

Castle Chronicle



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Updike Dining Room

December 1957.

Mrs. J. Earl Clauson pours
tea at a Queen Anne table
on loan from Mr. and Mrs.
Richmond Viall.



Note from the President

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As we come to the end of another year, it's a good time to reflect on the year's accomplishments and the outlook for the new year. 2009 marked some remarkable accomplishments for your association:

- Smith's Castle completed installation of a moisture remediation system, funded by a State Preservation Grant, the Champlin Foundations, the Smith's Castle Fund, as well as donations from our annual appeal. This will help protect the Castle and the collections from mold and mildew.
- We developed a new business plan through an internship program funded by Preserve Rhode Island. Smith's Castle was one of only five museums in the state selected for this competitive program, which will now help direct our business strategy over the next three years.
- We completed a Cultural Landscape Report and have started on a Master Landscape Plan (MLP). To fund the MLP, we received a \$6,000 "Preservation is Local" grant—one of only 16 projects awarded by the state preservation office—and \$5,000 from the Felicia Fund (see page 3). These steps are related to the ongoing Rhode Island Department of Transportation project to address our Post Road "curb appeal" and visitor safety.
- Smith's Castle received a \$10,000 grant from The Charles R. Jelm Charitable Foundation. This money will be targeted for youth education, including programming and updating our website.
- The 2009 Strawberry Festival was our most successful in several years.



We still face several major challenges, noted in depth in our business plan:

- How do we attract new volunteers?
- How do we connect with the local North Kingstown community, both residents and businesses?
- How do we expand our membership?

As I noted in this column in our last issue, it's an astonishing fact that less than one percent of North Kingstown households are members of Smith's Castle. But the benefits of membership are great. Of course, membership gives you reduced or free admission to Castle events and lectures. What many members don't know is that your membership also gives you reciprocal free or reduced admission to certain other member organizations of the New England Museum Association (NEMA)—for example, Sturbridge Village and Mystic Seaport. Moreover, in an economy of downsizing, what can be better than becoming tourists in our own neighborhoods and discovering history in our own backyards?

You will shortly receive our request for donations to our annual appeal, and our membership renewals will go out in March. Please consider the important contribution that Smith's Castle makes every day to our community and our state in preserving our local history, conserving our historic landscape, architecture, and archaeology, and informing our community, its visitors, and our next generation about Rhode Island history.

Carol Palmer

—Carol Palmer, President



Many thanks to the volunteers of Exeter Job Corps for weeding and tidying the grounds and helping to provide a spotless setting for the Colonial Harvest Festival.



Diane Amaral puts finishing touches on the Cocumscussoc Dairy Maid, Smith's Castle entry into the Wickford Village scarecrow contest as Past President Neil Dunay looks on.

'Preservation is Local' Grant Advances Site Planing

 n September 16, 2009 Smith's Castle was awarded a \$6,000 *Preservation is Local* (PIL) grant by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC). The grant, applied for in July by the long-range site committee, will enable the committee to continue developing a comprehensive landscape preservation and design master plan for Cocomuscussoc. Specifically, it will support the work of identifying interpretive priorities for Smith's Castle and determining how the priorities should be integrated into the master site plan.

In addition, \$5,000 received from the Felicia Fund in February 2009 will be applied as the required, non-Federal, match for the PIL award. This brings the total amount in hand for this phase of the site planning work to \$11,000.

To initiate the process of determining interpretive priorities for Smith's Castle, the site committee organized October and November workshops for the trustees and docents. The general membership was invited to participate as well. Both sessions featured an introductory presentation by Lucinda Brockway, the historic landscape consultant who authored Smith's Castle's recently-completed Cultural Landscape Report (CLR). In her presentation, *After the CLR: What's Next for Smith's Castle?*, Cindy outlined a broad range of possible treatments for the site based on her experience with a diverse range of historic sites throughout New England and neighboring states.¹ Following the presentation participants were organized into working groups where they shared ideas for potential interpretive treatments and visions of a future Smith's Castle landscape. The concepts and ideas were recorded on site plans and each group's work was presented at the end of the day. In addition, workshop participants completed a survey in which they evaluated and ranked a range of potential treatment options for Smith's Castle.²

In the coming weeks, the site committee will conduct a survey of historic sites in the region as a means of establishing a baseline against which Smith's Castle can weigh the range of potential directions identified in the workshops. The survey will solicit information concerning operations, planning priorities, interpretive programs, and similar data for each of the participating museums. The data gathered will help Smith's Castle evaluate its strengths relative to other sites,

avoid duplication of effort in the interpretive focus of its programs, and effectively position itself within the mix of regional historic sites. All sites taking part in the survey will receive a copy of the results.

Finally, the site committee will evaluate the findings and recommendations of various studies that have been conducted on behalf of the Association in the past decade. These include the Museum Assessment Program of 2000, the Strategic Plan of 2003 authored by Peter Dunston, the Collections Assessment Program of 2004, and the Business Planning Project completed earlier this year. All contain thoughtful recommendations concerning future planning for Smith's Castle.

Over the next several weeks Cindy and the site committee will review the data from the results of the working groups, the workshop surveys, the regional historic site survey, and the earlier planning studies to determine the priorities for site interpretation at Smith's Castle. The anticipated completion date for the work under the PIL grant is March 2010. By opening day 2010 the Association should have in place a document outlining likely treatment alternatives and interpretive priorities that will serve to guide the development of Smith's Castle's landscape preservation and master site plan.

The site committee is extremely grateful to RIHPHC, including Edward Sanderson, executive director; Rick Greenwood, deputy director; and Charlotte Taylor, senior archaeologist for their support of Smith's Castle and their belief in the future potential of the site. Also, we thank the trustees, docents, and members who shared their dreams and visions of Smith's Castle's possible future. It is their belief in the importance of the site and its future possibilities that drive the Cocomuscussoc Association as it faces today's challenges and prepares the site for what lies ahead. ■

—Darrell McIntire, Chair
Long-Range Site Committee

1. See page 8 for a review of a book by Cindy about one of these sites— Fort Ticonderoga in New York.

2. Not yet completed the survey? The site committee invites any member who has not yet done so to complete the survey on line. Simply go to www.surveymonkey.com/s/8KBB2CQ and follow the instructions. All surveys must be submitted by February 1.

The Updike Great Room

Neil G. Dunay

One of the best preserved and most elegant rooms at Smith's Castle is the so-called "Updike Dining Room." Following is an exploration of the evolution of this room's interpretation at Smith's Castle, its actual use historically, and some alternatives for its re-interpretation in the future.

All Families of Cocumscussoc

Some visitors and members familiar with the Updike Dining Room as it was staged until a few years ago find the current room "stark." They were accustomed to a collections staging philosophy at Smith's Castle called "All Families of Cocumscussoc." Dating probably from the 1980s, if not earlier, this view tried to rectify a problem faced by a number of small local historic house museums: how do you integrate disparate objects spanning several centuries and reflecting the eclectic tastes of local donors. The answer was to mix them all together. Rockers from the 1870s sat next to eighteenth-century beds placed in seventeenth-century rooms.

This philosophy evolved from the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial revival fashion for stuffing historic houses full of quaint items of non-specific "ye olden times," ready for costumed docents posing as if Wallace Nutting would soon walk through the door to take a portrait. It was also a convenient way to stage rooms because it didn't require anyone to know in what period a piece was made or how it might have fit into the daily lives of specific residents at Smith's Castle. It was all about atmosphere.

The "All Families of Cocumscussoc" staging philosophy was also, unintentionally, deceitful. It simply did not reflect all families who lived at Cocumscussoc. First, the staging seemed to have an arbitrary cut-off of about 1880. For example, the eighteenth-century kitchen held an exhibit of whale-oil lamps from the mid-to-late nineteenth century. If one intended to truly reflect all families in the room a group of electric floor lamps from the Fox family's occupation in the 1920s would have to be added.

Secondly, nowhere did we see represented the overseers, the servants/laborers, and, particularly, the slaves. Clearly, only certain families of Cocumscussoc merited attention. Sadly, even though about ten years ago, Smith's Castle was one of the first museums in Rhode Island to integrate a factual account of slavery



Staged for "All Families of Cocumscussoc" in the 1990s, the dining room crowded together William and Mary table and chairs, late eighteenth century Windsor chairs, Federal side tables, Victorian andirons and painted potty chair, and a twentieth-century oriental carpet.

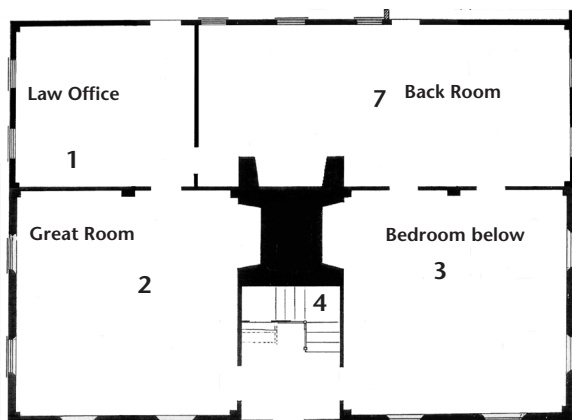
at our site into our regular public tours, we have yet to acquire objects and stage rooms to reflect the daily lives of slaves here.

The "All Families" philosophy had an impact on the name of the subject room of this article: "The Updike Dining Room." The room, furnished around the perimeter mostly with high-style federal pieces, was prominently staged at the center with a large table and six chairs from c 1730–1750. A c 1825 blue-pattern Staffordshire platter sat at its center and c 1790 Chinese-export tea service waited on the sideboard. Most visitors would automatically connect this with a room in their own home, a dining room.

Specific Families of Cocumscussoc

In 2007 Smith's Castle undertook a thinning of its furnishings to weed out non-period, non-New England, and redundant items. This would allow rooms to be staged more accurately by period and to support stories about the residents of Cocumscussoc. Following on the architectural restorations of the Castle in the 1950s and 1990s, the rooms would reflect the Smith and Updike periods of ownership, with a stylistic cut-off at the mid 1820s—coinciding with the death of Abigail Updike (1740–1824), the last Updike to reside in the Castle.

From the Updike Dining Room, only a few items were sold. These included c 1870 Renaissance Revival "lighthouse" andirons, a Victorian period oriental carpet, and a c 1800 Virginia hunt table that had migrated uncomfortably between the dining room and the front hall. The primary change to the room, however, was the removal of the pre-1750 table and chairs to the newly created law office of attorney



Conjectural route of the 1757 inventory. Inventory takers enter at the back and stop at (1) the *Office*, then move to (2) the *Great Room*. They walk through the unfurnished front stairhall to (3) the *Bedroom below*. They return to the hall and up the stairs to (4) the two *Bedrooms* and (5) the *North Chamber*, then move upstairs to (6) the *Garrett*. Moving downstairs via a back stairway they reach (7) the *Back Room*. The inventory does not mention a room on the first floor in the corner where the current pantry is located. This questions whether the current back staircase and the entire back ell were then present.



Updike "Dining Room" about August 1993. It would appear from this photo that someone undertook a thinning of this room in the 1990s. The oriental carpet is gone and the Federal furnishings are not in view and may have been moved to another room. This furnishing is more historically accurate than the subsequent overstuffed room of the late 1990s and first part of this decade. According to an inscription on this photo, the chairs and table (which appear to be the same as those in the 1957 photo on the cover) were "returned to Viall's Aug. '93."

general Daniel Updike. This opened up the space and thinned its contents primarily to c 1790–1820 federal furnishings. Most recently, the export china was moved to the bedroom upstairs to sit on the newly acquired Newport fly table. [Castle Chronicle: v. 18, n. 2, p. 16]

A Room by Any Other Name

Although so-called dining rooms appear in probate inventories from the late seventeenth century, they are very rare until the nineteenth century, when a room specifically for dining became a feature of many homes. Until then, meals might be taken in any room. "Meals at home in early America were served in the dining room, sitting room, drawing room, bedchamber, hall, piazza, and any other convenient location. Flexibility was essential when servants, weather, health, and family composition were ever-changing." [Garrett: 78]

The room-by-room probate inventory of Daniel Updike's personal estate in 1757 makes no mention of a dining room. Instead, on the first floor we have the Office, the Bedroom below, the Great Room, and the Back Room. We have generally assumed that the room now shown as the Updike Dining Room was the Great Room. I have second thoughts about this and now believe the room may actually have been the Bedroom below (see Conjectural Floor Plan, 1757, above). The inventory takers start in the Office, then move to the Great Room, and then to the Bedroom below. Had the Great Room been the east room and the Bedroom south, the progression of the rooms in

the inventory would be out of sync with their position in the house.

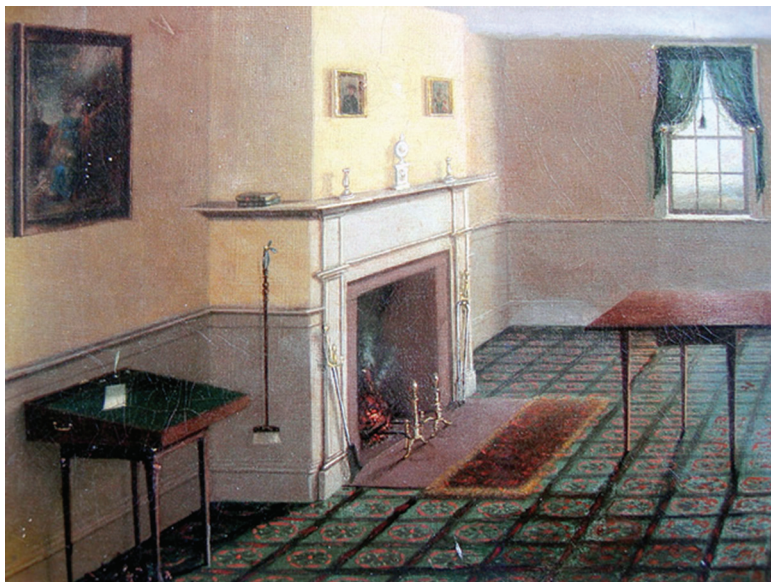
Typically, the most formal room in a house of this period would be the first floor bedroom for the master of the house (which in many houses was called the parlor). Hung with expensive curtains, the bed would have been on display for guests to take note of their host's wealth. Note that Updike's Bedroom below contains a table and eight chairs, as well as a tea table, ready for dining and entertaining.

If the Updikes had a formal "Bedroom below" with table and chairs to accommodate their most important guests, how was the Great Room used? The Great Room was the modern equivalent of today's family room, a multipurpose room where the family may have dined, drank, sewed, played, studied, smoked, etc. Other names for this room include the hall, the sitting room, the back parlor, or the keeping room (especially if it contained a closet for "keeping" the china). In Daniel Updike's Great Room in 1757, we find: 1 Clock, 2 Looking Glasses, 2 Oval Tables, 1 Tea Table and Chaney, 7 Leather Chairs, 1 Old Couch and Stool, 1 pair Andirons Tongues and Shovel, 5 Old Pictures.

Even though this was a less formal room, it was still fairly impressive, given the presence of the clock and two looking glasses. In fact, the value of items in this room (£357) slightly exceeds that of the Bedroom (£338). The reason for this is that the Updikes had a second informal sitting room upstairs, the North Chamber, equipped with wing-back chairs and probably the family's everyday china and glassware (but, oddly, no tables!).



Dining Room of Dr. Whitridge's, Tiverton, Rhode Island, as It Was in the Winter 1814–1815; Breakfast Time (Pot-Apple-Pie). Watercolor by Joseph Shoemaker Russell, c1850. Courtesy Old Dartmouth Historical Society, New Bedford. Note the bare floor, spare furnishings, and chairs aligned soldier-like against the wall.



Rhode Island Interior. Oil on canvas by an unnamed American artist, 1800–1810. Collection Fenton Brown. While this room reflects more affluence than Dr. Whitridge's, with wall-to-wall carpet, curtains, pictures, and decorative objects, the same sparseness of furnishing prevails.

It's very difficult for modern visitors to understand how these rooms were used. Thus, as part of our educational mission, it is important to portray these rooms accurately and integrate them into the stories of their residents. As a Great Room, the room should be staged to show the family activities that would have occurred: card playing, sewing, drinking, dining, etc.

Stark Quarters

Comments that the current room is stark are quite true. Colonial era rooms were very sparsely furnished by today's standards. Note in the 1757 inventory the only items taking floor space in this large, 20-foot by 20-foot room were three occasional tables, seven side chairs, and a couch (daybed).

When rooms were unused, the furniture was set back against the wall, leaving an open space in the center. Furniture was then moved to the spot where it was needed. Most likely one oval table and one mirror were placed between the two windows on one wall and the matching pair similarly centered on the adjoining wall, the tea table (folded) placed in one corner, the couch in the other corner, and the chairs filling in the gaps, lined up against the wall.

Note the sparse interiors in two period Rhode Island paintings. In the *Dining Room of Dr. Whitridge's, Tiverton* (1814–15), we see two bowback Windsor chairs, a small armchair, and a delicate dining table opened up and centered in the room, set for a meal. The floor is bare. In *Rhode Island Interior* (c 1800) we see a similar drop-leaf table opened into the center of the room. But the only other furniture piece shown is a portable writing desk. This room, far more elegant than Dr. Whitridge's, has curtains on the windows and a beautiful wall-to-wall carpet. "The carpet's decorative role brings to mind an Italian's observation, contemporary with this painting, that a majority of Americans displayed few pictures, statues, or ornamented furniture, preferring instead mahogany furniture and fine carpets. The simple starkness of this apartment remained characteristic of American interiors into modern times." [Garrett: 64]

Furnishing Options

Although today's Updike Dining Room room quite possibly was Daniel Updike's Bedroom in the 1757 inventory, we are already interpreting one of the rooms upstairs as an Updike Bedchamber, although at a c 1800 time period. For variety, the room therefore is best shown as the Updike Great Room. The most direct interpretation would be to recreate the room from the furnishing mentioned in the 1757 inventory. However, acquiring period Rhode Island pieces, especially of the caliber the attorney general owned, would be financially prohibitive for the Association.

We know of at least two pieces that occupied the house during Lodowick Updike's ownership. One item was a Newport-made maple, marble-top table (right). In her will of 1812, Lodowick Updike's wife Abigail

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directs, "I give to my Daughter Anstis Lee my Marble Table, one large looking Glass, [and] eight Chairs standing in the parlour." Mrs. Anstis Updike Lee allowed St. Paul's church to use this table as an altar in the church for many years. In 1888, Daniel Berkeley Updike, the Boston printer who descended from Wilkins Updike, contributed a new altar to St. Paul's Church, with the understanding the original marble top of this table be incised into the altar. The table, resurfaced with a new marble top, was displayed in the landmark *John Brown House Loan Exhibition of Rhode Island Furniture* in 1965. [RIHS: 54-55] Where is this table today? It would be wonderful if it could be rediscovered and returned to a place of prominence at the Castle.

The other item is a desk and bookcase owned by Lodowick Updike (right). This piece is mentioned also in Abigail Updike's will. "I give to my Son Wilkins Updike, my book Case standing the great Chamber." This rare and exquisite six-shell, mahogany desk and bookcase is now owned by Winterthur. Even if it were to be sold, its value today would certainly exceed \$10 million—well beyond the reach of our little museum. For more information, see "Lodowick Updike's Magnificent Mahogany Masterpiece." [Castle Chronicle: v.13, n.4, p.6]

With no items known to have been in the room nor the resources to purchase period examples, the Cocumscussoc Association is left to develop a fictitious but plausible story to account for the c1800 furnishings now in the room: Having been admitted to the Bar in 1808 and his marriage to Abigail Watson looming in September 1809, Wilkins Updike equips the room with elegant federal pieces. He perhaps used proceeds from his inheritance in 1804 to make the ancient family home he inherited more comfortable for his new wife. With Wilkins' portrait hanging above the fireplace, docents have the opportunity to tell the story of the seventh and last generation of the Smith-Updike dynasty to own Smith's Castle. ■



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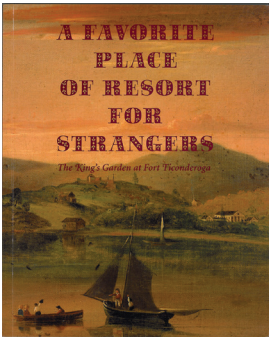
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Recommended Reading

A Favorite Place of Resort for Strangers

by Lucinda A. Brockway
Albert A. Knopf New York, 2009
Hardcover, 356 pages
ISBN-13: 978-0-307-27023-8



Lucinda A. Brockway, who authored the Cultural Landscape Report for Smith's Castle, collaborated with the staff of Fort Ticonderoga to produce a book based on her 1993–1995 study, *Historic Landscape Report for the King's Garden and Pavilion Grounds*. The Pavilion was the Pell family home and includes what has been described as “the oldest garden in the country.” The result is a fascinating, well-researched study of this historic locale in upstate New York.

Fort Ticonderoga “sat at the epicenter of territorial disputes.” The area was cultivated by Native Americans more than two thousand years before European contact. However, it was the French who erected the first garrison, Fort Carillon, in the early 1600s soon after Champlain claimed the area. The rich soil provided the ground for a garden cultivated by the French to feed their troops and also served as a grazing area for their livestock. For the next century and a half the area was a bone of contention between the French and British. After the British took control in 1759, they renamed the Fort “Ticonderoga” and the garden “King's Garden.” When the defeated British retreated to Canada in 1777, the fortress was reduced to ruins and the garden and pasture were overgrown with weeds and bushes.

William Ferris Pell, a New York businessman, purchased the 546-acre “Garrison Grounds” in the 1820s and this began almost two centuries of involvement with the site and the Fort by the Pell family. When the first structure Pell built on the site burned down, he replaced it with a large Greek Revival house, the Pavilion. After his death in 1840, it was leased as a hotel. Promoted by the travel industry as part of the so-called “Northern Tour,” it was a popular attraction until after the Civil War, when it fell into disrepair.

At the turn of the century, a restoration effort was launched by Stephen H.P. Pell and his wife. The Fort was reconstructed in 1909 and opened to tourists. The Pells were advised in their efforts by Alfred Blosson, an architect, and Marian Crugar Coffin, a landscape designer. Together these professionals developed a comprehensive plan for the area. The

Pavilion was restored as a family home, and a formal walled garden, the King's Garden, loosely based on the French garrison garden plan was constructed. Coffin, one of the first women to gain notoriety as a landscape architect, redesigned it in 1920. Later Stephen's son, John Pell, became President of the Fort Ticonderoga Association, a private nonprofit association formed by the family in 1931. The facilities were improved to accommodate the influx of visitors, and more land was acquired surrounding the Fort and home. The Pell family transformed this important historical site into a museum and celebrated private home. After John's death in 1987, the Board of Trustees voted to consider The Pavilion, the King's Garden, the Block House, and the surrounding landscape as part of the publicly accessible resources of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum.

Lucinda Brockway was selected to research the site for a Historic Landscape Study. Cindy concluded that the garden designed by Coffin in 1920 offered the best preservation opportunity as her entire garden plan survived. The book contains a good description of the restoration effort which took more than four years of work by both professionals and volunteers. Currently three garden tours are conducted daily.

This work is well illustrated, fully annotated, and contains numerous photographs. There is an appendix listing the operators of the Pavilion Hotel (1838–1908) and another detailing Coffin's 1920 plant list for the King's Garden in which both the botanical and common names are given. Suggestions for further reading are very helpful for anyone doing research on this geographical area or on the topic of historic gardens. Based on Cindy's report, the staff of the museum has rendered a readable and most interesting study. Not only will it make the reader want to join the thousands who visit the site each year, but it will also help Castle members to comprehend the aims of Cindy's *Cultural Landscape Report* for the Cocumscussoc Association. It should provoke some discussion on how her suggestions for our site could be implemented. ■

—Norma LaSalle, PhD

Hearthside Cooking

A History of Gingerbread

Contributed by Barbara Crudale

"And I had but one penny in the world, Thou should'st have it to buy gingerbread."

—William Shakespeare, *Love's Labours Lost*

The aroma of ginger and molasses wafts through the house on a cold winter afternoon, enticing all to the kitchen to wait impatiently for the pan of gingerbread to come out of the oven. Sliced into squares, topped with a scoop of vanilla ice cream or a bit of sweetened whipped cream, the gingerbread quickly disappears. The baker of the treat is lauded by all.

The main ingredient used in making gingerbread is the twisted rhizome called ginger root. Ginger originated in southern China and soon spread to India, Southeast Asia, West Africa, and eventually the Caribbean.¹ Now ginger is grown mostly in Jamaica. The Chinese used it medicinally, especially for stomach ailments, and the Romans used ginger to flavor foods. However, it was during the Middle Ages that spice merchants sold pounds of ginger, along with pepper, to be used in cooking, especially to cover the taste of meats preserved without refrigeration.²

The manufacture of gingerbread spread throughout Western Europe at the end of the eleventh century, possibly introduced by crusaders returning from wars in the Eastern Mediterranean. As the price of ginger and other spices became more affordable to the people of Europe, baking gingerbread became more common. Early recipes usually were prepared as a paste made of ground almonds, stale bread crumbs, sugar and ginger, which was pressed into wooden molds carved into the shapes of royalty or religious symbols. Once baked,



the cookies were iced with edible gold paint (for the upper classes) or white icing to bring out the details pressed into the cookie from the mold.³

The English replaced the bread crumbs with flour and added eggs and additional sweeteners in the

sixteenth century. The first gingerbread man is credited to Queen Elizabeth I, who instructed her bakers to create gingerbread people in the likenesses of visiting royalty. Her visitors were amazed with the gifts of cookies which had a remarkable similarity to themselves.

Villagers, however, were content with hearts or other simply shaped gingerbread. Market fairs became known as "gingerbread fairs" and shapes of gingerbread were associated with different seasons, with animals and birds shaped gingerbreads baked during the autumn and flower shaped gingerbreads made in the spring at Easter time. A common English tradition was for unmarried young women to consume gingerbread "men" during the fair, in the hopes of meeting a potential husband. Additionally, many English villages would prepare gingerbread cookies in the shape of the town's patron saint and on the special fair held on the saint's day, gilding or special icing would be added to the treats. On other market fair days, the cookies would be cut into round circles, called "snaps."⁴

By the seventeenth century, making gingerbread became a profession in itself. Gingerbread bakers had exclusive permission to bake and sell gingerbread, except at the holidays of Christmas and Easter. Some would sell the gingerbread from stalls during the markets, and others would walk the streets, pedaling squares of fresh gingerbread. This practice continued in the late nineteenth century.⁵

Hearthside Cooking (from page 9)

The people of Germany embraced the baking of gingerbread and brought the art to incredible heights. The Guild of Master Bakers produced beautiful cookies flavored with ginger during the seventeenth century, which were sold during the Christmas season. Nuremberg became the epicenter of gingerbread creations and other craftsmen were attracted to the town. Craftsmen carved intricate molds, artists assisted with decorating the baked gingerbread with frosting or gold paint and increasingly more detailed and fancy creations, such as hearts, angels and wreaths were sold at fairs and at the markets. The Nuremberg bakers became known as “pepper sacks” as they used all the flavorings available, including cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, white pepper, anise and of course, ginger.

As the gingerbread baking moved into the nineteenth century, the Grimm brothers were collecting volumes of German fairy tales and discovered the story of Hansel and Gretel. By the end of the century, the popularity of gingerbread houses grew when the story of the abandoned children who discovered the house decorated with candies was transformed into an opera by Englebert Humperdink.

European migration to the United States insured that gingerbread cookies and cakes continued to flourish. American recipes usually list fewer spices than European, and regional differences appeared as settlers used ingredients easily found. Maple syrup was often used in New England, and sorghum molasses added in the Southern states.⁶

The following recipes come from *First Catch your Hare: The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*; *Martha Washington's Booke of Cookery*, and a modern cookbook, *“The Essence of Chocolate.”* Entice your family into the kitchen this winter and enjoy some gingerbread together. ■

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Ginger-Bread Cakes

Take three Pounds of Flour, one Pound of Sugar, one Pound of Butter, rubbed in very fine, two Ounces of Ginger beat fine, a large Nutmeg grated; then take a Pound of Treacle,* a quarter of a Pint of Cream, make them warm together, and make up the Bread stiff, roll it out, and make it up into Cakes, cut them out with a Tea-Cup, or a small Glass, or roll them round like Nuts, bake them on Tin Plates in a slack Oven.

*Treacle is a generic word in Britain for any syrup made in the process of refining sugar cane, and it can range from very light to very dark, much like molasses found in America.⁷

Hannah Glasse. *First Catch your Hare: The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*, 1747. Reprinted by The Cromwell Press, Wiltshire, England, 1995.

Ginger Bread

Take 2 pound and a half of dried bread crumbs very fine, one pound of beaten cinnamon, A third part of ginger, and the same quantity of cloves, nutmeg, mace, licorish, and anny seeds. Then take a gallon of claret wine and 6 pounds of good loaf sugar beat very small. Then mix your spices very well together with a little claret wine. So pit your spices into the wine with your sugar, and set them on the fire in A pan or pot that will not brase [discolor]. And when they are boyled together, and begin to grow pritty thick, keeping of it stird continually, then put in A

pinte of sack and halfe of your breadcrumbs. When you have cullerd it well, take it off the fire, and strow some crums in the bottom of the boule you intend to put it into. Then poure it out of our pan as fast as you can, and strow in the remainder of the your bread crums, and knead them well in your hands. When it is pritty coole, roule it out & put or sprinkle a little cinnamon on your prints, which you must reserve out of your beaten cinnamon. And So print them up.

Karen Hess, transcriber. *Martha Washington's Booke of Cookery*. Columbia University Press, 1995.

Chocolate Marbled Gingerbread

Ingredients: 8 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 ½ cups water
1 cup unsulphured molasses
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 ½ cups flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
Pinch of ground cloves
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 large egg
4 oz. 62 percent semisweet chocolate, melted
Ice cream (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Butter the bottom and sides of a 13" x 9" pan and set aside. In a small saucepan, bring the water to boil. Remove from heat and stir in molasses and baking soda. Set aside to cool until lukewarm, about 10 minutes. Sift together flour, baking powder, salt, ginger, cinnamon and cloves. In another bowl, beat the butter and sugar on medium-high until light and fluffy. Add the egg and mix until combined, stopping to scrape down the sides of the bowl as necessary. On low speed, alternately add the dry ingredients and molasses mixture. Pour about 1/3 of the batter into a bowl. Add the

chocolate and stir to combine. Pour about the rest of the batter into the prepared pan. Evenly space about 6 heaping spoonfuls of the chocolate batter on top of the plain batter. Pull a skewer through the batter to marble the chocolate and plain batters. Bake for 30–35 minutes or until skewer inserted in the center comes out clean. Allow the gingerbread to cool completely in the pan on a cooling rack. Cut into squares and top each with a scoop of ice cream, if desired.

John Scharffenberger and Robert Steinberg. *The Essence of Chocolate*. Hyperion, New York, 2006.

Hot, Spice Gingerbread!

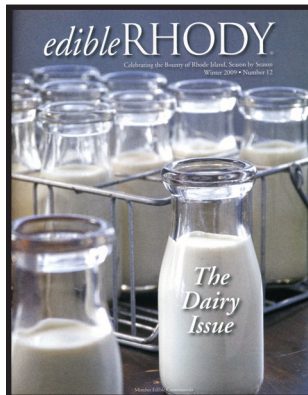


*“’Tis all hot, nice smoking hot!”
You’ll hear his daily cry;
But if you won’t believe, you sot,
You need but taste and try.*

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The winter issue of *edibleRHODY* examines Rhode Island's dairy farms, presently numbering just 17 (in 1880 there were 6,216). Christopher Martin explores the rich dairying history of Rhode Island in his column *Rhodeside Diaries*. It includes an account of the role played by Cocumscussoc as the "epicenter for cheese production in the northeast" up until the American Revolution. Richard and Esther's Smith's cheese making in the seventeenth century is discussed as are the final dairy farming years at Cocumscussoc with the Fox family of the early twentieth century.

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Upcoming at Smith's Castle

Cocumscussoc Association Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Cocumscussoc Association will be held Saturday, February 20, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the new Beechwood Center for Life Enrichment, 44 Beach Street, Wickford. In addition to the usual committee reports, two important planning projects currently underway are on the agenda. The results of the three-year business plan developed by the Preserve Rhode Island interns this past summer will be unveiled. In addition, an update on the interpretive priorities for the landscape master plan will be presented by landscape historian Lucinda Brockway (see p. 3). She will review the outcome of the planning workshops held this past fall and the results of a survey of the membership that have been used to determine the priorities for site interpretation at Smith's Castle. This will be the final opportunity for members to contribute to the treatment alternatives and interpretive priorities that will guide the development of Smith's Castle's landscape master plan.