

Folk 267: Food and Culture

**MARCH 22: DIANE TYE'S
CH. 3 "CHURCH LUNCHESES
AND LADIES' TEAS"**

What did *you* think of it?

Catering to Tastes

- Part of Laurene's domestic agenda was to make food her family, specifically her husband, would like
- Based on careful observation of food habits
 - “By taking into account her husband's preferences, a woman accommodates him at the same time as she appears to exercise her own choice.”
- Knowledge of preferences reflects the intimacy of their relationship

“Women’s role”

- ◎ In 1950s, within popular culture and the overarching hegemony, “the economic contributions of a woman to her country through the support of her husband, and most notably her husband,” were extolled
- ◎ Catering of tastes extends to entire family
 - Rejection of foods by family members seen as “disturbing”
- ◎ “Women’s primary responsibility for feeding their families can not easily be translated into either total control or total subservience.”

Public eye & Invisible work

- ◎ Status in community established through negotiation by that community of an individual's ability to run a household
- ◎ But part of that skill set is that the direct beneficiaries (family) barely notice the effort
 - “Our refusal, or maybe inability, to recognize Mom’s work, meant that we did not acknowledge the food she prepared as a gift.”

“Minister’s Wife” as Occupation

- Church life focused on a number of overlapping committees
- Provision of food for all meetings and functions a further expectation
- Committee work, community life, and food become inextricable from each other

“Volunteering”

- ⦿ As Minister’s wife, a heightened expectation for participation
- ⦿ Amount, kind, and quality of food made for church events another way she “did” gender: another mark of her successful womanhood
- ⦿ Church life depends on the work of women’s committees: as organisers, as fundraisers, as (unpaid) caterers, and as providers of uncompensated labour

Tested Sweet Recipes

- ⦿ Community cookbook, produced as fundraiser
- ⦿ Foods differ from the “comfort” foods of home (last class/chapter)
 - “Food should be tidy and contained.”
- ⦿ Ingredients are more refined, more exotic, and more expensive
 - White sugar, citrus, walnuts, etc.

“Two Atlantic Canadas”

- Recipes demonstrate transition of Maritime Provinces
- One rural and isolated, one urban and integrated
- Cookbook a text for middle-class expression: *daintiness*

Go away now

- Next class, Chapter 3: “Church Lunches and Ladies’ Teas”