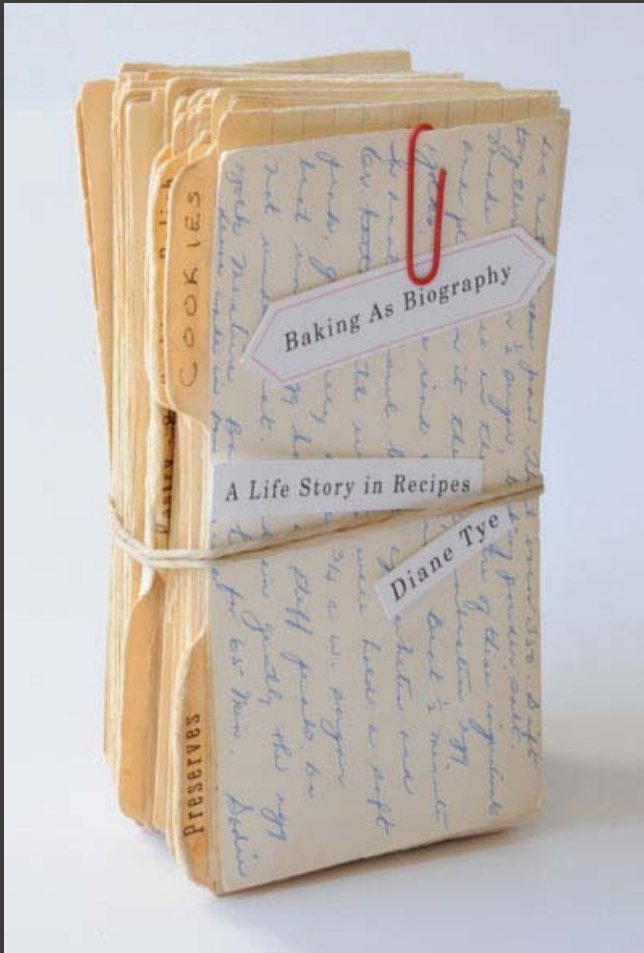


Folk 267: Food and Culture

**MARCH 15: DIANE TYE'S
BAKING AS BIOGRAPHY:
CH. 1 "A LIFE IN RECIPES"**

Baking as Biography



- Winner of the **Elli Kongas Miranda Prize**
American Folklore Society, Women's Section (2010)

“A Life in Recipes”

What did *you* think of it?

If you've never read an academic monograph before

- ◎ First chapters are sometimes tough, because they
 - Set out the basic context of the work
 - Set out the interpretive lenses through which the author is examining her subject
 - Put the work to follow in the context of previous scholarship
- ◎ The “meat” of the book is alluded to, but rarely present, in the first chapter
 - *But they are good for you, like vegetables*

A Study of One Woman's Recipes

- ◎ Tye's mother, Laurene (1931-1989), who
 - did not have a strong reputation as a baker,
 - expressly did not enjoy baking,
 - did not take pride in baking, and
 - did not have particularly interesting or distinct recipes.
- ◎ Why should we be interested?

Baking as obligatory act

- ◎ One of the activities her particular social contexts and particular social roles demanded of her
 - “Because my mother’s baking was obligatory, a response to family and community needs rather than an activity that gave her personal enjoyment, there are subtexts to this collection of recipes that offer insights not only into her life but also into the realities she shared with other women.”

Laurene:

- ◎ Born in Eureka, Nova Scotia, 1931
 - Mother: Bell, had worked as a nanny in Montreal for a minister who had previously serviced Eureka
 - Father: Fred, descended from a founding family of Pictou County

Bell and Fred in Eureka

- ◉ Scots Presbyterian ancestry and rural upbringing
- ◉ “Surfaced in foodways, both in terms of the plainness of food [...] and in the way it was categorized.”
 - Basic, unpretentious “grub”
 - Slightly more elevated baked goods “sweet stuff”



Eureka

- ◎ Formerly an industrial community
 - Former site of mills, blast furnaces, coke ovens, etc.
 - Home of Western Union, Nova Scotia Telephone, two halls, three churches
- ◎ By Laurene's birth, most worked in nearby Trenton (including Fred)

Henry Tye (b. 1930)

- From New Glasgow
- Meets Laurene in 1947 at church youth camp
- Laurene graduates high school, completes commercial course, works in office of hardware store in New Glasgow
- Marry in 1954 following Henry's BA and divinity degree (United Church ministry)

1st position: Cape North

- ⦿ Northern Cape Breton
- ⦿ Responsible for three congregations
- ⦿ Very rural posting at the time
- ⦿ Parent's inexperience a theme in their narratives
 - It encapsulates their inability to look after themselves independently and prompts accounts of how readily others came forward to help.
- ⦿ Begins to accrue recipes from local women

2nd position: Parrsboro

- ⦿ Just after the birth of Diane (1957)
- ⦿ Rural agrarian community with ship-building history
- ⦿ Two congregations
 - Her time in Parrsboro was inextricably linked to the church and its functions. She was involved in both congregations and actively supported women's and youth groups.

3rd position: Charlottetown, PEI

- ⦿ Suburban as opposed to rural
- ⦿ Younger congregation, closer to her own age
- ⦿ Their lives begin to disentwine
 - Not only church responsibilities but also part-time employment as kindergarten teacher, children, homemaking, social life of the “housewife”
- ⦿ Recipes reflect balance of church and neighborhood networks

4th position: Sackville / Amherst

- Amherst housed school for the deaf for sister Cathy
- Laurene worked as teacher's assistant, then secretarial work, at the school
- Increasingly independent

5th position: Charlottetown

- Dies that same year, after ten years with breast cancer

Lenses for the work to follow

- ◎ Folklore (obviously)
- ◎ Food as “Women’s Caring Work”
 - It is not just that women do more work of feeding, but also that feeding work has become one of the primary ways that women “do” gender. (DeVault)
- ◎ Folklore and Women’s Studies
 - “Coding”
- ◎ Autoethnography
 - Writing about the personal and its relationship to culture

Go away now.

- Next class, Chapter 2: “Feeding Our Family Well”