

Through thick and thin

by Lydia Lovell

Uncle Henry was no gambler. He didn't play the horses; in fact, he never spent a day at the track in his entire life. He didn't play cards for money, not even a friendly poker game with penny-ante stakes. He avoided casinos, pool halls, and saloons. He didn't participate in Bingo, or buy chances in a raffle, or enter pools. When invited to join a game of chance, he'd remember a previous engagement; when offered an opportunity to acquire a few chances on a raffle being run for a good cause, he'd make a generous outright contribution and give the chances to whoever was peddling them; when asked to join a pool, he'd admit to ignorance about the competition but express appreciation he'd been thought of as a possible member.

Uncle Henry just wasn't a betting man . . . except when it came to the stock market. Putting money in the market, he was convinced, was not gambling; that was investing. No one in the Lovell family ever tried to convince him otherwise. Had they succeeded, one of Uncle Henry's joys in life would have been spoiled.

Aunt Olivia worried only a little about Uncle Henry's investments. She sometimes said, "He's been lucky, I guess, but he's far enough ahead so that if he loses he'll still be okay." And Uncle Henry smiled, hugged her, and said she brought him all the luck he needed, but making good investments was a matter of study, not guess-work or chance.

"'Livy," he'd say, "you're not gambling when you put a whole bunch of good things into a bowl and stir them up. You know what you're doing and that the outcome will be good. That's just what I do in the market."

Aunt Olivia believed him and so did the rest of us. Fortunately, Uncle Henry's judgment was sound. Months before the Great Depression began with the stock market crash in 1929, Uncle Henry saw the dangers and recognized the euphoria that pumped the market to unsupported heights. Not only did he sell most of his holdings, he advised others to do so also. Those who took his advice were glad they had listened to him.

Even Uncle Henry, during the 1930s, wondered if the nation and the world would ever recover from the financial devastation of the crash and the global economic depression that followed. Slowly, slowly, business improved. Not until after war had been going on for two years in Europe, not until after the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor, not until the United States became totally committed to destroying Facist-Nazi forces in Europe and those of Japan in the Pacific, did American business boom again.

During those war years, Aunt Olivia found many a new recipe for her collection. No longer did she use unlimited quantities of butter and sugar. Both were rationed. So, too, was meat. Habits, perforce, changed. Every housewife

sought recipes to stretch rationed products. A new day dawned and we ate many a low-protein meal. A favorite was **Asparagus-Ham Rollades**.

2 T. margarine
2 T. flour
2 C. milk
salt to taste
1/8 t. white pepper

2 C. cheddar cheese, grated
2 lb. asparagus
12 paper-thin slices boiled ham
1/8 t. paprika

In the top of double boiler, melt butter, blend in flour, add milk, salt and pepper. Stir over boiling water until thickened. Blend in cheese. Set aside when cheese is melted. Cook asparagus ten minutes and drain. Roll four spears of asparagus in each thin slice of ham. Arrange in greased baking pan. Pour cheese sauce over rolls. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake at 325° for 20 to 30 minutes. Two rolls to each serving is enough for six. Baked potatoes and carrot slaw are good combinations.

Originally, this next recipe was Sauerkraut Austrian, but during World War II, the name sounded too German; Aunt Olivia renamed it **Pennsylvania Potpourri**.

1/2 lb. each, beef and pork
meat, cut into 1" cubes
1 T. cooking oil or fat
1 lb. sauerkraut
1 T. caraway seeds (optional)

1/2 pint sour cream
1/8 t. salt
1/8 t. pepper
1/2 t. paprika

In a large skillet, brown meats in fat. Use leftover meats, if possible. When meat is browned, rinse and drain sauerkraut and stir into meat. Add caraway seeds. Cover and simmer for 1½ hours if using raw meat; ½ hour for leftovers. Ten minutes before serving, stir in sour cream, salt, and pepper. Blend until smooth but do not boil. Serve over cooked wide noodles and garnish with paprika.

Is it possible, do you suppose, to serve six people with only a pound of pork sausage? Aunt Olivia didn't hesitate; why should we? **Mushroom and Sausage Casserole** is a one-dish meal you can make ahead and serve when ready. Fresh asparagus, this time of year, is an especially good choice.

1 lb. pork sausage (mild)
1 medium onion, minced
2 C. sliced mushrooms
2 C. shredded lettuce
1 15-oz. can crushed tomatoes

1 C. raw rice
2 C. fat-free chicken stock
1/4 t. salt
Dash of pepper

In a large skillet, parboil sausage in one cup of water for ten minutes, breaking meat up to remove as much fat as possible. Drain and return meat to skillet. Fry until lightly browned. With a slotted spoon, remove meat from skillet and drain on paper towels, patting with towels to remove remaining fat. In a large bowl, combine rest of ingredients, add meat, and pour into a large casserole. You may use chicken bouillon cubes to make chicken stock. Cover and bake at 375° for one hour. Toss with a fork before serving.

On the rare occasions during the war that Aunt Olivia was able to find pork ribs at the butcher's and had enough rationing tokens to acquire them, she made **Adam's Ribs** as a special treat. (Even when there's a war on, special treats are permissible now and then.)

2 racks pork ribs, cut into
3-bone serving-sized
portions
2 medium onions, chopped
2 T. cooking fat
1 t. dry mustard
2 T. cider vinegar
1 8-oz. bottle ketchup

1/2 C. water
1 T. Worcestershire sauce
1/8 T. Tabasco
1/4 t. garlic powder
1/2 t. salt
1/8 t. pepper
2 lbs. sauerkraut

In a medium skillet, saute onions in fat until golden. Add all ingredients except ribs and sauerkraut. Simmer 30 minutes.

If ribs have a lot of fat on them, broil on a rack to eliminate the excess. When ribs begin to brown, remove from broiler and dip in barbeque sauce, coating thoroughly. Layer sauerkraut in a large roasting pan. Place ribs, bony-side-up, on top of sauerkraut. Spread half of remaining sauce evenly over ribs. Bake at 275° for three hours, turning ribs bony-side-down and basting with rest of sauce, after two hours. Serves six.

Good with Adam's Ribs is **Potato-Cheese Casserole**. You have time to prepare and bake it along with the ribs, if you start as soon as they go into the oven.

8-10 large potatoes
1/4 C. margarine
3 T. minced onion

1/4 t. salt
1/2 C. Parmesan cheese

Scrub potatoes. With their skins still on, cut potatoes into ½" cubes. Layer in a well-greased shallow casserole. Dot with margarine. Stir cheese, minced onion, and salt together and sprinkle over potatoes. Cover closely (use foil if casserole has no cover), and bake 2½ hours in same oven with Adam's Ribs. There might be enough potato left over to warm up the next day. Then again, there might not. Don't bet on it.

Bon appetit.

CORRECTION

On April 18, 1985, From Aunt Olivia's Kitchen column, the recipe for **Connecticut Yankee Apple Torte** omitted the quantity of flour. In addition to the other ingredients, **3 heaping teaspoons of flour** should have been listed after the egg. If you snipped and filed this recipe, please correct your copy. Lydia Lovell apologizes for any inconvenience this error may have caused and appreciates that several readers brought the error to her attention.