

village view

by Andrea Leonard

Some old cookbooks have become collectors' items and one that's still to be found on many an Osterville pantry shelf is the Girl Scout Cook Book published about sixty years ago for the benefit of the Red Rose Troop.

Among other recipes is one called John's Delight, a dessert made with two cups bread crumbs, 1 tablespoon butter, half-a-cup molasses, a well-beaten egg, a cup of milk mixed with a half-teaspoon soda, a pinch of salt and some spices (doesn't say which spices, but try half-a-teaspoon each of cinnamon and nutmeg). Steam three hours and serve with any sweet sauce.

The "something from nothing" character of John's Delight is typical of the recipes in the Girl Scout Cookbook, and I'll bet it's mighty good eating. Another dessert called Pompadour Pudding was a favorite at our house and Snow Pudding was another. A luncheon treat that's still satisfying is a number called Shrimp Wiggle; it's good, in spite of the name.

Recipes for all these are in that little cookbook.

There's Winnifred Cross's Corn Soup... You know her--that's Winnie Hostetter; she and her husband, Ray, ran Wimpy's Restaurant for twenty-five years and more. Their sons still do.

There's Ellen B. Goodspeed's Chicken Souffle. Ellen, of course, is Roger's mother and she's still as good a cook today as she was then.

There's Adenia Hodges Shrimp Salad. Who's Adenia Hodges? If you talk with Ann Harmon, I think she'll tell you Adenia was her grandmother.

There's Angie Ames' Cooked Salad Dressing. She's quite an old lady now and lives near the corner of Pond Street and Tower Hill Road. Her granddaughter, Betsy, is a teller in the Osterville Branch of Cape Cod Bank & Trust.

Many of the girls active in scouting at the time contributed recipes. Some of them were Gladys and Murial Ames; Marjorie, Elizabeth and Dorothy Rankin; Emily, Elva and Grace Crocker; Marjorie Fraser, Alma Crosby, Elvira Lewis, Pauline Chadwick and Helen Macquade.

If I told you Grace Crocker is now Grace Chesbro, that Elva Crocker is Elva Moran, Helen Macquade is Helen Webb, and Elizabeth Rankin is Roy Piggott's wife, you'd probably say, "Oh, so that's who she's talking about!"

As interesting as the recipes, and as the people who submitted them, are the advertisements that made the book possible.

Many who helped the Girl Scout Troop get its start are still helping today, sponsoring ads for the United Fund, ordering Girl Scout cookies, taking an ad when the American Cancer Society mounts its drive, and making a contribution to the hospital building fund.

East Bay Lodge was generous then as now, though the proprietorship has schanged several times since those early days. J. Milton Leonard is listed ad "Insurance and Notary Public"; his grandson, my brother Phil, carries on the tradition of the family business.

Hyannis Trust Company has become Cape Cod Bank & Trust, with many branches up and down the Cape. In those days there was but one office at the far eastern end of Hyannis on the opposite side of Main Street from where the head office now stands.

John Hinckley & Son, in business then as now; the Hinckleys always can be depended upon to extend a ready helping hand to a worthy cause.

Many advertisers are gone but not forgotten: I. Crocker's ad reads "Everything for Everybody." Today, he'd probably be sued for false advertising.

Chester Baker, Tinsmith and Stove Dealer, I remember as a tall, thin, and somewhat dour man. His appearance always made me think of Abraham Lincoln.

he Crosby House in Osterville advertised that it was open all year. There are now homes where it and its out-buildings sprawled over the field at the foot of Crosbytown Hill.

Hyannis businesses were represented with Megathlin's Drug Store vying with Guyers for customers; Johnstone, the Jeweler promised "Quality Service Courtesy," and James E. Baxter didn't even bother mentioning his line of merchandise. Everyone knew Jim Baxter ran the shoe store.

Of all the advertisements, however, the one that tickles me most is that of Dr. W. D. Kinney. He didn't know, bless him, that it was unethical for physicians to advertise -- or, if he did know, he didn't care and wanted to help the Girl Scouts.

Doctor Kinney's ad reads: "Telephone Connection, Calls Answered Promptly, Day or Night. Office Hours: 7 to 9 A.M., 7 to 8 P.M."

You didn't need an appointment. You just walked in and waited your turn. The doctor did his best to cure whatever ailed you, whether it was a tooth needing to be pulled or a split head to be sewn up. anaesthesia was scorned unless Doc was to take out your tonsils or worse. "Hang on," he'd say, and take a quick stitch.

He lived and dispensed medicine and wisdom (in equal quantities as a rule) in the house where Horizons Gifts is today.

Someday I'd like to see the Girl Scout Cook Book of Osterville re-issued, perhaps for the benefit of the modern Red Rose Troop. I'd like to see the old ads reproduced along with new ones to sponsor it. I'd like to see the old recipes distributed again, and modern ones included from the favorites of the many fine cooks in the village.

Only a few weeks ago Florence Whitely supplied me with a recipe for baked chicken that's quick and easy to prepare and delicious enough for company fare. To serve six, pick up four or five pounds of chicken pieces, or the equivalent of two cut up chickens.

In a buttered shallow baking pan, put two cups of regular raw rice, add one can each condensed celery soup and mushroom soup. Add two cans of water, a pinch of pepper, and sprinkle in an envelope of onion soup mix. Stir thoroughly. Lay the chicken pieces on top, brush them with melted butter, dust top with paprika and bake an hour at 350. Serve with a green salad and whole kernel corn.

The only thing wrong with that meal is there won't be a bite left over for another meal later in the week.

With recipes as good as this being limited to a relatively small group, this village is ready to support its own cookbook. Isn't there someone who'd like to organize this project, someone with time and energy to carry it through?

It could contain all sorts of local lore and be a permanent record of how our village has handled food problems through the years. Such a book would have historic value as well as enhancing the culinary art of all who studied it.

There I go, dreaming again.