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## As American as Apple Pie: The History of American Apple Pie and Its Development into a National Symbol

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As American as Apple Pie:  
The History of American Apple Pie and Its Development into a National Symbol

Senior Project submitted to  
The Division of Social Studies  
of Bard College  
by  
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York  
May 2014



*For my family*

*...and for those who  
know how to cut fat into flour.*



## *Acknowledgements*

I would first like to acknowledge the fact that this project has made me a total pie snob. I am sorry.

It is with immense gratitude that I acknowledge the support and help of Professor Christian Crouch. I'm forever indebted to her for introducing me to the histories of food and material cultures as well as the joys of Bundt cake. I would also like to express deep gratitude to Professor Mark Lytle who has been absolutely instrumental to this project. Without his patience and gentle counsel, this project probably would not exist.

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*If I were to design a coat of arms for our country,  
a pie would be the main symbol. It would appear with a  
background of wild berry bushes, —and orchards.  
For pie is part of our history and tradition.  
By right of inheritance, adoption, and improvement, pies have  
become distinctively American.  
Every American home has its favorite pie.*

—Betty Crocker





## **Table of Contents**

Introduction .....	1
Chapter 1 - Roots: The Earliest American Apple .....	9
Chapter 2 - Will it Crumble? .....	29
Chapter 3 – Made with Love .....	51
Conclusion .....	73
Appendix A .....	77
Appendix B .....	81
Bibliography .....	83



## Introduction

In the 1996 film *Michael*, which stars John Travolta as the eponymous archangel, a crew of motley professionals undergoes tests of faith and the heart as they attempt to bring Michael back with them to Chicago. Travelling through Iowa into Illinois, the trip meanders. At one point, the gang stops at a diner and orders two slices of every pie on the menu, including apple pie and a dozen others. As they dig in, Michael poses the question: “What is it about pie?” The group responds readily. “There’s nothing prettier than pie with its scalloped edges and slits in the top for the heat to escape.” And another, the stodgier of the pair of journalists, adds that “Pie gives you the sense that you’re a square person living in a square country.” The heads nod around the table before another jumps in to remark that “A pie says home.” and, finally, the expression comes: “As American as apple pie.”<sup>1</sup> Neatly stated as a fact, no one at the table objects.

Most Americans, even almost two decades after the film debuted, would not object to the phrase “As American as apple pie.” Apple pie has enjoyed a special status in American for decades, although some might say centuries, and it has come to mean much more than dessert. The United States of America’s Department of Defense features a section on their website devoted to “Symbols of America” and among the ranks of the American flag, the Statue of Liberty, baseball, the Declaration of Impendence, and the cowboy is apple pie.<sup>2</sup> It is the only food on the list—not even hot dogs make the cut—and the fact that it is food is truly extraordinary, for few things are so ephemeral. Apple pie must be made and re-made and each manifestation will always be slightly different, even

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<sup>1</sup> *Michael*, directed by Nora Ephron, New Line Cinema, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> “Symbols of America,” U.S. Department of Defense, last modified 2008, accessed October 5, 2013, [http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2008/0708\\_symbols/applepie.html](http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2008/0708_symbols/applepie.html).

if prepared by the same person in the same way. Compared to steadfast American institutions, like the Declaration of Independence, apple pie is much more mutable. Furthermore, it depends on the participation of the individual and that self-expression to retain its symbolic status and resonance. While all apple pies have the same basic construction—a pie plate is lined with pastry dough, piled with pared and quartered apples that have been spiced and sweetened to the maker’s taste, covered again either by pastry dough or a crumb topping, and baked until the pastry is browned—there is always room for variation and idiosyncrasies.

As a national symbol, apple pie is multifaceted and convoluted. As that scene in *Michael* suggests, it is both national and familial, private with public connotations, and full of associations that proliferate throughout popular culture. Just in the last fifty years the nation has seen the likes of the film *American Pie* (1999) as well as the Don McLean song of the same name, both which address pie more obliquely than others. Films like *The Waitress* (2007), which features a woman finding solace in pie, demonstrate the humanizing effect of pie in narrative as well as its homey, nearly rustic, qualities. There is also the cartoon trope where a character steals a cooling pie from a windowsill. From casual references in cartoons, television, and literature apple pie pops up anywhere and everywhere. And why should people be surprised? Pie is dually revered and commonplace, and popular media can play off its many long established and intertwined associations. Yet it is not even in media alone that apple pie proliferates; fortunately the nation gets to savor the pie too.

According to the digital archives of *The New York Times*, apple pie peaked in the 1980s, but with the heritage, local, artisanal, food movements of the last decade, public

interest in pie has been reinvigorated. Dozens of cookbooks published in the last twenty years are devoted exclusively to pie baking. Ken Haedrich's *Pie*, Teeny Lamothe's *Teeny's Tour of Pie*, Warren Brown's *Pie Love*, and Michele Stuart's *Perfect Pies* represent just a smattering of the genre. Off the page, hip, new, pie shops that have popped up across the country—such as Brooklyn's Four & Twenty Blackbirds—succeed with their charming menus—which change seasonally, of course—and rustic-chic décor in making their pies feel storied and ancient despite their fresh baking. Yet few care to investigate much further beyond confirming that the contents of their plate is made on site and made of only locally-sourced, fair-trade, and organic ingredients. The preoccupation with heritage construction and content detracts from the symbolic associations of the slice of the “As American apple pie” pie that they have just consumed.

Those who do seek symbolic roots, like the Department of Defense, see “As American as apple pie” as being a staple since the nation's founding, yet this assumption is not wholly factual. One can trace apple pie back to the nation's roots and therefore claim, retrospectively, that it has always been crucial to the American identity, but this ignores America's disparate culture lasting into the late nineteenth century. Although apple pie has always been a more egalitarian dish—its recipes and ingredients allow for it to be accessible to a wide range of people—it was not truly accessible to the entire nation until national infrastructure was developed. Railways, and eventually interstates, made food and material goods more available and less expensive across the nation. So although apple pie was altogether present throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries it was not until the advent of a mass consumer culture that apple pie gained the national status and symbolic associations that are now taken for granted.

The history of apple pie is complicated for many reasons, but at its core apple pie has no specific moment of origin and has no singular champion. Whereas apple pie à la mode has its own founding myth, the etiology of American apple is long, twisting. Apple pie has neither a definitive nor a complete history to provide a guide to the novice, albeit intrepid, researcher. Accordingly there are holes in both knowledge and resources as well as significant gaps in time. Sources best suited for this project are illusive and difficult to access and in this project there are basically two qualities. Whereas the beginning of the project heavily depends on the time's published cookbooks, the latter half, focusing on late nineteenth through twentieth century has a broader range of sources available, as the nation was actually interested and aware of apple pie. For example, evidence corroborating the rise of apple pie was relatively scarce until *The New York Times* archives proved to be a rich source that marked the nation's fixation. Yet that same archive was not nearly so useful for the nineteenth century and so that time relies on the works and cookbooks of well-established and renowned writers. Where applicable, those cookbooks are supplemented with additional material such as outside recipes, newspaper articles, and letters. Although cookbooks have been absolutely instrumental to this project's development, they act as prescriptive records of a time's cookery rather than records of actual practice. While one can find evidence of women's cooking practices in manuscript cookbooks—Janet Theophano's book *Eat My Words* offers thorough insight on the subject—they are difficult to access in great volume. Furthermore, published cookbooks, by their very nature, reached a larger audience and so wield greater national influence.

Each chapter focuses on a period of twenty to thirty years to frame a significant, often deeply affective, national moment. In times of hardship and strife, people tend towards their most basic comforts and given the association of apple pie and the home, as a “Haven in a heartless world,” it seemed a fitting mode for the project.<sup>3</sup> Moving chronologically from the nation’s founding, the project is interested how apple pie grew and adapted alongside the nation and if it consistently reflects the contemporary values of the Americans who bake it.

The first chapter, “Roots,” focuses on the period between 1796 and the 1820s and it details some history of pie, cookbooks, and apples themselves before addressing the evolution and dissemination of apple pie in North America. With the Constitution signed, many Americans—some disappointed that the Revolutionary War had failed to be socially revolutionary—had to figure out how to participate civically in their new republic. For some women, that meant insuring that the next generation of American citizens would uphold the nation’s foundational values. The chapter examines the development of the Newtown Pippin cultivar and the first American cookbook, with a focus of Americanization, early apple pie associations, and its proliferation across the new nation.

The second chapter, “Will It Crumble?” addresses apple pie in the tumultuous decades of the mid-nineteenth century. Beginning in the 1840s this chapter sees the advent of the Industrial Revolution, the South’s succession, the California Gold Rush, and an influx of immigration. Throughout all the pioneering endeavor, the nation struggled to retain a sense of normalcy and nationhood. As the nation became more

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World*, W.W. Norton & Company, 1995.



centralized, thanks in part to the development of railroads and industrial centers, some influential urbanites, especially men, began to idealize the agrarian experience and its culinary traditions. Yet as the cookbook developed as a female genre, whatever the locale, the writing and advice began to trend toward science, lending their recipes and household guides greater authority. This male trend towards idealization and freedom, while women trended towards rationalism and technology likely had to do with the way men and women interacted with gendered spaces. Despite all the change—politically, socially, and economically—apple pie remained a consistent feature of written works and, in some areas, began to develop a greater cultural currency.

“Made with Love,” the third chapter, spans the 1940s and the 1950s. Coming off an era of economic boom and bust, America had just begun to recover and return to normalcy when Pearl Harbor was bombed in 1941 and the nation entered the Second World War. Of course, the twentieth century brought with it more than economic crisis and global conflict, it also marked the rise of mass production, consumption, and media. As those forces homogenized American culture, advancing kitchen technology and corporate marketing routinized the expectations and roles of American women.. With many turning towards the home as a source of comfort throughout economic uncertainty and the chaos of war, the nation’s women had to find ways in the kitchen to balance their national and familial duties. Eleanor Roosevelt and Betty Crocker modeled this domestic ingenuity for many American women. Others turned towards apple pie. With its ties to the founding moment, its agrarian and homey associations, and the availability of its ingredients, apple pie was primed for its ascent to the ranks of national symbols. While it is impossible to pin down exactly when the nation began to conceive of anything “as

American as apple pie,” the symbolic status was most likely achieved during the first few decades of the twentieth century.

It also should be noted that the project is largely skewed towards the experiences of white, middle/upper-class, Northerners who authored many of the works this project examines. A wider study of how different races and socio-economic groups interact with and approach apple pie is necessary to constructing a more complete history of apple pie’s evolution. Yet, at the very least, by exploring the development of the relationship between the American people and this pie, cookbook culture, consumerism, and national iconography this project hopes to better realize apple pie’s nuances and implications in the land of amber waves of grain.



## 1

**Roots:****The Earliest American Apple Pies**

Colonial America and the American Revolution enjoy sacred status as the point of origin for many of America's most poignant symbolism. Among the ranks of lasting cultural fixtures of this time, like the Liberty Bell and the Declaration of Independence, is also the humble apple pie. Fundamentally ephemeral, more average than anything else, the apple pie was a fixture of everyday life. A common item in the diet of English colonists—that is inherited from England rather than invented in the New World—the American apple pie's origin story is not dissimilar to this nation's founding.

By breaking down apple pie into its component parts—the surrounding pastry and the apples which make up the filling—one can better understand the evolution of the whole. For the former, cookbooks provide a reliable measure of a recipe's consistency or change over time. Apples, however, are not as formally documented and their history depends on personal accounts, estate records, and transactions. While one cannot definitively comment on the state of apple pie in colonial America, apple pies were certainly made—quality depending on the cook and resources available—in the Northeast United States and the Northwest Territory, where apple orchards were most abundant.

*Newly American: Women & Cookbooks, 1796-1820*

In 1796, Amelia Simmons published the first cookbook written by an American, for North America.<sup>4</sup> While many American women would have written their own personal cookbooks by hand—and if they could neither read nor write, some women would commit their recipes to memory and transmit them orally to future generations—Simmons was the first American to publish hers.<sup>5</sup> In the century leading up to the publication of Simmons's cookbook, *American Cookery*, a few other women had tackled a form that had existed for centuries. These published texts not only serve as great records of what people were cooking, but in how cultures perceived the kitchen and its associated labors. As *American Cookery* developed from an English model, it is necessary to understand the form from which Simmons developed the first American cookbook and, in doing so, recorded the first recipe for American apple pie.

Facing the relative unknown on a new continent, some literate colonists brought guides that contained detailed farming advice and principles to follow for domestic work. Thomas Tusser's *Five Hundreth Pointes of good Husbandrie* was first published in 1573 and went through multiple reprints, a few copies of which crossed the Atlantic to North America in the seventeenth century.<sup>6</sup> What set Tusser's book apart from others was the section devoted to "Huswiferie." Written primarily in rhyming couplets, the section on "Huswiferie" is more interested in reinforcing society's expectations of the housewife, emphasizing overall thriftiness in the kitchen rather than teaching the housewife new skills or recipes.<sup>7</sup> While Tusser's text validates the work of the housewife and provides a

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<sup>4</sup> Sherrie A. Inness, *Dinner Roles: American Women and Culinary Culture* (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 2001), 10.

<sup>5</sup> Carol Fisher, *The American Cookbook: A History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2006), 6.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "Saue droppings and skimmings, how euer ye doo,/for medicine for cattell, for cart and for shoo." (Thomas Tusser, *Five Hundred Pointes of Good Husbandrie*, The ed. of 1580 collated with those of

way for modern readers to understand how women's labor fit into the household's economy, the housewife herself would have to look elsewhere for a book that catered more to the demands of her existence.

Some housewives, seeking a more complete guide to household duties than Tusser's offered, turned to Gervase Markham's seventeenth century *The English Huswife, Containing the Inward and Outward Virtues Which Ought to Be in a Complete Woman*. From how to treat the plague to a cure for headaches to a guide for making "A broth for any fresh fish," Markham addresses the day-to-day life of the housewife with care and clarity.<sup>8</sup> Markham writes so thoroughly that Mary Tolford Wilson believes the text would have been "invaluable" to the average colonial woman.<sup>9</sup> *The English Huswife*, aside from being a great wealth of knowledge, is also one of the earliest records of apple pie in cookbooks found in America; in that way, it helps delineate the process of Americanizing the staples of English cuisine.

For example, Markham's recipe for "A pippin pie," pippin was a catchall term for apples, reflects the lack of standardization in recipes. His apple pie is extremely atypical and resembles a dumpling-pie hybrid in that he calls for whole, cored apples, which is a style of apple pie this project has not encountered anywhere else. Furthermore, his recipe for "A pippin tart" is much more like an American apple pie than a tart. Most tarts, by the time Simmons was writing and beyond, have a bottom layer of pastry with no top crust. Gervase's apple tart recipe, unlike his pie, specifically instructs the cook to take apples

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1573 and 1577. Together with a reprint from the unique copy in the British Museum, of a hundreth good pointes of husbandrie, 1557. ed. (1557; repr., London: Trübner, 1878), 176.)

<sup>8</sup> Gervase Markham, *The English Housewife*, ed. Michael R. Best, facsimile ed. (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 79.

<sup>9</sup> Mary Tolford Wilson, "Amelia Simmons Fills a Need: American Cookery, 1796," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third series, 14, no. 1 (January 1957): 18.

and “pare them, and then divide them just in the halves, and take out the cores clean” before setting them in the pastry-lined dish. After spicing the fruit, Markham calls for the cook to “cover the coffin”—the pastry lined baking dish—which fundamentally takes the pippin tart into pie territory.<sup>10</sup> Over time, expectations of pies and tarts, as well as the recipes for them, would become standardized. Radical variations like Markham’s “A pippin pie” would then fade out of practice. Yet at the same time that standardization, both in expectations of recipes and cookbooks themselves, would essentially guarantee the survival of apple pie.

As more and more women became literate, there was greater demand for literature, like Markham’s book, that was designed and written specifically for them. As soon as men had established the genre, many women—at least those who were literate—took up the pen themselves. For who knew how to be a good “Huswife” than the housewife herself? Who better knew the ins and outs of apple pies and tarts than those who made them? The gender of the author may not have affected the content of early household manual/cookbook hybrids, but the fact that women themselves become the published authorities on their own labor is significant. While it would be reductionist to suggest that women all had the same experiences within the household, all had to learn how to cook. Cooking was wholly necessary to the family’s economy and survival. Even if one was wealthy and could afford servants, the woman of the house must have enough know-how in the kitchen to instruct a domestic servant to cook to her family’s tastes. As female authors took control of these cookbooks and began to shape larger dialogues about the societal expectations of their sex, many books became more practical in their prescriptions.

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<sup>10</sup> Markham, *The English Housewife*, 105.

Among these female cookbook authors is Sussannah Carter, who published *The Frugal Housewife, or, Complete Woman Cook* as early as 1756 in England. Her book was then reprinted in the American colonies in 1772.<sup>11</sup> Subsequent printings in North America suggest that this text was quite popular although it borrowed, as some scholars say was common, from Hannah Glasse's *The Art of Cookery* which was first published in 1747. Carter's recipes for apple pie, which appears in the 1803 edition of *The Frugal Housewife*—an edition that includes, as a reaction to success of Amelia Simmon, a section devoted to North American cookery—is a verbatim reproduction of Glasse's.

Make a good puff paste crust, lay some round the sides of the dish, pare and quarter your apples, and take out the cores; lay a row of apples thick, throw in half the sugar you intend for your pie; mince a little lemon-peel fine, throw a few cloves, here and there one, then the rest of your apples, and the rest of your sugar. You must sweeten to your palate, and squeeze in a little lemon juice. Boil the peeling of the apples and the cores in fair water, with a blade of mace till it is very good; strain it, and boil the syrup with sugar till it is rich; pour it into your pie, put on your upper crust, and bake it. You may put in a little quince or marmalade, if you please.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the differences in their apple pie recipes—Simmons's recipe is more minimalistic—a majority of Amelia Simmons's text is also taken directly from Sussannah Carter. While today such plagiarism would come at the cost of reputation and lawsuits, historians contend that this practice was not atypical. Even ministers borrowed works from each other, so for women to do the same was probably not frowned upon. Rather, this recipe compilation and tweaking reflects a long tradition of personal, or familial, manuscript cookbooks. To take recipes, either from print sources or family or

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<sup>11</sup> Wilson, "Amelia Simmons Fills a Need," 20.

<sup>12</sup> Sussannah Carter, *The Frugal Housewife, or Complete Woman Cook;...Also The Making of English Wines*. (New York: G. & R. Waite, no. 64, Maiden-Lane, 1803),142.



friends, and record them by hand for future use was a common practice.<sup>13</sup> Granted, these manuscripts and cookbooks require literate women, otherwise recipes would have to be passed orally or through practice.<sup>14</sup> Fortunately, with the rise of Protestantism—and especially Puritanism in colonial America—more and more women were able to read and write.<sup>15</sup>

With rising literacy in American women and the establishment of the cookbook genre, the new republic was primed for Amelia Simmons when she published *American Cookery* in 1796. Prior to Simmons's publishing debut, all recipes had been originally written for the English and their lifestyle. Yet many food items available in England were not commonplace in America and by the Revolutionary War, and more specifically the ratification of the Constitution in 1787, housewives living in the United States were decidedly not English. Simmons, embracing the spirit of the time, was the first to formalize American recipes. Developed by an American for Americans, her work became exceptionally popular in the new republic.

Simmons, an orphan with an acute awareness of social strata and class, claimed that it was her mission in life to help others like her.<sup>16</sup> She wrote in the prologue to *American Cookery*:

As this treatise is calculated for the improvement of the rising generation of Females in America, the Lady of fashion and fortune will not be displeased, if many hints are suggested for the more general and universal knowledge of those females in this country, who by the loss of their parents, or other unfortunate circumstances, are reduced to the necessity of going into families in the line of domestics, or taking refuge with their

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<sup>13</sup> Wilson, "Amelia Simmons Fills a Need," 16.

<sup>14</sup> Fisher, *The American Cookbook: A History*, 6.

<sup>15</sup> There is an emphasis in Protestant sects that one must be able to read and interpret the Bible themselves. According, Protestants valued literacy in all people.

<sup>16</sup> Wilson, "Amelia Simmons Fills a Need," 20.

friends or relations, and doing those things which are really essential to the perfecting them as good wives, and useful members of society.<sup>17</sup>

In reaching out to aid other women who lacked the knowledge that was typically passed down through traditional family models, Simmons seeks to level the playing field of the less fortunate. Furthermore the patriotic lilt to Simmons's prologue is not surprising given that the nation in which her imagined "good wives, and useful members of society" inhabited was so new. George Washington was elected only four years prior to *American Cookery*'s publication and the Constitution signed less than a decade prior. Historian Jan Lewis claimed that "one of the objectives of the Revolutionary movement was to develop and maintain the virtue of the citizenry. Women were assigned and claimed a role in this endeavor, not as citizens themselves, but through their influence upon men, principally as wives, but also as mothers."<sup>18</sup> Simmons emphasis on being "good wives" and "useful" to society emphasizes the rise of Republican Motherhood at the turn of the century. One way for women to directly influence the men in their lives and demonstrate their patriotism was through cooking.

A second edition of *American Cookery* was printed the same year as the original release, this edition was published in Albany rather than Hartford, and featured new recipes such as "Liberty Cake" and "Election Cake." While some wives and mothers were fortunate enough to have the time and wealth to afford the extravagancies involved in cake making—especially these celebratory cakes Simmons describes—others could not. Apple pie, although a more egalitarian option, did not have the same status or patriotic flair. Yet apple pie was a consistent force throughout both the 1796 editions,

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<sup>17</sup> Amelia Simmons, *American Cookery* (1796; repr., Hartford: Printed for Simeon Butler, 1798), prologue.

<sup>18</sup> Jan Lewis, "Women and the American Revolution," *OAH Magazine of History* 8, no. 4 (Summer 1994): 24.

which speaks to its cultural relevance. Whereas Liberty Cake and Election cake were new forms to celebrate a new nation, apple pie was a holdover from colonial days. Karen Hess, in an introduction to a facsimile of the second edition of *American Cookery*, wrote that the book was a “bringing together of certain native American products and English culinary traditions.”<sup>19</sup> Whereas Hess likely refers to the increased use of corn meal, she can also be read as referring to the apple varieties developed in North America itself. Although imported, they are native to the nation and exist nowhere else. Historian Carl Degler too believes that part of what defines America is the fact that the nation, rather than repudiate its colonial past, which was not uncommon in terms of revolutions, colonial America was embraced as part of broader the national narrative.<sup>20</sup> The lingering Englishness in cookbooks and apple pie only served as evidence of the process of becoming American itself and so became vestiges of the War for Independence.

While Simmons’s cookbook resembled many of its English precursors, and in some instances copied them verbatim, she embraced and moved beyond those forms to offer some cultural commentary. Not restricted to her prologue, Simmons wrote on the relationship between food and society. Notably, she devoted more space to the apple than any other fruit in a section aptly titled, “Fruits.” She wrote:

*Apples*, are still more various, yet rigidly retain their own species, and are highly useful in families, and ought to be more universally cultivated, excepting in the most compactest cities. There is not a single family but might set a tree in some otherwise useless spot, which might serve the two fold use of shade and fruit; on which 12 or 14 kinds of fruit trees might easily be engrafted, and essentially preserve the orchard from the intrusions of boys, &c. which is too common in America. If the boy who

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<sup>19</sup> Karen Hess, “Historical Notes,” introduction to *American Cookery*, by Amelia Simmons (Albany: C.R. Webster, 1796; Bedford, MA: Applewood Books, 1996), xv.

<sup>20</sup> Carl N. Degler, *Out of Our Past: The Forces that Shaped Modern America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 79.

thus planted a tree, and guarded and protected it in a useless corner, and carefully engrafted different fruits, was to be indulged free access into orchards, whilst the neglectful boy was prohibited--how many millions of fruit trees would spring into growth--and what a saving to the union. The net saving would in time extinguish the public debt, and enrich our cookery.<sup>21</sup>

The social and economic virtues that Simmons associated with the cultivation of apple trees, as well as the general tone of self-improvement, goes hand in hand with the Protestant work ethic. Yet what is most spectacular about this passage is the fact that Amelia Simmons imagined the apple as being capable of more than “enrich[ing] our cookery.” She found a potential cure to a social ailment—young boys stealing in orchards—and a mode to achieve nationwide economic stability. Retrospectively, one knows that her projections were outlandish, but her capacity to recognize the potential value of the apple to the nation, both in cooking and otherwise, is an ideological forerunner to the status and associations America apple pie would begin to develop a century later.

### *The American Apple*

Seeking to bring a bit of home to the New World frontier, some of the earliest English colonists were eager to cultivate apples, a long-established staple of the average rural-agrarian diet in England.<sup>22</sup> The English first attempted to bring young grafted trees across the Atlantic, but most saplings died en route or in the harsh New England winter. Grafting, as a technology, was developed in approximately the second millennium B.C.E.

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<sup>21</sup> Simmons, *American Cookery*, 16-17.

<sup>22</sup> Frances Phipps, *Colonial Kitchens, Their Furnishings, and Their Gardens* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1972), 122.

by the Chinese and allowed for the asexual reproduction of favored trees and their fruit.<sup>23</sup>

With grafting, orchardists could not only propagate specific apple varieties, but also select for fruit that was sweeter, larger, and had a better flesh to core ratio than would occur naturally. So while the colonists first attempted to bring over specific apple varieties in the form of these young grafted trees, seeds made the voyage with much less fuss.

Compared to grafted trees, planting from seed has a huge degree of variability. The domestic apple, *Malus pumila*, is so heterozygous<sup>24</sup>, meaning that there is great opportunity for the expression of many different genes, that an apple tree grown from seed will not resemble its parent tree.<sup>25</sup> This heterozygosity often means, but does not guarantee, that the fruit grown from seed is not as choice as that from grafted tree. Furthermore, given Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection, trees grown from seed that would survive to maturity would be better suited to New England than anything transplanted across the Atlantic. Crossbreeding these seed-grown apple trees with native crabapple trees, further bolstered the apple tree's ability to withstand the North American climate. Yet, apple trees only began to flourish in North America after the importation and introduction of honeybees into orchards, which helped cross-pollinate the trees.<sup>26</sup>

While English varieties would eventually make their way stateside, the apple seeds planted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—and beyond, as well—yielded some distinctly American varieties such as the Northern Spy, Jonathan, and Newtown

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<sup>23</sup> Michael Pollan, *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's Eye View of the World* (New York: Random House, 2001), 12.

<sup>24</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary defines a heterozygote as "A diploid individual that has different alleles at one or more genetic loci." Humans are also heterozygous, it allows for genetic variability.

<sup>25</sup> Pollan, *The Botany of Desire*, 12.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

Pippin.<sup>27</sup> In taking the base materials from England to start from scratch in a new land so that one may produce something new and separate is not unique to the apple seed, but extends into much of colonial, and post-colonial, American culture as one has seen with cookbooks. By examining the Newtown Pippin and John “Johnny Appleseed” Chapman, one can understand the Americanization of the apple and understand its relationship with the fledgling nation’s frontier. Of course in these accounts of the Newtown Pippin and Johnny Appleseed, one can examine the practical relationships the new nation had with the apple and apple pie in contrast to the prescriptive and ideological modes of cookbooks.

Apples are typically named in three ways: for place, for taste, or for person. The Newtown Pippin, falls into the first category. Thought to have been first cultivated on Long Island in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, the Newtown Pippin, became one of the first commercially popular apples in the United States by the end of the eighteenth century. It was cultivated by chance from a seedling in the Moore Family Orchard in Newtown, Long Island who described it as having a “firm, crisp, juicy flesh,” as well as a “clean, highly aromatic flavor, a blend of pine, citrus and walnut...”<sup>28</sup> The Newtown Pippin’s texture and unique sweetness, which developed more acutely when it was left to age a few months after harvest, helped popularize its cultivar across a blossoming nation. Although predominantly grown in New York State, George Washington cultivated Newtown Pippins at Mount Vernon as did Thomas Jefferson at Monticello. Jefferson’s orchards contained eighteen North American varieties and of those specialized in only four varieties of apples, two of which were purposed for cider,

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<sup>27</sup> Ken Haedrich and Mike Berst, *Apple Pie Perfect* (n.p.: Harvard Common Press, 2002), xix.

<sup>28</sup> David Karp, "It's Crunch Time for the Venerable Pippin," *New York Times*, November 5, 2003.

which was a staple of Jefferson's table. The other two varieties, the Esopus Spitzenberg and Newtown Pippin, were considered to be dessert apple cultivars, and would be served at the table raw. The Newtown Pippin's reputation, and subsequent classification, as a dessert apple was not a phenomenon rooted in Monticello, but stuck with this Pippin wherever it went.

An English pomologist, Robert Hogg, also describes it as "A dessert apple" and argues "when [it is] in perfection, [it] is not to be surpassed."<sup>29</sup> Benjamin Franklin shipped Newtown Pippin apples to himself while he was in England in 1759 and some credit him with the introduction of this apple to the English palette.<sup>30</sup> American botanist John Bartram supplied another botanist in England, Peter Collinson, with Newtown Pippin scionwood and appeared on the Horticultural Society of London's select list of apples, yet those grown in England paled in comparison to their American counterparts. In 1838, Queen Victoria was introduced to the Newtown Pippin by way of Andrew Stevenson, who hailed from the same county as Thomas Jefferson where the Newtown Pippin was already exceptionally popular.<sup>31</sup> Queen Victoria lifted a tariff on the importation of apples and by 1898 imported Newtown Pippins sold at three times the cost of other American apples in Liverpool, England.<sup>32</sup>

While clearly favored by the aristocracy, from Washington—the premier American president—to the Queen of England, the Newtown Pippin lends itself to the palettes of the well-to-do, but the apple, as pomologist James Fitz suggests, "is our

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<sup>29</sup> Robert Hogg, *The Apple and Its Varieties, Etc.* (Groombridge & Sons, 1859), 141.

<sup>30</sup> Karp, "It's Crunch Time for the Venerable Pippin."

<sup>31</sup> Peter J. Hatch, *The Fruits and Fruit Trees of Monticello* (University of Virginia Press, 1998), 73.

<sup>32</sup> Annie Marie Chaker, "Before the Mac, Vintage Apples," *The Wall Street Journal* (New York, NY), October 27, 2010, Food & Drink.  
<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303467004575574262924513410>.

democratic fruit.”<sup>33</sup> While the wealthy could help propagate certain cultivars, like the Newtown Pippin, the apple would have been available to everyone, including the boys plaguing the orchards Amelia Simmons’s describes in *American Cookery*.<sup>34</sup> Even if one were not cultivating apples themselves, apples still would have been widely available. John Pintard, for example, was the founder of the New York Historical Society and can be described as a nineteenth century food enthusiast. Pintard, like many Americans, was quite taken with the Newtown Pippin. Although Pintard rubbed elbows with the political elite of his day and founded the New York Historical Society as well as the Massachusetts Historical Society, he was imprisoned for debt in 1792 after his financial involvements with William Duer turned sour.<sup>35</sup> After eight years of financial turmoil and time spent in and out of prison, Pintard was able to fully declare bankruptcy in 1800 and could begin his life anew.<sup>36</sup> Given his social status and reputation, he was able to bounce back from his financial troubles. Furthermore, in his faithful writings to his daughter, Eliza Noel Pintard Davidson—who lived in New Orleans with her husband and children—it appears that he lived a fairly comfortable life as he could afford to ship Eliza New England specialties regularly.

In 1820, Pintard notes that he sent her “2 Firkins choice butter packed in Salt, 1 Bar. buckwheat, 2° Newtown pippins, 1 Box Sweetmeats & 1 bundle Brooms.”<sup>37</sup> Eliza,

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<sup>33</sup> Peter J. Hatch, "The Royal Family of our 'Democratic' Fruit: Thomas Jefferson's Favorite Apples," *Twinleaf Journal Online*, January 1995, accessed April 28, 2014, <http://www.monticello.org/site/house-and-gardens/royal-family-our-democratic-fruit-thomas-jeffersons-favorite-apples>.

<sup>34</sup> Simmons, *American Cookery*, 17.

<sup>35</sup> John Pintard. 1816-1820. Edited by Dorothy C. Barck. Vol. I of *Letters from John Pintard to his daughter, Eliza Noel Pintard Davidson, 1816-1833*. New York, NY: J.J. Little & Ives Company, 1940, xiii

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.



having grown up in New Jersey and New York would be familiar with these culinary tokens of affection.

The apples, sh<sup>d</sup> they arrive sound, will be a fine treat for the children, a reward for good lessons. The pippins are not the largest, but being hand picked, promise to keep better than those that are shaken. Cheap as they are, I gave the best price to ensure the best fruit. At all events en<sup>o</sup> may arrive sound to gratify the bairns. If apples have been as redundant on the Ohio as in this quarter, you will have them in any quantity & very reasonable. Indeed great quantities are shipped I see on board of every vessel destined for N.O. [New Orleans] so that you can afford to treat your little ones with apple dumplings & molasses, a wholesome diet, every week.<sup>38</sup>

While writing later than Simmons—but not so late that the ripples of *American Cookery* had faded—Pintard’s letters are significant in that they offer a window into the apple’s practical application and uses. Although Pintard was well established in society, which contributed to the preservation of these letters, his writing on food is all about experience rather than expectation. Whereas Simmons was writing on how food should be prepared, Pintard was more interested in what food meant to himself and his family.

From his letters it is clear that Pintard was familiar with apples. He has a vague—if not nostalgic—understanding of the apple’s uses in the kitchen and has knowledge of the apple crop and trade. For example, Pintard knows not only that the apples he purchased are “not the largest.” While it may be obvious, this simple statement indicates that Pintard had eaten, purchased, or been around the Newtown Pippin cultivar enough to develop a baseline for size. Pintard further displays his familiarity with apple culture in his care in selecting fruit that has been harvested in a particular manner. Shaking a tree to harvest fruit would dislodge larger, heavier, apples easily, but the apples shaken loose are more likely to bruise upon impact. Those bruised apples are best consumed early—either

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 342.

eaten, cooked, or made into cider—as Pintard knows that apples without cuts and bruises “keep better” and for longer. Bruised sections of apples rot more quickly than their unblemished counterparts and speed up the decomposition of the entire fruit. If one wanted to store apples, or ship them in Pintard’s case, one would want to minimize the risk of rot caused by bruising or anything else as rotten apples, especially in close quarters, encourage their neighboring apples to rot as well.<sup>39</sup>

Through his letters one is also able to discern Pintard’s associations of the apple and the home. The Newtown Pippin dumplings Pintard describes are sweet enough to be a suitable as treat for children, but also are not a particularly mature dessert. Despite their “treat” status dumplings, according to Pintard, were affordable and wholesome. Unlike an apple pie, dumplings required only a single apple for each serving and the average pie, on the other hand, required six to eight apples. In this way, dumplings allow for a much more controlled and economic consumption of apples in a region that did not produce them locally. Economy and rationing aside, Pintard seemed to have an emotional relationship with the apple dumplings. His letter continued: “In old times in my good uncles family, and I suppose every other, there were stated days for every dish... Apple dumplings Friday, Pancakes Tuesday.”<sup>40</sup> In his suggestion to Eliza that the children should have apple dumplings every week, there seems to be a desire for them to be raised in the same manner of his culinary experience. Regardless of the nostalgia Pintard held for the dumplings of his youth, Pintard’s letters make explicit both the everyday use of the apple as well as its sheer reach across the republic.

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<sup>39</sup> Dan Fallick. "Here are some simple tips on how to store apples for a long, long time." In s. Previously published in Backwoods Home Magazine, September/October 1996. <http://www.backwoodshome.com/articles/fallick41.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Pintard, *1816-1820*, 342.

In the movement of apples nationally—as apples were not only being shipped in bulk via the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico to New Orleans, but also travelling along the Ohio River to meet with the Mississippi—one can surmise that there was larger interest and taste for apples throughout the republic. Shipping bulk from New England would help lower the price of apples in New Orleans, which would allow Eliza to “afford to treat” her children to apples regularly if the supply from her father dwindled. Furthermore, the fact that such large quantities are being shipped by sea suggests that demand in New Orleans has not been met locally. Furthermore, Pintard implied in his letter that there are orchards along the Ohio River and, although he seems unsure of their output, he suggested that if apples there were as “redundant,” as they were in New York, “this quarter,” then they would soon be readily available and inexpensive in New Orleans. With many orchards planted in the Ohio Valley at the beginning of the century, by the time of Pintard’s letters many trees would have had time to mature enough to bear fruit.

For example, although America loves John Chapman—Americans today know him as Johnny Appleseed—as he took the propagation of apple trees into his own hands in his travels along the Ohio River, his seed-planted orchards, although famous, were not the first apple trees along the Ohio River.<sup>41</sup> General Rufus Putnam and the Ohio Company founded Marietta, Ohio at the mouth of the Muskingum River in April 1788. Putnam was charged with surveying the land as dictated by the Land Ordinance of 1785.<sup>42</sup> The Ohio Company offered a limited number of free plots of land to those who

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<sup>41</sup> Jackson, Adah. Review of *Better Known as Johnny Appleseed*, by Mabel Leigh Hunt. *Indiana Magazine of History* 47, no. 1 (March 1951): 106-09, 107.

<sup>42</sup> Dean, Tanya West, and W. David Speas. *Along the Ohio Trail: A Short History of Ohio Lands*. Edited by George W. Knepper. (Columbus, OH: The Ohio Auditor

would “set out at least fifty apple or pear trees and twenty peach trees” within three years and “within five years he must have erected a dwelling house at least twenty-four by eighteen feet with eighteen feet between floors, a cellar ten feet square and six and a half feet deep and a brick or stone chimney.” By the end of five years, the settler needed to have an additional fifteen acres for pasture and another five acres available for the farming of grains like corn. Having met those conditions, the settler would receive a deed to the land.<sup>43</sup>

By 1801, Putnam had set up shop in Marietta on the bank of the Ohio River and sold grafted apple tree seedlings to frontiersmen travelling along the river. The varieties Putnam sold ranged from Roxbury Russets to Early Chandelers to Newtown Pippins all of which had a reputation on the East Coast.<sup>44</sup> It seems likely that Putnam, as one of the charter members of the Ohio Company, sought to profit off his own policy, but the Ohio Company’s requisite orchards were not designed to simply put money in Putnam’s pockets. Establishing orchards and the development of the land would discourage land speculation and organized the landscape in accordance with the Enlightenment ideals of order and dominance over nature.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, orchards did not require extensive slave labor, could eventually turn a profit even for a small landholder and provide a family with year round access to fruit if the orchard’s yield was correctly stored.<sup>46</sup> The last of which probably being the most challenging in the early settling of Ohio when resources were scarce and settlements scattered.

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of State's Office, 2003), 47.

<sup>43</sup> Leighton, Ann. *American Gardens in the Eighteenth Century: "for Use Or for Delight."* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), 218.

<sup>44</sup> Pollan, *The Botany of Desire*, 14.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>46</sup> Leighton, "American Gardens in the Eighteenth," in *American Gardens in the Eighteenth*, 219.

Yet, Putnam is not remembered as fondly as Johnny “Appleseed” Chapman who insisted on sowing orchards from seed, letting chance dictate the fruit. He is thought to have allegedly said, although it may be the validation of rumor through the popularity of *Harper’s Monthly*, “the correct method ... is to select good seeds and plant them in good ground and God only can improve the apple.”<sup>47</sup> Perhaps it is this one, possibly invented, quotation that lends itself to constructing Johnny Appleseed as religiously motivated in his quest for spreading apples across the Northwest Territory, but this religious influence is problematic when one considers the rising influence of the temperance movement in the nineteenth century.

While there could be one gem of an apple in an orchard of chance seedlings, the fruit of the rest of the trees was not to go to waste. Choice fruit would be harvested and some would be set aside to be sold, some would be cut into rings and dried behind the stove, others would go into the cellar where they would be carefully monitored in a cellar. Bruised fruit or apples from less favorable trees would end up being made into cider and it speaks well to the temperance movement that cider in the modern American mind refers to a headier apple juice than an alcoholic beverage. What was cider in the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries is today known as hard cider. So effectively Putnam and Chapman were selling radically different prospects on the Ohio and its many adjoining rivers. Chapman was selling reliable unpredictability in that the buyer of one of his seedlings might have the good fortune of discovering the next Newtown Pippin or Jonathan and have the opportunity to name the apple for himself or his town which would grant him fame in the fledgling nation and, potentially, a place in posterity.

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<sup>47</sup> Kerrigan, William. *Johnny Appleseed and the American Orchard: A Cultural History*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012.

From the shores of the Long Island Sound to the banks of the Ohio, the apple traveled. In its establishment—in the orchards of Founding Fathers or a homesteader's plot—the apple tree fundamentally altered the North American landscape and cuisine. With roots, literally, older than the very suggestion of the United States of America itself, the fruit became ubiquitous. Heirloom cultivars, like the Newtown Pippin and Northern Spy, persevere and are celebrated even though their originating trees are long dead. As a nation, Americans desperate to preserve all vestiges, apples, and recipes from the nation's infancy and hold them as artifacts of a time long past and greatly idealized. Without roots in the founding moment, apple pie would not have such heft in this nation's symbolic tradition. The fact that there is a clear presence of apple pie in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, although we cannot know at what frequency it was produced or consumed, authorizes Americans to call upon apple pie as a constant force throughout the nation's existence.



## 2

## Will it Crumble?

## Apple Pie as Anchor through Mid-nineteenth Century Chaos

With an industrial revolution underway and growing sectionalism among the states, the nation in 1840 was a long ways away from the simplicities of Amelia Simmon's 1796 *American Cookery*. Rapid geographic, economic, and scientific expansions were fundamentally altering the average American's day-to-day experience. With the advent of railroads, improved manufacturing processes, and the patent system being put into place, America was primed for a flood of materiality to come crashing down. Over 95,000 patents were filed between the system's founding, in 1836, and 1869.<sup>48</sup> Each of these patented products sought consumers and some of these new inventions were designed explicitly for female use. From ranges and stoves with many different attachments and features to smaller gadgets like apple corers and hand-crank butter churners, these new products affected the labor in all kitchens that could afford to have them.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, as kitchen technology became more prevalent and became the topic of articles in popular women's literature, new standards for homemaking were gradually established.

Catharine Beecher's writings on domesticity and homemaking circulated widely throughout the mid-nineteenth century, but she is best known both for her text *Treatise on Domestic Economy* and her sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In good sisterly fashion, Stowe and Beecher coauthored the *The American*

<sup>48</sup> Ellen M. Plante, *The American Kitchen, 1700 to the Present: From Hearth to Highrise* (New York, NY: Facts on File, 1995), 67.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.



*Woman's Home* in 1869. While many American women had taken up writing cookbooks and domestic manuals after Amelia Simmons's success with *American Cookery*, Stowe and Beecher are often the most discussed authors of domestic literature in the nineteenth century due to the sheer extent of their cachet.

Historians today often peg the mid-to-late nineteenth century as the beginning of more visible gender distinctions, and often point to Beecher's *Treatise* as evidence of the establishment of separate spheres. In urban centers, as men began to leave the home to work, greater emphasis was put upon precision, time, and social hierarchies. For many men, the home became a sanctuary separate from the bustle of public life. As for women, the housework that they had been doing for centuries suddenly had the opportunity to be elevated socially and culturally and, with it, they too could claim an unprecedented level of authority and status.

Yet the nation, as a whole, was not affected unilaterally by industrialization. The plantation system, for example, hindered the South's industrial development, which made it difficult for Southerners to find their footing as the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865 disassembled the slave labor system that drove their agrarian economy. Despite the differences in everyday experience—as determined by factors such as geography, occupation, race, class, and heritage—there was a sense that the home, and the kitchen in particular, could be a force of normalcy throughout all the chaos. Despite the Civil War, apple pie endured in cookbooks and practice across the country and even proliferated to remote areas, which suggests that it began to develop a broader national significance. Apple pie, as well as the space and women who produced it, stabilized and arguably united a nation in a period of near unequivocal stress.

While this chapter is particularly biased towards the experiences and ideologies of upper class, or upper-middle class, white people living in the northeast between 1840 and 1870, among them Catharine Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and writers of popular printed media, like *The New York Times* and Henry Ward Beecher, these records can be read as an outgrowth of the nation's tastemakers and thus reflective of national trends. In this way, through the idealization of written records, apple pie just barely begins its ascension to symbolic status.

### *Catharine Beecher's Ideologies of Domesticity and Apple Pie*

Despite her extensive writing on the subject, Catharine Beecher never married or owned her own home. While some attribute Catharine Beecher's atypical life to the death of her fiancé when she was twenty-two, others suggest that she was never particularly inclined to housewifery.<sup>50</sup> Born in 1800, Catharine was the eldest of thirteen siblings, among them bestselling author Harriet Beecher Stowe. Her father, Lyman Beecher, was a well-known Presbyterian minister, and by the time Catharine and her siblings reached adulthood, one writer wrote that they were one of "the most famous and distinguished families in nineteenth-century America."<sup>51</sup> Catharine pursued her education as far as her socio-economic status allowed and so attended Miss Pierce's School for young women, which taught science and mathematics to its students although women were not commonly instructed in those subjects.<sup>52</sup> Valuing her education and seeking a socially-

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<sup>50</sup> Nicole Tonkovich, introduction to *The American Woman's Home*, by Catharine Esther Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe (Hartford, CT: Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, 2002), xiii; Plante, *The American Kitchen*, 52.

<sup>51</sup> Paul C. Gutjahr, *Popular American Literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 255.

<sup>52</sup> Plante, *The American Kitchen*, 52.

acceptable mode to express her own ideologies, she could not become a minister like her brothers or father, Beecher founded the Hartford Female Seminary in 1823. A rigorous academy, she sought to educate women in all manners of study and did not limit her pupils to points of feminine refinement such as needlepoint or painting, although such topics were studied.<sup>53</sup> A vigorous advocate for the education of women, Beecher wrote consistently throughout her life as she continued to establish women's academies, develop curricula, and train educators like herself, but her first significant literary success came when she first published *Treatise on Domestic Economy, For the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and At School* in 1841.<sup>54</sup>

The *Treatise*, that would go on to be updated and republished yearly until 1856, was written, in part, to act as a textbook for Beecher's academies and other women's institutions that followed her model. The *Treatise* devotes thirty chapters to a wide variety of topics—ranging from a guide to fruit tree cultivation to medicinal remedies—all of which Beecher believed to be crucial knowledge for any housewife. As with Amelia Simmons's prologue to *American Cookery*, Catharine Beecher clarified her intent and her intended audience in her preface. Beecher believed that, referring to their domestic duties, women, especially those who were "more wealthy," were not prepared to enter their "profession" after marriage.<sup>55</sup> Her *Treatise* hammers home a belief in the

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<sup>53</sup> Tonkovich, introduction to *The American Woman's Home*, xii; Gutjahr, *Popular American Literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*, 255.

<sup>54</sup> There is some discrepancy as to the first year of publication. By the title plate of the 1845 edition it appears that the text was submitted by Thomas H. Webb, & Co., the publisher, in 1842 to the Clerk's Office of the district Court of Massachusetts. Yet later editions of the text are published by Harper & Brothers in New York. This change of publisher might help explain why some historians suggest the year 1841 and others 1842 for the text's debut. Gutjahr cites it as 1841.

<sup>55</sup> Catharine E. Beecher, *A Treatise on Domestic Economy, For the Use of Young Ladies at Home, and at School*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 82 Cliff Street, 1845), 5.

elevation of women's work and the domestic sciences. She wrote in the preface to the third edition of the *Treatise*:

The measure which, more than any other, would tend to remedy this evil [the lack of formal training], would be to place *domestic economy* on an equality with the other sciences in female schools. This should be done because it *can* be properly and systematically taught (not *practically*, but as a *science*), as much so as *political economy* or *moral science*, or any other branch of study . . . Women will be trained to secure, as of first importance, a strong and healthy constitution, and all those rules of thrift and economy that will make domestic duty easy and pleasant.<sup>56</sup>

Elevation of women and their work aside, creating standards and expectations through regulation and formal education, Beecher's emphasis on formal training is a huge departure from the guidance Simmons provided nearly half a century ago. Rather than providing a resource for women, who were not fortunate enough to have come up under the guidance of a domestically knowledgeable and well-practiced woman, Beecher wrote for those privileged enough to afford to delegate their day-to-day duties, who sought to educate themselves as a matter of principle rather than practicality.

The only missing components from Beecher's *Treatise* were the recipes that a housewife might seamlessly follow to insure that her carefully managed kitchen could produce "simple and well-cooked dishes... for every-day comfort and enjoyment."<sup>57</sup>

Five years after *Treatise* was first published, Beecher put out *Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book: Designed as a Supplement to her Treatise on Domestic Economy*.

Although it provided domestic advice, like how to manage one's servants and infants, *Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book* is, as its name suggests, primarily a book of recipes. Unlike Simmons and other authors of popular cookbooks of the late-eighteenth

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>57</sup> Catharine E. Beecher, *Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book: Designed As A Supplement To Her Treatise On Domestic Economy*, 1850 ed. (New York City: Harper, 1846), preface.

and early-nineteenth centuries, Beecher claimed in her preface that she sought “to include in the collection only such receipts as have been tested by superior housekeepers, and warranted to be *the best*. It is not a book made up in *any* department by copying from other books, but entirely from the experience of the best practical housekeepers.”<sup>58</sup> While it may seem as if Beecher was talking herself, she would host “cookbook-making” teas with the best of her former students.<sup>59</sup> That Beecher relied on this team of experts, the superior housekeepers, made the text authoritative and as she is credited as the sole author, she could take all the credit and recognition for her, supposed, domestic prowess.

Like almost all American cookbooks, Beecher’s also deals readily with apples and has a few recipes for apple pie. *Miss Beecher’s Domestic Receipt Book* dedicates its twelfth chapter to “Plain Puddings and Pies” and the thirteenth to “Rich Puddings and Pies.” Both of these dessert forms, while Anglican in origin, were firmly Americanized, by time and practice, when the cookbook was first published in 1846. As apple pie was well established and was known commonly enough that the public would have had certain expectations for the most basic apple pie, Beecher offer several apple pie recipes. For example, her “Common Apple Pie” follows:

Pare your apples, and cut them from the core. Line your dishes with paste, and put in the apple; cover and bake until the fruit is tender. Then take them from the oven, remove the upper crust, and put in sugar and nutmeg, cinnamon or rose water to your taste; a bit of sweet butter improves them.

Also, to put in a little orange peel before they are baked, makes a pleasant variety. Common apple pies are very good to stew, sweeten, and flavor the apple before they are put into the oven. Many prefer the seasoning baked in. All apple pies are much nicer if the apple is grated and then seasoned.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Tonkovich, introduction to *The American Woman's Home*, xv.

<sup>60</sup> Beecher, *Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book*, 107.

Although she cites this as being her most “common” apple pie, seemingly in name representing the most average pie, this recipe is odd in that Beecher calls for the removal of the pie’s “upper crust.” It is not clear how this removal is accomplished—as it seems like it would effectively ruin the pie’s aesthetic appeal—or why the fruit is not spiced before it is covered with pastry. In contrast with the scientific emphasis of her book, Beecher here appears to be following a mode of pie baking that can be dated to at least the mid eighteenth century if not earlier. For, Hannah Glasse’s recipe for apple pie—as was copied by Sussannah Carter—suggests that “You may butter them [the pies] when they come out of the oven...take off the lid [of the pie]and pour in the cream. Cut the crust in little three-corner pies, stick about the pie and send it to table.”<sup>61</sup>

Pastry crust, in earlier centuries and especially in the Middle Ages, was more a vehicle for the pie’s filling than something to be savored. Visiting New Sweden, Dr. Israel Acrelius, wrote on several variations of apple pie, but noticed that “House-pie,” a country variation of apple pie, was so poor that “its crust is not broken if a wagon-wheel goes over it.”<sup>62</sup> Yet Beecher’s recipe and method of making pastry crust—using simply butter, flour, and a simple culinary technique to produce small pockets of fat which—yields a savory, flakey, crust.<sup>63</sup> Although she does not give her recipe for pastry, paste, alongside her apple pie recipes, Beecher’s recipe for pie dough is quite modern by nineteenth century standards. In her attention to precision and science, the recipe calls for the flour and butter to be weighed and mixed according to ratios, which takes the

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<sup>61</sup> Hannah Glasse, *Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy; Which far exceeds any Thing of the Kind yet published* (1747; repr., Printed for W. Strahan, J. and F. Rivington, J. Hinton, 1774), 225.

<sup>62</sup> Phipps, *Colonial Kitchens, Their Furnishings*, 124.

<sup>63</sup> “Very plain paste is made by taking a quarter of a pound of butter for every pound of flour. Still richer allows three quarters of a pound of butter to a pound of flour. Very rich paste has a pound of butter to a pound of flour” (Beecher, *Miss Beecher’s Domestic Receipt Book*, 128).

guesswork out of the equation for novice cooks. Given that her recipe for pie dough resembles most modern recipes, it seems appears more likely that Beecher's removal of the top crust in her apple pie recipe was a step intended not to save the mouth from enduring a tough, unsavory, crust, but rather to act as a finishing touch just as Glasse does. At the same time, when one considers that most of the later renditions of the crust removal technique use nearly identical language to Beecher, and given the sheer scale at which Catharine Beecher's text was circulated and used in domestic education, it seems likely that other cookbook authors wittingly or not, borrowed this particular technique from Beecher.<sup>64</sup> Despite its expropriation by other authors through the end of the century, this technique is highly unusual and has not lingered in practice throughout time. The completeness of any pie is part of its charm; it is a neat package of butter, flour, sugar, and filling. The stylistic choice to remove the top crust might be made as a way of performing sophistication in that it demonstrated a learned and highly specific technique. Yet even more significantly, this individuality in serving style matches the flexibility of the apple pie itself in that it can always be adjusted to the maker's aesthetic preferences and palette.

In catering to the individual, cookbooks have long encouraged their users to adjust sweetness and spice to their own taste. While the variability of spicing can indicate the economy's influence and availability of spices themselves, there is also emphasis on variation and the individual. Beecher's recipe for "Common Apple Pie" is not a set of strict rules to be followed. The fact that the recipe is separated into two components lends

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<sup>64</sup> Annabelle P. Hill's *Mrs. Hill's Southern Practical Cookery and Receipt Book* (1872), *The Art of Cookery: A Manual for Homes and Schools* by Emma Pike Ewing (1896), and Lida Seely's *Mrs. Seely's Cook Book: A Manual of French and American Cookery* (1902) all follow the same pattern as Beecher presented: remove the upper crust, sweeten to taste, replace the upper crust with some variation at the end with garnish and serving temperature.

itself to this interpretation. The first paragraph generally outlines the process of apple pie making, whereas the second paragraph deals exclusively in variation and preference. For example, Beecher closed the recipe with her assertion that “All apple pies are much nicer if the apple is grated and then seasoned.”<sup>65</sup> Grating the apple before baking it totally changes the texture of the filling; no longer does the pie filling resemble chunks of apples in spiced apple syrup, but it becomes something more like an applesauce. Furthermore, it is incredibly odd that she does not offer the recipe for apple pie that she herself would have made or, rather, preferred to have eaten.<sup>66</sup> In this way it seems that in recording the “Common Apple Pie” Beecher is reflecting the values, experiences, and practices of the America she inhabited. Yet at the same time, given the removal of the top crust and the way the practice lingered through the end of the century—at least in writing if not practice— suggests that she simultaneously shaped popular practice as much as she reflected it.

Beecher influenced Americans in broad strokes, often making assumptions about what materials they would have available despite great regional differences. Not to suggest that Beecher was ignorant to the experiences of others, but to say the fact that Beecher’s America and her associations with America come, primarily, from New England. Therefore her text would resonate most with people of that area, the rest of the North as it shares a similar climate, those who imagined America in the same way Beecher did, and those who wished to participate in Beecher’s America. For example, in

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<sup>65</sup> Beecher, *Miss Beecher’s Domestic Receipt Book*, 107.

<sup>66</sup> Despite her domestic authority, Catharine Beecher, according to Nicole Tonkovich, was never all that interested in the domestic duties she wrote about and never married or owned her own house. If the household she was visiting made an apple pie, Catharine Beecher would have likely instructed its domestic servants in its the dish’s preparation (Tonkovich, introduction to *American Woman’s Home*, xxviii).



her chapter *Plain Puddings and Pies*, Beecher takes time to give her reader ten “Modes of Preparing Apples for the Table” just as she does with rice and “dry bread.”<sup>67</sup> In treating all three of these foods the same, there is an implied commonality. In this instance, that common ground is assumed availability and access as the “modes of preparing” emphasize treating foods with a degree of innovation and thrift. In supposing that her reader would have access to these items in such a quantity that ten alternative preparations would be useful to include is one instance that marks the assumptions Beecher made about her readership. Apples were cheaper and more accessible to those who lived closer to orchards. Furthermore, while apples were available in the South—as evidenced in the Pintard letters—they were probably not so common as rice or stale bread. However, perhaps Beecher saw utility in this inclusion in that these ten additional modes of use are principles of thrift that any housewife would use to her, and her family’s, advantage. Either way, it is safe to assume that Catharine Beecher’s prescriptions were not followed exactly and where it was convenient, or where tradition dictated a different practice, recipes would be altered. Yet Beecher assumes a commonality and specifically states in her preface that the text is specifically engineered, in the same manner as Amelia Simmons, for the American experience. When one considers regional differences, both social and cultural, across the nation in the mid-nineteenth century, it becomes infinitely more difficult to write a text that will mean the same and have the same applications for all. Biased from her own experience and her domestic ideologies, Beecher projected her own expectations and idealizations onto America, all of which are reflected in her *Treatise* and *Domestic Receipt Book*.

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<sup>67</sup> Beecher, *Miss Beecher’s Domestic Receipt Book*, ix.

*Romanticizing the Agrarian Experience*

In the autumn of 1852, the New York Daily Times—precursor the New York Times—began to run a series of “Country Sketches.”<sup>68</sup> The first, “Country Sketch No. I” was published October 22, 1852, waxes poetic on the “American Autumn” from the start, which suggests that the author’s imagined America does not extend beyond regional lines as he describes the change in foliage that New England autumns are famous for. While industrialization had shifted focus away from the bounties of the landscape, the factory inspired many to re-embrace the natural, albeit meticulously cultivated, world just as the founders of their nation had. The first country sketch, after a long meander through the country side and past a family’s farm where all engaged in various tasks from drying apples in the yard to boiling cider to make apple jelly, concludes:

Happy man, you will say, must the farmer be, or at least, should he be. He is surrounded by abundance. Almost everything he eats is of his own raising. No one could be more independent. He has the comforting reflection, even if scarcity pervades the land, that his own barns and cellar will supply all he needs. The fire cannot devour his land, nor the waves of the ocean bury it, and with his health, he can obtain, by his own labor, and within his own domain, most all that he or his family requires.<sup>69</sup>

While the author clearly stressed the independence of the farmer, compared to the dependency of the businessman—who is confined by the city itself, his boss, the market, and the clock—the author never provided the farmer the opportunity to speak for himself and does take into account the potential hardships the farmer will face if a crop fails by

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<sup>68</sup> While there may be more to this series than the two this chapter discusses, they were selected for their numerous references to apples as well as their commentary on the differences between urban and domestic lifestyles.

<sup>69</sup> “COUNTRY SKETCHES--No. I,” editorial, *The New York Daily Times* (New York, NY), October 22, 1852.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/95809038?accountid=31516>.

flood, fire, or a false spring. The author also does not consider agrarian debt cycles if one has to borrow money to seed fields or buy new animals or equipment.

“Country Sketch No. I,” as well as, “Country Sketch No. II” both depict labor as totally detached from physical exertion and although everyone is described at work, no one talks about the experience of work. Whereas “Country Sketch No. I” truly imagines the experiences of everyone the narrator encounters, “Country Sketch No. II: The Farmer at Home” is interested in portraying the everyday life and interpersonal relationships of the farmer. Published November 8, 1852 the sketch opens with a reflection on the warm hospitality of country folk and the constrictions of societal expectations in the urban center. The narrator, after encouraging the reader to do so as well at his convenience, hops on to a train out of New York City, which he describes as “The great annihilator of space and time.”<sup>70</sup> This description of trains has a grandeur and magical quality to it, and in that manner, it attests to the newness of the technology. If one were taking the train regularly, than it would not be such a grand adventure.

Never once does the narrator stop to consider that he may be imposing on the farmer and his family, and while it is easy to dismiss the lack of the narrator’s social graces as a byproduct of the sketch—as the form is fundamentally an exercise in fantasy— given the manner in which the narrator describes the family members it is as if the farmer’s kin were of a different kind than the narrator. One of the farmer’s daughters answers the door and the narrator immediately remarks upon her full figure, blatantly implying that she is a product of her environment and something truly separate from “the

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<sup>70</sup> COUNTRY SKETCHES..No. II.: The Farmer at Home,," editorial, *The New York Daily Times* (New York, NY), November 8, 1852.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/95795971?accountid=31516>.

fragile forms and pale complexions of our city beauties.”<sup>71</sup> While the narrator is likely remarking upon the healthful country air, it does not take a lot to approach the sketch as us versus them. The farmer’s wife comes in from the barn in her work clothes, as she was not expecting company, and according to the narrator, has no thought of vanity or an urbanite’s social etiquettes. Rather, the wife exhibits an earnestness and “simplicity of her heart” in that she does not abide the “thought of keep you waiting half an hour till she has made her toilet,”<sup>72</sup> As the wife and daughters scramble around to complete their morning chores, despite the narrator’s disruption of their routine, and make lunch, the narrator peruses their home to occupy himself by taking notes of their curios, seashells, and back issues of *Harper’s* magazine. The latter of which suggests that the family is not so distant from popular media and culture as they are geographically despite the fact that the narrator is keen on emphasizing their earnestness and independence compared to the rest of society. The farmer and his sons return to the house for their midday meal, as dictated by the progression of the sun through the sky, rather than the factory’s clock.

As the narrator and farmer catch up as the finishing touches are put on the meal, the narrator is “struck” by the farmer’s mental acuity even though “he is a man who does not read many books...”<sup>73</sup> The meal the women have prepared is elegant in its simplicity with roasted potatoes and chicken to be finished off with three different desserts that were prepared despite the arrival of an unexpected guest.

You rise from the table convinced you have never ate so much at one meal in your remembrance; and you ask the wife from what book she has learned her cookery. You will be surprised to find that she has not studied Dr. Kitchener nor Miss Leslie, nor any other cook-book. All the rules she goes by her mother taught her, years ago. You think to yourself what a

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

blessed thing it would be if your wife would discard French cookery, and take a few lessons in the farmer's kitchen.<sup>74</sup>

The author for this sketch, Monroe, is likely a man and the value judgments he makes in regards to the way a woman learns her domestic responsibility is telling about the perception of what Catharine Beecher would call the domestic sciences at the time. While the narrator clearly prefers women to learn from other women, favoring a matrilineal mode of skill-transference, he is simultaneously shunning a genre of literature that first existed by and for the use of men. Furthermore, he discourages the urban housewife, whether she learned to cook from her mother or not, from furthering her culinary repertoire. Given the content of the sketch to this point, it is not surprising that the narrator fawns over the cooking for its rustic, virtuous, simplicity.

In this idealization of the foreign experience of the farmer, the narrator establishes the farmer's kitchen as the pinnacle of domestic wholesomeness and satisfaction. The narrator is quite clear in his preference for the farmer's self-sustaining existence over his own industrially saturated life, despite even the wondrous nature of trains. As "Country Sketch No. 2" appeared following an article on New York's history, this idealization of the past is not an isolated incident and it is not unlikely that this same idealization of the agrarian experience was not held in other urban centers, especially those in New England. It also buys into the American anti-urban bias, which believes urban centers to be corrupting and steadfastly believes in Jefferson's agrarianism as well as his vision of self-sufficient yeoman farmers.

*Apple Pie Without Apples: More than an Oxymoron*

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

Outside the novelties of the kitchen and the quaintness of the country, the nation was at war with itself. Within two years of seceding, the people of the Confederate States of America were struggling to access everyday goods and foodstuffs.<sup>75</sup> While cookbooks have long emphasized economy in the household, the Civil War set up that the desperation and resourcefulness required to get by became a uniting factor for the Confederacy. With ports barricaded and trade prohibited with the United States, any substitutions for common recipes or medicinal remedies were published throughout the Confederacy.<sup>76</sup> In 1863, *The Confederate Receipt Book: A Compilation of Over One Hundred Receipts Adapted to the Times* was published in Virginia, without a specific author. With recipes for “Artificial Oysters” alongside folk remedies for common ailments like asthma, finding substitutes for comforts was most desirable. The *Confederate Receipt Book* also includes a recipe for “Apple Pie Without Apples.”<sup>77</sup> What can be described as a mock, or faux, apple pie is significant in the fact that it is the only pie in the book—and comes with its own thrifty pastry recipe—and that it indicates that there was a large apple pie tradition in the Confederate States before supply lines and trade failed, even before the secession itself.

“Apple Pie Without Apples” is just as the name suggests. Composed of crackers, and cream of tartar—what the recipe calls “tartaric acid”—and typical apple pie spices, this pie might seem like a culinary catastrophe on the page, but clearly met the demand with its inclusion in the collection. The recipe is disarmingly simple: “To one small bowl of crackers, that have been soaked until no hard parts remain, add one teaspoonful of

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<sup>75</sup> *Confederate Receipt Book: A Compilation of over One Hundred Receipts, Adapted to the Times*, 1863, 2906 Conf. (Rare Book Collection, UNC-CH), University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC, accessed October 6, 2013, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/receipt/receipt.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

tartaric acid, sweeten to your taste, add some butter, and a very little nutmeg.”<sup>78</sup> Soaking the crackers and adding cream of tartar to the mix resulted in a lumpy, mushy consistency resembling, in a way, well-cooked, or stewed, apples. Presumably spices would have been as expensive and scarce as the apples this recipe omits so it is not surprising that it does not call for more typical apple pie spices such as cinnamon or mace.

While the *Confederate Receipt Book* is one of the most famous sources for mock apple pie, it was likely introduced at least a decade or two earlier with westward pioneers. Although eventually it made some national headway, mock apple pie could only be successful in lean years or areas where apples were not widely available. For example, B.C. Whiting is cited in *How We Cook In Los Angeles*, a compendium published in 1894, for her recipe for mock apple pie.<sup>79</sup> The recipe, titled “A California Pioneer Apple Pie” is cited in the text as a recipe from 1852. While it is impossible to know if the recipe was in practice that year, Whiting offers her own memory as a source of authentication and wrote that “apples at this date were a dollar a pound,” much more expensive than they were out East.<sup>80</sup> Even if the Californian pioneer brought along apple seedlings or seeds themselves in 1849 with the Gold Rush, an apple tree can take almost ten years to mature so that it will bear fruit. With more people moving west in the 1850s, there would be greater demand for goods and foods that were commonly available out East. Furthermore, while certain apple varieties keep better than others, crackers were easier to store, lasted longer, and were less expensive. Yet the question lingers, why even bother to bake a mock apple pie if the ingredients were not available? Why not just make a cream pie, as

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Mary Ellen Snodgrass, ed., *Encyclopedia of Kitchen History* (New York/London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2004).

<sup>80</sup> Ladies' Social Circle of Los Angeles, ed., *Los Angeles Traditional Cookery Book* (Books on Demand, 2010), 240-241.

the farmer's wife of the Country Sketches did, or a pie made with local and readily available fruit or custard?

As people are generally resistant to change—whether it be social or a standard of living—the westward pioneers and the citizens of the Confederacy, in particular, may have fought to live and cook as they once had so that might maintain normalcy at a time of stress and transformation. While the *Confederate Receipt Book* does not make it explicit, there seemed to be an intense cultural and personal attachment to apple pie. Whiting, in her recipe for mock apple pie, suggested that people on the frontier turned towards mock apple pie as they "craved a piece of mother's apple pie to appease our homesick feelings."<sup>81</sup> Apple pie was a way of connecting with a culture and culinary landscape that they had left behind in memory and in taste as well as practice. One saw this same sort of nostalgic relationship with apple-based desserts on the American frontier in the letters of John Pintard.

Although this nostalgia for time past is challenged by the establishment of the Confederacy as a separate nation with its own culinary traditions, the fact that mock apple pie—and in that vein, apple pie if apples were available—is included in a cookbook, that by its name is of and for the Confederacy, indicates that the people of the new nation had their own relationships with apple pie. Or they may have felt a claim to themselves with a distinctive non-Northern interpretation, just as America adapted the apple pie from England. Furthermore, much like America in the War for Independence, the Confederacy did not repudiate its past prior to secession. In accepting the full length of its origin the South did share some of the same cultural reference points and have nostalgia attached to at least some of the same foods. In her book *Food, the Body, and the*

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<sup>81</sup> Ladies' Social Circle of Los Angeles, *Los Angeles Traditional Cookery*, 241.



*Self*, Deborah Lupton suggests that a person's food preferences can be shaped, to some extent, by foods that have happy memories associated with them.<sup>82</sup> Most become attached to these sorts of relationships with food as an adult after enough time has passed and allowed for the romanticization of childhood.<sup>83</sup> Those reading the Los Angeles cookbooks compendium or the *Confederate Receipt Book* might be old enough to have established those nostalgic ties to apple pie and so warrant the embrace of the mock apple pie. However, it is also possible that those same nostalgic ties are brought to the forefront by the sheer distance from home as well as the lack of access to apples and other familiar, and once common place, ingredients. In this way, mock apple pie, becomes a way of connecting with a broader, imagined, community, a way of tapping into shared culture and experience despite the circumstances.

### *The Kitchen in Reconstruction*

A year after the conclusion of the Civil War, Catharine Beecher and her sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, published a new domestic manual, *The American Woman's Home*. With chapters devoted to the "Care of Infants," "Domestic Amusements and Social Duties," and the "Care of Servants" it is clear that *The American Woman's Home* is more than an addition to Beecher's *Treatise on Domestic Economy*. Designed for an upper class audience—one that has time to reflect on the merits of French cooking compared to English and American styles while instructing their servants on the finer points of domestic excellence—*The American Woman's Home* could appeal to those of lower socio-economic positions in that it could serve as an aspirational model. Given the

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<sup>82</sup> Deborah Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self* (London: SAGE Publications, 1996), 49.

<sup>83</sup> Deborah Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self*, 50.

social and cultural clout wielded by the sisters Beecher and Stowe, the text's status should be recognized. And, tucked away between discussions on highbrow topics, were common sense practices that could be applied in essentially any household. Yet one of the most useful features of domestic texts are the tried and guaranteed recipes and *The American Woman's Home* has none and had no accompanying text as did Beecher's earlier *Treatise*. Fortunately, there were a few other cookbooks on the scene to fill the gaps not only with recipes, but also with a similar demographic.

Published in the same year as the Beecher/Stowe collaboration, was Jane Cunningham Croly's *Jennie June's American Cookery Book*. Croly, operating throughout her writing career under the *nom de plume* Jennie June immigrated to the United States from England as a child. She grew up in New York's Hudson Valley and wrote for *The New York Times* in the 1850s. Her column, "Parlor and Sidewalk Gossip" was picked up by papers in New Orleans, Richmond, Baltimore, and Louisville in 1857 and was the first syndicated column written by a woman. After a brief move to Rockford, Illinois in 1859 resulted in a failed newspaper venture, Croly and her Irish husband, moved back to New York where she headed the women's department at *The New York World*. She published her first book, *Talks on Women's Topics*, in 1864 only to follow it up two years later with *Jennie June's American Cookery Book*.<sup>84</sup>

In the introduction, she justified her composition of the book by arguing that most other cookbooks did not include "just what young, middle class housekeepers want[ed] to know."<sup>85</sup> While these young, middle class housekeepers may have read both

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<sup>84</sup> MSU Libraries, "Jane Croly Cunningham - Introduction," Feeding America: The Historic Cookbook Project, [http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/authors/author\\_croly.html](http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/cookbooks/html/authors/author_croly.html).

<sup>85</sup> Jane Cunningham Croly, *Jennie June's American Cookery Book* (New York, NY: The American News Co, 1870), v.

Beecher/Stowe as well, *Jennie June*'s followed through on its initial promise and offered women a wide range of recipes without cluttering the page with discussions of French cuisine. Although Croly had similar domestic ideologies as Catharine Beecher, and her recipes strive for healthfulness as Beecher's did, she prioritizes desserts much differently than Beecher. In a forward to the subsection on "Puddings and Pies" Croly wrote that "The dessert is the holiday part of the dinner" and suggested that there was no reason for pie to "not be just as healthy, just as digestible as the dinner."<sup>86</sup> Her section on cake received no equivalent introduction, and although puddings, cakes, and pies are all lumped together as dessert, pies do appear to have greater status in this cookbook than in any other this project has examined so far.

Despite their differences in attitudes toward dessert, for which Beecher believed most women already had the necessary skills even if deficient in their basic cooking, she, Stowe, and Croly sought in the year after the Civil War to publish texts that were distinctly American. Given the timing, one may suspect that this American emphasis, especially in title, plays into the question of reconstruction and reunion that the nation struggled with after the fall of the Confederacy. Although the authors of all three texts are biased by their East Coast upbringing and their own lack of housekeeping experience—recall that Catharine Beecher never married or owned her home—they do attempt to forge this sense of unity through America's households in that they encouraged the standardization of certain practices. Despite geography or political beliefs, one could make an apple pie—with apples or without—and be participating in the same print and social culture as any other American woman. While they did not explicitly label the apple pie as a national dish, its presence throughout the chaos of the mid-nineteenth century,

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 141

and geographic obstacles, is significant. Not as sexy as a flawlessly frosted cake or hand-cranked ice cream, apple pies have a personal, familial, familiarity. Tumultuous times lead many to seek a comfort food and apple pie was accessible to many. As Henry Ward Beecher wrote in 1862 on apple pie:

It is a glorious unity in which sugar gives up its nature as sugar, and butter ceases to be butter, and each flavorsome spice gladly evanishes from its own full nature, that all of them, by a common death, may rise into the new life of apple-pie! Not that apple is longer apple! *It*, too, is transformed. And the final pie, though born of apple, sugar, butter, nutmeg, cinnamon, lemon, is like none of these, but the compound ideal of them all, refined, purified, and by fire fixed in blissful perfection.<sup>87</sup>

His poetic waxings demonstrate the growing fondness for apple pie. Whatever their social status, whether pioneers, alienated Southerners, or industrialization-fearing urbanites, Americans found solace in the transformation of apple pie and the idealized household. Given that apple pie recipes changed very little despite all circumstances, it seems as if they had some significance to Americans at the time, even if just as a force of normalcy.

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<sup>87</sup> Henry Ward Beecher, *Eyes and Ears*, (London, Sampson Low, Son, & Co., 1862), 238.



## 3

**Made with Love:****Mom, Patriotism, and Nostalgia in Twentieth Century Apple Pie**

In 1935, Catherine Mackenzie reported in *The New York Times* that “apple pie had been made an issue in Congress by Representatives of rival [apple growing] States.”<sup>88</sup> In response to Oregon apples being distributed in the Congressional cloakroom, the Rochester Chamber of Commerce airmailed seventy-five New York apple pies to Washington so that the Representatives might judge which state grew superior fruit. When Connecticut argued that apple pie was native to its shores and thus no apple pie could be superior to that of The Nutmeg State, Congress could not come to a consensus. The United States Department of Agriculture took a neutral posture and acknowledged that apples of New York and Oregon—as well as Washington State—were excellent as they lead the nation in production. What is truly remarkable about this article is not even that Congress became involved in such a trivial debate, but the fact that apple pie is acknowledged as something that existed well beyond the confines of state or regional cuisine. Mackenzie plainly states in her article that “apple pie is a national dish” whether served plain or with cheese or ice cream.

While it is impossible to pin down an exact date that marks apple pie’s ascendancy to “first place as the favorite dessert” of Americans, it most likely happened around the Great War.<sup>89</sup> The loss of life and the culinary falloff, both at home and on the front, had many people reevaluating and appreciating traditional American values, apple

<sup>88</sup> Catherine Mackenzie, “Apple Pie Raises an Issue: Rival Claims Made of ‘Best Apples,’ but The Pie Belongs to the Nation.” *The New York Times*, May 5, 1935, sec. SM.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

pie among them. An article from *The New York Times* in 1926 relayed the hunt in Europe for apple pie like “the Kind They Make at Home.”<sup>90</sup> The hunt, naturally, was a failure. As Mackenzie noted, apple pie was a tricky dish for diners and fancy restaurants alike as the pie demands adherence to, and appreciation of, simplicity. The best apple pie any American could hope to have was at home, “preferably fresh made, barely cool from the oven, the pastry rich and crumbly or flaky and light, according the family’s taste, spicy with cinnamon or nutmeg or both.”<sup>91</sup>

The increased urbanization and industrialization of the nation, as well as the devastation of the Great Depression, caused many Americans to turn for solace to the home and idealizations of the past. With aggrandizement of the agrarian experience of decades past, there grew an increased appreciation of simple, rustic, pleasures, which further bolstered the national love of apple pie, as one can see by Mackenzie’s article. She emphasized that although one could have apple pie anywhere in the nation, “Out West or back East, home is where the heart is, and home remains the place for the best apple pie.”<sup>92</sup>

Yet even the home was undergoing change. With mass production and mass consumption cycling in harmony and driving the development of new technology—and vice versa—a sizable percentage of which was devoted to the kitchen by way of new appliances and processed foods—companies had to figure out new strategies to tap their consumer base, women. One of the most successful marketing strategies of the century was Betty Crocker and although there were others like her, none have matched her

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<sup>90</sup> James C. Young, “The Tourist Apple Pie Hunt is Ended: American Army Abroad Has Failed Again to Find In Europe ‘the Kind They Make at Home’” *The New York Times*, October 3, 1926, sec. SM, 2.

<sup>91</sup> Mackenzie, “Apple Pie Raises an Issue,” sec. SM.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

longevity. Yet Betty Crocker had much more to sell to “Mrs. Homemaker” than Washburn Crosby, later General Mills, flour. Betty Crocker became a mechanism of disseminating domestic and gendered ideologies across the nation. Through commercially produced and spokeswomen sponsored recipe booklets, the vast majority of which included apple pie recipes, one can surmise that the dish remained popular throughout the rest of the century’s hardships.

While media, namely print ads and recipe books, had been suggesting for a few decades that baking was an expression and manifestation of love—even Catharine Beecher recognized domestic duty as an expression of Christian, familial, love—it reached new heights during and after the war. Baking and home maintenance came to represent much more than thoughtful gestures; they served to keep a family together, win a man, and do one’s part for the good of the war effort. During World War II, Betty Crocker in particular was instrumental in guiding the homemaker into practices of thriftier baking, offering substitutes for old favorites. Eleanor Roosevelt, too, insured that the White House would serve as a model for American homemakers.

Although the nation had, by some standards, achieved a level of normalcy by the late thirties, due in part to President Roosevelt’s New Deal policies, the war—and Pearl Harbor in particular—emphasized the nation’s vulnerability and, in what had become a standard reaction to uncertainty, the nation turned once more to the home as an anchor. Of course, with this emphasis on the home and motherhood, came ever-pressing expectations of femininity and domestic labor. Apple pies became more than way of connecting to the agrarian past, but a mode of expressing love. In bundling up all its associations—both current and nostalgic—apple pie became a standard for the American



people to bear. Nationally recognizable, one could go anywhere and have a typical apple pie thanks to the proliferation of automobiles and consumer driven homogenization, and simultaneously hyper-individualized, apple pie married the space between public duty and private experience. The rise of mass consumer culture lent itself to the homogenization of national cooking culture and through the Second World War, and the country's numerous hardships, apple pie took on a new status that was simultaneously patriotic and homely.

### *The American Kitchen at War*

Recovering from disastrous economic collapse, the beginning of World War II in 1939 brought the nation's attention back to its most basic principles. Drawing from the Bill of Rights, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt expounded upon the oldest and most tried American virtues in a speech he delivered to Congress on January 6, 1941, less than a year before the attack on Pearl Harbor would drive America into the war. Roosevelt proclaimed that America, and the world, must strive for four freedoms:

The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world. The third is freedom from want ...everywhere in the world. The fourth is freedom from fear...anywhere in the world.<sup>93</sup>

After America entered the war, these “Four Freedoms” came to stand for the American stake in the war. To give these principles greater emotional heft, prolific American artist, Norman Rockwell, illustrated the “Four Freedoms” in 1943. Printed by the Government Printing Office to be distributed by the Office of War Information, Rockwell's depictions of “Freedom from want” and “Freedom from fear” touch on the sanctity of the American

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<sup>93</sup> "Powers of Persuasion: Poster Art from World War II," The National Archives, [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers\\_of\\_persuasion/four\\_freedoms/four\\_freedoms.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/four_freedoms/four_freedoms.html).

home. The “Freedom from” images, accompanied by the text “OURS...to fight” made the threat to the American way of life explicit and suggested that it was these moments that were worth defending.

Rockwell’s “Freedom from Want” shows a bountiful Thanksgiving table, that would have been near impossible to recreate within the confines of war rationing, and a happy family gathered around it. A succulent, browned, turkey is the focal point of the composition. President Lincoln had formalized Thanksgiving as a national holiday in 1863 with his Thanksgiving Proclamation, although many Americans had observed the holiday for decades.<sup>94</sup> In 1939, President Roosevelt amended the date Lincoln had set for Thanksgiving, changing the holiday so that it would fall on the second to last Thursday of November rather than the



Norman Rockwell, *Freedom From Want*, illustration, 1943.

last.<sup>95</sup> Regardless of the day, some scholars claim that Thanksgiving is the second most important national holiday, falling only behind the Fourth of July.

Anthropologist Janet Siskind asserted that Thanksgiving is a ritual that

<sup>94</sup> Valerie Strauss, "Lincoln's Historic Thanksgiving Proclamation of 1863," *The Washington Post*, November 21, 2012, The Answer Sheet, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2012/11/21/lincolns-historic-thanksgiving-proclamation-of-1863/>.

<sup>95</sup> The last Thursday that year was the 30<sup>th</sup> and businesses complained that the recovering economy might suffer if Americans only 24 days left to shop for Christmas. It was not until 1941 when Congress passed a joint resolution that Thanksgiving, as a federal holiday, was to be on the second to last Thursday of November ("Congress Establishes Thanksgiving," The National Archives, <http://www.archives.gov/legislative/features/thanksgiving/>).

“expresses and reaffirms values and assumptions about cultural and social unity, about identity and history, about inclusion and exclusion. Thanksgiving is highly structured and emotion laden, with its celebration of family, home and nation.”<sup>96</sup>

Although Rockwell’s scene does not directly feature an apple pie—perhaps it is cooling out of frame—an apple pie has many of the same associations as Thanksgiving. An article from *The New York Times*, published November 3, 1940, consults pie “philosopher” and savant Edward Elwell Whiting. While a controversial pie expert, Whiting exclusively prefers apple and mince pies, he insists that “You can drop in to any correct Northern New England home and find good pie.” Not only that, but there “apple pie is a food, a cult and a ceremony if not a religion.”<sup>97</sup> While the regional claim to apple pie was nothing new—see the Congressional shenanigans in 1935—the quality of the pie itself is a relatively new issue. While recipes from the nineteenth and eighteenth century recommend certain moments of pie baking over another, often resulting in a “fine pie,” it seems as if the nation was so inundated with apple pies that the truly exceptional pies shone high and away from the average and mediocre. Yet, so much of apple pie depends on one’s own preferences from the apples used to the fat used in the crust to the sweetness to, of course, the spicing. As for the “cult and a ceremony if not a religion” aspect of pie, that would only intensify with time.

The American entry into the war brought about heightened perceptions of pie. Just as the figures in Rockwell’s “Freedom from Fear” stand over their children after tucking them into bed, fundamentally doubting the safety of their own existences, apple pie began to stand all the more for the safety of home, the nostalgia for childhood and the

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<sup>96</sup> Janet Siskind, “The Invention of Thanksgiving: A Ritual of American Nationality,” in *Food in the USA: A Reader*, comp. Carole M. Counihan (n.p.: Psychology Press, 2002), 41.

<sup>97</sup> “Apple or Mince,” *The New York Times*, November 3, 1940, 86.

simple pleasures of peace time life. An article directed at civilian women in 1942 notes that “The Quartermaster General’s Office reports that apple pie appears more frequently than any other dessert on the military post menus, proving that soldiers rate this all-American favorite as highly as do civilians.”<sup>98</sup> Another, from 1943, emphasizes the G.I.’s preference for pie. “Ask a service man on leave in town—any town—what he’d most like to have to eat, and he probably will say, ‘A really good piece of pie.’”<sup>99</sup> The nation was inundated with material that firmly associated the war effort with ma, pa, and apple pie.

In 1941, Carmen Lombardo and John Jacob Loeb debuted the song “Ma! I Miss Your Apple Pie.”<sup>100</sup> Its catchy tune and lyrics captured the heart of the matter:

Ma, I miss your apple pie.  
 Ma, I miss your stew.  
 Ma, they’re treating me all right,  
 but they can’t cook like you.  
 Oh, Ma, nobody’s spoiling me  
 like you used to do.  
 They won’t let me stay in bed until noon.  
 At five-forty-five they play me a tune.  
 Oh, Ma, I miss your apple pie  
 and, by the way, I miss you too.<sup>101</sup>

The song was a hit, it was covered by half a dozen ensembles within the first five years of its release. “Ma! I Miss Your Apple Pie” is much more than simply a soldier’s longing for the home front, it longs for the relative innocence of the pre-war experience and it

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<sup>98</sup> Jane Holt, “Using the Abundant Apple,” *The New York Times Magazine*, August 9, 1942, 16.

<sup>99</sup> “Pie,” *The New York Times*, November 7, 1943, sec. E10.

<sup>100</sup> Lombardo and Loeb are Canadian, but Canadian-American Guy Lombardo and his orchestra accompany the song-writer/vocalists. Canada entered the war in 1939, but the song’s 1941 debut either speaks to the Canadian experience abroad or it was designed to appeal to the Americans. The song was covered by many other ensembles after it was debuted, Americans included, and it clearly resonated with the American public.

<sup>101</sup> Carmen Lombardo and John Jacob Loeb, “Ma! I Miss Your Apple Pie,” performed by Fox Trot Vocal Trio, orchestrated by Guy Lombardo and His Canadian Orchestra, on *n/a*, Decca Records 69047, 1941, LP, accessed April 28, 2014, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kC-xgmKe8\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kC-xgmKe8_A).

idealizes family dynamics. Although the song does not explicitly state the war is being waged to protect ma and her apple pie, it does associate the too in a manner that some G.I.'s fundamentally did not agree. John Morton Blum's *V Was for Victory* has a scene relating the indoctrination of soldiers and describes their viewing of Frank Capra's "Why We Fight." One soldier rejecting this swaddling of apple pie and the home in patriotic materials mutters to another disbeliever, "We won't wrap the apple pie in red, white, and blue."<sup>102</sup> Furthermore with men like Ernie Pyle and Bill Mauldin reporting from the field, it was clear that soldiers were homesick and had food on their minds—with the monotony of C Rations, how could it not?—apple pie rarely, if existed at all, surfaced in their work. For cartoonist Bill Mauldin, at least, the motivation for war was seeing the hardship and devastation of European civilians, as the G.I. then "thinks that this could probably have happened to his own sister or his wife."<sup>103</sup>

Yet those that did not see apple pie as a reason to fight, for whatever reason, remained in the cultural minority. So while "Ma! I Miss Your Apple Pie" reads like a letter and hails the home cook and, although the song itself is upbeat and cheerful, it has a bittersweet resonance. There is a hint of dissatisfaction in it—primarily with the army's inability to live up to ma's cooking. This dissatisfaction in finding good apple pie proliferated well outside the ranks of the military. Typically the same newspaper articles that would acknowledge apple pie as a G.I. favorite would also mention the gross inadequacies of most—whether restaurants or home cooks—to produce a quality pie. One wrote:

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<sup>102</sup> John Morton Blum, *V Was for Victory: Politics and American Culture during World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 11.

<sup>103</sup> Bill Mauldin, *Up Front*, (Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Company, 1945), 69.

At its best, of course, American pie is something to dream about and remember...Go anywhere and you take your chances with that staple of staples, apple pie. If it is right, it is superb; if it wrong, put it aside and eat the paper pie plate, which is just as tasty.<sup>104</sup>

Another, the same article that was written specifically for women, warns that “in spite of its universal popularity it [apple pie] is often a sorry, soggy affair when served forth by in[?]experienced cooks.”<sup>105</sup> While the article goes on to provide pie making tips to homemakers, as well as some thrifty suggestions for sweetening apple pies despite the ration on sugar, there is a huge expectation of apple pie quality and a simultaneous lack of confidence in young cooks.

Luckily, America’s “First Lady of Food” was on hand to help guide Americans to apple pie victory and all the difficulties that accompanied wartime home management. From tips for a successful Victory Garden to thrifty solutions for retaining relative culinary normalcy in spite of rationing, Betty Crocker was a resource for many during the war. Nine out of ten American women recognized Betty Crocker—the First Lady of Food—in 1945 and *Fortune* magazine reported that she was the second most recognizable woman in the United States of America, losing out only to the First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt.<sup>106</sup> All of this recognition, however, is odd considering that Betty Crocker was not, and is not, a real woman.

Betty Crocker was first conceived in 1921 after the Washburn Crosby Company placed an ad for their Gold Medal flour in *The Sunday Evening Post*. The ad, a puzzle, offered a pin cushion shaped like a flour sack as a prize for completed puzzles and the company received approximately 30,000 responses, not including the hundreds of letters

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<sup>104</sup> “Pie,” E10.

<sup>105</sup> Jane Holt, “Using the Abundant Apple,” 16.

<sup>106</sup> Susan Marks. *Finding Betty Crocker: The Secret Life of America's First Lady of Food*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 4.

that sought cooking advice.<sup>107</sup> Department manager of Washburn Crosby's advertising department, Samuel Gale, and James Quint—Gale's supervisor—believed it necessary to bring on a new team member to the "Gold Medal Home Service staff" to address these feminine concerns. Rather than scour the country for a talented home economist who could stay on message with Washburn Crosby copy, Gale and Quint decided to construct the perfect brand representative. Borrowing the surname of a well liked and recently retired director of the company, William G. Crocker, and adopting "Betty" for its "cheery, wholesome, and folksy" qualities, Betty Crocker was born into that advertising department at the ripe age of a perpetual thirty-something.<sup>108</sup> With the consolidation of smaller flour companies over the next few decades, Betty soon became property of General Mills and, through her kitchen counsel, recommended the purchase of all of General Mills baking products including Gold Medal flour, all-purpose and self-rising, and Softasilk cake flour.

Despite her humble beginnings, Betty soon grew to be more than the folksy construction of an advertising department. Through regular and discrete correspondence she answered the questions of all homemakers who wrote in asking for some culinary guidance. With her cheerful attitude and attention to minutiae, Betty gradually worked her way into the lives of millions of American women and eventually she became much more than a mascot or brand representative. As Susan Marks writes, "Like a trusted friend, or even a mother, Betty could be counted upon never to pass judgment, [and] always to give freely of her wisdom and advice."<sup>109</sup> Three years after Betty's inception,

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<sup>107</sup> General Mills, "The History of Betty Crocker," 9.  
[http://generalmills.com/~media/Files/history/hist\\_betty.ashx](http://generalmills.com/~media/Files/history/hist_betty.ashx).

<sup>108</sup> Marks, *Finding Betty Crocker*, 4-12.

<sup>109</sup> Marks, *Finding Betty Crocker*, 12.

Crosby Washburn brought Betty to the radio with her program, later titled “The Betty Crocker Cooking School of the Air.”<sup>110</sup> Although the radio show was written and originally aired out of Minneapolis, Minnesota, by the end of 1925, Betty shared tips and tricks out of Buffalo, New York as well as “New York City, Chicago, Boston, Kansas City, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Pittsburg, Los Angeles, Cleveland, and Detroit.”<sup>111</sup>

Betty’s catch phrase, “You can do it, and I can help you” sums up the relationship many listeners had with her; Betty was a guiding hand, a gentle presence in the kitchen. Although different women voiced her in different regions, drawing her listeners in, as her accent was no different from theirs, her message was always the same: she believed in the potential of all homemakers. No problem was too inconsequential or too foreign for Betty to tackle. She glorified and unified homemakers across America and encouraged her listeners to enter into a dialogue with one another by reading listener’s letters on the radio so that others might write in with their two-cents. While mediated, this exchange of information, across distance and radio waves, brought housewives together and created a real community for them and Betty was always waiting in the wings with an extra tip or suggestion.

When the war rolled around, Betty Crocker was ready to do her patriotic duty and lead American women through the dark days of the war. She sought to bolster the confidence of American women and the role they played during the war. In the foreword to her 1943 book, *Your Share: How to Prepare Appetizing, Healthful Meals with Foods Available Today*, she wrote, “Hail to the women of America! You have taken up your heritage from the brave women of the past. Just as did the women of other wars, you have

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<sup>110</sup> “General Mills, “The History of Betty,” 1.

<sup>111</sup> Marks, *Finding Betty Crocker*, 37.



taken your positions as soldiers on the Home Front.”<sup>112</sup> Although she acknowledged the breadth of roles women were taking in the war—scanning the skies for foreign aircraft to working in war manufacturing plants—she sternly reminded her reader of her place in the social order: “whatever else you do—you are, first and foremost, homemakers—women with the welfare of your families deepest in your hearts.”<sup>113</sup>

Despite rationing, Betty assured American women that they could still have their desserts and eat it too, just on a smaller scale. In *Your Share*, Betty suggested women “Use ½ or 1/3 of recipe. Make cup cakes. Serve uniced.” to reduce their use of expensive, and rationed, sugar.<sup>114</sup> In this way, pies may have been a more economical choice for Americans in a sugar-shortage as the ever present “sweeten to taste” in apple pie recipes was most accommodating. Aside from leaving the apple filing totally unsweetened, some would add tapioca to mix as it helped to cut the tartness of the apples while thickening the syrup that developed during baking.<sup>115</sup> Even the pie crust could be made more economically and she addressed how to stretch cooking fats—which were also rationed—in a section of *Your Share*. She recommended that the cook “Make 1-crust pies, *or* make only enough pastry for 1 crust, but use for 2 crusts: Roll out part for lower crust thinner than usual; use remainder for circle of pastry just large enough to fit on top of filling *or* make strips on top.”<sup>116</sup> While these were not the same hefty pies of the past, they may have been enough to create an illusion of plenty.

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<sup>112</sup> Betty Crocker, *Your Share: How to prepare appetizing, healthful meals with foods available today*, ed. General Mills, Inc. (Minneapolis, MN: General Mills Inc., 1943), foreword.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>115</sup> William H. Young and Nancy K. Young, *World War II and the Postwar Years in America: A Historical and Cultural Encyclopedia* (ABC-CLIO, 2010), 1:268.

<sup>116</sup> Betty Crocker *Your Share*, 15.

Even the White House adopted thrifty kitchen habits. After years of mailing the Roosevelts their baked good—especially pies and doughnuts—Henrietta Nesbitt was brought on board at the White House as head housekeeper. A fairly plain cook, Nesbitt's stint at the White House garnered less than fantastical dishes. Some scholars go so far to say that Nesbitt's position in the White House was Eleanor's way of punishing Franklin, as he preferred rich, hearty, fare. Others insisted that Eleanor and Nesbitt simply wanted to model good values for the nation and others still believe that Nesbitt's plain, yet nutritious, cooking was for the benefit of the president's health. Regardless, the White House's menus under Eleanor and Nesbitt were frugal, much to the president's chagrin.<sup>117</sup> In the cookbook she published in 1951, *Presidential Cookbook: Feeding the Roosevelt's and Their Guests*, Nesbitt reported that "Apple pie was the President's preference among pies" and that it was "generally conceded to be the All-American favorite."<sup>118</sup> The close of the war in 1945 meant brining back thousands of American men back home and although the process of de-militarizing was the source of much social and cultural anxiety, the nation welcomed home its troops with food. For V-E day, the War Shipping Administration, the WSA, announced a plan to meet "The desire of the war-weary soldier, returning from his triumphs in Europe, for real, fresh American food..."<sup>119</sup> Although it took extensive preparation, planning, and coordination, the government endured it all so that the GI could "shed his dehydrated rations with his battle equipment

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<sup>117</sup> Laura Shapiro, "FDR's Anti-Epicurean White House," editorial, *Gourmet*, last modified February 5, 2009, <http://www.gourmet.com/foodpolitics/2009/02/fdr-white-house-food>.

<sup>118</sup> Henrietta Nesbitt, *The Presidential Cookbook: Feeding The Roosevelts and Their Guests* (n.p.: Doubleday & Company, 1951), 161.

<sup>119</sup> "Pie and Fresh Food For Returning GI's: V-E Feeding Plan Adopted on All Troop Ships – None of Dehydrated Items Included" *The New York Times*, May 14, 1945, 3.

and indulge himself in fresh milk, eggs, fruits, vegetables, ice cream and apple pie.”<sup>120</sup>

While that shipside, armed forces, apple pie might not have compared to ma’s, it was, at least, like “the Kind They Make at Home.”<sup>121</sup>

### *Feed the Baby Boomers Apple Pie*

The transition back into a civilian economy was rocky and the nation continued to ration its food into 1947. Many women had taken up work outside of the home during the war, meeting the demand for labor wherever it arose. According to historian Carl Degler, “Between 1941 and 1944, some 6.5 million women took jobs; more than half of the new workers had previously been unpaid homemakers only.” Furthermore, by May 1945, fifty-seven percent of all employed persons were women, an unprecedented high.<sup>122</sup> Even after the end of the war, women continued to work although many were laid off to make way for the return of G.I.s. Of those women still employed in the post-war, fifty-two percent of them were married.<sup>123</sup> The reluctance of some women to return to the kitchen, their separate sphere, was almost foretold by General Mills and Betty Crocker in the preface to 1943’s *Your Share* and, after the war, the nation insisted that women had to remember their place in society. Although popular literature and advertisements during the war had focused primarily on how best to serve one’s country from the kitchen, in the late ‘40s and 1950s most female-oriented literature had to push and sway women back into their domestic roles. Women reluctant to return home prompted some literature to

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> James C. Young, “The Tourist Apple Pie Hunt is Ended” sec. SM2.

<sup>122</sup> Carl N. Degler, Carl N. Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 420.

<sup>123</sup> Degler, *At Odds*, 418.

emphasize the social relationships between men and women, often positing that a woman's abilities in the home would win her a man, a family, and a nice house in the suburbs.

The status of the home—its tidiness and efficiency, as well as the temperament and mood of its occupants—was up to the wife to mediate. The house's matriarch had to guarantee pleasant experiences and a nurturing environment. Although these expectations were not new to the twentieth century, Catharine Beecher had similar rhetoric, the war amplified the expectations of wife and mother. Not only did society and American popular culture expect more—advertisements increasingly featured spotless homes and beautifully prepared meals—but technology also, purportedly, made it easier for women to accomplish more. Betty Friedan, in *The Feminine Mystique*, wrote on the expectations and idealizations of the woman in the years following the war's conclusion:

Millions of women lived their lives in the image of those pretty pictures of the American suburban housewife, kissing their husbands goodbye in front of the picture window, depositing their stationwagonsful of children at school, and smiling as they ran the new electric waxer over their spotless kitchen floor. They baked their own bread, sewed their own and their children's own clothes, kept their new washing machines and dryers running all day. They changed the sheets on the beds twice a week instead of once, took the rug-hooking class in adult education, and pitied their poor frustrated mothers, who had dreamed of having a career. Their only dream was to be perfect wives and mothers; their highest ambition to have five children and a beautiful house, their only fight to get and keep their husbands.<sup>124</sup>

While managing a home was obviously more work than simply cooking or baking, popular media constantly reinforced the idea that if one could achieve a certain domestic consistency, or at least bake to her family's satisfaction, one could be sure of her place in

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<sup>124</sup> Betty Friedan, Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1963), 18.

the home. After, all, as the back cover of Betty Crocker's *Picture Cookbook* reminded the reader, "Home is where the heart is."<sup>125</sup>

Food companies and their advertisers jumped at this unique opportunity to pray on the social insecurities of many American women. A 1946 advertisement for Crisco proclaimed to Mrs. (or Miss Want-to-be) Homemaker "Cakes and Pies and Real Home Fries...that's what a G.I. dreams of! Lady—make his dreams come true!" Not only does this tagline tout the versatility of Crisco, but also it firmly asserts that women have the capacity to achieve extraordinary heights in the kitchen, so much so that they can make dreams into reality. Other companies, like heavy hitters General Mills and Pillsbury, developed new products that required appropriate marketing.<sup>126</sup> For example, shortly after the war's conclusion, General Mills introduced Pyequick, "an entire pie in a package," and each package of Pyequick contained both a bag of piecrust mix and a bag of dehydrated apples.<sup>127</sup> Although there was some initial hesitation from General Mills as this "shortcut" baking was incompatible with Betty Crocker's long-standing emphasis on the homemade, so many other companies were racing to perfect their own mixes and shortcuts that it had to compete.<sup>128</sup> Yet the homemaker and the corporation had to ask if pie mix or cake mix would be acceptable to the husbands that came home to their wives with the question: "Did you make a cake or pie today?"<sup>129</sup>

Still a reliable force in American kitchens, Betty Crocker was available to help the homemaker negotiate these types of questions and as far as taking a shortcut, she was all

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<sup>125</sup> Betty Crocker, ed., *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*, facsimile ed. (1950; repr., Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1998), back inside cover.

<sup>126</sup> Marks, *Finding Betty Crocker*, 121.

<sup>127</sup> Laura Shapiro, *Something from the Oven: Reinventing Dinner in 1950's America* (New York, N.Y.: Viking, 2004), 10.

<sup>128</sup> Marks, *Finding Betty Crocker*, 170.

<sup>129</sup> Shapiro, *Something from the Oven*, 70.

for it. As she was a brand representative of General Mills, Washburn Crosby had been bought out long ago, Betty had to act as an ambassador for many rising food technologies. Accordingly, to stem the fears that processed foods and culinary shortcuts would undercut the family's reception, as if there was less love or care put into new packaged or pre-prepared foods, Betty's rhetoric came more and more to focus on thoughtful, love-filled, cooking whether one was baking from scratch or not. She balanced her commitment to the American woman's traditional culinary heritage as well as the trend toward modern conveniences in the prologue to her 1950 runaway success, *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*. She wrote:

...to all of you who like to minister to your dear ones by serving them good food. That's the age-old way to express love and concern for welfare. And it's just as important today when we make use of the latest short cuts, equipment and prepared foods as it was when women made their own bread, butter, cheese, —all the foods their families ate.<sup>130</sup>

Not only does Betty connect the technological advances with the American culinary heritage, essentially an imagined past, she validates the use of the product she was designed to sell.

Of course it was this same sense of love and effort that made apple pie so difficult to commercialize. While Pyequick had all the key components and even if the same woman made it, would it stand up to ma's scratch pie? With this inundation of food advances, some began to feel that a distance was forming between women and the products of their kitchens. Increasingly, women relied upon corporate sponsored resources like recipe books or instructions on how to properly use new and unfamiliar foods.<sup>131</sup> Some cookbooks, such as *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*, making no

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<sup>130</sup> Betty Crocker, *Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook*, 5.

<sup>131</sup> Woloson, Wendy A.. *Refined Tastes: Sugar, Confectionery, and Consumers in*

assumptions about a woman's knowledge of the kitchen, made each step explicit to the reader. Marie Cunningham, in the introduction to *The Fannie Farmer Baking Book*, asserted that "[the] instinctive feeling for baking is no longer passed on from mother to daughter or niece." and that such women "take refuge in packaged dough mixtures or prebaked pie shells."<sup>132</sup> While Betty Crocker did offer some shortcuts with pie, the *Picture Cookbook* offered a recipe for "Stir and Roll" pie dough, she does take the space to illustrate to her readers how to roll out pie dough, but by the sheer amount of information given in these twentieth century cookbooks it seems true that many American women were learning more from print resources—even to cook traditional dishes—than from the women in their lives.

Perhaps it was the increased pressure put upon women to deliver perfection in the home, and definitely perfection in apple pie, that drove so many to consult the wisdom of the scientifically tested cookbook. In 1953, a Gallup poll asked Americans to name a dish that was "the real test of a woman's ability to cook," and far and away men and women both named apple pie as the true test of ability. While the sexes differed in their ranking for second place—men responded with roast beef whereas women then ranked cake—apple pie was in the forefront as the superior food.<sup>133</sup> As Jessie De Both wrote in her 1951 cookbook, "Truly a beautiful pie is a beacon to light a man's way homeward. It symbolizes so many things: the energy and effort of the woman he married; her wish to give him the utmost in eating enjoyment; her competence in fitting a pie into her never-

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*Nineteenth-Century America*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 213.

<sup>132</sup> Cunningham, Marion, and Fannie Merritt Farmer. *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook*. 13th ed. (New York: Knopf, 1990), xi.

<sup>133</sup> Shapiro, *Something from the Oven*, 71.

ending day of homemaking..."<sup>134</sup> Beyond the singular home, pies broadly represented "A Symbol of Good Eating in a Good Land," just as they had during the war.<sup>135</sup>

In Betty's rhetoric it is clear that pie has largely transcended the realm of fashionable food, home to the likes of chiffon cake and Jell-O confections, and is firmly entrenched as a classic, a staple, and a mode of connecting to the mythic American past. It seems that only after a nation has endured stress—the threat of the cold war loomed over America even after the end of the war in '45—that it is willing to evaluate its defining qualities, which in part explains why apple pie becomes more nationally significant in the years following World War I. The role of the homemaker is to keep the home insulated from all the threats of the outside world, to make sure everything is in order and effortlessly prepared. Betty, however, suggested that the phrase "easy as pie" was never quite as truthful as it sounded until modern technology and scientifically tested protocols made it so. Certainly throughout the 1940s and 1950s there was the expectation that pie, although a simple dish, required respectful and careful preparation and that carelessly prepared apple pie was an all too common and unsavory occurrence.

Apple was a small way of setting an anxious nation at ease and its preparation and consumption became a way of connecting with the nation's most basic virtues. By 1958, according to a survey conducted by the American Hobby Federation, apple pie replaced ice cream as the "favorite dessert of young Americans" ages 8 to 15.<sup>136</sup> It seems like a natural progression that the generation born into this era of apple pie, baked-with-love, would develop their own nostalgic associations. Those fond memories would propel

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<sup>134</sup> Sherrie A. Inness, *Dinner Roles: American Women and Culinary Culture* (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 2001), 146.

<sup>135</sup> Betty Crocker, *Picture Cookbook*, 293.

<sup>136</sup> "Apple Pie Favorite Dessert," *The New York Times*, January 27, 1958, p. 20.



apple pie through to the present moment. All the pies of the forties and fifties, the legacy of Betty Crocker and the Pillsbury Bake-Offs reassure Americans today that this baking culture, this pie culture, is intrinsic to the national identity. Most Americans do not even question the phrase “As American as apple pie” which has been applied from everything to “Revenge and payback politics” to the Fourth of July.

Furthermore, while this chapter primarily focuses on the homemade apple pie—shortcuts taken with pre-made crusts or not—there was a great attempt throughout the ‘50s and beyond to commercialize apple pie. Diners, which began serving and commercializing pie even earlier, were often hit or miss when it came to pie, but they were consistent in that they all offered it.<sup>137</sup> Eventually grocery stores opened bakery departments that sold apple pies and as women began to seek work outside the home once more, they turned to these for convenience. McDonald’s released its take on the apple pie roughly two decades after the end of World War II and it gave a sense of national identity, a vague gesture at wholesomeness even though the pie was deep fried and mass produced. Although one could wrap up an apple pie in a box or tamper-proof plastic, most everyone who has ever had the real deal knows that ma’s will always be better and there will never be anything like the Twinkie or Hostess cakes for apple pie. Whether we are conditioned by our childhoods to prefer specific variations of apple pie—tarter, sweeter, more heavily spiced, served a la mode, or with cheese—there is something about the apple pie that does not translate into mass consumption. Familial, regional, national twentieth century apple pies cannot quite be quantified for, as a mid-

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<sup>137</sup> “Pie,” *The New York Times*, November 7, 1943, E10.

century Pillsbury advertisement suggested, “Nothing says lovin’ like something from the oven.”<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Shapiro, *Something From the Oven*, 70.



## Conclusion

Straddling the divide between public and private life, separate and gendered spheres, apple pie could only ascend as a significant American symbol when greater value was put upon the labor of women, which is exactly what happened with the rise of mass consumer culture. In this way, it is clear that the apple pie's significance lies in the nation's movement away from the subsistence farming, domestic economy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries towards a mass national consumer society in the twentieth. Given the tumultuous nature of this movement out of the rural agrarian experience, the shift towards urban centers and mass production and mass consumptions is accompanied by this idealization of the home. In the moments that this new economy failed—like the Great Depression and the leanness of World War II rationing—Americans feel on the nostalgized staples of a past mode of living, apple pie included. With the rise of convenience consumption, such as the rise of store bought bread in the twenties, there is a societal dissociation—especially in urban centers—from historically essential knowledge and skills. Apple pie, in a similar manner, becomes a way for the nation to remind itself of its roots, both nationally and individually.

As the bulk of the process of becoming a national symbol is rooted in the twentieth century, by reframing the project to focus on this era of rapid development, one could better address the relationship of the mass consumer republic, in its best and worst moments, and the rise of American apple pie. Additionally, the project could benefit and be expanded upon by including more male perspectives, like that of Henry Ward Beecher in the second chapter. As cookbooks developed into an almost exclusively female genre, they offer a one-sided perspective into apple pie interpretations. Sherrie Inness suggested

in her book *Dinner Roles* that there was a masculine quality to apple pie, in its hearty form and bold flavors, which in part allows for its national success. A fussier, more feminine, dessert—like chiffon cake—could never achieve the same national status as apple pie. A discussion of those gender politics would be a boon to future studies and interpretations of the American apple pie as would an intensive examination of nineteenth and twentieth century popular literature.

Despite the shortcomings of this project, it is clear that apple pie's symbolic value is very real by the 1920s and it only continues to escalate throughout the decade. While apple pie comes in and out of vogue, as necessitated by the current state of the nation, its presence throughout time and associations with the nation's idealized home is consistent. In studying cookbooks, written typically by women for women, as well as twentieth century commercial cookbooks and marketing materials, some of which were also written by and for women, it becomes clearer that this socially acceptable literary form, for some, was a way to elevate their gender in society. While some of these forms, especially in the late nineteenth century, had a twinge of radicalism—the scientific rationale of Catharine Beecher first come to mind—they operated within a prescribed mode. By studying the evolution of apple pie as an American symbol one not only begins to understand the female's conception of her own existence, but how she imagines society perceives her.

Over the course of this project, apple pie has been called a cult, a religion, and MFK Fisher suggests that “Possibly our national appetite for apple pie could be called a syndrome, or even a mystique...”<sup>139</sup> Apple pie is a living symbol, an American ritual. Despite the efforts of some, take Martha Stewart for example, to distance pie from the

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<sup>139</sup> MFK Fisher, "Apple pie," in *Mom, the Flag, and Apple Pie: Great American Writers on Great American Things*, ed. Esquire (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976), 23

American public—via French cooking jargon, precise measurements, formal techniques, and fear mongering in their recipes—apple pie, at its core, is fundamentally egalitarian. The ephemeral nature of apple pie, and its many cultural associations, demands the ritual performance of pie making and pie eating. While most are content to enjoy apple pie for what it is, in some ways its history and symbolic associations—the balance of familial love and patriotism, individualism and unity—sweeten the deal. After all, what is more American than apple pie?



## Appendix A: Timeline of American Apple Pie Recipes as Referenced

**1798**

★ Amelia Simmons, *American Cookery*

### *Apple Pie.*

Stew and strain the apples, to every three pints, grate the peel of a fresh lemon, add cinnamon, mace, rose-water and sugar to your taste--and bake in paste No. 3.

### *Puff Pastes for Tarts.*

No. 3. To any quantity of flour, rub in three fourths of its weight of butter, (12 eggs to a peck) rub in one third or half, and roll in the rest.

**1846** (1850 edition)

★ Catharine Esther Beecher, *Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book*

### **Common Apple Pie.**

Pare your apples, and cut them from the core. Line your dishes with paste, and put in the apple; cover and bake until the fruit is tender. Then take them from the oven, remove the upper crust, and put in sugar and nutmeg, cinnamon or rose water to your taste; a bit of sweet butter improves them.

Also, to put in a little orange peel before they are baked, makes a pleasant variety.

Common apple pies are very good to stew, sweeten, and flavor the apple before they are put into the oven. Many prefer the seasoning baked in. All apple pies are much nicer if the apple is grated and then seasoned.

### *Paste made with Butter.*

Very plain paste is made by taking a quarter of a pound of butter for every pound of flour. Still richer allows three quarters of a pound of butter to a pound of flour.

Very rich paste has a pound of butter to a pound of flour.

### *Directions for making Paste.*

Take a quarter of the butter to be used, rub it thoroughly into the flour, and wet it with *cold* water to a stiff paste.

Next dredge the board thick with flour, and cut up the remainder of the butter into thin slices, and lay them upon the flour, and dredge flour over thick, and then roll out the butter into thin sheets and lay it aside.

Then roll out the paste thin, cover it with a sheet of this rolled butter, dredge on more flour, fold it up, and roll it out, and then repeat the process till all the butter is used up.

Paste should be made as quick and as cold as possible. Some use a marble table in order to keep it cold. Roll *from* you every time.





Dot with..... 1 $\frac{1}{3}$  tbsp. butter  
1 tbsp.

Cover with top crust. Bake until crust is nicely browned and apples are cooked through (*test with fork*). Serve warm or cold . . . may be topped with cream, whipped cream, or ice cream.

TEMPERATURE: 425° (hot oven).

TIME: Bake 50 to 60 min.



## Appendix B

### Senior Project Apple Pie Recipe

An earlier iteration of this project would relate my own coming to terms with pie making as before this year, I had never made an apple pie by myself or totally from scratch. Over the course of dozens of pies, many different recipes, and a lot of pastry angst this is how I bake my pies. I draw heavily from the teachings of pie enthusiast Matt Gillespie as well as *The Smitten Kitchen*.

#### Ingredients

##### For crust:

2/12 cups flour  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 cup, very cold, unsalted butter  
1 cup of ice water  
1 teaspoon of apple cider vinegar

##### For filling:

6-8 apples – preferably Northern Spy or Jonagold  
1-2 tablespoons cinnamon  
½ cup sugar  
1 lemon  
2 teaspoons uncooked tapioca  
1 tablespoon butter

##### To finish:

1 egg  
2 table spoons raw sugar

#### Instructions

1. To begin, cut butter into ½“ cubes and place in a separate bowl. Combine ice water and apple cider vinegar and put both the butter and the cup of water into the freezer while mixing dry ingredients.
2. Measure and whisk together all dry ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Remove butter and water from freezer. With a handheld pastry blender begin to cut the butter into the flour mixture. You want the butter to be well incorporated, but still chunk. Some people say to stop when the butter chunks are about the size of peas, but you can stop when they are larger than that too. Larger butter chunks mean a flakier crust.
4. Begin adding tablespoons of water. You can use more water than you think, but you don't want the dough to get oversaturated and sticky. Aim for 6-8 tablespoons The dough should stick to itself enough that there aren't many flour and butter crumbs left in the bowl. Press into ball with hands and wrap in wax paper or cling wrap and put into freezer. Leave in freezer for at least 30 minutes, but if you can let it sit over night that is better.
5. Preheat oven to 425° Farenheit. If your pie crust has been in the freezer for several hours, let it thaw as you prepare the filling.
6. Pare and core apples. If making filling the same day as crust, feel free to reuse the pie crust bowl. Add cinnamon and sugar. Zest half a lemon and if the apples are not vigorous—say you're using Macintosh or something—you might want to incorporate a teaspoon of lemon juice. Add tapioca. Toss thoroughly.

7. On a well-floured work surface, pastry cloth, or wax paper take half of the pie dough and press into flat shape with the heel of the hand. Make sure the pastry round is well covered in flour—this will prevent sticking.
8. With a rolling pin, roll away from your body in long motions. Rotate and flip the dough, ensuring all sides are well-floured and even. Your dough will probably not be perfectly circular and the edges may tear. This is okay. Roll out the dough so that it is approximately the same size as your pie plate (preferably glass Pyrex).
9. Gingerly pick up the pie dough—rolling it around the rolling pin or gently folding it into quarters works well—and place in dish. Trim the edges, leaving about a ¼“ of overhang
10. Mound apples in pie plate and dot with butter now. I have often forgotten the butter in my eagerness to put the top crust on.
11. Repeat steps 7 through 9 for the second half of the pie dough. This one should be easier to work with because it has sat out longer.
12. Cover the apples with the second crust.
13. With your finger or a pastry brush, run your finger along the edges of the pastry crust and then press together gently to seal. You may now crimp the edges of the pastry. Make it pretty.
14. Beat one egg and with a pastry brush, lightly coat the top of the pie. This will make the crust shiny and beautiful. Sprinkle raw sugar on top.
15. Cut vents in the top crust for steam to escape.
16. Bake in oven at 425° to brown the crust (15-20 minutes) and then lower the temperature to 350° and bake for 20-30 minutes more or until the filling bubbles and the apples appear soft.
17. Let cool for 30 minutes to an hour. I prefer to serve apple pie warm.

--CB

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