

## Original Archival Sources on Food: Cookbooks

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By Paul Rich

President, Policy Studies Organization

**M**ore research into food culture is highly desirable and this journal hopes to play a part. There are untapped resources. The American Antiquarian Society is one of the institutions that actively collects cookbooks and has been doing so since 1929.<sup>1</sup> It is certainly true that a useful tool in studying the changes in diet and food production is the cookbook, which is collected by many people. The Westphalia Press of the Policy Studies Organization has been publishing reprints of scarce cookbooks that provide insights into the sometimes surprising differences in diets as years pass, which of course are reflected in agricultural strategy.<sup>2</sup>

The Library of Congress of the United States also collects cookbooks and comments about them and their history and evolution that:

Reading a selection of community cookbooks across a time or place can give unexpected insight into aspects of American culture and public history. Unlike mainstream cookbooks, which tend to have just one authorial and authoritative voice, they are crowded with individuals who, while part of a group, may not always agree. A few

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1 <https://www.americanantiquarian.org/cookbooks>

2 <https://westphaliapress.org/>

books connect directly with historical events and causes such as war or the women's suffrage movement. But it is also possible to trace some of the widespread social and cultural effects of immigration, expansion, urbanization and industrialization through the ingredients and methods, kitchen equipment and household hints, advertising, and recipes.

One thing these cookbooks have in common is that they were—almost always—compiled by women for the purpose of raising money for a cause. Often, the funds were raised for church furnishings and other improvements, but many groups compiled recipes for more secular causes such as free kindergartens, establishing a library or planting trees in a new town. Despite their generally small size and the relatively humble subject matter, some of these cookbooks were very successful in raising funds, and went through multiple printings over the years.<sup>3</sup>

The commercial promotion of various foods, as the following booklet illustrates, is another aspect that deserves more attention than it has received. One notably major resource that provides unique items is at the library of the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota, the Kirschner collection of 5,000-plus cookbooks. But there are understudied troves in numerous libraries waiting for scholarly attention.

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3 <https://guides.loc.gov/community-cookbooks>

## Author Biographies

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**Austin Anderson** is an English PhD student at Howard University, where he studies literature and culture of the Americas, with a particular focus on racial representation in video games, comics, and visual art. He has published in *The Comparatist*, *Bodies of Water*, *ASAPJ* and has presented at MLA and AAAD.

**Shahbaz Khayambashi's** research deals with death in the media and the use of imagery in protest. He has been published in *Omega: Journal of Death and Dying*, the *Journal of Radio* and *Audio Media and Public*. He has also built a career in the experimental film and video scene, as a curator and artist.

**Justin Martin** is currently Associate Professor of Psychology at Whitworth University. His research explores the intersection of moral development with superhero and dystopian media. Recent publications explore relationships between Wakanda and civics education, superhero comics, civics and community, and *The Walking Dead* and Christian philosophy. He also co-teaches an interdisciplinary course on morality within the Marvel Universe.

**Julia Mollenthiel** is an assistant professor in the African American Studies Department at the University of Florida. She teaches interdisciplinary courses on Black Horror, Black Feminist Theory, and Afro-Futurism. Dr. Mollenthiel remains interested in how race figures into horror films, the history and uses of the Black horror aesthetic, the emergence of the new Black horror genre (i.e., Jordan Peele's *Get Out*), and how the concept of horror can be particularly important to some of the larger goals of Black Studies.

**Emily Scroggins** is a doctoral student in Communication Studies at the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities. Her research interests include representations of the Southern United States in television as well as gender, race, and fatness. She earned a M.A. in Communication Studies from Colorado State University.

### BOOK REVIEWERS

**Louie Galvan** has an M.A. from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he works as a part-time instructor in the English department. He hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in English, focusing on the Modernist period of literature between 1910 and 1945, particularly the work of Ernest Hemingway. His interests include scholarly research on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* during the Regency period. He is currently working on a short story collection inspired by American novelist Lydia Davis.

**Lavar Pope** is the author of *Rap and Politics: A Case Study of Panther, Gangster, and Hyphy Discourses in Oakland, CA (1965–2010)*. His second book, *Rap Nations*, explores factors in the origins, persistence, and legacy of rap music on 25 scenes in the U.S. and North America. He earned a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts from Lehigh University and a Ph.D. in Politics from the University of California Santa Cruz. He is a Clinical Associate Professor of Political Science at Loyola University Chicago's Arrupe College.