20). By comparison, decades into temperance reform, Americans in 1885 were consuming only 1.4 gallons of pure alcohol per person per year (Williams xiv–xv). This downturn seems to have rebounded, though. By 2020, the average American consumed 2.45 gallons of pure alcohol per year (National Institutes of Health, 12). Consumption of beer and wine (and recently, hard cider—perhaps echoing colonial times) also continues to edge up in modern times. Maybe the temperance movement promotional literature could again safeguard those who imbibe excessively from following the decline Nathaniel Ives presents in his 1846 cautionary lithograph, *The Drunkards Progress* (see figure 3).



Figure 3 *The Drunkards Progress: From the First Glass to the Grave*. Lithograph by Nathaniel Ives. 1846. (Source: Library of Congress: Prints & Photographs Online Images)

Although a man may begin with an innocent “glass with a friend,” his progress ends with “poverty and disease . . . crime . . . and death” (Currier and Ives). Hale employs her didactic tone to convey the dangers of “[s]pirituuous liquors” and to encourage her female readers not to suffer—and, moreover, to keep their men from suffering—the fate of “The Drunkards Progress.”

RECIPE METHODOLOGY AND EXAMPLES

Because early American cookbooks were mostly written in prose, they require a straightforward framework for analysis. We shall once again rely on the methodology of food historian M.F. K. Fisher in her “The Anatomy of a Recipe,” in which she claims that any “good recipe” should contain three components: “name, ingredients, and method” (23). Even with these modest requirements, some of Hale’s receipts fall short in meeting modern expectations of a recipe.

Before analyzing specific receipts, let us pause for an appreciation of Hale’s broader appeal to her readership. From novels to magazines to cookery and other domestic and non-fiction books, Sarah Josepha Hale was a master of marketing. She sought an audience not only with female readers but also appealed to “Man”—yes, capital “M”—in her first edition of *The Ladies Magazine* (Finley 39), diplomatically maintained America’s favor (North and South) during a Civil War and a forty-year run as editor of *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, and employed a pathos appeal to her readers of *Northwood* by reminding them that she wrote it as “a support for my little children” whose father’s eyes “were closed in death!” (Hale, *Northwood* iii). Her talent and market acumen made hers a household name during most of the nineteenth century.

In the preface to her second printing of *The Good Housekeeper* (November 1839), Hale works another marketing angle by capitalizing on the popularity of Sir Walter Scott and “his

admiration of French cookery” (4). In *The Good Housekeeper*, Hale includes some recipes from “The Cook and Housewife’s Manual,” which she claims “to have been prepared by Sir Walter Scott” (4). One example receipt ‘from Scott’ suggests preserving butter by topping it with a pouch of thin muslin filled with salt instead of “strewing a layer of salt on top of the butter” itself, which “makes the first slice unfit for use” (Hale, *GH* 121). Although in her preface, Hale claims to have written for the rich *and* poor, the references to Sir Walter Scott and French cookery suggest that she is writing with a higher socioeconomic class in mind. Readers will find no advice here on how to boil a calf’s head or wash their own feather beds. What readers do find is a collection of domestic instruction, seventy pages of prose-format receipts, and a few chapters of moralistic vignettes intended to aid the lady of the house in hiring good cooks and servants, and in preparing a “Good Dinner” (Hale, *GH* 141).

In a later chapter of this dissertation, a “good dinner”—the essential Thanksgiving dinner of *Northwood*—will be discussed. The receipt for each dish described in that dinner is included in Hale’s *The Good Housekeeper*. For now, here is a comparison of Child’s 1829 receipt with Hale’s 1839 receipt for the star of that Thanksgiving meal—pumpkin pie. Hale offers these directions:

Stew the pumpkin dry, and make it like squash pie, only season rather higher. In the country, where this *real yankee* [*sic*] *pie* is prepared in perfection, ginger is almost always used with other spices. There too, part cream instead of milk, is mixed with the pumpkin, which gives it a richer flavor. Roll the paste rather thicker than for fruit pies, as there is only one crust. If the pie is large and deep, it will require to bake an hour in a brisk oven. (Hale, *GH* 84)

Hale's recipe barely clears Fisher's minimum bar of "name, ingredients, method" requirements, but as long as one can reference Hale's "Squash Pie" recipe, these directions would likely generate a "Pumpkin Pie." The "Squash Pie" receipt cues the cook to use three eggs to a quart of milk, the same ratio as Child suggests. The difference here is the socioeconomic level of ingredients, and therefore of the homes: Hale suggests more expensive sugar, cream, a thicker crust, and extra ginger; Child calls for more affordable molasses, milk, and less ginger. Although both authors were writing from Boston only a decade apart, Hale's 1839 "*real yankee* [pumpkin] *pie*" is designed with the middle-class *housekeeper's* cook or kitchen servant in mind, while Child's 1829 receipt targets the working-class frugal *housewife* who does her own baking. This and other recipes that call for richer ingredients in Hale's cookbook reflect the 1830s rise of the middle class in urban areas like Boston.

From colonial times until now, American cookery books showcase that indigenous and quintessential American ingredient, corn. Both Child and Hale include numerous receipts for corn dishes, partly due to its availability and affordability. By the late eighteenth century, a bushel of wheat costs about nine schillings (almost a week's wages), but a bushel of corn cost only three shillings (Root and de Rochemont 61). Colonists spun this economic determinant into a patriotic virtue. Colonists chose corn "to represent the American character" and Ben Franklin, in 1766, defended corn as one of "the most agreeable grains in the world and that johnny [*sic*] cake or hoe cake, hot from the fire is better than a Yorkshire muffin" (McWilliams 8). In this spirit of celebrating corn, Joel Barlow, in his 1796 mock-epic poem *The Hasty-Pudding; A Poem in Three Cantos* claims that the home-spun simplicity of New England corn and hasty pudding is superior to the extravagance of European cookery with its "vicious rules of art / To kill the stomach and sink the heart" (II.1-2). Due to the symbolism and the popularity of hasty pudding,

most early American cookery books include a receipt. Amelia Simmons's 1796 recipe calls for milk, Indian meal, eggs, butter, spices, and raisins. Victorian era cookbooks revert to the original and even simpler mixture of water, corn meal or "Indian," and salt. As the Copyright Laws (1790) were still ignored at this time, Hale chooses to pirate, verbatim, Child's 1824 *The Frugal Housewife* "Hasty Pudding" recipe, which contains the required components of name, ingredients, and method, a bit jumbled, but still there. Hale borrows Child's directions:

Boil water, a quart, three pints, or two quarts, according to the size of your family; sift your meal, stir five or six spoonfuls of it thoroughly into a bowl of water; when the water in the kettle boils, pour into it the contents of the bowl; stir it well, and let it boil up thick; put in salt to suit your own taste, then stand over the kettle, and sprinkle in meal, handful after handful, stirring it very thoroughly all the time, and letting it boil between whiles. When it is so thick that you stir it with great difficulty; it is about right. It takes half an hour's cooking. Eat it with milk or molasses. (Hale, *GH* 105)

Hale includes Child's Hasty Pudding receipt in Chapter X of *The Good Housekeeper*, without acknowledging Child as the source. At least Hale stays true to Child's idea of frugal foods by including this inexpensive receipt in a brief, seven-page chapter on "Cheap Dishes." In *The American Frugal Housewife*, Child admires all "those who are not ashamed of economy," but in *The Good Housekeeper*, Hale divides the American population into six classes of poor and rich:

the miserable poor, usually made so by intemperance in drink; . . . the luxurious poor, who live on credit and by 'speculations;' . . . the rich, who intend to continue so, . . . the thriving, who mean to be rich, . . . the sensible and industrious, . . . and the benevolent, who wish to do good. (103-104)

By building this framework of socioeconomic classes, Hale does not paint a pleasant picture of the “miserable” or “luxurious” poor. Instead, her accolades are reserved for the rich.

While Hale claims to provide advice and recipes for both the rich *and* the poor in her 1839 *The Good Housekeeper*, most of her content seems intended for the rich, or at least for the housekeepers of the emerging middle class in America.

3.3 Harriet Beecher Stowe and *House and Home Papers* (1865)

Stowe’s *House and Home Papers* contains twelve sketches, roughly twenty-five pages each, covering domestic topics including new carpets, housewives vs. housekeepers, beauty, economy, foreign vs. domestic products, religion, servants, and—of course—cookery. These installments of didactic fiction, written in the nom de plume and voice of Mr. Christopher Crowfield, were published serially in the *Atlantic Monthly* during 1864 and in book form in 1865. In *House and Home Papers*, through the voice of Mr. Crowfield and the characters in the sketches, Stowe encourages readers to pursue industry, thrift (or at least thrift for the middle class), and orderly, comfortable, Christian homes. These values align with those emerging American values encouraged by Child and Hale in their domestic texts decades earlier.

Although *House and Home Papers* (1865) contains few recipes, its theme throughout is domestic advice, and Stowe devotes the longest chapter (forty-two pages) to “Cookery,” which meets the parameters of this project. Stowe did publish many recipes in another work, *The American Woman's Home* (1869), but that book was more of a marketing ploy than an original domestic work by Stowe. *The American Woman's Home* lists Harriet Beecher Stowe as an author, but her sister, Catharine Beecher is rightfully listed first on the title page (Beecher, 2). Indeed, the content was mostly a compilation of Catharine Beecher’s two popular domestic texts

from more than two decades earlier: *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841) and, as recipes were still called “receipts” in 1846, *Miss Beecher’s Domestic Receipt Book* (1846). Critic Jeanne Boydston points out this obvious republishing strategy, highlighting that by 1869, “Catharine Beecher had passed the peak of her career” and chose to publish “jointly with her now more famous sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe” (142). Because *American Woman’s Home* is primarily the compiled work of Catharine Beecher, this study will instead focus on *House and Home Papers*, a domestic text penned completely by Harriet Beecher Stowe.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

As was a frequent practice of Stowe’s, the content of *House and Home Papers* was first published serially, from January to December 1864 in the *Atlantic Monthly* before being printed in book form. Stowe proposed that perhaps readers needed a distraction from the heaviness of the Civil War, and she also recognized that using this monthly format would allow her to create sketches “out of which books may be made” as a financially rewarding endeavor (qtd. in Hedrick 317). After all, this strategy had worked well for *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, which, during its first year (1852), sold more than 305,000 copies in America, and a total of nearly two million copies globally (Showalter 107). A focused discussion on the cultural use of food and foodways in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* appears in a later chapter of this study.

The first hardcover edition of *House and Home Papers* (1865) is quite handsome. It features brown leather binding with gilded print of the title, the author (“Mrs. Stowe”), and the Ticknor and Fields colophon on the spine of the book (see figure 4). No text appears on the cover, only a framed diamond-shaped imprint of a botanical decoration in the center of the front

and back covers. Measuring approximately 7 ¼ inches by 4 ¾ inches, this duodecimo volume contains 333 pages of printed content (“Abe Books, House and Home Papers”).

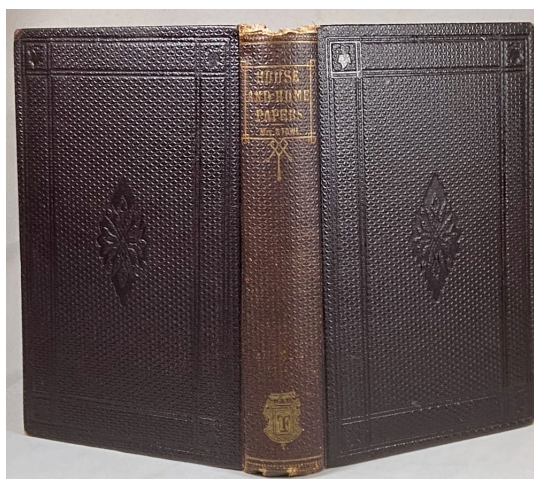


Figure 4 House and Home Papers by Harriet Beecher Stowe, (1865) 1st Edition Hardcover
(Source: Abe Books)

The 1865 book edition of *House and Home Papers* includes the same text for Chapters 1 through 8 as when these installments were published serially in the *Atlantic Monthly* from January through August 1864. However, the September 1864 edition of the *Atlantic* did not contain a *House and Home Papers* installment (“The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 14, No. 83, September, 1864”). Perhaps Stowe was preoccupied with settling into her new home in Hartford and missed an installment. The next month, October of 1864, welcomed Chapter 9 entitled “Servants” to the *Atlantic*. Chapter 10 “Cookery” and Chapter 11 “Our House” appeared in reverse order in the *Atlantic*, with “Our House” appearing first in November of 1864, and “Cookery” closing out the series in December of 1864. Chapter 12 “Home Religion” is included only in the book edition. Coming from a family of distinguished Calvinist preachers (and marrying one), Stowe valued the content of this chapter that instructs readers to practice religion in everyday home life, creating uplifting rooms with “flowers and sunshine” because home “ought to be so religiously cheerful, so penetrated by the life of love and hope and Christian

faith, that the other world may be made real by it” (Stowe, *HHP* 333).¹³ If Stowe followed the rhetorical strategy of emphatic order, this final chapter is of the greatest importance to her purpose.

PURPOSE

Stowe’s stated rhetorical purpose in writing *House and Home Papers* was to provide readers with a needed distraction from the burden of the ongoing Civil War. She discloses her intent in an 1863 letter to James Fields, a successful publisher, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and along with his wife Annie, a friend of Stowe. She described her planned set of domestic essays as follows:

a sort of spicy sprightly writing that I feel I need to write in these days to keep from thinking of things that make me dizzy & blind & fill my eyes with tears so that I cant [*sic*] see the paper I mean such things as are being done where our heroes are dying. . . . it is not wise that all our literature should run in a rut cut thro our hearts & red with our blood—I feel the need of a little gentle household merriment & talk of common things. (qtd. in Hedrick 312)

Fields agreed to publish the monthly series of domestic essays in the *Atlantic Monthly*, with compensation of \$100 for each installment (Hedrick 312). With twelve installments, the opportunity to entertain subscribers with “spicy sprightly writing” about home matters as well as to earn \$1200 income for 1864 met not only Stowe’s rhetorical purpose, but also her practical purpose for writing *House and Home Papers*.

¹³ Parenthetical references to *House and Home Papers* are denoted by *HHP*.

Much like the publication motives for Child and Hale (and Beecher for *American Woman's Home*), the practical—and probably primary—purpose for Stowe writing her 1865 *House and Home Papers* was financial. After all, this “damned mob of scribbling women” had to make money somehow.¹⁴ In 1863, the Stowe family left Massachusetts upon Calvin Stowe’s retirement from Andover Theological Seminary, and for the next sixteen years, Harriet Beecher Stowe would be the sole breadwinner for the family including four of her adult children (Hedrick 310). The whole family moved to Hartford, where H. B. Stowe had purchased land and supervised the building of “Oakholm,” a Victorian Gothic house of which Stowe had proudly informed her Boston literary friend, Annie Fields: “. . . my house with *eight* gables is growing wonderfully . . . [Stowe’s emphasis]” (311). The pronoun choice in “*my* house” is fitting, as a good portion of the income from her previous publications including *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* had gone into building Oakholm. An *eight*-gabled home, it clearly displayed more gables than the fictional Pyncheon home from Hawthorne’s 1851 *The House of the Seven Gables*—and hopefully Stowe’s home displayed more cheer, too (see figures 5 and 6).

Stowe was fastidious in her housekeeping calculations and understood that without her husband’s \$2,000 annual salary from Andover, ends simply would not meet. Stowe further recorded that their “annual household expenses were \$2,890. Their investments yielded about \$1,500 a year and she usually brought in another \$500 through her writing. Harpers had offered her \$400 a number for a serial story” but to devote time to writing, she would need to enlist the

¹⁴Sales of books by women authors were a valid concern for Nathaniel Hawthorne, who disparagingly crafted this phrase. From 1850 to 1854, the best-seller list in America included works by Susan Warner, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Maria Cummins, and Mary Jane Holmes. The best-sellers from 1810 to 1849 had listed only one female American author, Hannah F. Lee. (Mott, *Golden Multitudes* 305-308)

housekeeping support of her twin daughters, now twenty-seven years old and reluctant to give up their lives of leisure (Hedrick 311). It is likely that the twins' Aunt Catharine Beecher, a founder



*Figure 5 Oakholm, home of Harriet Beecher Stowe from 1864-1870. Hartford, Connecticut.
(Source: Harriet Beecher Stowe Center)*



Figure 6 House of the Seven Gables, inspiration for Hawthorne's 1855 novel, built in 1668. Restored in 1908. Salem, Massachusetts. (Source: The House of the Seven Gables Settlement)

of the field of domestic science and author of the 1841 *A Treatise of Domestic Economy*, a textbook used in female education, was not pleased with this lack of domestic industry on the part of her fully grown nieces.

The financial and popular success of Stowe's serialized *House and Home Papers* in the *Atlantic Monthly* emboldened her to write again to editor James Fields in 1864, proposing "to keep up a Domestic Department [in the *Atlantic*] . . . for the same price which I should want for a romance—two hundred a month" (qtd. in Hedrick 318). Fields accepted her proposal, and during 1865 and 1866, Stowe continued the voice of Christopher Crowfield and serially published *The Chimney Corner* papers, which "secured a steady annual income of \$2,400, exclusive of the hefty 45 to 55 percent royalties" that she would earn on the 1865 and 1866 gift book versions, both entitled *Little Foxes* (Hedrick 318). Once again, Stowe's business model of monetizing serialized sketches and then printing them in book form put bread on her family's table in Hartford, Connecticut.

AUDIENCE

In the 1865 book edition of *House and Home Papers*, Stowe and the publishers—perhaps unnecessarily—remind her audience of her moral ethos and authorial credibility by listing "Mrs. Stowe's Writings" including *The Minister's Wooing* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. An alternate reason for this listing of her writings on the verso of the title page is to clarify that the listed author "Christopher Crowfield" is indeed Stowe, lest the audience missed the gilded "Mrs. Stowe" on the spine.

Stowe was not the only American who needed talk of "household merriment" as a distraction from the horrors of the Civil War, both South and North. The Southern audience may have been seeking a distraction, but it was not seeking more publications from Stowe. Due to what some Southerners viewed as its unfair depiction of slavery, Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had been banned in many parts of the South during the Civil War. In the Northern states, the

Atlantic Monthly was based in the literary hub of Boston, so Stowe's geographic audience consisted mostly of Bostonians and readers from the urban areas of New York and Philadelphia. This mostly Northern audience of the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1864 appreciated the distraction of discussions of home matters, as evidenced by the demand for more of Stowe's domestic writing, this time as *The Chimney Corner* papers, published serially in the *Atlantic Monthly* during 1865 and 1866.

In times of war and recovery, it is a normal reaction for a reading audience to yearn for the comforts of home. However, the concept of an American home had been shifting rapidly due to nineteenth-century changes including population growth from immigration, increased factory production following the First Industrial Revolution, wartime production boom, and recent decades of transportation innovations like the Erie Canal and the B&O railroad. The food industry underwent changes, too. The tin can was invented in 1825, the same year the Erie Canal opened, and the icebox railroad car came into use in 1842 (Cognard-Black 79). All these changes meant that industrially produced foods and goods could be produced and distributed in mass and therefore more cheaply. Many people who produced or sold the goods earned decent wages, which helped create a stronger middle class, who, in turn, could afford to buy more things that needed to be produced—and the cycle of American consumerism began.

This shift in socioeconomics formed a new American audience, a “newly affluent class uneasy about their station, unsure how to manage servants and the array of expensive wedding gifts with which they started their life together,” but in this new social milieu, Stowe “preached simplicity and common sense” (Hedrick 320). Stowe knew just how to reach this new audience through clever dialogue, characters who mirrored her audience (or foils of her audience), and her ever present wit. For example, in *Little Foxes*, her follow-up to *House and Home Papers*, Stowe

(once again under the pen name Christopher Crowfield) creates a fictional family caught up in the world of Victorian-era excess. Stowe fittingly names this family “the Mores” (Stowe, *Little Foxes* 255). Stowe’s audience soon discovers that having ‘more’ and reaching for secular, high society does not a happy home make. Instead, throughout her domestic writing, Stowe urges her mostly middle-class audience to seek a balance in life, pursue Christian values including humility and integrity, and take pleasure in the simple things of life, such as “tempting ears of Indian-corn steaming in enormous piles” or freshly baked bread with “good . . . perfectly pure” butter (Stowe, *HHP* 229, 244). Regardless of the socioeconomic class of her audience, Stowe encouraged them all to be content and make the most of what their station in life afforded them.

TONE

In *House and Home Papers*, Stowe utilizes a witty, conversational tone to exhort her readers to practice American values by embracing domestic ideals of economy and integrity, deftly managing servants, purchasing (mostly) American-made products, and expertly cooking “the bounties of Providence” amply provided for American tables (Stowe, *HHP* 228). Stowe facilitates this series of monthly didactic fiction through the framework of parlor literature. With a lively voice and moralistic but witty vignettes, Mr. Christopher Crowfield entertains and educates his wife and daughters by reading his draft of the next installment for *The Atlantic Monthly* fireside in his sensibly furnished library—not the parlor.

The family and visitors are drawn to the comfortable library because by the end of the first chapter, a cautionary tale entitled “Ravages of a Carpet,” the once comfortable parlor has been expensively updated to fit the social expectations of 1860s Boston. It now boasts a new Brussels carpet (purchased at a “bargain”), which in turn had called for new velvet curtains,

original artwork, and formal, uncomfortable furniture (purchased at great expense).¹⁵ The parlors of the antebellum period were active and multipurpose, filled with guests, pets, children, embroidery, musical instruments, books, and letters—a space of domestic power for middle-class women—and a warm, evening gathering place for the family. Both men and women were welcomed in the parlor, as it was “a place in which separate gender spheres were not finely drawn” (Cooper 3). Working-class families also shared fireside listening sessions of letters (incoming and outgoing), the bible, books, or music. With few rooms and no parlor in the smaller home, the working-class housewife would complete the kitchen work and then the family would gather around the kitchen hearth—a place of cultural agency for working-class women, too. In *House and Home Papers*, the Crowfield’s 1860s parlor is ornate and closed up in an effort to preserve their investment in a new Brussels carpet and home décor. Their parlor, like some upper-class ladies of leisure (perhaps like Stowe’s own adult daughters), had become an inactive “museum of elegant and costly gewgaws” (Stowe, *HHP* 43). Perhaps the Crowfield parlor could be seen as a forewarning against the rarely used “living rooms” of twentieth-century America.¹⁶ So it is in the cozy library, not the formal parlor, that Mr. Crowfield continues the tradition of parlor literature by gathering his family in the “evening, at fire-light time, [to] read to my little senate” his latest sketch for *House and Home Papers*.

¹⁵ A similar Boston tale of a “cheap” Brussels carpet was published in the May 1861 edition of *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, under the editorship of Hale. “A Great Bargain” by Mary Janvrin (who also published a cookery book in 1891) tells the cautionary tale of Mrs. Morrison, who is lured into an auction by “a great bargain” on a Brussels carpet that was formerly owned by the stylish “Mr. Moneybags of Beacon Street.” After purchasing the carpet at such a low price, Mrs. Morrison proceeds to spend all her savings and more on kid gloves, a silk dress, a lace collar, and other items she did not need, which turned out to be of poor quality and expiring fashion.

¹⁶ In *American Afterlife: Encounters in the Custom of Mourning*, Kate Sweeney explains how the Victorian “parlor” (often used for wakes or funerals) came to be associated with stillness and death, and in the early twentieth century, this room was rebranded as the American “living” room in an effort to counteract that negative stigma.

By January 1864, when the first installment of *House and Home Papers* appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*, Harriet Beecher Stowe was one of the most recognized names in American literature. Why would she feel the need to assume the male persona and tone of Christopher Crowfield? Stowe biographer Joan Hedrick claims that “speaking in a male voice was the price of admission to the *Atlantic* club,” which regularly published authors including Oliver Wendell Holmes, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and male authors and poets from across the Atlantic like Robert Browning (314). However, Hedrick fails to note that in April 1862, Stowe had just completed serial installments of *Agnes of Sorrento* under her own name in the *Atlantic Monthly* (“Publications Received”). Furthermore, in the December 1863 issue of *The Liberator*, the *Atlantic Monthly* proudly advertised its list of contributors for the new year of 1864 including several women: “Mrs. Julia W. Howe . . . Gail Hamilton [Mary Abigail Dodge] . . . Rose Terry . . . Harriet Martineau . . . Harriet E. Prescott” and this project’s Harriet, “Mrs. H. B. Stowe” (*The Liberator* Dec. 1863). Granted, over eighty percent of the contributors listed in that advertisement were male, but in 1864, the “*Atlantic* club” was already evolving from a gentlemen-only club, so maybe a male narrator was not necessary for Stowe after all. Likely, Stowe simply wanted to use a pseudonym as she tried a new style of writing in *House and Home Papers*. After all, she did tell James Fields that she felt the need for something light, “a sort of spicy sprightly writing” to distract herself from the heaviness of the Civil War (qtd. in Hedrick 312). Whatever her reason, Stowe assumes the voice of Mr. Crowfield, creating a self-aware narrator who at times speaks directly to his audience and even reminds readers of his sketch from the previous month, as he does in the fourth installment, “The Economy of the Beautiful”:

Talking to you in this way once a month, Oh my confidential reader, there seems to be danger, as in all intervals of friendship, that we shall not readily be able to take up our

strain of conversation just where we left off. Suffer me, therefore, to remind you that the month passed left us seated at the fireside, just as we had finished reading of what a home was and how to make one. (Stowe, *HHP* 79)

Mr. Crowfield continues by setting up a tale of two new Boston households from the same social circle, one extravagant and one sensible, as an illustration to his daughter Jenny of how household beauty can come from economical choices. For example, the sensible husband and wife buy rolls of “good American paper” at thirty-seven cents a roll, while the lavish couple purchases the “heaviest French velvet [wallpaper], with gildings and traceries at four dollars a roll” (Stowe, *HHP* 85, 89)¹⁷. The more economical decorating also “gave freedom to their children” and their parlor, hung with lithographs and drawings instead of expensive foreign artwork, “suggests a thousand inquiries [and] stimulates the little eye and hand” (Stowe, *HHP* 99). Here, Stowe seems to strike a balance between the austere frugality of Lydia Maria Child, who advocates for boiling a calf’s head at home and braiding one’s own straw hat, and the near extravagance of Sarah Josepha Hale, whose readers apparently had a taste for Rice Blancmange or a Stuffed Loin of Mutton. Stowe uses the conversational tone and educated wit of Christopher Crowfield to teach lessons of domestic moderation to the newly middle-class audience as they try to define their own set of American values.

¹⁷ Barbara Hochman notes that “The Economy of the Beautiful” chapter of *House and Home Papers* may serve as a neglected source for Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper.” Hochman argues that Stowe’s piece “may have inspired Gilman to make a grotesque parody of domestic values” by recasting parts of Stowe’s sketch and moving the setting from a downstairs parlor to an upstairs asylum-like nursery. In addition to discussions of yellow and buff colors for wallpaper, and “convolutions” of rug and wallpaper patterns, the admittedly common names of “John” and “Jenny” appear as characters in both works. Gilman was the great-niece of Stowe and is known to have spent much time with Stowe as a child, and with her works as an adult.

RECIPE METHODOLOGY AND EXAMPLES

The prose format of early American cookbooks calls for a streamlined analytical framework, such as the methodology provided by M. F. K. Fisher in “The Anatomy of a Recipe.” Well known as a food critic and translator of Brillat-Savarin’s *The Physiology of Taste* (*Physiologie du Goût*), Fisher requires a recipe to have only three primary components: “name, ingredients, and method” (23). In *House and Home Papers*, however, Stowe meets Fisher’s minimal requirements for only a few recipes including those for baking bread, making butter, and broiling a beefsteak (233, 244, 249). For example, to avoid making “a hobgoblin-bewitchment of cream into foul and loathsome poisons” Stowe lays out a simple recipe for good butter: “To keep the cream in a perfectly pure, cool atmosphere, to churn while it is yet sweet, to work out the buttermilk thoroughly, and to add salt with such discretion as not to ruin the fine, delicate flavor of the fresh cream” (Stowe, *HHP* 244). While Stowe meets Fisher’s basic framework for this butter recipe by providing the name, ingredients, and method, she neglects to give details such as measurements or preparation time.

The “Cookery” chapter of *House and Home Papers* is not a cookbook in the mode of those written by Amelia Simmons, Eliza Leslie, Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Josepha Hale, or Stowe’s own sister, Catharine Beecher.¹⁸ Therefore, it does not follow the usual methodology for mid nineteenth-century recipes. Fortunately, Stowe, speaking as Christopher Crowfield in the first pages of the “Cookery” chapter, establishes a clear methodology for analyzing cookery:

In lecturing on cookery, as on house-building, I divide the subject into not four, but five grand elements: first, Bread; second, Butter; third, Meat; fourth, Vegetables; and fifth,

¹⁸ Harriet Beecher Stowe and her sister, Catharine Beecher, are listed as co-authors of *American Woman’s Home*, although that work is a compilation of Catharine Beecher’s two popular domestic texts *A Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841) and *Miss Beecher’s Domestic Receipt Book* (1846).

Tea,—by which I mean, generically, all sorts of warm, comfortable drinks served out in tea cups, whether they be called tea, coffee, chocolate, broma, or what not. . . . I affirm, that, if these five departments are all perfect, the great ends of domestic cookery are answered, so far as the comfort and well-being of life are concerned. (230)

Crowfield is persuaded by his wife—his “sovereign lady” who is stitching quietly by his side—to write on the subject of cookery, but he readily admits to her (and to readers) “. . . if I write on a pure woman's matter, it must be understood that I am only your [his wife's] pen and mouthpiece, only giving tangible form to wisdom which I have derived from you” (227).

Then, in a style uncharacteristic for Stowe in *House and Home Papers*, Stowe speaks almost entirely in her own voice for the next thirty-eight pages—no witty parlor banter, no didactic vignettes—just advice on American cookery, mostly framed in the negative of what American cookery *should not* be. At the end of the chapter, as if Stowe forgot that Crowfield is the narrator, she abruptly extricates herself from the chapter with a two-sentence conclusion, which begins in the third person and transitions to the first person as Crowfield seems to also remember that *he* is the one speaking: “But Christopher has prosed long enough. I must now read this to my wife, and see what she says” (Stowe, *HHP* 265). Here, Stowe is pulling readers back to Crowfield's voice and reminding them that women are still the ones with final approval on matters requiring domestic ethos.

Stowe and Hale share many of the same tastes (aesthetic and gustatory) concerning American food, mostly for the middle class. On the contrary, Child's opinions seem to be based more on costs than tastes, as befitted her target audience, frugal housewives of the working class. Stowe claims that “the American table . . . presents a fine abundance of material, carelessly and poorly treated . . . [and] there are great capabilities and poor execution” (229). A similar

sentiment is expressed by Hale in the preface to her first edition of *The Good Housekeeper* (1839), as she aims to show “the best methods of preparation now understood . . .” so that Americans may “. . . preserve their health, and yet enjoy the bounties of Providence” (5). Intentionally, Stowe snubs the “Confectionery” category of cake, pastry, ices, preserves, etc., claiming that Americans should “turn their great energy and ingenuity” into doing common things “perfectly” instead of wasting effort on confectionery, which she labels as the culinary equivalent of beginning to sew “our shirt at the ruffle” (Stowe, *HHP* 264). Again, Stowe’s opinion—this time regarding desserts—echoes that of Hale’s three decades earlier. Hale asserts that “[p]astry, rich cakes, plum-puddings, hot short-cakes . . . are the most indigestible of any kinds of food. These should rarely be eaten” (15). Other similarities include that both Stowe and Hale admire French cookery for the way it wastes nothing and produces rich flavors, as opposed to American cookery which wastes much and relies too heavily on spices and salt. They both warn against undercooked meats and hot breads. A shared theme of all three authors is the central tenet of wisely using the plentiful foods grown in America for the purpose of building a strong family, and therefore a strong country. This belief extends the idea of early Republican Motherhood into the American kitchens of the 1860s.

To improve the cook’s “capabilities,” Stowe exhorts her readers to properly utilize the “five grand elements” of food: bread, butter, meat, vegetables, and tea—and to prepare them with expertise. Stowe barely mentions “Confectionery,” granting this “ornamental cookery” merely one page of her forty-two page chapter (263).¹⁹ Bread merits nine pages, butter four, meat thirteen (five of which lambasts American butchers), vegetables only three (mostly devoted

¹⁹ Those interested in confectionery recipes of this era may consult the 1828 or later editions of Miss Leslie’s *Seventy-five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes, and Sweetmeats* and make LaFayette Gingerbread (named for the French military officer in the American Revolutionary War) or Gooseberry Jelly (Leslie 75, 80).

to discussion of the potato), and tea four. In the slice of the chapter discussing “Bread,” Stowe goes into detail about methods of “lightening” bread including fermentation (yeast), use of an alkali and an acid (from sour milk), and aeration (with beaten egg whites) (234-235). Although Hale and Child showcase the use of corn-meal or “Indian meal” in their recipes, and Stowe fills *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (the book and the fictional cabin) with corn cakes, here Stowe makes just one mention of “corn-meal,” referenced only as a more affordable alternative to flour (240). Following middle-class mores, Stowe believes bread should be light and sweet, not “the green, clammy, acrid substance . . . wholly unworthy of the men and women of the Republic. Good patriots ought not to be put off in that way, –they deserve better fare” (234). The green substance Stowe refers to is caused by overuse of pearlash, potash, or saleratus—leavening agents used by hasty cooks, before baking powder made its revolutionary debut in the 1860s.²⁰ Stowe’s bread is middle-class bread made from flour and allowed to slowly rise before baking, not the corn-based quick bread of the working class or enslaved peoples. After all, “good patriots” deserve good fare.

Whether it was shaping or reflecting American tastes (or both), Stowe dedicates four times more discussion to meat (thirteen pages) than she does to vegetables (three pages). Even in our modern day, many American cookbooks and most diets still overemphasize meat. In the “Cookery” section on beverages, Stowe extols the virtues of French coffee and English tea, but she does not mention alcoholic drinks. This omission is somewhat surprising for the daughter of preacher Lyman Beecher, one of the leaders in the temperance movement. In other parts of *House and Home Papers*, Stowe does briefly mention “flaming brandy” as the topping for a

²⁰ For a lively and well-researched exploration of how baking powder started a chemical revolution in American kitchens, and a transformation in American commerce and advertising, see Linda Civitello’s *Baking Powder Wars: The Cutthroat Food Fight that Revolutionized Cooking* (2017).

nearly indigestible “cannon-ball” of a plum pudding, and rum as a thing “needless, doubtful, and positively hurtful” (190, 265). She also utilizes intemperance as a symbol for violence and non-Christian values in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, to be discussed in a later chapter. However, in the “Cookery” chapter of *House and Home Papers*, Stowe—under the guise of narrator Mr. Crowfield—avoids the topic of beer, cider, cordials, or spirits.

Stowe’s serialized 1864 *House and Home Papers* was well received, as evidenced by its publication in book form the following year, as well as editor James Fields continuance of Stowe’s “Domestic Department” in the *Atlantic Monthly* for two additional years. The December 1864 issue of *Scientific American* praises the 1864 issues of the *Atlantic* as “refreshing” and recognizes the boon provided by Stowe’s monthly contributions:

The *House and Home Papers* of Mrs. Stowe abound in hints and suggestions on domestic reform, not the least important one of the series alluded to is that upon domestic cookery. . . . Mrs. Stowe appreciates the French system of serving food in an appetizing manner, and cooked with a “toothsome” flavor. Our own fault of economy as well as slovenliness in this respect are properly enough deprecated. The *Atlantic Monthly* for 1865 promises . . . a more extended circle of readers [and] an effort on the part of the editors to render it more attractive to the general reader; as an instance, The *House and Home Papers* are prominent. (“Review of House and Home Papers”)

Appealing to the “general reader” would inevitably draw more women into the readership of the *Atlantic Monthly*. In this way, Stowe leveraged her knowledge within the private domestic sphere to not only publish in a male-dominated magazine, but to incentivize the editor to extend his circle of readers to include women, too.

As industrialization continued, a wider selection of kitchen innovations and foodstuffs became available to most Americans during and after the Civil War. The self-sufficient homestead gave way to urban and suburban living, and the American diet evolved away from the early colonial days of surviving on the indigenous foods the land produced. The days of subsisting on wild game and “the three sisters” of squash, corn, and beans cooked over an open fire (as depicted on the anachronistic cover image of Hale’s *The Good Housekeeper*) were replaced with the luxuries of local butcher shops, great quantities of manufactured butter melted over most vegetables, and a steady parade of new cookstoves.²¹ For several decades from 1824 through 1865, the domestic texts of Child, Hale, and Stowe helped guide Americans to choose industry, economy, and Christian values as they nourished their families and built their nation. Recognizing that food is a key ingredient in the formation of a uniquely American identity, Child, Hale, and Stowe also authored influential novels that employ food as a means of shaping the values of America. An analysis of food and how it is utilized in *Hobomok*, *Northwood*, and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* will be served up in the following chapter.

²¹ Some critics argue that the cookstove is as representative of American culture as the automobile. Readers may learn more about the history of cookstoves and their cultural impact on America in Priscilla Brewer’s article, “We Have Got a Very Good Cookstove: Advertising, Design, and Consumer Response to the Cookstove, 1815-1880.”

4 CASE STUDIES: FOOD, FICTION, AND AMERICAN IDENTITY

“There is no eating in the archive.” This well-known rule is the first sentence of Lauren Klein’s book-length compilation of her scholarship on eating as a “means of expressing both allegiance and resistance to . . . the ideological framework of the [early] United States” (Klein, *An Archive of Taste* 1). The “no eating” rule is literally true, it also provides a methodological challenge to the academic archive. Eating—and food in general—has been largely excluded from the archive of scholarship in American literature. However, paying critical attention to food in cookbooks and novels enriches understanding of not only gustatory tastes of the time but also aesthetic tastes and values.²²

Aesthetics scholar, Denise Gigante, points out that in the eighteenth century, cultural critics and Enlightenment philosophers including Joseph Addison and David Hume relied on the metaphor of gustatory taste to express their ideas about subjective judgment, or “aesthetics.” Gigante claims that poets and authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries discovered and utilized this same “creative power of taste as a trope for aesthetic judgment and its essential role in generating our very sense of self” (2).²³ For early Americans including Child, Hale, and Stowe, the “sense of self” Gigante highlights could be expanded into a sense of nation, as individuals endeavored to cultivate tastes in their homes that they wanted to see mirrored as republican tastes in their new nation. If citizens of a growing democratic republic were to be

²² Regarding gustatory tastes of early America, Rachel Hermann notes that early New England colonists farmed and ate during a time when the descriptions of the sense of taste were changing. Our modern framework for taste includes only five characteristics: sweet, sour, bitter, salty, and umami. Hermann asserts that Europeans just before colonial times would have “counted eight or nine (sweet, greasy, bitter, salty, salty like the sea [which felt ‘thicker in the mouth’], sharp, harsh, vinegary, and tasteless)” (Hermann 52).

²³ Denise Gigante’s book-length study of aesthetics and gustatory taste in literature, *Taste: A Literary History*, focuses primarily on the English Romantic poets. However, many of her arguments reflect the Victorian ideal of tastes also held in many parts of America during the early-mid nineteenth century.

trusted to make their own political decisions, each individual needed to develop and exhibit good values and morals—in other words, a sense of taste. Klein asserts that these American values centered on simplicity (harkening back to Puritan plain living), temperance (ability to moderate all desires), and benevolence (acts of civic virtue) (59). Within that framework, Child, Hale, and Stowe extol similar values, sometimes under other names including frugality, industry, self-denial, education, family, economy—all worthy attributes Americans should emulate. But how could these values be conveyed to the public? Klein argues that increased literacy rates, the popularity of sentimental literature, and the shared gustatory and literary spaces of taverns, literary salons, and social clubs all helped disseminate these desired values through pamphlets, domestic texts, and novels (59).²⁴ Following Klein’s vein of scholarship, this chapter relies on the public writing of novels by Child, Hale, and Stowe, including shared experiences of food as vehicles of civic duty in forming American values and identity.

4.1 Gender in Food and Fiction: Lydia Maria Child’s *Hobomok* (1824)

At the age of 22, Maria Francis (she had dropped her first name and had not yet married) self-published her first novel, *Hobomok: A Tale of Early Times* (1824).²⁵ As female authors were still a rarity and a risk, she chose to remain anonymous by stating that the novel was written “By an American.” Biographer Lydia Moland claims that these three simple words formed “a phrase as full of mystery and promise as the country its author claimed as her own” (51). In her

²⁴ Scholarship on the sense of aesthetic tastes in early America includes Michael Warner’s work on the civic duty of private reading and public writing in the early national period, Elizabeth Maddock Dillon’s study of how mid-nineteenth-century sentimental literature helped consolidate national values, and David S. Shields’s argument that the shared experiences of literary salons, coffee houses, and social clubs helped formalize and build key “performative values of civic virtue” (Klein, “The Matter of Early American Taste” in *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Food* 58–59).

²⁵ Carolyn Karcher notes that Child spent \$495 to publish 1,000 copies of *Hobomok* to be sold at 75 cents each (*First Woman* 38–39).

historical novel, *Hobomok*, Child (Maria Francis at the time) portrays a compassionate narrative of Native Americans in early New England and challenges patriarchy, Calvinist religion, and societal expectations of women throughout her tale.

PURPOSE

Ever an astute observer of people and events around her, Child must have stored up some core memories during her interactions with the Penobscot people outside Norridgewock during her teenage years. From 1815 to 1820, Child lived with her sister's family in Norridgewock, Maine; Child later records in one of her *Juvenile Miscellany* entries: "I used to go to the woods [outside Norridgewock], and visit the dozen wigwams that stood there, very often" and take small gifts, observe as the Penobscot women would cook meals and weave or dye baskets, admire their "tall, athletic youth," and listen to their stories (qtd. in Karcher 11–12). This personal experience, coupled with her knowledge of New England history and her wide reading including Sir Walter Scott's adventure novels, prepared her to answer a challenge she received in 1824.

One source of Child's inspiration for *Hobomok* was John Gorham Palfrey's review of the epic poem *Yamoyden* (1820). In 1824, Child was living with her brother Convers Francis in Watertown, Massachusetts, when she came across an April 1821 volume of the *North American Review* in his study (Moland 47). Within that volume was Palfrey's lengthy review of and excerpts from the over three-hundred-page narrative poem *Yamoyden, A Tale of the Wars of King Philip: in Six Cantos* (Eastburn and Sands). Relying on history "gathered from a few pages of Hubbard's *Narrative of the Indian Wars*," James Eastburn and Robert Sands created

Yamoyden as a historical fiction poem that told the story of the Wampanoag uprising of 1675-1676 from the Native American point of view.²⁶

Eastburn and Sands breach the taboo topic of an interracial romance between a Nipnet Indian, Yamoyden, and a Christian English woman, Nora, who (like Hobomok and Mary Conant in *Hobomok*) eventually have a child. Palfrey praised *Yamoyden* for its depiction of the “stern, romantic enthusiasm” of America’s Puritans, the “fierce” and noble character of its Indians, and its depiction of the “bold rough lines of nature” (480).²⁷ Palfrey also issued a challenge to any ambitious American authors by predicting, “whoever in this country first attains the rank of a first rate writer of fiction, will lay his scene here. The wide field is ripe for the harvest, and scarce a sickle yet has touched it” (Palfrey 483-85). A couple of decades later, Ralph Waldo Emerson would issue a similar challenge in the quest for an American poet: “I look in vain for the poet whom I describe. . . . Yet America is a poem in our eyes; its ample geography dazzles the imagination, and it will not wait long for metres [*sic*]” (Emerson, “The Poet”). Of course, Walt Whitman would answer Emerson’s call for a national poet by writing and continually adding to his magnum opus, *Leaves of Grass*.²⁸

²⁶ John Gorham Palfrey states in the *North American Review* that *Yamoyden* was published by two young theological students, James Eastburn and Robert Sands. During editing, Eastman became ill and died. Sands published the poem in honor of Eastman, with the author listed as “By the late Rev. James Wallis Eastburn, A.M., and his friend.” The epic poem featured engravings by Asher Brown Durand, who later became part of the Hudson River School of painting.

²⁷ Nathaniel Hawthorne once listed the three “matters” of American fiction (not of Rome) as follows: “the Puritans, the Indians, and the Revolution” (qtd. in McWilliams 29). In the 1820s, American novelists like Irving, Cooper, Sedgwick, and Child were discovering the literary riches of the history of their young nation.

²⁸ Upon receiving Walt Whitman’s letter along with a twelve-poem, first edition *Leaves of Grass*, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote to “Walter Whitman” a letter of praise in July of 1855 including the line, “I greet you upon the beginning of a great career” (Emerson, “Letter” 3). Whitman, without asking Emerson, released Emerson’s letter to the *New York Tribune* and included it in the appendix of his second edition of *Leaves of Grass*, also including the now-famous “I greet you . . .” sentence on the spine of that edition.

Finding her inspiration in Palfrey's review of *Yamoyden*, Child drafted the first chapter of *Hobomok* on one Sunday afternoon at her brother's parsonage home in Watertown, Massachusetts (Moland 48). Like *Yamoyden* (1820), *Hobomok* (1824) is a work of historical fiction portraying Native Americans and New England settlers, including an interracial romance between a Native American and an English woman that results in a mixed-race son. Unlike *Yamoyden*, the couple in *Hobomok* does not die and their son does not disappear. As America moved toward the Indian Removal Act of 1830, Child, by allowing her characters to live, was signaling to readers that brutal extermination of native 'savages' was not the only option, and perhaps Indians and colonists could coexist.

In the preface to *Hobomok*, a "young author, in his first attempt" (not unlike Child) conducts research on the history of New England, writes a manuscript, and hands it over to his friend, Frederic, who deems it worthy of immediate publication. The first chapter frames the tale one level deeper, as the unnamed narrator claims to have recently received "an old, worn-out manuscript, which accidentally came in my way. It was written by one of my ancestors who fled with the persecuted nonconformists [Puritans] from the Isle of Wight, and about the middle of June, 1629, arrived at Naumkeak on the eastern shore of Massachusetts" (Child, *Hobomok* 6–7). This narrative framing technique used by authors including Hawthorne, as he framed his tale of *The Scarlet Letter*, bolsters the veracity of a Romantic storyline and helps situate the plot of the story within a historical context.

PLOT of *Hobomok*

Throughout the plot of *Hobomok*, Child includes native foods such as corn, pumpkin, venison, and clams; she also includes English fare like cheese, pudding, cordials, and cider. The

depiction of these foods helps situate the reader in a plot that operates in both worlds of this historical novel set in 1629—the world of the Native American and that of the Massachusetts colonist.

The heroine of *Hobomok* is Mary Conant, an imagined daughter of historical figure Roger Conant, a disaffected member of the Plymouth colony who had sought refuge in Naumkeak (soon to become Salem). In defiance of her stern, Calvinist father, Mary accepts the affections of the young Episcopalian, Charles Brown, which causes her father to become even more stern. In further rebellion against her father's Calvinist creed of election, Mary exercises her own agency in deciding her fate. She sneaks into the woods at night to perform a ritual that she believes will summon her future husband. Mary cuts her own arm to draw blood, dips a feather in the blood to write words (undisclosed to the reader), and then proceeds to etch a circle on the ground and walk forward then backward around it, three times, while chanting:

Whoever's to claim a husband's power,

Come to me in the moonlight hour.

And again,--

Whoe'er my bridegroom is to be,

Step in the circle after me. (Child, *Hobomok* 13)

Mary's incantation summons not one potential groom, but two: Hobomok, a Wampanoag warrior (who is in the woods tracking deer for food), and Charles Brown, an Episcopalian Englishman (who is awakened by a dream that Mary needs his assistance). Mary and Charles fall in love, but Mary's father, a Puritan Calvinist, forbids her engagement to an Episcopalian. Charles tries to persuade Mary to return to England with him, but Mary refuses to leave her frail mother. After heated religious discussions with Mr. Conant and a decision by the Governor, Charles is sent to

England, leaving Mary bereft. With time, she becomes friends with Hobomok, who is a kind guide, a skilled hunter, and an ally of the Salem settlers.

Prominent visitors from England, Lady Arabella (Mary's childhood acquaintance) and her husband, Mr. Isaac Johnson, arrive to check on the progress of the Salem settlement and church. When Mary offers a breakfast of venison and pumpkin, Mr. Johnson chooses only venison, a familiar English dish he proclaims as "good enough for an alderman," while his wife answers, "I am going to try some of Mary's pumpkin" (Child, *Hobomok* 97-98). Lady Arabella bravely embraces her frontier environment and tastes the "pilgrims' fare," while her husband maintains his comfortable culinary stasis and mindset.

Mary receives a package and letter from Charles in England; he tells of his plans to go to the East Indies for a year and then return to her in Salem. Mary's mother, now on her deathbed, urges Mary's father to approve of the marriage of Mary and Charles. Mr. Conant acquiesces. Mrs. Conant and Lady Arabella, who has also fallen ill, both die within hours of each other. Later, Mary sees a vision in the sky of a sinking vessel. A letter arrives that informs her that Charles's ship sank and that he has drowned. In her grief (and her rebellious anger against her father for driving Charles to return to England), Mary—in a radical reversal of gender roles for 1630—asks Hobomok to marry her. She then runs away from Salem to Plymouth with Hobomok and becomes his wife, thus turning her back on her father and his religion. In turn, Mary's father disowns her, appalled by her willingness to live amongst the non-white, non-Puritan savages.

Over the next three years, Mary and Hobomok live near Plymouth and have a son. Mary learns contentment among the Wampanoag people and grows to love her husband, Hobomok. But alas, one night when Hobomok goes into the forest to hunt, he sees Charles, who had not drowned after all, but had been captured during the shipwreck and taken to Africa as a prisoner

for three years. In the tradition of the noble savage, Hobomok tells Charles that he knows that Mary loved Charles first, and he implores Charles, “Ask Mary to pray for me—that when I die, I may go to the Englishman’s God, where I may hunt beaver with little Hobomok, and count my beavers for Mary” (140). Then, after visiting Governor Winslow to document his divorce from Mary and then quietly leaving a gift of deer and small game for his son and Mary, Hobomok, “with a bursting heart again murmured his farewell and blessing, and forever passed away from New England” (141). Mary and Charles marry and raise Little Hobomok, who graduates from “that infant university” Harvard, and then he continues his studies in England, where “by degrees his Indian appellation was silently omitted” (150).

Lydia Moland asserts that in the novel *Hobomok*, Child broke multiple taboos by including “an insubordinate daughter, an indictment of a Puritan patriarch, interracial sex, a mixed-race child, and a kind of divorce” (49). Moland is correct. Furthermore, Child challenges the fledgling American literature norms, too. Contemporary works by authors like Cooper (and Sedgwick, to some degree) portrayed brutal endings for any native peoples who challenged the primacy of the European settlers of America. Instead, Child creates an alternate ending by allowing the Wampanoag warrior, his English wife, and their son all to live—even though Hobomok must leave his home, and the young Charles Hobomok Conant moves abroad (much like Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter*) and gradually loses his “Indian appellation.” Although Child’s conclusion is not progressive by modern standards, her gentler ending boldly invites her readers to consider an idea of assimilation instead of annihilation of Native Americans in the 1820s. The reading public did not care for Child’s message then, and our American literature canon provides no shelf space for Child now. However, Cooper is still on that shelf, front and center, despite his inclusion of tragic endings for nearly all of his major Native American characters. During the era

of a continued push for Westward Expansion and the Indian Removal Act of 1830, most readers and critics demanded that the literature of the era create no physical space for Native Americans in spaces needed for the burgeoning population of American citizens.

FOOD AND PLOT

Child utilizes food throughout her 1824 novel. Food or foodways are included in each of the twenty chapters of *Hobomok*. As a demonstration of the longevity of early seventeenth-century English and Native American foods including cider, cordials, wine, pumpkin, corn, and venison, recipes for most of these foods are provided in Child's 1829 *The American Frugal Housewife*.²⁹ Each of these and other food references in *Hobomok* serve a purpose, some as cultural indicators of gender, class, or race roles and some as setting guideposts or direct plot devices.

The plot of *Hobomok* breaks with the pattern of many novels from the early national period of literature. The earliest popular novels in America are often called 'seduction novels' in which the female protagonists are tricked, seduced, forced into some type of fall from grace, and usually, by the end of the story, they die—a lesson to any readers who choose to follow that same path. Some examples are *The Power of Sympathy* (1789) by William Hill Brown, and *Charlotte Temple* (1794) by Susanna Rowson. Nina Baym, in her groundbreaking work, *Woman's Fiction*, describes a shift away from these seduction novels. For this shift, she credits the reading public and women authors who "theorized on fiction, like Lydia Maria Child in *The Mother's Book* (1831), [who] looked for novels that would expand and strengthen the young

²⁹ Although Child does not list recipes for venison in *The American Frugal Housewife* (perhaps due to venison being considered more middle- or upper-class food by the 1830s in Boston), Hale includes at least eight recipes for venison in her 1839 *The Good Housekeeper*.

girl's mind" (Baym 52). Baym defines a succeeding genre she calls "woman's fiction" that she claims must have four plot elements: the heroine's home support system must fail, she must be assisted by the kindnesses of a larger community (often other women), for a time she must fend for herself, and finally—she marries of her own free will (Baym 37-40). Does Mary Conant's story arc fit Baym's requirements? Mary's mother dies and her father is harsh (and later disowns her), and she briefly relies on the kindnesses of her friends Sally Oldham and Dame Willett (and Hobomok). Mary fends for herself for only a very short while (days, not months), and in a bold move, she asks Hobomok if he will marry her. Although the plot points are out of order or too fleeting to perfectly fit Baym's requirements, Child does create a plot that helps move the theme of novels away from the seduction novel and toward woman's fiction.

In *Hobomok*, Child employs food as a plot device in several ways. Breakfast, dinner, and supper are often mentioned to help establish a time frame for the action. Seasons are marked by moons, often with food-related names, as in "the sturgeon moon" of August, when Mary accompanies Hobomok on a torchlit deer hunting expedition one night (87). Child sometimes employs a food reference to end a scene or chapter. For example, when Mary and her friend, Sally Oldham, have (for several pages) been discussing potential suitors, Child ends the chapter abruptly with Sally excusing herself: "But I can't stop to say no more, for the cows ain't milked yet" and off she runs (Child, *Hobomok* 21). Conversations or inner thoughts are often cut short due to required domestic duties, conveniently allowing the plot to move forward to the next point.

FOOD AND SETTING

Especially with a historical novel (such as *Hobomok*), readers are unfamiliar with the often exotic or mystical or primitive setting. Romantic writing of the early national period often describes the purity of vast natural vistas of mountains or forests, much like Child's narrator describes the setting of the forests outside of Naumkeak:

"I looked out upon the surrounding world scenery, and its purity and stillness were a reproach upon my inward warfare. The little cleared spot upon which I was placed, was everywhere surrounded by dark forests, through which the distant water was here and there gleaming . . . and the trees stood forth in all the beauty of that month which the Indians call the 'moon of flowers.'" (12)

While the natural settings of *Hobomok* are these vast forests, rocky seacoasts, and broad harbors of Salem and Plymouth, the private settings are the characters' homes and wigwams, which necessarily depict items and details of home life including food.

Mark McWilliams contends that authors include details of quotidian life intentionally: "Food, like other details of daily life, plays a key role in the re-creation of settings removed by time or distance from readers" (34). By including specific foods and who shared them, Child adds verisimilitude to her settings of time and place. For example, when Hobomok arrives in Salem from Plymouth (sometime during 1629), bearing gifts from the Englishmen and a message from Massasoit to Sagamore John, the tension between Hobomok and an often-agitated Corbitant is diffused by a meal. As Sagamore John's "young sons sat [around the fire] devouring the words of their father . . . his guests seemed to have forgotten their own hatred . . . His squaw in the mean time [*sic*], had taken her coarse, roasted [corn] cakes from the fire, and placed some cold venison before her visitors, and pointed to it with a look of pride" (32). This intimate detail

of storytelling over a shared meal not only lends realism to the setting, but it also aids in building the characterization of two historical figures—Hobomok and Corbitant—who, although they were at odds, found peace during a meal around a fire. Scenes such as this one challenged the reading public of the early national period to practice their good republican values by considering that perhaps not all Native Americans were savages, as was often depicted in numerous captivity narratives, such as the tale of the ransomed Mary Rowlandson or the vengeful Hannah Duston.³⁰ In those captivity narratives and in Child's historical novel *Hobomok*, food helps establish a convincing setting of time and place.

FOOD AND GENDER ROLES

When Child wrote *Hobomok* she had not yet written her cookbook *The American Frugal Housewife* (1829). However, as a young woman of the 1820s, she knew how to cook. She had also been raised as the daughter of a Medford baker, spent time on the Maine frontier assisting

³⁰ Captivity narratives like those of Mary Rowlandson and Hannah Duston (as recorded by Cotton Mather) were publicized as a partial justification for the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and its aftermath, The Trail of Tears.

Child's *Hobomok* begins in 1629, during the peace pact between the Plymouth colonists and the Wampanoag. Fifty years later, Metacom (or King Philip), after disputes resulting in the killing of three of his men, launched King Philip's War (1675-1676).

In her captivity narrative from King Philip's War, Rowlandson recounts the savagery of the 1676 sunrise attack by the Wampanoag tribe, as they shot, slaughtered, and scalped many people in her Lancaster, Massachusetts settlement including most of her family (3-10). During her eleven weeks of hunger and series of forced "removes" through wintry New England, Rowlandson first spurned the Wampanoag food, referring to it as "their filthy trash" (Rowlandson 33). However, by the third week of captivity, her hunger compelled her to begin consuming stewed horse hooves, nearly raw horse liver, corn cake fried in bear grease, and even a cooked unborn fawn—which she describes as "so young and tender, that one might eat the bones as well as the flesh, and yet I thought it very good" (Rowlandson 33, 39, 44, 71). These actions and foods are a stark contrast to Hobomok's peaceful assistance, and the squaw's hospitable "coarse cakes" and "cold venison" in *Hobomok*.

Duston's story is recorded by Cotton Mather in his *Magnalia Christi Americana*. Mather reports that in March of 1697, Duston, her newborn daughter (who would soon have her brains "dashed out . . . against a tree" by the Abenaki), and Duston's nurse were taken as captives after the Abenaki raid on their village of Haverhill, Massachusetts (Mather VII:90). After about six weeks of captivity, Duston and another captive (a fourteen-year-old boy), "furnishing themselves with hatchets for the purpose . . . struck home such blows upon the heads of their sleeping [Abenaki] oppressors, that ere they could any of them struggle...they fell down dead" (Mather VII:91). Thus, Duston's captivity story ends in revenge. In Mather's account, the Abenaki are depicted as cruel savages, while in *Hobomok*, Child's titular character is depicted as a self-sacrificing noble savage.

her sister in cooking, and lived with her brother in Watertown, where she would prepare dinner (and listen to his acquaintances from Harvard—including Ralph Waldo Emerson—discuss politics, theology, Kant, or the new ideas of the day) (Moland 46). Child did not always relish these kitchen duties. In a letter to her sister in Maine, Child once complained, “We have just bid good night to a couple of the *moralizing* sons of Harvard, and for whom, dreadful to relate, we have had to prepare dinner, and perform the honours of the table” (qtd. in Moland 46). Even if she did not always enjoy “the honours of the table,” she understood the performative value of sharing a meal. So, when it came time to try her hand at a novel in 1824, it is not surprising that food is peppered throughout each of the twenty chapters.

Hobomok (1824) was written just as the concept of Republican Motherhood was morphing into the ideal of True Womanhood. Around the turn of the nineteenth century, the woman’s role in American society began to shift. America experienced its first Industrial Revolution, and a new working class began to emerge near cities. By 1820, 20% of Americans lived in cities, and that percentage would only continue to increase (McWilliams 4). A family no longer grew all their food or wove their own cloth in a self-contained agrarian economy, like that of the original colonial settlers. Instead, urban Americans became consumers. To be able to buy these goods, the husband/father would go to work, usually in a factory, and the wife/mother would stay home in her domestic sphere. With men working long hours outside the home, women—in addition to cooking, cleaning, washing, mending, child-bearing, and child-rearing—became the moral guardians of the home, the bearers of the torch of American values. Barbara Welter, in her ground-breaking article “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860” characterizes a woman of this era as “the hostage in the home” and claims that this culture spread because it was widely “presented by the women’s magazines, gift annuals and religious literature of the

19th century” (151). In a mystifying turn, the home also became the woman’s sphere of power. Welter defines the tenets of True Womanhood as follows:

The attributes of true womanhood, by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, her neighbors and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity. Put them all together and they spelled mother, daughter, sister, wife—woman. Without them, no matter whether there was fame, achievement or wealth, all was ashes. With them she was promised happiness and power. (152)

Welter’s “four cardinal virtues” serve as a useful framework for the discussion of gender roles in *Hobomok*. Child—through the character of Mary Conant—challenges these four ideals of True Womanhood, frequently employing food as an aid or symbol in doing so.

Piety was considered to be a woman’s utmost goal, her innate gift from God. One school textbook in Boston, *The Young Ladies Class Book: A Selection of Lessons for Reading in Prose and Verse* (1831), claimed that “[t]his ‘peculiar susceptibility’ to religion was given her for a reason: ‘the vestal flame of piety, lighted up by Heaven in the breast of woman’ would throw its beams into the naughty world of men” (qtd. in Welter 152). In *Hobomok*, Mary Conant wants no part of that responsibility. When her father, a staunch Calvinist, coerces her further toward his religion, she answers by fleeing into the forest to perform a pagan circle ceremony to summon a husband as an act of rebellion against her father and his devotion to the predestined life. Deep in the forest night, Mary involves no literal food in her witchery, but she brings a knife (no doubt from her kitchen), and the first suitor she summons is Hobomok, who is out tracking deer for food. Without Mary’s kitchen tool or Hobomok’s need to track food, the circle ceremony—a pagan ritual that flies in the face of piety—would not have happened.

In other plentiful and pious religious discourses in *Hobomok*, food is used in biblical references such as “the flesh pots of Egypt,” or the longing to sit under “the vine and fig tree,” or the Puritans as “laborers in his [God’s] vineyard” (Child, *Hobomok* 9, 45, 66). Food as religious metaphor is also used to describe the animosity between the Puritans and the Anglican church. When Charles Brown, Mary’s Episcopalian suitor, privately reads the Anglican book of common prayer to townspeople, the Puritans say he is “encouraging his people to chew the ratsbane of Satan” (66). These charges lead to Charles being summarily shipped back to England, where he will no longer enflame the piety of the Salem Puritans.

The second “cardinal virtue,” purity, held that women should remain sexually pure, angelic, and virginal until they were married. Furthermore, it was the True Woman’s duty to prevent men (who were naturally less pure) from falling prey to their own fleshly weaknesses. In *The Mother’s Book* (1831), Child boldly wrote about the unnecessary secrecy shrouding the act of sex. She advised mothers to educate their daughters about the mystery of purity:

Judging by my own observation, I believe it to be the greatest evil now existing in education. I mean the want of confidence between mothers and daughters on delicate subjects. . . . a well-educated girl of twelve years old, would be perfectly satisfied with a frank, rational explanation from a mother. It would set her mind at rest upon the subject; and instinctive modesty would prevent her recurring to it unnecessarily.” (Child, *The Mother’s Book* 150)

Here, even Child promotes the idea of inherent purity, or “instinctive modesty.” However, in *Hobomok* she subtly challenges the Christian idea of purity. Mary, with her dark hair and eyes (a trope of sensuality, as opposed to virginal blonde hair and blue eyes), exudes a type of freedom in the wild landscape of New England by running away from her father’s home and choosing to

marry Hobomok. Although she is married to Hobomok nearly two years *before* their interracial sex results in a child, their pagan marriage ceremony—including a witch-hazel wand, peace pipes, and the pledge (from Hobomok) to hunt deer and the promise (from Mary) to cook it well—was far from a Puritan-approved wedding. Therefore, any marital relations could not be considered sanctioned by the church.³¹

Welter's third virtue of True Womanhood is submissiveness, a sense of a perpetual childlike state, subservient to fathers, husbands, and brothers. Throughout *Hobomok*, Mary challenges Puritan patriarchy by submitting to neither her father's religion nor his wishes. For example, when Charles comes to try and make peace with Mr. Conant after a heated religious argument, Mr. Conant shows Charles the door, exclaiming, "Out with you, and your damnable doctrines, you hypocritical son of a strange woman" (Child, *Hobomok* 77). These caustic words send a weeping Mary to her bed, "[b]ut the poor may not long indulge their grief. Her father's supper must be prepared, and her mother's wants must not be neglected" (77). Mary does summon the serenity to return to the kitchen, but in an act of culinary defiance, "the cake was burned,—and the milk was not sweet,—and there had been *too much fire* to prepare their little repast" (77; emphasis added). This *fire* burned both in the hearth and in Mary's heart. Her hatred for her imperious father manifests itself in the ruined supper, as yet another challenge to his patriarchal authority.

The final virtue of nineteenth-century True Womanhood is domesticity. Welter explains that domesticity expected women "to dispense comfort and cheer" through the usual labors of cooking cleaning, washing, mending, caring for children, and nursing the sick, but it also

³¹ Child, in "History of the Condition of Women," documents the manner of an actual Indian marriage, which has the same elements of a wand, pledges to hunt and cook venison, and other elements of Hobomok and Mary's fictional ceremony (172).

expected leisure time (if there was any) to be spent doing the “morally uplifting tasks” of needlework, painting, music, writing letters, or arranging flowers (163-165). Of course, in the rugged seventeenth-century setting of *Hobomok*, domestic duties focused mostly on the essential tasks for survival, usually performed in an interior space. Although many of Mary’s scenes take place in the interior, domestic space of a cottage or wigwam, much of Mary’s plot takes place in exterior, undomesticated, often wild, spaces. In the first chapter, Mary sneaks to the forest alone at night to perform her summoning circle ceremony, complete with blood she draws from her own arm. When Charles Brown, rebuked by Mary’s father and the Governor, sets sails for England, Mary does not join the sendoff on the shore, but instead runs by herself to an isolated woody hill above the seacoast to wave a last, distant farewell. When Mary hears that Hobomok is going on a torchlit night hunt for deer, she brazenly invites herself to ride along (her father feels compelled to accompany her, of course). Mary’s independence will not allow her to stay indoors and constantly labor by the hearth.

However, Mary practices selective domesticity by cheerfully performing deeds for the people she loves. For example, she prepares Charles a bowl of [hot] chocolate (from the supply ship’s provisions), nurses her mother and Lady Arabella (who both die), gives a healing cordial to Hobomok’s mother (who lives), accepts Hobomok’s continual gifts of deer and game (which she must have cooked for him and others), makes Hobomok a wampum belt (from Quahog clam and whelk shells), and she tenderly feeds her “Indian boy from his little wooden bowl” (47, 33, 84, 86, 141). Meanwhile, especially after her mother’s death, her father’s meals are often burned, left half-finished, or overlooked altogether. Mary builds her own system of domestic agency related to her domestic duties. Perhaps Mary’s resistance to unwanted domestic duties is a reflection of Child’s own experiences, such as when she had to prepare dinner for her brother’s

acquaintances, the “*moralizing* sons of Harvard.” Or perhaps, at the outset of the cult of True Womanhood, Child was challenging the emerging values and weighty expectations of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity for American women.

CONCLUSION

Child’s first novel, *Hobomok*, despite her efforts to promote it, was not a best-selling novel of 1824.³² Scott, Cooper, Irving, and Edgeworth took those 1824 honors (Mott 317). If Child’s purpose in writing *Hobomok* was to encourage more compassion and kinder policies toward Native Americans, that purpose did not succeed, either. Native Americans continued to be criticized and were pushed westward with the Indian Removal Act of 1830. If her aim was to challenge the cult of domesticity, she missed that mark, too. True Womanhood continued to gain strength and representation in American literature, religious tracts, and magazines until the Civil War began.

But Child was made of stronger stuff. Within only two years, she had published *Evenings in New England*, *The Rebels*, and “The Rival Brothers,” started the *Juvenile Miscellany* magazine, opened a school, and met her husband and Revolutionary War hero, General Marquis de Lafayette, to boot (Karcher, *The First Woman* xx). She would go on to publish more than fifty major works including a best seller—her *Boston Courier* columns collected into a two-volume *Letters from New York*—and her popular cookbook, *The American Frugal Housewife* (Baym 53).

³² Lydia Moland records that the initial reviews of *Hobomok* were somewhat negative, characterizing Mary Conant as a “high born and delicate female” who becomes mother to a “semisavage.” In response, Child capitalized on her brother’s Harvard connection to George Ticknor by writing him a letter, persuading him to encourage an additional, kinder critique be published in the *North American Review*. This review praised the historical aspects of *Hobomok*, and concluded that it would “stand the test of repeated readings, and it will obtain them” and book sales improved (qtd. in Moland 51-53).

Her essays and other works promoted the emerging American values of education, equality, frugality, and benevolence. Throughout her career, Child tirelessly and publicly advocated for Native Americans, women, and enslaved people. While she has not traditionally been a part of the established American canon, scholars are striving to reclaim authors and activists like Child, who fought to shape a truly democratic America.

4.2 Class in Food and Fiction: Sarah Josepha Hale's *Northwood* (1827)

Northwood: A Tale of New England (1827) introduced Sarah Josepha Buell Hale to the reading public. Before she became the editor of the taste-making *Godey's Lady's Book*—which helped popularize the works of Poe, Hawthorne, Irving, Longfellow, Sedgwick, Child, Stowe, and others—she was an autodidactic daughter, housewife, and mother in Newport, New Hampshire. After her husband of nine years, lawyer David Hale, died in 1822 following a brief battle against pneumonia, Hale was sponsored by his fellow Masons to try her hand at the millinery craft and then publish a book of poetry (Finley 37–38). Neither venture succeeded. Then, in 1827 she wrote and published (perhaps also with the assistance of the Masons) her first novel, *Northwood: A Tale of New England*, which quickly ran through four printings in America and was reprinted in London (174).

Hale went on to live an extraordinary life.³³ However, most Americans today know her—if they know her at all—as the author of the children's poem “Mary Had a Little Lamb” and perhaps for her advocacy in establishing a national date for Thanksgiving. As an example of how forgotten Hale's fiction is at risk of becoming, The Internet Archive, an extensive non-profit

³³ The scope of this project prevents an in-depth biography of Hale. For the definitive Hale biography, see *The Lady of Godey's: Sarah Josepha Hale* by Ruth E. Finley.

library of millions of books and other media, does not even recognize that *Northwood* (1827) was a two-volume work; only the first volume is archived. However, without her two-volume *Northwood*, Hale may never have been discovered. In 1827, an enterprising publisher was impressed by *Northwood* and offered Hale the opportunity to move to Boston as founding editor of the *Ladies' Magazine* (Finley 39). A decade later that magazine merged with *Godey's Lady's Book*, where Hale used her platform to continue her writing and help bring to fruition the Seaman's Aid Society, Vassar College, completion of Bunker Hill Monument, preservation of Mount Vernon, economic and educational opportunities (including medical school) for women, and the first national Thanksgiving holiday—all while editing, for four decades, the most influential American women's magazine of the nineteenth century (305). It all began with *Northwood*.

PURPOSE

In her own words, Hale offers an often-used apologia of early women writers. She states that the authorship of her 1827 edition of *Northwood* “was not entered upon to win fame, but a support for my little children. *Northwood* was written literally with my baby in my arms—the “youngling of the flock,” whose eyes did not open on the world till his father's were closed in death!” (II:iii). In addition to the welfare of her flock of five now-fatherless children, Hale also wrote with the welfare of her fledgling country in mind. Hale was born in 1788, the same year George Washington was chosen as America's first President. With this providential beginning and her parents' unwavering patriotic influence at home (her father, Captain Gordon Buell, fought in the Revolutionary War), Hale was “a true daughter of the American Revolution [and

fought] for American cultural independence,” as well (Peterson 34). Hale was ever devoted to her family and her young country.

In her 1827 edition of *Northwood*, Hale begins with two epigraphs:

“He who loves not his country, can love nothing”

[*Two Foscari*. [Byron]

“Home is the resort

Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,

Supporting and supported, polished friends

And dear relations mingle into bliss.”

[Thomson.

(Hale I:i)

By intentionally selecting these two epigraphs, Hale points readers toward her themes of patriotism and family in *Northwood*.

Reflecting patriotism and family, Hale devotes three entire chapters of *Northwood* to Thanksgiving, the holiday that she believed could promote national unity among all states, North and South. The first of these chapters is dedicated to the Thanksgiving sermon, as piety, prayer, and church attendance were a necessary ingredient in all early American Thanksgiving celebrations. Even though modern Americans have largely moved away from Thanksgiving as a religious holiday, the ideas of gratitude and abundance remain.³⁴ The next chapter of *Northwood*

³⁴ In the article “Overflowing tables: Changes in the energy intake and the social context of Thanksgiving in the United States,” Diana Thomas et. al assert that since 1621, “the social context of Thanksgiving has evolved from a focus on prayer and celebrated gratitude to a focus on food, football, and retail” (30). Through a scientific approach, using methods of mathematical modeling, nutrition science, history, and machine learning, Thomas et. al demonstrate that although Thanksgiving menus have remained mostly static, the changing social context of Thanksgiving has resulted in “increased energy intake” (calories) and increased annual weight gain since 1941. The

sets the family table with an abundant and scrumptious Thanksgiving meal, combining the values of patriotism and family, as discussed later in this study. The final chapter regarding Thanksgiving day portrays a family wedding that evening, complete with an iced wedding cake “covered with sugar plums of all colors and forms, and tastefully decorated with myrtle and evergreen” (I:131). Of note, both Hale and Child in their cookery books include similar recipes for “Rich Plum or Wedding Cake,” calling for approximately three pounds each of flour, sugar, and butter, mixed with about two dozen eggs (eggs were smaller in the 1830s), dried currants and raisins, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, plus rosewater for temperate Hale, or brandy and wine for Child (Hale, *Good Housekeeper* 100, Child *Frugal Housewife* 62). By including a description of the wedding cake and the Thanksgiving meal in *Northwood*, Hale utilizes food as a culinary marker for the importance of building a family, and therefore facilitating the building of a nation.

Hale’s patriotism takes a multi-faceted—and to modern sensibilities, problematic—view of abolition, showing concern not only for enslaved peoples, but also for their masters, and for the “harmony between the South and the North” (II:iv). Hale releases a second edition, entitled *Northwood; or, Life North and South: Showing the True Character of Both*, in 1852, twenty-five years after the first edition. In her preface to the 1852 edition, Hale claims that she has “consented to its republication at this time” in hopes that it will help diffuse the Christian spirit, “which seeks to do good to all and evil to none” (II:iv). Hale does not mention that her September 1852 republication of *Northwood* follows closely on the heels of Stowe’s release of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in book form in March of 1852. Since Hale’s income was secure at *Godey’s* and financial consideration was not a driving force, Hale biographer Ruth Finley characterizes

researchers assert that Americans should “begin imagining ways in which the social context for the Thanksgiving holiday may be evolved yet again to help improve American health” (31).

the underlying purpose of Hale's 1852 republication as being "aimed at counteracting the inflammatory influence of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'" [sic] (175). To Hale, preservation of the union was paramount. The 1852 edition of her novel included an extra chapter at the end, offering a 'solution to slavery' of educating, Christianizing, and expatriating manumitted enslaved people to Liberia.³⁵ If such an extreme proposal could help soothe national tensions, Hale must have believed it was worth a try. However, the 1852 edition of *Northwood* did not change the course of American history, and the Civil War began in earnest less than a decade later.

PLOT

As promised by the subtitle of the 1852 edition, *Northwood* tells a story of life in the North (Northwood, New Hampshire) and in the South (Charleston, South Carolina). The story follows the actions of protagonist Sidney Romelee as he moves between Northwood and Charleston. Much of *Northwood* focuses on Romelee family farm life in New Hampshire including a homecoming, church sermon, Thanksgiving, weddings of four of their children, and the funeral of Sidney's father. The Southern part of the storyline takes place in Charleston, where Sidney Romelee moves at the age of ten or twelve, when he was adopted by his childless aunt and uncle, who own a plantation. Sidney has a friend, Frankford, who, as an Englishman with many questions, serves as a handy trope when Hale needs to explain culture or class differences to her readers.

After Sidney finishes his education in Charleston, he returns to Northwood for a long-awaited visit. He soon falls in love, first with Zemira, a rich woman secretly married to someone

³⁵ Hale publishes her novel *Liberia; or, Mr. Peyton's Experiments* in 1853. It tells the story of an enslaver (Mr. Peyton) who sends some of his enslaved people to a farm in the South, some to a factory in the North, and some to a town in Canada. Because they are unhappy at all these places, he decides to send them to Liberia.

else, and then with Susan, a poor woman rich in virtue. After a flurry of plot points involving stolen banknotes, sabotaged letters, a sybil reading tea leaves, near death experiences, and the resolution of it all, Sidney and Susan wed and return to manage the debt-ridden plantation left to Sidney by his adoptive parents, his aunt and uncle. The 1827 edition ends there.

However, the 1852 edition adds a rather contrived final chapter describing how Sidney and Susan dutifully feed, clothe, proselytize, and educate their “servants” on the plantation, equipping them to eventually be returned to Africa. For, in Hale’s words, “Liberia has solved the enigma of ages. The mission of American slavery is to Christianize Africa” (Hale 408).³⁶ The 1852 edition ends with those weighty words.

FOOD AND CLASS

In *Northwood*, Hale juxtaposes the virtues (or lack thereof) of the Southern aristocratic class with the virtues of the class of the yeoman farmer in New England. The Southern aristocracy represents the Old World values of those who artificially gained wealth and luxury through the efforts of others, such as through inheritance, or in this case—through enslavement. However, the farmers of New England succeeded through their own efforts and reflected “an ideal agrarianism that combined Jefferson's sense of natural aristocracy with a kind of frontier egalitarianism” (McWilliams 6). Squire Romelee and his New Hampshire family work their own farm, cook and serve their own meals, and exhibit the values of industry, frugality, and simplicity—the values extolled by Child, Hale, and Stowe in their cookery books, as discussed previously.

³⁶ In the 1852 edition, Hale changes the family name to “Romilly” (a more common spelling, perhaps), and Sidney’s wife Susan becomes “Annie” (for unknown reasons).

As a guiding methodology for exploring food and class in Hale's *Northwood*, this project builds on the scholarship of Mark McWilliams, primarily his expanded definition of foodways and the myth of republican simplicity. Foodways is a term used by social scientists to describe the farming, procurement, preparation, and ingestion of food, as well as the cultural meaning encoded by those and other food-related acts. Foodways are invested with different meanings based on culture, geography, religion, historic period, and other factors. McWilliams relies on a further explanation by Roland Barthes that food operates, not merely as a response to a biological need, but as "a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of uses, situations, and behaviors . . . a veritable grammar of foods" (qtd. in McWilliams xvi–xvii). This "grammar of foods" helps a society claim and demonstrate their collective values and helps define social classes.

In the early republic, the citizens of the new United States wanted to create a distinctly American cultural identity including (among other things) politics, religion, fashion, literature, and food. McWilliams poses a question:

What would be the proper food for a New Republic? With old English ways tainted by association with monarchy and new French alternatives already marked by continental decadence, food entered into the larger debate between luxury and virtue. . . . American cuisine was thus born in the anxiety of identity. (McWilliams 1)

The citizens of this new republic would have to decide for themselves what they would eat and how that choice would shape their country.

During colonial times, foodways necessarily reflected the collective values of frugality and simplicity—and survival. In *Mourt's Relation* (1622), Edward Winslow praises "God's good providence" that the Plymouth colonists could aid their survival with corn and beans that

had been abandoned by the “Indians . . . in all about ten bushels, which will serve us sufficiently for seed” (Winslow and Bradford 10). If corn, beans, and (later) squash were all that early settlers could grow, then those were the vegetables they ate, along with deer, fish, fowl, clams, and small game. And they wasted nothing. As the centuries progressed in America, so did the collective values of its citizens; different interpretations of those values began to create social classes. Early American foodways evolved and moved away from the values of frugality and simplicity because farming, trade, transportation, and cities grew. With growth came the opportunity for excess and waste. As food became more varied and available in the burgeoning cities of America, its good citizens struggled with, as Barthes characterizes it, the “veritable grammar of foods” and what those foods reflected about them, their values, and their social class.

In *Northwood*, Hale critiques the lack of virtue found in the Southern aristocratic class and extols the virtues of the class of the ‘Yankee’ yeoman farmer in New England. The virtues of these farmers echo elements of Jacksonian democracy and specifically the sentiments of Jefferson, who famously claimed in a letter to John Jay, that “cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independant [*sic*], the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to it’s [*sic*] liberty” (Jefferson). However, the self-sufficient yeoman farmers (and their families and communities) of the early-mid nineteenth century eventually gained the opportunity for luxuries, afforded them by expanded trade and trade routes. This dichotomy of simplicity versus luxury created a tension for many citizens of the early republic who wanted to exhibit “good” tastes and values. McWilliams labels the response to this tension the “myth of republican simplicity” and defines it as follows:

In food, this myth [of republican simplicity] values the simple, wholesome food of the colonies—baked beans, cornbread in all its forms, roast game and pork, and the New

England boiled dinner. . . . In the early national period, republican simplicity, symbolized in such dishes, served the effort to create a national culture . . . [and] aligned such foods not with physical hunger but with republican virtue. (McWilliams 7)

Like everyone, these yeoman farmers needed to satiate their hunger, but they wanted to do so in a way that reflected their values. Often, their foods took the form of nostalgia in an effort to reflect the value of simplicity.

Hale creates moments of gustatory nostalgia for the protagonist, Sidney Romelee, as he returns to Northwood, New Hampshire. After spending his childhood and young adult life in South Carolina as the adopted son of his aunt and uncle, Sidney makes a long-awaited return to the state of his birth, New Hampshire. As an old driver in an old wagon pulled by an old horse carries Sidney to his home, he passes a pond where he, as a child, had often caught fish and a mountain he had “rambled over . . . in search of blueberries” (Hale I:63). The ability for even a young boy to live off the land (and pond) recalls the summers of simplicity for him. Sidney is traveling with a friend from Charleston, an Englishman (a convenient trope for facilitating cultural explanations of North versus South) named Mr. Frankford. Upon seeing, from afar, one of the Romelee boys capture the doomed Thanksgiving turkey, Frankford also adds to the food imagery, this time with a fitting biblical reference: “Now, I presume, the fatted calf will be killed as well as the turkey. Don’t you think, Romelee, the return of the prodigal son on the eve of a Thanksgiving?” (I:69). Upon this not-so-prodigal son’s surprise arrival at his parents’ home, Sidney is greeted by the familiarity of the red house, pasture, trees, lilac bush, and corn house (I:70).³⁷ After he discloses his identity to the Romelee family (and there is much rejoicing), the

³⁷ Finley observes that Hale, with a journalistic eye, catalogs cultural aspects of the Romelee home: trees (native and foreign), architecture, the eagle decoration above the fireplace, and clothing of his mother and sisters. Finley claims that Hale is nostalgic in these descriptions, since the fictional Romelee home is a near replica of the actual home where Sarah and David Hale lived before he died (Finley 70-72). Hale herself confirms that she is intentionally

family welcomes him with a plenteous evening supper—even though the next day is Thanksgiving and it will, of course, have a cornucopia of its own.³⁸

The welcome supper is served by Sidney's two sisters (Lucy and Sophia) and his mother, who—in an effort of nostalgia—tried “to recollect the savory dishes he used to like, and had prepared them now in the same manner” (Hale I:80). Hale describes the homecoming supper:

The supper consisted of every luxury the season afforded. First came fried chicken, floating in gravy; then broiled lamb, toast and butter, wheat bread, as white as snow, and butter so yellow and sweet, that it drew encomiums from the Englishman, till Mrs. Romelee colored with pleasure while she told him she made it herself. Two or three kinds of pies, all excellent, as many of cake, with pickles and preserves, custards and cheese, and cranberry sauce—the last particularly for Sidney—furnished forth the feast. The best of young hyson [tea], with cream and loaf sugar, was dispensed around by the fair hand of Sophia.” (Hale I:80-81)

This description of a savory meal in literature is similar to others of the same era, such as Washington Irving's 1820 appetizing description of “the ample charms of a genuine Dutch country tea-table” featuring the “sweet cakes and short cakes, ginger-cakes, and honey-cakes . . . apple-pies and peach-pies and pumpkin-pies; besides slices of ham and smoked beef; and moreover . . . broiled shad and roasted chickens . . . with the motherly teapot sending up its

documenting the ways of New Englanders by stating, “The dress of the daughters, which their mother observed was according to their work, it may perhaps be interesting to describe, and then, a century hence, when our country boasts its tens of millions of inhabitants, all ladies and gentlemen, arrayed in satins and sinchaws, muslins and mecklin laces [*sic*], chains of gold and combs of pearl, this unpretending book may be a reference, describing faithfully the age when to be industrious was to be respectable, and to be neatly pressed fashionable” (I:78).

³⁸ Most Americans in the early republic referred to their daily meals as breakfast, dinner, and supper. Hale writes of ‘her’ supper: “But now to my dinner, or supper—perhaps the former would be the appropriate name, but the latter is the most ancient and most used in the country, therefore I have retained it” (I:107).

clouds of vapor from the midst” (Irving 115-17). The charms of the table appeal to the insatiable Ichabod Crane almost more than do the charms of the maiden Katrina Van Tassel, who is also described with gustatory imagery: “a blooming lass of fresh eighteen; plump as a partridge; ripe and melting and rosy-cheeked as one of her father's peaches” (49).³⁹ Irving’s *Sleepy Hollow* is a little nook of New York filled with a class of yeoman farmers, where the old customs remain fixed. It is a place of nostalgia much like Hale’s Northwood, New Hampshire. While both fictional meals display values of abundance yet simplicity, gratefully consumed by a class of New England yeoman farmers, neither Sidney’s welcome supper nor Ichabod’s banquet can compare to the upcoming Thanksgiving feast of the Romelee family. After his homecoming meal, Sidney, apparently looking forward to Thanksgiving, nostalgically inquires, “Do you . . . *still* have your plum pudding and pumpkin pies, *as in former times?*” His father replies, “O yes . . . our supper *will be the same*; but our evening's entertainment will be different” (Hale I:82-83; emphasis added). The “evening’s entertainment” will be the wedding of his brother, Silas, complete with the iced wedding cake described previously.

In these examples of nostalgic vignettes, the images of simplicity (rambling over a mountain to find blueberries, fishing in a pond, or storing corn in a family corn house) compete with images of luxury or excess (the bounteous fried chicken and lamb supper—served the day before a Thanksgiving meal *and* a wedding, or the reference to the “fatted calf” for a prodigal son). Still, Sidney demonstrates republican simplicity by being nostalgic for his childhood stomping grounds and foods, as well as consuming foods that are home-grown—no imports here, except the tea and maybe a few spices. Suzanne Gossett and Barbara Ann Bardes assert that

³⁹ These descriptions and the rest of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* tale are whimsically portrayed in a 1949 short, animated film by The Walt Disney Company (*The Legend Of Sleepy Hollow, Short Film*).

Hale's primary goal in *Northwood* was to help "'restore' the virtues of the past in an age of rapid economic and social change" (15). Sidney's nostalgia celebrates and helps "restore" the virtues of simplicity and family, values important to both the early settlers of the colonies and to the yeoman class of farmers in Sidney's home state, New Hampshire. These values were especially celebrated during the harvest season of Thanksgiving.

THANKSGIVING AND CLASS

Although Hale is often referred to as the "Mother of Thanksgiving," she certainly did not invent Thanksgiving. By 1827 when *Northwood* was published, many settlers in New England had been celebrating thanksgiving (lower case) for a couple of centuries, and people in many parts of the world had been conducting some type of post-harvest celebration since ancient times. However, she *was* responsible for a thirteen-year campaign (1850-1863) including writing letters to every U.S. president and many key government figures, urging them to designate a national day of Thanksgiving. Hale, as the author of multiple cookbooks and the primary writer for *Godey's* monthly cookery department, believed in the restorative power of food and family gatherings. In her 1859 Thanksgiving editorial in *Godey's*, Hale—perhaps sensing the inevitability of Civil War—proposed that if "every state would join in Union Thanksgiving on the 24th of this month [November], would it not be a renewed pledge of love and loyalty to the constitution of the United States which guarantees peace, prosperity, progress and perpetuity to our great Republic?" (qtd. in Finley 199). Her efforts finally paid off. On October 3, 1863, President Lincoln issued the first National Thanksgiving Proclamation, stating " . . . I do, therefore, invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States . . . to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of Thanksgiving and praise to our Beneficent

Father who dwelleth in the heavens” (qtd. in Finley 203). Hale helped establish the national holiday and also set the familiar menu, which is still widely served each November in America.

In her introduction to the reprint of Hale’s *The Good Housekeeper* (1839), Longone claims that Hale’s approach to food provided both economy *and* taste, and this philosophy carries into Hale’s fictional Thanksgiving supper in *Northwood* (ix). Longone then informs readers that “[r]ecipes for each of the [Thanksgiving] dishes named can be found in the historic American cookbook you have in your hand” (x). Many of those dishes (pumpkin pie and turkey, for instance) have not changed significantly since 1827 when Hale first published the lengthy Thanksgiving menu in *Northwood*:⁴⁰

The roasted turkey took precedence on this occasion, being placed at the head of the table; and well did it become its lordly station, sending forth the rich odour of its savoury stuffing, and finely covered with the frost of the basting. At the foot of the board a surloin [*sic*] of beef, flanked on either side by a leg of pork and joint of mutton, seemed placed as a bastion to defend innumerable bowls of gravy and plates of vegetables disposed in that quarter. A goose and pair of ducklings occupied side stations on the table, the middle being graced, as it always is on such occasions, by that rich burgomaster of the provisions, called a chicken pie. This pie, which is wholly formed of the choicest parts of fowls, enriched and seasoned with a profusion of butter and pepper, and covered with an excellent puff paste, is, like the celebrated pumpkin pie, an indispensable part of a good and true Yankee Thanksgiving; the size of the pie usually denoting the gratitude of the

⁴⁰ As an introduction to this Thanksgiving meal description, Hale humorously claims that she “never much relished” descriptions of meals in novels and hopes that she will not be “suspected of imitating those profound and popular writers, who make a good stomach the criterion of good taste; and instead of allowing their characters to display their sentiments in conversation, make them eat to display their appetites. Such authors might, very well dispense with all but two characters in their books — a cook to dress their dinners, and a hero to devour them” (I:106-07).

party who prepares the feast . . . Plates of pickles, preserves, and butter, and all the necessities for increasing the seasoning of the viands to the demand of each palate, filled the interstices on the table, leaving hardly sufficient room for the plates of the company, a wine glass and two tumblers for each, with a slice of wheat bread lying on one of the inverted tumblers. (I:109)

The passage is riddled with military imagery: the “lordly station” of the turkey, the beef sirloin “flanked” by pork and mutton—“bastions” of defense “in that quarter” of the table, and goose and duck as “side stations” for the “burgomaster” chicken pie. Even the diners themselves are referred to as “the company.” Effectively, the military description of the feast connects the patriotic spirit of a nation (necessary for times of war), with the patriotic spirit of a family, the building block of a republic.⁴¹

Military allusions are reflected in the introduction of the novel, too. In *Northwood*, Hale is working to establish a uniquely American novel and class of people. In her introduction, Hale tells her readers that she is not merely copying Scott’s Waverly novels and his hero. Instead, she is writing about uniquely American characters and setting, “. . . having, in short, only a farmer’s

⁴¹ Similar military imagery in depicting foods is used by other early American authors, as well. For example, Herman Melville, in the first part of “The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids” (1855), portrays a lavish banquet of the nine Bachelors in their hidden cloister in downtown London. Melville’s narrator describes the meal:

If I remember right, ox-tail soup inaugurated the affair . . . Neptune’s was the next tribute rendered—turbot coming second; snow-white, flaky, and just gelatinous enough, not too turtleish in its unctuousness. (At this point we refreshed ourselves with a glass of sherry.) After these light skirmishers had vanished, the heavy artillery of the feast marched in, led by that well-known English generalissimo, roast beef. For aids-de-camp we had a saddle of mutton, a fat turkey, a chicken-pie, and endless other savory things; while for avant-couriers came nine silver flagons of humming ale. (Melville)

Melville’s culinary campaign continues with game-fowl, tarts, puddings, cheese and crackers, claret, port, and snuff. The Bachelors’ meal arrives in courses, is facilitated by servants, and offers never-ending wine and spirits, many of which are imported—all indications that the Bachelors are of an aristocratic, imperial class of people. Melville’s elaborate meal presents a stark contrast to the Romelee’s yeoman-class Thanksgiving supper, which does demonstrate abundance but also stays true to the values of republican simplicity by serving home-grown foods, enlisting no servants, serving no spirits (only homemade currant wine, cider, and ginger beer) and sharing the meal with their patriotic family.

son for my hero, and a New England country village for his theatre of action” (Hale I:4). This lionizing of Sidney Romelee and his quiet New Hampshire village supports the idea that Hale was striving to bolster the patriotic spirit and political egalitarianism of her readers, in the countryside as well as in the cities. If Sidney is Hale’s hero of *Northwood*, then food is a hero, too—at least of chapter nine.

No description of a Thanksgiving supper is complete without detailing the desserts and beverages. Hale continues:

A side table was literally loaded with the preparations for the second course, placed there to obviate the necessity of leaving the apartment during the repast. Mr. Romelee keeping no domestic, the family were to wait on themselves, or on each other. There was a huge plumb [*sic*] pudding, custards, and pies of every name and description ever known in Yankee land; yet the pumpkin pie occupied the most distinguished niche. There were also several kinds of rich cake, and a variety of sweetmeats and fruits. On the sideboard was ranged a goodly number of decanters and bottles; the former filled with currant wine and the latter with excellent cider and ginger beer, a beverage Mrs. Romelee prided herself on preparing in perfection. There were no foreign wines or ardent spirits. Squire Romelee being a *consistent* moralist; and while he deprecated the evils an indulgence in their use was bringing on his countrymen, and urged them to correct the pernicious habit, he *practised* what he *preached*. Would that all declaimers against intemperance followed his example. (Hale I:110-11)

Although the quantity of food would signify luxury, the quality of the food is simple in nature. The Romelee family has no servant, and they have grown the foodstuffs with which the meal has been made. They have only the wine, cider, and ginger beer they have produced, and no “foreign

wines or ardent spirits,” as befitted the early temperance movement. As Squire Romelee explains during the patriotic meal, “Excessive luxury and rational liberty were never yet found compatible,” and he reminds his English guest of the dangers of foreign imports, declaring that “had your East India company kept their tea at home, . . . we might, till this day, have been a colony of Great Britain” (Hale I:114-15). Food has power, and something as quotidian as tea (and taxes) can cause a disagreement to boil over into war.

CLASS NORTH AND SOUTH

When Hale republished her novel after twenty-five years, she changed the title from the two-volume *Northwood: A Tale of New England* (1827) to a one-volume *Northwood; or, Life North and South: Showing the True Character of Both* (1852). Much of the novel focuses on Romelee family life—church, home, Thanksgiving, wedding(s), and the funeral of Sidney’s father—in the North (New Hampshire). Near the end of *Northwood*, much of the plot takes place in Charleston, where Sidney returns to manage the debt-ridden plantation left to him by his adoptive parents, his wasteful aunt and his unfortunate uncle. The key change in the one-volume 1852 edition is the addition of a final chapter that details Sidney’s plans to manumit his enslaved people and send them to Liberia.

As previously noted, Sidney was adopted by his childless aunt and uncle in Charleston when he was a boy of ten or twelve years old. Sidney’s aunt, Lydia Romelee Brainard, who serves as “a negative example of womanhood, . . . is, in general, rather ignorant . . . [and once] in the South she is startled to find that she is surrounded by black slaves” (Gossett and Bardes 18). Mrs. Brainard does not adhere to the tenets of republican simplicity and instead is interested only

in new carpets and fashionable dresses.⁴² Mr. Brainard laments his oversight that “before taking her ‘for better for worse,’ he did not ascertain whether she had *taste*, and how far it was in unison with his own!” (I:22; emphasis added). Hale uses gustatory imagery in describing Mrs.

Brainard’s fear. Mrs. Brainard candidly recalls her arrival to the Charleston plantation:

. . . when we entered the hall, there stood a row of blacks, laughing till *their mouths were stretched from ear to ear*, to welcome us. They all crowded round my husband, and I was so frightened thinking some of them *might have knives in their hands* to . . . kill us, that I could not help shrieking as loud as I could. (I:26; emphasis added)

In one of the dozens of letters in *Northwood*, these words are written by Mrs. Brainard in Charleston to her mother in New Hampshire. By including the imagery of a riotous crowd of wide mouths with knives, Mrs. Brainard indicates her fear of being consumed by the South, a place and people foreign to her.⁴³ Due to her lamentable lack of taste, Mrs. Brainard is unfit for high class society as the wife of a wealthy plantation owner in Charleston. According to her husband, she is equally unfit for working class life in a kitchen, where the ideals of republican simplicity can usually be found. In a letter, Mrs. Brainard writes, “I often tell my husband I would do my work alone, but he laughs, and says, ‘What a ridiculous thing it would be to see you in the kitchen.’ And besides, he says, no white person will live long if they attempt to labor in this warm climate. —What to do I know not, but I am determined to get the black creatures away” (I:27). Mrs. Brainard can find no place in Charleston or its social classes, and her

⁴² In the letter to her mother, Mrs. Brainard callously transitions from the issue of race to the purchase of a new carpet: “But they [the enslaved people] are a stupid, ungrateful race, and I detest them perfectly. I have a new carpet for my parlor . . .” (Hale I:27).

⁴³ This imagery is racially reversed from what Tompkins outlines in her *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the Nineteenth Century*. The scholarship of Tompkins will be explored in the *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* section of this project.

determination to “get the black creatures away” foreshadows the proposal of Liberia at the end of the novel.

Luxury and conspicuous consumption operate as identifiers of class and virtue of characters from the South. At one point, when Sidney is lamenting that he has not earned the affections of his first love, Zemira, he wonders if things would have turned out differently if he had “remained in New Hampshire and won my way from the plow to the honors of a college . . . but *luxury* has undone me (II:6-7; emphasis added). This luxury of the South is afforded to Sidney only because his “servants” (as enslaved people are called in *Northwood*) are the ones doing the exploitative work. Hale viewed the luxury and inequality of the South as a threat to what the North had already worked hard to achieve (Gossett and Bardes 18). Her questionable ‘solution’ to slavery appears in the final chapter, which was added to the 1852 edition.

By the end of the novel, Sidney and his bride are managing his plantation in Charleston. There is no mention of specific foods, but Sidney feels the duty of providing for the “servants” under his care:

I have a household, including the plantation hands, of *one hundred and forty-nine servants*;--more than a third of these are under fourteen years of age. This great family is to be fed, clothed, and instructed. The latter duty will, I fear, follow chiefly on my wife. I am not fitted for the task; and it has been sadly neglected. (Hale 392).

No mention is made of “slaves.” Instead, the domestic imagery of “household . . . hands . . . servants . . . [and] great family” contributes to the problematic ‘myth of the happy slave,’ which will be discussed in this study’s section on *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. After Sidney carries out his ‘white man’s burden’ of feeding, clothing, and instructing (read “Christianizing”) his “servants,”

he plans to dutifully return his “servants” to Liberia, where they—in turn—could carry out the mission, “to Christianize Africa” (Hale 408).

CONCLUSION

Throughout *Northwood*, the class of the yeoman farmer (as exemplified by Squire Romelee and his family) epitomizes republican simplicity. The ideal republican virtues of industry, frugality, and simplicity are displayed repeatedly by the Romelee family in New Hampshire through their dialogue, actions, clothing, and—for purposes of this study—their choice of food and foodways. They utilize their “grammar of foods” (as Barthes labels it) to establish and reflect their chosen cultural values. The Romelees grow and prepare their own food (even Mrs. Romelee’s ginger beer) and eat abundantly but simply, as good citizens should. Hale paints the aristocracy of the South in a less positive light, obviously due to plantation owners’ dependence on slavery, but also due to their idleness, wastefulness, and luxury—the inverse values of McWilliam’s republican simplicity.

Although *Northwood* never made it into the American literature canon, perhaps rightfully so, the novel still deserves recognition by scholars. Without it, Hale may have gone unnoticed by Godey, and the *Godey’s Lady’s Magazine* may not have exerted the same cultural influence as it did under Hale’s editorship for four decades. Americans can also thank Hale for campaigning for a national Thanksgiving holiday, and for memorializing in the pages of *Northwood* the Yankee Thanksgiving supper—a version of which still appears on the November tables of many citizens across America to this day.

4.3 Race in Food and Fiction: Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)

Up to this point, this study has explored the role of food and literature as a shaper of American identity. It has analyzed how authors, who published both cookbooks *and* novels, used food to challenge the cult-of-domesticity gender roles in Child's *Hobomok*, and to extol the natural aristocracy of the class of the yeoman farmer in Hale's *Northwood*. While examples of the power of food in gender, class, and race are present and overlap in all three novels in this project, the novel that most directly addresses food and the concept of race is—unsurprisingly—Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

As Elizabeth Ammons matter-of-factly states, “*Uncle Tom's Cabin* is controversial and always has been” (ix). Southerners argued it did not tell the truth about slavery, and Northerners criticized its support of African American emigration to Liberia. It was first published serially in 1851 in the antislavery newspaper *The National Era*, and then as a two-volume book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly*, in 1852. It outsold all other books (except the Bible) during the nineteenth century,⁴⁴ and as the story goes, it even spurred President Lincoln to greet Stowe at the White House in 1862 with the words, “So you are the little woman who started this great war” (Ammons ix). The scope of this study prevents a full analysis of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which has been examined by numerous expert scholars.⁴⁵ Instead, this project will focus on Stowe's purpose in writing *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the role food and eating play in characterizing race in the formation of the early American identity.

⁴⁴ In *Golden Multitudes*, Luther Mott calculates that *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, “this Iliad of the Blacks,” with over 40 international translations, sold at least six and a half million copies worldwide between 1852 and 1947. Mott challenges readers, “. . . if you wish to know why millions once read it, go and hunt it out of the shelves, and, putting aside all modern sophistication, read it for yourself. And do not be surprised if, like Congressman Greeley [who cried as he read it on a train], you should drop a few tears on its pages” (Mott 118-19).

⁴⁵ *Uncle Tom's Cabin* has received critical analysis from a host of scholars including Elizabeth Ammons, Eric J. Sundquist, Susan Belasco, David S. Reynolds, Jane Tompkins, and Kyla Wazana Tompkins (whose analysis provides the framework for this project's discussion).

PURPOSE

When the Fugitive Slave Law passed in 1850, Stowe was outraged. From 1832-1850, Stowe had lived in Cincinnati, met fugitive slaves who had crossed the Ohio River from Kentucky along the Underground Railroad, employed some of them as washwomen, and enjoyed “spending time in the kitchen with servants like the African-American Zillah” (Reynolds 114). Fugitive slaves and free black people were not a distant concept to her; they were real. She knew their stories, too. Biographer Joan Hedrick points out, “It is well known that for her plot Stowe drew on the narratives of escaped slaves, particularly those of Josiah Henson and Henry Bibb, both of whose adventures took them to Cincinnati” (211).⁴⁶

Racial injustice was not the only driving force for Stowe. She was born in 1811 to Roxana Foote Beecher and the famous preacher Lyman Beecher in a home of future preachers and activists, a “family of social crusaders” (Reynolds 6) (see figure 7). Stowe learned early on



Lyman Beecher family c. 1859
Standing from the left: Thomas, William, Edward, Charles, Henry.
Seated from the left: Isabella, Catharine, Lyman, Mary, Harriet.
Superimposed in the foreground: James (left) and George (right).

Figure 7 The Lyman Beecher Family, 1859
 (Source: *Mightier Than the Sword: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Battle for America* (Reynolds 4))

⁴⁶ Instead of the term “slave narrative,” Toni Cade Bambara posits that a more fitting term is “freedom narrative” (Hedrick 211).

to carry a heavy burden for those who were not Christians including enslaved people *and* their enslavers. That evangelical zeal permeates the pages of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In her later years, Stowe supposedly claimed that *she* did not write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but “God wrote it. . . . I merely wrote his dictation” (Mott 1).

Furthermore, Stowe's emotions were raw after the recent loss of her eighteen-month-old son, Charley, in 1849 to cholera.⁴⁷ Stowe wrote that her son's death taught her “what a poor slave mother may feel when her child is torn away from her” (qtd. in Ammons viii). She was also overwhelmed by caring for a newborn and her four other busy children while she prepared a drafty house in Brunswick, Maine, for her husband's arrival at a professorship at Bowdoin College. She soon enlisted the aid of her sister, skilled domestic science expert Catharine Beecher, to help her (Boydston 157). Stowe's sister-in-law, Isabella Beecher, wrote letters to Brunswick from Boston, detailing the public injustices of the Fugitive Slave Law there. It was Isabella who challenged Stowe: “Hattie, if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something that will make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is” (Boydston 156). In her preface to the 1852 edition, Stowe herself states the purpose of her novel:

The object of these sketches is to awaken sympathy and feeling for the African race, as they exist among us; to show their wrongs and sorrows under a system so necessarily cruel and unjust as to defeat and do away the good effects of all that can be attempted for them by their best friends under it. (iv)

⁴⁷ The scope of this project prevents an in-depth biography of Stowe. For book-length biographies, see *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* by Joan D. Hedrick, *Stowe In Her Own Time: A Biographical Chronicle Of Her Life* by Susan Belasco, or *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe - Compiled From Her Letters and Journals* by her son Charles Edward Stowe.

It would be at the noisy, drafty house at Bowdoin, spurred by the literary challenge from her sister-in-law, and supported by the capable domestic assistance of her sister Catharine, that Stowe would pen the pages of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (see figure 8).



Figure 8 Harriet Beecher Stowe House. Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine
(Source: Gina Flowers, June 2022)

PLOT

The plot of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is well-known to literary scholars and perhaps still familiar to some of the general public. Stowe's story begins at the dining room table of the Shelby plantation in Kentucky, home of the famed cook Aunt Chloe and her husband, the faithful Christian, enslaved Uncle Tom. When Tom and the playful house "servant" little Harry are sold to the slave-trader Haley, the storylines diverge north and south. Little Harry's mother, Eliza, plans their escape across the frozen Ohio River, and with the aid of generous Quakers, toward Canada. Uncle Tom is sold downriver, first to the genteel St. Clare plantation, where the

reader meets angelic but sickly little Eva, who shares nuts, oranges, and Bible verses with her new friend, Uncle Tom.

Tom is then sold to the violent Legree in New Orleans, where Tom convinces Cassy to flee instead of killing her abusive master, Legree. After undeserved beatings, Tom forgives Legree and anyone who has wronged him. He then dies a Christian death. Young Master Shelby (who had gone to New Orleans to rescue Tom) returns to Kentucky but can present to Aunt Chloe only the story of Uncle Tom's noble death. In the end, young Master Shelby manumits his slaves in Kentucky. Eliza, her husband George, and their son, little Harry, make it safely to Canada—then France—then Liberia. Stowe ends her novel with a chapter of “Concluding Remarks,” in which she supports the veracity of her characters.⁴⁸ Stowe then sermonizes, ending with a fiery oven reference to the judgment day for all evildoers: “For that day shall burn as an oven: and he shall appear as a swift witness against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger in his right; and he shall break in pieces the oppressor” (391).

FOOD AND RACE in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

As a framework for approaching the generous spread of food references in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, this study relies on a classification established by Kyla Wazana Tompkins. In *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century*, Tompkins explores what she terms “critical eating studies”—not merely food studies—because as she explains, the field should look “beyond food itself to consider practices and representations of ingestion and edibility, including

⁴⁸ Stowe will go on to publish a book-length support of the authenticity of her characters in *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin: Presenting the Original Facts and Documents Upon which the Story is Founded. Together with Corroborative Statements Verifying the Truth of the Work* published the following year, in 1853.

literary, dietetic, and visual texts in which objects, people, and political events are metaphorically and metonymically figured through the symbolic process of eating” (2).

Tompkins posits that in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, five interconnected “representational strands create the complex of food, orality, and African American bodies: the literary function of the kitchen . . . representation of African Americans as food themselves . . . the figure of the cook as a threat of domestic disruption . . . connection between kitchens, food, and vernacular speech . . . and excremental symbolism of slavery, the South, and death (expulsion from the body politic)” (103-104).⁴⁹ The text of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is rich with examples that reflect these five strands.

The first representational strand Tompkins highlights is the “literary function of the kitchen” (103). Setting, plot devices, and characterization are all enriched through the function of the kitchen and food in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. The novel begins in the civilized setting of the dining room of Arthur Shelby:

Late in the afternoon of a chilly day in February, two gentlemen were sitting alone over their wine, in a well-furnished dining parlour, in the town of P , in Kentucky. There were no servants present, and the gentlemen, with chairs closely approaching, seemed to be discussing some subject with great earnestness. (Stowe 1)⁵⁰

The subject of this earnest discussion, as the reader soon learns, is the sale of Uncle Tom and little Harry, which sets in motion the two plot lines that diverge north and south. It all begins at the setting of a dining room table. In each geographical setting of the novel, the kitchens (discussed at length later) set the literary tone for the action of the plot. The Quaker kitchen in

⁴⁹ Kyla Wazana Tompkins, professor of English and Gender and Women’s Studies, researches American literature, politics, foodways, queer studies, and disability studies, among other passions. She won a James Beard Award in June 2023 for her essay “On Boba,” which explores the indigenous and global connections of Boba tea. The essay is published in the *Los Angeles Review of Books Quarterly*. www.pomona.edu/news/2023/06/15-prof-kyla-wazana-tompkins-wins-james-beard-award-essay-boba

⁵⁰ Parenthetical references listing only “Stowe” refer to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

Indiana is cheerful and egalitarian, the Shelby kitchen in Kentucky is generous and organized, the St. Clare kitchen in New Orleans is chaotic and mismanaged, and the Legree kitchen (also in New Orleans) is basically non-existent, consumed by the decay and waste of Legree's physical and mental state.

The kitchen and its products also serve the literary function of plot devices. Several plot points transition or chapters end with a call to tea or dinner. When Tom and a guilt-laden St. Clare are reading the bible passage on "Inasmuch as ye did it not . . . to my brethren [did not feed and clothe people in need], ye did it not to me," the scene ends and "Tom had to remind him [St. Clare] twice that the tea-bell had rung, before he could get his attention" (269). Another example of how food advances the plot is when Tom, forced onto the boat downriver toward New Orleans, befriends the angelic Evangeline St. Clare (little Eva) by producing from his pockets folk art he had carved from food items, "cunning little baskets out of cherry-stones . . . [and] grotesque faces on hickory-nuts," that charm Eva and initiate her request that her father buy Tom—who further ensures his purchase by saving little Eva from drowning (125). Multiple conversations, plans, and debates also occur at the table for most characters, as life—both fictional and real—is often driven by kitchen table talks.

If Brillat-Savarin was right when he wrote, "Tell me what kind of food you eat, and I will tell you what kind of man you are," then what characters eat or consume should indicate their nature (3). In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, food serves the literary function of characterization—both good and bad—and excess is bad, particularly when it comes to consuming alcohol. For example, both of the "good" enslavers, Shelby and St. Augustine, are seldom depicted drinking wine or brandy, but as an indicator of their good nature (and high social class) they are seen "thoughtfully peeling an orange" and sharing it, or they are described as "never in a hurry about

anything” including supper (5, 137). On the other hand, cruel Legree, despite his efforts to control his drinking, not only consumes frequent glasses of wine, beer, brandy, and rum himself, but he also rashly bribes, forces, or drives others to drink, as well. Legree rewards the slaves who join the hunt for escaped Cassy and Emmeline by “serving brandy” to make the “hunt as much of a holiday as possible” (Stowe 357). After Legree orders his “drivers,” Sambo and Quimbo, to administer the soon-to-be-fatal beating of Tom, Legree summons them both to his sitting-room to perform “one of their hell dances,” forcing them to drink whiskey until “Legree and both the drivers, in a state of furious intoxication, were singing, whooping, upsetting chairs, and making all manner of ludicrous and horrid grimaces at each other” (325).⁵¹ Through his extended abusive treatment of Cassy, Legree drives her to a brandy addiction. As Cassy tells young Emmeline, “I hated it [brandy], too; and now I can't live without it. One must have something; things don't look so dreadful when you take that” (327). Of course, pious and steadfast Tom, with behavior that would exceed the expectations of the temperance movement, does not allow a drop of alcohol to touch his tongue. Furthermore, Tom pleads for old Prue to avoid drinking: “I wish I could persuade you to leave off drinking. Don't you know it will be the ruin of ye, body and soul?” (185). In the end, Prue does die of alcoholism, spurred by grief over her lost baby. Tom, however, is the ideal of a good Christian—slave or free, male or female—and the food and beverage he chooses to consume (or refrain from) represent his virtuous nature.

Foods also convey personality traits, such as social status, generosity, or weakness. Several times in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, oranges (or orange blossoms or trees) are an indicator of wealth and high social status. In the opening scene, wealthy Haley flings a quarter of his orange to the floor for little dancing Harry; when Eliza marries George, her mistress Mrs. Shelby adorns

⁵¹ This scene is an adult (and darker) equivalent of little Harry's “Jim Crow” performance, requested by Shelby and Haley in the opening scene of the novel.

Eliza's hair with orange blossoms; as little Eva becomes ill, Tom carries her on a pillow and walks "with her under the orange trees" in the garden; and troubled Cassy tells Tom of her luxurious childhood, when she "used to play hide-and-go-seek, under the orange-trees, with my brothers and sisters" (3, 11, 251, 314). In addition to the generosity of Chloe's feasts and Rachel Halliday's Quaker kitchen, non-cooks show generosity with foods, too. On the boat to New Orleans, little Eva—like a visiting angel—would go to the enslaved men in chains, appearing "suddenly among them, with her hands full of candy, nuts, and oranges, which she would distribute joyfully to them, and then be gone again" (125). Later, when Tom was sent to the market, "the choicest peach or orange was slipped into his pocket to give to her [Eva] when he came back" (222).

The second "representational strand" that Tompkins discusses is "the representation of African Americans as food themselves" (103). One method the human brain uses to decode a foreign or exotic object is to make it analogous to something familiar, something safe. In the antebellum period, rethinking enslaved peoples as a commodity—a dehumanized object that could be used, traded, and sold (consumed)—allowed enslavers to carry out their misguided mission of slavery. Stowe points out the dangers of commodification herself: "So long as the law considers all these human beings, with beating hearts and living affections, only as so many *things* belonging to a master . . . it is impossible to make anything beautiful or desirable in the best-regulated administration of slavery" (7; emphasis added).

The opening scene of the book objectifies both little Harry and his mother Eliza through dehumanization and representation as food themselves. As Mr. Shelby (owner of Uncle Tom) and Mr. Haley (slave-trader) drink their wine at the dining room table and negotiate Shelby's sale of Uncle Tom, both men admire little Harry, the five-year-old quadroon house slave. They

repeatedly call him Jim Crow and direct him to sing and dance. Stowe describes Harry as being “petted” and “patted” as he “scampered” around the dining room, singing “wild, grotesque” songs (3). Not only do the two men consume Harry as entertainment, but this dehumanizing animal imagery is also enforced through the use of food: “‘Hulloa, Jim Crow!’ said Mr. Shelby, whistling and snapping a bunch of raisins towards him, ‘pick that up now!’” (Stowe 3). At this point, as Tompkins argues, there is a “visual parallel that is implied between Harry and the raisins—each small and black, each on the floor” (104). The degrading act of forcing Harry to retrieve food from the floor (and *become* food on the floor) continues as Mr. Haley joins in, shouting “Bravo!” and throwing a quarter of an orange at little Harry, perhaps with the double meaning of “quarter” emphasizing the economic commodification of Harry. As Eliza, Harry’s mother, enters the room, Haley quickly assesses the “fine female article,” just as he had judged a glass of wine moments before, and he appraises Eliza as “Capital . . . first chop!” (Stowe 3-4). With this assessment, Haley economically commodifies Eliza as “capital” and goes on to foodify her as a premium cut of meat, the prime “first chop” of the butcher.

Naturally, the accomplished cook and wife of Uncle Tom, Aunt Chloe—with her proximity to the kitchen—comes to embody food, as well. Chloe, “the first cook of the neighbourhood,” prepares supper at the hearth of her and Tom’s orderly log cabin, which has a “neat garden-patch” and “a large scarlet bignonia and a native multiflora rose” covering the logs on the front of the cabin, and “brilliant Scriptural prints, and a portrait of General Washington” hanging inside the cabin (Stowe 16-18). Here, in “her own snug territories,” Chloe—*after* cooking supper at the Shelby house—prepares bacon, sausages, batter-cakes, and pound cake for her family and thirteen-year-old Master George Shelby, a regular cabin visitor. As she cooks, Chloe herself becomes the food:

A round, black, shining face is hers, so glossy as to suggest the idea that she might have been washed over with white of eggs, like one of her own tea rusks. Her whole plump countenance beams. . . A cook she certainly was, in the very bone and centre of her soul. . . she was always meditating on trussing, stuffing roasting. . . . Her corn-cake, in all its varieties of hoe-cake, dodgers, muffins, and other species too numerous to mention, was a sublime mystery to all less practiced compounders; and she would shake her fat sides with honest pride and merriment, as she would narrate the fruitless efforts that one and another of her compeers had made to attain her elevation. (17)

The images here, as Tompkins suggests, echo the “folkish trope” of the mother hen, who eventually ends up being trussed, stuffed, and roasted, providing a “very real specter of terror that haunts the slave body, a terror that is ultimately enacted in Tom’s death” (110). As the slaves represent or become food themselves, it is one more step toward the enslavers being able to commodify them, consume them, and use them up.

The third strand of African American representation Tompkins proposes for *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is “the figure of the cook as a threat of domestic disruption” (103-104). Although Tompkins offers no specific examples of this strand, many exist in Stowe’s novel. A prime example is when Haley, the slave-trader, wants to quickly pursue runaway Eliza and her son Harry. Mrs. Shelby presses Haley into staying for a “hurried” dinner before his hunt begins, but Aunt Chloe, acting as domestic disrupter, “went on with every operation in an unusually leisurely and circumstantial manner” (Stowe 45). Chloe’s kitchen helpers join in the distraction, dropping the butter and spilling the gravy and water, requiring a trip to the spring for more water.⁵² The labor-intensive replacement gravy eats up the most time:

⁵² Other enslaved people outside of the kitchen sphere also use food (nuts) to serve as disrupters. Andy and Sam are slow to round up the horses for the chase of Eliza, and Sam places a “small, sharp, triangular beech-nut” under the

One luckless wight contrived to upset the gravy; . . . then gravy had to be got up de novo, with due care and formality, Aunt Chloe watching and stirring with dogged precision, answering shortly, to all suggestions of haste, that she ‘warn’t a going to have raw gravy on the table, to help nobody’s catchings.’ (45)

Aunt Chloe’s “dogged precision” in avoiding “raw gravy” has purchased Eliza precious time, allowing just enough of a window for her to jump the ice floes for her iconic escape carrying little Harry across the Ohio River toward freedom.

Another method of domestic disruption is connected directly to gustatory imagery. Tompkins lays out her plan for discussion in *Racial Indigestion*: “We will follow the moments when the ingestion and figuration of blackness . . . *chokes*—in other words when blackness pushes back at its devouring racial other and thus not only rejects white desire but also complicates the mythology of whiteness itself” (92). One cause of this “choking” in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* stems from the “sauciness” of Aunt Chloe in Shelby’s Kentucky, and from Rosa in St. Clare’s New Orleans. Aunt Chloe tells young Master George Shelby that she told his mother (her mistress), to leave the kitchen by saying, “‘Now, don’t you think that the Lord must have meant *me* to make de pie-crust, and you to stay in de parlor?’ Dar! I was jist so sarcy, Mas’r George” (Stowe 21). On a more punishing note, at the St. Clare plantation in New Orleans, Rosa, who is caught trying on one of Mrs. St. Clare’s dresses, recalls that Mrs. St. Clare “slapped my face; and I spoke out before I thought, and was saucy; and she said she’d bring me down” for a whipping (Stowe 277). In sharp contrast to “sauciness,” Tompkins asserts that “[t]raditional femininity . . . depends on sweetness—a subject whose power is palatable” (109). By pushing back, by

saddle of Haley’s horse, so that “[t]he instant Haley touched the saddle, the mettlesome creature bounded from the earth with a sudden spring, that threw his master sprawling, some feet off, on the soft dry turf” (Stowe 37, 39).

resisting, by virtue of being “saucy” and unpalatable instead of “sweet,” Chloe and Rosa, at least temporarily, present a domestic disruption and resist being consumed by their white enslavers.

The next representational strand, which Tompkins refers to as minor, is “the connection between kitchens, food, and vernacular speech” (104). The kitchen, by function, is a communal space of conversation. (Consider modern-day parties and where, despite the best efforts of the host, everyone inevitably ends up standing and talking—the kitchen.) In the opening scene of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, discussed earlier, the crude slave-trader Haley, serves up vernacular speech. The narrator describes Haley’s verbal style: “His conversation was in free and easy defiance of Murray’s Grammar, and was garnished at convenient intervals with various profane expressions, which not even the desire to be graphic in our account shall induce us to transcribe” (Stowe 1). Here, Haley’s words are offered as a dish in poor taste, “garnished” with profanity.

Echoing the Jim Crow minstrel show characteristics of that opening scene with little Harry dancing and singing for Shelby and Haley, Aunt Chloe also uses physical jesting and lively vernacular in her own cabin’s kitchen. Tompkins explains the significance:

The mammy figure—who is inevitably a cook—is often characterized by a sort of succoring benevolence as well as a minstrel show stereotyping that provides the text with its racist levity. The comedy of the mammy lies in what seems to be her empowered place in the household. From the kitchen she seems to speak from power, but a power that is undercut by the broad vernacular of her speech and her natural embrace of manual labor. (107)

Aunt Chloe fits this minstrel show stereotype. Another stereotype is at play here, too. The cabin scene of a Christian husband and cheerful wife and three little children, all slaves, fits the problematized depiction of the “happy slave” (see figure 9). Furthermore, they are all sharing a

meal of batter-cakes with a white man (who just happens to be their owner's son). However, as young Master George Shelby waits for his sausages and batter-cakes in Aunt Chloe's kitchen, their light-hearted jesting turns dark, with Chloe "varying the exercise with playfully slapping and poking Mas'r Georgey, and telling him to go way, and that he was a case — that he was fit to kill her, and that he sartin would kill her, one of these days" (Stowe 20). This concept of the white other consuming or "killing" the black body—even in jest—serves as a transition to our final point.

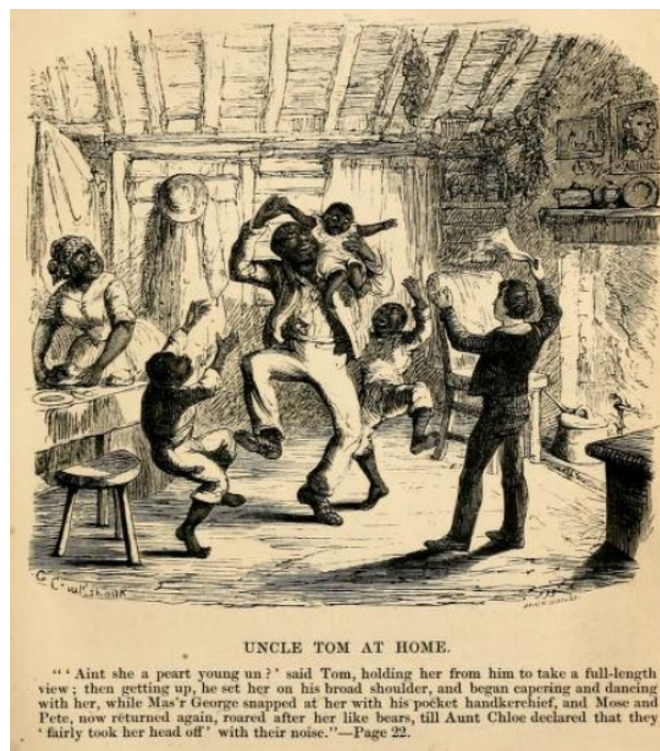


Figure 9 "Uncle Tom at Home" Illustration by George Cruikshank
Source: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, London edition, 1852

The final strand, as Tompkins describes it, "lies in the links between slavery, the South, and death and plays out, according to the digestive logic of the novel, in an excremental symbolism that supports Stowe's commitments to recolonization, what we might read as a form of expulsion from the body politic" (104). Enslaved persons are commodified, consumed, and—

once there is no more value left in them—expelled like waste from the system of slavery through emigration (like Eliza and George) or death (like Tom). This concept of “excremental symbolism” can be applied to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* through multiple facets, as discussed below.

Excremental symbolism through a geographic lens morphs the muddy, winding Mississippi River (and its tributary Ohio River) into a digestive tract. As the geography shifts downriver, to the South and New Orleans, the depiction of slavery and even the kitchens described in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* become progressively darker and more unspeakable. In the northern (Indiana) kitchen of Rachel Halliday, recently escaped Eliza awakes to the cheerful “social clatter” of the knives and forks and the “dreamy murmur of the singing tea kettle” in the perfectly productive Quaker kitchen (Stowe 118-19).⁵³ Slightly south, Aunt Chloe’s kitchen for the Shelby family (Kentucky) is clean, organized, and full of mouthwatering food. Even the leftovers from Chloe’s kitchen (for consumption by favored slaves) showcase “savory morsels of ham, golden blocks of corn-cake, fragments of pie of every conceivable mathematical figure, chicken wings, gizzards, and drumsticks” (64). Much farther south, Dinah in the St. Clare’s kitchen (New Orleans), produces good food and is a “self-taught genius;” however, her kitchen “generally looked as if it had been arranged by a hurricane blowing through it” (176-177). By the time the story reaches its endpoint at Simon Legree’s plantation (below New Orleans), Stowe does not describe a kitchen or directly mention a cook (perhaps Cassy must do the cooking), but the house is in disarray, and the dining room has splashes of wasted wine and beer on the ceiling. Legree must eat something, sometime, but his primary alimentary focus is on consuming alcohol in all its forms including making his own tumbler of rum “punch” from a cracked teapot in his

⁵³ Jane P. Tompkins argues that this chapter entitled “The Quaker Settlement” provides “an idyllic picture, both Utopian and Arcadian, of the form human life would assume if Stowe’s readers were to heed her moral lesson” (572).

disheveled parlor. Tompkins claims that Stowe engages “deeply with cloacal imagery of rot, decay, and death” in her depiction of Legree’s plantation, and Stowe describes it as a place of ‘utter decay . . . littered with broken pails, cobs of corn, and other slovenly remains’ (Tompkins 114). The reader is introduced to Legree’s unspeakably foul place in Chapter XXXII, which Stowe fittingly titles “Dark Places” (296). The more northern kitchens provide food and energy and care; Legree’s southern plantation—with no visible kitchen or cook—produces only waste and destruction and decay in dark places.

From a physiological standpoint, Victorian-era readers would have been all-too-familiar with “digestive logic” and “excremental symbolism” due to outbreaks such as the cholera epidemic in “the hog capital of the world,” Cincinnati, during the late 1840s, during which Stowe’s young son Charley died in 1849 (Tompkins 117, Hedrick 186). Through a financial lens, enslavers like Simon Legree viewed enslaved people as commodities and assets, to be purchased, used up, and disposed of. Legree, fueled once again by brandy, assesses his slave pipeline: “‘I don’t go for savin’ niggers. Use up and buy more’s my way; makes you less trouble, and I’m quite sure it comes cheaper in the end,’ and Simon sipped his glass” (294). After Tom is killed, Legree refuses to accept money from George Shelby for Tom’s body, claiming with misdirected pride, “I don’t sell dead niggers” (366). Once Tom has reached the ultimate “excremental symbolism,” death, he holds no value for Legree and is buried, like waste, in a hole far from his home.

From a political view, Stowe’s solution to the slavery question was, as Tompkins puts it, “expulsion from the body politic,” as seen through the paths of several characters. The trouble-making Topsy is adopted by St. Clare’s Aunt Ophelia and removed to Vermont, where she was, “by her own request, baptized, and became a member of the Christian Church . . . and a missionary to one of the stations in Africa” (Stowe 379). Topsy is educated, civilized,

Christianized, and then expelled by the American body politic to go serve as a missionary in Africa. The reunited Harris family—George, Eliza, son Harry, daughter little Eliza, Cassy (Eliza’s long-lost mother), Madame Emily de Thoux (George’s long-lost and now conveniently very wealthy sister), plus Emmeline—live in Montreal for a while, then George and family live in France for four years while George attends university. After returning briefly to America, George decides, “As a Christian patriot, as a teacher of Christianity, I go to my country—my chosen, my glorious Africa!” (379). George and family then embark for Liberia, a convenient pathway for expelling freed slaves out of the body politic of America.⁵⁴

CONCLUSION

Stowe designed *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as both a sentimental story and an evangelical sermon. These complementary components were intended to build empathy and mobilize white Christian sentiment toward ending slavery in America. Throughout the novel, Stowe utilizes food, eating, and the kitchen as a literary device, a representation of enslaved people as food, a domestic disruption, a connection to vernacular speech, and a symbol of expulsion from the body politic (Tompkins 103-104). Each of these representative strands serves to move American (and global) readers toward a more empathetic and Christian view of enslaved people.

It is no mistake that the first and last chapters of the storyline take place at the same dining room table of Mr. Shelby, in Kentucky. The kitchen, as Jane Tompkins characterizes it, becomes the “center of power” in Stowe’s novel:

⁵⁴ Beverly Peterson maintains that “the pro-colonization idea expressed at the end of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* as one solution to the problem of race-based slavery fits well with Hale’s own proposals in her novels *Northwood* (revised 1852) and *Liberia* (1853). In Hale’s [and Stowe’s] interpretation of God’s plan, slavery came to the United States so that Africans could be educated and Christianized before being returned to Africa as missionaries to teach Christianity, democracy, and capitalism.” (Peterson 33)

By resting her case absolutely, on the saving power of Christian love and on the sanctity of motherhood, and the family, Stowe relocates the center of power in American life, placing it not in the government, nor in the courts of law, nor in the factories, not in the marketplace, but in the kitchen. (575)

This sentiment is carried out in Mr. Shelby's final words to his slaves as he is setting them free. Uncle Tom's log cabin is a place of domesticity—figuratively through the care Chloe and Tom provide, and literally, through the kitchen hearth taking up a large portion of the room. Mr. Shelby, after handing each person a statement of manumission, encourages each to "[t]hink of your freedom, every time you see Uncle Tom's Cabin; and let it be a memorial to put you all in mind to follow in his steps, and be as honest, and faithful, and Christian as he was" (Stowe 383).

Stowe's great hope seems to be that if each American could view the issue of race and slavery with empathy, and if each citizen could be "as honest, and faithful, and Christian" as both little Eva and Uncle Tom, then perhaps America could survive intact and its faithful citizens could create a successful recipe for their new republic.

5 CONCLUSION

As the nineteenth-century father of gastronomy, Brillat-Savarin, believed, “The destiny of nations depends on the manner in which they are fed” (*The Physiology of Taste* 9). During the antebellum period, the burgeoning nation of America was seeking its destiny as a democracy, and its people were trying to decide what “good” citizens should eat—and what they should read. This dissertation has explored the intersectionality of food and fiction, and views on gender, class, and race in the formation of a uniquely American identity from approximately 1820-1860.

Critical case studies of cookery books and novels by three well-known early American tastemakers—Lydia Maria Child, Sarah Josepha Hale, and Harriet Beecher Stowe—illuminated how the rhetorical spaces of the cookbook and the novel helped challenge and shape early American views on gender, class, and race. A rhetorical analysis of the cookery books revealed that all three authors urged American women to build their own agency in the private sphere by maintaining orderly Christian homes, practicing constant industry, and avoiding what Child refers to as “this false and wicked parade” of excessive luxury and unnecessary debt, brought on by the complexities of an emerging middle class of Americans (*AFH* 5).

Through the depiction and meaning of food in their novels, Child in *Hobomok* (1824) challenges the gendered pillars (piety, purity, submission, and domesticity) of what Barbara Welter defines as the cult of True Womanhood; Hale in *Northwood* (1827) promotes the republican simplicity and natural aristocracy of the class of the Yankee yeoman farmer; and Stowe in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) utilizes the domestic praxis of various kitchens, cooks, and foods to differentiate race and define morality, while building a Christian pathos appeal for the end of slavery.

This dissertation adds to the extant scholarship by seeking to heighten awareness of the contributions that Child, Hale, and Stowe—through their cookery books *and* novels—made to the evolution of early American values. As all studies have limitations, this study recognizes the inherent and implicit bias of its female, educated, white author in any discussion of gender, class, and race in America. The project is also limited in scope and would benefit from additional analyses of even more cookery books, domestic texts, essays, novels, and other publications of Child, Hale, Stowe, and other authors of the antebellum period in America.

In our fast-paced, technocentric world, there is hope that the general audience of modern Americans may still recognize the name of the novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and its author, Harriet Beecher Stowe. However, some may know of Lydia Maria Child and Sarah Josepha Hale only indirectly, through their children's poems or songs: Child's "Over the River and Through the Woods" and Hale's "Mary Had a Little Lamb." To shrink the prolific life of either of these extraordinary women down to a single poem or nursery rhyme is an injustice. Child was the first American to fight for social justice for women, Native Americans, and formerly enslaved people.⁵⁵ Hale led *Godey's Lady's Book* to become the most influential lady's magazine of the nineteenth century and convinced President Lincoln to establish Thanksgiving as a national holiday.⁵⁶ Stowe, after the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, continued to tour and lecture nationally and internationally to promote abolition. The onus lies on academic scholars of today

⁵⁵ Child published a barrage of social justice tracts and essays including *An Appeal for the Indians* and *An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans*. Child also edited, wrote the introduction, and helped publish and distribute *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs (1861). Energized by John Brown's 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry, she wrote, "The fact is, I want to shoot the accursed institution [slavery] from all quarters of the globe. I think, from this time till I die, I shall stop firing only long enough to load my guns" (Karcher 117, 147, 416).

⁵⁶ Hale diplomatically used her platform as the four-decade "editress" (her favored term) of *Godey's Lady's Book* to help bring to fruition the Seaman's Aid Society, Vassar [Female] College, completion of the Bunker Hill Monument, preservation of Mount Vernon, economic and missionary and educational opportunities (including medical school) for women (Finley 305).

to ensure that Child, Hale, and Stowe are remembered and recognized for the literary, domestic, educational, religious, and political impact they exerted on the formation of “good” gustatory and aesthetic tastes in the early American identity.

APPENDIX

We Are What We Ate: A Brief History of Food in the Americas

In the underground supper club scene of modern-day New York City, food historian and chef Jay Reifel brings the past to the plate (*Edible History*). In April of 2021, Reifel, the Executive Chef of Brooklyn's Edible History crafted his authentic Colonial American Mince Pie to defeat superstar chef Bobby Flay on Food Network's aptly named *Beat Bobby Flay*. Reifel's appearance on Food Network and the success of his nearly \$200 per plate historical meals demonstrate popular culture's growing interest in the history of American food. However, Reifel's Colonial "American" Mince Pie is a misnomer, since mince pie originated from England's House of Tudor and was inspired by spices brought to northern Europe from the medieval Crusades in the middle east. Indeed, most "American" foods originated somewhere besides America.

When most Americans consider the history of American food, images of bright pumpkins, perfectly roasted turkeys, stern-faced Pilgrims, and bare-chested Native Americans at the "first" Thanksgiving may spring to mind. While some elements of that oft-told narrative have a tenuous toehold in fact, that iconic image does not accurately depict the food and foodways of the early Americans and certainly does not reflect the foods of the earliest inhabitants of the Americas. Although an in-depth discussion of who first inhabited North America, where they originated, and what they ate is far beyond the scope of this project, a cursory review is helpful as we situate this project within the history of American foodways.

As history tells us, the buckle-clad feet of the 1607 Jamestown colonists were certainly not the first to touch the land that would eventually become the United States of America. Although scientists debate the exact timeline, roughly 20,000 years ago the first human

inhabitants of North America came from northeastern Asia across Beringia, a temporarily exposed land bridge across the Bering Strait of the Pleistocene era. These Arctic pilgrims of the Stone Age likely survived on foods like sparse shrubs, herbs, kelp, fish, and seal as they made their way to the area now known as western Canada and spread down the Pacific coast and across the Americas (Potter 24). Scholars surmise that this Arctic migration was spurred by a depletion of food sources in northeastern Asia, and—as hunter-gatherers are wont to do—they moved on over multiple generations to find new territory by following the migratory patterns of birds and herds.

Over millennia, these Paleo-Indians expanded throughout North America, Mesoamerica, and South America. They flourished, and eventually created vast and intricate societies known as the Clovis, Olmec, Maya, Aztec, Inca, Mississippian, Algonquian, Inuit, and others. Of the ancient North American tribal communities, the Clovis seem to have left behind the oldest traceable archeological and DNA-based evidence. The hunter-gatherer Clovis (named for their sophisticated spear points first unearthed in Clovis, New Mexico in the 1930's) lived approximately 13,500 years ago and nourished themselves by gathering flora and opportunistically hunting the occasional megafauna (Mann “Clovis Points” 58). The museum displays of yesteryear, showcasing shaggy-haired, Clovis spear-wielding natives battling a fierce saber tooth tiger or gargantuan woolly mammoth created an unlikely scene. Archeological evidence shows that the Clovis targeted only the injured or old woolly mammoths or other megafauna as a supplement to their primarily vegetation-based diet. Aggressive over-hunting certainly was not a primary factor in the ultimate demise of the woolly mammoth.

Later civilizations of the Americas hunted game of a more manageable size like buffalo and antelope, and about 10,000 years ago they began the shift from food collection to food

production via small-scale horticulture of plants like squash, beans, and corn (McIntosh 28). This planned cultivation provided a steady food source in a stable place and enabled permanent settlements for these former nomads. Furthermore, these crops of squash, beans, and corn would become familiar staples for all subsequent inhabitants of the Americas to present day. Long before the European explorers even knew of this vast and plentiful land, an enormous population hunted, gathered, farmed, and yes—ate—on the American continents.

Although many in the general population still somewhat begrudgingly credit Columbus with discovering the New World, historical evidence suggests otherwise. Literary epics like the *Saga of Erik the Red* and archaeological excavations indicate that some 500 years before Columbus bumped into the islands of the Bahamas and Hispaniola in 1492—mistaking them for the Indies—Leif Erikson and his Viking crew spent a decade c. 1000 CE hunting, raising sheep, farming, and trading with the local Inuit and other tribes in the Atlantic coastal area of L’Anse aux Meadows, near Newfoundland (Chandonnet 52). While historians have almost no extant record of firsthand accounts of Erikson’s crew, the voyages of Columbus are recorded in his letters and other historical documents.

Often, explorers’ descriptions of their newly discovered lands tend toward the dramatic, or at least toward the romantic. In his February 1493 Letter to Louis Santangel, Columbus describes Hispaniola, now known as the Dominican Republic, as “a wonderful island, with mountains, groves, plains, and the country generally beautiful and rich for planting and sowing, for rearing sheep and cattle of all kinds . . . the rivers are plentiful and large and of excellent water; the greater part of them contain gold” (Columbus 189). Despite the dearth of actual gold, for Columbus and the stream of Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish explorers who would soon follow in his 1492 wake, the warm climate, lush vegetation, tomatoes, corn, sweet potatoes,

cocoa, and chili peppers of the New World offered welcomed variety, no doubt, after months of seeing nothing but ocean and consuming nothing but bland ship fare like dried lentil stew, weevil-infested hardtack, and salted pork or fish. Rather than respect the bounty of this new land and the long-established societies of its dwellers, these European explorers instead spread disease and devastation. Food historian Anne Chandonnet pointedly claims that “with guile and enslavement, smallpox and genocide, Columbus conquered the Arawak of the Bahamas, Cortes the Aztecs of Mexico, and Pizarro the Incas of Peru” (9). Other empire-hungry explorers would follow these same tactics.

From the arrival of Columbus in 1492 until approximately 1650, the native population of the New World plunged precipitously, and not from famine or hunger. Anthropologists, archaeologists, linguists, and other scholars, suitably named Low Counters and High Counters, debate the number of inhabitants in the Americas during the pre-Columbian era. Although estimates range widely, the modern consensus seems to land somewhere around 60 million indigenous people living in the Western Hemisphere before first contact (dated at 1492); similarly, 60-70 million people lived in Europe during that time (McIntosh 60-61). Although the New World land mass was vast and civilizations had ample space to thrive, the myth of the Americas as virgin land populated only sparsely is clearly false. This thriving New World population would soon be devastated, however. After first contact from European explorers, the indigenous population of the New World plummeted by around 90%, from an estimated 60 million c. 1500 to only 6 million c. 1650 in what has come to be known as the Great Dying of the Americas (Koch 21). In North America specifically, the indigenous population plunged from an estimated pre-contact number of 10 million to only 1 million by 1800 (Koch 22). The Great Dying of the indigenous peoples of the Americas led to the inevitable abandonment of over 138

million acres of cleared land, which spurred a mass reforestation, so extensive that “the resulting terrestrial carbon uptake had a detectable impact on both atmospheric CO₂ and global surface air temperatures in the two centuries prior to the Industrial Revolution” (Koch 30). As an anthropogenic event large enough to effect global cooling, the Great Dying of 1492-1650 changed the demographics of the New World forever.

Disease had taken its toll. Because Europeans had lived for centuries in a viral stew of smallpox, measles, and influenza—partly because they kept some of their livestock inside their cottages—many were generally immune to fatal cases of these diseases. However, the indigenous peoples of the Americas housed no livestock and had no such acquired immunity; therefore, they fell victim by the millions, roughly 54 million over 150 years, to these rapidly and sometimes intentionally spread viruses. Coupled with ongoing battles, enslavement, and loss of settled land to the European explorers, only a remnant of the once prevalent native tribes of South America, Mesoamerica, and North America remained by the mid-seventeenth century. That remnant would face even more devastation in the coming centuries. Despite their drastically decreased numbers, these indigenous societies—particularly those near the northeastern Atlantic seaboard—would exercise a broad influence on settlements, trade, politics, and foods of the British colonies beginning in the early seventeenth century.

From the early sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century in northeastern North America, explorers encountered the Algonquian, Iroquois, Wampanoag (depicted in Lydia Maria Child’s *Hobomok*), Powhatan, and other tribes. Here, too, the Europeans had spread their deadly diseases, primarily smallpox, and annihilated up to 90% of the Native American population of the Northeast. In southeastern North America, explorers conquered the Seminole, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Natchez, and other civilizations as the explorers claimed Spanish Florida,

which reached all the way from the Florida Keys to Texas to the Appalachian Mountains. In what is now the southeastern United States, Spaniard explorer Hernando de Soto in May of 1539 brought 600 soldiers, 200 horses, and 300 swine to Florida, searching for non-existent gold and killing countless Native Americans—not by guns, but by diseases like anthrax and tuberculosis carried by the contagion of De Soto’s “ambulatory meat locker: his three hundred pigs” (Mann 1491 97-98). Within a couple of years, the number of De Soto’s swine in southeastern North America had grown to over 700 live animals, not including the ones who had been eaten, stolen, or had escaped to the forests to pass diseases to deer, turkey, and by extension to the natives who ate them (98). Although biological warfare pigs were probably not the intent of De Soto, the resulting death rate from De Soto’s path during 1539-1543 was staggering and forever altered the population and future culture of North America.

A half-century after De Soto’s exploration, English colonists first arrived on the North American continent. They were greeted by dense forests along the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean, and although they did not realize it, this thick vegetation continued all the way to the Mississippi River. In 1587, the first documented group of settlers from Britain formed the New World colony of Roanoke, but by 1590 that settlement had completely disappeared, as discovered by its returning British supply ship. Theories about the Lost Colony of Roanoke abound, from Native American attacks to witchcraft to cannibalism, but the real reason for the disappearance of the Roanoke colony was likely disease and starvation.

Twenty years after the demise of Roanoke, Captain John Smith led an expedition in 1607 to Jamestown, Virginia. For long-term survival, colonists must eat, and they must first grow crops *to eat*. This necessity meant that trees must be felled, rocks and roots and stumps must be laboriously extracted, and the ground must be tilled before any planting can begin. Therefore, as

food historian Ann Chandonnet asserts, “colonial farming commenced with an axe” (20). The ground-clearing process could take years as these fledgling farmers waited for stubborn roots to rot so stumps could be pulled from the ground, and the small plots of squash and “alien corn” with a measly eight rows of multi-colored kernels could then be expanded into larger plots for a productive farm (Chandonnet 7). The Jamestown group, consisting largely of ‘gentlemen’ instead of laborers or farmers, was lured to the New World by rumors of gold, which proved to be something like worthless pyrite, or ‘fool’s gold.’ These treasure-seeking settlers were ill-equipped for agricultural survival. Indeed, from their 1607 arrival through the “Starving Time” winter of 1609-1610, only 60 of the original 500 colonists lived to see spring of 1610 (Freedman 149). Starvation drove these struggling survivalists to extreme measures. Contemporary oral and written accounts and recently discovered archaeological evidence from the site of the Jamestown Colony support at least one occurrence of cannibalism. In 2013, a group of Jamestown archaeologists discovered knife and cleaver marks indicative of post-mortem cannibalism on a partial skull and shin bone of a 14-year-old girl, whom they dubbed Jane (Bower 5). Despite their grim and grizzly beginnings, the surviving inhabitants of Jamestown eventually learned to farm, hunt, and survive in the New World.

Thirteen years later, in 1620, the Plymouth colonists sought out a more opportune landing spot for their famed ship *The Mayflower*. When they came ashore at Plymouth Rock, they found already cleared land that had been left behind by native Algonquian who had apparently fallen victim to disease, like so many millions of their ancestors during the Great Dying, previously discussed. Although the colonists of Plymouth Plantation fared better than those of Jamestown, the sea voyage and first winter proved to be crushing for them, with 50 of the 102 settlers of Plymouth perishing before the spring of 1621 (Staveland 5). However, aided by the cleared landing

site and a peace treaty with Massasoit and Squanto of the Wampanoag tribe, these hearty Pilgrims pressed on and by late spring of 1621, Edward Winslow recorded that the colony had planted “some twenty acres of Indian corn, and sowed some six acres of barley and peas . . . Our corn did prove well, and God be praised, we had a good increase of Indian corn, and our barley indifferent good, but our peas not worth the gathering” because they had been planted too late (Winslow and Bradford 60).

Even without peas, the so-called “first” Thanksgiving soon followed in the autumn of 1621 as the Pilgrims celebrated their triumph of being able to survive and harvest their own crops (albeit from seed corn stolen from Indian caches, later repaid). The Pilgrims of Plymouth now had one relatively successful farming season under their brass-buckled belts. Food historian Paul Freedman claims that the advent of the Pilgrims’ autumn 1621 celebration could be regarded as the “primordial incident of an American locavore tradition” (150). Of course, the neighboring Wampanoag joined in and contributed, with “many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest King Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer” (Winslow and Bradford 61). This concept of marking a Thanksgiving celebration with family and friends became one of the goals for Sarah Josepha Hale, as discussed in this dissertation. A rapid succession of colonies followed the Plymouth colony including the Massachusetts Bay Colony. By 1628 their planning, planting, and farming were successful, and by 1640, Massachusetts had the new commerce center of Boston and 16,000 settlers, most of whom farmed (Chandonnet 21).

As these early New England colonists scratched out a living from the strange and new landscape, they quickly became acquainted with the Native Americans of the northeast including the Algonquian, Wampanoag, and Mohican tribes. From these skilled and experienced

navigators of the New World frontier, the novice colonists quickly learned agricultural skills that would enable their long-term survival. For example, Squanto taught the Plymouth Plantation settlers how to use shad as fishy fertilizer when planting corn, the Wampanoag also taught settlers how to add ash when cooking corn to release the flavor and nutrients, and the Mohican taught these new settlers to grow the three sisters: maize, squash, and beans (Stavely 6-7). As the corn stalks reached toward the sky, they provided a natural scaffold on which rattlesnake beans or shell beans could climb, while the ground cover of the squash hill performed an innate mulching function, trapping moisture in the ground to allow the three sisters to thrive as one happy family. The three sisters, in combination with fish, game, and berries, provided sound nutrition. These indigenous farming and cooking techniques “exemplify the substantial, if intuitive, wisdom that underlay many premodern traditions” and allowed these tribes to avoid diseases such as scurvy and pellagra that afflicted the peasantry of Europe (Stavely 7). Not all the indigenous peoples of this new land were as helpful, however.

Roughly fifty years after the peace treaty between Massasoit and the Plymouth colonists (Child’s *Hobomok* is set in the time of peace), Massasoit’s son, Metacom, known as King Philip, assumed leadership of the Wampanoag and after disputes culminating in the killing of three of his men, launched King Philip’s War during 1675-1676. In her captivity narrative, Mary Rowlandson recounts the savagery of the sunrise attack by the Wampanoag tribe, as they shot, slaughtered, and scalped many people in her Lancaster, Massachusetts settlement including most of her family (3-10). During her time of hunger and series of forced “removes” through wintry New England, Rowlandson first spurned the Wampanoag food, referring to it as “their filthy trash” (Rowlandson 33). However, by the third week of her captivity her hunger compelled her to begin consuming stewed horse hooves, nearly raw horse liver, corn cake fried in bear grease,

and even a cooked unborn fawn—which she describes as “so young and tender, that one might eat the bones as well as the flesh, and yet I thought it very good” (Rowlandson 33, 39, 44, 71). Critics have thoroughly analyzed Rowlandson’s narrative, often focusing on her catalog of food. One critic argues that “Rowlandson’s changing tastes denoted her tendency to try to retain her Englishness [by attempting to roast the horse liver, for example], and her transforming eating habits [consuming even the bones of a deer fetus, for example] represented her acculturation to new foodways” (Hermann 58). Rowlandson adapted her foodways enough to survive. Her narrative ends when she is ransomed and returned to her husband in Boston after nearly three months, thankful to God for the afflictions she had suffered, in that she could now see that “when God calls persons to never so many difficulties, yet he is able to carry them through, and make them say they have been gainers thereby” (121). Even with divine aid, survival was not easy for seventeenth-century colonists.

During the eighteenth century, survival became easier, the colonies expanded, and cities like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia grew. The majority of colonists still farmed, and the food staples of the average family still consisted of “salt pork, beans, corn, squash, vegetables, and fish” while the wealthy also spread their tables with “imported sugar, spices, raisins, almonds, figs and oranges” (Chandonnet 40). This class difference in diet carried into the nineteenth century, as evidenced by the cookery books and fictional food references shared in this dissertation. Beginning in the nineteenth century, cooking methods also changed from open fires to brick or iron cookstoves, but the kitchen—whether it contained an open fire or a cookstove—still retained the legacy of the hearth and remained the housewife’s ultimate center of influence on her family and on her new republic.

WORKS CITED

- Ammons, Elizabeth. Preface. *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1852, 1st ed., edited by Elizabeth Ammons. WW Norton & Company, 2018, pp. vii-x.
- Barlow, Joel. *The Hasty-Pudding; A Poem, in Three Cantos*. New York, W.H. Graham, 1847.
archive.org/details/hastypuddingpoem00barl.
- Baym, Nina. *Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-70* / *Nina Baym*. 2nd ed., with New Introduction and Supplementary Bibliography, U of Illinois P, 1993.
- Beecher, Catharine Esther, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. *The American Woman's Home, or, Principles of Domestic Science : Being a Guide to the Formation and Maintenance of Economical, Healthful, Beautiful, and Christian Homes*. New York : J.B. Ford and Company ; Boston : H.A. Brown & Co., 1869.
archive.org/details/americanwomansho00beecrich.
- Blankenship, Avery. "Nineteenth-Century Manuscript Cookbooks and Memoirs of Taste."
Consumption and the Literary Cookbook. Routledge, 2020. 177-189.
- Bower, Bruce. "Cannibalism in Colonial America: Girl's Remains Shed Light on Jamestown's Gruesome 'Starving Time.'" *Science News* 183, no. 11 (May 25, 2013): 5–6.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/scin.5591831103>.
- Boydston, Jeanne et al. *The Limits of Sisterhood: The Beecher Sisters on Women's Rights and Woman's Sphere*. U of North Carolina P, 1988.
- Brewer, Priscilla J. "'We Have Got a Very Good Cooking Stove: Advertising, Design, and Consumer Response to the Cookstove, 1815-1880.'" *Winterthur Portfolio*, vol. 25, no. 1,

[U of Chicago P, Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Inc.], 1990, pp. 35–54.

JSTOR.

Brillat-Savarin, Jean Anthelme. *The Physiology of Taste: Or, Transcendental Gastronomy*.

American Antiquarian Cookbook Collection. Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1853.

Chandonnet, Ann. *Colonial Food*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013.

Child, Lydia Maria. *American Frugal Housewife: Dedicated to Those Who Are Not Ashamed of Economy (1833. 12th ed.)*, Applewood Books, 1989.

---. *Hobomok and Other Writings on Indians; Edited and with an Introduction by Carolyn L. Karcher*. Rutgers UP, 1986.

---. "History of the Condition of Women." *Hobomok and Other Writings on Indians; Edited and with an Introduction by Carolyn L. Karcher*. Rutgers UP, 1986, pp. 168-80.

---. *The Mother's Book*. Boston: Carter, Hendee, and Babcock; Baltimore: Charles Carter, 1831.
archive.org/details/mothersbook1831chil.

Civitello, Linda. *Baking Powder Wars : The Cutthroat Food Fight That Revolutionized Cooking*. U of Illinois P, 2017. *EBSCOhost*,
search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=nlebk&AN=1428853&site=eds-live&scope=site&custid=gsu1.

Columbus, Christopher and Curtis, William Eleroy. *The Authentic Letters of Columbus*.

Translated by José Ignacio Rodríguez. Library of Congress, John Boyd Thatcher Collection, 1895. archive.org/details/authenticletters00colu.

Cooper, Michelle. "The Hands of Labor: Depictions of Antebellum Authorship and the Shaping of Class in the Willis Family (Nathaniel Parker Willis, Fanny Fern, and Harriet Jacobs)."

Ph.D., University of South Carolina, 2009.

search.proquest.com/pqdt/docview/304994645/abstract/A43236FAD0094CA8PQ/3.

Currier and Ives. "The Drunkards Progress. From the First Glass to the Grave." Lithograph, 1846. www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3b53131.

Dighton, Robert. *Keep Within Compass*. Engraving. August 16, 1785.

emuseum.history.org/objects/15332/keep-within-compass.

Donawerth, Jane. "Nineteenth-Century United States Conduct Book Rhetoric by

Women." *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 21, no. 1, Jan. 2002, pp. 5–21. EBSCOhost,

search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.466109&site=eds-live&scope=site. Accessed 6 July 2023.

Eastburn, James Wallis, and Robert Charles Sands. *Yamoyden, a Tale of the Wars of King*

Philip: In Six Cantos. New York: Published by James Eastburn. Clayton & Kingsland, Printers, 1820. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/yamoydenatalewa00sandgoog.

Edible History. Edible History NYC. Accessed June 6, 2021. www.ediblehistorynyc.com.

Edwards, Herbert. "Lydia M. Child's the Frugal Housewife." *The New England Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 2, 1953, pp. 243–49. *JSTOR*, doi:[10.2307/362453](https://doi.org/10.2307/362453).

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Letter, Ralph Waldo Emerson to Walt Whitman, 21 July 1855." Image.

Library of Congress. Accessed April 12, 2023. www.loc.gov/item/mcc.012/.

---. "The Poet." In *Essays, Second Series*, 1844. www.gutenberg.org/files/2945/2945-h/2945-h.htm#link2H_4_0001.

Feeding America | *MSU Libraries*. d.lib.msu.edu/fa. Accessed 15 Mar. 2020.

Finley, Ruth Elbright. *The Lady of Godey's, Sarah Josepha Hale*. Philadelphia, PA and London: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1931.

Fisher, M.F.K. *With Bold Knife & Fork*. Putnam, 1969.

Fleitz, Elizabeth J. "The Multimodal Kitchen: Cookbooks as Women's Rhetorical Practice."

Ph.D., Bowling Green State University, 2009.

search.proquest.com/pqdt/docview/304831985/abstract/FEF83FBD03F143BAPQ/20.

Freedman, Paul, Joyce E. Chaplin, and Ken Albala. *Food in Time and Place: The American Historical Association Companion to Food History*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2014.

search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=nlebk&AN=841274&site=eds-live&scope=site&custid=gsu1.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. Yale UP, 1979.

Gossett, Suzanne, and Barbara Ann Bardes. "Women and Political Power in the Republic: Two Early American Novels." *Legacy* 2, no. 2 (1985): 13–30.

Hale, Sarah Josepha. *The Good Housekeeper*, edited by Jan Bluestein Longone. Reprint of 6th ed. 1841. Dover Publications, 1996.

---. *Northwood; or, Life North and South: Showing the True Character of Both*. By Mrs. Sarah Josepha Hale. 2nd ed., Scholarly Publishing Office, U of Michigan Library, 2005.

Hedrick, Joan D. *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*. Oxford UP, 1995. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/gsu/detail.action?docID=430928.

Herrmann, Rachel. "Food in America and American Foodways." *The Junto*, 3 July 2013, earlyamericanists.com/2013/07/03/food-in-america-and-american-foodways/.

Introduction to the Feeding America Project. MSU Libraries. d.lib.msu.edu/fa/introduction.

Accessed 11 Nov. 2019.

Irving, Washington. *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. New York : G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1899.

[archive.org/details/legendofsleepyho07irvi](https://www.archive.org/details/legendofsleepyho07irvi).

Julia Child Foundation for Gastronomy and the Culinary Arts. "Sean Sherman Named 2023 Julia Child Award Recipient by the Julia Child Foundation." *The Julia Child Award* (blog). Accessed June 20, 2023. juliachildaward.com/sean-sherman-named-2023-julia-child-award-recipient-by-the-julia-child-foundation/.

Karcher, Carolyn L. *The First Woman in the Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child*. Duke UP, 1994.

Kimball, Marie. *The Martha Washington Cook Book*, 1940. New York City: Coward-McCann, 2005.

Klein, Lauren F. *An Archive of Taste: Race and Eating in the Early United States*. U of Minnesota P, 2020.

---. "The Matter of Early American Taste." In *The Cambridge Companion to Literature and Food*, edited by J. Michelle Coghlan, 58–72. Cambridge Companions to Literature. Cambridge UP, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316997796>.

Koch, Alexander, Chris Brierley, Mark M. Maslin, and Simon L. Lewis. "Earth System Impacts of the European Arrival and Great Dying in the Americas after 1492." *Quaternary Science Reviews* 207 (March 1, 2019): 13–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2018.12.004>.

LaRoche, Amanda Ray. "The Cookbook Canon: How Women Authors Tamed the Domestic Sphere." *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*. U of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2017. www.proquest.com/central/docview/1978966279/abstract/FB711E29CBBA443EPQ/1.

Leslie, Eliza. *Seventy-Five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes, and Sweetmeats*, 1832. *The Feeding America Project*. MSU Libraries. d.lib.msu.edu/fa/67?page=78.

The Liberator. "House and Home Papers_Multiple Classified Advertisements." December 1863. *Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers*.

link.gale.com/apps/doc/GT3005891574/NCNP?sid=bookmark-NCNP&xid=c719a0f5

Lincoln, Waldo. "Bibliography of American Cookery Books, 1742-1860." *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, April 1929, 85–214.

Longone, Jan Bluestein. Introduction. *The Good Housekeeper*, by Sarah Josepha Hale, edited by Jan Bluestein Longone. Reprint of 6th ed., 1841. Dover Publications, 1996, pp. v-xi.

Matthiessen, F. O. *American Renaissance; Art and Experience in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*. Oxford UP, 1968.

Mann, Charles C. *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*. 1st ed. Knopf, 2005. ---. "Clovis Points." *Smithsonian* 41, no. 7 (2013): 57–59.

Mather, Cotton. *Magnalia Christi Americana: Or, The Ecclesiastical History of New-England, from Its First Planting in the Year 1620. unto the Year of Our Lord, 1698. In Seven Books* ... London: Printed for Thomas Parkhurst, at the Bible and Three Crowns in Cheapside, 1702. John Adams Library (Boston Public Library). archive.org/details/magnaliachristia00math.

McIntosh, Elaine N. *American Food Habits in Historical Perspective*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995.

McWilliams, Mark. *Food and the Novel in Nineteenth-Century America*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012.

Melville, Herman. "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids." In *The Apple-Tree Table and Other Sketches, 1850-1856*. Princeton UP, 1922.

www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/53861/pg53861-images.html.utf8.

Moland, Lydia L. *Lydia Maria Child: A Radical American Life*. The U of Chicago P, 2022.

Mott, Frank Luther. *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States*. Macmillan Company, 1947.

National Institutes of Health. "'Surveillance Report #119.' National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, April 2022. pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/surveillance119/fig4.htm.

Peary, Alexandria. "Eliza Leslie's 1854 'The Behaviour Book' and the Conduct of Women's Writing." *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2012, pp.219-35. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/42003408. Accessed 6 July 2023.

Palfrey, John Gorham. "Review in NAR. XXV.--Yamoyden a Tale of the Wars of King Philip, in Six Cantos." *The North American Review and Miscellaneous Journal (1815-1821)*, Boston: American Periodicals Series II, April 1821.

Peterson, Beverly. "Mrs. Hale on Mrs. Stowe and Slavery." *American Periodicals* 8 (1998): 30–44.

"*Publications Received: The Atlantic Monthly, for April.*" April 3, 1862.

www.proquest.com/americanperiodicals/docview/137690882/abstract/3129D647A71C43A3PQ/1

Randolph, Mary. *The Virginia Housewife: Or, Methodical Cook*. Baltimore: Plaskitt, 1836, archive.org/details/virginiahousewif00randrich.

"Research Guides: American Women: Resources from the General Collections: Specialized Resources." Cookbooks & Home Economics. Etiquette & Advice Books. *Research*

Guides at Library of Congress, guides.loc.gov/american-women-general-collections/other-sources. Accessed 6 July 2023.

Reynolds, David S. *Mightier Than the Sword: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Battle for America*. WW Norton, 2011.

Root, Waverley and Richard de Rochemont. *Eating in America: A History*. Ecco P: Distributed by WWNorton, 1995.

Rowlandson, Mary White. *A Narrative of the Captivity, Sufferings, and Removes, of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*. Boston: The Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1856.
archive.org/details/anarrativecapti01unkngoog.

Schenone, Laura. *A Thousand Years over a Hot Stove: A History of American Women Told through Food, Recipes, and Remembrances*. 1st ed., WWNorton, 2003.

Showalter, Elaine. *A Jury of Her Peers: American Women Writers from Anne Bradstreet to Annie Proulx*. 1st ed., Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.

Simmons, Amelia. *American Cookery, A Facsimile of American Cookery, 1796*, 2nd ed., Dover Publications, 2014.

Stavely, Keith W. F. *America's Founding Food: The Story of New England Cooking*. U of North Carolina P, 2004.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Leipzig, Germany: B. Tauchnitz Publishers, 1853. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/bub_gb_LjnF7G3rn5MC.

---. *House and Home Papers*. Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1865. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/househomepapers00stow_2.

---. *Little Foxes*. Boston Ticknor and Fields, 1866. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/littlefoxes00stowuoft.

---. *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly*. London: John Cassell, 1852. *Internet Archive*, archive.org/details/uncletomscabin00instow.

Sweeney, Kate. *American Afterlife: Encounters in the Customs of Mourning*. The U of Georgia P, 2014.

Theophano, Janet. *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives through the Cookbooks They Wrote*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Tompkins, Jane. "Uncle Tom's Cabin and Literary History." *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1852, 1st ed., WW Norton & Company, 2018, pp. 554-76.

Tompkins, Kyla Wazana. *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the Nineteenth Century*. New York UP, 2012.

Walden, Sarah. *Tasteful Domesticity: Women's Rhetoric and the American Cookbook, 1790-1940*. U of Pittsburgh P, 2018. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=nlebk&AN=1791359&site=eds-live&scope=site&custid=gsu1.

Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860." *American Quarterly*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1966, p. 151. *EBSCOhost*, doi:[10.2307/2711179](https://doi.org/10.2307/2711179).

Williams, Susan. *Food in the United States, 1820s-1890*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2006. archive.org/details/foodinunitedstat0000will.

Winslow, Edward, and William Bradford. *Mourt's Relation A Relation or Journall of the Beginning and Proceedings of the English Plantation Setled at Plimoth in New England, by Certaine English Adventurers Both Merchants and Others With Their Difficult Passage, Their Safe Arivall, Their Joyfull Building of, and Comfortable Planting*

Themselves in the Now Well Defended Towne of New Plimoth [sic]. London, England,

1622. www.proquest.com/docview/2240890285/citation/9F3CFB8A9FAE4D10PQ/1.