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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, Sept. 13, 1932.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Historical Dishes." Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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My housekeeping friends seem to be taking a special interest in history these days. Last week a friend of mine in La Crosse, Wisconsin, wrote for a recipe for Jefferson Davis pie. She added that this pie was much like our present-day butterscotch pie. And then, only yesterday, came a letter from a Minnesota lady asking how to make Nancy Hanks pickles.

So I took those letters and went to call on the Recipe Lady.

"Did you ever make a Jefferson Davis pie?" I asked her.

"No," she said. "I don't remember even hearing of such a pie. It must have been a pre-Civil War Recipe. But now I come to think of it, I do remember a Jeff Davis pudding, quite a favorite dessert in the South."

"What's this pudding like?"

"As I recall, it's a rich butterscotch mixture. Maybe Jefferson Davis was one of those men who is partial to butterscotch."

Well, the upshot of it all was that the Recipe Lady and I did some historical research then and there. We went through the recipe files, we studied all the cookbooks, particularly the books on Southern cooking, we even went into culinary dictionaries and old encyclopedias. And from all we could learn Jeff Davis pudding is a very sweet butterscotch pudding made with sugar, cream, butter and flour and flavored with lemon or nutmeg. And Jeff Davis pie is like our butterscotch pie.

Would you like the recipe now for this butterscotch pie, our modern revision of the historical recipe? It takes just eight ingredients:

- |                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 pint of milk       | 2 tablespoons of butter      |
| 1/2 cup of flour     | 2 eggs                       |
| 1/4 teaspoon of salt | 1/2 teaspoon of vanilla, and |
| 1 cup of brown sugar | Pastry, of course.           |

I'll repeat those eight ingredients. (Repeat.)

Now, to make the filling, you heat the milk in a double boiler and then remove a half a cup to mix with the flour and salt. Add this mixture to the hot milk, stir until it thickens. Then cover and cook in the double boiler for 15 minutes. In the meantime, cook and stir the brown sugar and butter for five minutes and add to the thickened milk. Stir this hot mixture slowly into the beaten egg yolks, add the vanilla and beat well.



This filling you pour into a baked pastry shell and let it stand for a few minutes. Then cover it with a meringue made by adding 4 tablespoons of sugar and a few grains of salt and a drop or two of vanilla to the beaten egg whites. Spread the meringue over the top of the filling to the edge of the crust and bake in a very moderate oven (325 degrees F.) for 15 or 20 minutes--or until the meringue is a light brown.

This butterscotch cream filling is also good served as a pudding with cream, or used as a filling for cream puffs or tarts.

Now that other historical recipe--Nancy Hanks pickles. Some people call them bread-and-butter pickles. You can suit yourself about the name. But from all we can learn these old-time favorites are pickled cucumber rings, sometimes made with onion and sometimes not.

Here's a recipe for Nancy Hanks or bread-and-butter pickles with onion. Seven ingredients. Here they are:

1 peck small cucumbers	1 cup mustard seed
2 quarts small white onions	2 tablespoons celery seed
1 cup salt	2 tablespoons peppercorns
Vinegar	

I'll repeat that list of seven. (Repeat.)

Slice the onions and cucumbers, about 1/4 inch thick. Pack in a crock in layers with salt sprinkled between, and let stand overnight. In the morning drain in a cheesecloth bag, and press out all the juice possible. Taste before adding the vinegar and if too salty rinse in cold water. Measure the onions and cucumbers. Take half as much vinegar, heat to the boiling point, add the spices, and pour over the vegetables. Pack at once in sterilized glass jars, seal, and store in a cool place.

While we're turning back the pages of history, perhaps you'd like to know how some of our foods got their names. Somebody asked me the other day how those two cornbreads--Johnny cake and hoe cake happened to have such funny names. Both these breads have a history. Johnny cake was a standby of the early settlers in our country and they often took it with them on long journeys, so they called it "journey cake." Several centuries of use have shortened that title to Johnny cake. As for hoe cake, which is much like Johnny cake, this was so named because it was originally baked by the plantation mammy on the broad blade of the cotton hoe right over the hot embers.

What's in a name? Well, in the names of even our commonest foods, you'll find plenty of history, tradition and old customs. Take bread, for example. Probably no article of food has a more interesting history than bread in its various forms, which, from time immemorial, has furnished us with the staff of life. According to the encyclopedia, the word "bread" itself came first from a Scandinavian word that meant a piece or a fragment. Later, in Anglo-Saxon times, it came to mean a loaf or a half.

The white bread which we use today originated in the early church for use in communion. Then during the middle ages the nobility began to buy and use it. The bread of the middle classes in those days was made of unbolted flour and called "Chete" bread. As for the peasants, they had a coarse brown bread and they



probably got more minerals and vitamins than the nobility. According to the old custom, the mistress of the manor distributed these various breads to her people. As a result, she came to be known as a lady, which meant originally, a loaf giver.

Hot cross buns like the white bread had a religious origin and are still used during the Lenten season, especially on Good Friday. The first hot cross buns were made way back in the early days when housewives were very superstitious. They marked each bun with the sign of the cross to keep the devil from interfering with the baking. Gradually, this sign ceased to appear except on Good Friday. Of course, you remember hearing about the old street cry used in early times by the boys selling buns, "One a penny, two a penny, hot cross buns."

Another kind of bread with a much shorter history is the Parker House roll. This popular roll was born in the famous old Boston hotel, the Parker House.

Even that form of pastry known as the tart has a story all its own. The word tart is supposed to have come from the Latin word "tortas", which means a twisted shape. I haven't learned whether the old Romans ate tarts or not. But certainly people of many nations from very early times have relished these small pies. Tarts are even celebrated in our nursery rhymes. And remember that old verse that goes--

"Where girls are wooed for the tarts they make,  
Where women are loved for the pies they bake,  
And the husbandman prays when he comes to die  
He may go to heaven where all is pie."

Tomorrow: "Buying Blankets."

