

**PLAIN COOKING: THE EMERGENCE OF THE COMMUNITY  
COOKBOOK AFTER THE CIVIL WAR**

A Thesis Proposal

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By

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**ABSTRACT****PLAIN COOKING****THE EMERGENCE OF THE COMMUNITY COOKBOOK AFTER THE CIVIL  
WAR****By Beth A. Twomey**

The proposal outlines a course of research directed at an historical analysis of the emergence of the community cookbook as a preferred method of charitable activity after the Civil War. Utilizing the methodology of women's separate spheres, it explores the ways in which women's benevolent acts transformed in character and organization during the course of the Civil War giving rise to the social conditions that allowed for the birth of the community cookbook. Concentrating on a community cookbook from Dayton, Ohio published in 1873 as an exemplar of the cookbooks published by ladies' groups within the first ten years of the end of the war, the study will utilize archival resources from Dayton, Ohio including ladies' aid society records, histories of the local Sanitary Fair, and church records to demonstrate the war time work of the ladies who contributed to the cookbook.

**"What's most wonderful (about charity cookbooks) is that they befuddle the historian who wishes to generalize about American food, American women, or American life."**

From: *A Thousand Years Over a Hot Stove* by Laura Schenone

### ***Introduction***

Widely lauded as the first American cookbook,<sup>1</sup> Amelia Simmons' exhaustively titled *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 Plumb Cake to Plain Cake. Adapted to this Country, and All Grades of Life*, was first published by the author in Hartford, Connecticut in the spring of 1796. Simmons' book marked a turning point in American cookbook publishing that would eventually result in a massive tide of books "adapted to this country" that continues today. Previous to Simmons' book American publishers, taking advantage of the absence of international copyright law relied on reprints of British authored works that had already proven to be popular in England since "a British author's work could be pirated for free, while American copyright law protected native authors and left open the possibility that they might get paid."<sup>2</sup>

The earliest such British authored, American published cookbook known, according to the only American cookbook bibliography yet compiled that includes the colonial period, Eleanor Lowenstein's *American Cookery Books 1742-1860*, was E. Smith's *The Compleat Housewife*. First published in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1742 by William Parks after

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Tolford Wilson. "Amelia Simmons Fills a Need: American Cookery, 1796" *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ser. 14, no. 1 (1957): 16-30. p. 19

<sup>2</sup> Zbory, Ronald J. and Zbory Mary Saracino. *A Handbook for the Study of Book History in the United States*. Center of the Book, Library of Congress: Washington D.C. 2000. p. 32

initially being published in England in 1727,<sup>3</sup> the American version of *The Compleat Housewife* was adapted by Parks by leaving out information that would not be applicable in the colonies (the adaptation also fortuitously resulted in a smaller and cheaper book!).<sup>4</sup> Another British import, Susannah Carter's *The Frugal Housewife, or Complete Woman Cook*, previously published in London, was first published in Boston in 1772 with plates by none other than Paul Revere<sup>5</sup> before going on to multiple printings in Boston, New York and Philadelphia.

Simmons' work marks the first cookbook to offer recipes featuring the indigenous American ingredients and food preparation methods utilized by the colonists for over 150 years. Mary Tolford Wilson writes that, "the deficiencies of British works stemmed largely from one source: Americans used ingredients that Europeans did not ordinarily employ."<sup>6</sup> Simmons' recipes for dishes made of "Indian corn" or what we today call cornmeal, such as those for Johnny cakes, puddings and slapjacks and her recipes for what are now traditional American dishes such as pumpkin pie, cranberry sauce (to accompany roast turkey) and the use of maple syrup and molasses as sweeteners remedied that deficiency so successfully that *American Cookery* went on to be published thirteen times between 1796 and 1831.<sup>7</sup> Aside from the inclusion of specifically American ingredients and recipes however, *American Cookery* was very similar in format to contemporary British cookbooks. Recipes (or "receipts" in eighteenth and early

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<sup>3</sup> Lowenstein, Eleanor. *American Cookery Books 1742-1860. Based on Waldo Lincoln's American Cookery Books 1742-1860*. American Antiquarian Society: Worcester and Corner Bookshop: N.Y. 1972. pp. 1-2

<sup>4</sup> Yost, Genevieve. "The Compleat Houswife or Accomplish'd Gentlewoman's Companion: A Bibliographical Study". *William and Mary Quarterly*

<sup>5</sup> Lowenstein, p. 2

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, p. 20

<sup>7</sup> Lowenstein, p. 5.

nineteenth century usage) were in a simple paragraph format and usually lacked precise measurements, temperatures and cooking times. Recipes for tasks such as trussing chickens or mixing pastry crusts were usually entirely lacking directions under the assumption that the reader had some familiarity with standard culinary techniques as in Simmons' recipe for chicken pie:

Pick and clean *fix* chickens, (without *fcalding*) take out their inwards and *wafh* the birds while whole then joint the birds, *falt* and pepper the pieces and inwards. Roll one inch thick *paft*e No. 8, and cover a deep *difh*, and double at the rim or edge of the *difh*, put thereto a layer of chickens and a layer of thin *flices* of butter till the chickens and one and a half pound butter are expended, which cover with a thick *paft*e; bake one and a half hour.<sup>8</sup>

Cookbooks of this time period could also perhaps be more accurately considered "household manuals" since directions for procuring and preserving food, instructions and recipes for household products such as dyes for cloth, soaps, polishes and personal products such as perfume and lotions, not to mention recipes for medicines were all commonly included. Also typical of the time, cookbooks frequently featured large numbers of recipes for meats and pastries. Often considered an indication of American's dietary preferences, this prevalence could also be understood from the standpoint of the needs of the cook: both meats and pastries were and are today still costly, time consuming and more difficult to prepare successfully than, for example, a salad or some boiled turnips. Cookbook authors responded to these concerns by including a greater number of recipes for those items requiring more precision and information for success.

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<sup>8</sup> Simmons, Amelia. *American Cookery*. Hartford, Printed for Simeon Butler, Northampton, 1798. p. 23

*American Cookery's* success also meant it was subjected to a common indignity of early American publishing: it was widely copied and even reproduced in its entirety with a different title as noted in the Lowenstein bibliography about *The New England 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 Plumb Cake to Plain Cake. Adapted to this Country, and All Grades of Life* compiled by Lucy Emerson and published in 1809, "the title of this work is copied from *American Cookery* and much of the text is a verbatim copy of the ...edition of 1808 of that work."<sup>9</sup>

Within ten years of the first publication of *American Cookery*, more American cookbook writers began to be published. The cookbooks often prominently featured the word "American" in the title along with other key words suitable to a young nation such as "economical", "frugal", "practical", "modern" and "improved". Publishers also continued printing British cookbooks claiming them to be "adapted" to American needs. Wilson comments that:

For thirty-five years, then...Amelia Simmons's awareness of a distinctly American cookery had an impact directly upon the contents of American culinary imprints...Editors of British works about to be published in America acknowledged the validity of her assumption and took steps to compete with her work.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Lowenstein, p. 11

<sup>10</sup> Wilson, p. 29

One such work was British cookbook author Mrs. Maria Eliza Rundell's *A New System of Domestic Cookery, Formed Upon Principles of Economy and Adapted to the use of Private Families*. First published in England in 1806, Mrs. Rundell originally compiled the cookbook and domestic advice manual for her two daughters.<sup>11</sup> The book was extremely popular in England and was printed the very next year in an American edition.<sup>12</sup> Mrs. Rundell's cookbook enjoyed a strong ten year run in America but was eventually abandoned as increasing numbers of more current, American authored volumes were published. Michael Winship points out that throughout the early nineteenth-century, "changes in plates, presses and paper meant that the rate of printing could be greatly increased."<sup>13</sup> These changes were driven by the industrialization and mechanization of the print and paper manufacturing processes that were part of the overall trend that we now call the Industrial Revolution which drove costs down and made the publication of copyright protected American authors more feasible.

The veritable flood of new American authored cookbooks in the mid-nineteenth century illustrates a number of emerging trends in nineteenth century American cookbooks: regional American cookbooks that reflected the local preferences, traditions and available foodstuffs of a large, diverse and growing young nation, secondly, the greatly increasing number of books authored by women who had previously been discouraged from publishing, third, cookbooks written to support or advance a cause such as temperance, vegetarianism or the numerous dietary fads which were common throughout the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Feeding America, Accessed March 29, 2010 at [http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/authors/author\\_rundell.html](http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/authors/author_rundell.html)

<sup>12</sup> Lowenstein, p. 10

<sup>13</sup> Winship, Michael. "Manufacturing and Book Production". *A History of the Book in America*. volume 3. Casper, Scott E. et al. eds. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill. 2007.

century in America (and remain so today). Finally, the charity or community cookbook made its first appearance during this time and quickly became a tremendously popular way to raise money for a variety of charitable endeavors nationwide.

### ***Regional Cookbooks***

Feeding the demand for regional cookbooks was the great diversity of a sprawling young country. Diversity that included not only ethnicity or the countries of origin of the many new immigrants settling in America but also diversity in climate, geography, proximity to fresh or salt water and the types of agriculture suited to those conditions. Over time, distinct geographic areas of the new nation like the Northeast, the South, the Pacific Northwest and others came to be identified with particular food preferences, traditions and local products. Regional cookbooks met the localized needs and preferences of cooks living in a particular region greatly increasing their value as a reference material for the home cook.

Perhaps the first truly regional cookbook produced in America was Mrs. Mary Randolph's *The Virginia Housewife: Method is the Soul of Management* first published in Washington in 1824 and regularly re-printed over the next 30 years. Recipes for such diverse items as Apoquiniminc cakes, Turkey a-la-daub, pumpkins , Indian meal, sweet potato and sago puddings and numerous tomato receipts reflect distinctly New World ingredients while a veritable alphabet of vegetables, from asparagus, to Jerusalem artichokes to sea-kale attest to the diversity of available foodstuffs in the American South of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Regional characteristics were also reflected in notes in the text such as this one about the word "shote" which Mrs. Randolph notes "is the name given in

the southern states to a fat young hog" assuming that Americans in other parts of the country will find the term unfamiliar:

Shote being a provincial term and not a legitimate English word, Mrs. R has taken the liberty of spelling it in a way that conveys the sound of the pronunciation better more clearly than *shoat*, the usual manner of spelling it.<sup>14</sup>

The following years saw more regional cookbooks being published such as *The New England Economical Housekeeper and Family Receipt Book* published in 1844 by Mrs. Esther Allen Howland<sup>15</sup> which includes entries about how to remove ice from door steps and deal with frozen pumps from the cold New England winters along with a full Thanksgiving menu featuring stuffed, roast turkey, potatoes, gravy, apple and cranberry sauces and pumpkin and apple pies among its generous offerings.<sup>16</sup> With the publication of *The Carolina Housewife* by "a lady of Charleston" in 1847<sup>17</sup> and *The Great Western Cookbook* by Mrs. A.M. Collins in 1857<sup>18</sup> regional American cookbooks became a firmly established genre of cookbook.

### ***Women as Cookbook Authors***

Previous to the mid-nineteenth century cookbooks owed their genesis to a number of factors, some being created originally to help out one's daughters (such as the previously mentioned Mrs. Rundell's *A New System of Domestic Cookery*), some written by men (and some women) who worked as domestic servants or caterers who wished to share

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<sup>14</sup> Randolph, p. 51

<sup>15</sup> Lowenstein, p. 56

<sup>16</sup> Howland, Esther Allen. *The New England Economical Housekeeper, and Family Receipt Book*. Cincinnati: H.W. Derby, 1845 p. 72

<sup>17</sup> Lowenstein, p.66

<sup>18</sup> Lowenstein, p. 109

(lucratively) their expertise<sup>19</sup> and some written simply and anonymously by "a lady" who was perhaps renowned in private life for her expert cooking and household management.<sup>20</sup> At this time in America there were not yet cookbooks authored by famous chefs as could already be found in Europe and as previously noted, a majority of the cookbooks published were pirated from British authors.

As the century progressed however, the genre came to be dominated by female authors writing most often for middle class households. Many of these women became popular and widely read authors whose names are still familiar to us today: Sarah Josepha Hale, Catharine Beecher, Eliza Leslie and Mary Randolph amongst many others. These women were not only publishing recipes however. Many published or wielded influence in other arenas as well. William Woys Weaver points out that:

These women compiled cookbooks to take advantage of a lucrative market among urban readers. They were not confectioners or chefs or even simple housewives. Cookbook writing was truly secondary to the serious literary endeavors on which these writers staked their reputations...<sup>21</sup>

Sarah Hale, for example was the influential editor of the immensely popular magazine *Godey's Lady's Book* where she was in a powerful position to promote not only her taste in fashion, poetry, literature and art but her belief that women were the moral center of

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<sup>19</sup> For example, see Robert Robert's *The House Servant's Directory, Or A Monitor For Private Families: Comprising Hints On The Arrangement And Performance Of Servants' Work... And Upwards Of 100 Various And Useful Receipts, Chiefly Compiled For The Use Of House Servants...* Boston, Munroe and Francis; New York,: C.S. Francis, 1827 which can be accessed at [http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book\\_05.cfm](http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book_05.cfm)

<sup>20</sup> An example from the Lowenstein bibliography is *The American Housewife* "by an experienced lady" published in 1839 which went into multiple editions over almost a decade, Lowenstein, p. 65

<sup>21</sup> Weaver, William Woys. *The Quaker Woman's Cookbook: The Domestic Cookery of Elizabeth Ellicott Lea*. Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2004: xvii.

family life and should use their position to raise moral, temperate and Christian families.<sup>22</sup>

Catharine Beecher was primarily an educator of girls and young women having founded four schools during her life. Like Hale, she believed in woman's moral superiority and in the importance of women exerting their moral influence in their families. For Beecher, working as a teacher was a natural extension of woman's sphere of influence and she championed the right for women to be trained as and work as educators, particularly of the young. Her cookbook, *Miss Beecher's Receipt Book* was designed as a supplement to her treatise on domestic economy.

Mrs. Lydia Maria Child's *The American Frugal Housewife. Dedicated to those who are not ashamed of economy*<sup>23</sup> also typified the new breed of cookbook writer. Educated in public schools and under the guidance of her older brother Convers Francis Jr., a well known Unitarian pastor, Child dreamed of seeing her name in print and after teaching for a few years, published her first novel, *Hobomok, a Tale of the Times* in 1824 at the age of 22.<sup>24</sup> When the book was warmly received, Child continued to write and publish novels, short stories and founded the *Juvenile Miscellany*, the first children's periodical in the United States.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Hale was also the author of the children's poem "Mary Had a Little Lamb"! Her cookbooks include *The Good Housekeeper* published in 1839 and *The Ladies' New Book of Cookery* published 1852.

<sup>23</sup> First published as *The Frugal Housewife* in Boston in 1829. Lowenstein p. 31

<sup>24</sup> Feeding America. Accessed April 1, 2010 at [http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/authors/author\\_child.html](http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/authors/author_child.html)

<sup>25</sup> Feeding America. Accessed April 1, 2010 at [http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/authors/author\\_child.html](http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/authors/author_child.html)

Lydia Child's *The American Frugal Housewife* was published in over thirty editions between 1829 and 1847<sup>26</sup> and helped to provide a steady source of income. Child's increasing activities as an abolitionist and her publication of a number of strongly worded letters and tracts in protest of slavery eventually led to it going out of print.

Folkloricist Janet Theophano who writes extensively about food and food ways writes that,

Cookbook writers were often celebrated personalities. They were "respectable" women who did not flagrantly defy the norms of society, and who forged an image of femininity around which other women could safely rally. In fact, by first codifying domestic life and the moral influence of the home, the writers cloaked themselves in personae of respectability, which permitted them to speak out about other social issues, though granted not in one voice.<sup>27</sup>

Other social issues included issues such as abolition, suffragism, temperance, the education of girls, women in medicine and more. The humble cookbook became for these women a useful tool with a variety of purposes; to further their own moral and social agendas, and to make money with which to support themselves, their families and their other literary, political and educational goals.

### ***Cookbooks for a Cause***

As little has been written about cookbooks generally, the category of books written in support of a specific cause or to promote a certain lifestyle such as temperance or

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<sup>26</sup> Lowenstein, p. 3

<sup>27</sup> Janet Theophano, curator "Household Words" Aresty Library U. of Pennsylvania Library. Accessed July 29, 2010 at <http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/rbm/aresty/aresty8.html>

vegetarianism has been particularly neglected. As noted earlier, industrialization of the printing process lowered costs sufficiently to allow publishers to take a gamble and publish such niche books. Examples from the Lowenstein bibliography include books written by doctors such as *Vegetable Diet* by Dr. Wm. A. Alcott in 1849<sup>28</sup> and 1854's *The New Hydropathic Cookbook* by R.T. Trall, M.D.<sup>29</sup> both of which reflect an increasing interest in "hygienic" cookery, a health trend in America concerned with vegetarianism, the elimination of fats, sugars, alcohols and spices and a focus on simple, whole and healthful foods.

Temperance was a common theme amongst mid-nineteenth century cookbooks with authors who completely eschewed alcohol to those that allowed the use of some in cooking and for medicinal purposes. An example of the later, featured on the University of Michigan's Feeding America website is Ann Allen's *The Housekeeper's Assistant*<sup>30</sup> the subtitle of which promises the book was "composed upon temperance principles." Allen's use of alcohol is limited to preserving (such as making vinegar and sweetmeats) and fails to utilize alcohol in soups, sauces and desserts in the manner quite common for the time.

These cookbooks reflect American's growing concerns about health and well being and the use of life style choices to promote health that will explode in the early twentieth century when Dr. E.E. Kellogg first came to prominence in Battle Creek Michigan. While outside the scope of this work, cookbooks written for health, social and dietary causes during this time are a rich avenue for research into American's diets, attitudes about food, exercise and medicine.

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<sup>28</sup> Lowenstein, p. 73

<sup>29</sup> Lowenstein, p. 96 "Hydropathy" refers to a popular nineteenth century medical treatment using water therapy.

<sup>30</sup> Accessed August 5, 2010 at [http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book\\_13.cfm](http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book_13.cfm)

### *Community Cookbooks*

Women have worked together to compile and publish cookbooks of their best home recipes for the purposes of charity in every state of the nation since the second half of the nineteenth century. Commonly called charity or community cookbooks, they are a uniquely American phenomenon. In *America's Charitable Cooks: A Bibliography of Fund-Raising Cookbooks Published in the United States (1861-1915)* Margaret Cook documents the early years of the community cookbook and traces the startling speed of their spread throughout the United States.<sup>31</sup> Cook claims in the forward of her book that;

The first fund-raising 'receipt books' were compiled and sold in the United States during the Civil War at the Sanitary Fairs held to raise money for military casualties and their families. After the war was over, the ladies' aid societies formed during the war turned to local charities and published their recipe collections to benefit hospitals, homes for the friendless, schools, and churches in every part of the country.<sup>32</sup>

The cookbook she identifies in her bibliography as the first cookbook sold for charitable purposes is called *A Poetical Cookbook* written by Maria J. Moss which was published and sold at the Philadelphia Sanitary Fair of 1864. In her dedication, Moss wrote that when she originally composed the cookbook, "I did not think it would be of service to my fellow-creatures, for our suffering soldiers, the sick, the wounded, and needy, who have

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<sup>31</sup> Margaret Cook *America's Charitable Cooks: A Bibliography of Fund-Raising Cookbooks Published in the United States (1861-1915)*. Kent, Ohio, 1971. See also Eleanor and Bob Brown's *Culinary Americana: Cookbooks Published in the Cities and Towns of the United States of America During the Years from 1860-1960*. New York: Roving Eye Press, 1961 which covers both charitable and professional cookbooks.

<sup>32</sup> Cook, page 7.

so nobly fought for our country's cause"<sup>33</sup> Of the three cookbooks in bibliography that date from the Civil War years, *A Poetical Cookbook* is the only one which specifically identifies itself as having been sold for charitable purposes.

Approximately five years after the end of the war, the first community cookbooks began to appear on the scene and by the mid 1870's the rate of publication began to increase rapidly. By 1880, community cookbooks had been published in twenty-one states and by 1906, community cookbooks had been published in every state of the Union including one by the women of St. Marks Parish in Cheyenne, Wyoming, who were careful to note in the title that the cookbook was "compiled by women living one mile above sea level."<sup>34</sup> The vast majority of these early community cookbooks were published by ladies' groups affiliated with various Protestant denominations, most commonly the Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Methodists.

An early community cookbook called the *Presbyterian Cookbook, Compiled by the Ladies of First Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio* published in 1873 was particularly successful, having been published in eleven editions between 1873 and 1911.<sup>35</sup> The ladies themselves, in the preface to the second edition wrote,

In March last, the Ladies Aid Society of the First Presbyterian Church of Dayton, hastily compiled and published a 'cook book', or a small selection of recipes for plain household cooking. Five hundred copies were published and, notwithstanding the book contained some errors, and the arrangement was very

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted by Cook, page 221

<sup>34</sup> Quoted by Cook, page 273. The late comer was Florida. Even such seemingly exotic locales as Alaska and Hawaii had published community cookbooks by the turn of the century.

<sup>35</sup> Cook, pages 206-217.

imperfect...it met with such gratifying and unexpected success, that its authors felt it to be their duty to revise and re-publish it.<sup>36</sup>

Published eight years after the end of the Civil War in April of 1865, could it be that the ladies of the *Presbyterian Cookbook* were merely utilizing lessons learned during the Civil War as claimed by Cook and others?<sup>37</sup> It must be noted that this widely asserted historical fact rests on Cook's claim that *A Poetical Cookbook* is the first charity cookbook and it is not even a compiled cookbook, but instead, the work of a single woman. What is undisputed is that the Ladies' aid societies which formed all over the Union during the Civil War in order to offer aid to soldiers and which often worked closely with the U.S. Sanitary Commission, were amongst the first publishers of community cookbooks after the war.

Cook and others neglect to offer an explanation for why the cookbook was chosen as the fund-raising tool of choice by these ladies. It also neglects to account for the extremely rapid spread of these books beginning approximately five years after the war. Women, while accustomed to communal work such as the much studied practice of quilting, had not, previous to the war, come together to publish books. What changed during and after the war that empowered these women's groups to publish and often, publish again, their own work and sell it? In short, why did the community cookbook emerge after the Civil War as the fundraising tool of choice?

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<sup>36</sup> *Presbyterian Cookbook, Compiled by the Ladies of First Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio.* Oliver Dayton, Ohio: Oliver Crook, 1873. From the preface, page 7.

<sup>37</sup> Janice Longone, curator of the American Culinary Collection at the Clement Library, University of Michigan which owns a copy of the *Presbyterian Cookbook* also claims this on the *Feeding America* website at [http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/intro\\_essay.html](http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/intro_essay.html) Accessed November 24, 2008. A wide variety of food writers promote this unsubstantiated history as well.

Cook offers a clue when she points to the Sanitary Fairs. All throughout the Civil War, Union women joined together to collect money, sew blankets, preserve food, and often, organized fairs both through the Sanitary Commission and on their own in to raise even more money. Women moved from more personal benevolent acts to organized charitable activities that built on their domestic expertise and history of collective work allowing them to affect change and participate in the public sphere.<sup>38</sup> The community cookbook was a product of this profound change in the manner in which women engaged in charitable works and participated in the public sphere.

Long neglected by academia, the community cookbook has been a perennial topic of analysis for chefs and food writers. Mary Anna DuSablón points out that, because of the cookbooks published by women, we have an incredibly complete written history of American food and "...proof that our national cuisine was conceived, developed, penned and conserved almost entirely by women."<sup>39</sup> This viewpoint is widely echoed by professional chefs such as Louis Szathmáry who believes that the only way to understand American culinary traditions, particularly the adaptation of native foods and the assimilation of ethnic foods, is through the study of women's home cooking.<sup>40</sup>

Community cookbooks are still being produced by groups of charitably minded people to raise funds for a wide variety of beneficiaries as they have been for over one hundred

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<sup>38</sup> See Lori Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990 chapter five.

<sup>39</sup> Mary Anna DuSablón. *America's Collectible Cookbooks: The History, the Politics, the Recipes*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1994. Page 61.

<sup>40</sup> Louis Szathmáry. *American Gastronomy: An Illustrated Portfolio of Recipes and Culinary History*. Chicago: Arno Press, Henry Regnery Company, 1974. Chef Szathmáry book contains recipes almost exclusively from nineteenth century community cookbooks. In addition, he has donated a portion of his formidable culinary collection to the University of Iowa to create the Chef Louis Szathmáry II Collection of Culinary Arts.

and forty years. While many studies have been written concerning the cooking schools of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the women who ran them and the cookbooks they published, the history of and reasons behind the emergence of the community cookbook remain unexplored.

### *Literature Review*

In the last couple decades, work by women's historians has broken away from traditional avenues of historical research in an effort to uncover how women themselves may have perceived their lives and place in society. Exciting investigations into women's charity work and the political and moral causes to which middle class women dedicated themselves have spot lighted prominent and powerful women in history. At the opposite end of the spectrum, women's historians are using the methods of material culture to explore the everyday lives of individuals and small communities of women through their quilts, diaries and other ephemera. In the midst of this has been lost a unique development in American history and in the lives of middle class American women in the second half of the nineteenth century: the community cookbook.

Community cookbooks of the nineteenth century are relatively easy to find, they are not rare objects. Could this be why they have been so persistently overlooked? And yet, the community cookbook brings together, between its humble covers, a group of women, their values and interests, their charitable activities, a taste of their home lives (and their tasty pies) and presents them all to us in one useful and enduring package.

Scholars have only recently begun to turn their attention to the charitable cookbook so it is useful to also look at the other scholarship which has been done about the lives of

middle class women in the second half of the nineteenth century. Works by Barbara Epstein, Judith Ann Giesberg and Lori Ginzberg help to create a framework for understanding women's charitable work in the nineteenth century while Faye Dudden deepens our understanding of their domestic lives. Other fruitful avenues of exploration include the extensive writings of those interested in the history of American culinary trends including food writers and folklorists. Anne Bower and Janet Theophano, among others, offer a variety of methods for approaching the analysis of community cookbooks.

### ***Recent Scholarship Concerning Cookbooks***

The past decade has seen an increase in interest in American food ways including cookbooks. Many of these scholars are engaged in women's history as filtered through a variety of lenses such as literature, folklore and cultural studies. While their approaches vary, the questions they ask are quite similar. Who were these women? How did they see themselves? Who used this book? How did they express their values through the cookbook? In all cases, the cookbook is viewed as much more than a repository of recipes.

Feminist scholars have frequently sought out both objects and texts created by and used by women that have been overlooked and devalued historically, and utilized those texts to increase their understanding of the lives of women. Often, this involves a close "reading" or analysis of the text to uncover the socio-cultural conditions under which it was produced. Anne Bower offers three reasons why community cookbooks in particular have been overlooked as historical documents. First, that community cookbooks are products of women's work in both their production and content, which has been

traditionally undervalued, second, that the very word "recipe" implies a formula, something practical and functional and so is not seen as something which may reveal values or identity and third, the very ubiquity of community cookbooks. The great numbers in which community cookbooks exist and the fact that many are produced from popularly available templates have caused them to be overlooked.<sup>41</sup> These reasons have applied, until quite recently, to women's historians as well. In our efforts to "get out of the kitchen" perhaps we too have undervalued cooking and the cookbook's place in our history, social relations and identity.

Janet Theophano, Andrea Newlyn and Anne Bower have all published works in the last ten years that employ slightly different tactics in "unpacking" the contents of a variety of cookbooks. Bower approaches community cookbooks as a collaboratively written story, one that contains the traditional elements of stories though perhaps in a somewhat attenuated form. Setting, character and plot can be discerned through careful reading. For Bower, setting includes women's domestic space, but also the setting in time, the historical, regional and social milieu. Character is elusive and collectively created through the elements of personality that shine through recipes. Plot takes a few dominant forms in cookbooks and tends to reflect most clearly women's sense about their place in their world. Plot can include making a statement about belonging to a special group (as in a Suffragist cookbook), how well a group is assimilated to the dominant culture (such as the very non-kosher Jewish settlement house cookbooks), religious or moral adherence (all those church cookbooks) and, more recently, historical cookbooks that pair recipes

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<sup>41</sup> Anne L. Bower. "Bound Together: Recipes, Lives, Stories and Readings" *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories*. Bower, Anne L., ed. Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997.

with local history.<sup>42</sup> Bower writes that "Along with text itself, one must 'read' its context—a community cookbook is a subtle gap-ridden kind of artifact, that asks its reader (at least the reader who seeks more than recipes) to fill those gaps with social and culinary history, knowledge of other texts..."<sup>43</sup> The clues, for Bower, are all there to be read and it remains up to the researcher to follow them. Andrea Newlyn, however, claims that cookbooks challenge traditional narrative structures rather than following them. While acknowledging that there are some cookbooks which may read in the manner Bower suggests, Newlyn focuses her work on nineteenth century manuscript cookbooks created by individual women that change over time. For Newlyn, manuscript cookbooks "provided women with a textual apparatus which enabled artistic and creative experimentation...the cookbook is both literally and metaphorically a canvas."<sup>44</sup> Drawings, scraps of paper with recipes, addresses, personal letters, newspaper clippings and the doodling of children make up the narrative of the cookbook and map out the values, social networks, domestic concerns and aspirations of the author in a non-linear way.

Theophano, a folklorist, also primarily concerns herself with seventeenth to nineteenth century manuscript cookbooks in her recent book. She shares with Bower, however, an emphasis on the communal and collaborative aspects of creating cookbooks asserting that cookbooks were a vehicle for creating and sustaining community among women, and

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<sup>42</sup> Anne L. Bower. "Cooking Up Stories: Narratives Elements in Community Cookbooks" *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories*. Bower, Anne L., ed. Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997.

<sup>43</sup> Anne L. Bower. "Our Sister's Recipes: Exploring 'Community' in a Community Cookbook". *Journal of Popular Culture*. 31, no. 3 (1997): 137-151. Page 138.

<sup>44</sup> Andrea K. Newlyn. "Challenging Contemporary Narrative Theory: The Alternative Textual Strategies of Nineteenth-Century Manuscript Cookbooks" *Journal of American Culture*. 22, no. 3 (1999): 35-47. Page 37.

offered a protected space for the expression of opinions and beliefs about society and women's place in it. Theophano also views manuscript cookbooks as an occasion for the development of literacy both for the author of the book and for those around her such as children, family members and servants. These shared elements represent continuity over time in the ways in which cookbooks have been used by women and indicate their tremendous value in better understanding how women interpreted their own lives.<sup>45</sup> Unlike both Bower and Newlyn however, Theophano follows through with rigorous and exhaustive historical research into every scrap of information she can glean from a cookbook demonstrating the depth of information that can be found when cookbooks are carefully analyzed.

In a similar vein, food writer Laura Schenone focuses on the lives of American women as expressed through their cookbooks and explores the ways in which the demands of providing food for others both restricts and empowers them. Schenone sees cooking as a "secret language" which connects women and which has avoided the scrutiny of traditional history. Along with Bower and Theophano she sees the community cookbook as demonstrating women's connections with one another through the collaborative process of assembling them. She also points out that community cookbooks represent women using something which has restricted them (the necessity of cooking) and employing it to empower themselves in the public sphere by contributing the funds they

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<sup>45</sup> Janet Theophano. *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote*. New York: Palgrave MacMillon, 2002.

collected through the sales of the cookbooks to support groups which reflected their values.<sup>46</sup>

Janice Longone, curator of the Clements collection at the University of Michigan, approaches community cookbooks in a much broader way. Perhaps it is precisely because of her role as a curator that Longone sees cookbooks as something to be studied collectively to understand trends not only in food preferences but philosophy, culture and religious aspects of society. Community cookbooks, in her view, offer a broad survey of the tenor of women's thoughts and feelings about the major social issues of the day. Comparison of similar cookbooks from different areas (Suffragist cookbooks for instance) or comparison of cookbooks produced by the same community group over the space of decades (such as a group from a single church) offer a unique way of understanding women's changing roles and activities over time or geographic location.<sup>47</sup> In this, she shares Theophano's understanding that there is continuity in the ways cookbooks are used by women.

### ***Related Scholarship on the Lives of Nineteenth Century Women***

The amount of scholarship concerning the lives of women in the nineteenth century is immense and covers a wide range of territory. However, historical research into women's participation in charity, and research which explores in depth women's domestic lives

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<sup>46</sup> Laura Schenone. *A Thousand Years Over a Hot Stove: A History of American Women Told Through Food, Recipes, and Remembrances*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003. See introduction. Scheone's book is truly food writing at its very best, well researched, evocative and full of intriguing recipes.

<sup>47</sup> Janice Bluestein Longone. "'Tried Receipts': An Overview of America's Charitable Cookbooks" *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories*. Bower, Anne L., ed. Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997.

intersects the arena of the community cookbook and suggests valuable avenues for inquiry. A few of the most pertinent texts will be discussed here.

### ***Women's Charitable Work***

Barbara Epstein, Judith Ann Giesberg and Lori Ginzberg all explore women's participation in charitable organizations in the nineteenth century and view the Civil War years as effecting a profound change in the way in which women viewed their own participation in charity work. Ginzberg concisely states how views of women's "nature" were used to justify women's participation in charitable work:

Women or, more accurately, the belief in women's moral superiority perfectly fit the requirement that charitable endeavors appear unmotivated by self- or class interest. As members of a group that seemed to be defined exclusively by gender, women could have no interest other than to fulfill their benevolent destiny; they could be applauded and recognized without calling into question the purity of their motives.<sup>48</sup>

For Ginzberg, that belief covered over a shift in the emphasis of women's charitable work during the course of the Civil War. For Epstein, writing about the women's temperance movement, this rigid notion of women's roles further spurred women to participate in benevolent activities out of an antagonism towards their forced subordination to men.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Lori D. Ginzberg. *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics and Class in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century United States*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1990. Page 216.

<sup>49</sup> Barbara Leslie Epstein. *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1981.

Before the war, charity work was perceived as needing the special feminine qualities of virtue that all women possessed regardless of socio-economic status. After the war, women's charitable work became increasingly defined by class with the middle class becoming the protector of societal values. This shift is also noted by Giesberg in *Civil War Sisterhood* in which she examines women's charitable work with the U.S. Sanitary Commission providing aid to Union soldiers.<sup>50</sup> Both Ginzberg and Giesberg note, with some awe, the highly efficient and rigorously organized entity that women helped create in the Sanitary Commission. Both note that women involved with the Sanitary Commission had their first experiences of directly interacting with the political structure and creating strategies for influencing it—a far cry from the simple exercise of their "innate" quality of virtue. Giesberg notes the extreme reluctance that female leaders felt at the dissolution of the Sanitary Commission shortly after the war and their determination to continue working together for charitable ends, "...as members of a transitional women's culture, women who worked for the commission during the war set important precedents for women's reform in the postwar era."<sup>51</sup> Epstein, in her work on women's participation in the temperance movement notes a similar outcome for temperance after the war—bolder, louder and better organized than ever before.

As was noted previously, the publication of community cookbooks exploded after the Civil War. Epstein, Giesberg and Ginzberg cast that work in a very different light. Women developed organizational skills and a taste for operating in the public sphere during the war that they did not have previously. It is quite possible that the community

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<sup>50</sup> Judith Ann Giesberg. *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* page 154.

cookbook offered women a way to collaboratively express those new skills in the community in a non-confrontational but highly effective way.

### ***Folk History and Domestic Culture***

The number of works concerning an examination of domestic culture, especially when it also involves the examination of material or popular culture is growing steadily. A few of these works are quite pertinent to an examination of nineteenth century community cookbooks. Faye Dudden, in her work *Serving Women: Household Service in Nineteenth Century America*, analyzes the transition over the course of the nineteenth century from a familial and reciprocal notion of having household "help" to a market based notion of a "domestic" working in the home.<sup>52</sup> Folklorist Michael Owen Jones writes that, "Who prepares the food, serves it, and cleans up, where people take their meals...who sits where and talks about what-all these convey roles, values and ideas about gender hierarchy, and power."<sup>53</sup> Dudden, in tracing these changes, exposes women's transition into a domestic manager of staff, family and home.

Jones points out that this change in women's domestic role can reflect changes in values which in turn can have ramifications for the ways in which we interpret community cookbooks, complicating the simple contribution of a recipe with notions of the expression of mastery, competence and specialized knowledge. As William Woys Weaver points out in his delightful *America Eats*, "quality of food and type of cookery

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<sup>52</sup> Faye E. Dudden *Serving Women: Household Service in Nineteenth Century America*. Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1983.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Owen Jones. "Food Choice, Symbolism, and Identity: Bread-and-Butter Issues for Folkloristics and Nutrition Studies" *Journal of American Folklore*. 120, no. 476 (2007): 129-177. Page 138.

was much more a sign of class in the nineteenth century than it is today."<sup>54</sup> For Jones, the procuring, preparing and eating of certain foods are practices which both reproduce identity (for individuals and familial, ethnic, religious and regional groups) and construct identity. A women's contribution to a community cookbook then, could be seen to function as a public statement as to her values and skill as a domestic manager and an assertion of personal identity.

### *Conclusions*

Scholarship about community cookbooks has just begun to emerge in the academic community. While the careful textual analysis of Bower and Theophano's work is most welcome and will provide tremendous guidance for historians in using community cookbooks as historical documents, it is only a beginning. Yet to be accomplished is an in depth investigation of a community cookbook. Since recipes are often attributed to particular women, local advertising solicited and a local printer chosen, there is much work to be done to find out exactly what it took for these women to produce a community cookbook. Who were those women? Can we find out where they lived? Who they were related to? What connections can we trace among the contributors to the book? What foods were commonly available and valued in their communities? Who solicited the advertising? Who negotiated with the printer? How were funds collected and distributed? What exactly were funds used for and who made the decision about how they were allocated? What did participation in the compilation mean to these women? For some community cookbooks, such as those put out by Suffragette groups, we may

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<sup>54</sup> William Woys Weaver. *America Eats: Forms of Edible Folk Art*. New York: Museum of American Folk Art, Harper and Row, 1989. Page7

feel the answers these questions are obvious but they are not. We do not really know what it took for nineteenth century women to make these cookbooks and what it meant to them.

Work such as that by Giesberg, Ginzberg and Dudden offer invaluable avenues of exploration which sheds light on the apparently common activity of compiling a community cookbook and suggests that there is more to it than we have previously acknowledged. And while food writers have valiantly kept the community cookbook in the public eye and championed their importance, it is past time that academic historians take up the study of these cookbooks and fully utilize them as the important historical documents they are.

### ***Theoretical Issues and Approaches***

Scholarship regarding women in nineteenth-century America has often been organized around and informed by the doctrine of "separate spheres". According to Barbara Welter, in her ground-breaking work, *The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860*,<sup>55</sup> mid-nineteenth century popular literature such as religious tracts, women's magazines and even cookbooks promulgated a "cult" of true womanhood that defined women in terms of four primary virtues. Those virtues were religious piety, sexual purity, submissiveness to all authority, and domesticity. These virtues constituted a woman's "sphere" of action exclusive to her and were the source of her womanly powers. Woman's power was thought to lie in being a positive moral force to her husband and

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<sup>55</sup> Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860". *American Quarterly*, 18, no. 2 (summer, 1966): 151-174.

children through her good example, the education of her children and through the exercise of merciful benevolence.

The virtue of domesticity was particularly prized by these publications since it managed to encompass the other virtues into one united space-the home with woman in it. This conflation of women and home has had lasting repercussions in American society and in historian's interpretations of the lives of nineteenth century women in particular. For Welter, the concept of "separate spheres" was indicative of the subjugation of women and so completely negative in its connotations.

Another early and influential article in women's history by Gerda Lerner outlines the evolution of approaches taken in women's studies.<sup>56</sup> The first level of inquiry she describes as "compensatory history" when historians report on the accomplishments of exceptional women in history-women whose lives and actions do not reflect the activities of most women in their historical milieu. The second level of inquiry accounts for the contributions of women to the dominant male culture including their status and oppression they may have been subjected to. Lerner calls this "contribution history" and says "what we have mostly done in writing contribution history is to describe what men in the past told women to do and what men in the past thought women should be."<sup>57</sup> For her, historical work focused on "woman's sphere" falls into this category which echoes Welter's negative assessment of the concept without entirely condemning it. The third

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<sup>56</sup> Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges". *Feminist Studies*, 3, no. 1-2 (autumn, 1975): 5-14.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* page 7.

level she describes as the "history of women's culture". This is history which asks about the actual experience of women from a female oriented consciousness.<sup>58</sup>

Linda Kerber, building on the work of Welter and Lerner, discusses how the understanding of the doctrine of "separate spheres" has evolved over time. In particular, she points out that the "concepts of separate spheres and of a public/private dichotomy offered ways of addressing women's history that employed social and cultural, as well as political, material."<sup>59</sup> In other words, instead of being a mere marker of subjugation and a part of Lerner's "contribution history", the study of separate spheres could be used as a way of focusing on the lives of women from their point of view, moving to Lerner's third level of women's history, "women's culture". Feminist historians did this by making innovative use of women's diaries, letters and the records of women's organizations as a way of entering into the "women's culture" of the nineteenth century.

Writing in the late 1980's, Kerber felt that women's history was moving into yet a new phase of development. She wrote:

The need to break out of the restrictive dualism of an oppressive term (women's sphere) and a liberating term (women's culture) has propelled what I think is a third stage in the development of the metaphor of separate spheres...historians now seek to show how women's allegedly "separate sphere" was affected by what

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid. Page 10.

<sup>59</sup> Linda K. Kerber. "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History" *The Journal of American History*, 75, no. 1 (June, 1988): 9-39. Page 14.

men did, and how activities defined by women in their own sphere influenced... what men might choose to do.<sup>60</sup>

More recent scholarship supports Kerber's early claim and also indicates far more interaction between the sexes than earlier works concerning "separate spheres" asserted.<sup>61</sup>

For the purposes of this thesis, the use of the concept of "separate spheres" offers a method for focusing on one key aspect of women's lives and actions—that of charity or benevolence. Before the Civil War, the doctrine of "separate spheres" interpreted a woman's acts of benevolence as a natural extension of her cardinal virtues. During the Civil War, however, with their men away to battle, women ran farms and businesses, actively organized to raise funds and necessary items for the soldiers, worked as nurses and even followed their men to war. It would be difficult to conceive of a greater affect men could have on women's sphere than to go to war. After the war, women's new found organizational skills found outlets in all sorts of political and moral movements which have been well documented and researched by historians.

For many women, however, it was back to the status quo. Kerber notes that, while the Progressive Era (beginning roughly 1870) saw tremendous participation of women in public life, they also "met unprecedented hostility and resistance that seems disproportionate..."<sup>62</sup> The community cookbook offered women a way to engage in public activity, spread their influence (by raising funds for activities they believed in),

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. page 18.

<sup>61</sup> See Cameron Lynne MacDonald and Karen V. Hansen, "Sociability and Gendered Spheres: Visiting Patterns in Nineteenth Century New England" *Social Science History*, 25, no. 4 (winter, 2001): 535-561.

<sup>62</sup> See Kerber, "'Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History", page 27.

utilize their formidable organizational skills all while remaining securely in the women's sphere of domesticity.

The concept of separate spheres offers a methodological framework that allows analysis of the evolution of women's benevolent activities during and after the Civil War. In particular, it offers a rich view of the community cookbook and its emergence after the Civil War as a fund raising tool of choice in communities throughout America.

### ***Methodology***

The decision to research community cookbooks as a historical topic quickly led to the discovery of the *Presbyterian Cookbook, Compiled by the Ladies of First Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio*<sup>63</sup> published in 1873 on the University of Michigan's Clement Library *Feeding America* website.<sup>64</sup> While some community cookbooks were published earlier in other states, the ladies of the First Presbyterian Church published the first known of in the state of Ohio. They were early adopters of a fundraising mechanism that is still in use in the United States today.

As mentioned previously in this work, Margaret Cook claimed that the first cookbook sold for charity was at the Philadelphia Sanitary Fair in 1864.<sup>65</sup> Not all that much has been published about the U.S. Sanitary Commission and even less has been published about community cookbooks. The few historians who have written about women's contributions to the Sanitary Commission believe that women's participation in the Sanitary Commission represented a shift in the way women engaged in charity work in

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<sup>63</sup> *Presbyterian Cookbook, compiled by the Ladies of the First Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio*. Dayton, Ohio: Oliver Crook, 1873. [cited 10 November 2007]; available from [http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book\\_29.cfm](http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/books/book_29.cfm)

<sup>64</sup> <http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks>

<sup>65</sup> See Cook, page 222.

their communities.<sup>66</sup> It seems possible that, perhaps, the work women did with the Sanitary Commission might help to explain the proliferation of community cookbooks after the Civil War.

Since the cookbook was compiled by "the ladies" of the church in Dayton, research about the history of Dayton, Ohio and surrounding areas of southwestern Ohio such as Cincinnati and Columbus represent important opportunities for understanding the broader cultural conditions and historical markers experienced by these ladies during and after the Civil War.<sup>67</sup> The choice of the *Presbyterian Cookbook* as a focus for the study of the emergence of the community cookbook yields a rich terrain for exploring the question "why cookbooks?"

### ***Primary Sources***

*Wright State University Libraries Special Collections and Archives, Dayton, Ohio*

MS-236 Patterson Family Papers, 1785-1960 (no restrictions)

A famous family in Dayton, the archive contains letters written to and family information about Mrs. J.J. Patterson, a contributor to the cookbook. There are also recipes in the archive. The archive will allow me to track the family's activities through the Civil War and after and will perhaps suggest friendships, family connections and religious affiliation that will illuminate individuals who participated in the cookbook.

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<sup>66</sup> See Judith Ann Giesberg. *Civil War Sisterhood: The U.S. Sanitary Commission and Women's Politics in Transition*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000 and Lori, D Ginzberg. *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics and Class in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century United States*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1990.

<sup>67</sup> For example, a Sanitary Fair was held in Cincinnati in the winter of 1863 which reported ladies throughout south west Ohio contributed to.

MS-256 Gebhart Family Papers, 1794-1930 (no restrictions)

Finding aid indicates there is family correspondence from the time frame I am looking for. Mrs. Gebhart is a contributor to the cookbook. I hope to utilize this archive in a similar manner to that outlined concerning the Patterson Family Papers.

MFM-139 First Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio, Records, 1804-1919

The records are actually the minutes of the church leader's meetings. It is my hope that I will find minutes directly pertaining to the community cookbook. Since it cost money to get the book published I am hoping that a discussion of how much the cookbook cost to publish will be included in the minutes. It is possible that the minutes will also reveal for what reason the cookbook was compiled, how much money it raised and who was involved in its organization and compilation.

MS-284 Schenck Family Papers, 1860-1895 (no restrictions)

The exceedingly famous Admiral Schenck and his wife both made contributions to the cookbook. There are letters from the time period I am looking for and information as well on other Dayton families that married into the Schenk family. I plan to utilize this archive in a similar manner to the Patterson and Gebhart archives already mentioned.

*Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio*

SC 1176: small photo collection

Series 2242: Reports from Sanitary Commission 1864-1865.

VFM 2402, 2490, 3089: Vertical file manuscript collection

This is a collection of materials related to the Great Western Sanitary Commission which sponsored the Great Western Sanitary Fair of Cincinnati. There is no finding aid so it is difficult to ascertain what materials are in the archive at present. However, I believe that I will find information regarding the Commission's charitable activities and accomplishments in the area. Hopefully, this will include information about Soldier's Aid Societies which were active in the Commission.

#### *Dayton Metro Library Manuscript Collections*

The Dayton Metro is the main public library of the city of Dayton. It maintains a local history room with a wide range of materials that could be of significance to my subject. Most of the collection is not represented in the on-line OPAC. I need to contact the archivist about sources that may be more closely related to my topic. Sources that can be found on-line include the following which could provide important, contemporary contextual information for my work.

#### *Archives*

MSS-837 Columbus Female Benevolent Society 1808-1980

This archive contains the society's administrative and financial records. Since this group was clearly active during the Civil War and after, its records could provide

valuable insight into the organization structure and activities undertaken by women's benevolent groups of the time.

#### VFM 382 Records of the Female Benevolent Society, Columbus, Ohio

This archive contains a "sketch" of their work. This group is also called the Women's Work of Charity in Columbus Ohio and was established in January 5, 1835. Having the records of two groups from the same time period will allow me to compare and contrast structure and activities of these groups offering me a more complete look at women's charitable work of the time.

#### *Books*

*A History of the First Presbyterian Church of Dayton, Ohio from 1845-1880.*

McDermont, Clark. Dayton, Ohio: Journal Book and Job Printing Establishment, 1880.

Undoubtedly this book will provide me with information concerning church leaders and projects near and dear to them. It is my hope that the cookbook project undertaken by the ladies of the church will also be covered. I believe I will also get an idea of the range of charitable activities undertaken by the church and its response to the Civil War.

#### *Ephemera*

The library possesses a collection of newspaper clippings from Dayton regarding the Civil War that date from April 1, 1861 to June 1, 1864. This collection has not been catalogued. It seems likely that the collection would include articles about the fair that was held by a variety of Dayton women's groups during the Civil War and perhaps other

charitable efforts as well. It is to be hoped that articles will provide some names of participants as well.

### *Maps*

Dayton Metro Public Library offers full access to a complete line of Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for Dayton, Ohio including the time the cookbook was published.

### *Historical Books*

*Centennial Portrait and Biographical Record of the City of Dayton and Montgomery County, Ohio Containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent Citizens Together with the Biographies and Portraits of the Presidents of the United States and Biographies of Former Governors of Ohio.* Conover, Frank, ed. Dayton, Ohio: A.W. Bower and Company, 1897. (Accessed November 8, 2007 at <http://daytonhistorybooksonline.com>)

This book offers biographical information about a number of men whose wives are contributors to the cookbook. This includes the names of their wives, date of marriage, number of children and their level of education, church affiliation and socio-economic status in the city.

*History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio: Their Past and Present.* Cincinnati, Ohio: S.B. Nelson and Company, Publishers, 1894. (Accessed November 7, 2007 at <http://www.heritagepursuit.com>)

Like many of the other books of this type I have looked at this book offers a wealth of biographical and historical information including information about the Great Western Sanitary Fair. It will be valuable as a source of information about

who exactly was involved with the Sanitary Fair and other charitable works during and after the Civil War.

Crew, Harvey W. *History of Dayton Ohio with Biographical Sketches of Some of its Pioneer and Prominent Citizens*. Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing, House Publishers, 1889. (Accessed November 8, 2007 at <http://daytonhistorybooksonline.com>)

This book offers detailed Civil War coverage including regiments recruited out of Dayton, and men who became officers. Of greater interest to this project is fairly detailed information about Soldiers' Aid Societies in Dayton including the names of those ladies heading up their committees (including a number of women who were involved in the community cookbook). Also included is some information regarding the types of charitable activities undertaken and the amount of funds that were raised.

*History of the Great Western Sanitary Fair*. Boyton, Charles Brandon. Cincinnati, C.F. Vent and Company, 1864.

Since the book was published so soon after the Great Western Sanitary Fair actually occurred in the winter of 1863 it is to be hoped that it contains details such as the names of women involved in the committees and organization of the fair. Greater information into the types of products made or services offered by women for the fair would also be of interest, most particularly if any recipes or pamphlets about cooking were produced. I also hope to find out how far away contributors came from since other records have said that contributors to the fair came from all over south west Ohio.

*Presbyterian Cookbook, Compiled by the Ladies of First Presbyterian Church, Dayton, Ohio.* Dayton, Ohio: Oliver Crook, 1873.

The cookbook itself is a tremendous source of information. While almost completely bare of narration, the cookbook does include some 162 contributor's names. This has offered a way to track down biographical information regarding the contributors and in so doing, develop a sense for the networks of friends and family women had in Dayton. The cookbook also offers considerable insight into the foods popularly eaten by this group of citizens and the cooking methods employed. The very structure of the book itself shows that the ladies who compiled it were familiar with professionally authored cookbooks of the same period with implications for literacy etc...

### ***Tentative Chapter Outline***

While necessarily quite preliminary, this outline of potential chapters demonstrates the overall arch of the thesis. I believe that the final document will contain more chapters as my research continues.

#### **Introduction:**

The introduction will consist of a revised historiography which introduces and analyzes the state of scholarship concerning the history of community cookbooks and women who published them. It will contain a statement of the core questions and working thesis of the work.

**Chapter One:** *The tradition of women's communal work and benevolent action.*

This chapter will introduce the community cookbook as in keeping with the tradition of women's communal work and charitable acts in the nineteenth century. The ways in which women participated in benevolence before the Civil War will be reviewed as well as nineteenth century concepts concerning "women's sphere" and women's perceived aptitude for benevolent work.

Chapter Two: *Benevolence and the Civil War: Soldiers' Aid Societies and the U.S. Sanitary Commission.*

This chapter will offer a brief overview of the U.S. Sanitary Commission's work and organizational structure during the Civil War (1861-1864). In particular, the focus of this work will be on the contribution of the Soldiers' Aid Societies which were locally organized women's groups which constituted the vast majority of the Sanitary Commission's volunteers and who ran the massive Sanitary Fairs in which the first community cookbook is thought to have been published. Archival material concerning the Great Western Sanitary Fair of Cincinnati, Ohio (1863) will be explored.

Chapter Three: *Charity and the Civil War in Dayton, Ohio.*

This chapter will delve deeply into the specific charitable activities undertaken by the citizens and most particularly, by the women of Dayton during the Civil War. Archival materials will be utilized to document the charitable activities of women including their participation on committees and leadership roles they undertook to raise funds for Union soldiers. The small fair that was held to raise funds in Dayton will be explored as well as documentary evidence that Dayton women contributed to the Great Western Sanitary Fair as well.

#### Chapter Four: *After the War: The Ladies of the Presbyterian Cookbook.*

This chapter will utilize the minutes of the First Presbyterian Church of Dayton and other historical materials including the community cookbook itself to establish that many of the contributors and organizers of the cookbook were active in organized charitable work during the Civil War. Archival materials will be utilized to introduce some of the women involved in the cookbook demonstrating that a strong network of kin, family marriages and friends existed among them. The process of compiling and publishing the cookbook will be documented if possible with an emphasis on both the communal nature and the highly organized effort publishing a community cookbook takes.

Conclusion and epilogue.

#### ***Timeline***

As I will note in the resource requirements, the best time for me to travel to do research at the archival sources I have identified will be immediately after the end of the Spring 2008 semester (mid-May) delaying some of my thesis work. It is my intention to take a full course load during the spring semester in order to free up time for my dissertation work beginning next summer.

Completing, as best as I am able, the archival research at the beginning of the summer allows for a of couple months before Fall 2008 to organize my notes and identify areas requiring further research. I will also work on a detailed outline of the thesis during the summer to facilitate the writing of it and also to bring to light areas requiring further research or historical support.

It is my intention to take LIBR 299 Fall 2008. Having had the summer to do so much vital ground work I feel confident of keeping to a schedule of writing each chapter within a six to eight week time frame and completing revisions. Below is a tentative timeline for completion of the thesis.

*Spring Semester 2008:* Revise proposal, identify thesis chair and form committee. Secure official approval for thesis proposal. The required NIH course has already been completed as of this writing.

*Summer 2008:* Archival research to be undertaken in Ohio.

*Fall 2008:* Take LIBR 299 and file necessary paperwork concerning graduation. While it is possible the thesis may be completed by the end of Spring semester 2009, I believe it prudent to assume a graduation date of August 2009 instead which allows for a few more months to complete the thesis. A preliminary schedule for chapter deadlines is presented here which allows for flexibility and takes into account the amount of work I anticipate for various chapters of the thesis.

September 1-mid October: Introduction

Mid-October-end November: Chapter One

December: Chapter Two

January to end of February: Chapter Three

March to end of April: Chapter Four

May to early June: Conclusion and Epilogue

The time tables for the various graduation deadlines, including thesis submissions are not yet posted for the Summer of 2009. For graduation by Summer 2008 the completed thesis must be handed in by July 7, 2008. It seems reasonable to assume that a similar time frame will apply in summer 2009. With the above schedule I feel confident of meeting that deadline with ample time to write a significant and original thesis.

### ***Resource Requirements***

I will need to travel to Ohio to do archival research. Unfortunately, the best time for me to do this is immediately after the end of the Spring 2008 semester which will delay much of my thesis work. I am currently looking at the time period of roughly May 19 to June 6, 2008 to do research.

As of this writing I have not ascertained what, if any archival resources may be available in Cincinnati so I am focusing on what it will cost to travel to Dayton and Columbus for about two and a half weeks. A round trip flight to Dayton in late spring will cost roughly \$400. Accommodations which are convenient to locations I need to get to for my research will cost approximately \$50 a night and so about \$800 for two and a half weeks. I travel to the Midwest every couple years and can say with confidence that daily expenses for food and transportation will be much less than in the Bay Area. I do not drive however so if there are locations I cannot reach with public transportation cab fare could add up. I estimate that roughly \$30 a day will suffice.

I already know that many of the materials I will be accessing in archives are not available for photocopying so it is hard to gauge what photocopying expenses will be. At an average 25 cents a page even a hundred pages of copies would only cost \$25. I

believe it the expense that is the least of my worries. It will be quite easy to travel between Columbus and Dayton by bus as they are not that far apart. Cincinnati is even closer so I plan to make Dayton my base of operations. It is fair to say that the trip will cost approximately \$2,000 in total.

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