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Eating German, the American way: German and American cooking traditions, potato salad, and the culinary assimilation of German immigrants, 1820-1920.

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Eating German, the American way: German and American cooking traditions, potato salad, and
the culinary assimilation of German immigrants, 1820-1920.

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A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
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in History
in the Department of History

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“Eating German, the American Way” explores how and why the mayonnaise-based potato salad came to be a staple of American culinary tradition. It examines how native-born Americans and German immigrants in the nineteenth century identified themselves based on their culinary traditions and what they ate and how the interactions between, and accessibility of, those traditions created a new identity based on the sharing of recipes as the two groups mingled and assimilated to each other. It uses food as a way to understand the processes of assimilation by defining the distinctions between the two groups based on their separate repertoire of recipes, looking at the obstacles to the adoption of ingredients or techniques, and engaging with the primary sites of contact that facilitated the mixing of the cuisines to create a shared culinary identity. Cookbooks are used to establish the boundaries which defined German and American cuisine and introduce the first obstacle to be overcome, the language barrier. Magazines removed the language barrier and created the opportunity for more direct interaction between readers from both traditions, but also introduced another obstacle in the perceptions and preconceptions each group had regarding the other. Changes in the understanding of diet and nutrition in the closing decades of the century introduced another obstacle as attempts to standardize and control what

Americans ate limited or excluded the contributions of immigrant groups and the language of control and standardizations reinforced preconceptions and the effects of “othering.” Restaurants and ethnic groceries functioned as the sites of direct contact, exposing native-born Americans to the food offerings of German immigrants, and providing direct access to both complete dishes and the ingredients needed to recreate them at home. As native-born Americans and German immigrants interacted and overcame these obstacles, they shared the recipes that defined them and created a new definition of what it meant to eat American food and a new identity as American eaters.

DEDICATION

To my family, for supporting me throughout the whole process.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“What’s more fun than a Fourth of July picnic?” asked Winzola McLendon in her article concerning upcoming celebrations of the holiday for 1959 at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C.¹ McLendon’s answer is two picnics, one for the kids and one for the adults, but it is the menu, and McLendon’s comments on it, that are more interesting. The hotel provided simple box lunches for the youngsters while their parents dined on a buffet of Hawaiian inspired dishes with one notable exception: the Shoreham’s signature potato salad. “Nothing Hawaiian about that” McLendon wrote, “but what’s a picnic without potato salad.”² All the other dishes received a touch of the soon to be fiftieth state, the fried chicken included coconut and the corn fritters included pineapple, but the picnic staple potato salad was unchanged.

McLendon was not the only one to note the importance of potato salad to Fourth of July festivities. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* reported in 1960 that American servicemen stationed in Great Britain were served “a little less than a ton of potato salad” at a celebration of American independence in London.³ A 1971 article in the *Los Angeles Times* referred the pairing of fried

¹ Winzola McLendon, “Double Up on Picnics for Fourth of July Fun,” *Washington Post and Times Herald* (Washington, D.C.), July 1, 1959. Cited in Lynne Olver. “What do Americans eat on July 4th?” FoodTimeline, January 3, 2015, <https://www.foodtimeline.org/july4th.html>

² McLendon, “Double Up on Picnics for Fourth of July Fun,” *Washington Post and Times Herald* (Washington, D.C.), July 1, 1959. Cited in Lynne Olver. “What do Americans eat on July 4th?” FoodTimeline, January 3, 2015, <https://www.foodtimeline.org/july4th.html>

³ Arthur Veysey, “GIs celebrate Fourth at Big London Picnic,” *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, IL), July 5, 1960. Cited in Lynne Olver. “What do Americans eat on July 4th?” FoodTimeline, January 3, 2015, <https://www.foodtimeline.org/july4th.html>

chicken and potato salad as “almost as traditional as you can be” for the holiday.⁴ Again and again potato salad appears on menus for the Fourth in the latter half of the twentieth century. And yet, according to preeminent American culinarian James Beard, the tradition was not that old having only become the standard fare in the 1910s and 1920s.⁵ How the potato salad so familiar today became a mainstay in the American culinary cannon is a fascinating story and it starts with immigrants from the German states in the early nineteenth century.

The story of any food is, necessarily, the story of the people who produce and consume it. This, then, is the story of the people who brought their ideas and their culinary expertise to a new home, and their interactions with the people who already called that place home. As they mixed and mingled, so too did their ideas about food. The potato in particular has a history that crosses oceans and mixes different peoples and their cultures. The potato is native to the Americas and was first introduced to Europeans when encountered by Spanish explorers and conquistadors as they spread across South America. They took the plant back to Spain where it slowly spread across the rest of Europe before European colonists brought it back to the Americas with them. Along with the tubers themselves, Europeans also brought their ideas about how to prepare and eat them.⁶ One dish that European colonists brought with them was the potato salad, but this dish underwent some changes following its arrival.

⁴ Jeanne Voltz, “Easy Does-it Cookery Makes 4th of July Picnicking a Breeze,” *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, CA) July 1, 1971. Cited in Lynne Olver. “What do Americans eat on July 4th?” FoodTimeline, January 3, 2015, <https://www.foodtimeline.org/july4th.html>

⁵ James Beard, *James Beard’s Menus for Entertaining* (New York: Dell Trade Paperback, 1965). Cited in Lynne Olver. “What do Americans eat on July 4th?” FoodTimeline, January 3, 2015, <https://www.foodtimeline.org/july4th.html>

⁶ Larry Zuckerman, *The Potato: How the Humble Spud Rescued the Western World* (New York: North Point Press, 1998), John Reader, *Potato: A History of the Propitious Esculent* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), Andrew F. Smith, *Potato: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), William H. McNeill, “How the Potato Changed the World’s History,” *Social Research* 66, no. 1 (1999): 67-83. When first brought to Europe the potato, which is botanically related to nightshade, was used for medicine or decoration.

Potato salads, in a form, existed in the United States before the arrival of millions of immigrants from the German States in the nineteenth century, but these recipes were mostly an afterthought and a way to dispose of leftover cooked potatoes. As German immigrants arrived, they brought their versions which appeared more frequently on the table as a side dish and were the intended end point, not a secondhand use. The two groups, immigrant and host, explored, adapted, and adopted new dishes from each other and through this process of culinary assimilation they created new definitions of the dishes they shared. In the process of melding and reshaping ideas of food, the people also reshaped their ideas of each other and redefined themselves along with their dishes.

Looking at the culinary assimilation of German cuisine provides insight into the larger process of assimilation experienced by German immigrants. As more and more people arrived from the German States and opened businesses, many centered around food, their cuisine became more accessible to non-Germans living in the United States. Food plays an important role in identity creation and how people perceive themselves and others. Access to ingredients and dishes is a major factor in deciding what foods people identify with. This accessibility comes in many forms, from recipes published in cookbooks and magazines, to fully prepared dishes available in restaurants. As the number of German people in the United States increased throughout the nineteenth century, so did these resources that exposed the country to their style of potato salad. As the tastes of native-born Americans changed in the latter part of the century, the accessibility of German cuisine helped it to fit into the new culinary cannon being crafted. In turn, the German immigrants who published recipes and opened restaurants, opened themselves to the desires of their American readers and patrons. This dissertation examines how this

exchange broke down old definitions of German and American culinary identities and created a new, shared identity as American eaters.

The creation of a new identity does not mean that either of the old was wholly subsumed by the other and ceased to exist. Rather, both continued, and continue, to serve as identifiers for many people who consider themselves to be German Americans. In many ways this project challenges more traditional models of assimilation. Older models, including those pioneered by Milton Gordon in the 1960s focus heavily on a static host and a changing immigrant who undergoes four stages of transformation to become fully assimilated to the host. The German experience, however, challenges the first stage of Gordon's model. A recurring theme in works on German immigration is the strong sense of German independence. Albert Bernhardt Faust's *The German Element in the United States* is a prime example.⁷ Faust illustrated how those arriving from the German States brought and continued their own, separate, institutions. They frequently settled in their own ethnic enclaves and set up their own churches and political spaces. Culturally, German immigrants established their own clubs such as the *Turnerverien* (gymnastic or athletic clubs), *Sangerverien* (singing clubs), and in some areas even established their own militias. In some cities across the country German immigrants were so numerous that they dominated not only the social and cultural scene, but also politics. Milwaukee, an important

⁷ Albert Bernhardt Faust, *The German Element in the United States: With Special Reference to its Political, Moral, Social, and Educational Influence, Vol. I-II* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1909). See also, Lavern J. Rippley, *The German-Americans* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), Carl Wittke, *The German Language Press in America* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1957), Richard O'Connor, *The German-Americans: An Informal History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), E. Allen McCormick, ed., *Germans in America: Aspects of German-American Relations in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1983). For broader studies of immigration that include aspects of German independence see: Carl Wittke, *We Who Built America: The Saga of the Immigrant* (Cleveland, OH: Western Reserve University, 1964), Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations that Made the American People* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951), John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1955).

center for this study, was so heavily German in its character that it was referred to by many in the nineteenth century as the “German Athens of America” for its cultural influence.⁸

Even newer assimilation models, which give more agency to the immigrants and make the host more receptive, have flaws. The New Assimilation model pioneered by Richard Alba and Victor Nee in the 1990s has been criticized for expanding the definition of “host” to the extent that it is almost meaningless. The emphasis on ethnic institutions as mediators and meeting points between immigrant and host that this model provides is useful as long as one looks beyond the obvious political, social, and cultural institutions. Restaurants, ethnic grocers, drinking establishments, and other places where food is served, also function to bring the two groups together, often in a more direct and personal way. More useful still is the Identity Assimilation model popularized in the early 2000s.⁹ The selective path of this model, which suggests that the immigrant group chooses which aspects of its culture are assimilated, often for the potential of economic success, in many ways fits the story this project is telling. German immigrants opened many restaurants and grocers as a means of securing their economic fortunes in the United States and these establishments highlighted German cuisine, but these places, at least initially, were not intended to serve and introduce Americans to German food. German

⁸ William George Bruce, “Memoirs of William George Bruce,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 16, no. 4 (1933), 361. See also: Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), John Gurda, *The Making of Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee County Historical Society, 1999), H. Russell Austin, *The Milwaukee Story: The Making of an American City* (Milwaukee: The Milwaukee Journal, 1946). In a 1996 speech, President Bill Clinton, appearing alongside German Chancellor Helmut Kohl also noted Milwaukee’s distinct German character.

⁹ As Frank D. Bean, Gillian Stevens, Susan Wierzbicki, Mary Waters, and others have explored, Identity Assimilation centers on the notion that immigrant groups will mix certain aspects of their background with the host society but also maintain some identifiers that separate them from the host. This assimilation can take three forms: reactive, selective, and symbolic. For the purposes of this discussion selective and symbolic identification are the focus. In selective identification the ethnic/cultural identifiers which are maintained are often kept in order to further economic or social opportunities, while in symbolic identification the maintenance of old traditions is often done to create a separate space within the host society and out of pride for one’s ancestry.

business owners, operating in German enclaves, intended to supply their fellow immigrants, earning a few dollars from those outside the community was simply a bonus.

All these models share one thing, they all build a power structure in which the immigrant ultimately bears the greater burden for assimilation. Even the newer models of the 1990s and 2000s, which emphasize that assimilation is a two-way street and both sides are making changes, tend to put the host in a more rigid and static position where only small changes are made to accommodate new arrivals. As Faust and others have shown however, in the case of German immigrants the host often found themselves to be the outsider in their local community. William George Bruce, in his memoir of growing up in Milwaukee, noted “for a period of nearly three decades, the community was densely and tensely German in feeling and expression” which “caused some misgivings on the part of the Anglo-American element” who “soon reconciled themselves to the new order of things.”¹⁰ And yet the seemingly more powerful German element did not force their American neighbors to become German despite the power structure being flipped.¹¹ The potato salad illustrates this more equal sharing of the burden of change because both sides had their own recipes and both made changes and adapted. While the American recipes largely fell out of favor, it was not the preferred German recipe that replaced them, but rather a lesser-known version that fit more neatly into changing dietary guidance. Looking at food allows us to abandon the need for a power structure and look at assimilation as the compromise and equal sharing of the burden of adjustment the newer models suggest. This

¹⁰ William George Bruce, “Memoirs of William George Bruce,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 16, no. 4 (1933), 362.

¹¹ For a more detailed discussion of the impact of immigrant cultures on local communities see Kathleen Neils Conzen, “Mainstreams and Side Channels: The Localization of Immigrant Cultures,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11, no. 1 (1991): 5-16. Conzen argues that the greater numbers of immigrants, especially Germans in many Midwestern communities, influenced those communities to take on a character more in line with the immigrant’s culture. While assimilation did occur, and the communities increasingly saw themselves as American, the cultural influence of the immigrant community remained dominant and became the new “American.”

dissertation builds from these models, and brings in foodways studies, to expand the range of ethnic institutions that mediate and provide points of contact between groups to include food centered media and establishments.

The role of food in identity creation has been an increasingly popular field of study over the past three decades. In 1984 Linda Keller Brown and Kay Mussell edited *Ethnic and Regional Foodway in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity*.¹² The essays collectively argued that many Americans maintain cultural and ethnic ties through their choice of foods and the traditional cooking and eating practices associated with them. Through their dietary habits they establish boundaries that can be strengthened by keeping those habits only within the community or weakened by sharing them with people outside the community.¹³ In the case presented in this dissertation, early nineteenth century Americans and German immigrants differed in the cooking practices associated with potato salads. For American cooks, potatoes in a salad were a way to utilize leftovers and they were dressed like any green salad. In comparison, German recipes started with cooking the potatoes specifically for use in a salad and the dressings differed from those used on green salads. By the end of the century, as the two groups assimilated to each other, one version of the German salad remained identified with people of that ethnic origin while the other became “American”, and the old American salads disappeared

¹² Linda Keller Brown and Kay Mussell, eds., *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984).

¹³ See also: Peter Scholliers, ed., *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), Corinna Treitel, *Eating Nature in Modern Germany: Food, Agriculture, and Environment c. 1870 to 2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), Michael D. Wise and Jennifer Jensen Wallach, eds., *The Routledge History of American Foodways* (New York: Routledge, 2016), Mark H. Zanger, *The American Ethnic Cookbook for Students* (Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 2001), Martin Bruegel, ed., *A Cultural History of Food Vol. 5: In the Age of Empire* (Oxford: Berg, 2012), Amy Bently, ed., *A Cultural History of Food Vol. 6: In the Modern Age* (Oxford: Berg, 2012), Paul Freedman, Joyce Chaplin, and Ken Aldala, eds., *Food in Time and Place: The American Historical Association Companion to Food History* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2014), Carole M. Counihan, ed., *Food in the U. S. A.: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2002), Richard Pillsbury, *No Foreign Food: The American Diet in Time and Place* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), Werner Sollors, ed., *The Invention of Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

almost entirely. For second, third, and beyond generations preparing German style potato salad linked them symbolically to their past and separated them from their fellow Americans.

Katharina Vester also looked at the role of food in identity creation, but her work focused on more amorphous groups and ideas like masculinity and sexual identity. A crucial part of Vester's analysis, however, are the discourses that develop around food and how those are used to define a "normal" member of a group and separate the "other."¹⁴ The ways in which people discuss food are perhaps more important than the foods themselves in identity creation. Vester used the example of campfire cooking to illustrate the discourse around masculine cooking. It was less about what a man cooked, but how he cooked it, over an open flame surrounded by nature, that made his cooking different from that of women. Similarly, the way in which nineteenth century cookbook authors and magazine contributors talked about potato salad distinguished German from American.

American cuisine, as much as such a thing can be said to exist, has undergone numerous changes.¹⁵ The biggest influences in the early years of the nation were British and French cuisines. Especially among upper-class Americans, French food became the standard as they tried to distance themselves from British rule. Susan Pinkard provided a wonderful analysis of the rise to prominence of French cuisine.¹⁶ She connects food to political, social, and philosophic changes and in particular the egalitarian ideas of the Enlightenment that heavily influenced the Founding Fathers. Attached to these ideas, French cuisine rose in popularity in the United States,

¹⁴ Katharina Vester, *A Taste of Power: Food and American Identities* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015).

¹⁵ In 1996 Sidney Mintz argued that the United States has no national cuisine and that is not a bad thing. Like the American people, Mintz argued, their dietary habits are diverse and made up of many ethnic influences and regional variations. Sidney Mintz, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).

¹⁶ Susan Pinkard, *A Revolution in Taste: The Rise of French Cuisine, 1650-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

but its position soon came to be seen as opposing the original ideas of equality. In the mid-nineteenth century, as restaurants began to appear in American cities, the wealthy began to limit the accessibility of French food. As Andrew Haley discussed in his work *Turning the Tables*, French restaurants became more inaccessible to the average American and the rising middle-class especially.¹⁷ Many of the top restaurants printed menus only in French and implemented a dress code, ensuring that those who could not read French or afford the appropriate attire would be kept out. In response, the middle-class, which desired to participate in the act of dining out, turned to more accessible options and began entering the ethnic dining establishments in immigrant neighborhoods. Haley argued that as their numbers and wealth grew, the middle-class became the taste makers of American society and their desire and preference for ethnic cuisines became dominant.¹⁸

The influence of various ethnic groups on American dietary habits have attracted other scholars. An important work in this field is Donna Gabaccia's *We Are What We Eat*.¹⁹ She argued that American's diverse eating habits are not as new as Haley might suggest and instead date back to the first European colonists. She instead focused on a longer and slower process, by which separate cuisines interact and breakdown over time and mix together to form an American cuisine. It is these culinary creoles, as Gabaccia called the successive waves of mixtures, that define American cuisine. In her work Gabaccia labeled the period of the nineteenth and early-twentieth century as a time of culinary conservatism, but what seems to be conservatism was

¹⁷ Andrew Haley, *Turning the Tables: Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

¹⁸ See also: Robert Dirks, *Food in the Gilded Age: What Ordinary Americans Ate* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016).

¹⁹ Donna Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

rather a period of rapid growth in which more barriers were being established than were being broken down. As waves of new immigrants, from new parts of the world, arrived with their culinary traditions the slow process of creating a new creole was overwhelmed. While immigration had been part of American history since colonial times, the numbers of people arriving had been small in comparison to late-nineteenth century arrivals and many came from the same areas. As such, it was easier for the slow process of creating a culinary creole to work and by the time waves of new immigrants began arriving older traditions were well on their way to being assimilated. As immigrants and culinary traditions began arriving from new places all around the world each had to begin the process of being incorporated and many of these new arrivals faced prejudices that hindered the start of the process altogether.²⁰ This dissertation suggests that older immigrant groups continued the process of integrating into American society and influencing culinary habits even as the newer arrivals stalled. Germans in particular were well established, and their cuisine was well on its way to being part of the new culinary creole.

Taking a more in-depth look at the process by which these culinary mixtures occurred is Jennifer Jensen Wallach's *How America Eats*.²¹ Wallach argued that looking at food and its changes can reveal changes in the United States and in the definition of what it means to be an American. In the early years of European colonization, the process of mixing foodways was driven almost exclusively by the need to avoid starvation. Even as colonies grew, adoption of foods was often driven by a need to have something to eat. Wallach noted, however, that this process begins to break down in the nineteenth century as technological advances made it

²⁰ See also: Hasia R. Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

²¹ Jennifer Jensen Wallach, *How America Eats: A Social History of U. S. Food and Culture* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013).

possible to distribute food more widely. Two new factors, speed and convenience, started to replace starvation as the driving force behind the mixing of culinary traditions. This dissertation agrees with Wallach's analysis, but speed and convenience are only part of the equation. A dish may be quick to prepare but not be accepted into the new tradition for many reasons, including limited availability of a key ingredient (quick and convenient do not always go together), the requirement of specialized cookware, or prejudice against the group to which the dish is common. Similarly, a dish may be convenient, ready to grab and go, but be kept out of the new tradition due to factors like prejudice or simply because it does not fit with the overall character of the tradition. Instead, this project argues that accessibility more broadly, which includes speed and convenience but also distribution, familiarity, and similarity to the existing tradition, drives the process of creating new culinary creoles.

Before jumping into the main discussion of this dissertation a note on terminology is needed. The two major groups are referred to by their classification in the 1880 United States census. Native-born American is used to refer to the group functioning as the host society in this study and not Indigenous Americans. In more practical terms this refers to middle-class Anglo-Americans who, through various means, asserted themselves as the dominant social group.²² German immigrants is used to refer to those first and second generation individuals who arrived from the lands listed under the banner of German Empire in the 1880 census and maintained strong cultural ties to those lands.²³ The word taste is also frequently used to refer to the set of

²² Due to the fact that definitions of race, especially of whiteness, underwent many changes during this period, including for German Americans, I avoid using white Americans. This also excludes groups, such as African Americans, Asian Americans, and Indigenous Americans, who through discrimination were kept from being part of the taste making middle-class. The contributions of those groups are to be celebrated but lay beyond the scope of this project which focuses narrowly on the contributions of one immigrant group.

²³ I include second generation immigrants because many of them maintained a close association with the homeland of their parents including use of German as their primary language and participation in German cultural clubs. The lands listed in the census as part of the German Empire are: Baden, Bavaria, Brunswick, Hamburg, Hanover,

preferences for particular dishes in the cuisines of the two groups. The dish known as potato salad has many variations, and many of them appear throughout this work, so distinctions are made between recipes published in American cookbooks and those published in German cookbooks, the use of key ingredients like mayonnaise, and through identifications used by the authors (e.g., “German style” or “as the Germans make it”). These terms are imperfect as this is the story of changes made to all of them, but they serve well enough to identify the parts that are mixing into the whole.

The chapters which follow are organized around particular types of sources or establishments related to food. The first chapter utilizes cookbooks to establish the rough boundaries between American and German cuisine and how those boundaries began to break down and blur during the nineteenth century. As German immigrants began arriving in larger numbers from the 1840s, a thriving German language press established itself in the United States with Milwaukee on the leading edge. These cookbooks outlined what constituted German or American cuisine, and what it meant to be a German or an American based on one’s diet. Cookbooks are a valuable resource for this study because they are a public expression of a cuisine. Many nineteenth century cookbooks were expansive tomes that contained more than just recipes, but the recipes within served to mark out what the author considered the most important parts of a cuisine. Anyone who purchased the book could participate in that cuisine, reinforcing their existing identity by purchasing books on their own cuisine, or expanding and blurring their identity by purchasing books on other cuisines.

Hessen, Lübeck, Mecklenburg, Nassau, Oldenburg, Prussia, Saxony, Weimar, Württemberg, and Germany (not specified). This definition does not include those ethnic Germans who immigrated from Austria or the Austrian Empire, Switzerland, Poland, Russia, and other parts of Eastern Europe. The definition is religiously inclusive and does not separate Roman Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish Germans except as specified by the individuals themselves.

Cookbooks also posed an obstacle to assimilation, however. A language gap existed which prevented many Americans from being able to access German cuisine. The earliest cookbooks on German cuisine were printed by German language presses, in German, for the use of German Americans. Henrietta Davidis' *Praktisches Kochbuch* is a prime example. The book, discussed further in chapter one, was popular in Germany, with several editions published beginning in 1845. The Milwaukee publisher Georg Brumder produced a special version, specifically for Germans in America, in 1879. Native-born Americans became increasingly curious about the foods of those around them late in the century.²⁴ Their curiosity encouraged publishers to begin printing translations of German works, and just before the turn of the century an English language edition of Davidis' book was published, even as more German language cookbooks continued to appear. The appearance of English language versions of popular German cooking texts began to make the cuisine more accessible to American audiences who desired to know and cook what their German neighbors ate.

The second chapter utilizes magazines, specifically those printed for women, to look at the ways in which people talked about food and particular cuisines. Some of the boundaries that existed in cookbooks carried into the recipes and discussions conducted in magazines. Unlike cookbooks however, magazines were, in many ways, more accessible. While the German language press did publish magazines, they had a much smaller circulation than many of their English language counterparts and were often focused on political and social events back in Germany. The dominant women's magazines at the time were printed in English and eased the language barrier as many second and third generation German Americans could read, write, and

²⁴ Andrew Haley argues in *Turning the Tables* that after the upper-class made French restaurants more inaccessible to middle-class Americans they became more interested in other ethnic cuisines to satisfy their desire to dine out and become more cosmopolitan.

speak the language. Magazines also reached a wider audience. Two of the leading women's publications of the time, *Good Housekeeping* and the *Ladies' Home Journal*, had subscriptions in the hundreds of thousands around the turn of the century.²⁵ This wide readership makes magazines a unique source.

Magazines also made new cuisines more accessible by providing more direct interaction between those who cooked and ate German and American. Readers could write in to the magazine and request recipes or ask questions and these requests were often answered in a later edition by another reader. Like with cookbooks, this gave curious native-born Americans a way to explore German cuisine. Those interested could ask for a specific recipe and their interest in ethnic dishes was marked by the use of phrases such as "as the Germans make it." Some publications also solicited guest articles from their readers and gave contributors the opportunity to promote their favorite dishes or highlight the cuisine they had grown up with. Readers could also submit their own commentary on recipes or articles and offer suggestions for adaptations to the dish based on local availability of ingredients. Through these interactions the boundaries between German and American cuisine were further broken down as recipes and techniques were shared on a larger scale.

The third chapter looks at educational efforts on the part of the federal and state governments to teach Americans and immigrants alike how to eat more scientifically. In the late nineteenth century, following the work of German chemists, a new science of nutrition began to

²⁵ Kathleen L. Endres and Therese L. Lueck, eds., *Women's Periodicals in the United States: Consumer Magazines* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 124, 173. By 1911 *Good Housekeeping* had reached a circulation of 300,000 and *The Ladies Home Journal* reached one million subscribers in 1889. By comparison the leading German language women's publication, *Die Deutsche Hausfrau*, only began publication in 1904 and had reached a circulation of 130,000 by 1910. See: "German-American Publications Before World War I," Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, accessed Jan. 19, 2023, <https://mki.wisc.edu/exhibits/virtual-exhibits-2/in-their-own-words-german-americans-in-the-world-war-i-era/>

develop. As scientists began to better understand the component parts of food and how they were utilized by the body, governments took a greater interest in the way their citizens ate. In the United States the federal government funded much of the research into nutrition through the USDA and published bulletins containing the results of many of the studies. Through these bulletins the government sought to standardize the way Americans ate and redefine consumption along scientific lines.

Along with publishing the results of these studies the information was distributed through government supported programs. Many states, including Michigan and Wisconsin, began to include a women's section to their Farmers' Institute meetings. A frequent topic at these sections was cooking and the proper, scientific methods of feeding a family. At the same time the field of Home Economics emerged to teach a scientific approach to household management predominantly to young women. Included in these courses, at all levels of education, was the scientific approach to cooking. Despite these wide-reaching efforts however, this attempt at standardization imposed a new obstacle to the assimilation of German cuisine. As the government created a new definition of what foods were acceptable and fit for consumption by Americans, it established new boundaries that made some dishes incapable of being assimilated. It also opened some new avenues to assimilation, however, and a more obscure version of potato salad was able to fit into the new dietary guidelines, one that was already gaining popularity among urban Americans.

The fourth chapter looks at ethnic restaurants and eating establishments as sites of direct contact between German cuisine and native-born Americans. As increasing numbers of German immigrants arrived in the United States, eating places opened that catered specifically to their needs. Restaurants, grocers, and beer gardens appeared in the German neighborhoods of many

American cities. Milwaukee especially witnessed an explosion, early in its history, of German eating establishments. Some of these places, especially the large beer gardens operated by the major breweries in the city, catered to more than just the food needs of the German community. These were also places to celebrate being German, to spend time with friends and family, and to enjoy a weekend. Their strong German character was not for everyone, however, and many native-born Americans looked at these establishments disapprovingly.

In their early years of operation these ethnic eateries were an obstacle to culinary assimilation. They were often opened in German neighborhoods and often in whatever space was available, so they were not the most accessible to those outside the German community. There was also a language barrier, menus were printed in German and the wait staff took orders only in German. The perceptions of many native-born Americans, that these places were smelly, hard to find, and difficult to order in, also contributed to their inaccessibility. As the nineteenth century progressed and curious middle-class Americans began to venture out in search of places to dine outside their homes however, German restaurants were among the first they patronized. Newspaper articles published at the time informed readers of the benefits to be found by venturing into German food. The cheap prices and large quantities were early selling points followed by the realization that once one could determine what they were ordering, the food was fairly similar to what many already ate. For their part, German restaurant owners were quick to welcome American diners and were some of the first to print menus with English translations. The potato salad in particular, received a boost from the opening of delicatessens, corner grocery stores that sold imported goods and also prepared dishes, especially salads. The delicatessens of major cities became a place for busy middle-class consumers to grab a quick lunch. Many deli salads contained mayonnaise made in-store and the product, which became popular on its own,

became associated with the salads sold. The convenience of this potato salad, which could be bought already prepared or the main ingredients of which could be purchased together and mixed later, made it popular with both German and American patrons and allowed it to more easily cross into the newly forming culinary creole.

This dissertation argues that as the number of German immigrants arriving in the United States grew during the nineteenth century their food, and to an extent themselves, became more accessible. This accessibility opened new sites for native-born Americans and Germans to interact and share their cuisines and blend them to create a new, shared identity based on food. By examining this process of mixing and creating new culinary identities we learn more about the processes of assimilation and its impacts on both the immigrant and host societies. By bringing foodways studies to the long historiography of Germans in the United States this dissertation provides a more detailed picture of the German experience in the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER II

COOKING BY THE BOOKS: COOKBOOKS DEFINE WHAT IT MEANS TO COOK AND EAT GERMAN OR AMERICAN

In 1956 the Culinary Arts Institute in Chicago published *The German and Viennese Cookbook*. In the introduction German cooking is described as “generous, hearty, comfortable” for the American audience. “The basic traditions of German cookery,” it continued, “developed in the aromatic kitchens of *Hausfrauen* who resisted the influence of France and Italy and borrowed ideas only from their Central European neighbors.”¹ The cookbook made no mention of an American influence, or of a German influence on American cookery, however. Those of German descent had been making the United States home since the colonial period and had arrived in Chicago during the nineteenth century, when the ranks of Germans in America swelled quickly, over a century by the publication of the Culinary Arts Institute’s cookbook on their food.² During that time the two culinary traditions, German and American, mixed, along with the people themselves, and both immigrant and native-born reshaped their definitions of food and

¹ Melanie De Proft, *The German and Viennese Cookbook* (Chicago, Culinary Arts Institute: 1956), 3.

² The 1850 census was the first to record the nativity of the population. It recorded a total white population of 19,553,068 people of which 2,240,581 (11%) were foreign born. Of that foreign born population 583,774 (26%) were from Prussia and the “rest of Germany.” J. D. B. DeBow, *A Statistical View of the United States: Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census* (New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1990), 45, 61, 117. The 1920 census recorded a total white population of 94,820,915, of which 13,712,754 (14%) were foreign born. Of the foreign born white population 1,915,864 (13%) were from Germany. The 1920 census also recorded statistics for “foreign white stock” which it defined as any person having at least one foreign born parent. Under this category it recorded 7,259,992 (7%) persons as being of German descent, by far the largest white ethnic group in the country at the time. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920, Vol. II* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), 29, 897.

each other. By looking at the potato salad and language surrounding it, we can see how this process of blending took place as the recipes in American and German cookbooks changed over the course of the nineteenth century.

Cookbooks offer a unique, everyday insight into nineteenth century cooking practices, but also offer a definition and standardization of the cuisine of the group they represent. In this way cookbooks act as sites of public assimilation. They institutionalize a culinary canon for their intended audience, teaching them what it means to cook in a specific way. In *The German and Viennese Cookbook* mentioned above, the staff of the Culinary Arts Institute standardized their interpretation of German cuisine and offered a definition of it for native-born American cooks and eaters. Cookbook authors throughout the nineteenth century also engaged in the practice of standardization. Words like “American”, or “German” featured prominently in the titles and told readers exactly what kind of cooking they could expect to learn. These designations never fully disappeared from cookbooks, as seen with the Culinary Arts Institute’s book, but recipes moved across the boundaries as they were adopted by one group or the other. Beyond the ethnic or regional identifiers, titles also expressed styles of cooking with the word “practical” appearing frequently to signal that the recipes featured inside were simple, everyday fare that could be prepared in the humblest of kitchens.

But cookbooks also presented a clear obstacle to the mixing of culinary traditions with the language barrier. If a German immigrant could not read English, cookbooks published in that language were inaccessible to them. Conversely, German language cookbooks were often inaccessible to native-born Americans. It was not until sufficient interest was created that translations were published to overcome this obstacle. Once produced however, these translations opened a new avenue of accessibility for people from both groups. Native-born

Americans especially, could now cook the recipes they saw in the German restaurants, groceries, and beer gardens.

These books, published internationally, nationally, or even locally, provided a uniform expression of the cuisine they represented to a wider public. The 1899 *Ann Arbor Cook Book*, for example, informed the curious reader of who made up that community. Its contents show where community members came from and how they saw themselves or wished others to see them. In this way, cookbooks serve also as an expression of private assimilation. The books, and the recipes within, are both selective and symbolic. They express the parts of personal or ethnic cuisine which the author wants others, implicitly, to identify with him or herself or the ethnicity being presented. Cookbooks then offer a window through which to view the process of assimilation in German immigrant communities during the nineteenth century. As native-born Americans became more curious about their German neighbors and what they ate, publishers began printing translations of German cookbooks. Through the publication of collections of German recipes, reprints of popular German texts, and the inclusion of German recipes in American books we see how both sides adapted and shared ideas about food and identity.

Food is an important part of identity and other scholars have examined food and diet, and by extension cooking texts, as sites of identity creation in a German context.³ Corinna Treitel examined the German diet and its relation to politics and identity in the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century. As Treitel explained, cookbooks are often tools of scientific or political propaganda. In their standardization of cuisine, they served as a platform from which

³ See Corinna Treitel, *Eating Nature in Modern Germany: Food, Agriculture and Environment, c.1870 to 2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). Treitel examines the growth of plant-based diets in Germany and their use by scientists and politicians to promote an ideal of the German people while maximizing Germany's agricultural resources in times of plenty and times of want. See also Heather Merle Benbow and Heather R. Perry, eds., *Food, Culture and Identity in Germany's Century of War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

politicians could dictate who is part of the group, in Treitel's case who is German, and who is the other. Scientifically, they serve to express what makes a person healthy and what food should be eaten to maximize human ability. In the immigrant experience, however, when the self and the other are defined most prominently by point of origin, the identity created by political uses of cookbooks play a new, cultural role.

In the nineteenth century, as nationalism exploded across Europe and ethnic ties replaced feudal ones, culturally similar peoples grouped, or were grouped, together. Culinary traditions were no exception to this grouping movement. But the German immigrants arriving in the Upper Midwest were not surrounded by culturally similar people. Their staple foods and the dishes they prepared were often very different from those of the native-born Americans they settled near. As the population of German-born and first-generation German Americans increased, so did a desire for their favorite culinary texts.⁴ The decade between 1880 and 1889 saw the arrival of almost one and a half million immigrants from Germany and in 1880 almost five million people claimed one parent of German birth.⁵ Cookbooks written by German authors were published and republished in the United States in both German and English. These cookbooks, along with their

⁴ The first reliable statistics for the origin of foreign-born people in the United States is the 1850 census. According to the 1850 census 573,000 German-born people lived in the United States. New York and Ohio had the highest numbers with over 100,000 each. The states of the Upper Midwest (Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Iowa) combined for just under 52,000 with Wisconsin providing the bulk. By the turn of the century over 2.6 million German-born people lived in the United States. The Upper Midwest was home to 637,000 of these German immigrants. Michigan, Minnesota, and Iowa each counted over 100,000 German born residents while Wisconsin counted almost a quarter of a million. An additional 1.88 million residents of the Upper Midwestern states identified as having at least one parent born in Germany. J. D. B. DeBow, *A Statistical View of the United States: Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census* (New York: Norman Ross Publishing Inc., 1990) <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1850/1850a/1850a-06.pdf> (accessed January 8, 2021). U.S. Bureau of the Census, *The Twelfth Census of the United States: 1900* (Washington: United States Census Office, 1901) <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1900/volume-1/volume-1-p3.pdf> (accessed January 8, 2021).

⁵ The 1880 census records 4,883,842 persons having a German-born father and 4,557,629 having a German-born mother. It does not indicate how much overlap there is in these two groups. Department of the Interior Census Office, *Compendium of the Tenth Census* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1885), 1409.

American counterparts, show the selective and symbolic nature of assimilation among those arriving during the nineteenth century.

By the nineteenth century cookbooks were still in their infancy. Books containing recipes had been produced since the Middle Ages, but their wide acceptance by the general public and for home cooking was just beginning as the waves of German immigrants arrived in the United States. This was due in large part to the status of cooks through the Medieval period.⁶ The work of cooking was performed by the lower classes of society due to its dirty and strenuous nature. Cooks worked in hot and humid kitchens, surrounded by the ash of the fires they used to cook and the blood of slaughtered animals.⁷ Their portrayal in literature did not help improve their status either. As Henry Notaker discussed, cooks were frequently portrayed as devils and associated with the sins of greed and gluttony.⁸ Outside of courtly kitchens there was little interest in the techniques and recipes cooks used and the few manuscripts produced on cooking were usually intended for use by the guilds.

By the Renaissance opinions began to change. Cooking moved from the category of practical knowledge to the more respected category of science or art and those with guild training gained a bit of respect.⁹ Male cooks in prominent positions, such as royal or princely courts, benefitted the most from this change. But women also benefitted, as male cooks sought higher prestige positions female cooks took positions in tavern kitchens.¹⁰ In the following

⁶ See: Henry Notaker, *A History of Cookbooks: From Kitchen to Page Over Seven Centuries* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017). Megan Elias, *Food on the Page: Cookbooks and American Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017). Anne Willian and Mark Cherniavsky, *The Cookbook Library: Four Centuries of the Cooks, Writers, and Recipes that Made the Modern Cookbook* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2012).

⁷ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 7-8.

⁸ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 10-14.

⁹ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 15-17.

¹⁰ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 18.

centuries men would continue to dominate the prestige positions in cooking, working in royal courts and restaurants, but women began to dominate the world of domestic service among the middle class, taking care of household management and the affairs of the kitchen. This shift had an important impact on cookbooks as well.

From the Medieval period into the eighteenth-century, cookbooks were often published anonymously or under a pseudonym.¹¹ Since cooking was still a low class occupation dominated by men, women frequently signed simply “by a lady” and respectable gentlemen wrote under the name of their personal cooks.¹² As more people became literate and interest in food, especially the food served in royal courts, grew, some cooks took the opportunity provided by the printing press to gain a level of celebrity. Names like Taillevent, court cook to Charles VI of France, or Bartolomeo Scappi, cook at the Papal court, gained prominence and were attached to new publications to boost sales.¹³ Some gentlemen or aristocrats would attach recipes to scientific treatises, but these frequently featured a preface deriding the practice of cookery and making it clear the recipes only functioned to prove the scientific research.¹⁴ Some female authors, on the other hand, attached their names to their cookbooks and gained fame. The German cookbook author Henriette Davidis, whose work will be discussed later, became so popular that cooking texts were written under her name.¹⁵ The popularity of female authors was aided by the fact that middle class women preferred books written by women. They argued that male authors lacked

¹¹ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 42.

¹² Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 42-43.

¹³ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 41.

¹⁴ Notaker uses the example of horticulturalist and member of the Royal Society, John Evelyn who wrote a treatise on salads. The recipes are attached as an appendix without page numbers, and in a different typeface to clearly distinguish between the real work of science and the lower work of cooking. Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 15.

¹⁵ Notaker notes that some works were written under names like H. Davitis in an attempt to profit from Henriette’s popularity.

the practical knowledge of everyday cooking required to manage a home kitchen.¹⁶ The shift can also be seen in the content of cookbooks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Those written by men, as noted above, often accompanied scientific treatises or were authored by royal cooks. The cookbooks written by women often included long sections on home economics and covered all aspects of household management, not just cooking. By the nineteenth-century women dominated the practical cookbook market while men controlled scientific cookbooks that focused more on the new nutritional science emerging at the time.¹⁷

Amelia Simmons' *American Cookery* is perhaps the first published American cookbook. Published in 1796 *American Cookery*'s full title indicates that the recipes within have been "adapted to This Country & All Grades of Life."¹⁸ The ingredients showcased the vast bounty available to early American cooks, from small game animals to numerous types of seafood, and a variety of fruits and vegetables. Native foodstuffs featured prominently in the recipes collected in the book, especially corn, beans, and turkey. But what is perhaps more striking to the modern reader is the structure of the work. Broken into two sections Simmons opened with brief descriptions of how to select the best produce for use in the kitchen. From beef to eels, and carrots to beans, most of the ingredients received only a few lines or a paragraph at most. The entry for eels, for example, read "Eels, though taken from muddy bottoms, are best to jump in the pan."¹⁹ The entry on butter ran about half a page.²⁰ These short entries provided much useful information

¹⁶ Notaker, *History of Cookbooks*, 44.

¹⁷ Corinna Treitel discusses this dichotomy in her work *Eating Nature in Modern Germany*.

¹⁸ Amelia Simmons, *American Cookery: or the Art of Dressing Viands, Fish, Poultry, and Vegetables, and the Best Modes Of Making Pastes, Puffs, Pies, Tarts, Puddings, Custards and Preserves and All Kinds of Cakes, from the Imperial Plumb to Plain Cake Adapted to this country and all Grades of Life* (Hartford, CT: publisher unknown, 1798), digitized by Feeding America: the Historic American Cookbook Project, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. <https://d.lib.msu.edu/fa/1#page/1/mode/2up>., 13.

¹⁹ Simmons, *American Cookery*, 24.

²⁰ Simmons, *American Cookery*, 30.

often including ways to stretch the life of the ingredient, but little information on how to cook them.

One entry stood out from the rest however, the humble potato. Simmons' prescription for potatoes ran a full two pages. What made the root so special that it deserved four times the attention of other ingredients? The answer can be found in two parts of the entry. First, Simmons opened with how to choose potatoes. She wrote, "potatoes take rank for universal use, profit and easy acquirement."²¹ There were many varieties of potato available, from smooth skin to red rusticoat, each with unique textures and flavors. They also grow well in sandy or loamy soils and can produce abundantly. The potato was also a very versatile ingredient for Simmons and "a good potato comes up in many branches of cookery."²² This versatility required some explanation, and the majority of the entry is taken up by it.

The second reason potatoes received extended attention lies in the language Simmons used when describing them. The potato was something which was exotic. "Those cultivated from imported seed... are best for table use" with Spanish potatoes having the best value.²³ The storage method described by Simmons also reflected the Incan practices recorded by Spanish observers.²⁴ It is clear that much of Simmons' knowledge of potatoes came from foreign sources, but Spain was not the only place she cited. "It would swell this treatise too much to say every thing that is useful to prepare a good table, but I may be pardoned by observing that the Irish have preserved a genuine mealy rich Potatoe, for a century, which takes rank of any known in any other kingdom."²⁵

²¹ Simmons, *American Cookery*, 34.

²² Simmons, *American Cookery*, 34. Simmons herself includes potatoes in several of the recipes in her book, from an accompaniment to meat dishes to a sweet, wine-soaked potato cake.

²³ Simmons, *American Cookery*, 34.

²⁴ The potatoes are dug in the fall and dried in the sun. They are then kept over the winter away from frost and moisture before being spread out again in the spring to continue drying.

²⁵ Simmons, *American Cookery*, 35. The original spelling has been maintained from the text.

The Irish, according to Simmons, were the owners of the best potatoes and while many early Americans had Irish ancestry they had not brought their seeds with them, at least not in a quantity which suited her. Simmons was also not alone in her identification of the potato as something foreign and particularly Irish. The plant was often identified in the early United States as the “Irish potato.”²⁶ The only other item that received as much attention as the potato in Simmons’ work was the cabbage which received about a page, simply because there were several varieties that were each distinct. For Simmons the exoticism of the potato deserved the attention and education of her readers.

But even as Simmons dedicated two pages to identifying and selecting potatoes, they played only a supporting role in the recipes contained in the second half of *American Cookery*. A recipe entitled “To Stuff and Roast a turkey or Fowl” included the option to “boil and mash 3 pints potatoes, wet them with butter, add sweet herbs, pepper, salt, fill and roast as above.”²⁷ The potatoes served as an accompaniment to the fowl without needing a separate dish for service. In other recipes potatoes were used as a replacement for starchy grains, such as one recipe for potato pudding or potato cake where mashed potato took the place of wheat flour. None of the recipes let the potato stand alone or take center position on the plate, it would not be until well into the nineteenth century that a dish like potato salad would appear in American cookbooks and place the spud in a separate serving dish and sometimes even as a separate course.

One of the first recipes for potato salad published in the United States appeared in Pierre Blot’s *What to Eat and How to Cook It*. First published in 1863 Blot’s book contained “over one

²⁶ Willy Ley, “For Your Information: The Devil’s Apples.” *Galaxy Science Fiction* 26, no.4 (1968): 118-125. Redcliffe Salaman, *The History and Social Influence of the Potato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1949) also notes this trend.

²⁷ Simmons, *American Cookery*, 51.

thousand receipts” including seventeen for potatoes.²⁸ Parts of Blot’s section echoed Simmons’ work, such as the method of cleaning and preparing potatoes for cooking. Blot, however, had many dishes which make use of the versatility of the potato, including forming it into balls or fritters, as well as different methods of preparation from steaming to frying. There were also several sauces, many butter-based, which were served over the potatoes once cooked. By the time Blot’s work was published the potato had clearly become more of a staple, but two of his receipts also show that potato salads had entered the American cooking lexicon by the middle of the nineteenth century.

Tucked at the end of the recipes for potato dishes, almost a casual afterthought, was the salad. Titled “The same, in salad” Blot’s recipe at first appeared like any other salad with a vinaigrette.²⁹ A simple mixture of cooked potatoes, oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper Blot’s potato salad had all the characteristics of those being published in Germany around the same time. But it was the additional serving options which raise the German connection into the spotlight. “You may use butter instead of oil if you serve warm; you may also add slices of beets, and of pickled cucumbers, according to taste” he wrote.³⁰ A warm potato salad was a signature of German cooking, especially in southern German states where the addition of beets or pickles was also common.

Following a brief paragraph on how to prepare potatoes and how to steam them Blot introduced a recipe for potatoes with bacon. Blot’s recipe read as follows:

Prepare two quarts of potatoes; cut them in pieces. Put in a stewpan half a pound of bacon cut in dice, and set it on the fire; when nearly fried, sprinkle in it a teaspoonful of flour,

²⁸ Pierre Blot, *What to Eat and How to Cook It: Containing over One Thousand Receipts, Systematically and Practically Arranged, To Enable the Housekeeper to Prepare the Most Difficult or Simpler Dishes in the Best Manner* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1863), 189- 194.

²⁹ Blot, *What to Eat and How to Cook It*, 193-4.

³⁰ Blot, *What to Eat and How to Cook It*, 194.

stirring with a wooden spoon; then add the potatoes, season with two sprigs of parsley, one of thyme, a bay leaf, salt, and pepper, add also a pint of warm water; boil gently till cooked, then take out parsley, thyme, and bay leaf, and serve.³¹

This recipe was close to several German recipes popularized about a decade earlier by Henriette Davidis, whose work will be discussed in more depth later. The main difference between Blot's recipe and the German recipes lay in the addition of thyme and bay leaf. That Blot's recipes were so similar to those of German cooks should come as no surprise. Blot, like many German immigrants, arrived in the United States in the 1850s as a political refugee fleeing the fallout of the Revolutions of 1848.³² Entering New York city Blot would doubtlessly have been surrounded by many Germans as he established himself as a culinary educator and in the decade before publishing *What to Eat*.

A decade later potato salad recipes were appearing in American cookbooks more frequently under the salads section, but they were still treated as an afterthought. *Jennie June's American Cookery Book* published in 1870 contained only one recipe for potato salad. What is striking about the recipe is that it is clearly not meant to be a regularly prepared dish. "When materials for a salad are scarce" was how the recipe began.³³ The author made it clear that this salad was less preferred in American cookery than a salad of greens or a meat salad.³⁴ Another indication that the recipe was not a staple comes in the line "this is a good way of disposing of

³¹ Blot, *What to Eat and How to Cook It*, 189. Original punctuation retained.

³² "Cooking as Fine Art," *New York Times*, April 7, 1865.

³³ J. C. Croly, *Jennie June's American Cookery Book: Containing Upwards of Twelve Hundred Choice and Carefully Tested Receipts; Embracing all the Popular Dishes, and the Best Results of Modern Science, Reduced to a Simple and Practical Form* (New York: The American News Company, 1870) digitized by Feeding America: the Historic American Cookbook Project, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. <https://d.lib.msu.edu/fa/45#page/1/mode/2up>, 122.

³⁴ The salad section is also home to salads of chicken, lobster, and other meats and seafoods. Another salad, "The Poet's Salad" also has potato as the base, but the potatoes are mashed, and the recipe reads more like cold mashed potatoes than a salad.

cold potatoes.”³⁵ Unlike the recipes in Blot’s work, where the potatoes were cooked with the salad in mind, this recipe utilized leftover potatoes from another dish. They were then dressed “with oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper, precisely like any other salad.”³⁶ For the author of Jennie June’s recipes potato salad was something to utilize the leftovers of American cooking and certainly not a special dish.

Another late nineteenth-century author, and an early American celebrity cook, Maria Parloa, did not relegate the potato salad to the realm of afterthought, but it took several years after her rise for her to include a recipe for it in her work. In the entry on Parloa in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*, Mary Mooney-Getoff called her “a respected cooking authority” and “one of the innovative superstars of her field.”³⁷ Parloa’s popularity was the result of her tireless work on education and American cookery. She taught at several schools, founded her own school, and gave lectures across New England.³⁸ Her influence on American cookery was undeniable in the nineteenth-century, training generations of cooks and housewives and publishing numerous cookbooks.

Parloa’s first recipe for potato salad was published in 1894. A previous recipe for potatoes in a salad appeared in a supplement to the *New York Tribune* titled “Practical Cookery,” with demonstrations. This recipe consisted of layering cooked and sliced potatoes with boiled lima beans before dousing with vinegar, oil, and optionally, mustard. The recipe was simply titled “salad” and fit with previous authors’ styles. But when her first true potato salad recipes were

³⁵ Croly, *Jennie June’s American Cookery Book*, 122.

³⁶ Croly. *Jennie June’s American Cookery Book*, 122.

³⁷ Mary Mooney-Getoff, “Maria Parloa” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*, ed. Andrew Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 776-777.

³⁸ William Alexander, “Maria Parloa: What She has Done and is Doing to Improve American Cookery,” *Good Housekeeping* 1, no. 5 (July 11, 1885), 9-10.

published in Miss Parloa's *Young Housekeeper* a change had taken place. The book featured two recipes in which the potato was the star ingredient. In both, the simple sauce of vinegar and oil was replaced by a cooked salad dressing of vinegar, eggs, and cream, although the second recipe stated that a French dressing could also be used.³⁹ What is remarkable about this shift is that Parloa, a noted expert on American cookery, had begun moving away from the traditional formula toward a creamier sauce. Both of these recipes were served cold no doubt due to the cream in the sauce.

Shortly after the *New York Tribune* printed Parloa's work, Cincinnati based Bloch Publishing and Printing Company published the eleventh edition of "*Aunt Babette's*" *Cook Book*.⁴⁰ The book offered "*Foreign and Domestic Receipts for the Household*" as the subtitle read. Like most of the cookbooks written by women so far discussed, Aunt Babette's work includes extensive household management tips along with the recipes. However, she devoted careful attention to the humble spud. "No vegetable, perhaps, is, as a rule, more carelessly cooked than the potato" she wrote early in the section on vegetables.⁴¹ "This is to be regretted" she continued before declaring that no meal was complete without the addition of potatoes.⁴² Seventeen potato dishes then helped fill out the vegetable chapter. These recipes ranged from simple baked potatoes to more complicated potato puffs. But, in similar fashion to Jennie June's work, the potato salad appeared under the salad section and not as a vegetable.

³⁹ Parloa's French dressing recipe is simply oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper as found a few pages earlier. Maria Parloa, *Miss Parloa's Young Housekeeper: Designed Especially to Aid Beginners* (Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1894) accessed by HathiTrust. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark:/13960/t0bv8788w&view=1up&seq=9>, 176.

⁴⁰ While the title page claims that the 1889 publishing is the eleventh edition an article on the Suro Library's website claims this to be the first printing. All locations which have original copies of the book, including the *Feeding America: the Historic American Cookbook Project* at Michigan State, have no information on earlier editions. Little information is available on the author, Bertha F. Kramer, as well. Her name, and pseudonym, are only attached to two cookbooks. Kramer was Jewish, though the cookbook is in the Reformed tradition and therefore not kosher.

⁴¹ Bertha F. Kramer, "*Aunt Babette's*" *Cook Book: Foreign and Domestic Receipts for the Household* (Cincinnati: The Bloch Publishing and Printing Co., 1889) digitized by Feeding America: the Historic American Cookbook Project, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. <https://d.lib.msu.edu/fa/4#page/1/mode/2up>, 113.

⁴² Kramer, "*Aunt Babette's*" *Cook Book*, 114.

What first stands out to the reader about Babette's recipe is the title, "unique potato salad."⁴³ The directions read as follows:

Boil potatoes in their jackets. When done, peel and cut them into squares. While still hot put on a tablespoonful of butter or drippings of poultry, and add two or more hard-boiled eggs, cut into squares; sprinkle salt and pepper over potatoes and eggs. You may add an onion if you like the flavor. Boil enough vinegar to just cover the salad and add two teaspoonfuls of prepared mustard; beat up the yolks of one or two eggs light, and add the boiling vinegar to the beaten eggs gradually. When thoroughly mixed pour over the potatoes. Serve in a salad bowl; garnish with chopped parsley. Eat cold.⁴⁴

The instructions began in a similar way to the other recipes covered so far, with cooking and peeling the potatoes. What made Aunt Babette's potato salad unique were the next few steps. First, the addition of hard-boiled egg. Previous authors included the option to make additions, but they suggested other vegetables like beets or lima beans. Babette was one of the first to add a non-vegetable component to her salad. But perhaps the thing that made the salad truly unique was the dressing. Previous authors, and many of Babette's contemporaries, dressed their salads simply with oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Babette broke from this tradition and added a thicker, creamier sauce akin to mayonnaise. Potato salads popular in Germany at the same time also included thicker sauces or the inclusion of mustard and meat drippings in the dressing. The distinctly German influence on Babette's salad was unique among her fellow American authors.

Smaller, local communities also reflected the shift toward foreign attribution in cookbooks. In 1899 the Ladies' Aid Society of the Congregational Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan published a collection of recipes for the community.⁴⁵ The recipes were sourced from

⁴³ Kramer, *"Aunt Babette's" Cook Book*, 145.

⁴⁴ Kramer, *"Aunt Babette's" Cook Book*, 145.

⁴⁵ According to the 1890 census Washtenaw County, whose seat is Ann Arbor, had a total foreign-born population of 7,789. Out of these people 4,102 were identified as having been born in Germany and accounted for roughly ten percent of the county's population. Their influence is reflected throughout the 1899 edition of the cookbook. Robert P. Porter, *Compendium of the Eleventh Census: 1890* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1892), 492, 641

within the church community and from “the ladies of the whole city.”⁴⁶ In the preface of the book, the editor’s noted that they received many more recipes than they could fit into the publication. Those recipes that made the cut cover all parts of a meal from the soup course to dessert, and special preparations for chafing dishes and the sick.

A casual reader may be confused by the organizational structure of the book. While the table of contents organizes the recipes by the type of dish (soup, meat, salad, etc.) three recipes for Yorkshire Pudding can be found in the middle of the “Meat” section, for example. More curious were the occasional labels assigned to recipes. Some of the recipe titles were followed by a parenthetical citation of the cookbook the recipe originally came from, but some were followed by an ethnic or national identifier. Two recipes under the “Soups” section, for example, indicate that they were German in origin as opposed to the cookbook from which they came. While not consistent throughout the book, this trend was something new and different compared to the works discussed above. While any identifiers were probably included by the author of the submission, the attention given to the origin of the recipe makes it clear what was considered American food and what came from foreign locations. A few other recipes contained an identifier, including two Armenian recipes, a Russian drink, and one “recipe from an Italian restaurant in London.”⁴⁷ Those contributors who decided to include an ethnic identifier wished to demonstrate the heritage of their recipes and themselves and maintain a separate identity.

⁴⁶ Ladies Aid Society of the Congregational Church, *The Ann Arbor Cook Book* (Ann Arbor, MI: Courier Office Printers and Binders, 1899), preface.

⁴⁷ Ladies Aid Society. *The Ann Arbor Cook Book*, 89. Some other recipes are attributed to the states of New Hampshire and Maryland and one from the territory of Hawaii as well as a Southern recipe. Some dishes contain the name of a country in their name like Welsh rarebit, Turkish sweetmeat, Russian cream, Spanish cream, and Mexican chocolate.

The cookbook included four recipes for potato salads under the “Salad” section. Each recipe was unique, some aligning more closely with the older American styles seen in Simmons’ and Blot’s works and some being attributed to foreign traditions. The first, a “French style” dish, called for sliced potatoes and onions to be tossed with a mixture of sour cream and vinegar. Much like Babette’s salad this recipe stood out for its use of sour cream to create a thicker, creamier sauce. The next recipe, which called for sliced potatoes in alternating layers with onions and covered in a thickened milk sauce, reflected both the layering style of Parloa’s recipe and the thicker sauce of Babette or the “French” style. The third recipe was a hybrid between the one found in Babette’s work and the older dishes. Cooked and sliced potatoes were added to a bowl with onion and hard-boiled eggs “chopped fine,” much like in Babette’s.⁴⁸ The dressing, however, was much like the simple dressings of authors like Blot and Jennie June but with the addition of sugar, celery seed, and mustard to the standard oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper. The final recipe was unique. The cooked and diced potatoes were mixed with chopped celery and onion and chilled.⁴⁹ The dressing was then prepared by combining vinegar, sugar, salt and mustard in a pot and heating the mixture to near boiling. One beaten egg was then added and heated until cooked. After the mixture was allowed to cool thick cream was added, before being poured over the vegetables and tossed.⁵⁰ All the components were kept cold before and after mixing and the salad was served cold. The dressing, much like the one in Babette’s work, may reflect the most influence from Ann Arbor’s German community of any in the cookbook.

Cookbooks in Germany during the nineteenth century also focused their attention on the housewife and included far more than recipes. These books also contained tips and instruction on

⁴⁸ Ladies Aid Society. *The Ann Arbor Cook Book*, 107.

⁴⁹ The author does not say how to chill the recipe, by 1899 they may have presumed everyone had an icebox.

⁵⁰ A very similar recipe appears earlier in the salad section under the title Mayonnaise Dressing

household management and the scientific research on nutrition being produced in Germany at the time.⁵¹ Two women stood out among the authors of these works, Hedwig Heyl and Henriette Davidis. Both women published cookbooks packed with household tips and showcasing the newest science, Heyl much more overtly.

Hedwig Heyl was born in 1850 and played a large role in the women's movement in Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She taught several classes on household management and cooking in the 1890s and "organized housewives' societies, and schools for domestic science."⁵² Her efforts to improve the lives of German *hausfrauen* earned her the nickname "Hindenburg of the Kitchen," according to her obituary in the *New York Times*.⁵³ In 1896 she condensed the public lectures she had given into "the most popular prewar textbook of domestic science" *Das ABC von Kuche*.⁵⁴ *Das ABC* opened with a chapter on money and time management, a theme that carried throughout the recipes. Her recipes were precisely measured, and the cost of each ingredient was given along with its measurement, and the time required to prepare each dish was given after the instructions. The next chapter focused on the relationship between food and human nutrition and discussed the science of things like protein and fat and includes a chart showing the percentage of protein, fat, and carbohydrates in common foods/ingredients. The science of nutrition was fairly new and German scientists like Justus von Liebig and Carl Voit were at the forefront of research. These men were frequently publishing and

⁵¹ Corinna Treitel has a lengthy discussion on the science of nutrition in nineteenth century Germany in her book *Eating Nature in Modern Germany*. She notes a shift in German cookbooks that reflects new ideas about calorie intake and the requirements of protein, carbohydrates, and fats pioneered by men like Justus Liebig and Carl Voit. These ideas were especially prominent in the mainstream cookbooks of the nineteenth century.

⁵² "Frau Hedwig Heyl Dead in Berlin, 83", *New York Times* (New York, NY), January 24, 1934.

⁵³ "Frau Hedwig Heyl Dead in Berlin, 83", *New York Times* (New York, NY), January 24, 1934.

⁵⁴ Treitel, *Eating Nature in Modern Germany*, 69 The title of Heyl's book, which translates to *The ABC of the Kitchen*, is often given as *Kitchen ABC*. I will refer to it as *Das ABC* to maintain the original meaning. The 1896/97 edition was the fourth edition of *Das ABC der Kuche* although the first edition was only a manuscript and not available in bookshops.

lecturing on their findings and Heyl was clearly familiar with their work. After several more chapters that covered kitchen basics, like managing a fire or ensuring fresh water, the book was then broken into departments which focused on a specific item or a set of items.⁵⁵ Each department began with information on the types of the ingredient available, the nutrition of the ingredient, the prices, and how to handle the ingredient. The length of these openings varied, and some included more detailed information than others.

One of the more detailed departments was that of the potato. Aside from the information on price and variety, Heyl included two paragraphs on the history of potatoes in Germany and a guide of the best growing conditions for potatoes. Twenty-six recipes featuring the potato as the main ingredient then followed. Unlike the American cookbooks Heyl featured one potato salad under this department, a warm potato salad. The recipe was very different from those featured in the cookbooks above. Some ingredients remain the same, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, and onion, but Heyl also called for flour, milk, and bouillon, which the cook could prepare themselves much like a stock or buy as some meat extracts were becoming available.⁵⁶ The procedure further distinguished Heyl's salad from those of her American contemporaries. First, the onion was sweated in the oil.⁵⁷ The American recipes which called for onion, or listed it as an optional ingredient, provided no instruction to cook it since they were served cold. The raw onion also gave the salad a stronger flavor and Aunt Babette cautioned her readers to use it only if they like the taste. Cooking the onion, as Heyl did, mellowed the sharpness and allowed the

⁵⁵ There is one department on fish, for example, but the potato has its own department.

⁵⁶ In some areas throughout the book *Fleischextrakt*, or meat extract, is used in place of bouillon. German chemist Justus Liebig, one of the pioneers of nutritional science, produced some of the first meat extracts in the nineteenth century. Heyl was certainly aware of Liebig's invention which is probably why the terms are used interchangeably. The bouillon is prepared beforehand as Heyl gives a liquid measurement.

⁵⁷ Hedwig Heyl, *Das ABC der Küche* (Berlin: Carl Habel, 1897), 524.

onion to better incorporate in the next step. After the onion was sweated the flour was added and cooked for a few minutes to make a roux that thickened the sauce. Then the liquids were added along with the salt and pepper and the mixture cooked for a quarter of an hour over a low heat⁵⁸ Then, cooked, peeled, and diced potatoes were added, boiled in the sauce, and the dish was served. Heyl's "Warm Potato Salad" was clearly very different from those in American cookery, but a "special comment" following the instructions directs the reader "for cold potato salad, see: Salad."⁵⁹ Like other authors Heyl included her other potato salads under that department.

While Heyl's note directed readers to the salad department for cold recipes, the various potato dishes there could be served cold or warm. Three variations appeared there, *Kartoffelsalat*, *Kartoffelsalat mit Speck*, *Kartoffelsalat mit Mayonnaisesauce*, and *Kartoffelsalat mit pikanter Sauce*.⁶⁰ The recipes were grouped together, with the ingredients for all four listed before the instructions, because they followed the same direction with only minor variation.⁶¹ All four started with cooked potatoes being peeled and sliced and then covered in hot bouillon, or a mixture of hot, salted water and vinegar, to warm them.⁶² Changes were then made according to the ingredients for each variation. The first recipe, *Kartoffelsalat*, was much like the recipes seen in American cookbooks. The most notable changes were the option to substitute goose fat for the oil, and the addition of shallots, bouillon, and chopped herbs to the dressing.⁶³ The other dishes differed much more. Of the remaining dishes the *Kartoffelsalat mit Mayonnaisesauce* was

⁵⁸ Heyl, *Das ABC der Küche*, 524. Heyl's directions translate to "cooked very slowly for a quarter of an hour" using the typical nineteenth century convention of describing temperatures in the language of speed. Since most cooking was done over a fire, temperatures were difficult to gauge, a good cook knew to adjust based on the speed of boiling. Cooking the sauce very slowly would be roughly equal to a low simmer in modern cookbook language.

⁵⁹ Heyl, *Das ABC der Küche*, 525.

⁶⁰ Potato salad, potato salad with bacon, potato salad with mayonnaise sauce, and potato salad with spicy sauce.

⁶¹ Heyl, *Das ABC der Küche*, 596-597.

⁶² Heyl, *Das ABC der Küche*, 597.

⁶³ Heyl, *Das ABC der Küche*, 596.

perhaps the most like a recipe seen in American cookery. It differed from Aunt Babette's recipe, which calls for a mayonnaise like dressing, more by what it omitted than what it added. This variation did not include the hard-boiled eggs of Babette's dish. Instead, the potatoes were dressed in a mixture of bouillon, oil, vinegar, and mayonnaise.⁶⁴ This was also the first recipe, both German and American, which called directly for mayonnaise. The other two dishes differed much more.

The variation called *Kartoffelsalat mit pikanter Sauce* included some ingredients not seen in the American cookbooks. Aside from the shallots, this recipe also called for red wine and English mustard flour.⁶⁵ The English mustard was what gave the salad its spicy nature. But it was the variation called *Kartoffelsalat mit Speck* that was the most different. The instructions for this variation were brief in the cookbook and translate to "Also 65 grams bacon and 1 onion in cubes, light yellow roasted, then add vinegar and mix this with the potato slices seasoned with salt and pepper, results in a tasty salad."⁶⁶ The ingredients also listed bouillon, which was probably added with the vinegar. This was the first recipe to include meat as an ingredient, not just the optional drippings. The rendered bacon fat replaced the oil of the other recipes and the cooked onion, like before, was unique to German cookery. However, these differences in culinary practice would not be bridged by Heyl. *Das ABC* was only published in Germany and never translated into English, so copies remained limited to the German immigrants who brought them to the United States at the end of the nineteenth century.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Heyl, *Das ABC der Küche*, 596.

⁶⁵ Heyl, *Das ABC der Küche*, 596. Mustard flour, also called mustard powder or dry mustard, is unique to this recipe. Some of the other recipes have included mustard, but not mustard powder. This recipe also specifies English mustard which is often spicier than other mustards.

⁶⁶ Heyl, *Das ABC der Küche*, 597.

⁶⁷ No version printed in the United States can be found, but several libraries across the Midwest and in other states and cities with large German populations in the United States have copies.

It would fall to the other prominent German author, Henriette Davidis, to bring German cookery to the American market. Henriette Davidis, the “creator of German cuisine,” played a prominent role in German cookery.⁶⁸ Davidis, like Maria Parloa, worked in schools for the education of young women teaching cooking and household management for both the elite and domestic servants. She published several cookbooks throughout her life including a series that provided instruction for women at all stages of life from childhood to marriage and beyond. But one of her works stands out above the rest, the *Praktisches Kochbuch für die gewöhnliche und feinere Küche* (*Practical Cookbook for the common and finer cuisine*), later known simply as “*the Davidis*.”⁶⁹ Work began on the *Practical Cookbook* in 1836 and Davidis set herself a monumental task. Regional cookbooks were common in what would become Germany, but no work had synthesized German cuisine. Davidis collected these regional cookbooks and sampled the recipes, adjusting as necessary, to create a uniform standard for recipes.⁷⁰ Containing recipes from across the German lands the *Practical Cookbook* that was created was “multi-faceted” and, when published in 1844, would “revolutionize German cuisine.”⁷¹ *The Davidis* went through over seventy versions and remained in publication until the 1960s.⁷²

Davidis’ work was so popular among Germans that the thirty-fifth edition was published in Milwaukee for the large German population living there.⁷³ The book was published in German

⁶⁸ “Henriette-Davidis-Museum,” Startseite (Stadt Wetter (Ruhr), accessed February 15, 2021, <https://www.stadt-wetter.de/freizeit/wetter/kultur-feste/henriette-davidis-museum/>).

⁶⁹ Treitel, *Eating Nature in Modern Germany*, 69.

⁷⁰ Eckehard Methler, *Von Henriette Davidis bis Erna Horn: Bibliographie und Sammlungskatalog hauswirtschaftlicher Literatur, mit Anmerkungen zur Frauenfrage* (Wetter, Rhur, Germany: Ev. Kirchengemeinde Volmarstein-Oberwengern, 2001), 3. Translated as “brought everything to the common denominator of good recipes.”

⁷¹ Methler, *Von Henriette Davidis bis Erna Horn*, 3.

⁷² Treitel, *Eating Nature in Modern Germany*, 69 n. 54-55 As Treitel notes in footnote 55, following Henriette Davidis’ death in 1878 updates to the *Practical Cookbook* were made by Luise Holle. This date may refer to when Holle took over editing the work as Davidis actually died in 1876.

⁷³ By 1880 twenty-seven percent of Milwaukee’s population was born in Germany and by 1910 over fifty percent were first- or second-generation Germans

as *Praktisches Kochbuch für die Deutschen in Amerika* (*Practical Cookbook for the Germans in America*) and in English as *Henriette Davidis' Practical Cookbook*. In the publisher's note which opened the English translation it was noted that the book "is recognized in Germany as being the standard authority in all matters pertaining to the culinary art."⁷⁴ It went on to explain the purpose of producing an English version of the text. "Appreciating the fact that we have in America many thousands of families comprising not only German-Americans, but among them many native Americans who are fond of cooking according to the German methods" they felt the need to make the work accessible to "those not familiar with the German language."⁷⁵ As the publisher's note made clear, by 1897 when the translation was published, there was sufficient curiosity among the native-born American audience of Milwaukee and beyond to require the publication of Germany's most prominent cookbook for their use. Milwaukee's large German population was very visible to the native-born population, their public displays will be addressed in chapter four, and food was a central part of their cultural expressions. This visibility no doubt drove the curiosity of those outside the German community and increased the desire to learn about the recipes served in the beer gardens and restaurants around the city.

The Davidis, like Heyl's work and others, contained recipes for potatoes in their own section while the recipes for potato salad appeared under the salad section. Some of the recipes under potato in the *Davidis* are closely related to Heyl's "Warm Potato Salad." They consisted of potatoes in a sauce thickened with flour, simmered, and served warm. All the sauces started with bacon and onions cooking slowly in a pan before the other ingredients were added. One recipe,

⁷⁴ C. N. Caspar and H. H. Zahn, Publisher's Note to *Henriette Davidis' Practical Cook Book* by Henriette Davidis (Milwaukee: C. N. Caspar and H. H. Zahn & Co., 1897) digitized by Feeding America: the Historic American Cookbook Project, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. <https://d.lib.msu.edu/fa/40#page/4/mode/2up>, III.

⁷⁵ Caspar & Zahn, Publisher's Note, IV.

titled “Potatoes with different sauces,” began by stating “if the potatoes are cooked as before, any sauce of onions, bacon or parsley” could accompany them.⁷⁶ The prevalence of bacon in these German recipes, and in the potato salads, stood out from their American contemporaries.

The Davidis, unlike *Das ABC*, codified three recipes under the title of potato salad which exemplify the intentions of the original title. The first is a *Feiner Kartoffelsalat* (Fine Potato Salad) translated to simply “Potato Salad” in the English version. The recipes in the English translation were true to the originals, only the names were changed. The salad was much like those of the early American cookbooks.⁷⁷ The sauce was a mixture of fine oil, red wine, vinegar, salt, and pepper. The salad was carefully layered in a bowl to keep the potato slices intact. Davidis then provided serving tips for the fine salad. The potatoes were served warm so “with the exception of lettuce” any green salad could be added to the dish.⁷⁸ The two salads were not to be mixed together however, as the heat of the potatoes would wilt the greens and make them “unsightly,” instead the greens were served as a wreath surrounding the edges.⁷⁹ The dish was intended as a display during the salad course at a dinner party.

The second recipe, *Kartoffelsalat für den gewöhnlichen Tisch* (Potato Salad for the ordinary table), given in the English version as “Potato Salad No. 2,” was a simpler affair.⁸⁰ The sauce was a mixture of oil, vinegar, milk, onions, salt, and pepper.⁸¹ Warm potato slices were added to a bowl and topped with half the sauce. The cook then had two options for combining the two, the potatoes and sauce could be stirred together, or a second bowl could be placed on

⁷⁶ Henriette Davidis, *Praktisches Kochbuch für die Deutschen in Amerika* (Milwaukee: Georg Brumder’s Verlag, 1879), 67.

⁷⁷ Davidis, *Henriette Davidis’ Practical Cook Book*, 345.

⁷⁸ Davidis, *Praktisches Kochbuch*, 234.

⁷⁹ Davidis, *Praktisches Kochbuch*, 234.

⁸⁰ Davidis, *Praktisches Kochbuch*, p. 234. Davidis, *Henriette Davidis’ Practical Cook Book*, 346.

⁸¹ Davidis, *Praktisches Kochbuch*, 234.

top of the other and the salad could be shaken to combine.⁸² Unlike the previous recipe little attention was paid to keeping the potatoes intact. No reason is given for the shaking method, but as the title claimed this recipe is for the ordinary table it was probably a common practice among the lower classes.

The final recipe was one held in common by both Davidis and Heyl, *Kartoffelsalat mit Speck* or “Potato Salad with Bacon” in the English version.⁸³ “Fry a saucer full of bacon cut into cubes, remove the same, cook a finely chopped onion in the fat, the vinegar, salt and a little pepper- add a few spoons of sour cream to it, if there is no water, and cut the potatoes in warm broth, turn them over and serve the salad”⁸⁴ The recipe was shorter than the other two due to its simplicity and there were no breaks in the directions. This recipe was clearly common and any German reading the cookbook needed only a quick reminder how to make the salad. There were also no exact measurements given in the recipe which suggests that the dish was made to taste. A good cook would know exactly how much vinegar, salt, and pepper to add to strike the perfect balance. That Davidis included the recipe in a book intended to create a standard of German cuisine is testament to its commonality and popularity among Germans, a fact further supported by its appearance in Heyl’s work as well.

One striking difference between *The Davidis* and *Das ABC* was the lack of a mayonnaise-based salad. Heyl’s work, originally published for the market in 1888, would have been known to Luise Holle who was the editor of the 1897 version of *The Davidis*. And Heyl’s work was not the only one to include such a recipe. Just before the appearance of *The Davidis* in Milwaukee, the Chicago publishing house of Louis Lange Jr. & Company produced the *Deutsch-*

⁸² Davidis, *Praktisches Kochbuch*, 234.

⁸³ Davidis, *Praktisches Kochbuch*, 234.

⁸⁴ Davidis, *Praktisches Kochbuch*, 234.

Amerikanisches Kochbuch by Frau Erica. The book was entirely in German and contained three recipes for potato salad, and a variation on the first. The first recipe, simply titled *Kartoffel-Salat*, was the same as Heyl and Davidis' salad with bacon, the standard in German kitchens. The recipe noted, importantly, that "you only learn to prepare a good potato salad through practice" suggesting that only those experienced in German cuisine could make this version well.⁸⁵ The other two, however, were identified with other culinary traditions. There was a *Französischer Kartoffel-Salat* (French style potato salad) that was similar to all the American dishes previously discussed, cooked potatoes dressed with a mixture of oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper. While these salads were clearly popular with American cooks, the author attributes them to French cooking. Even more striking is the other recipe. Titled *Amerikanischer Kartoffel-Salat*, or "American potato salad," this dish called for mayonnaise as the dressing following in the same vein as Heyl's salad. The attribution of this dish to Americans stands out. None of the American cookbooks of the time contained a mayonnaise-based recipe and Heyl's work was only published in Germany. Perhaps Frau Erica simply misinterpreted the thicker, boiled dressing that Babette used. A more likely reason lies not in cookbooks, but in the ethnic eateries opening in the latter half of the nineteenth century. A mayonnaise-based salad was a staple in the delicatessens opening and becoming popular in American cities near the end of the century, and they will be discussed in more detail later. Whatever the reason, Frau Erica's attribution of a recipe previously only seen in a German cookbook to Americans signals a change in the culinary traditions of native-born Americans.

⁸⁵ Frau Erica, *Deutsch-Amerikanisches Kochbuch* (Chicago: Louis Lange Jr. & Co., 1896), CULHS, Janice Bluestein Longone Culinary Archive, University of Michigan Hatcher Library, Ann Arbor, MI., 302.

Following the arrival of *The Davidis* in the United States and its publication in both German and English the influence of German cooking could be seen in communities across the Midwest. Five years after the Ladies Aid Society published their *Ann Arbor Cookbook*, a second edition was produced. This edition, “revised and enlarged,” contained some major changes from the original.⁸⁶ New chapters were added before the recipes and offered tips and hints on cooking and serving and an entirely new section on dietetics was added at the end. Most importantly, however, was the addition of a chapter entitled “German Cookery.” Recipes from the first edition which were identified as German in origin were not moved into this chapter, instead forty-five new recipes were added. Thirty of the new recipes were for desserts like cookies and cakes. Of the remaining fifteen recipes six were soups, three were meat or seafood dishes, three were side dishes, and three were sauces. Only one of the recipes is for German Potato Salad.⁸⁷ The recipe was strange and called for a mixture of boiling vinegar and butter to be poured over sliced boiled potatoes and raw onion and then topped with sliced hard-boiled eggs. The recipe appears unlike any of the recipes in German cookbooks, but some similarities exist below the surface. The first is the inclusion of onion, common to all the German recipes, but in its raw state as seen in some of the American recipes. The second is the sauce. In most of the German recipes the sauce, a mixture of fat and vinegar, was cooked before being mixed with the potatoes, and in the two recipes with bacon the potatoes were added to the sauce and cooked a bit longer. The addition of the eggs, like the raw onion, was similar to some American recipes. This dish, then, can be seen as an attempt to hybridize the German and American traditions for the German American community of Ann Arbor.

⁸⁶ Ladies Aid Society of the Congregational Church. *Ann Arbor Cook Book Second Edition* (Ann Arbor, MI: George Wahr, 1904), preface.

⁸⁷ Ladies Aid Society, *Ann Arbor Cook Book Second Edition*, 435.

The publication data for many of these cookbooks has been lost. Many of the publishers were small, local businesses and their records were lost when they closed. Several of the cookbooks went through multiple printings and editions, so there was some desire for them. The *Praktisches Kochbuch für die Deutschen in Amerika*, published by Georg Brumder, had multiple printings and possibly sold over 12,000 copies across all printings.⁸⁸ The English translation published by Caspar and Zahn also went through another printing in 1904.⁸⁹ It is also unclear how often some of the books were used and by whom. Both editions of the *Ann Arbor Cookbook* have notations, presumably from the original owner, in them. Some recipes have an X next to them and the copy of the first edition held by the University of Michigan has some faded notes written in it. The notes are illegible, so it is difficult to know if they were once additional recipes or commentary on those included, but it suggests that the book was used regularly. The copy of Frau Erica's book, also held by the University of Michigan, also has a handwritten recipe in the back suggesting it was frequently referenced by its owner.

Looking at these cookbooks shows how native-born Americans and German immigrants defined their food and their culinary traditions. The way both groups referred to potato salad marked a clear difference between them in early cookbooks. For American authors the potato salad was a way to use leftovers and dressed like any other salad, while for German authors it was a more deliberate dish. As the German population of the United States grew during the nineteenth century, they and their food became more visible and attracted the attention of native-born Americans. This led to a growing curiosity about German cuisine that convinced publishers

⁸⁸ Suzanne Reller, "Henriette Davidis and Her Cookbooks in the German Americana Collection," LiBlog, University of Cincinnati Libraries, April 27, 2020, <https://libapps.libraries.uc.edu/liblog/2020/04/henriette-davidis-and-her-cookbooks-in-the-german-american-collection/>

⁸⁹ Reller, "Henriette Davidis and Her Cookbooks in the German Americana Collection"

to print translations of German cookbooks for the use of non-German speakers. As the communities mixed, so too did their recipes like in Ann Arbor, and new traditions began to emerge and blur the lines between the two groups. As Frau Erica highlights, these new traditions changed the language used as a lesser-known German recipe became more associated with Americans. Being able to cook “German” or “American” was not enough however, the two traditions needed more mixing.

CHAPTER III
AN ACQUIRED TASTE: PRECONCEPTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS OF GERMAN
FOOD IN MAGAZINES

Cookbooks were not the only form of print media that spread knowledge of cooking. The nineteenth century saw the establishment of many magazines, covering a wide range of topics. Some of these magazines were directed at women and homemakers and these often contained sections on cooking which provided not just recipes, but also more in-depth discussions of techniques or cuisines. As they grew, they also had a wider reach than cookbooks reaching hundreds of thousands of readers weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. And unlike cookbooks which were more static once published, magazines offered a flexibility where recipes could be adjusted, or errors corrected in the following issue. In this way, magazines were also sites of public assimilation open to all readers.

Magazines also offered a chance for readers to interact with each other. Publishers frequently solicited recipes and questions from their readers and printed them in the issues. Questions published were open to answer by all readers and a request for a recipe could be answered by several fellow subscribers in a sort of delayed conversation. Reader submissions also offered the opportunity to showcase a favorite dish or cuisine, and some took advantage of this to defend German cuisine from the assumptions of less knowledgeable readers. These openings helped make German food more accessible by connecting native-born American

readers with those more familiar who could explain it to a wider audience. And in the largest magazines of the time, which were published in English, the language barrier was removed. In the last few decades of the century German food and German recipes were frequently featured in some of the leading magazines.

Two of the largest women's magazines in the late nineteenth century were *Good Housekeeping* and the *Ladies Home Journal*. *Good Housekeeping* began publishing in May 1885 in Holyoke, Massachusetts as a biweekly magazine.¹ It published a mix of fiction literature, poetry, and tips on household management which included recipes and cooking techniques. In the "Editor's Portfolio" of the first issue editor and publisher Clark W. Bryan wrote "our homes are what we make them" and "good housekeeping makes good homes."² Bryan set out a mission statement for the magazine as he closed the article, "To produce and perpetuate perfection- or as near unto perfection as may be attained in the Household- is the purpose and mission of *Good Housekeeping*."³ The magazines first decades were slow, but by 1911 it had reached a circulation of 300,000 and exceeded one million by the 1920s.⁴ In comparison, the *Ladies Home Journal* rocketed to success. The *Journal* began publishing as a separate magazine, having previously been a supplement to the *Tribune and Farmer* of Philadelphia, in 1883.⁵ In just two years the magazine reached a circulation of 100,000 and by 1889 it had reached one million.⁶ The *Journal*, like *Good Housekeeping*, offered selections of literature and poetry, childcare, and household tips, but it also offered craft instructions and fashion templates for home sewing. A section on

¹ Kathleen L. Endres and Therese L. Lueck, eds. *Women's Periodicals in the United States: Consumer Magazines*. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 123.

² Clark W. Bryan, "For the Homes of the World," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 1, no. 1. (May 1885), p. 23

³ Bryan. "For the Homes of the World," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 1, no. 1. May 1885, 23. Capitalization retained from the original.

⁴ Endres and Lueck, eds. *Women's Periodicals*, 124.

⁵ Endres and Lueck, eds. *Women's Periodicals*, 173.

⁶ Endres and Lueck, eds. *Women's Periodicals*, 173.

food and cooking, “The Practical Housekeeper,” was run by editor Louisa Knapp, and Sarah Tyson Rorer, founder of the Philadelphia Cooking School, served as food editor for fifteen years.⁷ Both Knapp and Rorer answered questions submitted to the *Journal* by readers. Together these magazines, and their approaches to food, German and American, form the basis of this chapter’s analysis.

In their January 1886 issue, *Good Housekeeping* ran an article reprinted from *The Californian* about German cuisine. The short article condemned German food as a mixture of “as many incongruous things as possible” citing the staggering six ingredients found in herring salad.⁸ The article also criticized the cooking techniques common in the kitchens of *hausfrauen*. “What they call roast beef is a chunk of meat boiled a while and then baked” which the article described as looking “like a lump of india-rubber.”⁹ The vegetables found on German tables, according to the article, were always bathed in grease, and fruit was always served stewed or preserved. The article concluded “the German family table, with its mysteries and abominations, is the severest trial which the American has to undergo” if one dared to enter a German home. One of the first articles *Good Housekeeping* published on German food, the short piece from *The Californian* certainly made a statement.

Not everyone agreed with what *The Californian* had to say about German food however. In the May 1886 issue of *Good Housekeeping* one Miss Emilia Custer took on the task of correcting the assumptions about German cuisine. In an article titled “German Cookery:

⁷ Bonnie J. Slotnick. “Rorer, Sarah Tyson,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* vol.3, 2nd edition, ed. Andrew Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 156.

⁸ “German Cookery,” *The Californian* (Salinas, CA) n.d. republished in *Good Housekeeping* vol. 2, no. 5. (January 1886), 143.

⁹ “German Cookery,” *The Californian* (Salinas, CA) n.d. republished in *Good Housekeeping* vol. 2, no. 5. (January 1886), 143. Original spelling retained.

Defended by One Who Knows All About It” Miss Custer pushed back against *The Californian’s* interpretation. She wrote, “I should like to know what part of Germany the writer got all those queer things that are talked about” before taking each complaint apart.¹⁰ Of the vegetables, she noted that many are prepared with butter, but never were they found floating in grease, and roast beef was relatively new, a pot-roast being preferred in German kitchens. As for the herring salad that seemed to bewilder *The Californian* with its six ingredients, Miss Custer pointed out that it was not much different than the English dish Salmagundi.¹¹ After defending the specific dishes from the article, Miss Custer began her own criticism of the fare of average Americans in comparison to German peasants.¹²

Her comparison began gently, noting that Germans do not eat meat any more often than Americans, but German cooks prepared their food much better. The mainstay of German kitchens was soup. Custer noted that a wide variety were served throughout the week including bean, lentil, rice, or barley soups which were good and nourishing.¹³ She also noted the frequent use of eggs in German kitchens while American farmers “either allow them to rot in the barn... or they collect them, keep out a few for cake and send the rest to market.”¹⁴ Custer’s point was supported by the newly emerging science of nutrition, a field that was sweeping Germany, and the German diet, at the time.¹⁵ The German peasant was better fed by foods like beans, lentils,

¹⁰ Emilia Custer, “German Cookery: Defended by One Who Knows All About It,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1886), 13. I was unable to find any information on Emilia Custer beyond her contributions to *Good Housekeeping*. Her connections to Germany and German cooking are limited to what she writes in her series of articles for the magazine.

¹¹ Custer, “German Cookery,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1886), 13.

¹² She does not state whether she is comparing German peasants to rural Americans or urban, working-class Americans, but based on the examples she uses it seems likely that she is referring to rural Americans engaged in agriculture.

¹³ Custer, “German Cookery,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1886), 13.

¹⁴ Custer, “German Cookery,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1886), 13.

¹⁵ See Corinna Treitel, *Eating Nature in Modern Germany: Food, Agriculture and Environment, c.1870 to 2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017). German chemists pioneered new research into nutrition and ideas of a scientifically based diet that could make more efficient use of food resources and produce more physically fit

and eggs which supplemented the meat they consumed while American farmers, who threw away their eggs or sold them at market, suffered from a poorer diet.¹⁶ The last comparison Custer made was between the other staple of peasant and farmer tables, bread. Here she focused more on the criticism of American bread than the virtues of its German counterpart. She lamented the American utilization of “all the old crusts and pieces that were left over” that were “soaked in water and new bread made of them” something she calls “a sour, musty paste, that was hardly fit for the pigs.”¹⁷ German loaves, however coarse, were at least made from fresh grain. Custer’s purpose, she said, was not to be “as sweeping in her assertions as *The Californian*” but to show what German cookery was truly like through the inclusion of some typical recipes.¹⁸

What is curious about the recipes included in the first article is that they do not directly correspond to the things *The Californian* criticized. Custer opened by pushing back against the depiction of German meat, vegetables, and fruit, before discussing soups, eggs, and breads, but neither of the two recipes she gave in the article are for any of these dishes. Instead, she made the conscious choice to include two items that were both simple, and perhaps more familiar to her audience, while still being distinctly German. Her goal was to make German food accessible to her readers by highlighting similarities to the foods they already knew. The first recipe was for *Nudel*, or German style noodles. The recipe was simple and made use of eggs, prized by

workers. A lot of the research was sponsored by the government who took an interest in better utilizing the agricultural resources of the country and having a well-fed citizenry. Researchers in the United States took an interest in the work of their German counterparts in the late nineteenth century and tried to reorient the American diet along scientific lines as well. More will be said on their efforts in the next chapter.

¹⁶ Custer, “German Cookery,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1886), 13. Custer writes “I know from experience that the German peasant is a much better fed individual... There is not a day but what he has some good nourishing soup of peas, beans, or lentils... they are not afraid to use their eggs and prepare them in every conceivable way; while our farmers either allow them to rot in the barn... or they collect them, keep out a few for cake and send the rest to market.”

¹⁷ Custer, “German Cookery,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1886), 13.

¹⁸ Custer, “German Cookery,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1886), 13.

Germans and unused by Americans, flour, and milk. After the dough was made, rolled out, and cut, it could be cooked immediately or dried for a few days. Custer then suggested it be used just like macaroni and served in soups or as a side, even mixed with cheese for a comforting dish.¹⁹ She also offered a few suggestions perhaps less familiar to her audience, such as serving the *Nudel* browned with butter and topped with cracker crumbs or as a topping for stewed prunes, a favorite among children.²⁰ Custer presented the recipe in a way that would appeal to readers, as a substitute for something already known, but more often purchased from the store or ordered at a restaurant than made in the home. Her serving suggestions also catered to what readers were already familiar with and adding a few German twists.

The second recipe in the article was for *Schmierkäse*, a product similar to cream cheese.²¹ Another item that would have been familiar to some Americans, Custer's recipe again relied on simplicity to increase accessibility. Milk was set in a warm place until "it has turned and become so thick and firm that it can be cut."²² The curd was then strained and stirred, with a little cream added, until it was smooth. The serving suggestions were also simple, a little salt and pepper for a savory dish or cinnamon, sugar, and breadcrumbs for a sweet option. An additional option, in the form of a cheese cake, was also offered.

Custer's defense of German cuisine did not end there. Over the next year, three more articles appeared in which Custer presented more German recipes to readers. The third installment, published in September 1886, presented three dessert recipes and instructions on pickling vegetables. The first dish was "a favorite dessert of the North Germans... *Rothe Grütze*

¹⁹ Custer, "German Cookery," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1886), 13.

²⁰ Custer, "German Cookery," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1886), 13.

²¹ Literally "smear cheese"

²² Custer, "German Cookery," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1886), 13.

[sic].”²³ Literally translated as “red grits” Custer called it by its more familiar name of Fruit Flummery. She abandoned tradition in her instructions, substituting corn starch for farina, as the former could now be purchased in stores and gave the dish a smoother texture. The starch thickened a mixture of raspberry and current juice into a smooth jelly that was served cold on North German tables.²⁴ A simple spring and summer dessert, the recipe showed that German food did not lack sweetness as *The Californian* claimed. The dish was very accessible to the home cook and Custer hoped this approachability would make more people willing to try German food. The fruit flummery was followed by a recipe for Danish Cream and one for huckleberry preserve, which would fit *The Californian*’s assertion that all German fruits are stewed or preserved if Custer had not already shown another method of fruit preparation.

Then came the recipes for pickles, one for small cucumbers, one for green tomatoes, and one for string beans. “Next in order comes a recipe for Sauerkraut” Custer noted anticipating her readers reactions.²⁵ “I can see some of the readers of *Good Housekeeping* smile, and hear them say, ‘Oh, of course, I thought that was coming! Whoever can think of German Cookery without being reminded of sauerkraut?’” she wrote.²⁶ But she also knew that not everyone would be as happy to see “the nasty stuff.”²⁷ She defended the divisive side dish by comparing it to other fermented products, like beer and wine, which during their transformation give off an odor that

²³ Emilia Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no 10 (September 1886), 237.

²⁴ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no 10 (September 1886), 237.

²⁵ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no 10 (September 1886), 238.

²⁶ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no 10 (September 1886), 238.

²⁷ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no 10 (September 1886), 238.

“is not always an agreeable one.”²⁸ Custer knew that many of the readers of the magazine were familiar with the classic German cabbage dish, and she knew that many of them were opposed to it so she also tackled some myths about the cabbage preparation. If done correctly, the cabbage had soured, it was not putrid, and never had anyone made sauerkraut with their bare feet as Custer mentioned that some believed.²⁹ In addressing these common complaints she was removing the mystery, and prejudice, that surrounded the most recognizable of German foods. She then provided two recipes, one a simple mash of shredded cabbage and salt left to ferment for a few weeks, and the other “more of what some would call ‘an incongruous mixture.’”³⁰ The second instructions called for layering the shredded cabbage with sliced grapes and apples, peppercorns, and caraway seeds, along with a little salt.³¹ The inclusion of fruit added some flavor but more importantly it added more sugar to the fermentation process, the resulting sauerkraut being much more sour. Together, these recipes provided access to both the people who loved the dish and those who were less inclined toward it.

The fourth installment, from the February 1887 magazine, returned to the foods discussed in her first article. The article opened with a lengthy discussion of a German mealtime blessing and an old breakfast custom. The blessing, *Wünsche Gesegnete Mahlzeit*, which translates to “I hope that your meal may be blessed” is a simple phrase that Custer said began every meal.³² The old custom that she mentioned was supposedly common among wealthier families but showed

²⁸ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no 10 (September 1886), 238.

²⁹ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no 10 (September 1886), 238. Custer writes “The popular idea that it is put into casks and stamped down with the feet has about as much truth in it as the one that bakers knead dough with their feet.”

³⁰ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no 10 (September 1886), 238.

³¹ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no 10 (September 1886), 238.

³² Emilia Custer, “German Cookery: A Chapter on Soups,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 4, no. 7 (February 1887), 158.

that Germans considered eating to be a communal activity, something German immigrants continued in the beer gardens they established in the United States. As Custer described it, a large bowl of porridge or oatmeal was placed in the center of the table and the family, and their servants arranged around it with the master at the head and the servants in order of rank. The master began the meal, using a long-handled spoon he took a scoop and ate, followed by the rest in their order. The process repeated, going around and around, and when an individual had had their fill, they stepped out of the order.³³ She admitted that the practice is old-fashioned, but it sheds some light on the German mentality towards food.

Custer then presented recipes for the soups she had declared ever present on the German table. The variety of soups served in Germany, she said, outnumber those of any country, even France “the home of soup.”³⁴ “Beef soup, fish soup, vegetable and fruit soups, beer and wine soups, in fact everything eatable in the animal or vegetable kingdom is converted into soup by the German” and some Germans had soup for every meal.³⁵ The first recipe given here was for a basic beef soup, then three dumpling recipes follow. The first dumplings were listed along with their German name, Sponge Dumplings or *Schwamm Klosse*. A simple loose batter was made and dropped into the prepared beef soup, when cooked “these dumplings will be as porous and light as a sponge.”³⁶ Two other dumplings were given, one utilizing the marrow from the bones used for the beef soup and the other being small meatballs. The article ended with two traditional German soups, a lentil soup and two ways to prepare potato soup. The lentil soup, a staple of the lentil growing regions of southern Germany, was a simple recipe. The lentils, along with onion,

³³ Custer, “German Cookery: A Chapter on Soups,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 4, no. 7 (February 1887), 158.

³⁴ Custer, “German Cookery: A Chapter on Soups,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 4, no. 7 (February 1887), 158.

³⁵ Custer, “German Cookery: A Chapter on Soups,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 4, no. 7 (February 1887), 158.

³⁶ Custer, “German Cookery: A Chapter on Soups,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 4, no. 7 (February 1887), 158.

carrot, celery, and parsley were boiled until soft. But Custer includes some valuable tips for her American readers who may not be as familiar with the lentil, “always set them on in *cold water*... never boil them in an earthen vessel, and never salt them until they are done” as those things would make them take longer to cook.³⁷ The soup could be supplemented with a meaty flavor in a few ways, according to Custer. First, the cook could make a large meatball or meatloaf (the recipe calls it a meat pudding) and set this on top of the lentils as they finished cooking, allowing the drippings to flavor the soup. Second, beef suet could be rendered and added along with a teaspoonful of meat extract, a favorite ingredient of many German cooks.³⁸ The two preparations of potato soup were short and simple. The first consisted of diced potatoes boiled in broth along with some other vegetables. The second required a bit more work as the potatoes were boiled with an onion until soft and then passed through a colander. Milk was then added, along with some meat extract, to make the soup thin enough for service.

Turning to the second installment of Custer’s defense, the vegetables, which allegedly floated in lakes of grease, get their chance to shine. Appearing in the magazine from August 1886, the article focused on salads for the tables of rural and urban cooks alike. After a brief introduction the recipes opened with a simple bean salad, a cucumber salad and sauce, and an asparagus salad. The fifth recipe, however, was one that was for an ingredient “little used in this country except among the Germans,” kohlrabi.³⁹ Often called German turnip, kohlrabi is a type of cabbage with a bulbous stem, that resembles a turnip, and large leaves, similar to collard greens. Both parts are edible, and Custer’s recipe made use of this to prepare a complete salad.

³⁷ Custer. “German Cookery: A Chapter on Soups,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 4, no. 7 (February 1887), 158.

³⁸ Custer. “German Cookery: A Chapter on Soups,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 4, no. 7 (February 1887), 158.

³⁹ Emilia Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 7 (August 1886), 168.

The leaves were first removed and set aside while the bulb was prepared. “Peel the kohlrabi very thin on top where it is tender, and thicker below where it is sometimes tough and stringy” she wrote, then it was quartered and boiled in salted water, along with the leaves, for an hour.⁴⁰ The salad was then dressed with a sauce of drawn butter, milk, and some of the cooking water, and sprinkled with a little nutmeg “if agreeable to taste.”⁴¹

With this recipe Custer introduced a more foreign German dish to her American audience than noodles or pickled vegetables. As she pointed out, kohlrabi was something most readers did not use and were perhaps completely unfamiliar with. While she did not provide the background for the vegetable that she provided for some dishes in later articles, she did compare it to something familiar. “It is oftenest prepared like cauliflower and resembles it in taste” she told readers and included recipes for cauliflower further down in the article. Her approach to most of the salads was subtle, she presented familiar ingredients in a German style, or she presented unfamiliar ingredients with a familiar analogue. But there was one dish she was less subtle about, potato salad. In some ways her recipe seemed to be closed off, she was strict about the ingredients and the technique, but she also promoted closer interaction between readers and their local German community through her strictness.

“This recipe differs considerably from any other I have seen, and there is considerable difference in taste” Custer declared of her potato salad recipe.⁴² The longest set of instructions in the article show just how seriously she took the dish. Unlike the other salads which were a bit

⁴⁰ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 7 (August 1886), 168.

⁴¹ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 7 (August 1886), 168.

⁴² Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 7 (August 1886), 168.

more lenient in their directions, this needed to be “made carefully and conscientiously” to avoid being a “sour mush.”⁴³ Success laid in the careful selection of potatoes and adherence to the directions. First, Custer addressed which potatoes were appropriate for the recipe. They needed to be small and not mealy, extra emphasis is put on this part. New potatoes were an excellent option, but when they were unavailable the cook needed to go to a German delicatessen to purchase imported spuds if they wished to make a “respectable potato salad.”⁴⁴ From the beginning Custer was noting a difference between German potato salads and those found most commonly in American homes. American recipes, for Custer, did not use the proper potatoes, and the proper potato was crucial to making the best salad. To secure the finest ingredients readers who wished to make the recipe properly would need to explore and patronize their local German grocer.

Next came her precise directions which, as cautioned, needed to be followed conscientiously to avoid creating an unappetizing pile of sour, mushy potatoes upon the plate. The potatoes were washed well, then boiled, drained, and allowed to cool just until they could be handled and peeled. They were then set aside while the dressing was made. Custer began with *Speck*, a German cured and smoked pork product similar to bacon, which was diced and put in a pan to render. The meat could easily be procured from the local German grocer when picking up the proper potatoes. Readers were directed to cook the *Speck* “over a slow fire; if it gets too hot suddenly it will have a scorched taste.”⁴⁵ While the meat rendered, an onion would be diced fine

⁴³ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 7 (August 1886), 168.

⁴⁴ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 7 (August 1886), 168.

⁴⁵ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 7 (August 1886), 168.

and set aside in a large bowl along with a bit of salt. When the fat had been rendered, a bit of olive oil was added to the pan before a “goblet half full of vinegar” topped off with hot water was added. Custer directs that this be done over the sink to prevent the grease from making a mess of the kitchen.⁴⁶ This was then added to the bowl with the onions and the potatoes were sliced “so thin that you can almost see through them” directly into the bowl.⁴⁷ The salad was to be stirred frequently during this step, if one waited until all the potatoes were in the bowl it would be too difficult to stir without breaking the slices. If prepared correctly the salad “should have a glossy look without being either greasy or lumpy...and if it looks all right it is pretty sure to taste all right.”⁴⁸ The dish was to be served warm for best results.

Custer’s defense of German cuisine stood out in the early issues of *Good Housekeeping*. She was one of the first to discuss, in detail, the culinary habits of Germans and German Americans. Her format was similar to that of other contributors, but her tone was more passionate. It is clear that she wanted readers to explore German cuisine as it was meant to be, even if it might be a little off putting at first glance. Her articles presented just a brief snapshot of the foods offered at the tables of *Hausfrauen* so they highlighted the most important and easiest dishes for her readers. Her choice of recipes also eased readers in, starting with more familiar ingredients to show the similarities between German and American cuisine, before getting into the more unfamiliar dishes. While cookbooks could present the entirety of a nation’s culinary offerings, articles published in magazines and journals had to be more selective. Despite the

⁴⁶ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 7 (August 1886), 168.

⁴⁷ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 7 (August 1886), 168.

⁴⁸ Custer, “German Cookery: With Some More German Recipes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 7 (August 1886), 168.

necessary selectivity, Custer still managed to fit a good number of recipes into her four articles. It is no small matter then that she devoted much of her attention to the potato salad. The longest and most detailed recipe in her presentation, with special care taken in selecting the best ingredients from the best source and specific instructions for preparation, it is clear that the salad holds a special place in German culinary canon. Custer, of course, was not the only one to publish potato salad recipes or comments on German food in the magazine during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Her work, and the passion with which she approached the subject, is not matched by other authors at the time.

The same year that Custer's piece on vegetables appeared in the pages of *Good Housekeeping* an article by Eliza R. Parker titled "Some Seasonable Dishes: Vegetable Salads" was published.⁴⁹ Parker informed readers that "the markets at this season of the year afford such an unlimited variety of vegetables" a sentiment echoed by Custer.⁵⁰ Vegetable salads, she wrote, "are among the most agreeable and wholesome dishes that can be prepared for a light summer repast."⁵¹ Vegetable salads were inexpensive and easy to prepare, but Parker also cautioned readers to take care if perfection was the aim. She then selected the best vegetables for salads, a lengthy list covering several different greens and roots, before giving recipes for each. Interestingly, Parker gave three recipes called potato salads, two of which depart greatly from any seen in German or American cookbooks. The first was a simple preparation of diced cooked potatoes with a dressing of vinegar, oil, mustard, salt, and ground hard boiled eggs.⁵² This

⁴⁹ Eliza R. Parker, "Some Seasonable Dishes: Vegetable Salads," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 6 (July 1886), 146.

⁵⁰ Parker, "Some Seasonable Dishes," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 6 (July 1886), 146.

⁵¹ Parker, "Some Seasonable Dishes," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 6 (July 1886), 146.

⁵² Parker, "Some Seasonable Dishes," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 6 (July 1886), 146. Hard boiled eggs were common in dressing recipes at the time and earlier in the article Parker instructs cooks to powder, or grind, them in a mortar and pestle or using the back of a silver spoon. To this the vinegar, oil, and other seasonings are added to create a thicker dressing.

version was very much in the style of other American authors. A simple vinaigrette thickened by cooked egg coated the potatoes.

The next recipe, however, was quite different as it called for mashed potatoes. A dressing was made from “two ounces of fresh butter, one teacup of cream, two tablespoonfuls each of mustard and sugar... salt and pepper... the yolks of two hard boiled eggs” ground to a powder with “vinegar to moisten” and the finely diced egg whites.⁵³ The dressing was then layered in an alternating pattern with the mashed potatoes in a serving bowl beginning with potatoes and ending with dressing. The final recipe was attributed to Hungarian cuisine. With some similarities to German style salads, this dish perhaps better fit *The Californian*’s description of a mixture of many incongruous things. First the similarities, small potatoes were boiled, then peeled and sliced thin while still warm. Diced onion was added along with a healthy amount of vinegar. Then the ingredients got a bit wild. A pickled beet, sliced cucumber, “a Dutch herring,” sardines, and minced boiled ham round out the dish with pickled walnuts for garnish.⁵⁴ With this lengthy list Parker’s Hungarian recipe seems closer to what *The Californian* referenced that Custer’s.

Around the same time Custer’s third defense of German cuisine was published, an anonymous article on “Eating in Berlin” engaged readers of *Good Housekeeping*.⁵⁵ The article seems to be one of a kind, another article titled “Eating in Syria” appeared the same year but the formats of the two articles are quite different.⁵⁶ Much like the article from *The Californian* this

⁵³ Parker, “Some Seasonable Dishes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 6 (July 1886), 146.

⁵⁴ Parker, “Some Seasonable Dishes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 6 (July 1886), 146. The recipe provides no direction on whether the beet should be sliced, diced, or otherwise prepared and specifies exactly four sardines should be used along with a “spoonful” of the minced boiled ham.

⁵⁵ “Eating in Berlin,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 9 (September 1886), 220. The article may be a reprint from the *New York Sun* since it mentions a letter written to that publication, but no attribution is made.

⁵⁶ The article “Eating in Syria” is very brief and only discusses two meals that can be had in the country. The article on Berlin is more detailed and includes prices and restaurant recommendations.

piece on German food contained no recipes. Instead, it served as a short guide to the food available in the German capital. The author opened with the statement “the Berliner loves soup” before listing three options available to diners. Custer echoed this statement in her treatise on soups a few months later. The article continued “there are a number of German national dishes, the merits of which cannot be gainsaid.”⁵⁷ While it did not list any entrees as it did with the soups, it did describe a goose course that is “a standard dish at most restaurants” as well as a few preparations of partridge and venison.⁵⁸ The piece then quickly transitioned to talk about the German penchant for beer. Almost as an aside, the author mentioned “every known vegetable when cooked plain, is eaten cold as a salad.”⁵⁹ The article ended with a brief discussion of wine and the prices at certain restaurants in Berlin.

Less than a year separated the reprint of *The Californian's* attack on German cuisine and the anonymously authored presentation of dining in Berlin. The approach to this foreign food was quite different in the latter as well. While not in praise of the offerings of German kitchens like Custer, it was also not disparaging of the dining options. The greasy vegetables were gone, replaced by cold salads of all varieties. While the roast goose described had a complicated stuffing it was not seen as a mish-mash of ingredients, but a compliment to the meat with which it was served. While not fully in support, the author was clearly appreciative of the offerings and there was an openness to their exploration of the fare. German food had its merits and when one took the time to sit down and try it a pleasant experience could be had.

Discussion of German cuisine fell out of the pages for a few years following these articles and other recipes and cooking information filled the pages, but in 1896 a new analysis

⁵⁷ “Eating in Berlin,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 9 (September 1886), 220.

⁵⁸ “Eating in Berlin,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 9 (September 1886), 220.

⁵⁹ “Eating in Berlin,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 3, no. 9 (September 1886), 220.

graced the pages of *Good Housekeeping* titled “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating.” The author, known only by the initials C. R. M., described their experience living and eating in Germany. The lower class of Germans, according to the article, ate mainly bread and vegetables and consumed only beer.⁶⁰ When Germans did eat meat, it was in the form of sausages of all kinds, shapes, and sizes. “Sausages form a large element of food in all classes of German society. Sausage shops abound, the windows filled with sausages of all kinds, defying description. Festoons of red sausages, geometrical piles of black and white sausages; sausages from the size of one’s little finger to sausages as large around as a child’s body.”⁶¹ The sausages were made of meats of all kinds, *leberwurst* made from calf or pork liver being one of the most popular, and the author said they were more similar to Bologna sausage than the kinds readers may have been more familiar with.⁶²

These shops were busy all day long with people buying varying numbers and amounts of the meats. At five o’clock the ranks of shoppers swelled. The author noted that this was the time when hot sausages were sold. Freshly boiled links were served from the clean marble counter by a young woman in a white cap and apron.⁶³ People of all walks of life flocked to the shop for the hot meal, some eating there, others taking the sausages to go. The author described one man, a

⁶⁰ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115. According to Corinna Treitel meat consumption among the working class in Germany had almost tripled during the course of the nineteenth century and meat was a common part of the German diet. C. R. M. does not indicate what part of the country they were in, but it seems improbable that the people consumed only vegetables, bread, and beer and only rarely had sausages.

⁶¹ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115.

⁶² C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115.

⁶³ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115.

cab driver, enjoying his meal there in the shop “as placidly as in the bosom of his family.”⁶⁴ The daily ritual of grabbing a quick meal away from home was certainly not foreign to the Germans.

Sausages were so popular they were even served at parties; in place of the cake and ice cream an American readership would be familiar with, although it is unclear if the author meant that sausages were served as a dessert or that they were as abundant as the dessert options at American parties.⁶⁵ Other popular offerings included thinly sliced ham, smoked meats, cheese, black bread, and smoked or pickled fish. These offerings, aside from being strange choices from the American standpoint, also seemed to be slightly offensive to the author. Of being served some pickled sardines they wrote “they were evidently pickled raw. The taste still lingers in my memory.”⁶⁶ Germans however, delighted in these appetizers at gatherings along with caviar and anchovy paste and the favorite, herring salad. A simple concoction of smoked herring, potatoes, and apple diced and mixed with a creamy sauce, the dish was everywhere according to the author. But while it could be found across Germany it was not for the American palate “as a rule.”⁶⁷ It seems many of the salad offerings of Germany were unappealing to the author who noted that vinegar was more prominent in dressings than oil and complained that cucumber was grated, not sliced, in salads and celery root was preferred over the stalks. This shows an important distinction between American preferences and those of the Germans. The sour, vinegary salad dressings did not fit the tastes of American diners, even those dining in Germany

⁶⁴ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115.

⁶⁵ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115.

⁶⁶ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115.

⁶⁷ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115.

itself. This posed another obstacle to the assimilation of German cuisine, and the potato salad, which used the sourness of vinegar frequently.

The author also returns to *The Californian's* view and described vegetables that “are universally sent to the table swimming in butter” and seemed to be opposed to most preparations of German vegetables which they noted were “often cooked in oil and vinegar.”⁶⁸ That C. R. M. would return to this position shows that American taste had still not grown to fully embrace German cuisine. But some avenues were open. C. R. M. noted that onions and cauliflower were usually good, and carrots and cabbage were abundant. Unfortunately, many vegetables were unavailable in the winter and canned versions cost far more than in America. *Sauerkraut*, a dish Custer took care to mention was not prepared with the feet, was noted as an acquired taste, but once gained it was “not bad.”⁶⁹ If a taste for sour cabbage could be gained, perhaps a taste for other vinegared German dishes could also be acquired.

Another opening for Americans to explore German cuisine, and one C. R. M. was more in favor of, were the soups of German homes. Whenever meat was purchased the trimmings and other scraps were kept and put into a pot. “Absolutely nothing is wasted” and bits of vegetable and even fruit were thrown in the pot.⁷⁰ These soups were often served with noodles, “a great variety” of which existed, either homemade or purchased.⁷¹ Everything leftover seemed to end

⁶⁸ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115.

⁶⁹ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115.

⁷⁰ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115.

⁷¹ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115.

up in the pot according to the author, who commented on having had a currant and prune soup and seeing or hearing about a soup of apples and chocolate.⁷²

But the slight praise for German soup making was quickly replaced by criticism of bread and desserts. Here the author quoted Mark Twain in calling German bread “cold and unsympathetic,” but noted that it was still good.⁷³ Kitchens in Germany did not serve their bread hot, instead it was allowed to cool completely before consumption so often that it prompted the author to declare that the people of Germany “have a great horror of hot bread.”⁷⁴ The rolls, despite their temperature, were light and crusty, topped with salt or seeds. The black bread, typically made with rye flour, had a distinct taste that the author assures readers they could learn to like.⁷⁵ Again we see language of acquiring a taste for German food. The author suggested that the tastes of native-born Americans could be changed if they opened themselves to new foods and took the time to try them, but they did not need to go to Germany to do it. As we will see in chapter four, German restaurants and other establishments serving food were becoming a common sight in many cities across the United States in the late nineteenth century.

While contributors described the various merits or perceived demerits of German food in the pages of *Good Housekeeping*, the potato itself was quite common. In the issue from February 1889, the editors announced a competition for papers on five special topics: eggs, chickens, fish, potatoes, and beans.⁷⁶ The papers “on marketing, cooking, serving and eating” the five chosen

⁷² C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115. Davidis’ cookbook, by this time the standard on German cooking, includes recipes for soups like these.

⁷³ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115.

⁷⁴ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 115-116.

⁷⁵ C. R. M., “German Food, and German Cooking and Eating,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 23, no. 3 (September 1896), 116.

⁷⁶ “\$150 in Cash Prizes: For Papers on Marketing, Cooking, Serving and Eating Eggs, Chickens, Fish, Potatoes and Beans,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 8, no. 8 (February 1889), 191.

ingredients would be examined and the top two on each subject awarded prizes, \$20 for first place and \$10 for second. “These papers will be expected to give suggestions, experiences and reliable information, by way of remark and recipe” the editors wrote.⁷⁷ Of potatoes specifically the papers needed to be “giving an intelligent survey of the potato field as represented in the Market, the Kitchen, the Dining-Room and the Pockets of those who buy for those who eat.”⁷⁸

The first-place paper on potatoes, written by Mrs. S. O. Allen, appeared on 22 June 1889. Mrs. Allen opened her rather lengthy paper with a history of the potato. “Its origin is uncertain” she wrote, but it arrived in Europe from the Spanish after their encounter with the Americas.⁷⁹ From Spain, or Spanish merchants sailing directly to other ports, the plant spread across Europe. She then took a short detour into the science of potatoes and their starch and mineral content before entering a discussion on marketing and selecting the tubers. “More than three hundred varieties of the potato are now grown, and new ones are continually appearing” in the New York market she wrote.⁸⁰ All these varieties differed greatly, but the main thing readers were told to look for was a potato that was mealy when cooked. The only way to know which variety was best, Mrs. Allen said, was to cook them and try them for oneself.⁸¹ After selecting a variety she advised the cook to purchase in bulk and store them in a cellar so that a steady supply could be ensured.⁸²

Having procured a steady supply, Mrs. Allen turned her attention to cooking. “The methods of cooking potatoes vary in different countries. The Irish boil them in their jackets, and

⁷⁷ “\$150 in Cash Prizes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 8, no. 8 (February 1889), 191.

⁷⁸ “\$150 in Cash Prizes,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 8, no. 8 (February 1889), 191.

⁷⁹ S. O. Allen, “First Prize Paper: Subject No. 4- A Potato Periscope,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 4 (June 1889), 73.

⁸⁰ Allen, “First Prize Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 4 (June 1889), 73.

⁸¹ Allen, “First Prize Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 4 (June 1889), 74.

⁸² Allen, “First Prize Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 4 (June 1889), 74.

only so much as to leave the center a little hard, or ‘with a bone in it,’ as the saying is. The French, while using them extensively, do not depend so largely upon them, and are more elaborate in their forms of cooking them. The Germans chiefly regard them as a salad acquisition.”⁸³ In America, however, potatoes were either boiled or baked, with some variations on these two methods.⁸⁴

Mrs. Allen made a clear differentiation in the practices of these ethnic groups. The Irish preferred a simple preparation since they consumed potatoes often, while the French were more extravagant when they consumed them. Germans were again noted for their close association to the potato salad, and Americans fell in between the simple preparation of the Irish and the complicated methods of the French. The recipes she included, however, paint a different picture. Taking the recipes as a snapshot of the kinds of dishes popular among American cooks it seems there was a preference for the fancier French preparations.

Mrs. Allen’s recipe section opened with simple instructions for boiling potatoes in either cold water or already boiling water, to the preference of the cook. Forty-seven unique recipes followed, covering the range of possibilities for serving the versatile spud. The first four were simple and probably the most familiar to modern readers, mashed, baked, “hashed and browned,” and escaloped.⁸⁵ Salt, pepper, butter, and cream were the only additions in these recipes. The recipes then began to get more complicated, and ornate, in their preparation.

Starting with *potatoes a la neige*, or potato snow, the French influence began to show through. This was followed by four recipes for molded dishes, croquettes, puffs, scallops, and *a*

⁸³ Allen, “First Prize Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 4 (June 1889), 74.

⁸⁴ Allen, “First Prize Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 4 (June 1889), 74.

⁸⁵ Allen, “First Prize Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 4 (June 1889), 74. Mrs. Allen’s instructions for hashed and browned potatoes are quite different from the modern equivalent. Her recipe calls for hashing cold, boiled potatoes and reheating them in a gravy before frying on just one side and serving.

la duchess. The croquettes and duchess were formed by hand, being rolled into balls and flattened into a biscuit respectively. The puffs and scallops made use of a mold, a baking dish to help guide the puffs up like a soufflé while scallop shell shaped molds gave the other dish its namesake appearance. While perhaps not much more difficult than the first four dishes, these required some extra equipment to prepare in the home kitchen and were cooked a second time, either by frying or baking.

The recipes continued to utilize multiple cooking methods and molds as the article continued. French names littered the list of dishes as well. A group of five dishes, *potatoes a la Macon, a la Ruban, a la Lyonnaise, a la Parisienne*, and *a la Maitre d'Hotel*, appears and *potatoes a la Trianon, a la sauce Blanche, sautees au Beurre, a la Pueckler, a la pomme*, and *a la Bechamel* all carried the French influence from the fashionable hotel kitchens into the home. But while the French dishes may have been the most fashionable, they were perhaps not the most practical. Other, simpler dishes continued to populate the pages of the article and reflect the influence of other nations. A recipe for Texas baked potatoes and one for Saratoga potatoes, along with a recipe said to be common in New York markets, show the homegrown achievements in spud cookery. Other foreign influence also appeared, although to a much smaller extent, through the inclusion of Irish colcannon and potato salad.

In line with her earlier comment that Germans preferred their potatoes in a salad, Mrs. Allen's recipe showed its German roots. Like other contributors to *Good Housekeeping* Allen recommended and defined the perfect starting potato. "A small potato, imported from Germany, the size of Spanish chestnuts, found at Delicatessen shops, is excellent for this purpose."⁸⁶ Like Custer, Allen directed readers to the delicatessens being opened by German immigrants in the

⁸⁶ Allen, "First Prize Paper," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 4 (June 1889), 75.

later decades of the nineteenth century for the best possible ingredients. These small, German potatoes, Allen directed, should be hot, much like in the other German recipes that appeared in the magazine. To the hot potatoes, onion, parsley, salt, and pepper were added. Allen then offered two serving suggestions, one more in line with other American versions and one she probably picked up at the delicatessen, where mayonnaise-based salads were more common, along with her ingredients. Both were surrounded by a wreath of lettuce leaves, but the American version was dressed with a French dressing while the other “a richer salad” used mayonnaise for its dressing.⁸⁷ By the closing decades of the nineteenth century the mayonnaise-based salad was gaining some popularity, but it was far from the dominant form of the dish in American kitchens as the second-place paper made clear.

Published in the following number of *Good Housekeeping* the second prize winning essay on potatoes was authored by a Marion Thorne. Thorne’s paper spent less time on the history, marketing, and selection of the tuber, mentioning that the plant is grown widely in “the temperate zones.”⁸⁸ Around the time of the Revolution, Thorne wrote, only two varieties of potato were known in Great Britain, but contemporary growers in New York produced over 200 million bushels from three hundred varieties.⁸⁹ Some of the most popular varieties in the area around Washington D.C. included the Early Rose, Empire State, Burbank, Peerless, and Beauty of Hebron, with the Burbank being the top choice and the Peerless the most readily available.⁹⁰ While Allen suggested the only way to truly know a potato’s quality was to cook it, Thorne provided another method. “In buying potatoes for table use those kinds should be chosen which

⁸⁷ Allen, “First Prize Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 4 (June 1889), 76.

⁸⁸ Marion Thorne, “Second Prize Paper: Subject No. 4- A Potato Periscope,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 97.

⁸⁹ Thorne, “Second Place Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 97.

⁹⁰ Thorne, “Second Place Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 97.

when cut are of a light cream color and froth a little when the cut surfaces are rubbed together.”⁹¹
Having selected the best specimens, Thorne moved on to a lengthy list of recipes.

In contrast to the heavy French influence of Allen’s essay, Thorne’s list included more homely dishes and chose variation over variety. Three methods for boiling the spuds opened the recipes. Some “varieties require to be differently cooked,” some started in cold water, while others were put into already boiling pots.⁹² Steamed potatoes were another good option and were “more nutritious” than boiled.⁹³ Two variations on mashed potatoes followed, along with instructions for *Potatoes a la Neige*, or potato snow. Six options for browning potatoes came next, four utilizing mashed potatoes mounded or hand shaped and baked, one sliced and roasted in the oven, and one sliced and griddled. Three variations on stuffed potatoes followed, then one for crisped, one for breakfast, four variations of fried, a recipe for Saratoga chips, and one for potato roses or ribbons. Stewed potatoes received five variations followed by six variations on scalloped potatoes. Several other dishes followed, including *potatoes a la Parisienne* and *Lyonnaise*, before five variations on potato salad appeared.

The first three of Thorne’s potato salads fall in line with the traditional American recipes. “Boil the potatoes, without paring, till tender, then peel and slice them. As soon as they are cold throw over them a teaspoonful of very finely chopped onions or olives with enough French dressing to moisten well.”⁹⁴ Like other American recipes, Thorne’s first dish was simply potatoes and onions dressed like any green salad. The second variation was similar to the first

⁹¹ Thorne, “Second Place Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 97.

⁹² Thorne, “Second Place Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 97.

⁹³ Thorne, “Second Place Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 97.

⁹⁴ Thorne, “Second Place Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 99. French dressing here refers to the mixture of oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper, and possibly mustard, not the tangy red sauce available at modern supermarkets.

except the diced onion is replaced by “small, new onions” and the potatoes are diced, not sliced.⁹⁵ The third dish was a bit more different. First, the onion was removed from the dish, instead finely chopped parsley was added. Second, the serving bowl was rubbed with garlic before the potatoes were tossed together with French dressing in it.⁹⁶ All three of these variations would have been familiar to an American cook as we have seen previously in cookbooks and other articles.

The fourth variation would have been more familiar to German cooks. “Boil and cut potatoes as in 1. Add to them cold meat finely chopped, or soup bouilli, with one-half of a teaspoonful each of salt and pepper, two teaspoonfuls of vinegar, three or four teaspoonfuls of oil, one teaspoonful of chopped parsley, pickled olives or anchovies”⁹⁷ Like many of the German recipes discussed previously this dish also called for the addition of meat, or at least bouillon, along with the vinegar and oil. The addition of anchovies was also a nod to the popularity of herring and potato salads among Germans. While Thorne does not attribute this salad to any ethnic tradition, it is distinct from the other variations around it as the only one to call for meat or fish additions as seen in German traditions.

The final variation was another familiar one. “Cut cold potato in small slices. Put into a dish two eggs, seven tablespoonfuls of vinegar, one tablespoonful of butter and half a teaspoonful of mustard. Put the dish into boiling water and stir until the dressing is as thick as good cream. Add salt and pepper and pour all over the potatoes.”⁹⁸ This cooked salad dressing was also popular in American cookbooks of the nineteenth century. The creamy dressing would

⁹⁵ Thorne, “Second Place Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 99.

⁹⁶ Thorne, “Second Place Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 99.

⁹⁷ Thorne, “Second Place Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 99.

⁹⁸ Thorne, “Second Place Paper,” *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 99.

have made for a warm salad, unlike those with a French dressing which would be served cold. But this creamy salad led straight into Thorne's next recipe.

Set aside from the salad recipes, but similar in preparation, was a dish titled "Potato Mayonnaise."⁹⁹ The instructions began similarly to the salads. "Boil and slice potatoes as for salad 1."¹⁰⁰ But in place of the French dressing or boiled dressing, this recipe directed readers to "make a mayonnaise sauce and mix with it a small onion very finely chopped."¹⁰¹ This sauce was then poured over the potatoes and parsley was added. "Chopped pickles, celery or tarragon may be added" the recipe concluded.¹⁰²

It is unclear why Thorne set this recipe apart from the other salads, but the inclusion of a mayonnaise-based potato salad recipe in both prize-winning essays suggests that it was becoming more popular with American audiences. But it had not yet become the standard in American kitchens. Allen offered it as a serving option alongside the popular French dressing, and Thorne considered it a separate dish. Still, while not explicitly stated, the German influence on these two writers peers through.

Good Housekeeping was not the only magazine with a cooking section reaching a wide audience in the later part of the century. The *Ladies' Home Journal*, another popular magazine, also published recipes for its readers in the late nineteenth century. In early volumes of the *Journal* most of the recipes appeared in a regular section titled "The Practical Housekeeper." The section varied in its format during the 1880s, sometimes consisting of requests and recipes from readers and sometimes featuring full articles on a single topic. The section was replaced in the

⁹⁹ Thorne, "Second Place Paper," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 99.

¹⁰⁰ Thorne, "Second Place Paper," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 99.

¹⁰¹ Thorne, "Second Place Paper," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 99.

¹⁰² Thorne, "Second Place Paper," *Good Housekeeping* vol. 9, no. 5 (July 1889), 99.

1890s by two new sections “Mrs. Rorer’s Cooking Lessons,” which focused on regular articles about cooking techniques or types of food, and a section where readers could submit questions for Mrs. Rorer to answer about food or home management.¹⁰³ While the *Journal* focused more on literature, fashion, and gossip for its middle and upper-class readers, the recipes included in these sections show the trends in American cooking at the end of the nineteenth century.

The potato salad was an early and frequent feature of the *Journal*’s housekeeping section. An unattributed recipe appeared in the October 1885 issue under the heading “Salads.” The recipe was fairly simple but required a bit of time as it used a homemade mayonnaise dressing. “Take from 6 to 8 medium-size potatoes (cold boiled) cut in size of dice. Two silver skinned onions chopped fine. Mix and season with salt and pepper, (parsley chopped fine can be added to the above if desired).”¹⁰⁴ Like many other recipes the base was a simple mixture of potatoes and onions lightly seasoned. The directions for the dressing followed. “Take 1 tablespoonful of dry mustard, moisten with a teaspoonful of hot water, put the yolks of two eggs in the same dish, beat together with an egg-beater until well mixed, then put in sweet oil drop by drop until it thickens like custard, add 1 ½ teaspoons of vinegar, put it over your potatoes and onions, mix all together, garnish the top with small lettuce leaves, celery tops or parsley.”¹⁰⁵ The other salads in the section, two for cabbage and one for chicken, also included a similar mayonnaise like

¹⁰³ Sarah Tyson Rorer was something of a cooking superstar in the nineteenth century. Born in Richboro, Pennsylvania in 1849 she began attending the New Century Club in Philadelphia in 1879 to study cooking. She became interested in the nutrition research being published at the time and attended lectures on chemistry and hygiene. In 1883 she opened the Philadelphia Cooking School which operated for 20 years. She authored several cookbooks and frequently contributed to magazines. She also hosted demonstrations at the World’s Columbian Exposition. Rorer was a pioneer in the field of domestic science. Bonnie J. Slotnick. “Rorer, Sarah Tyson,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America* vol.3, 2nd edition, ed. Andrew Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 155-156.

¹⁰⁴ “Salads,” *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 2, no. 11 (October 1885), 5.

¹⁰⁵ “Salads,” *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 2, no. 11 (October 1885), 5.

dressing. The rising popularity of mayonnaise dressing for certain salads seemed clear, but other dressings still appeared regularly.

The May 1886 edition of the *Journal* contained another recipe for potato salad that returned to the cooked salad dressing and layered style of earlier dishes. Boiled and cooled potatoes were sliced thin into a glass dish. Then “half of a white onion...cut into the smallest possible pieces, and strewn between the sliced potato” was added to the dish.¹⁰⁶ This sat while the dressing “is made of two eggs, the yolks in a bowl with a small tablespoonful of ground mustard, one of white sugar, teaspoonful of salt, one-quarter teaspoonful of black pepper. Put a large cup of vinegar in a saucepan, with butter size of an egg, when melted stir slowly into the egg yolks, and when all is in pour over the sliced potatoes.”¹⁰⁷ The presentation was then completed by whipping the egg whites to stiff peaks and dolloping around the top before garnishing with beets, carrots, pickled cucumbers, or parsley and serving.¹⁰⁸ Attributed to a *Journal* reader given as only M. F. L. this recipe brought in many of the elements of the fancier salads from earlier in the century. The garnish of other vegetables, especially beets or pickled cucumbers, was reminiscent of many earlier German recipes.

A simple request appeared in the March 1887 issue of the *Journal*. An inquiring reader asked for a “recipe for making potato salad as made by the Germans.”¹⁰⁹ The wording of the request shows that there was a clear distinction for readers between German recipes and those they may be familiar with. It also shows an interest in learning how to make the dish in the German style and utilizes the access provided by the magazine format to cross the boundaries

¹⁰⁶ M. F. L., “Potato Salad,” *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 3, no. 5 (May 1886), 7.

¹⁰⁷ M. F. L., “Potato Salad,” *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 3, no. 5 (May 1886), 7.

¹⁰⁸ M. F. L., “Potato Salad,” *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 3, no. 5 (May 1886), 7.

¹⁰⁹ “Wants,” *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 4, no.4 (May 1887), 9.

between the two culinary traditions. The request is short however, and leaves much of the finer details open to the interpretation of fellow readers.

The first response appeared two months later in the May issue. The author, Virginia, sent her recipe along with a short introduction. “In answer to the question...’how to make potato salad as the Germans make it’- I will send a recipe that is correct and has been highly complimented by all who have eaten my salad.”¹¹⁰ The recipe then followed. “Boil about 8 or 9 good-sized potatoes with skin on, and when done pour the water off and with a small knife take the skin off, and slice fine in a bowl, adding one onion also finely sliced to every three potatoes; sprinkle salt and pepper over them.”¹¹¹ The potatoes and onions were left to sit while the dressing was made. “Heat two cups of vinegar, half cup of pure goose grease together; take a teaspoonful of English mustard and dissolve smoothly in very little water, and to this add one egg beaten lightly; then pour this in the hot vinegar and grease and pour all over the potatoes and onions.”¹¹² Some German influence on Virginia’s recipe is shown by the heated dressing of vinegar and fat, the choice of goose fat was similar to the “Fine Potato Salad” that appeared in Henriette Davidis’ work. Virginia told readers that olive oil may be substituted for the goose fat, but that it should be mixed with the egg and mustard and poured over the potatoes before the vinegar is added.¹¹³ The large amount of vinegar was more in line with the perceptions of German food seen in C. R. M.’s article in *Good Housekeeping* than Emilia Custer’s carefully presented recipe. The inclusion of the egg yolk in the recipe also stands out. Vinegar, fat, and egg yolk are the basic ingredients in mayonnaise, but in the recipes for that sauce at the time the

¹¹⁰ Virginia, “Potato Salad,” *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 4, no. 6 (May 1887), 9. The author provides no indication as to what makes their recipe correct beyond that it is enjoyed by all who eat it.

¹¹¹ Virginia, “Potato Salad,” *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 4, no. 6 (May 1887), 9.

¹¹² Virginia, “Potato Salad,” *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 4, no. 6 (May 1887), 9.

¹¹³ Virginia, “Potato Salad,” *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 4, no. 6 (May 1887), 9.

vinegar and fat were not heated. Virginia's recipe appeared to be a hybrid between the vinegar and fat dressing of Custer and the boiled dressing presented in "Aunt Babette's" recipe and crossing the culinary boundaries of those works.

A second response appeared in the August issue contributed by a "Miss Lincoln." She wrote to the editors "You will find the following a good recipe for 'Potato Salad' as the Germans make it."¹¹⁴ Her recipe began with boiling "one or one and half dozen small size white potatoes until they are soft enough to stick a fork in, (that is not quite soft enough to put on the table.)"¹¹⁵ The potatoes were then drained and left to cool for a bit while the rest of the ingredients were prepared. "Cut an onion in very fine slices, a small piece of bacon, smoked fitch, as we call it, cut it in small dice and fry a crips brown."¹¹⁶ The cooled potatoes were then peeled and sliced, seasoned with salt and pepper, and mixed with the onions. Finally, "add your fried bacon and the fat that is left in the pan; then finally add about two tablespoonfuls of vinegar."¹¹⁷ The staples of the German salad are present in "Miss Lincoln's" recipe. The dressing made from warm fat and vinegar and the inclusion of bacon highlight the German influence. A note from the author followed the recipe. "Salad oil may be used instead of bacon. If some of the ladies of L. H. J. try this, I should like to hear of their success. If satisfactory, will give recipes for some more German dishes."¹¹⁸ The author was clearly someone familiar with German cuisine and eager to share their knowledge with fellow readers. A final recipe appeared in the January 1888 issue contributed by a "Journal sister" and followed the same lines as that from the August issue. "Boil potatoes with the skins on. When they are cool enough to handle, pare them and slice very thin,

¹¹⁴ "Miss Lincoln," "Editor Ladies' Home Journal," *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 4, no. 9 (August 1887), 9.

¹¹⁵ "Miss Lincoln," "Editor Ladies' Home Journal," *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 4, no. 9 (August 1887), 9.

¹¹⁶ "Miss Lincoln," "Editor Ladies' Home Journal," *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 4, no. 9 (August 1887), 9.

¹¹⁷ "Miss Lincoln," "Editor Ladies' Home Journal," *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 4, no. 9 (August 1887), 9.

¹¹⁸ "Miss Lincoln," "Editor Ladies' Home Journal," *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 4, no. 9 (August 1887), 9.

sliceing [sic] an onion with the potatoes; salt, pepper, and vinegar to taste. Before serving, heat a little meat fryings [sic] in a skillet, pour the vinegar on it and let it get hot; then pour it over the potatoes and serve.”¹¹⁹ Here again we see the dressing made from meat drippings and vinegar being added to the potatoes while hot to create a warm salad. Miss Lincoln’s salad was much more in line with that presented by Custer. It shows a willingness to share the recipe with fellow readers and open the dish to all.

The readiness with which these responses were submitted illustrates the prevalence of German recipes in America by the later part of the century. The German style salad was popular enough that a curious reader wanted recipes to make it in their own home. And there were several fellow readers who were happy to provide classic German approaches to the dish. The magazines facilitated this exchange, providing a site for women from both groups, curious native-born Americans and German immigrants, to interact and share their knowledge. This exchange further blurred the boundaries defining German and American cuisine established by cookbooks.

The recipes and articles in *Good Housekeeping* and the *Ladies Home Journal* highlight just how German cuisine fit into American culinary culture. Some contributors entered the exchange with preconceptions that saw it as foreign and off-putting. The language they used to describe the food show a definite preference for American cuisine, but not always a prejudice against German dishes. Those contributors who defended German cooking presented it in ways that would be familiar to fellow native-born American readers. They were open and willing to share their recipes and debunk common myths that dishes were greasy or sour. For their part, some native-born American contributors expressed an openness to exploring German foods and

¹¹⁹ “German Potato Salad,” *Ladies Home Journal* vol. 5, no. 2 (January 1888), 9.

suggested that some dishes may be off-putting at first but that a taste for them could be acquired after which they would be quite pleasant. Potato salad in particular was a common point of contact bridging the two culinary traditions. As a key part of German cooking, it appears in the defenses of that culinary tradition. The recipes given are lengthy and detailed and suggest that proper care in selecting ingredients and preparation prevents the sour and mushy dishes that many complained of. The exchange also encouraged readers to explore other areas to connect the native-born American and the German immigrant by directing them to the delicatessens and ethnic groceries where the best ingredients could be purchased, or an already prepared salad could be had. These interactions continued to mix the two culinary traditions.

CHAPTER IV

TELLING PEOPLE HOW TO EAT: LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY DIETARY REFORMS THREATEN ASSIMILATION

Access to cookbooks and journal articles provided specific examples of German recipes, but they were not the only ways people learned about food. The late nineteenth century saw the rise of new ideas about food and cooking and new methods of spreading those ideas. Cooking schools opened in the largest cities of the country and trained women in the arts of kitchen management and cooking. Reform initiatives, inspired by numerous impulses from religious and spiritual to scientific, produced new understandings of the effects of diet on the human body. Reforms of all kinds aimed at creating a more uniform and efficient American society. Some of these reforms aimed directly at bringing immigrants into the mainstream of American life while some sought to define the nature of work for different groups of people.

One area that received a lot of attention and support from the government was reforms in food. New discoveries in nutrition led scientists to formulate and prescribe new dietary standards with work being pioneered by German chemists and Americans, like Wilbur O. Atwater, who studied in Germany. Experiment stations attached to agricultural schools in the United States, especially in the Northeast, became the primary sites for research into the chemistry of food. This new information was distributed through the publication of research bulletins and through the cooking schools and home economic classes starting around the turn of the century. All of

this scientific impulse posed an obstacle for the acceptance of German cuisine, however. In their efforts to create a standardized diet reformers and scientists closed off paths to assimilation for foods and dishes that did not fit the new standard. Still, some German recipes passed through and fit into the new trends developing in cooking and dietary education and became more accessible as a result.

In 1913 the Bureau of Education published a bulletin titled *Education of the Immigrant*. A collection of essays presented at a conference of the North American Civic League for Immigrants in New York City; it opened with a section on domestic education. “Domestic education, as we understand it, is an effort to meet the educational needs of the adult immigrant woman and to preserve the influence of her home as a vital force in the training of her children” opened the essay by Mrs. Annie L. Hansen.¹ Hansen moved on to emphasize the importance of cleanliness in the home and of the person. Educators were told they must demonstrate the importance of proper personal hygiene in maintaining the purity of the family.² In terms of food, the family’s needed to be prepared first. “When the amount available for food is determined, the woman is advised as to the best meals she can provide for that amount.”³ Hansen did not describe the “best meals,” but by 1913 the work of scientists toward a standard diet based on the principles of nutrition was firmly established.

That work built on the work of German scientists, led by chemist Justus von Liebig, and pioneered new understandings of food and nutrition during the nineteenth century. Liebig’s discovery of basic nutrients- protein, carbohydrates, and fats- radically shifted the way reformers

¹ Annie L. Hansen, “The Work of the Domestic Educator” in *Education of the Immigrant* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), 7.

² Hansen, “The Work of the Domestic Educator”, 8.

³ Hansen, “The Work of the Domestic Educator”, 9.

thought about food and its relationship to the human body. His 1842 work, translated in English as *Animal chemistry, or, Organic chemistry in its applications to physiology and pathology*, sparked a wave of research into the dietary needs of humans. While his work was published in the United States in the 1840s, it was not until the last decades of the century that Americans began their own studies of human nutrition as it applied to their own society.⁴

As researchers at the United States Department of Agriculture began their investigations, they acknowledged the debt owed to German, and German trained, chemists. In 1891's *The Science of Nutrition* Edward Atkinson noted the "chemical standards of nutrition which have been established by Professor Voit and others in Germany."⁵ Atkinson also noted that the leader in American nutrition was Professor William O. Atwater who studied in Germany.⁶ In 1894 Atkinson again commented on the leading status of Germany in nutrition work. In the opening of *Suggestions Regarding the Cooking of Food*, published in 1894, Atkinson argued for the establishment of "food laboratories in which the highest scientific work may be conducted corresponding to that in Germany."⁷ Other researchers noted Atwater's contributions and the debt owed to Germany. C.F. Langworthy noted in his *Investigations on the Nutrition of Man* in the United States that Atwater was crucial in "introducing into the United States the German

⁴ For more on Liebig's influence on American science see Margaret Rossiter, *The Emergence of Agricultural Science: Justus Liebig and the Americans, 1840-1880* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1975). Rossiter's work focuses on the explosion of interest in agricultural science following the publication of his work relating to the chemistry of plants, but she highlights the number of Americans who began travelling to Germany to study and bring back new scientific ideas.

⁵ Edward Atkinson, *The Science of Nutrition* (Springfield, MA: Clark W. Bryan & Company, 1891), 15.

⁶ Atkinson, *The Science of Nutrition*, 15. Professor Atwater's name is given incorrectly as William, it should be Wilbur. Atwater studied for 2 years in Germany under Professor Voit.

⁷ Edward Atkinson, *Suggestions Regarding the Cooking of Food* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), 2.

methods of studying nutrition problems.”⁸ The results of these studies were published by the Department of Agriculture and distributed free of cost to anyone interested.⁹

These publications were not simply lists and tables giving the composition of food materials, however. Many contained sections on basic cooking principles to instruct readers how to get the most nutrient value from their food. Atkinson was joined in 1894 by Mrs. Ellen H. Richards who helped author sections on cooking and nutritive value. Richards, a leading expert in nutrition science, compared human nutrition to the functioning of a locomotive. Like the locomotive, she argued, the human body required the right fuel to operate at its peak. She then broke down the nutritional value of common foods and recommended a standard weekly diet. “The best food to eat” for an individual she wrote, “is that which will enable him to make the best of himself.”¹⁰ Others focused their writing on the effects of cooking on the nutrients themselves. W.O. Atwater dedicated a portion of his 1895 *Methods and Results of Investigations on the Chemistry and Economy of Food* to cooking. Much of the section, however, discusses how different methods of cooking assist in digestion or rob food of its nutrients.

One thread that tied these works together was the notion that formal education on cooking was lacking in the United States. Atkinson in particular took issue with the state of culinary education in the 1890s. “The subject of cooking is now attracting wide attention” he

⁸ C. F. Langworthy, *Investigations on the Nutrition of Man in the United States* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), 7.

⁹ U.S. Department of Agriculture. *Annual Report of the Office of Experiment Stations for the Year Ended June 30, 1905* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), 13-14. The *Report* recorded that 5,400,000 bulletins on all the topics of research conducted were sent to 731,000 addresses and an additional 1,150,000 were distributed from the stations. It also estimated that 10,000 students in the agricultural colleges and 300,000 attendees of the farmers’ institutes were presented with the information. The *Report* does not separate the numbers on each topic so it is difficult to say how many of those bulletins and lectures were on human nutrition.

¹⁰ Edward Atkinson and Ellen H. Richards. *Suggestions Regarding the Cooking of Food* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894), 8.

wrote.¹¹ But there was a problem, contemporary instruction was promoting cooking as a business designed to prepare chefs for working in wealthy homes or restaurants.¹² Atkinson lamented the lack of popular instruction and especially the lack of a scientific approach to the art of cookery.¹³ “There are certain great and comprehensive works upon cooking by those who have been held to be masters of the art...They may have been masters of the art of combining food material in order to secure certain flavors, but in cooking they were masters only of empirical methods of adapting to the development of certain results of an appetizing kind” he said.¹⁴ These individuals may have known how to create good flavors, but for Atkinson they did not truly understand cooking because they did not understand the proper amount of heat to apply to produce the best results in nutrition. A scientific way of cooking was needed, one in which the heat could be more directly controlled.¹⁵ Atkinson’s motives may not have been pure, however, as many of his suggestions center on the use of his own invention, the Aladdin Oven. Still, his invention was built on scientific principles and designed to control heat and make more efficient use of cooking fuels.¹⁶

Atkinson also took issue with the way cookbooks are written. For Atkinson, instructions in cookbooks could be broken down into two distinct parts “first, combining or mixing food

¹¹ Atkinson and Richards, *Suggestions*, 18.

¹² Atkinson and Richards, *Suggestions*, 18.

¹³ For more on the scientific impulse in cooking see: Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the turn of the Century* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986), Helen Zoe Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food: Self Control, Science, and the Rise of Modern American Eating in the Early Twentieth-Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), E. Melanie DuPuis, *Dangerous Digestion: The Politics of American Dietary Advice* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), Danielle Dreilinger, *The Secret History of Home Economics: How Trailblazing Women Harnessed the Power of Home and Changed the Way We Live* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2021).

¹⁴ Atkinson and Richards, *Suggestions*, 18.

¹⁵ Atkinson and Richards, *Suggestions*, 20.

¹⁶ A full description of the oven can be found in *Suggestions Regarding the Cooking of Food*, but the design is largely a wooden box, lined with tin, which is placed on top of a metal table. A lamp is placed under the table with its chimney sticking through a hole in the table. The lamp provides the heat and can be adjusted while the tin lined box traps the heat and creates an even cooking environment.

material; second, subjecting this material to the application of heat.”¹⁷ These instructions, however, did not always produce the same result because the application of heat was not standardized. The instructions often directed cooks to put the food into a quick oven or a slow oven without, as Atkinson lamented, defining exactly what those terms meant. The solution to this problem was a new, scientific cookery. This new approach could also be more easily taught because the precise directions and measurements would produce the same result every time.

The language that Atkinson used was repeated over and over in the work of reformers and in the presentations they gave in schools and Farmer’s Institutes. Ideas of control and standardization seeped into all of their writing. By emphasizing scientific cookery reformers ensured that cooks across the country would produce the same meal, with only slight variation, every time. Training all women to practice more control in the kitchen would help to meet the goal of Mrs. Hansen to create spaces for the vital training of children. As E. Melanie DuPuis argued, controlling food, and the discourse around it, was a way to control people.¹⁸ Stigmatizing the food of certain groups, especially immigrants, forced them to either conform or remain outsiders. Following the Civil War, reformers from the Northeast used this practice to claim the dominance of Yankee cooking which heavily featured dairy, especially in cream sauces.¹⁹ Essentially, controlling food meant controlling people and reformers spread their message far and wide.

Atkinson was far from alone in his suggestion that cooking become more scientific. His colleague Ellen H. Richards, and many other women, were a major force behind this new

¹⁷ Atkinson and Richards, *Suggestions*, 21.

¹⁸ E. Melanie DuPuis. *Dangerous Digestion: The Politics of American Dietary Advice* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015). DuPuis ties changes in American dietary advice to changes in the political currents of the nation.

¹⁹ DuPuis. *Dangerous Digestion*, 65-66.

movement. This drive toward a new scientific approach led turn of the century women in cooking and nutrition to found the discipline of home economics.²⁰ The exact beginnings of this new discipline are difficult to pinpoint, according to Emma Seifrit Weigley.²¹ She suggested that the movement may have started in 1841 with the publication of Catherine Beecher's *Treatise on Domestic Economy for the Use of Young Ladies at Home*, and it gained a boost in the 1860s and 1870s following the establishment of land grant colleges.²² Cooking schools also began to open in the 1870s in the major cities of the East under the supervision of some of the most prominent women in American cooking. Juliet Corson opened a school in New York in 1876, Maria Parloa opened one in Boston in 1879, and that same year Sarah Tyson Rorer opened one in Philadelphia.²³ These women would also be crucial in establishing home economics as a discipline.

One of the things all these women agreed on was the ability to create good citizens through proper education. While most supported the traditional gender roles the promoted home economics as a course of study for women, they shared the idea that scientific and manual

²⁰ See: Charlotte E. Biester, "Catherine Beecher's Views of Home Economics," *History of Education Journal* 3, no. 3 (1952), Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), Emma Seifrit Weigley, "It might Have Been Euthenics: The Lake Placid Conference and the Home Economics Movement," *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1974), John L. Rury, "Vocationalism for Home and Work: Women's Education in the United States," *History of Education Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1984), Pamela Curtis Swallow, *The Remarkable Life and Career of Ellen Swallow Richards: Pioneer in Science and Technology* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2014), Danielle Dreilinger, *The Secret History of Home Economics: How Trailblazing Women Harnessed the Power of Home and Changed the Way We Live* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2021).

²¹ Emma Seifrit Weigley, "It might Have Been Euthenics: The Lake Placid Conference and the Home Economics Movement," *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1974), 79.

²² Weigley, "It might Have Been Euthenics" *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1974), 79-80. It is worth noting that many of the women who featured prominently in these reform movements and in the creation of the field of home economics came from the Northeast.

²³ Weigley, "It might Have Been Euthenics" *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1974), 80. All of these women were also editors and contributors to *Good Housekeeping* or the *Ladies Home Journal* and their cooking advice was widely read through those journals and the cookbooks they published.

instruction in homemaking would be a boon to the nation.²⁴ This idea was demonstrated at the World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. Richards, Corson, Rorer, and others held demonstrations in their state's pavilions to showcase the new scientific cooking, based on precise measurements and control, they advocated.²⁵

The Massachusetts Board of World's Fair Managers, recognizing the high scientific character of the work of the New England Kitchen over which these ladies preside, and believing that such a practical demonstration of the usefulness of domestic science could not fail to be of advantage to multitudes of visitors to the Columbian Exposition, invited Mrs. Richards and Mrs. Abel to open the Rumford Kitchen, as it is called, as a part of the exhibit of Massachusetts.²⁶

Richards's experimental kitchen was a popular attraction for many fair goers. The food prepared was sold for a small fee "to reduce, in some degree, the expenses of the exhibit."²⁷ The managers emphasized that the purpose was not to make a profit but rather an "absolutely scientific and educational one."²⁸ In her report of the exhibit, Richards states the purpose was "to illustrate the present state of knowledge in regard to the composition of materials for human food, the means of making these materials most available for nutrition, and the quantity of each necessary for a working ration."²⁹ The Fair served as a prominent space for American scientists and cooks to educate the public on the new nutritional guidance they had been formulating as part of the growing interest in home economics.

²⁴ Weigley, "It might Have Been Euthenics" *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1974), 81-82.

²⁵ Weigley, "It might Have Been Euthenics" *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1974), 83. Many of these reformers talked about gaining control over household tasks through the use of science. Standardizing measurements in recipes gave the cook more control, especially when it came to managing heat.

²⁶ *Report of the Massachusetts Board of World's Fair Managers*, (Boston: Wright and Potter Printing Company, 1894), 41.

²⁷ *Report of the Massachusetts Board of World's Fair Managers*, 41. In her report Richards notes "some ten thousand people were served during the two months that the kitchen was open, between the hours of twelve and two only, in a space so small as to permit only thirty people to be seated at the same time."

²⁸ *Report of the Massachusetts Board of World's Fair Managers*, 42.

²⁹ *Report of the Massachusetts Board of World's Fair Managers*, 43.

The success of the demonstrations at the World's Fair provided new impetus for the home economics movement. In the closing decade of the nineteenth century more schools began adding courses in cooking and domestic sciences and the cooking schools began training teachers. There was still no official structure for home economics as a discipline however. It was not until 1899, at the Lake Placid Conference, that a formal organization would begin. Richards was joined by ten others for a series of lectures on domestic economy and science.³⁰ The conference met every year before finally adopting a constitution and officially becoming the American Home Economics Association in 1908. The Association's purpose in its constitution was "to improve the conditions of living in the home... by securing recognition of subjects related to the home in the curricula of existing schools and colleges."³¹ Home economics had become an important tool in the American education system, teaching the young (mostly) women a new scientific and standardized cooking.

The Association quickly began publishing its own journal, the *Journal of Home Economics*, the first issue of which appeared in 1909. The *Journal* featured articles on new research and instructional methods along with dietary information. Importantly, the articles did not only focus on the United States, but also emphasized new information and methods from around the world as well as specific dietary information from other countries.³² One article from the second issue highlighted an unique method of instruction in Germany. Titled "Travelling Cooking Schools for Rural Regions in Germany" it told of a cost-effective educational outreach

³⁰ Weigley, "It Might have been Euthenics," *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1974), 84.

³¹ *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year Ended June 30, 1909* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909), 178.

³² The second issue featured articles on "Diet in the Philippines," "Food of Mexican Laborers in Mexico and the United State," and "The Edinburgh School of Cookery and Domestic Economy." Later issues contained articles on the diet of Central Africa and the Turkish people.

program.³³ Instead of farm families needing to send their daughters off to school when their labor may be needed on the farm, the school came to them. The courses lasted a few weeks and were offered in different rural areas several times a year to provide the most availability possible.³⁴ The cost of running such schools was also a bonus. The author noted an initial outlay of around \$95 to purchase the necessary equipment and a yearly expense of around \$37 for the teacher's salary and repairs or replacement of equipment.³⁵

The idea proved popular with some in the United States. Ten months after the article's appearance the *Journal* republished an article from the *Wisconsin Farmer* which advocated the adoption of a similar system of travelling schools. "Special trains have been run through the farming districts of the corn belt district to instruct farmers how to grow more and better corn, oats and wheat... Why not a special train to teach farmers' wives and daughters the latest and most approved methods of cooking?"³⁶ The article then discussed how the method was already employed in Germany and how there were examples already in the United States of similar demonstrations at state and county fairs. "But the situation in America, as regards ability to attend school and colleges, is not materially different from the situation in Germany" the article continued.³⁷ There were many women whose labor could not be sacrificed on the farm while they travelled to attend cooking lessons. Wisconsin's large German population no doubt helped spread these ideas in the state.

³³ M. Salm, "Travelling Cooking Schools for Rural Regions in Germany," *Journal of Home Economics* 1, no. 2 (April 1909), 164-166.

³⁴ Salm, "Travelling Cooking Schools for Rural Regions in Germany," *Journal of Home Economics* 1, no. 2 (April 1909), 164.

³⁵ Salm, "Travelling Cooking Schools for Rural Regions in Germany," *Journal of Home Economics* 1, no. 2 (April 1909), 165-166.

³⁶ "Travelling Cooking Schools," *Journal of Home Economics* 2, no. 1 (February 1910), 95.

³⁷ "Travelling Cooking Schools," *Journal of Home Economics* 2, no. 1 (February 1910), 95.

Even before it became an official academic discipline, however, education on cooking and housekeeping occurred in public spaces. During the 1888-89 school year, Milwaukee experimented with a course on cooking. Some of the women from the Milwaukee Cooking School Association conducted some lessons in “a room in the seventh district school.”³⁸ The results were favorable to the superintendent. Quoted in the *Report of the Commissioner of Education*, they remarked on the value of the classes. “The work is valuable in two aspects,” they wrote, “it is educational as well as useful.”³⁹ The course provided opportunities to observe and practice the principles of chemistry and physics as they related to cooking. It also provided practical skills for girls.⁴⁰ Other schools had adopted similar programs by the early 1890s.⁴¹

The cooking classes in the public schools of large cities did not meet the needs of everyone, however. As expressed in the *Journal of Home Economics*, the rural communities of the west desired education in the culinary arts as well. Rising to the occasion, Farmers’ Institutes incorporated lessons for farm women into their programs. The Farmers’ Institutes were often organized by, or with the assistance of, the agricultural college in each state. They were intended to bring together the scientific experts of the colleges and the farmers of the state to share the knowledge each group possessed. The educational value of the Farmers’ Institutes was demonstrated by their continuation through the closing decades of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

³⁸ “The Educative Value of Cookery,” in *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the Year 1888-89* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1891), 419.

³⁹ “The Educative Value of Cookery,” 419.

⁴⁰ “The Educative Value of Cookery,” 419. The article refers to the course as “manual training for girls.”

⁴¹ The *Report of the Commissioner* features a report on cooking classes in Connecticut following the Milwaukee school experience. In the report parents were asked to evaluate their daughter’s experience with the cooking classes, the majority were in favor of the classes and their benefits.

Each state introduced a women's section to their Farmers' Institutes at different times and with different focuses. Michigan introduced a formal women's section in 1895. The first sessions featured lectures and discussion on housework, art, family, and domestic science. Miss Margaret M. Sill gave a lecture on "Kitchen Economy." In it, she attributed many of the ills of home and society to a lack of proper cooking education.⁴² But she also commented on the growing movement to include cooking and household management in public schools. Her lecture then proceeded with some common kitchen tips for cooking simple but common dishes, the kind of information she said was lacking among many young women in the United States.

These sections were favorably received by the women of Michigan. The state reported that "nearly 6,500 were in attendance at the various women's sections."⁴³ A brief questionnaire was sent to the women asking whether they had enjoyed the section and if they would like to see it continued. Mrs. A. M. Brown of Kalamazoo County responded, "I considered our women's section a decided success, and think the same plan should be carried out at our next Institute, with or without state aid."⁴⁴ The other respondents echoed Mrs. Brown's sentiments to varying degrees. All were in favor of continuing the women's section, some suggesting it should be longer and held in a separate part of the Farmers' Institutes to allow for a fuller discussion, but some worried that without state funding it would be impractical.⁴⁵ The section was continued the

⁴² *Michigan State Farmers' Institutes, 1895-96.* (East Lansing: Agricultural College, 1896), 219.

⁴³ *Michigan State Farmers' Institutes, 1895-96.* (East Lansing: Agricultural College, 1896), 317.

⁴⁴ *Michigan State Farmers' Institutes, 1895-96.* (East Lansing: Agricultural College, 1896), 317. The questions were "1. Did the Women who attended the woman's section at your last Farmers' Institute feel profited by the sessions? Have you heard comments on it since the Institute? 2. At a future Institute in your county would it be desirable to have a special woman's section? Would your ladies want to hold one even if we could not send a lady by State help? 3. What were the chief benefits that came from the session, and what suggestions have you for improving it?"

⁴⁵ *Michigan State Farmers' Institutes, 1895-96.* (East Lansing: Agricultural College, 1896), 317. Mrs. C. C. McDermid of Calhoun County noted that many of the women she talked with would prefer to stay at the main Institute if there was no funding from the state for a women's section instead of trying to set up one themselves. She also notes that the section was too short for many and having to leave the main Institute was a disappointment. Mattie A. Kennedy of Muskegon County and Mrs. J. D. W. Fiske of Branch County both objected to the section. Mrs. Fiske thought the separation created an unhealthy divide in farm life, acknowledging that women had separate

following year and expanded to include a cooking demonstration. Professor Edith McDermott demonstrated some techniques and recipes for making bread which was followed by a lengthy and engaged discussion.⁴⁶ Despite this the cooking demonstration does not appear to have been continued at the Round-up Institute.⁴⁷

The application of scientific knowledge to cookery, and the dissemination of this new understanding and the new techniques continued to be a popular topic at the Farmers' Institutes. In 1899, Miss Belle C. Crowe, an instructor at the Agricultural College, presented "The Relation of Good Cooking to the Health of the Family."⁴⁸ She began her lecture by quoting a definition of good cooking by Mr. Ruskin who said cooking involved the knowledge of food materials, equipment, and "the science of modern chemists."⁴⁹ The good cook, therefore, was one who could implement this knowledge to create delicious and nutritious food. The good cook, for example, knew that "chemists tell us that vegetables have very little fat in their composition" so they served them with butter to add flavor and nutrients.⁵⁰ The lecture moved on to discuss cleanliness in the kitchen to prevent the spread of bacteria. Miss Crowe concluded that following the scientific principles of chemists and nutritionists would make one a good cook. These ideas reappeared throughout the first decade of the twentieth century at the Institutes.⁵¹

interests from men would feed into the "new woman" movement. Miss Kennedy agreed that a separate section acknowledged a separation of interests and found the lectures too idealistic to be implemented in actual homes.

⁴⁶ *Michigan State Farmers' Institutes, 1896-97.* (East Lansing: Agricultural College, 1897), 134.

⁴⁷ Round-up Institutes were held during the winter when farm families were under less pressure to tend fields for the whole state, not just a single county. Many of the lectures and demonstrations were the same as those conducted at the county level. The Round-up served as a way for those who may have missed their county meeting to still benefit.

⁴⁸ *Michigan State Farmers' Institutes, 1899-1900.* (East Lansing: Agricultural College, 1900), 169.

⁴⁹ *Michigan State Farmers' Institutes, 1899-1900.* (East Lansing: Agricultural College, 1900), 169.

⁵⁰ *Michigan State Farmers' Institutes, 1899-1900.* (East Lansing: Agricultural College, 1900), 169.

⁵¹ The 1908 Farmers' Institute featured two presentations on making food selections for best nutrition and proper cooking to get the most nutrients from food.

Few of the women's sections at Michigan Farmers' Institutes featured actual recipes, preferring instead to focus on reporting the latest scientific advice on how to cook to get the most nutritive value from food. In contrast, the Farmers' Institutes of Wisconsin offered more practical lessons. A women's section was featured at the Institutes in Wisconsin from very early on. Legislation was passed in 1885 for the establishment of the Institutes and the first program for women occurred at the 1892 meeting. This first instance was called the "Cooking School Session" and conducted under the care of Miss M. L. Clarke, the principal of the Milwaukee Cooking School.⁵² In his introduction of Miss Clarke, the Institute superintendent said, "for some time I have desired to have one or two sessions of each Institute devoted to cooking."⁵³ Miss Clarke then began her lesson with a discussion and recipe for bread. Her lecture featured many recipes, notably two recipes for potato salad. The first was brief. "Bake or boil potatoes according to the directions already given. Dice them when cold, and for each quart allow one cucumber, one cup of diced celery, and once the measure of the following dressing."⁵⁴ The instructions for the dressing, a boiled salad dressing, began with a roux made from butter and flour. Then boiling vinegar was added and the mixture stirred until smooth before an egg, beaten with salt, sugar, dry mustard, and cayenne pepper, was added and cooked for one minute. When it had cooled it was thinned with sour cream and added to the salad of choice.⁵⁵ The second recipe was a bit longer and featured a different dressing.

Boil the potatoes and when cold slice very thin. For a small salad of about a pint of potatoes take the yolks of two eggs and two tablespoons of good cider vinegar.

⁵² W. H. Morrison, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers' Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 6, 1892* (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1892), 232.

⁵³ W. H. Morrison, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers' Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 6, 1892* (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1892), 232.

⁵⁴ W. H. Morrison, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers' Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 6, 1892* (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1892), 232.

⁵⁵ W. H. Morrison, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers' Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 6, 1892* (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1892), 232.

Upon the beaten yolks pout the vinegar boiling; place the bowl containing them in a kettle of boiling water and stir with a wooden spoon till it thickens stiff; to it then add a teaspoonful of butter, mixing well. When cold add one teaspoonful cayenne pepper and salt (mixed in the proportion of 6 parts salt to 1 of pepper), and one-half teaspoonful mustard mixed in cold water that has been boiled; enough onion to suit your taste (onion is as essential to this salad as celery is to chicken salad); one cup of cream just commencing to turn sour: a little more vinegar, and something green and fresh; sliced cucumbers in their season, green cabbage, pepper grass or a few celery leaves. Pour this over the potatoes, stirring as little as possible. These ingredients, mixed in proper proportion will give a salad equal to the chicken salad.⁵⁶

Both of these recipes featured the thick, cooked sauces in fashion among American cooks at the end of the nineteenth century. Cream also featured in both dishes, creating a white sauce to coat the potatoes, a theme that ran throughout later demonstrations.

The following year's lessons featured the same two recipes for potato salad. The enlarged lesson also featured a recipe for mayonnaise. Miss Clarke's instructions began simply, with egg yolks and seasonings whipped together in a bowl. She then called for lemon juice and vinegar, instead of the straight vinegar of most recipes of the time. Oil was streamed in until a thick sauce formed. While many would consider the mayonnaise complete at this step, Miss Clarke made one final addition before serving. She whipped cream "thick and stiff" which was then incorporated into the dressing.⁵⁷ This dressing was used in the next recipe for a sweet bread salad and its use as a salad dressing was noted, but what salads it was best used for were not mentioned.

Only two of the Institutes of 1895 featured cooking demonstrations, but these were attended with the same interest as previous years. Miss Clarke did not attend and instead the

⁵⁶ W. H. Morrison, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers' Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 6, 1892* (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1892), 232.

⁵⁷ W. H. Morrison, ed. *Wisconsin Farmers' Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 7, 1893*. (Madison: Democrat Printing Company, 1893), 229.

cooking school portion was headed by Mrs. Jennie A. Jamison, a graduate of the Milwaukee Cooking School.⁵⁸ Before the lessons were presented a note on the lecture hall and instructor were made. “Mrs. Jamison, with her assistant, had arranged a platform” with a simple stove, table, and all the utensils to be used in the demonstration prepared.⁵⁹ This ensured that “everything during the lesson was done with such neatness and order” to demonstrate the scientific approach now being taken to the art of cooking and hygiene.⁶⁰ Even Mrs. Jamison’s apron was noted as being spotless and white.⁶¹ As part of the first lesson a recipe for a cream salad dressing was given. Unlike previous recipes, this dressing was not cooked. The raw egg yolks were replaced with the yolks of hard-boiled eggs, rubbed into a paste with the seasonings and vinegar. The cream was beaten separately until thick and then added slowly to the egg yolks.⁶² Mrs. Jamison served this dressing on a Russian salad made with potatoes and other root vegetables.

The following year Mrs. Jamison again led the cooking school. As part of her lessons, she included a new recipe for potato salad that again used the boiled dressing from Miss Clarke’s dishes.

Put in a salad bowl successive layers of thinly sliced cold boiled potatoes, cucumbers, hard-boiled eggs and celery. Reserve enough of the better slices of egg to garnish the top. Pour over the vegetables a mixture of two tablespoonfuls of melted butter, half a tablespoonful of vinegar, half a saltspoonful of salt, a speck of pepper and a few drops of onion juice. Let it stand an hour or longer in a

⁵⁸ George McKerrrow, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers’ Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 9, 1895* (Madison: The Evening Wisconsin Company, 1895), 183.

⁵⁹ George McKerrrow, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers’ Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 9, 1895* (Madison: The Evening Wisconsin Company, 1895), 183.

⁶⁰ George McKerrrow, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers’ Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 9, 1895* (Madison: The Evening Wisconsin Company, 1895), 183.

⁶¹ George McKerrrow, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers’ Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 9, 1895* (Madison: The Evening Wisconsin Company, 1895), 183.

⁶² George McKerrrow, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers’ Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 9, 1895* (Madison: The Evening Wisconsin Company, 1895), 189.

cold place; then pour over it a boiled dressing. Garnish with the egg and celery leaves and serve.⁶³

Layered potato salads were not very common, usually served at upper class dinner parties where the presentation would be a topic of conversation. Mrs. Jamison suggests serving this salad for just such occasions in her discussion following the recipe. She also discusses the nutritional benefits, derived from the scientific experiments being conducted in stations across the country, of vegetable salads prepared in similar fashion. “They perform an important office as a food” she said.⁶⁴ “The acid, if not used in excess, helps in the assimilation of the food.”⁶⁵ This line seems out of place considering her recipe calls for only a half cup of vinegar in the dressing, why issue this caution when the point was for listeners to follow the recipe exactly? The ideas of control, so prevalent in the reform efforts lurk just under the surface.

Jamison was presenting in Wisconsin, a state with a large German population. As we have seen in previous chapters, the traditional German potato salads relied heavily on vinegar as the base of their dressings although most of the recipes do not call for much more than Jamison’s half cup. Jamison would no doubt have been aware that many in her audience cooked in this tradition. Her caution to not use vinegar in excess, when viewed through the reformer’s impulse to control food and bodies makes more sense. She was not directly stigmatizing German cooking, but by suggesting that her listeners ease back and use the appropriate amount, that called for in the recipe, she was guiding her audience toward the standard that reformers wanted.

⁶³ George McKerrow, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers’ Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 9, 1896* (Madison: The Evening Wisconsin Company, 1896), 229.

⁶⁴ George McKerrow, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers’ Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 9, 1896* (Madison: The Evening Wisconsin Company, 1896), 230.

⁶⁵ George McKerrow, ed., *Wisconsin Farmers’ Institutes, A Hand Book of Agriculture. Bulletin no. 9, 1896* (Madison: The Evening Wisconsin Company, 1896), 230.

Not everyone agreed with this standardizing impulse. E. Melanie DuPuis noted that immigrants often “rejected the cultural domination of... New England dishes” and the cultural domination that accompanied it. German immigrants also rejected many of these attempts at control. Their restaurants and groceries, the subject of the next chapter, continued to serve traditional German foods. But they did take advantage of one aspect of the reform movements around them, the interest in the way food looked.

Reforms in diet based on science were intertwined with reforms in hygiene and ideas of purity. As discussed above, reformers discussed personal hygiene and food together when they talked about immigrants. But Mrs. Jamison’s spotless white apron at the Farmers’ Institute in Wisconsin, and the recipes presented there and in Michigan, also demonstrate the link between ideas of purity and food. As E. Melanie DuPuis discussed in her book *Dangerous Digestion*, the second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the rise to dominance of the Yankee diet. “At the forefront of the development of national institutions of public health and nutrition, New England reformers made the Yankee diet the ideal form of American eating.”⁶⁶ The cities of the northeast, especially New York, Boston, and Philadelphia with their cooking schools, became the arbiters of culinary fashion in the United States. One of the main pillars of this new Yankee standard was a heavy European, mostly French, influence. As previous chapters have discussed, dishes with French names appeared in almost every cookbook and magazine article and French cooking dominated the high-end restaurant scene. But American cooks did not simply adopt French cuisine as their own, they adapted it to their own circumstances, especially the use of cream-based sauces.

⁶⁶ E. Melanie DuPuis, *Dangerous Digestion: The Politics of American Dietary Advice* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 54.

As the nation expanded west during the 1800s, and industry grew in the east, the west became the major agricultural producing region. The east did not cease to produce food, but its focus shifted as the more fertile land in the states around the Great Lakes and along the Mississippi River produced an abundance of grain. Dairying became the new focus for many states in the northeast and dairy products became key components of the hybrid American/French Yankee cookery.⁶⁷ It is no wonder then that the recipes presented to the farmers of Wisconsin, another major dairy producing state, feature so much cream.

Laura Shapiro noted that the attention paid to the nutritive value of food was matched by an interest in the way food looked on the plate.⁶⁸ Like Mrs. Jamison's apron, white was a popular color choice for food and showed the cleanliness with which it was prepared. The cream-based sauces and dressings of Northeastern cooking schools were tossed with and topped nearly everything. The addition of dairy, as Miss Crowe noted in Michigan, filled in the nutrients missing from the vegetables and creaming became a popular cooking method for them. But not all white sauces contained cream. The mayonnaise-based potato salad that first appeared in Hedwig Heyl's cookbook fit this new aesthetic, it was white and the fat in mayonnaise provided what the potatoes lacked. Unintentionally, this recipe, which was a staple of German delicatessens, found itself in position for success and it may have been this coincidence that led Frau Erica to label it as American potato salad.

The reform movements of the latter half of the nineteenth century often saw immigrants being acted upon. The language of reformers centered on control and standardization. Food was one way to emphasize that control and create the standard. Controlling the definitions of what

⁶⁷ DuPuis, *Dangerous Digestion*, 66.

⁶⁸ Laura Shapiro. *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the turn of the Century* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986), 83-84.

foods were acceptable and which were not established new culinary boundaries and closed off those foods and cuisines that did not fit. By creating standards for the American diet, reformers restructured what it meant to eat American and by extension what it meant to be American. New immigrants were often the targets of efforts to educate the public about proper cooking and eating as the conference of the North American Civic League for Immigrants in New York City shows. But second and third generation immigrants also experienced the wide-ranging educational endeavors in schools, bulletins, and Farmers' Institutes. These efforts established new barriers to the assimilation of German cuisine. The more traditional recipes did not fit the new standard. But a space was opened for some less traditional recipes and the two culinary traditions continued to mix.

CHAPTER V
DINE IN OR TAKE OUT: GERMAN RESTAURANTS AND ETHNIC GROCERS MAKE
POTATO SALAD ACCESSIBLE

Restaurants in the early nineteenth-century United States were few and far between. Since Colonial times the options for those dining away from home were often constrained to the taverns and inns whose dining options were secondary to drink and room. The food was often simple and varied in quality from one establishment to the next.¹ Most of the diners in the taverns tended to be men, a trend that continued into early restaurants. Dining establishments and lodging would also remain connected into the nineteenth century. But in the late decades of the century immigrant communities began opening eating establishments to cater to their own needs.

These eateries posed and faced many of the same obstacles to the culinary assimilation of German immigrants that cookbooks and magazine articles showed. Like early cookbooks, a language barrier existed in these spaces. Intended to meet the needs of German immigrants, the menus were printed in German and wait staff took orders in their native tongue. In the early years of their operation this posed a significant boundary to native-born Americans. The dining establishments also had to overcome the preconceptions that non-Germans had about the cuisine.

¹ William Aspray, Melissa G. Ocepek, and George Royer, "America Eats Out: An Interdisciplinary Study of American Eating Habits from Colonial to Modern Times" *Americana: E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary*, vol. 9, no. 2 (Fall 2013): N.p. Aspray et al. note that salted cod and ham were common offerings at taverns and inns in the colonial period because their saltiness encouraged further drinking by patrons. Bread and potatoes were also mainstays of the menu with little fresh fruit or vegetables on offer.

As the aromas drifted from the kitchens the same comments that some magazine contributors made appeared in restaurant reviews. These places were smelly and loud, as some observers commented, but if one knew what they were ordering, or had a friend who did, the food was good and a taste for it could be acquired.

Restaurants also benefitted from the fact that they were very public places. Their appearance in any place with a significant German population made them very visible to native-born Americans. Cities like Milwaukee became home to many German establishments, and some were quite large. As more of these ethnic dining places opened, they increased the curiosity of native-born Americans, many of whom were looking to dine outside their homes. Not every German establishment was a hit, the large beer gardens of many cities were an oddity and sometimes an offense to the moral standards of native-born Americans. But smaller establishments were more welcome, especially the groceries and delicatessens where the displays made it easier for those who did not speak or read German to know what they were getting. As curious native-born Americans explored these establishments, and the food served at them, they blurred the boundaries of eating German and eating American.

As the wealth of America's social elite grew, the dining experiences of Europe, and especially Paris, became more enticing. Hotels, built in the major cities of the East, began including restaurants to service not only their guests, but also patrons passing by or looking to dine outside their homes. These patrons demanded, as they did in all things, the finest that Europe had to offer. In restaurants, that meant the French dining experience and by the middle of the century more dining establishments were opening with French cuisine on display. Delmonico's, the first standalone fine-dining restaurant in the United States, began in 1827 as a small café operated by the brothers John and Peter Delmonico. By 1830 they had expanded into

a larger restaurant under the name Delmonico & Brother, Restaurant Français.² As the name suggests, Delmonico's focused on providing French cuisine to the upper-class of the city. In the following decades other French inspired restaurants began opening. Mainly located in the larger cities of the east, these places leveraged the status of their upper-class patrons to become the standard for the country. Even as the nation expanded to the west and new cities, like Chicago, St. Louis, and Milwaukee, grew in the middle of the century, the restaurants of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia were the standard.³

But the upper-class were not the only ones to benefit from America's economic booms in the second half of the century. A rising middle class also began to take an interest in dining outside the home. Early on their culinary desires aligned with those of the elite, French offerings were preferred, but the elegant hotel dining rooms of cities like New York eluded them. Price alone was enough to keep many out, the average meal could cost as much as a month's salary. Other obstacles stood in the way of middle-class diners including the dress code required by many such establishments and the language barrier presented by menus written in French.⁴ On the other end of the scale were the growing number of restaurants located in the ethnic enclaves created by the immigration boom at mid-century. Offering a wide variety of foods from around the world, those serving the cuisines of Europe and China were the most popular, these spots catered to their own community and provided a sense of home in a foreign land. They also

² Andrew Smith, *Eating History: 30 Turning Points in the Making of American Cuisine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 19.

³ Aspray et. al, "America Eats Out." Manhattan specifically is cited as the leading innovator in restaurants in the early to middle nineteenth century. Delmonico's, the first restaurant in the United States, opened there in 1827 and moved frequently to follow its upper-class clientele.

⁴ Aspray, et al. "America Eats Out" n.p.

became destinations for middle-class Americans who demanded to take part in the dining-out culture of the upper-class, but without the expense and stuffiness of French restaurants.

Historian Andrew Haley explored this phenomenon in his work, *Turning the Tables*. For Haley, the ethnic restaurant served as a site of middle-class identity construction. Kept from the desirable French establishments, working class Americans used their collective economic weight and traditional American values to shift the culture of eating out. They demanded a more democratic experience, one in which food, and the ability to dine away from home, was available to anyone.⁵ They also laid claim to a truly cosmopolitan identity. While the wealthy may have been able to afford goods from around the world, the middle-class was experiencing the cultures of the world through the food of Chinese, Italian, German, Jewish, and many other different immigrant groups arriving in the United States. The middle-class used the abundance and variety of these ethnic eateries to claim their own form of cosmopolitanism.⁶

Even as middle-class diners began to patronize the ethnic establishments around them the influence of New York and its restaurants continued. Newspapers in the states of the Midwest often reprinted articles which reported on the dining options in that city. An article on a German establishment, reprinted from the *Brooklyn Eagle*, appeared in *The Times* of Owosso, Michigan in July 1887.⁷ Much of the language in these articles was similar to that being used in magazines to describe German food. The author described their experience at “an old German restaurant... which is celebrated among the Germans” but was not well known outside of that community.⁸

⁵ Andrew Haley, *Turning the Tables: Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 3.

⁶ Haley. *Turning the Tables*, 8. Haley argues that this idea of cosmopolitanism was based on a celebration of the diversity of ethnic dining options available.

⁷ “A German Restaurant in New York,” *The Times* (Owosso, MI), July 22, 1887. N.p.

⁸ “A German Restaurant,” *The Times* (Owosso, MI), July 22, 1887. n.p.

The building in which the dining establishment resided was described as dilapidated and broken, but upon entering it was found to be full of Germans.⁹ “Several active waiters shouted out the orders in German, and the numerous dishes on the bill of fare were all written in the same language” they noted.¹⁰ The author was accompanied by a German friend who ordered for them and “some astonishing dishes” arrived at the table.¹¹ The meal was presented in several courses, beginning with a soup, followed by a “mysterious fish salad flanked by an equally problematic dark brown sauce, strongly seasoned with garlic.”¹² This was followed by several meat dishes and a variety of vegetables, a dish of sausage, cabbage, and potatoes being “one of the luxuries” of the meal, along with a bottle of “excellent red wine.”¹³ Following the meal, the author noted that those who wished could spend the rest of their evening socializing and drinking beer.

It is unclear whether the author enjoyed the experience, there were some highlights to the meal, but also some negative experiences. However, they may have felt, the article illustrates many of the feelings of Americans toward ethnic cuisine, and German cuisine especially, in the 1880s. German restaurants were some of the first to be patronized by middle-class native-born Americans at the end of the century. German immigrants were familiar and had been arriving in the United States since the colonial period and formed the largest ethnic group in the nation by the middle of the nineteenth century. Haley noted that by the closing decades of the century, many German immigrants were already fully assimilated into the American middle class which

⁹ “A German Restaurant” *The Times* (Owosso, MI), July 22, 1887. n.p.

¹⁰ “A German Restaurant” *The Times* (Owosso, MI), July 22, 1887. n.p.

¹¹ “A German Restaurant” *The Times* (Owosso, MI), July 22, 1887. n.p.

¹² “A German Restaurant” *The Times* (Owosso, MI), July 22, 1887. n.p. The soup, which is described as containing “diminutive, flat, imported peas,” is probably a lentil soup or *Linsensuppe*, a dish popular in German cuisine.

¹³ “A German Restaurant” *The Times* (Owosso, MI), July 22, 1887. n.p.

eased the transition of many native-born Americans into their cuisine.¹⁴ Native-born Americans also found it easier to enter into this cuisine because, as Harvey Levenstein argued, the food was similar to the British food they were already used to.¹⁵

The prevalence of German immigrants also meant that restaurants serving dishes from the Fatherland were common and accessible. Many of the restaurant were located in working class neighborhoods where rent was cheap and frequently occupied the basement of the building.¹⁶ As the article in *The Times* illustrates, these locations were not always appealing to the eye and did not stand out as a restaurant like the fine French establishments or hotels, but they were far more convenient for their intended patrons to access. Located inside the ethnic neighborhoods they served, these restaurants provided a bit of the familiar to those entering a new and strange country. For adventurous native-born Americans however, few obstacles stood in the way as they began to patronize these eateries.

The appearance and location were certainly worthy of comment by those venturing into a new culinary world, but the article also highlights two bigger issues for Americans. The first was the language barrier. As *The Times* reported, the whole menu was in German and the waiters took the orders in German. This issue was short-lived and German restaurants quickly changed their menus and ordering practices as the ranks of Americans entering their doors grew.¹⁷ The second issue was more difficult to overcome. Despite the similarities between British and German food, many Americans still held stereotypical views of the cuisine presented in German

¹⁴ Haley. *Turning the Tables*, 99. See also J. J. Lalor, "The Germans in the West." *Atlantic Monthly*, (October 1873), 459-470. Lalor argues that shortly after the Revolutionary War German immigrants began to learn English to better interact with their American counterparts.

¹⁵ Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 4.

¹⁶ Haley. *Turning the Tables*, 99.

¹⁷ Haley. *Turning the Tables*, 99. Haley noted that by the mid-1870s German restaurants in New York offered selections for Americans on their menus.

eateries. Those reporting on their dining experience often commented on the pungent aromas emanating from the kitchens and the dishes set in front of them.¹⁸ The author of *The Times* article revealed this bias by spotlighting the “equally problematic” garlicky sauce they were served. They also noted the “mysterious fish salad” that the sauce accompanies, which may be a comment on the dish’s appearance more than its smell but shows that American diners expected to recognize their food and German dishes were often unrecognizable to them.

The negative stereotypes of the dining experience were further reflected in an article published in *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine* in 1898. The author, Walter Cotgrave, described German restaurants and their offerings thusly:

In the German restaurant the *cuisine* is on the whole monotonous and the food singularly insipid: all meats seem to have the same flavor, all are served with the same heavy, viscous sauces, and invariably escorted with the same soap-like potatoes. Stodginess and heaviness are the great blots on the German fare... The sensation produced by the peculiar charm of a refined repast is well-nigh unknown: there is no thought of coupling eating with æsthetic surroundings; more often than not it takes place in a crowded, smoke-filled room.¹⁹

Much like the other article, Cotgrave spotlighted the sauces common to German cuisine, though he was less specific about the flavor of them and instead commented on their texture. Beyond the sauces Cotgrave’s focus was on the monotonous nature he perceived in the meal. It was never stated directly what his point of comparison was but given the frequency with which he referenced French writers and cooks it may be safe to assume he was measuring against French cuisine and the fine restaurants which serve it. The courses offered in the German restaurant,

¹⁸ Haley. *Turning the Tables*, 99.

¹⁹ Walter Cotgrave, “Gastronomic Germany.” *Lippincott’s Monthly Magazine*, vol. 61 (Jan.-June 1898), 854. Italics from the original.

mostly meat and potatoes, appear the same in comparison to the delicate French cuisine.²⁰ When it came to discussing a specific example of the same-flavored meats however, Cotgrave chose *Beefsteak à la Tartare*, oddly using the French name for the dish better known in the United States at the time as Hamburg Steak.²¹ This choice is equally odd because the dish features none of the thick, heavy sauces so much maligned earlier in the article nor is it a particularly heavy or stodgy preparation. The use of the French name for the dish, however, reflected the deep bias of upper-class Americans for French food and the assumption that a dish of German origin, even when presented in French, was bound to be unappealing to American tastes.

Another stereotype reflected in *The Times* article is the quantity of the food served.²² The author reported that “three kinds of meat, accompanied by half a dozen different vegetables” followed the fish and was in turn followed by roast turkey and a celery root salad.²³ This stereotype was widely positive, even if some of the dishes presented were not well received, and many applauded the bounty provided, especially since it tended to be well priced.²⁴ Along with reports that German restaurants tended to be cleaner and better kept than other ethnic eateries, the quantity of food and low cost formed the major selling points for those trying to get Americans to venture into German cuisine.

These factors, especially the number of German immigrants, made it far easier for native-born Americans in the cities of the Midwest to explore German food. Milwaukee in particular

²⁰ By comparison the number of sauces offered in French cuisine would make any other cuisine seem limited. The 1921 edition of Auguste Escoffier’s *Le Guide Culinaire* devotes a full 67 pages to the different sauces used in French cooking.

²¹ Cotgrave, “Gastronomic Germany,” 855. The dish that Cotgrave describes under this name is referred to in Auguste Escoffier’s work as *Beefsteak à l’Americaine*, a separate dish from *Beefsteak à la Hambourgeoise*. This suggests that what Cotgrave is describing is not actually the German dish, but an American variation of it.

²² Haley, *Turning the Tables*, 99.

²³ “A German Restaurant” *The Times* (Owosso, MI), July 22, 1887. n.p.

²⁴ Haley. *Turning the Tables*, Tables, 99.

was a major center of German settlement. By the 1880 census twenty-seven percent of the city's population was born in Germany with many more claiming German descent.²⁵ With such a concentration of Germans the city took on a distinctly German character. One of the most conspicuous representations of this were the beer gardens and beer halls that opened across the city. Beginning in the 1840s German immigrants opened what would become some of the largest breweries in the country. Jacob Best moved his brewing operation to Milwaukee in 1844 and Frederick Miller purchased his operation in 1855.²⁶ Others followed, Valentin Blatz and Joseph Schlitz took over breweries following the deaths of John Braun and August Krug respectively and operated successful breweries in the city. The city's large German population drove demand for the lighter colored and lower alcohol beer that came to be known as *lager*.²⁷ This demand in turn drove the expansion of the breweries and the establishment of beer gardens and halls.

Beer gardens were the first to appear due to the needs of the beer produced in the brewhouses. The name lager, which translates to warehouse, comes from the storage of the beer after fermentation. Traditionally, this was done in large caves or cellars where the beer could be kept cold and therefore avoid spoilage. Beer gardens were a part of this storage arrangement as

²⁵ *Compendium of the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880)*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883), 546-548. Milwaukee's total population counted 115,587 persons with a total native-born population on 69,514 and a foreign-born population of 46,073. Of the foreign-born population 31,483 were from the states of the German Empire and 950 from Austria proper as listed in the census. Ten years earlier those born in Germany made up one-third of the population according to Bayard Still, *Milwaukee: The History of a City* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1948), 259. The percentage of the population born in Germany declined after 1880, but by 1900 seventy-two percent of the population still claimed German birth or descent according to H. Russel Austin, *The Milwaukee Story: The Making of an American City* (Milwaukee: The Milwaukee Journal, 1946, p.140).

²⁶ Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 104.

²⁷ Beers brewed in the United States since colonial times tended to be the darker and higher alcohol ales after the British style. Due to the utilization of top fermenting yeast in the brewing method, ales had to be kept much colder during fermentation, so their production was limited to norther states and certain times of the year. The German style used a bottom fermenting yeast that made it less susceptible to temperature changes during brewing. See Andrew Barr, *Drink: A Social History of America* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1999) and Thomas C. Cochran, *The Pabst Brewing Company: The History of an American Business* (New York: New York University Press, 1948).

they were often planted on top of the cellars to provide extra shade with large chestnut trees and help keep temperatures low.²⁸ They also shortened the trip from the cellar to the customer who could purchase their beer and then enjoy it sitting in the shade of the garden's trees. By the end of the nineteenth century beer gardens in Milwaukee had grown into far more than simple cellar covers, they were gathering places for the city's German population to revel in their culture.

Gottfried Ludwig opened one of the first gardens in 1847. As it grew in popularity, he built a dance floor and offered beer and other refreshments to those who came to dance and listen to music.²⁹ Others followed and in 1855 the Milwaukee Garden opened just outside the city. The Garden was large enough to hold ten thousand guests and included "a concert hall, summer theater, dance pavilion, bowling alley, menagerie and a midway" with a variety of booths offering games and refreshments.³⁰ These were popular weekend destinations and families could often be found enjoying themselves and listening to music for the whole day.

The large breweries, much like back in Germany, also built their own gardens to attract customers. Schlitz opened the most popular garden of the 1880s. It featured a concert hall, dancing hall and bowling alley, but the centerpiece of the park was a three-story lookout on top of a hill which offered a view of the city.³¹ Schlitz Park also featured gas lighting on the terraces of the hill that allowed patrons to stay after dark. Not to be outdone, Pabst built its own park covering an eight-acre plot.³² Pabst Park was an extravagant space that "featured a 'figure 8' roller coaster 15,000 feet long, a 'Katzenjammer palace' fun house, the 'smallest real railroad in

²⁸ "Shocking to the Natives- The 'Continental Sunday' ." *Der Blumenbaum* vol. 22, no. 3 (Jan./Feb./Mar. 2005), 133.

²⁹ H. Russel Austin, *The Milwaukee Story: The Making of an American City*. (Milwaukee: The Milwaukee Journal, 1946), 143. Austin does not specify the kind of music played, but it was probably provided by one of the local *Musikvereinen* or music clubs.

³⁰ Austin, *The Milwaukee Story*, 143.

³¹ Austin, *The Milwaukee Story*, 143.

³² Cochran, *The Pabst Brewing Company*, 223.

the world” and many other amusements.³³ Like the other large gardens Pabst Park also included a concert hall and dance hall and a shooting range.³⁴ All the large gardens featured similar attractions, but what stood out most to the American observer were the days and hours they were most popular.

The weekend, and particularly Sundays, were a time of community and entertainment for German immigrants in the United States. This caught the eye of many native-born Americans, especially the more devout, who were often confused, and occasionally appalled, by Germans spending their Sunday carousing and drinking with family and friends in public. “The German’s idea of Sunday is anything but Puritanic. It is the very opposite. It is for them a day of amusement” J.J. Lalor wrote in 1873.³⁵ There were those among the German immigrants who do “keep the Sabbath” but according to Lalor “there are always enough of them who do not.”³⁶ So frequently could they be found outside of church that Lalor wondered if the Germans even had a sabbath. Instead, they spent their Sundays in the parks, beer gardens, and other public halls amusing themselves and enjoying the sense of community provided by gathering in large numbers.

Another observer, Josiah Flynt, applied the German word *Gemütlichkiet* to this sense of community. “An utterly untranslatable word” according to Flynt *Gemütlichkiet* means coziness or friendliness, a sense of comfort and belonging for those who are a part of the community.³⁷ To this feeling Flynt ascribed the popularity of the beer garden among the German immigrants in the

³³ Austin, *The Milwaukee Story*, 144.

³⁴ When Pabst purchased the plot, it was home to the Shooting Park where the Milwaukee *Schuetzen Gesellschaft* practiced and held competitions.

³⁵ J. J. Lalor, “The Germans in the West.” *Atlantic Monthly* (October 1873), 465. German immigrants did not have a solid religious background, so it is difficult to know if these practices were more common among Catholic or Protestant Germans or if this perception applied to all, regardless of religious affiliation.

³⁶ Lalor, “Germans,” 465.

³⁷ Josiah Flynt, “The German and the German-American.” *Atlantic Monthly* (November 1896), 664.

United States. “It is a question too large to discuss here, whether these institutions are the unmixed evils that our Puritan forefathers would have thought them” he wrote.³⁸ For Flynt, the problem with the beer garden was that it was not native to the United States, it was transplanted along with the German immigrants themselves and as a result it “is not in any degree the respectable place that it is in Germany.”³⁹ The beer garden in America brought harm to the social and cultural life of the United States, in Flynt’s view, by undermining the traditional American observance of the sabbath.

Flynt was not alone in his opposition to the “Continental Sunday” practiced by German immigrants. An article published in Harper’s Weekly also questioned the practices and whether or not they should be allowed in the United States. “In Germany Sunday is kept in one way, and in the United States in another; and that the present effort of the Germans in New York and some other cities is to have our method of keeping Sunday done away with, and their method adopted in its stead” the article claimed.⁴⁰ In the United States, the article noted, Sunday was a day of rest and religious practice, while in Continental Europe, especially Germany, Sunday was a day of pleasure and recreation.⁴¹ Germans would spend the day in the country or at the theater or by taking “one’s wife and children to beer gardens.”⁴² The article claimed it meant no criticism of the practices, but later described German attempts to protect their traditions as “silly speeches about their rights (meaning their right to annoy us).”⁴³ The author was clearly not a fan of the traditions of the immigrant community and the perceived attempts to institute them as the

³⁸ Flynt, “The German,” 664.

³⁹ Flynt, “The German,” 664.

⁴⁰ “The Foreign Movement on the Sunday Question,” *Harper’s Weekly* 3, no. 143 (September 1859), 610.

⁴¹ “Sunday Question,” 610.

⁴² “Sunday Question,” 610.

⁴³ “Sunday Question,” 610.

common practice, and instead suggested that it would be easier for the “couple millions of Germans [to] defer to our habits” rather than the “twenty-five millions of Americans overcome their scruples” and submit to German norms.⁴⁴ In Milwaukee, this debate sometimes led to political movements. Two mayors were quickly voted out of office by the German population following the passage, or attempted passage, of laws that limited the operating hours of dance halls and beer gardens on the weekends.⁴⁵

Another common complaint made by the native-born population against beer gardens was the presence of women and children in a place where alcohol was served. “Men, women, and children, older men with their wives, and younger ones with their sweethearts, throng these places every Sunday, and enjoy themselves, careless of what impression they make on their fellow-citizens of American origin” Lalor wrote.⁴⁶ Many Americans, especially those who advocated temperance, looked negatively on the beer gardens. They objected to the presence of children, believing that exposing them to alcohol at a young age would make them more inclined to drink and the evils that came with it.⁴⁷ Many temperance advocates were also shocked by the presence of women, fearing that alcohol would arouse “irresistible temptations among men” and make the women victims of depravity.⁴⁸ These fears seem largely unfounded. Lalor, often a critic of the immigrants arriving, noted that despite the proliferation of beer gardens and lager saloons “a confirmed German inebriate is as rare almost as a German advocate of total abstinence... they

⁴⁴ “Sunday Question,” 610.

⁴⁵ Robert W. Wells, *This Is Milwaukee* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970), 157.

⁴⁶ Lalor, “The Germans,” 465.

⁴⁷ Andrew Barr, *Drink: A Social History of America*. (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1999), 384.

⁴⁸ Barr, *Drink*, 384.

by no means produce the greatest number of drunks.”⁴⁹ By the end of the nineteenth century a growing number of Americans found the beer gardens to be acceptable spaces to dine out.

As native-born Americans began to enter the beer gardens, they noted some favorable differences to American drinking establishments. The gardens tended to be cleaner and better kept than other establishments of a similar price point and the presence of German *hausfrau* made them an acceptable place for American women to enjoy a meal outside the home.⁵⁰ Many also noted the social nature of the gardens, with families engaged in conversation, and the sense of community that was lacking in most Americans barrooms. The beer garden was more than a place to get a drink, it was a place for people to gather and socialize with their neighbors. As native-born Americans entered these spaces and mixed with their German immigrant neighbors, they created a new sense of community as Milwaukeeans⁵¹ This social aspect was aided by the décor of the typical beer garden. Most of the gardens opening in the nineteenth century were not the extravagant, multi acre entertainment spaces operated by the large breweries in and around Milwaukee. The majority were small lots next to a saloon where patrons could enjoy their food and drink outdoors.⁵² Many were also not outdoor spaces at all, but rather indoor spaces filled with potted plants and trees to mimic the outdoor feel.⁵³ For a growing number of Americans, these factors eased entry into the world of German dining.

The biggest difference that Americans noted between the beer garden and the typical saloon was the food. In most American drinking establishments food was an afterthought, if it

⁴⁹ Lalor, “The Germans,” 462. Lalor does not provide any other ethnic groups for comparison.

⁵⁰ Cindy R. Lobel, *Urban Appetites: Food and Culture in Nineteenth-Century New York* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 125.

⁵¹ Beer gardens were a place for anyone, middle-class or working-class. The upper-class also patronized the beer gardens of the city, especially the resorts just outside the city limits.

⁵² Austin, *The Milwaukee Story*, 144.

⁵³ Lobel, *Urban Appetites*, 187. Austin also describes the opening of indoor gardens, especially the Schlitz Palm Garden which featured high, vaulted ceilings, stained glass windows, and paintings decorating the walls.

was served at all. In the German establishments however, food was often just as important as the beer being served.⁵⁴ The typical menu at these establishments featured a host of German fare. Some of the most common offerings were pretzels, sausages, sauerkraut, bread and cheese, and potato salad.⁵⁵ Heartier fare was also on offer at many of the larger establishments like the Schlitz Palm Garden. As middle-class Americans entered these establishments these dishes were a way to experience German cuisine and led many to seek out more and venture into German restaurants like the one from *The Times* article.

Restaurants and beer gardens were not the only places for native-born Americans to experience German cuisine, however. Ethnic groceries and markets were another gateway through which Americans gained access to German foods. Some of the German immigrants who arrived in the nineteenth century looked to provide the goods their countrymen longed for from the Fatherland and so they opened grocery stores that catered specifically to those needs. Beginning in the late 1860s, delicatessens began to open in the United States.⁵⁶ These shops originally focused on selling fine imported canned and bottled goods, but quickly began to offer fresh goods like prepared meat, cheese, and bread. Historian Andrew Smith described the delicatessen as filling the gap between butcher shops, which sold uncooked meats, and general grocers, which sold packaged goods, by selling a bit of both.⁵⁷ By the turn of the century many shops had expanded their offerings of prepared dishes to include sandwiches and salads,

⁵⁴ Lobel, *Urban Appetites*, 187. Lobel notes that many newspapers and periodicals on the east coast reported favorably on beer gardens and were quick to point out that the beer was not strictly the center of attention, but often accompanied and complemented a meal.

⁵⁵ "Shocking to the Natives- The 'Continental Sunday'," 133.

⁵⁶ Artemas Ward, *The Grocer's Encyclopedia* (New York: N.P., 1911), 212. Ward states that the first delicatessen opened in New York in 1868, but they can be found in every large city by 1911.

⁵⁷ Smith, *Eating History*, 53.

including potato salads. These dishes were originally meant to be taken home, but as the shops expanded to meet customer demand many began to include a place for customers to sit and eat.⁵⁸

A key component of many of the salads served in delicatessens was mayonnaise. Originating in France in the late eighteenth century, mayonnaise became increasingly popular in the United States at the end of the nineteenth.⁵⁹ Mayonnaise was a popular salad dressing by the end of the century due in part to its use in the upscale French restaurants that many still considered the pinnacle of cuisine. But delicatessens also used it frequently, and they were more accessible to middle-class native-born Americans than the French establishments. The dressing became so popular that some delicatessen owners began selling jars of it separately from the prepared salads. The first commercial mayonnaise in the United States was sold by Philadelphia deli owners Edward and Amelia Schlorer in 1907.⁶⁰ A few years later the Schlorers trademarked their product under the name Mrs. Schlorer's Mayonnaise and formed the Schlorer Delicatessen Company to produce and market larger quantities.⁶¹

The Schlorers were not alone in their new venture. In 1912 a German deli owner in New York by the name Richard Hellmann also began marketing mayonnaise. Hellmann was born in Germany and worked for various grocery and wholesale companies before immigrating to the United States in 1903.⁶² Hellmann and his wife opened their deli in 1905 and he worked hard to make the business successful, almost working himself to death.⁶³ After a health scare, he sold the deli, but retained an interest in the business, and left for a vacation in Europe. While in Europe

⁵⁸ Smith, *Eating History*, 53.

⁵⁹ Andrew Smith, "Mayonnaise," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America vol.2*, 2nd edition, ed. Andrew Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013) 516-517.

⁶⁰ Andrew Smith, "Mayonnaise," 516-517.

⁶¹ Andrew Smith, "Mayonnaise," 516-517.

⁶² Andrew Smith, "Hellmann's Mayonnaise: A History," Andrew F. Smith, accessed Sept. 19, 2022.

⁶³ Smith, "Hellmann's Mayonnaise: A History," Andrew F. Smith, accessed Sept. 19, 2022.

Hellmann reconnected with an old colleague, Matt Martinez, who showed him his extensive distribution network that sold a wide range of products including mayonnaise.⁶⁴ After receiving news of the death of his business partner, the Hellmanns returned to New York and took over running the deli again. Remembering what he had learned from Martinez, Hellmann began working on his own distribution plans.⁶⁵ He perfected his recipe for mayonnaise and began selling it in small jars to the customers at his store. By late 1912 he began bottling and selling his mayonnaise and by 1914 he was distributing across New York under the trademarked Blue Ribbon Mayonnaise brand name and sales outpaced his ability to manufacture the product from the back of his deli.⁶⁶ He sold the deli in 1914 and moved production to a larger facility, but this also proved inadequate and in 1915 he moved again to a larger facility.⁶⁷

As both the Schlorers' and Hellmann's companies expanded they made mayonnaise more accessible. While recipes existed in cookbooks beginning early in the nineteenth century, the process of making the dressing was time consuming. To get the proper consistency a cook had to continually whisk the egg yolks while slowly adding the oil. With the new mass market brands however, this time-consuming step was eliminated. A home cook could purchase jarred mayonnaise and take it home to produce potato salads with less effort and in less time. In the early years of production, the delicatessens also offered the advantage of selling both the mayonnaise and potatoes, which Emilia Custer and Mrs. Allen noted in their magazine articles were best for potato salad when they came from the deli, in the same location. Mayonnaise, and the deli potato salads made with it, also fit into the new dietary advice of the late nineteenth

⁶⁴ Smith, "Hellmann's Mayonnaise: A History," Andrew F. Smith, accessed Sept. 19, 2022.

⁶⁵ Smith, "Hellmann's Mayonnaise: A History," Andrew F. Smith, accessed Sept. 19, 2022.

⁶⁶ Smith, "Hellmann's Mayonnaise: A History," Andrew F. Smith, accessed Sept. 19, 2022.

⁶⁷ Smith, "Hellmann's Mayonnaise: A History," Andrew F. Smith, accessed Sept. 19, 2022.

century which suggested that fat be added to vegetables to round out their nutrition. This was often done using cream, but mayonnaise also contained a high proportion of fat and gave the creamy texture and appearance of using cream. Tied in with its convenience these factors made it easier for the deli style potato salad to fit within the new culinary framework being created.

A major feature of the delicatessen was its large front windows where products were displayed. These displays helped to attract customers, especially non-German customers, by providing a look at what the store carried without having to venture inside first. While the majority of the patrons remained German, native-born Americans occasionally entered the shops for specific products. Some contributors to the popular women's magazines of the day even recommended visiting the local delicatessen to procure the best ingredients for making a potato salad, as discussed in chapter two. The grab-and-go lunch offerings also attracted Americans who were looking for a taste of ethnic cuisine without the hassle of trying to read a large menu in German.⁶⁸ The pared down offerings of these establishments simplified what German cuisine was for many.

Open air markets also exposed non-Germans to the immigrants in their communities. In Milwaukee the German farmers operated *Der grüne Markt*, or the German Market as many locals called it. Located on the east bank of the Milwaukee River the market was “not only a trading center...but also a unique social center of German life in the community.”⁶⁹ Gossip passed around the market in “every dialect known to Germany” as stall keepers and shoppers interacted.⁷⁰ German *hausfrauen* sold vegetables and dairy products produced on their farms or

⁶⁸ Lobel, *Urban Appetites*, 188.

⁶⁹ William George Bruce, “Memoirs of William George Bruce,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, vol. 16, no. 4 (June 1933), 365.

⁷⁰ Bruce, “Memoirs,” 365.

in the small market gardens they kept. *Schmierkäse* and rye bread were also commonly available for purchase.⁷¹ Germans were not the only ones to shop in the market, women from the Yankee Hill neighborhood could often be found among the shoppers.⁷² The interactions between these two groups, the Yankee women and the German stall keepers, were often polite, even if the former could not understand the latter.⁷³ However, while the two groups did interact, the market was a center of the German community. Despite its function as a place to gossip and share news, the market ultimately was replaced in the later part of the nineteenth century by the more permanent delicatessens and corner groceries that offered a wider range of products than the produce of local farmers.

During the nineteenth century dining establishments offered a bridge between German immigrants and the native-born Americans they settled among. Originally operating as centers for the German community to maintain parts of their ethnic identity, by the end of the century they had become sites of interaction and exchange. Middle-class, native-born Americans found German establishments more accessible than the high-class French restaurants opening in major cities. Despite the appearance of many of the early establishments they were often conveniently located for patrons wishing to expand their horizons. The German immigrants who operated these businesses readily made changes, often as small as printing menus in English, to welcome new patrons. The food also proved more appealing among the ethnic cuisine options, even if some dishes remained mysterious and problematic, given its similarities with the British food many Americans were used to.

⁷¹ Bruce, "Memoirs," 365.

⁷² Bruce, "Memoirs," 366. As the name suggests the Yankee Hill neighborhood was settled by native-born Americans, many of whom had migrated from the east coast to settle in Milwaukee.

⁷³ Bruce, "Memoirs," 366.

But the process was not always smooth. As German immigrants became more settled and reproduced the cultural institutions of their homeland, many native-born Americans initially opposed the cultural practices associated with them. Beer gardens were initially regarded with suspicion because they were contrary to the morals of many. Other venues proved more accessible, and the popularity of delicatessens grew as a place to grab a quick lunch. Delis also provided access to mayonnaise as it grew in popularity around the turn of the century and became a key component in salads, especially the potato salad. The restaurants, beer gardens, and delicatessens provided an accessible space for native-born Americans to mix directly with German immigrants and their food.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The popularity of mayonnaise and the deli style potato salad continued to grow in the early twentieth century. Richard Hellmann's company continued to expand. In 1919 he licensed fellow German immigrant John Behrman to produce his mayonnaise in Chicago.¹ Sales were good for Behrman who also quickly moved production into a larger space. A few years later Hellmann's company built a factory in San Francisco becoming a nationwide brand.² The brand was so popular that the *New York Tribune* included it as one of four brands tested for flavor and quality in 1920. Two of the three judges ranked Hellmann's as the top while the third placed it in second.³ The company continued to grow and by 1927 manufacturing plants and distribution centers had been opened across the southeast.⁴

Hellmann's success was due in part to the company's advertising strategy. As part of a new marketing campaign following the licensing of Behrman's Chicago operation a small cookbook was published in 1922. Titled *The Chef's Standby; Blue Ribbon Recipes* the book featured Hellmann's mayonnaise in every recipe.⁵ Another short cookbook was published in 1928 titled *Salad-Ideas*. A variety of salads filled the pages including one for potato salad that still carried some of the markings of other German style offerings with the inclusion of beets.⁶

¹ Andrew Smith, "Hellmann's Mayonnaise: A History," Andrew F. Smith, accessed Sept. 19, 2022.

² Smith, "Hellmann's Mayonnaise"

³ "Salads and Their Dressings Bought 'Ready-to-Wear,'" *New York Tribune* (New York, NY), Aug. 8, 1920.

⁴ Smith, "Hellmann's Mayonnaise"

⁵ Smith, "Hellmann's Mayonnaise"

⁶ *Salad-Ideas* (New York: Postum Company, Incorporated, 1928), 9.

The book also extolled the benefits of using prepared mayonnaise. “A good cook may use choice ingredients, the utmost care, a favorite recipe” it said, but even the best home cooks struggled to make their mayonnaise “perfect every time” the way Hellmann’s did.⁷ The perfect mayonnaise, according to the book, was perfectly blended and the technique was impossible by hand so why put in the effort when you could just buy the perfect product at the store.⁸ Snippets of letters from satisfied customers were also included in the book. “Better flavored than the mayonnaise I used to make” wrote one, “as fresh as though I’d just made it myself” wrote another.⁹ These testimonials showed other prospective customers the benefits of buying and using Hellmann’s mayonnaise instead of making their own. The price also made it accessible, at just 25 cents for a half-pint jar, and three other sizes including a pint and quart size, a consumer could have mayonnaise on hand for all occasions.¹⁰ The access provided by commercial mayonnaise meant that the home cook could have a potato salad ready in just the time it took to boil and dice the potatoes. Potato salad became a convenience food made accessible by German immigrants.

By the middle of the twentieth century the mayonnaise-based potato salad was firmly established in the American culinary cannon as written in the articles by Winzola McLendon, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and James Beard that open this story. It has become a staple of summer cookouts and Fourth of July celebrations and its history is as American as the people who consume it. Arriving with the millions of German immigrants who came to the United States in the nineteenth century the salad, alongside the immigrants themselves, became

⁷ *Salad-Ideas*, 4.

⁸ *Salad-Ideas*, 4.

⁹ *Salad-Ideas*, 15.

¹⁰ *Salad-Ideas*, 15. Andrew Smith notes that by 1927 Richard Hellman Inc. was generating \$15 million in sales and \$1 million in net profit. Andrew Smith, “Hellmann’s Mayonnaise: A History,” Andrew F. Smith, accessed Sept. 19, 2022.

American. As immigrants and native-born Americans interacted and shared their culinary traditions the separations began to blur and mix. In the process they blurred their culinary identities and what it meant to “eat German” or “eat American” became more inclusive of the other. The key factor in this change was the accessibility of German immigrants and their food. As the number of Germans arriving increased, they published their recipes and opened restaurants and stores showcasing their edible identity.

The accessibility of German cuisine was not without its obstacles, however. German immigrants focused their attention on their own communities in the early years after their arrival. A thriving German language press was established to meet the needs of these immigrants and published several cookbooks popular in Germany for those now living in the United States. Henriette Davidis’ work was the most notable. Popular in Germany a version was printed in Milwaukee for Germans living in the United States. The language barrier made the recipes inaccessible to many native-born Americans and kept the dishes within the German community. The process of opening the recipes and the cookbooks to American readers was slow and only occurred in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Some cookbooks, like Aunt Babette’s, contained German recipes or adaptations of them without directly assigning them to any particular culinary tradition. Others were more explicit about the origin of their recipes. As seen in the publisher’s forward to the first English translation of Henriette Davidis’ work, this opening was driven by a desire among native-born Americans to learn the culinary habits of their immigrant neighbors which were becoming more visible in the restaurants and beer gardens opened and operated by Germans.

Another obstacle that stood in the way of the assimilation of German cuisine was the perceptions of native-born Americans. Newspapers like *The Californian* published articles which

described the cuisine as “smelly” or “sour” or “greasy” and gave the impression that German food was unappetizing at best and unfit for eating at worst. These comments were even reprinted in *Good Housekeeping*, one of the leading women’s magazines at the time. Magazines, however, offered Germans a chance to defend their cooking more directly. Emilia Custer took *The Californian* article to task over several articles and showed her American counterparts what German cuisine was really about. Magazines like *Good Housekeeping* helped open German food to a wider audience. By the early decades of the twentieth century *Good Housekeeping*, and its sister magazine the *Ladies’ Home Journal*, had a subscribership in the hundreds of thousands and over a million respectively. Printed in English, these magazines avoided the language barrier that hampered cookbooks until the end of the nineteenth century.

Magazines also offered a chance for more interaction among readers. They offered readers a chance to produce longer articles on their favorite foods and recipes by holding contests. Entrants were able to showcase their own knowledge and skill in cooking and the dishes they were most familiar with. Readers could also submit their own recipes or ask questions of other readers by writing to the publisher who printed their submissions and queries in the magazine. A curious reader could request a recipe for potato salad “as the Germans make it” and receive replies from several fellow readers with directions to produce just such a salad. Questions about German food appeared more frequently in the closing decades of the nineteenth century around the same time that English translations of cookbooks began appearing and native-born Americans began venturing out into German restaurants. Americans were curious about the foods they were seeing and eating, and their German counterparts were happy to provide recipes.

Another obstacle came in the form of government action and education efforts. Toward the end of the nineteenth century a new, scientific approach to nutrition came about. The federal

government funded many projects that explored the nutritional value of different foodstuffs and sought to create a more standardized American diet. Within these attempts at standardization came a new definition of American cuisine. Knowledge of these new experiments was spread through the publication of bulletins, public demonstrations, and in the classrooms of schools and colleges across the country. The Farmers' Institutes conducted with the aid of agricultural colleges began to include a Women's Section in the later years of the century. A frequent feature of these sections was cooking demonstrations that promoted the latest scientific advice. Even more direct, the field of home economics emerged and grew at this time. Organized by several prominent health reformers from the Northeast the field quickly expanded across the country and many schools offered classes and some colleges began offering a major in home economics. Through all of this reforming and standardization space was created for some new dishes, but more often ethnic cuisines were limited. German cuisine had some advantages during this standardization, German immigrants had established themselves in communities across the United States and their food and recipes were becoming more common and popular.

Food reformers from the Northeast drove many of the changes and gave preference to dishes that included cream or other forms of dairy. This limited the opportunity for the more common style of German potato salad which featured a darker dressing of bacon fat and vinegar and which some earlier commentators called a sour mush. However, it opened the door for a less common German recipe, one that Hedwig Heyl had first published in 1896, the mayonnaise-based potato salad. This variation fit neatly into the reform movements. It added fat to the potatoes, something the scientific diet emphasized since vegetable on their own fell short of the nutrition requirements for fats. It also fit the ideals of Northeastern reformers who had a preference for making their foods white with the addition of sauces. While the mayonnaise that

was used for these salads did not contain any cream or dairy it still provided the requisite texture and appearance. On top of that, mayonnaise was becoming more popular and readily available thanks in part to some entrepreneurial German immigrants.

Perhaps the most accessibility for German food came from the restaurants, beer gardens, and delicatessens opened by immigrants. These spaces began appearing around the middle of the century as the number of Germans arriving in the United States started increasing. In the early years these establishments faced the same obstacles as cookbooks, the language barrier between staff and native-born patrons and the preconceptions of those same patrons. Newspapers reported that early German eateries were smelly and without being able to read and speak German a diner could never be entirely sure what they were ordering. Many native-born Americans also objected to the behavior they witnessed, particularly at beer gardens. The German custom of spending the weekend socializing with family and friends while drinking disturbed more conservative Americans. The inclusion of women in such establishments also seemed improper to many.

Many of these concerns disappeared in the 1880s as middle-class Americans became more interested in dining outside their homes. In an attempt to emulate upper-class Americans the middle class sought to participate in an activity that reflected their access to more disposable income, but many of the French style restaurants that catered to the wealthy became, and continued to be, inaccessible. Searching for an alternative many found that German cuisine was not all that different from what they already ate if one could get past the language barrier. For their part, German restaurants were quicker to add English to their menus than other ethnic eateries. It also helped that the large German communities in many cities supported numerous restaurants, so Americans had no difficulty in finding them. The accessibility of these places

soon attracted larger numbers of native-born American patrons who took their new fondness for the cuisine to the pages of magazines and cookbooks.

One kind of German establishment in particular attracted the patronage of middle-class Americans, the delicatessen. Originally opened as ethnic grocery stores that sold imported goods to the German community, delis soon grew into much more. Many owners sold some simple prepared dishes that could easily be purchased and taken on the go. Most common were prepared salads including a mayonnaise-based potato salad. Delis, and their salads, quickly became popular for their ease of access. Large windows invited customers in and gave them a view of what they could purchase, and, like restaurants, they were a common sight in the large German communities. As their popularity increased many delis expanded to include an area for customers to sit and eat the food they purchased. The salads remained popular and the dressing itself became popular. The first commercially available mayonnaise was made and sold by German deli owners Edward and Amelia Schlorer. Soon after, another German immigrant deli owner, Richard Hellmann, began producing and selling his mayonnaise. Hellmann's business became so popular that he sold his deli to focus on producing mayonnaise full time and his company quickly expanded across the country. The popularity of the deli style potato salad, helped by its fit into the dietary reforms of the late nineteenth century, increased as mayonnaise became more commercially available and saved housewives the time and hassle of making it themselves.

Both German immigrants and native-born Americans changed their culinary identities throughout the nineteenth century. Driven by the accessibility of German cuisine through the sources above, many Americans began to eat more "German" and the distinctions between the two cuisines began to blur. For their part, German immigrants participated in the process of culinary creolization by opening their sources and establishments to their American neighbors.

They defended and explained their cuisine when necessary and shared their recipes as Americans became more and more interested in what they ate. As the distinctions between the eating habits of the two groups blended so did the identities of the people.

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