

# A Time to Sow, A Time to Reap: Native American Foodways

The earliest occupants of Geneva were here between 3,500 and 1,300 BCE. The Lamoka culture hunted and gathered but did not cultivate crops. The Cayuga (Gayogohó:no') and Seneca (Onödowá'ga) people settled the area about 1000 CE. Soil and water made it a good home. Men used the shallow waters along Seneca Lake in the summer to catch and dry fish. Women planted and harvested staple crops. They also gathered wild fruits and planted apple and peach orchards. Today, Iroquois (Haudenosaunee) farming projects are reviving traditional foods for their communities.



Shallow water and nearness to the Seneca River made the northeast corner of Seneca Lake a good location for net fishing.



Gakwi:yo:h Farms provides fruits, vegetables, beef, and bison to residents on the Seneca Allegany and Cattaraugus reservations in western New York. Their mission is to increase food sovereignty and decrease dependence on government-assistance and processed foods.



European contact introduced Native Americans to apples, peaches, and other tree fruits. Cayuga and Seneca settlements moved around but orchards were planted in central locations.



Staple crops were corn, beans, and squash. Bean vines grew up the cornstalks and squash grew around the base, resulting in high yields in a small amount of space.

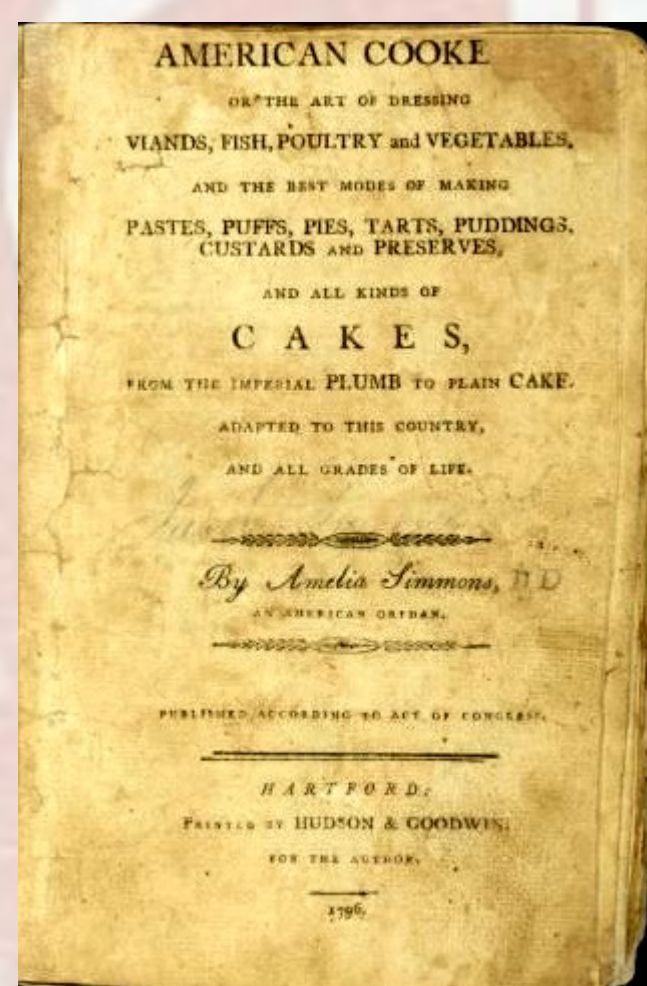


The Iroquois White Corn Project at Ganondogan State Historic Site in Victor encourages Haudenosaunee farmers to grow more of the traditional crop. White corn is low in sugar and high in protein, fiber, and amino acids.

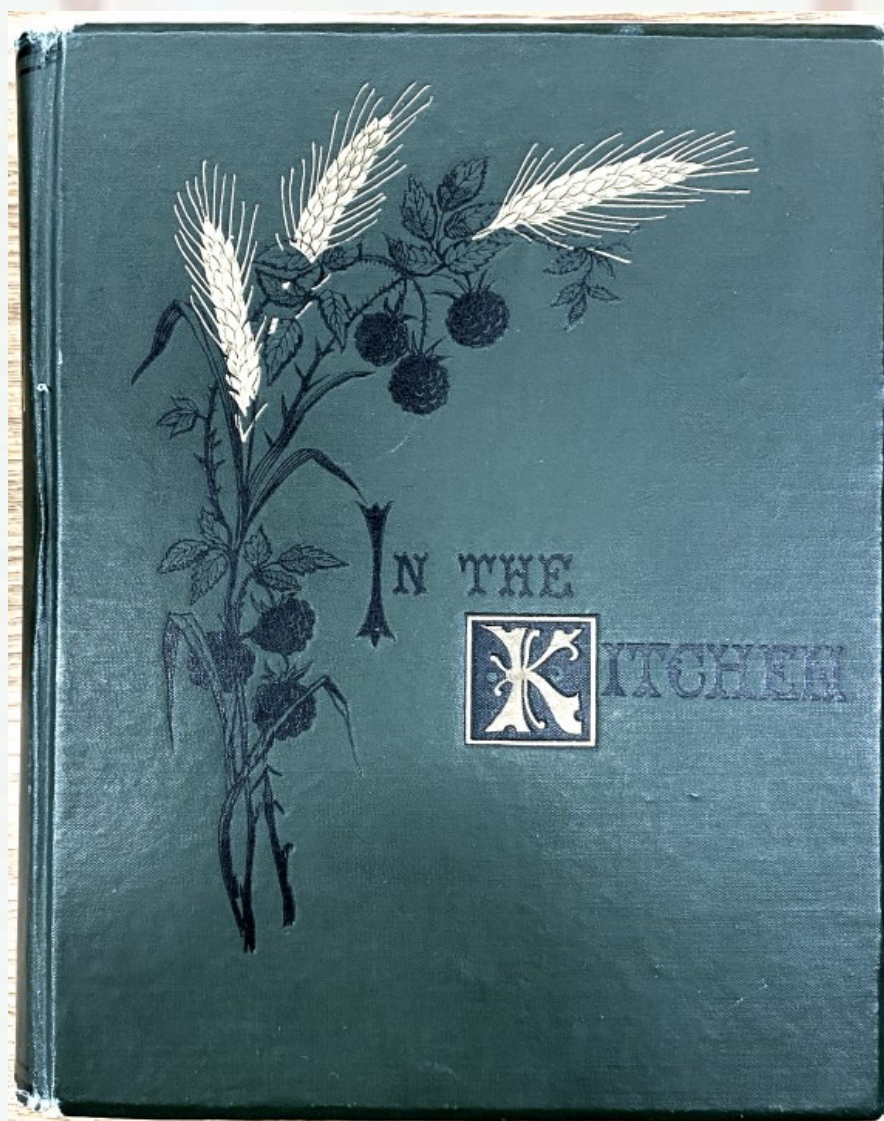
# American Pie: Cookbooks

In 1796 Amelia Simmons' *American Cookery* was the country's first cookbook. It shared recipes for everyday cooking and created a national food identity. Social reformers like Lydia Childs and Catherine Beecher wrote cookbooks that expanded into instructing women on the best way to run a home.

Recipes were handed down in families or shared among friends. Fundraising cookbooks in Geneva began in the late 1800s. Organizations like the Geneva Hospital Auxiliary contributed favorite recipes and sold their books to raise money. While family recipes are still treasured, Internet websites are replacing cards and cookbooks.



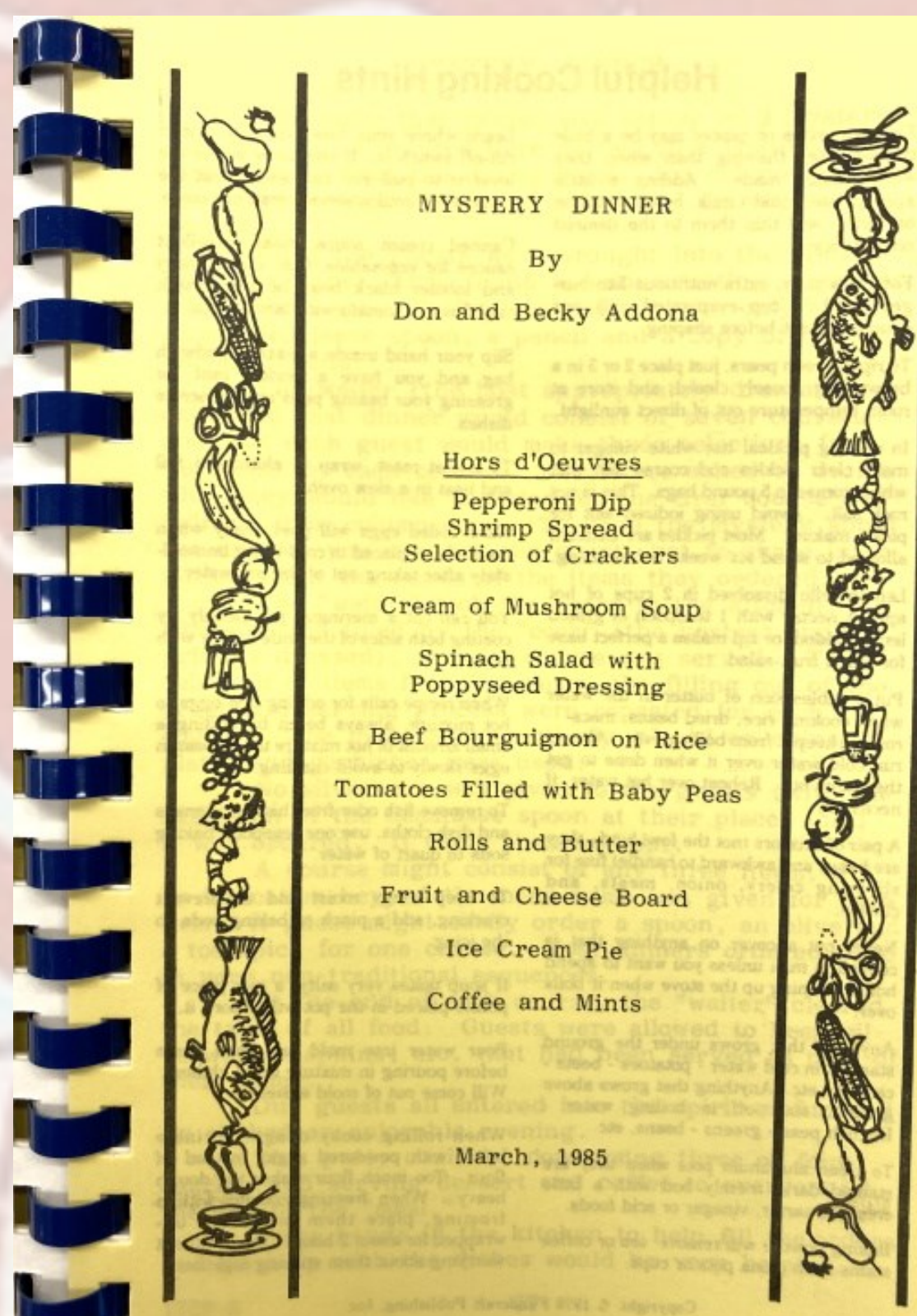
Title page of *American Cookery* by Amelia Simmons, 1796



In 1875 local suffragist Elizabeth Smith Miller wrote *In the Kitchen*. She selected recipes from Europe, England, and America, including some from Geneva.




*Chicken Croquettes.*—One pint of finely chopped cooked chicken, one teaspoonful of salt, quarter of a teaspoonful of pepper, one cupful of cream or chicken stock, one heaping tablespoonful of flour, two eggs, half an onion, four tablespoonfuls of melted butter, one heaping teaspoonful of finely chopped parsley. Put the cream or stock on to boil, mix the butter and flour and stir into the boiling cream, add chicken and seasoning, boil two minutes, add the eggs, stir well, take from the fire and stand aside to cool. When cold roll in beaten egg and fine bread crumbs, drop in hot lard.—Mrs. L. M. Page.

In 1895 the Woman's Board of the Medical & Surgical Hospital of Geneva compiled a book of recipes to raise money. The cookbook was one of many fundraisers for the new hospital that opened in 1898.



The recipes in a North Presbyterian Church cookbook were organized as complete dinner menus given by church members.

Recipes :

		
<a href="#">Grands!™ Monkey Bread</a>	<a href="#">Granny's Monkey Bread</a>	<a href="#">Monkey Bread</a>
Pillsbury.com	Recipe	Allrecipes
4.5 ★★★★★ (1.2K)	Self Proclaimed Foodie	4.7 ★★★★★ (2.2K)
1 hr 5 min	4.9 ★★★★★ (300)	1 hr 5 min
Brown sugar, flaky layers, cinnamon, raisins	45 min	Refrigerated biscuit dough, brown sugar, cinnamon, raisins,
	Pumpkin pie spice, refrigerated biscuit dough, brown sugar	

Recipes for dishes like monkey bread—a sweet, pull-apart bread—once were shared among friends on cards. Now, almost any recipe can be found on multiple websites.

# Like Mama Used to Make: Cultural Food Traditions

Few small cities in New York State are as culturally diverse as Geneva. Cultural backgrounds include English, Irish, German, African, Italian, Syrian, Jewish, Latino, and Asian.

Every culture has its own food. It can be connected to place or a special holiday. Cooking and eating food together strengthens ties with family, and friends from the same background. Over time, food gets shared at public gatherings like festivals, church dinners, and fundraisers.



An annual Latino Festival includes food from the 13 Spanish-speaking countries represented in Geneva. *Photo courtesy of Spencer Tulis, Finger Lakes Times*



In 1933 the Acquilano family opened the Deluxe restaurant in Geneva's Italian neighborhood. Carrie Acquilano was in charge of the kitchen and making the pasta sauce.



During World War II the Jewish Communal Welfare Group (forerunner of Temple Beth El) hosted a Purim feast for sailors and soldiers from Sampson Naval Training Station and the Seneca Ordnance Depot.



St. Michael's Orthodox Church is the center of Geneva's Syrian community. They cook Middle Eastern dinners to raise money and have an annual hafli, Arabic for party or celebration.



The Juneteenth Carnival, sponsored by Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, featured traditional Southern cooking. Several African American churches hold regular fish fries and barbecues.