

‘Tried and Tested’:

Community Cookbooks in Australia, 1890 - 1980

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Abstract

'Tried and Tested': Community Cookbooks in Australia, 1890 - 1980

Australian community cookbooks are an under-recognised and under-utilised trove of historical information about the life of the nation. Special features of form and function make this cookery genre distinctively revealing not only of the evolution of Australian food culture, but of twentieth-century discourses of identity. Community cookbooks express the voices of “ordinary people” in everyday life, in particular the large cohort of mostly middle-class twentieth-century women who recognised the community cookbook as a way they could help themselves and their communities. In doing so, they made their social, religious, political and cultural values manifest in the fabric of the community and thereby contributed to the building of the Australian civil society. They also left an enduring record of the foodways practiced in Australian homes.

This thesis undertakes a genre study of the Australian community cookbook.

Investigation of the history of community cookbooks in Australia positions them in the context of a fast-changing social and political culture, within an emergent and maturing nation. Careful dissection of the community cookbook demonstrates the significance of the special features that distinguish this genre – the important principle of the volunteer community group and the role of the recipes. The thesis discusses how Australian community cookbooks relate to the three pillars of cultural history – class, gender and ethnicity. It further reflects on a trio of themes with particular resonances in Australian social history – technology, regionalism and the development of the Australian national and civic culture.

Survey of a large number of texts helps to refine understanding of how the genre has been mobilised in Australia, and how it has contributed to the broad history of

Australian communities and community endeavours. Closer reading of selected texts allows a deeper investigation of the themes of the community cookbook and produces a rich picture of Australian social and culinary culture at the domestic level.

Sharing food is the most basic human communal activity. The sharing of recipes through community cookbooks has evolved as a multifaceted way of building social capital, making it a small but sturdy plank in the civil society. Community cookbooks are very flexible in reflecting individual communities, their foodways, their needs and their views of the broader society. This study of community cookbooks is a contribution to the field of Australian social and cultural history, particularly food history, and to the pursuit of history “from the ground up”.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

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My late grandmothers, Una Shepherd and Eloise Niday Brown, were both busy, community-minded twentieth-century women. From them I inherited my first community cookbooks, Australian and American respectively. Though they were falling apart from years of use, I kept these books on my kitchen shelf. After some years' perusal and quite a bit of baking, I began to reflect on what set them apart from other cookbooks. My grandmothers showed me how to live a good life, be a good citizen and get the food onto the table. They also, by leaving me the "unpretentious little books" that beckoned me first into the kitchen and later into the study, gave me the germ of the idea for this thesis. To them, then, this work is dedicated. May it be even half as useful as the CWA cake calendar or the Grace United Methodist Church recipe collection.

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Australian Food Terminology

<u>Australian</u>	<u>American / British (as needed)</u>
billy, billycan	metal pail, campfire cooking receptacle
biscuit	cookie
“cocky’s joy”	golden syrup (see below)
damper	flattish quickbread; traditional camping food
golden syrup	sugar by-product; milder than treacle
swede	rutabaga
trombone	type of vegetable marrow or squash
tucker	food
yabby	type of small, freshwater crayfish

List of Abbreviations

CWA	Country Women's Association
SACWA	South Australian Country Women's Association
QCWA	Queensland Country Women's Association
WMA	Women's Missionary Association (later WMU)
WMU	Women's Missionary Union
PMU	Presbyterian Missionary Union
PWMU	Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union
AFL	Australian Football League
NMAA	Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia
CAA	Community Aid Abroad (now Oxfam)
RSL	Returned Servicemen's League
<i>The Presbyterian</i>	<i>Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts</i> (until 1950) <i>The Presbyterian Cookery Book</i> (popular name adopted as title after 1950)
<i>The Worker</i>	<i>The Worker Cookery Book</i> (legitimate editions) <i>The Mary Cookery Book</i> (pirated edition)

Section 1

Form and Function

Chapter 1

Introduction: Australian Community Cookbooks as Social History

Chapter 2

“These Unpretentious Little Books”: Defining the Genre

Chapter 3

Subtypes of the Genre: An Overview

Chapter 1

Introduction: Australian Community Cookbooks as Social History

Every book of recipes is a ‘partial reflection’ of peoples’ image of themselves and the world.¹

(Symons, 1998)

What home loving housewife does not enjoy having a new recipe book, full of worthwhile recipes, which have been well tested and tried. We trust the proof of the pudding will be in the eating. Much valuable assistance will be gained for the holiday cottage in your district by the use of the cookery book.²

(CWA Olinda Branch Cookery Book, ca 1940)

Community cookbooks as the object of scholarly inquiry

The humblest of the cookery genres, the community cookbook, is a rich primary text of community activity, lives lived and foods cooked and shared. It deserves greater status as a source material for the study of social and cultural history, as well as in the canon of food history.

Cookbooks have a much-noted history of academic neglect. This is despite their profound practical and symbolic importance in the life and growth of Western capitalist society. That august Australian periodical, *The Bulletin*, described them evocatively as “a snapshot of the lives we once led”.³ It is the opinion of Canadian bibliographic scholar Elizabeth Driver that “no other category of book evokes such an emotional

¹ Michael Symons, *The Pudding That Took a Thousand Cooks: The Story of Cooking in Civilisation and Daily Life* (Melbourne: Viking, 1998), 121.

² CWA Olinda Branch Cookery Book, 1st ed. (Surrey Hills, VIC: Olinda Branch CWA, 1930s), preface.

³ Jackie Dent, “Old Tucker”, *The Bulletin*, 24 October 2001, unnumbered. Available via findarticles.com.

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response across generations and genders and is freighted with so much cultural and historical meaning”.⁴

The work of theorists such as Rolande Barthes,⁵ Claude Levi-Strauss,⁶ Elizabeth and Paul Rozin⁷ and Mary Douglas⁸ in the mid-twentieth century laid out ways of understanding food and its preparation as a symbolic system. This system provides an “analysable set of cultural meanings”.⁹ If cookbooks are such powerful sources - affording, as Stephen Tobias argues, “great insight into the generalised socio-historical transformations” of nations - why have they been generally ignored?¹⁰

As well as the general issues underlying the “invisibility” of food in academic history, discussed by Warren Belasco,¹¹ there are specific problems pertaining to cookbooks. Historian Barry Higman identifies four important points: 1) “few scholars are cooks, and even fewer cooks are scholars,” 2) cookbooks may have been seen as too humble to warrant attention, 3) this neglect “can be interpreted in gender terms” and 4) libraries

⁴ Elizabeth Driver, *Culinary Landmarks: A Bibliography of Canadian Cookbooks, 1825-1949* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), vii.

⁵ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Lavers (London: J Cape, 1972). Roland Barthes, “Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption”, in *European Diet from Pre-Industrial to Modern Times*, ed. Forster and Forster (London: Harper, 1975).

⁶ Claude Levi-Strauss, “The Culinary Triangle”, *Partisan Review* 33 (1966). Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. Weightman and Weightman (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

⁷ Elizabeth Rozin, “Structure of Cuisine”, in *Psychobiology of Human Food Selection*, ed. Barker (Westport, Conn: AVI Publishing, 1982). Elizabeth Rozin and Paul Rozin, “Some Surprisingly Unique Characteristics of Human Food Preferences”, in *Food in Perspective: Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Ethnological Food Research, Cardiff, Wales, 1977*, ed. Fenton and Owen (Edinburgh: Donald, 1981).

⁸ Mary Douglas, “Deciphering a Meal”, in *Myth, Symbol and Culture*, ed. Geertz (NY: Norton, 1971). Mary Douglas, “Food as a System of Communication”, in *In the Active Voice* (London: Routledge, 1982).

⁹ Anne Murcott, “Raw, Cooked and Proper Meals at Home”, in *Food Choice and the Consumer*, ed. Marshall (Glasgow: Blackie Academic and Professional, 1995), 228.

¹⁰ Steven M Tobias, “Early American Cookbooks as Cultural Artifacts”, *Papers on Language and Literature* 34, no. 1 (1998): 2.

¹¹ Warren Belasco, “Food Matters: Perspectives on an Emerging Field”, in *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*, ed. Belasco and Scranton (New York: Routledge, 2002).

have not actively preserved cookbooks, meaning that collections are generally incomplete.¹²

If these problems apply to cookbooks generally, they apply particularly acutely to community cookbooks, the most humble corner of the cookery canon. In Australia, as in many other countries, community cookbooks are for the most part neglected, misunderstood and generally overlooked as a source material for the study of social, cultural and culinary history. Community cookbook theorist Anne Bower considers this neglect in the light of gendered approaches to the study of history and literature, as well as confronting academic preconceptions about the concrete and hence theoretically uninteresting nature of cooking and recipes.¹³ There are other, more practical, contributory factors as well. Food historian Colin Bannerman suggests that the neglect lies in the material nature of the community cookbook genre itself. “Most books of this sort were neither published nor dated, and are treated as ephemera by collectors and bibliographers. They are generally ignored by historians because of difficulties associated with their interpretation”.¹⁴ Yet alongside these and other potential problems (discussed in Chapter Two), the community cookbook has unique textual features that make it particularly useful in the pursuit of social and cultural history. Its dual aspect – it is at once a community project and a recipe collection – affords the researcher unusually intimate glimpses into the kitchens and consciences of everyday people. Bannerman asserts that “for the scholar willing to tackle the problems of identification, dating and cataloguing, these works may provide one of the most authentic accounts of

¹² BW Higman, “Cookbooks and Caribbean Cultural Identity: An English-Language Hors d'Oeuvre”, *New West Indian Guide* 72, no. 1-2 (1998): 78.

¹³ Anne Lieberman Bower, *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997), 6-9.

¹⁴ Colin Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating, C1850-1920: The Evidence from Newspapers, Periodical Journals and Cookery Books” (PhD, University of Canberra, 2001), 70.

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the popular culture of the Australian kitchen”.¹⁵ It is clear that more should be known and understood about this genre.

Community cookbooks in Australia

Community cookbooks (also known as compiled, regional, charitable, contributory, democratic or fundraising cookbooks) had their origins in the American Civil War, and were well established in North America by the 1870s. It is most likely that the idea came to Australia with the Sydney-based publication, around 1891, of a Canadian community cookbook, *The Home Cook Book*, originally compiled by “the Ladies of Toronto and districts” in 1874.¹⁶ The idea took hold, and before long Australian women were producing their own recipe compilations.

It all started in the north-east of the country. Bannerman refers to the publication of the *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, by the New South Wales Presbyterian Women’s Missionary Union (then named the “Women’s Missionary Union”, or WMU) in 1895 as the first recorded community cookbook in Australia.¹⁷ However, it seems the NSW ladies may have been just pipped at the post by their Presbyterian Missionary Union sisters in Queensland, whose book is recorded as having first appeared in 1894. A notice in the *Brisbane Courier* on Thursday the second of August that year advised, “Look out for the *P.M.U. Cookery Book*. Just published”.¹⁸ By 1898 the same newspaper was advertising the *WMU Cookery Book*, (the PMU having become the WMU in the meantime) as being in its fourth edition. One other 1895 publication, from

¹⁵ Colin Bannerman, *Acquired Tastes: Celebrating Australia's Culinary History* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1998), 49.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Driver, ed., *The Home Cook Book* (Toronto: Whitecap Books, 2002 (c1878)), xi. Elsewhere she estimates the publication date around 1889. Elizabeth Driver, “Canadian Cookbooks (1825-1949): In the Heart of the Home”, *Petit Propos Culinaires* 72 (2003): 30.

¹⁷ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts / Compiled for the Women's Missionary Association Sale and Exhibition, Sydney, September, 1895*, 1st ed. (Sydney: s.n., 1895).

¹⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, Thursday 2nd August 1894, 2.

Grafton on the NSW North Coast, was called *The Housewife's Friend*. It is recorded as being in its second edition in that year, suggesting an earlier date for its first edition, but no copy of the first edition appears to have survived.¹⁹ Harder to pin down to a date, but potentially the earliest of all, is *A Voice from the Bush*, from Clermont, Queensland, which was produced sometime between 1893 and 1901. Community cookbooks' Australian origins are thus at the end of the colonial period and in the lead-up to Federation (1901). It was in these exciting years, in the dawn of the twentieth century and the Australian nation, that they enjoyed their first flush of general popularity.

Culinary sociologist Michael Symons defines three "levels" of cookery text in Australian history.²⁰ The first level, belonging to the period before 1890, consists of a relatively small number of colonial texts, mostly British in origin. This precedes the development of the community cookbook genre in Australia. The second level describes the period from the 1890s to the end of the Second World War, a period of cookery texts which Symons characterises as "plain [and] grandmotherly". Community cookbooks were a particularly significant feature of this era. Two well-known examples, the *Presbyterian* and the *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, Symons describes as the favourite cookery books of their respective States. Other states had similarly significant community cookbooks. The *Companion to Tasmanian History* mentions the *Hobart Cookery Book* in a similar light.²¹ Various sources indicate that, nation-wide, several of the Country Women's Association (CWA) cookery books are also regarded in this manner, particularly the *Cookery Book and Household Hints* in Western

¹⁹ E Doberer, *The Housewife's Friend: A Book of Tested Recipes / Compiled at Grafton by the Committee of Church of England Sunday Schools' Sale of Work*, 2nd ed. (Grafton NSW: Examiner Officer, 1895).

²⁰ Michael Symons, "The Postmodern Plate: Why Cuisines Come in Threes", *Australian Cultural History*, no. 15 (1996).

²¹ Tony Marshall, "Food", in the *Companion to Tasmanian History* (Online edition) (Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania, 2006 [cited 7 April 2009]); available from www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/F/Food.htm.

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Australia and the *Esk Valley Cookery Book* in Tasmania.²² The National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame displays a range of CWA cookbooks "considered by many women as their 'bible'", and historians Susan Addison and Judith McKay mention the importance of "local church, Red Cross and CWA recipe books" in their discussion of Queensland's significant cookery texts, singling out the *WMU Cookery Book*, the *Bundaberg QCWA Cookery Book* and the *Longreach Red Cross Cookery Book* in particular.²³ It remains the popular view, reflected in online forums as well as in the more elevated forum of the Australian Symposium of Gastronomy, that CWA cookery books are the best and most useful sources for "real" regional and Australian cookery.²⁴

Community cookbooks have also made the transition to Symons' third level, which is the "wondrous proliferation" of cookery books since the 1950s. Having remained a constant feature of Australian life through the difficult years of the two World Wars and the Great Depression, community cookbooks underwent a renewed flowering in the post-war era. The post-war publishing boom was a harder market in which to make a splash, but community cookbooks held their own and in fact thrived in the atmosphere of increasing creativity, idiosyncrasy and specificity. An ever-increasing range of

²² Paul County and Bernard Lloyd, *Before We Eat: A Delicious Slice of Tasmania's Culinary Life* (Hobart: Culinary Historians of Tasmania, 2003), 314-15, Tony Marshall, "Food", in *the Companion to Tasmanian History* (Online edition) (Centre for Tasmanian Historical Studies, University of Tasmania, 2006 [cited 7 April 2009]); available from www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/F/Food.htm.

Sian Supski, "We Still Mourn That Book': Cookbooks, Recipes and Foodmaking Knowledge in 1950s Australia", *Journal of Australian Studies* 84 (2005): 87.

²³ Pauline Cockrill, *Women's Work Is Never Done* [Internet] (National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame, 2000 [cited 7 April 2009]); available from www.pioneerwomen.com.au/exhib.htm.

Susan Addison and Judith McKay, *A Good Plain Cook: An Edible History of Queensland* (Queensland Museum, 1999), 6.

²⁴ Barbara Santich, ed., *The Upstart Cuisine: Proceedings of the First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy*, 1st ed. (Adelaide: s.n., 1984), 24.

Help a Brother Out: Australian Cookbooks Query [Internet] (ZGeek, 2007 [cited 1 April 2009]); available from www.zgeek.com/forum/archive/index.php/t-71206.html.

community groups produced them and the books themselves, in consequence, developed a more varied typology.

Community cookbooks' character was shaped by the social currents of Australia's long twentieth century, but they continue to fill a niche in Australia in the twenty-first century. They remain a notable community resource, as fundraisers, statements of group identity and ways to share culinary and domestic information of common interest.

The North American and Australian research background

Community cookbooks were originally sold at "Sanitary Fairs", in Civil War-ravaged America, held to raise money for war-related social causes. They are, generally, modest little volumes, containing recipes collected from a pool of contributors. They are usually collated with the intention of selling them to raise money for a group, institution or cause – hence their alternative names of "fundraising" or "charitable" cookbooks.

Janice Longone was the first to articulate the view that community cookbooks are "an American phenomenon".²⁵ In this she has been echoed by many other writers who describe community cookbooks as "distinctively American cultural artifacts",²⁶ "a special category of American (women's) writing",²⁷ "Americana in the raw",²⁸ "anthologies of Americana",²⁹ or "a uniquely American book form".³⁰ Longone argues that "although some books have appeared in Britain, Canada and other parts of the former British Empire, there are only a small number of them, and they do not seem to

²⁵ Janice Bluestein Longone and Daniel J Longone, *American Cookbooks and Wine Books 1797-1950* (Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1984), 32.

²⁶ Anne Lieberman Bower, "Our Sisters' Recipes: Exploring Community in a Community Cookbook", *Journal of Popular Culture* 31 (1997): 137.

²⁷ Bower, *Recipes for Reading*, 9.

²⁸ Jane Stern and Michael Stern, *Community Cookbooks* [Internet] (Epicurious: The World's Greatest Recipe Collection, 2004 [cited 3 May 2004]); available from www.epicurious.com.

²⁹ Evan Jones, "The Purpose of a Cookery Book", *Gourmet* (1982): 58.

³⁰ Janice Bluestein Longone, "'Tried Receipts': An Overview of America's Charitable Cookbooks", in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 27.

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have gained much prominence”.³¹ In point of fact, though, community cookbooks play an important role in many countries. They are very common in Australia as well as Canada and the UK and are well known in various parts of the Commonwealth of Nations, which consists principally of former British colonies. Nor are they confined to this arena; anthropologist Jack Goody mentions an example from Ethiopia.³² Though this genre is originally American, it has not remained unique to that country. A good idea travels far and wide. The community cookbook may have begun life in the United States, and it may even have developed more fully, as a genre, in that nation than anywhere else. However, the nature of community cookbooks is to reflect their environment *wherever* that may be.

For nigh on twenty years after Longone’s publication, there was no corresponding Australian research. Although individual Australian community cookbooks, notably the *Presbyterian*, were recognised for their historical significance, the unique characteristics of this cookery genre were not generally perceived. They did rate a mention in Bette Austin’s *Bibliography of Australian Cookery Books Published Prior to 1941* (1987). Austin notes that “although these collections lack the unity of a work by a single author, they nevertheless represent the recipes which many Australian families used and which were considered to provide good eating”.³³ The *Presbyterian* was noted by the authors of *Landmarks of Australian Gastronomy* for its faithful reflection of community eating and cooking habits.³⁴ In her article “When Did We Teach Our Girls to Cook?” social

³¹ Longone and Longone, *American Cookbooks and Wine Books*, 32.

³² “*The Empress Menan School Cook Book* (Addis Ababa, 1945) was composed from recipes submitted by students and staff of the school.” Jack Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 212.

³³ Bette R Austin, *A Bibliography of Australian Cookery Books Published Prior to 1941* (Melbourne: RMIT, 1987), xvii.

³⁴ Graham Pont et al., *Landmarks of Australian Gastronomy: Catalogue of an Exhibition at the Senior Common Room Club, the University of New South Wales October 14 - November 9* (Kensington: University of New South Wales, 1988), 45.

historian Beverley Kingston alludes to the “contributory cookbooks produced for fund-raising purposes by the PWMU and the CWA”, noting their strength in baking and “the feminine-frivolous area of sweet things”.³⁵ Apart from this brief treatment, Bannerman (who, like Kingston, notes their focus on cakes and biscuits) appears to have been the first person to put his finger squarely on Australian community cookbooks’ value as historical source material.

Literature review - bibliography and primary literature

Margaret Cook’s 1971 bibliographic work, *America’s Charitable Cooks: A Bibliography of Fund-Raising Cook Books Published in the United States (1861-1915)* laid the groundwork in this field by defining a large body of primary sources available in American public and private repositories.³⁶ In this she followed on from such culinary bibliographers as Eleanor P Brown and Eleanor Lowenstein.³⁷ Cook was the first to allude to some of the insights held by this genre. Firstly, she found that community cookbooks “reflect the cooking fashions of the period ... more accurately than the standard works by professional authors”. Secondly, she found that they chronicle technological, commercial and industrial change. Thirdly, they document regional and/or archaic foods.³⁸ All of these features point to them as an excellent mirror of their times, and possibly also of their makers. Driver’s 2008 bibliography of Canadian cookbooks, *Culinary Landmarks*, which includes many community cookbooks, defines another significant body of primary literature.

³⁵ Beverley Kingston, “When Did We Teach Our Girls to Cook?”, *Australian Cultural History* 15 (1996): 94.

³⁶ Margaret Cook, *America’s Charitable Cooks: A Bibliography of Fund-Raising Cook Books Published in the United States (1861-1915)* (Kent: Ohio University Press, 1971).

³⁷ Eleanor Parker Brown, *Culinary Americana: Cookbooks Published in the Cities and Towns of the United States of America During the Years from 1860 through 1960* (New York: Roving Eye Press, 1961). Eleanor Lowenstein, *Bibliography of American Cookery Books, 1742-1860* (Worcester, Mass: American Antiquarian Society, 1972).

³⁸ Cook, *America’s Charitable Cooks*, 7.

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Austin's 1987 work remains the only large-scale cookbook bibliography in Australia, and does not deal, on the whole, with community cookbooks. There is a dearth of bibliography on this subject. Some public repositories, notably the National Library of Australia (NLA) and the state libraries of NSW and SA, have quite strong holdings of community cookbooks, as does the library of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in the Emily MacPherson Collection, which relates to domestic technology. The general lack of finding tools, however, makes it a labour-intensive exercise to ascertain their true extent. (When I went to RMIT in 2001 the librarian kindly showed me to a large number of miscellaneous cookbooks stored, uncatalogued, in cardboard boxes. It does not appear that this situation has since improved.)

Additionally, private and community repositories contain holdings which, in some cases, are quite significant. Community groups such as the CWA generally maintain their own archives, containing all or at least most of their publications. The private libraries of individuals can be considerable, such as that of cookery book collector John Hoyle. (These have since been passed to the State Library of NSW, and hence are now publicly available.)

However, as scholars continue to lament, community cookbooks are remarkable for their dual qualities of ubiquity and elusiveness. Omnipresent in the kitchens, fetes and bazaars of general society, they are nonetheless often startlingly difficult to find in the nation's libraries, archives and bookstores. Many a community cookbook is planned, published, sold, used and disposed of without ever going near a bookseller, let alone a library. Their generally modest production values make them easy to discard. Unknown numbers languish unloved in far-flung junk shops and at the municipal tip, beyond the historian's grasp.

My own working database, while by no means comprehensive, redresses at least to some degree the lack of bibliography in this area.³⁹

Literature review - secondary literature

Subsequent research has corroborated Cook's view of community cookbooks as broadly accurate representations of community food culture. Lynne Ireland's 1981 article, "The Compiled Cookbook as Foodways Autobiography", is the first serious analysis of the community cookbook as a discursive genre. Ireland argues for a reading of community cookbooks as foodways autobiographies of their compilers, "a composite picture of what they allegedly eat". By offering insights into food preference, ethnic settlement and assimilation, community cookbooks "serve as a fairly accurate guide to the food habits of the group which produced them" and thus can be a "useful research guide", offering "insight into traditional attitudes, usage and consumption".⁴⁰

Community cookbooks have come to the scholarly attention of those interested in the discursive powers of cookery literature. Susan Leonardi's "Recipes for Reading: Pasta Salad, Lobster a la Riseholme and Key Lime Pie", a discussion of recipe writing, mostly with reference to the *Joy of Cooking*, makes statements about the act of cookbook writing which apply to the compiling of community cookbooks. To Leonardi, recipes are "an embedded discourse" and cookbook writers must create personas and tell stories to provide their recipes with a context which will appeal to cooks/readers and incite them to culinary action. She regards this as an essential element of successful cookbook writing; the writer must find ways to recreate, in textual form, "the social context of

³⁹ Available on request.

⁴⁰ Lynne Ireland, "The Compiled Cookbook as Foodways Autobiography", *Western Folklore* 40, no. 1 (1981): 110.

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recipe sharing”.⁴¹ The text surrounding the recipe reproduces the “loose community of women” who share recipes together. In the community cookbook such extended narrative frameworks are rare, yet community cookbooks appear to supply this framework in other ways. They must, or we would not hear the refrain, echoed by many writers, that the dog-eared little community cookbooks in their kitchens are the ones they most frequently use.⁴² What are their distinctive features, including discursive strategies, that draw in readers and get them cooking?

Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories (1997) remains, to date, the most substantive work in this field. Bower assembles essays from a variety of disciplines (principally literature studies and women’s studies) which analyse the genre of the community cookbook and its

power to construct an ideology ... to demonstrate the position of women between public and private worlds; to establish for the cookbook makers and readers certain ideas of literacy, empowerment, and community; and to provide enduring representations of ethnic, religious and other group affiliations.⁴³

The insights, methodologies and arguments contained in this book outline the state of the scholarly field, approaching the community cookbook variously from a literary, linguistic, gender-studies and historical perspective. The volume takes as its premise Lisa Heldke’s concept of foodmaking as “a ‘mentally manual’ activity, a ‘theoretical practical’ activity – a ‘thoughtful practice’” and articulates a view of the community

⁴¹ Susan J Leonardi, “Recipes for Reading: Summer Pasta, Lobster a La Riseholme, and Key Lime Pie”, *PMLA* 3 (1983): 342.

⁴² See, for example, Marion Bishop, “Speaking Sisters: Relief Society Cookbooks and Mormon Culture”, and Anne Romines, “Growing up with the Methodist Cookbooks”, both in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower.

⁴³ Bower, *Recipes for Reading*, 12.

cookbook as “a text that enacts within it a group of women’s mental, theoretical, thoughtful positions or statements”.⁴⁴

As Longone and Bannerman both note, community cookbooks are not always or solely produced for the benefit of others; they benefit the communities who produce them as well.⁴⁵ For instance, community cookbooks document, and thereby help preserve, family and community traditions. They are used to advertise products; to raise money for causes; to share information about issues affecting the community, such as health; to develop and present a particular group image; as a forum for sharing ways to lighten the domestic load; to explore and define national, regional and local cultures; and many more things besides. From a historical perspective, their value as a body of texts is not limited to the communication of foodways. They represent the distillation of the cultural identities and endeavours of families, communities, regions and nations. Their affect is directed both externally, to the broader community, and internally, to the group that creates them.

Longone comments that for women who collaborated on them, such texts could be “one very effective way to participate in the public life of the nation.” Community cookbooks “created networks of mutual support, training grounds for organizing, and acceptable platforms from which to influence American life”.⁴⁶ As such, they can also reveal detail about what performance theorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls women’s “efficacy

⁴⁴ Anne Lieberman Bower, *Reading Community Cookbooks: Recipes, History, Values, and More: Talk Given by Anne L. Bower to the Culinary Historians of Washington DC* [Internet] (Culinary Historians of Washington DC, 2003 [cited 3 May 2004]); available from <http://www.chowdc.org/Papers/Bower%202003.htm>.

⁴⁵ Longone, “Tried Receipts”, 28. Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 70.

⁴⁶ Longone, “Tried Receipts”, 20.

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in the public sphere”.⁴⁷ Jeffrey Pilcher’s work on community cookbooks in the history of Mexican nation-building reveals the way community cookbooks can mobilise ideological power. Pilcher shows Mexican women creating, through their own compiled texts, a cuisine which prefigured the development of a national cuisine based on both indigenous and exotic influences. In this way they resisted the “new order” based on “Western European models”. “Women began to imagine their own national community in the familiar terms of the kitchen, rather than as an alien political entity formulated by men and served up to them in didactic literature”.⁴⁸

Where community cookbooks in the United States were born in the blood and loss of the Civil War, and in Mexico appeared during the peaceful but repressive years of the Porfirian period, in Australia they began in the context of the move to Federation and the establishment of Australia as a sovereign nation. In each country they germinated in a powerful nation-building moment. This appears to me no coincidence.

There has been very little scholarship on community cookbooks in Australia, the principal published work on them being by Bannerman. His work is of both a scholarly and a popular nature.⁴⁹ Bannerman’s research has primarily taken place in the context of his interest in the Australian print-media discourse of food and eating. He finds that in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, community cookbooks were one of

⁴⁷ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “The Moral Sublime: The Temple Emmanuel Fair and Its Cookbook, Denver 1888”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 137.

⁴⁸ Jeffrey M Pilcher, “Recipes for *Patria*: Cuisine, Gender and Nation in Nineteenth-Century Mexico”, *ibid.*, 211.

⁴⁹ Colin Bannerman, *A Friend in the Kitchen: Old Australian Cookery Books* (Kenthurst, NSW: Kangaroo Press, 1996), Colin Bannerman, *Acquired Tastes: Celebrating Australia's Culinary History* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1998), Colin Bannerman, *The Upside-Down Pudding: A Small Book of Christmas Feasts* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 1999), Colin Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating, C1850-1920: The Evidence from Newspapers, Periodical Journals and Cookery Books” (PhD, University of Canberra, 2001), Colin Bannerman, “Cookery Books as History: Crunching the Numbers”, in *Cookery Books as History: presented by the Research Centre for the History of Food and Drink* (Adelaide: 2006), Colin Bannerman, *Seed Cake and Honey Prawns: Fashion and Fad in Australian Food* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2008).

two major forums through which the public was able to participate in this discourse, the other being newspaper correspondence columns. Within the field of cookery literature Bannerman discerns some half-dozen genres: epicurean, gastronomic, historical, chronicles, technical, and cookery manuals. This last category he subdivides into four further types: documentary, educational, personal and “contributory” (or community) cookbooks. Of the four types, he judges community cookbooks to be the “most revealing” of the reality of Australian kitchen life, “probably the best of the available sources of information on popular cookery”.⁵⁰ He later concludes that of all the forms of cookery discourse in the early twentieth-century Australian print media, “only the contributory cookbooks can be taken as reasonably valid samples of what people were actually cooking”.⁵¹ This suggests that the general agreement on this feature of the genre holds true for Australia as well as for Northern America.

More recently, a number of other researchers have published work in this field. Angela Heuzenroeder’s work on the food culture of South Australia’s Barossa Valley includes extensive work on the *Barossa Cookery Book*, a community cookbook with a strong regional identity.⁵² Julia Pitman’s article on the *Green and Gold Cookery Book* discusses that text’s history in terms of women’s church leadership and South Australian popular culture.⁵³ In New Zealand, anthropologists Helen Leach and Rae Inglis’ research project on Christmas Cake finds that community cookbooks are a “highly responsive” genre, reflecting quite small degrees of change in fruitcake

⁵⁰ Bannerman, *A Friend in the Kitchen*, 25.

⁵¹ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 194.

⁵² Angela Heuzenroeder, “A Region, Its Recipes and Their Meaning: The Birth of the *Barossa Cookery Book*”, *History Australia* 3, no. 2 (2006).

⁵³ Julia Pitman, “The Green and Gold Cookery Book: Women, Faith, Fetes and Popular Culture”, *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia* 35 (2007).

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recipes.⁵⁴ Leach’s work on pavlova also draws extensively on community cookbook sources,⁵⁵ as does Symons’ research examining Antipodean baked goods.⁵⁶ My own previously published work on Australian community cookbooks has also added something to the understanding of this field, exploring the themes of childhood and women’s civic culture in the Federation era.⁵⁷

Theoretical framework

This thesis is premised on the idea that community cookbooks, as proposed by Longone, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Driver and Pilcher and as outlined above, have a distinctive culinary / social function relating to citizenship, nation-building and the civil society. It relies on the broad scholarly consensus of the last thirty years that community cookbooks are sensitive barometers of shifting culinary tastes and cultural mores. It rests upon the concept that food is a powerful player in the construction of individual and shared identities. “What we like, what we eat, how we eat it, and how we feel about it ... speak eloquently to the question of how we perceive ourselves in relation to others”, as anthropologist Sidney Mintz proposes.⁵⁸ Furthermore, it addresses the idea that “identity is produced in the context of community” and the proposition that “for many the capacity to have an identity means the ability to ... tell a story about the self

⁵⁴ Helen M Leach and Raelene Inglis, “The Archaeology of Christmas Cakes”, *Food and Foodways*, no. 11 (2003).

⁵⁵ Helen M Leach, “The Pavlova Cake: The Evolution of a National Dish”, in *Food on the Move: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery*, ed. Walker (Totnes, Devon: Prospect Books, 1996), Helen M Leach, *The Pavlova Story: A Slice of New Zealand's Culinary History* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2008).

⁵⁶ Michael Symons, “The Cleverness of the Whole Number’: Social Invention in the Golden Age of Antipodean Baking, 1890-1940”, *Petit Propos Culinaires* 85 (2008).

⁵⁷ Sarah Black, “Kiddies’ Delight’: Children and Community Cookbooks in Australia, 1900-2000”, *Food, Culture and Society* 9, no. 3 (2006) 346-54, Sarah Black, “Community Cookbooks, Women and the ‘Building of Civil Society’, Australia 1900-1938”, in *Dining on Turtles: Food Feasts and Dining in History*, ed. Kirkby and Luckins (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

⁵⁸ Sydney W Mintz, *Sweetness and Power* (New York: Viking, 1985), 4.

and related communities”.⁵⁹ I submit that the distinctive nature of community cookbooks derives from their “dual aspect”, as discussed earlier. My analysis of the community cookbook genre ultimately ties in to the sociological projects mapped by Elias and Bourdieu and to the theoretical field of the civil society.

Civilisation and the civil society

The idea of the civil society has a long pedigree in Western thought. The notion of the state as the means of civilisation of humankind was first laid out by Aristotle. Various theorists by Kant, Locke, Ferguson, Hegel and Marx, the civil society emerged as a conceptualisation of the social contract, but also as “the public sphere within which opinions are formed, developed and exchanged”.⁶⁰ The idea of the public sphere “presupposes urbanisation, the evolution of civil society and civic culture and the spread of literacy”. Sociologist Bryan Turner distinguishes the “bourgeois public sphere” from the “public sphere of the uneducated lower class”, characterised by “for example, the Chartist movement, the working-class Protestant chapels, craft guilds, and eventually trade unions”.⁶¹ In Australian community cookbooks, both these bourgeois and working class exemplars of the public sphere can be seen in operation.

In *The Civilising Process* (1939) German sociologist Norbert Elias explored the idea of civilisation, taking his cue from Kant in his view that civilisation requires a fine balance of personal liberty and restriction. This, he argued, had been developed in the West through an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century process of “psychological and behavioural transformations among the secular upper classes”. He argued that this process was “integrally tied above all to processes of internal pacification and state

⁵⁹ Nick Stevenson, “Identity”, in *Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, ed. Turner (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 278.

⁶⁰ Bryan S Turner, “Civil Society”, *ibid.*, 71.

⁶¹ Bryan S Turner, “Public Sphere”, *ibid.*, 482.

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formation”. He found that civilisation came to express the self-consciousness of the West: “It sums up everything in which western society of the last two or three centuries believes itself superior to earlier societies or ‘more primitive’ contemporary ones”.⁶² This sense of pride could be based on its level of technology, its type of manners, its development of scientific knowledge or its religious ideas and customs.⁶³ Elias’ work was seminal in exploring the tie between civil society and the State.

Voluntarism and the “good life”

Democracy is “people power”: “rule that is justified and exercised by the people for the benefit of the people”.⁶⁴ In this sense it is not surprising that there is a close connection between democracy, the civil society and the activities of a wide variety of community groups. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba argue “that the success of stable democracy [is] the result of civic institutions promoting democratic participation and creating opportunities for commitment and trust ... thus closely connected with the idea of civil society”.⁶⁵ This is notably sustained by the activity of voluntary associations, such as those responsible for the production of community cookbooks – church groups, service organisations, the Country Women’s Association, the Red Cross, everything from local progress associations to animal welfare groups to community choirs and the Scouts. Voluntary associations, as described by Engin Isin, are “the building blocks of civil society and associative democracy”.⁶⁶ Isin discusses Emile Durkheim’s theorisation of community groups and their central role in modern life, mediating and supporting “the relationship between individual and society”. A similar concept to the civil society, and

⁶² Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, ed. Dunning, et al., trans. Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 5.

⁶³ Steven Loyal, “Elias, Norbert (1897-1990)”, in *Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, 161.

⁶⁴ Frederic Volpi, “Democracy”, *ibid.*, 126-28.

⁶⁵ Bryan S Turner, “Civic Culture”, *ibid.*, 70-71.

⁶⁶ Engin Isin, “Voluntary Associations”, *ibid.*, 655.

one gaining in prominence, is the idea of the “third sector”, often taken to mean simply non-profit organisations as a sector of the economy, but more broadly interpreted to include all forms of voluntary association.⁶⁷

Closely related to the idea of democratic, voluntary agency in establishing and maintaining social networks is the idea of the “good life”. A widely used term, traceable back to the ancient Greek philosophers, the idea of “the good life” interrogates both philosophy and action; it relates to the question of community and to the importance of individual and shared ethical values. Where Aristotle saw “the good life” as being distinguished by virtuous action, the more hedonistic Epicurus considered that “the good life” was one of pursuit of pleasure and freedom from pain, which would accord with a life of virtue.⁶⁸

Skipping forward to a much more recent past, the idea of the “good life” took on particular resonance in the evolution of Australian national sentiment and the foundation of Australian federal democracy. Historian of the Australian labour movement RA Gollan has described Australian nationalism during the lead-up to Federation as “a complex of ideas and emotions ... a belief in equality of opportunity, and a conviction that in Australia [people] had a right to a good life”.⁶⁹ The idea of the good life has remained a significant component of popular understandings of what it means to be Australian.⁷⁰ In recent Australian history the “good life” has often been

⁶⁷ For a study of this concept in Australia, see Mark Lyons, *Third Sector: The Contribution of Nonprofit and Cooperative Enterprises in Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2001).

⁶⁸ The ancient Greeks discussed the concept of “eudaimonia”, a form of happiness variously described as “living well” or “doing well”. Richard Parry, *Ancient Ethical Theory* [Internet] (2009 [cited Fall 2009]); available from <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/ethics-ancient>.

⁶⁹ RA Gollan, “Nationalism, the Labour Movement and the Commonwealth, 1880-1900”, in *Australia: A Social and Political History*, ed. Greenwood (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1955), 146.

⁷⁰ Rhonda Craven and Nola Purdie, “What Does It Mean to Be an Australian? The Perceptions of Students, Senior and Prominent Australians” (paper presented at the Fourth International Biennial SELF Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2005), 5.

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identified with hedonistic, material pleasures, but in this thesis I do not use the term in that sense. When Australians talked about the “good life” during the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, they were concerned with both the material and the moral aspects of living well. Community cookbooks bear rich evidence that the “good life” involved a diet that was both physically and emotionally sustaining. This was variously framed within distinctions of class, gender, race and other cultural categories that were (in any given time and place) agreed upon as right and proper. Part of the function of community cookbooks, indeed, was as a forum for representations about rightness, propriety and goodness. The “good life” also bore a range of meanings related to community, virtue and mutual responsibility; community cookbooks were evidence of the activities and causes that Australians considered to be worthy of support. The evidence that will be adduced from community cookbooks suggests a cultural philosophy with Aristotelian as well as Epicurean elements.

Everyday life and social capital

The history of community cookbooks is in a great degree the history of everyday life. French historian Fernand Braudel, in his *Structures of Everyday Life* (1967), brought to prominence the history of the everyday, including such previously spurned subjects as dress, housing and eating - to the lasting gratitude of the food historians who have followed in his wake.⁷¹ More recently, Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari have argued eloquently for the importance of an understanding of food and its course in history.⁷² Pierre Bourdieu is another who was notably concerned with “the ordinary

⁷¹ Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible*, trans. Kochan, new ed. (London: Collins, 1981). Original title *Les structures du quotidien* (1967). Previously published as *Capitalism and Material Life, 1400-1800*. (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973).

⁷² Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari, eds., *Food: A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 1-7.

behaviour of people in everyday life”.⁷³ Influenced by Levi-Strauss, his work on aesthetics and taste is particularly valuable in setting community cookbooks in a framework of class distinction. Bourdieu also worked a great deal with the concept of social capital – the idea that social networks have a value analogous to economic capital. Robert Putnam’s work, notably in *Bowling Alone*, has focussed on social capital as a public good.⁷⁴ “According to Putnam, participation in community groups and civic associations enhances collective norms and trust and this in turn has positive effects on democratic participation and collective well-being. ... participation in voluntary associations [is] an index of social capital”.⁷⁵

Separate spheres

One of the recurring themes of the thesis is women’s participation in society. To this extent I have also had recourse to the organising category of “separate spheres”. This doctrine, much challenged in feminist theory, is useful as a term for an ideology which helped to shape women’s lives in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries.⁷⁶ This thesis, along with many other source materials, suggests that the porosity of the spheres was, in an odd sort of way, one of their key characteristics. The grey boundaries between the public and the private were areas in which women, even within the restrictions of social expectation, could have a great deal of agency. Australian feminist historian Sue Rowley notes that precisely the period of the late nineteenth century saw an increase in this porosity, arguing that “the idea of discrete domains ... masked the

⁷³ Derek Robbins, “Bourdieu, Pierre (1930-2002)”, in *Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, 45.

⁷⁴ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

⁷⁵ Jeff Manza, “Social Capital”, in *Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, 558-59.

⁷⁶ See, for example, Amanda Vickery, “Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History”, in *The Feminist History Reader*, ed. Morgan (Routledge, 2006), 74-86.

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extent to which the relations between men and women were characterised by uncertainty, anxiety and change”.⁷⁷

Methodology

Much of the extant research using community cookbooks makes close analyses of small numbers of primary texts. In her review of *Recipes for Reading*, cultural geographer Barbara Shortridge suggests that the future for this field lies in broader survey. “[N]ow we need to devise ways to utilize larger samples ordered through time and space”.⁷⁸ In this spirit (if on a different continent) I have undertaken a historical review of community cookbooks in Australia, followed by an analysis of their discursive richness, with reference to current scholarship.

My methodology involved, firstly, compilation of a database of Australian community cookbooks currently housed in public repositories. To this I added my own small personal library and an even smaller number of texts in the private possession of others. This database amounts to something in excess of 1,000 individual titles (not including multiple editions of many titles).⁷⁹ It can fairly be assumed that this represents only a portion of the community cookbooks still available in Australia; significant numbers of other titles are likely present amongst private cookbook collections and/or on the second-hand and antiquarian book markets. This again would represent only a portion of the community cookbooks ever produced in this country. Nonetheless, I believe that the database forms a sufficient sample of community cookbooks through time and space to afford a representative picture of the state of community cookbooks in Australian

⁷⁷ Susan Rowley, “Things a Bushwoman Cannot Do”, in *Debutante Nation: Feminism Contests the 1890s*, ed. Magarey, et al. (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 185-98.

⁷⁸ Barbara G Shortridge, review of Bower, ed, *Recipes for Reading* (1997), *American Studies* 40, no. 3 (1999): 177.

⁷⁹ Available on request.

history. It is fortunate that Australia's copyright-deposit libraries have preserved a surprising number of community cookbooks. This suggests that fair numbers of community cookbooks have historically been considered important enough for someone to send a copy off to fulfil the requirements of copyright deposit legislation. Many have had the good fortune to be regarded as fully-fledged "books", not mere pamphlets. Furthermore, since the 1980s the collections policies of increasing numbers of municipal libraries and tertiary institutions have come to reflect community and academic interest in cookery and in "history from the ground up", and hence have increasingly included cookery texts, among them at least some community cookbooks.

Secondly, I created a research template. This tool of analysis was intended to expedite consistent analysis of a sample of many texts, identifying a range of cultural and culinary themes.⁸⁰ Specific foci include the rise of the curry in Australian recipe collections; references to 'ethnic' foods; signifiers of region and country; use of key ingredients such as garlic, mincemeat and alcohol; developments in domestic technologies; the decline in home baking; and the changing roles of men, women and children in relation to food and the kitchen.

Thirdly, I used the research template to guide my analysis of some 300 texts drawn from the database. Texts were chosen in the first instance with regard to their place of origin and their year of publication, with the aim of covering a cross-section of the nation. I also tried to address a wide selection of different types of community groups. I aimed to research the best-known, most long-lived and most influential community cookbooks of each state / territory, as well as a good range of less well known texts and community groups.

⁸⁰ See Appendix 1.

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The time period 1890-1980 represents the years of the birth and flowering of the genre. The year 1891 marked the first known appearance of a community cookbook in the Australian marketplace and 1894 the first known home-grown publication. By 1980 the community cookbook was well entrenched as an Australian phenomenon. It has continued unabated to the present day, but the major themes with which this type of cookbook is associated are apparent prior to 1980. After 1980, the sheer numbers of books available for analysis increase exponentially. To have included this time period in my terms of reference would have greatly increased the difficulty of covering a reasonable cross-section, without adding significantly to the richness of the findings. I have, however, allowed myself forays into more recent years when I considered it justified by the particular insight a more recent book would afford. I believe that the chosen time span is the most workable for a project which aims to make a broad-based exposition of a little-recognised genre. The community cookbook is, as the resulting analysis will demonstrate, significant in its ability to reflect, through food culture, the social history of particular times and places in this country.

One of the first questions which arose was the issue of appropriate interpretive strategies. Collector John Hoyle maintains that “the wealth of information – if you have been reading a cook book correctly – ... in non-cooking terms, is wonderful”.⁸¹ He is right to emphasise the importance of “correct reading”, but what are the most effective ways of reading cookbooks for socio-historical information? How does one best extract this wealth of information for research purposes? Jane C Bush suggests that cookbooks are highly flexible and variable as historical sources, revealing “insight into broad

⁸¹ Dent, “Old Tucker”, unnumbered.

cultural patterns or into the tastes of individual households”.⁸² Cookbooks can be both surveyed and deeply analysed; each method reveals its own kind of information. It is when the insights of both approaches are pooled that the cookbook becomes a powerful source of information about culture and identity in different times and places.

Recipes for Reading suggests a range of different approaches for close reading of cookery texts, designed to throw light on them as community histories, women’s “autobiographies” and related areas.⁸³ Close analysis, delving deeply into a cookbook’s structure and narrative, can reveal information about many less tangible social and historical issues. Social values, food values, family structures, labour division within families, concepts of work and dignity, ingredient availability, nutritional theories, ethnicity, local, regional and national cultures - all are reflected in these humble, so frequently stained and bespattered documents.

Broad mapping of the field provides a context in which to place such close analysis. Shortridge considers that utilising large samples is the way to make “revealing observations” on cultural regions.⁸⁴ In common with her, I consider it the essential basis for useful conclusions to be made from this field.

Bower notes the complexity of the picture generated from a large-scale investigation of one state’s community cookbooks.⁸⁵ To take an example from one particular field of cultural history, Guibernau and Rex quote Anthony Cohen’s conviction that “the apparently monolithic or generalised character of ethnicity at the collective level ...

⁸² Jane Busch, “Learning by Pinches and Dashes: Using Cookbooks as Research Documents”, *History News* 52, no. 2 (1997): 24.

⁸³ Bower, *Recipes for Reading*.

⁸⁴ Shortridge, review of Bower, ed, *Recipes for Reading* (1997), 178.

⁸⁵ Anne Lieberman Bower, “Tamale Loaf and Sombrero Beef Dip: Mexican Foods in Texas Community Cookbooks [Draft]” (paper presented at the Fifth Conference of the Americas, Universidad de las Americas - Puebla, 17-20 October 2001).

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does not pre-empt the continual reconstruction of ethnicity at a personal level”.⁸⁶ It is this flexibility, this fluidity, which is so clearly reflected in community cookbooks, and which Bower rightly identifies as a complicating factor in synthesising the results of large-scale analysis. Community cookbooks are amazingly effective in portraying the idiosyncrasies, the exceptions, the unique niches of Australian community life, and it would be impoverishing to ignore these. Within the context of a broader synthesis, an approach which validates close analysis and individual example, attending to divergences and anomalies as well as the “mainstream”, gives the richest and most textured picture possible of this vastly diverse, sometimes unruly genre.

Busch emphasises the importance of several further steps in using cookbooks as research documents. She stresses the significance of a cookbook’s popularity; its objectives; explicit and implicit messages (also known as direct and embedded discourse); the relationship of the author to the intended audience (and relevant class, gender and ethnicity issues); the context of time and place; and verification through “comparison with other cookbooks and other types of documents”.⁸⁷ These lines of inquiry help to build a broad picture of the “life” of Australian community cookbooks (and thereby of the cooks who produced them), and a reflection of some of the major themes of twentieth-century Australian life. In particular, it yields insights into changes in gender and class roles, the technological revolution which underpinned these in the kitchen, and changes in Australian experiences of and attitudes towards ethnicity, regionalism and nationality.

⁸⁶ Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex, eds., *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), 4.

⁸⁷ Busch, “Learning by Pinches and Dashes”, 23.

The structure of the thesis

I have sought in this thesis to approach community cookbooks in two separate but complementary ways. Firstly, community cookbooks are interesting as artefacts in themselves, as a genre with distinctive formal features which give rise to particular discursive potentialities. Secondly, they are significant as textual embodiments of social and cultural history. Their discursive potentialities make them a unique form of primary source material.

To honour this twin focus, the thesis is structured to consider firstly the formal elements of the community cookbook and secondly its discursive richness. Section One attempts a taxonomy of the genre, dissecting its formal features and historical evolution. Section Two delves into the riches of the community cookbook from a historical standpoint, structured according to the three traditional pillars of cultural history - gender, class and ethnicity. Section Three explores a selection of topics with specific resonances in Australian cultural history – namely, the issue of technology, the question of regionalism and the subject of the Australian civil society and the twentieth-century nation-building project. At the core of the investigation is the question of how community cookbooks have contributed to the building and maintaining of community institutions and community identities, and thereby to the creation and maintenance of the civil society in Australia.

Defence of my methods

Cookbooks, as typically feminine texts and as the workhorses of that epicentre of the private sphere, the kitchen, were long deemed too lowly for public attention. Consequently, it is quite true that public library collections are often patchy and incomplete, presenting difficulties in obtaining an appropriately representative sample. As Higman cautions, “the interpretation of trends in quality and content of cookbooks

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must be approached cautiously, bearing in mind the poor survival chances of this literature”.⁸⁸ However, bibliographic research indicates that this difficulty need not prevent researchers from finding valid historical information in this genre. A wide variety of times, places, community groups and causes is represented in those community cookbooks available in Australian public repositories. Many of the major texts, such as the *Presbyterian* or the *Green and Gold*, are available in enough different editions to make tracing over time a viable activity.

Kaplan et al point out some of the limitations of the genre. For instance they argue that, in any cookbook, foods are presented in a context which potentially “conveys little of the cultural and even less of the behavioural context of ethnicity or foodways”.

Cookbooks may offer few clues to the significance of particular dishes and often ignore regional variations, instead presenting one version of a dish as representative of all.

Even worse, published recipes may contain inauthentic shortcuts or substitutions. “In short, published recipes are not always reliable versions of home-cooked ethnic foods, even though they may accurately reflect the shortcuts some cooks take if pressed for time”.⁸⁹ This concern for the idea of authenticity has been largely discredited in more recent years, due to its subjective, static, ultimately retrospective stance. The idea of authenticity assumes one authoritative, ideal version of a dish and denies the possibility of either individual variation or culinary evolution. In any case, it does not pose a particular problem in my project of overviewing the history of community cookbooks themselves. The idiosyncrasies of individual cooks’ recipes can reveal change and continuity in ethnic communities, and flux in the markers of ethnicity and community

⁸⁸ Higman, “Cookbooks and Caribbean Cultural Identity”, 78.

⁸⁹ Anne R Kaplan et al., “On Ethnic Foodways”, in *The Taste of American Place: A Reader on Regional and Ethnic Foods*, ed. Shortridge and Shortridge (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 133.

culture over time. This is part of how community cookbooks document change and continuity on a particularly local and specific basis.

Lynne Ireland asks cautionary questions about the completeness and accuracy of the foodways autobiography provided by the community cookbook. She sees community cookbooks as providing insights into food preferences, cooking methods, taboos, fashions and traditions, and settlement and assimilation patterns, but is unsure how accurate such insights necessarily are. This issue may be more relevant to my analysis of the discourses of Australian community cookbooks. However, Ireland's concern with community cookbooks is more ethnological in nature than mine. She wishes to document the cultures of specific groups through their compiled cookbooks, rather than to interrogate the genre itself. Ireland concludes that, while community cookbooks are "no replacement for a first hand foodways investigation" they are a "fairly accurate guide" to a group's foodways, creating "a composite picture of what they allegedly eat".⁹⁰ The word "allegedly" looms rather large here, underlining Ireland's doubts about the veracity of the autobiographical statements made in such texts. And she is right, in that people can and do dress up the narratives of their lives and their food. This ever-present potential gap between fantasy and reality carries its own layer of meanings. We generally aim to present ourselves from our best angle, whenever we are aware of presenting ourselves at all. Sociologist Anne Murcott similarly notes the problem that what cookery books portray cannot necessarily be taken at face value. "It cannot be assumed that they are a straightforward representation of what actually took place in kitchens in the past, any more than they are in kitchens of the much more recent present." So, for instance, when Mrs Beeton was nominated the most popular cookbook

⁹⁰ Ireland, "The Compiled Cookbook as Foodways Autobiography", 109.

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in a British Food Enquiry carried out in the late 1930s, the writer of the resulting report considered it likely that “she receive[d] more lip service than regular consultation“.⁹¹

Cookbooks tell us what people were prepared to publish, but not necessarily what they actually cooked. Bannerman laments, “There are substantial records of published recipes ... but very little reliable evidence of what recipes people actually *used*”.⁹²

There are various ways, albeit not necessarily foolproof, to sort out the sheep from the goats. For instance, as Busch suggests, customisation of cookbooks with notes and insertions reveals much about patterns of use. This is a downside of the copyright-deposit system in Australian libraries; cookbooks acquired under this system typically have never been used in private kitchens.⁹³ More interesting are the older cookbooks which either arrived in state and national libraries by a more circuitous route, having first belonged in individual ownership, or those that once belonged to circulating libraries and could be borrowed for home use. Such texts do often display the evidence of earlier use in the form of notes and insertions - plus the ubiquitous splodges of long-ago cake batters.

With the more long-lived cookery texts, noting changes from one edition to another can throw light on which recipes made the grade and which did not. This is not necessarily an indication of quality, however. It might rather reveal when a recipe toppled off the wave of fashion, or ascended to its crest, or it might reflect the interpersonal politics of the book’s creation. In general, however, indicators such as recipe frequency and duration over time are among the best indicators of genuine popularity and use. Though it has been suggested that community cookbook revisions consist of an unchanged

⁹¹ W Crawford, *The People's Food* (London: Heinemann, 1938), 113. Quoted in Murcott, “Raw, Cooked and Proper Meals at Home”, 225.

⁹² Bannerman, *Acquired Tastes*, 143.

⁹³ Busch, “Learning by Pinches and Dashes”, 24.

original text plus an appendix of “new” recipes, and indeed sometimes this was the case, it was not typical of the major long-lived examples. The *Presbyterian Cookery Book*, as the main example of its kind, has undergone at least two complete revisions in its lifetime. Certainly by the 1920s recipes were being selectively deleted as well as added. Similar processes can be observed in the *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, the *WMU Cookery Book* and the *PWMU Cookery Book*. There is evidence of recipe deletion in successive editions of the *Coronation Cookery Book*, but on the whole the CWA groups tended to publish new books rather than revise the old.

Bannerman suggests that the community cookbook is, of all the different genres of cookery text in Australia, probably the most reliable source of actively used recipes.⁹⁴ Professionally published cookbooks are more likely either to be didactic in nature (as with the products of the Domestic Science movement, and, more recently, the large body of cooking-school cookbooks released by various women’s magazines), or to represent purely commercial, image-based judgements of recipe popularity. Community cookbooks have the advantage of relying primarily or solely on amateur, practical cooks. Hence, they should reveal more consistently the actual food preferences of the people they represent. Note, however, that this may not always equate directly to “those recipes actually used”. Recipe donors may feel tempted to submit recipes they feel they ought to be *seen* to use, in preference to the ones they actually use. This, then, represents a rather different window into their culinary lives - a source of information about their food dreams and nightmares, their sense of community expectation, and their idea of culinary aspiration. This variation notwithstanding, community cookbooks are a potent source material for the historical researcher whose interests lie more in

⁹⁴ Bannerman, *Acquired Tastes*, 49.

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“real” community food culture than in the official line touted by culinary experts and professionals.

Is a study of community cookbooks equal to the type of data that Murcott calls for, “based on direct observation of what people routinely actually do as well as that based on what they routinely say about their activities”?⁹⁵ Perhaps they do not equate to a “fly on the wall” perspective. But if community cookbooks do not show us exactly what people, in the past, routinely did in the kitchen, they are an excellent source material for finding out what people had to say on the subject. Community cookbooks represent one of the best genres (along with personal recipe notebooks and newspaper correspondence columns) for discerning the truth of what and how people cooked. Available over a wide geographic and temporal range, from a truly amazing plethora of different social groups and community institutions, representing a variety of age, class and ethnic groupings, they are among the best resources available to the cultural historian and to the food historian. The fact that they have been much overlooked is partly due to the lack of scholarship drawing attention to their riches. This thesis aims to redress that situation.

Potential problems

Community cookbooks have drawbacks as social history sources. To the extent that their creators are driven by non-culinary motivations (eg, commercial, status, personal) they may be duplicitous, or at least they may stray from what the researcher might wish were their central agenda.

However, by acknowledging that any cookbook will contain recipes chosen on a wide range of different bases, the researcher may be able to use this information to advantage.

⁹⁵ Murcott, “Raw, Cooked and Proper Meals at Home”, 229-30.

Recipes make it into community cookbooks because they taste good; because they are easy; because they are “all the rage”; because they were contributed by the editor’s sister-in-law; because they were needed to fill in an empty page, because they appeared in this month’s *Women’s Weekly* magazine and hence seemed reliable enough, or for other reasons the researcher may never divine. However, the totality of the book still offers a window into a kitchen, a community, a way of dealing with food that reflects the cookbook creators’ lives and worldviews.

Community cookbooks may not allow researchers to draw hard and fast conclusions about specific food-related topics, but as images of the broad sweep of a society they are richly illustrative. If approached with appropriate rigour and using an effective balance of survey and close analysis, they yield valid insights in both broader and more specific matters of culture, identity and the foodways of a group.

Limitations of the thesis

This thesis is not a comprehensive representation of Australian community cookbooks, even of those available in public repositories – the number of texts is simply too great for the scope of this work.

Many interesting avenues of inquiry had to be set aside due to considerations of space. Historical work on some of the original community cookbooks; study of cake (a very significant subject in the Australian home cooking tradition); an exposition of the history of Australian curry (a hybrid and, some would say, fearful beast) and discussion of “mock” foods and their significance in Australian culinary history are just a few of the remaining subjects that promise fruitful returns. I would have liked to situate the community cookbook more squarely in the history of the family in Australia; this would be a useful future project.

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Aims of the thesis

This thesis takes the proposition that community cookbooks fulfil a distinctive civilising project, and tests it in relation to the evolution of Australian social culture in the twentieth century.

This thesis contributes, principally, to the understanding of the community cookbook genre and its discursive richness. I aim to make apparent the possibilities of community cookbooks as a tool for interrogating various aspects of history and cultural life. This thesis enriches scholarly understanding of the community cookbook as a genre by further elucidating its characteristics and research potential (as relevant to Australia) and by providing a comparison to the similar bodies of cookery literature in other nations. It enhances the scholarship on cookbooks generally, by providing an in-depth analysis of a particular genre of the culinary canon.

This project represents a contribution to the written history of Australian food culture.

Bannerman suggests that “[a] thorough analysis of the historical foundations of Australian food culture has yet to be undertaken”. He proposes three main areas:

- 1) “how ideas about food and cooking were developed, transmitted and shared”,
- 2) examination of “spatial, temporal and social features – the importance of distance, place, events and social circumstances in Australia’s culinary experience”, and
- 3) consideration of symbolic content – “the construction of culinary identity and the relationship of food and eating practices to other areas of cultural expression” (for example, cultural icons, legends and the “Australian way of life”).⁹⁶

This thesis contributes something to the scope of such a project by examining in detail the workings and history of a particular medium for transmitting and sharing ideas about food and cooking.

⁹⁶ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 42-43.

With particular reference to nation-building and citizenship, this thesis illuminates a particular way in which “ordinary Australians” – primarily, though not only, women – were able to participate in the building of the civil society through their creation, selling, purchasing and use of community cookbooks. Recent scholarship has identified a lack of theory on the relationship between women and the civil society.⁹⁷ This thesis throws a little light on the subject. Community cookbooks offer a window on the historical tensions for women between the public and private spheres. They are, if you like, an easement zone, in which the private sphere of kitchens, food and domestic duties comes in contact with the public world of publishing and fundraising. They represent a liminal space between the public and private worlds, in which certain border negotiations can take place.

An analysis of community cookbooks in Australian life reveals much about the importance of “distance, place, events and social circumstance” in the Australian culinary experience. Chapter Two discusses the formal elements of the Australian community cookbook, and Chapter Three outlines a range of subtypes of the genre, with particular focus on changes over time. Chapters Four, Five and Six discuss the community cookbook in the light of ethnicity, class and gender issues. Chapter Seven addresses the theme of technology and Chapter Eight that of regionality. The close relationship between community cookbooks and the discursive field of identity is explored throughout the thesis, culminating in Chapter Nine, which reflects on community cookbooks, nation-building and the making of the civil society.

⁹⁷ Jude Howell and Diane Mulligan, eds., *Gender and Civil Society: Transcending Boundaries* (Routledge, 2005), xiv.

Chapter 2

“These Unpretentious Little Books”: Defining the Genre

[T]he compilers of ‘The Housewife’s Friend’ have endeavoured to offer to the public a Book to meet the requirements of their own district. All the Recipes have been tested by the Ladies who have kindly supplied them, and found to be excellent. The proceeds of the sale of the Book are intended to go towards liquidating the debt on the Church of England Parish Hall in Grafton, and so worthy an object should meet with the co-operation of all.¹

The Housewife’s Friend (1895)

It has been reliably reported that some people worked, ate and slept Staff College during their 1978 stay in Queenscliff. This book is a collection of favourite recipes of wives, staff and students present in 1978. ... all the committee members willingly combined their talents to prepare a Cook Book which will provide both funds for local charities and the chance for you all to continue ‘eating’ Staff College in the years to come.²

College Cuisine (1978)

Defining the Australian community cookbook

This chapter attempts, as truly and completely as possible, to define the Australian manifestation of the community cookbook genre. By considering the genre in terms of two very simple core components - the principle of community and the use of recipes - and by evaluating various other issues of form and content, I aim to elucidate the features of the community cookbook that allow it to be “a powerful form of cultural expression and a vehicle for promoting social cohesion”.³

¹ Doberer, *The Housewife's Friend*, preface.

² *College Cuisine*, (Queenscliff, VIC: Queenscliff College, 1978), unnumbered.

³ Driver, “Cookbooks and Community-Building”, 1.

Chapter 2 – Defining the genre

Though there has been much description of this genre, there has been relatively little in the way of definition and without a clear definition there is little basis for meaningful discussion. I will, therefore, begin by discussing in detail the features of community cookbooks as they appear in Australia. (These may or may not be the same as community cookbooks in other countries.) What are the parts, features and hallmarks of this genre? In examining these, there begin to emerge some of the characteristics that make them distinctive as primary sources for the study of Australian social and cultural history.

Other names for community cookbooks

Community cookbooks are commonly described by other qualifying adjectives, including compiled, regional, charitable, democratic and fundraising. Each of these offers a different clue to the nature of the genre, but none captures it entirely.

“Fundraising cookery books” is probably the most common alternative name, but as Bannerman notes, besides fundraising “they may have met other needs as well, such as providing common-interest group activities in which members could participate and from which all could benefit. Usually the result was supposed to be a recipe collection especially relevant to the needs of the group”.⁴ One example is the *Darwin Gardeners’ Gourmet Guide*, featuring recipes for garden produce. Its foreword commented not on the charitable cause espoused, but on the process of creating the book: “It is our hope that you enjoy using this book as much as we have enjoyed putting it together”.⁵

The term “democratic” cookbook describes another particular feature of this genre. Its ideal is to represent the cookery and the values of the people of a particular community.

Community cookbooks are typically constructed in such a way that no contributor has

⁴ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 70.

⁵ *Darwin Gardeners’ Gourmet Guide*, (Darwin: Members of the Darwin Garden Club, 1978), acknowledgements.

any ostensible culinary authority over any other contributor. Democracy, according to Volpi, carries the epistemological implication that “as a matter of principle, no citizen can claim to know better than his or her neighbour what is ... desirable”.⁶ This has its own expression in the term “democratic cookbook”, in which the recipes of the many are presented without fear or favour. This may be contrasted with the epistemological implications of the term “charity”, which implies the (intendedly benign) power of one group over another, and hence a hierarchy of cultural authority. A “charitable cookbook” might be expected to foreground its improvement agenda, certainly in social terms and possibly also in culinary ones, over the idea of any democratic genesis. The truth is, though, that the great majority of community cookbooks balance these and other imperatives; hence these terms are at best only partial descriptions of the genre.

Scholarly descriptions and definitions

The *Encyclopaedia of Food and Culture* defines community cookbooks as “a unique genre of culinary literature ... produced collaboratively by volunteer women from charitable organizations, churches, synagogues, heritage associations, clubs, schools, and museums, among others”. The entry notes that “they represent the group’s members and cuisine”.⁷ This is a good starting point. Driver makes it clear that community cookbooks are “always a group effort”. Her definition is largely procedural: “recipes are solicited from the community, the recipes selected and edited, usually by a committee, then the book sold by members of the group, usually (but not always) with the purpose of raising money for a particular cause”.⁸ Here, quite plainly, is the core: community groups working for a cause, and recipes as their tool.

⁶ Volpi, “Democracy”, in *Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, 128.

⁷ Linda Murray Berzok, “Cookbooks, Community”, in *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture*, ed. Katz and Weaver (New York: Scribner, 2003), 456.

⁸ Driver, “Cookbooks and Community-Building”, 1.

Chapter 2 – Defining the genre

So quotidian is this genre, so familiar and taken for granted, that the majority of scholars to have written about it have felt little need to define it. Accordingly, many scholars have tended to describe the genre in terms of their own particular interests, or according to individual outstanding characteristics of community cookbooks' appearance and function.

Bibliographer Margaret Cook was the first to describe community cookbooks as a distinct genre “reflect[ing] the cooking fashions of the period ... more accurately than the standard works by professional authors”. She found them particularly notable for their documentation of the development of technologies and the use of regional or now-archaic food sources and preparation methods.⁹ Bower remarks on their ubiquity: “almost everyone owns or has seen community cookbooks”. Bower’s research focus on women’s writing informs her investigation of the community cookbook as “a text that enacts within it a group of women’s mental, theoretical, thoughtful positions or statements”.¹⁰

Bannerman’s concern with the development of a discourse of food in the Australian print media prompts him to focus on editorial qualities in his discussion of the genre. “Some were carefully compiled, with every attempt to keep out recipes that might prove unreliable or unpopular, and were maintained over a period of years to reflect changes in available foods and technology and changes in the culinary interests of their members. ... Others show little evidence of critical editing”.¹¹ He notes also that their culinary content is distinctive: for example, community cookbooks typically contain many more sweet recipes than their professionally published counterparts. (This seems to have its origin in community demand. Old community cookbooks very consistently

⁹ Cook, *America's Charitable Cooks*, 7.

¹⁰ Bower, *Recipes for Reading*, 7.

¹¹ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 70.

show more wear and tear, as well as more annotation, in the sweet recipe sections, suggesting that cakes, puddings and biscuits were the recipes most likely to be used by the owners of the books – a point discussed later in this chapter.)

The *Encyclopaedia of Food and Culture* gives a handy starting point for understanding the nature of this genre, but its definition, in my view, bears a degree of adjustment. The descriptive and definitive statements of the various scholars to have written on this topic are valid and valuable, but are frequently geared towards specific research interests. In the following discussion of the two essential components of the community cookbook, I aim to tease out its unique characteristics and derive the basis for a more comprehensive definition.

Core definition

As noted before, the core elements of the community cookbook are community groups and recipes. Closer understanding of the form and function of this genre will rest upon a socio-historical elaboration of these elements.

1. Community and community groups

Community cookbooks derive from and are embedded in particular community groups. Driver notes that they are “produced cooperatively and locally, for the community by the community”.¹² Amitai Etzioni, author of *A New Golden Rule* (1996), finds that community can be defined with reasonable precision. “Community is defined by two characteristics: first, a web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationships that often crisscross and reinforce one another ... and second, a measure of

¹² Driver, “Cookbooks and Community-Building”, 1.

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commitment to a set of shared values, norms and meanings, and a shared history and identity – in short, to a particular culture”.¹³

In historical overview, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Three, community cookbooks reflect the development of a multitude of community groups. This expresses the modern situation that Etzioni describes, where communities are multiple, limited in scope and variably defined - for example, work, ethnic and religious. Membership of multiple “communities of ‘mutual aid and memory’” protects the individual from “both moral oppression and ostracism”. There will always be another community group to fall back on in case of need, as “community members have multiple sources of attachments”. In this way Etzioni characterises the formation of a modern community typology.¹⁴

Community groups may be geographically defined, and typically there is at least some geographic element to the definition of the group. It is relevant to note that there are few international community cookbooks. They may also, more specifically, be communities of common interest, such as church groups, embroidery circles, football clubs or school communities. Not just the food culture of the community group is represented. More broadly, the group’s social and political outlook, class affiliations, gender norms and other aspects of its position within the fabric of society are articulated. At the same time, community cookbooks are more than expressions of community feeling and social culture. They are also a form of community action. As historic records, they are representatives not just of the group but also of its cause, and they may represent a very powerful practical contribution to a cause.

Most frequently (though not always) they exist because of the need to raise money for a community purpose. Community groups of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries

¹³ Amitai Etzioni, *The New Golden Rule: Community and Morality in a Democratic Society* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996), 127.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 128.

commonly produced cookbooks to fund their own projects, such as those great early proponents in the PWMU, who used community cookbooks to fund Presbyterian mission work. The great variety of Auxiliaries, Friends-Of, Ladies Guilds and similar subsidiary groups typically aimed to raise money for the main group and its projects. Sometimes (particularly during or in the aftermath of war) a community cookbook was created to raise money for a cause with which the group was not directly associated. For example, the *Miss Australia Exclusive Recipe Book* (1947) was sold in aid of the Returned Servicemen's League (RSL) and the Kindergarten Union.¹⁵ The foreword of the 1979 *Presbyterian Cookery Book*, which in general directed all funds to Presbyterian mission projects, noted that "a special edition ... known as *The Belgian Edition* ... [had been] printed to help 'Brave little Belgium' during the First World War", in view of the well publicised war-related suffering in that country. This was the only time when funds from the *Presbyterian* were used for an outside cause.¹⁶ Annie King's *Australian Missionary Cookery Book* (1915) was initially also diverted to "the Belgian Need". Only later, as the '*Carry On*' *Cookery Book* (in which form it "carried on" for at least three decades), did its proceeds go to mission work as originally intended.¹⁷ Historian Melanie Oppenheimer notes the importance of the Second World War in promoting civilian community projects, which had a significant carry-over after the war, as people wanted to "carry on" with the good works they had begun.¹⁸ The First World War can be seen to have had the same effect.

¹⁵ *The Miss Australia Exclusive Recipe Book*, (Adelaide: Commercial Publications of SA, 1947), preface.

¹⁶ *The Presbyterian Cookery Book of Good and Tried Recipes / Compiled for the PWMU Standing Committee of the Presbyterian Women's Association*, rev. metric ed. (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1979), v.

¹⁷ Annie J King, *The Australian Missionary Cookery Book: A Collection of Recipes Simple, Practical and Up-To-Date* (Sydney: Marchant & Co, 1915). Annie J King, '*Carry on*' *Cookery Book*, 4th ed. (Parramatta: Cumberland Argus, 1920).

¹⁸ Melanie Oppenheimer, *Volunteering: Why We Can't Survive without It* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2008), 41.

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However attenuated the social links become, the basic principle of fundraising by the community for the community holds true. The makers of the *Green and Gold Cookery Book* were succinct on the subject of this underlying purpose, stating in their foreword: “King’s College, like all living growing institutions, still needs money, which these unpretentious little books help to supply”.¹⁹ Though community cookbooks can be, and often are, described as humble and unassuming, such terms belie their significance. A community cookbook can be conceived, published, sold, and all its copies ultimately disposed of without ever glimpsing the mainstream media, a bookshop or a library, yet its influence *within* its community can nonetheless be profound. This is due both to the social connectivity it promotes and to the money it raises - enough, perhaps, for “improvements to the Kindergarten”,²⁰ to repair a church “destroyed by a Cyclone”,²¹ or to support a club for “factory girls and others”.²²

Very often, community cookbook projects derive from deep social and financial need, as their origins in the American Civil War suggest. It is no coincidence that they are traced to the 1890s in Australia – years of vicious drought and debilitating economic recession that left many communities reeling. *A Voice from the Bush*, one of the very early Australian community cookbooks, has a “back story” which exemplifies the issues of the era.

¹⁹ *Green and Gold Cookery Book: Containing Many Good and Proved Recipes*, 4th ed. (Adelaide: RM Osborne, 1928), unnumbered.

²⁰ {Untitled} / *Darlington Kindergarten Mothers' Club*, (Darlington, SA: Darlington Kindergarten Mothers' Club, 1964), unnumbered.

²¹ *Guild Cookery Book / Holy Trinity Church, Port Melbourne, Ladies' Working Guild*, (Port Melbourne: Riall Brothers, 1909), unnumbered.

²² “The Lady Victoria Buxton Girls’ Club Association (in aid of the building fund of which the Kookaburra Cookery Book is established) is worthy of the help of all who have the well-being of their fellow-citizens at heart. The Girls’ Club was founded in 1898 by Lady Victoria Buxton to provide rooms where factory girls and others might meet for amusement and instruction – the only other playground for these girls is the street. The Club keeps them from this, and the undesirable companions they would inevitably find there.” *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (Melbourne: EW Cole, 1911), unnumbered.

A Voice from the Bush came from All Saints' Anglican Church in Clermont, central Queensland. Tough economic and climatic times bit very hard in this region. The bank crash of 1893 led to closure of eight out of eleven banks in the colony of Queensland. This was shortly followed by a crippling extended drought, which, according to contemporary Anglican Synod reports, led to the death of most of the livestock in the Clermont district. In addition, the mining industry, of great local significance, was depressed by low international metal prices. For local community institutions, even significant ones like the church, the 1890s were difficult. Few wealthy churchgoers lived in the Clermont region, and the Church of England diocese, new and badly underfunded, was in a desperate situation.²³ All Saints' church, established a few years previously in 1878, needed to do some effective fundraising if it was to survive at all.

The cookbook was compiled by Mrs Henry Coldham (*nee* Helen Gordon Moffitt), the wife of a local grazier. It was produced some time between 1892, when Mr Coldham took up co-ownership of Wolfgang Station, and 1903, when the Coldhams moved on to the Barcaldine area, but its reference to "the Colony" of Queensland suggests a pre-Federation origin.²⁴ Coinciding with the bank crash, the drought and the depression, these were hard years, but *A Voice from the Bush* helped All Saints' to get over the financial line. No records remain of the cookbook's particular level of success (early church records would have been destroyed in the catastrophic Clermont flood of 1916), but the fact that a copy of the book resides today at the James Cook University Library in Townsville is some indication it probably did reasonably well. (Many copies of the cookbook were doubtless swept away in the flood as well, so its survival is doubly

²³ Keith Rayner, "The History of the Church of England in Queensland" (PhD, University of Queensland, 1962), 119.

²⁴ The title page states that Mrs Coldham "will be pleased to send a copy to any part of the Colony on receipt of 1/7 in stamps".

impressive.) The continued existence of All Saints' Church in Clermont must also be regarded as a sign that the cookbook made a sufficient contribution to its cause.

Where fundraising is not the primary purpose, a community cookbook may originate in the desire of a group to celebrate its existence and / or its chosen cause. Community cookbooks may explicitly focus on religious, ethnic or other aspects of group identity. They can represent a group-bonding or learning exercise, as with the *Torres Strait Cookbook*, which was produced as part of a senior English project at the Thursday Island State High School.²⁵ Many community cookbooks display a balance of motivations, such as *Afternoon Tea with the 'PHE'*, (an embroidery guild involved in the Parliament House Embroidery in the 1980s), which was published, its makers remarked, "partly to raise funds for the ACT Guild's contribution to the PHE project and partly to prove that we are dedicated and competent cooks as well as embroiderers extraordinaire (when we find time to demonstrate the fact!)".²⁶ This frequent refrain – the aim of contributing to a cause as well as creating a useful body of recipes – is ample testament to the fundamentally dual character of the community cookbook.

2. Recipes

Community cookbooks are predicated on a concern for food, cooking, kitchens, domestic life and home management. Through the recipes they contain and the way in which these recipes are presented, community cookbooks encode the foodways as well as the socio-cultural outlook of a group. Viewed collectively, community cookbooks represent the foodways of the nation. Change over time in recipes and modes of organisation reflects change in society - for example, evolving domestic and food-production technologies, changing gender roles, changing ethnic makeup and changes

²⁵ *Torres Strait Cookbook*, (Thursday Island, QL: Thursday Island State High School, 1987).

²⁶ Libby Fenwick-Williams, *Afternoon Tea with the "PHE"* (Canberra: The Embroiderers' Guild, ACT Inc, 1987), v.

in class structure. Community cookbooks are also differentiated across space, reflecting variations in regional subcultures, class, technologies of transport and other factors.

Community cookbooks' most frequently invoked virtue is the practicality of their recipes. Being "tried and tested" by other home cooks, under the conditions of home and family life, the implication is that they may be relied upon. *The Liberal's Cookery Book*, in that vein, gave a recipe for Home-Made Bread which started rather fearsomely with "Take a handful of hops..." but ended with the reassurance that "No one need have any fear of trying this recipe, as it is the result of practical experience".²⁷ The most successful, long-lived titles such as the *Presbyterian* tended to trade strongly on this feature, but it was common to a great many community cookbooks.

Community cookbooks may be specialist or generalist in their recipe content. Where a group is defined by cultural factors such as ethnicity, region, or special interest these factors may influence the choice of a specialist topic. For example, many community ethnic associations have produced cookbooks showcasing their ethnic cuisine. These may be intended for use within the group, to preserve culinary traditions, and/or to share the group's food culture with the broader society. Hence community cookbooks can also constitute both a way of recording group memory and a form of social outreach. Alternatively, a community cookbook may celebrate a local industry or product, such as the *Apple Country Fair Cookery Book* from Orange, NSW, the heart of Australia's "Apple Country".²⁸

The choice of a specialist subject may be also an artifice. It may be a way of expediting the process of recipe collection and collation, or a way of enhancing the book's appeal

²⁷ Racey Schlank, *The Liberal's Cookery Book: Being Good and Tried Recipes / Contributed by Ladies from All Parts of South Australia* (Adelaide: Adelaide Women's Branch of the Liberals' Union, 1912), 114.

²⁸ *The Apple Country Fair Cookery Book / Presented by the Ladies of the Apple Country Fair Committee*, 2nd ed. (Orange, NSW: Apple Country Fair Committee, n.d.).

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by giving it a point of difference. In the 1970s, for example, St George’s School for Crippled Children in Rockdale, NSW, published cookbooks with subjects ranging from “Grandma’s Favourites” to Latin American, French cuisine and Cheese.²⁹ A specialist recipe focus may, equally, be a way of exploiting particular strengths or interests within the group. In *Afternoon Tea with the ‘PHE’* the editor explained, “One group of ladies – those stitching the ‘Petroglyph’ image – elevated the humble ‘tea and bikkies’ to an art-form in itself. ... From these beginnings came the idea that the Guild should compile a recipe book of ‘afternoon tea treats’.”³⁰

Due to this genre’s foundation in the philanthropic impulse, some community cookbooks (in truth, usually the less successful ones) trade less on the quality of their recipes than on the great merit of their cause. Bannerman notes that community cookbooks’ purpose is not by any means always primarily culinary – they can be bought (and created) “for reasons other than intended use”.³¹ This does not mean that such community cookbooks are constructed in an off-handed or accidental way; merely that the recipes sometimes rank as a second priority, evincing less culinary concern than is usual. From a researcher’s point of view this is in fact not necessarily a disadvantage, as it adds to the candour with which the genre reflects its time and place. The recipes, being subject in many cases to a minimum of editorial control, may give a more honest account of what was really going on in the home kitchens of Australia.

Recipes constitute more than merely a food-narrative of their respective communities.

They can inscribe many kinds of stories. As noted by Marion Bishop, “A title like

Christmas Spritz Cookies has the ability to recall all the Christmases when it was

²⁹ *Nice ‘N’ Spicy Recipe Book*, (1970s), *Ways with Cheese*, (1970s), *The European Adventure*, (1970s), *French Recipe Book*, (1970s), *Chinese Cook Book No 10*, (ca 1974), *Latin American 75: Recipe Book*, (1975).

³⁰ Fenwick Williams, *Afternoon Tea with the “PHE”*, iii.

³¹ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 121-22.

prepared and served. Stories are also embedded in ordinary recipes like Busy Day Roast, Left-Over Meat Pie and Eat'n'Run Breakfast, whose titles carry with them the memories and resonance of countless days and meals.” Bishop considers that storytelling can find its way into the body of the recipe and that recipes can be “a token or symbol of memories and stories”.³²

Further issues of form and content

Beyond their essentially dual nature, community cookbooks possess other elements and qualities that contribute to their textual and historic function and hence are a part of their unique character. Their often distinctive physical format, their use of advertising and their differing approaches to editorship are significant parts of the story told by the genre. As such, their key characteristics include ephemerality, temporality, liminality and democracy. Most of all, though, they rely on volunteerism, otherwise known as the contributory principle.

1. The contributory principle

Community cookbooks are grounded in the principle of volunteer community effort. This essential amateurism is an important aspect of the community cookbook genre. In bypassing the professionals, early community cookbook compilers were able to turn otherwise unvalued resources (women’s kitchen expertise and time) to financial account. Moreover, they were able to turn their very amateurism into a positive resource. As ordinary home cooks their recipes had, if not professional authority, the assurance of “tried and tested” appropriateness and utility, as discussed above. In offering their time and effort on a volunteer basis they were able to make money where a professional venture would be uneconomic. In pooling their talents through recipe

³² Bishop, “Speaking Sisters”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 98-99.

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contribution, they were able to harness the social power of the collective. As such they reveal what Oppenheimer calls “the associational impulse at the heart of the Australian way of volunteering”.³³

Community cookbooks are collections of recipes that emanate from more than one individual source. The recipes may come from within the core group alone; from “friends and supporters” as well; from the community at large (publicly solicited); or sometimes from celebrities (by invitation). Hence the nature of the “food community” described, and its relationship to the “cookbook community”, may vary according to the method chosen. It is clear that different groups at times employed different methods for collecting their recipes, from “approaching people personally” for contributions,³⁴ to posting advertisements inviting contributions in community newsletters, local press or even state-wide newspapers, to applying specific forms of pressure. Heuzenroeder describes how the editorial committee of the *Barossa Cookery Book* mentioned in a local newsletter “that they were still looking to certain well-known cooks to deliver their recipes”.³⁵ Such variations notwithstanding, community cookbooks represent, in form, content and purpose, the social web that sustains communities.

2. Physical format - ephemerality

One of the issues of community cookbooks is their ephemeral nature, a fact that can be linked to the physical format typical of the genre and also to the typical mode of their production. The publication values of community cookbooks vary widely. They range from full-scale, hardback publications with generous illustration (this being more the exception than the rule) down to small pamphlets, photocopied and hand-collated by an

³³ Oppenheimer, *Volunteering*, 28.

³⁴ Heuzenroeder, “A Region, Its Recipes and Their Meaning”, 46.2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.6.

anonymous volunteer.³⁶ One of the reasons community cookbooks are relatively unlikely to be preserved for posterity is because of this often modest physical presence. So often produced on shoestring budgets entirely by volunteer labour, the majority of them never make it anywhere near a professional publishing house or a library. Easily discarded, they exist in the public sphere but largely off the public record. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has noted, this fact creates absences which must be taken into account. “Because they are so ephemeral, we cannot assume that the earliest extant volumes are the first to have been published”.³⁷

In the early years of the twentieth century, before in-house copying technologies were generally accessible, a cookbook had to be at least professionally printed, if not also professionally published. Many of the early community cookbooks were hardback, and several were, once successful, published by major publishing houses, such as Angus and Robertson, who took on the *Presbyterian Cookery Book*. Ironically, cookbooks produced during these early years may actually be more likely than their latter-day counterparts to have left some kind of public record. Once schools, churches and other community groups began to gain access to in-house technologies of print reproduction, from about 1955, community cookbooks became an easier proposition than previously. A pamphlet could be produced for the school fete at little cost, so it did not matter if the profits from it were correspondingly low. A probably great majority of community cookbooks did not get professionally published or even printed, but rather remained the product and concern of a very small group. This is consistent with their role in small-scale fundraising and as group activities.

³⁶ In the pre-photocopy era they were variously roneoed, gestetnered or mimeographed, processes which produced an even less professional-looking result.

³⁷ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “The Moral Sublime”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 146.

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It is impossible, as American scholars have noted, to do more than make the coarsest estimate of the numbers of community cookbooks, but if the second-hand shops and estate auctions are any indication, probably hundreds of titles are made each year. In many cases they are produced in very small print runs, to be sold for a small profit at the school / church / nursing home fete. If the recipes turn out to be useful to the buyer the cookbook might live on for many years, but if not, typically the modest variety of community cookbook is discarded without much soul-searching. A few A4 sheets of paper, perhaps folded into a pamphlet, perhaps bound with a plastic spiral binder, are easily jettisoned. Undoubtedly many community cookbooks vanish without a trace.

3. Temporal and liminal characteristics

To make a study of community cookbooks is to foreground the private world of domestic cookery. Community cookbooks as artefacts represent a liminal zone in that they function to link the private activities of home cooking and eating to the public world of bookselling and fundraising. This liminality notwithstanding, however, the content of the community cookbook is the private *Kulturgut* of the kitchen. As such, as Sheridan suggests, “Once the ‘private’ dimension is foregrounded, some important distinctions can be observed – for instance between family meals and entertaining; between innovative and comfort food; between healthy and unhealthy food”.³⁸

Community cookbooks are temporal by nature and liminal by social positioning. These characteristics are both evident in the context of advertising. Community cookbook creators long solicited advertisements from local businesses to offset the costs of printing and to boost the ultimate profit. Advertising is one of the most volatile elements of the community cookbook – the most likely to change from edition to edition. Hence

³⁸ Susan Sheridan, “Eating the Other: Food and Cultural Differences in the Australian Women's Weekly in the 1960s”, *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 21, no. 3 (2000): 327.

it must count as the most temporally sensitive feature of a temporally sensitive genre. Advertisements hold a wealth of information about the economic, social and other conditions that affect communities, the way they live and the food they eat. They reveal the technologies on offer for the kitchen, the industrial food products being pitched at the consumer, the gender, class and labour assumptions underpinning the image of the cook (servant? housewife? working mother? dad?) and the areas of production and consumption for which cooks and/or housewives have been considered responsible.

Advertisers have often come in for even more thanks than recipe contributors in the forewords of community cookbooks. This is not completely surprising, given the crucial financial support such patronage represented. In 1908 the *Hobart Cookery Book* commented with gratitude, “the entire proceeds of the sale will be available for Church Funds, as through the assistance of our Advertisers and Publishers the book is printed free of cost”.³⁹ The advertisers, of course, expected to gain their money back in increased custom. *The Busy Woman’s Home Companion* (1924), produced by the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, said, “The Committee desires to express its thanks to the various firms whose business advertisements appear herein [and] trusts that those who sympathise with the work of the W.C.T.U., and who find this collection of Tested Recipes of use to them, will give to the firms advertising in this book, at least, a fair share of their patronage”.⁴⁰

Though at its heart a book about the private sphere, drawing for its substance on the private activities of home and hearth, the community cookbook is connected through its advertisements with the public sphere, the world of “real” work, of commerce and

³⁹ *Hobart Cookery Book of Tested Recipes, Household Hints and Home Remedies / Hobart Methodist Central Mission*, (Hobart: Davies Bros, 1908), foreword.

⁴⁰ *The Busy Woman's Home Companion*, 3rd ed. (Bendigo, VIC: Bendigo Branch, Women's Christian Temperance Union, 1924), preface.

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industry. It thus represents an interesting liminal zone between the public and the private worlds. Women could be empowered by their activity within this zone, but the difficulties of negotiating it were also clear. Alice Ross, in her study of one early twentieth-century American woman's never-completed community cookbook, suggests that it was the public act of soliciting advertisements that finally defeated Mrs Smith.⁴¹ The ambiguities of this liminal zone represented both opportunity and danger to early twentieth-century women, a fact also apparent in many recipe donors' choice to remain anonymous.

Two broad categories of community cookbook tended *not* to include advertising. The first of these was the very well-established, financially assured, high-profile books. Later editions of the *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, the *Presbyterian Cookery Book*, the *Coronation Cookery Book* and some of the CWA cookbooks fell in this category. These very successful books initially included advertising but omitted it from later editions. Perhaps the great financial success of the books rendered the extra income insignificant. Perhaps the effort of going out and recruiting advertisers became too great for an aging volunteer base. On the other hand, perhaps the advertisers lost interest. Perhaps the changing profile of the business world, increasingly geared to mass markets, streamlined operations and marketing plans, meant that advertisers later in the century were not attracted to local, amateur publications as an advertising forum. Perhaps the gradual lowering of the social profile of "the housewife" as a target of advertising made community cookbooks less promising commercial vehicles. Certainly, advertisements dropped off markedly in the 1960s and later, years when such factors were in force. The decline in the presence of advertising thus corresponds not only with

⁴¹ Alice Ross, "Ella Smith's Unfinished Community Cookbook: A Social History of Women and Work in Smithtown, New York 1884 -1922", in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 168-69.

the ascendancy of big business, but also with the rise in women's participation in the workforce, suggesting a changing relationship of public and private worlds for women.

The second category of community cookbooks without advertisements comprised the modest, financially marginal examples. These existed in the world *below* commerce, purely in the realms of individual parish churches, schools, kindergartens and scout troops. They either did not reflect the interface of public and private, or at least they did so only in a circumscribed way. This itself can be a valuable insight into the world of the cookbooks' creators, a glimpse of the private sphere, "untrammelled" by commerce, in which many middle-class twentieth-century Australian women spent their lives.

All in all, the relationship of community cookbooks to the commercial world appears to be on the decline. It has become rare, in the twenty-first century, for a community cookbook to be printed in hardcover, to contain advertisements or to make an impression on the community such as that made by the most successful examples from the twentieth century. As business becomes bigger and advertising becomes slicker, it seems probable that the relationship between community cookbook initiatives and local businesses will eventually desist altogether.

4. Democracy – the issue of editorship

Some community cookbooks have transcended the ephemerality inherent in their type. Cookbooks that achieve success as community publications can wield a significant degree of influence on community perceptions of good food and good living. Some examples have achieved a rare degree of cultural authority. Australian community cookbooks which have enjoyed this status at various times and in various places include the *Presbyterian Cookery Book*, the *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, the *Coronation Cookery Book*, the *Barossa Cookery Book* and some of the CWA cookbooks. These often contain markers of their success. The *Presbyterian Cookery Book's* early

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forewords offered the association’s “grateful thanks to a generous public”,⁴² and celebrated its “steady and ever-increasing sale”.⁴³ Later editions made a running tally of the number of copies in print, which reached 410,000 by the twenty-first edition in 1936.⁴⁴ The *Green and Gold*’s fourth edition expressed similar sentiments in its reflection on the book’s success:

The first edition of this little ‘vade mecum’ appeared in 1924, when, with much fear and trembling, the Committee decided to launch 5,000 copies on the world, as a lesser number would scarcely have been profitable. To the great delight of its members, in less than a year, the whole of the first edition was sold, and we were able to place a second on the market. This also was disposed of in a short time, and in 1927 the third edition was called for: it likewise ‘came, saw and conquered’. To-day – at the end of this year of grace, 1928 – there is not a copy to be bought in the City of Adelaide, and the publishers have decided to issue the Fourth Edition to satisfy the still continuing demand. It is with great pleasure that we start our little craft on her fourth voyage in the hope that it may prove to be as pleasant and prosperous as the three preceding ones. ... we launch our Fourth Edition with hopes as bright as those which surrounded its predecessors, which we feel sure a kindly public will justify.⁴⁵

A great part of the significance of this genre is its democratic nature. What makes community cookbooks powerful, both as community publications and as historical source material, is that they can be produced by *anyone*, from the Darlington Kindergarten Mothers’ Club⁴⁶ to the Mount Isa Animal Aid Society,⁴⁷ and every imaginable group in between. Seen from a research perspective, it is precisely the ubiquity and the egalitarian nature of “these unpretentious little books” that make them a valuable source for understanding Australian domestic culture, community culture and

⁴² *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 7th ed. (1902), preface.

⁴³ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 8th ed. (1904), preface.

⁴⁴ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 21st ed. (1936), preface.

⁴⁵ *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 4th ed. (1928), preface.

⁴⁶ {Untitled} / *Darlington Kindergarten Mothers’ Club*.

⁴⁷ *Mt Isa Animal Aid Society Recipe Book*, (Mt Isa, QL: The Society, 1967).

food.⁴⁸ The democracy of the project is a characteristic that can also be mobilised for gain. The editors of the most successful, broadly disseminated community cookbooks typically alluded to their books' democratic genesis by attributing their success to the homespun source of their recipes. The "editresses" (so called) of the *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, for example, asserted in the ninth edition, "it is the best seller in South Australia, because it is 'Home-Made', and the Recipes are easy to work and understand".⁴⁹ The question of democratic genesis is not unproblematic, however, especially in the case of the large-scale, highly successful community cookbooks.

Various approaches to editorship may limit the extent to which a community cookbook mirrors either the group or its food. Firstly, self-censorship inevitably plays a part in mitigating the candour of the text. Recipe donors are more likely to offer recipes for their party cakes than for the leftover omelettes they make on Saturdays or the "Tuesday night dinners" they feed to their children. (Such recipes were more likely to appear in the primary school and kindergarten books that first appeared in the post-war era, which sometimes were structured on a theme of sharing precisely such ideas to alleviate the pressures of everyday life for young families.)⁵⁰ Secondly, there is the censorship inherent in editorship. Someone (usually a committee but sometimes an individual) must be at the helm, and must make decisions about content. While usually any member of the group may offer recipes for inclusion, community cookbooks vary in their approach to constructing the final work. As Bannerman points out, "Even cookery

⁴⁸ *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 4th ed. (1928), preface.

⁴⁹ *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 9th ed. (1938), preface.

⁵⁰ For example, Mrs W Beneke's "Monday Night Curry", *Island Recipes*, (Kingscote, SA: Kingscote Area School Welfare Club, 1978), 6. This book was from the Kingscote Area School Welfare Club, on Kangaroo Island.

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books which purport to be no more than information resources for cooks embody conscious or unconscious decisions about the style of cookery that is to be presented”.⁵¹

Editorial activities may include selecting recipes from a pool of entries, testing recipes, rewriting them for clarity, choosing recipe categories, arranging the recipes under these headings and making decisions about other inclusions such as illustrations, forewords, introductions, literary quotes and so forth. Community cookbooks show considerable variation in the degree of editorial control of the book, the recipes and the process of publication. At one end of the editorial spectrum a committee collects recipes, arranges them in some particular order and publishes the resulting compilation without further ado. This may result in a collection that truly reflects the culinary culture of the group which created it. Some may value this candour; others may regard it as an expression of de Tocqueville’s “tyranny of the majority”.⁵² At the other end of the spectrum, an editor may make the book more or less her (or his) own. The editors of the *Coronation Cookery Book* alluded to their discretionary powers, remarking, “we have included in the Cookery Book what we considered would be the most acceptable, proved Recipes and Household Hints”.⁵³ Ethel Wald, in her preface to the *Empire Cookery Book* (1940), produced in aid of the Red Cross society and the Royal Naval Friendly Union, wrote, “I have endeavoured to make this book of Recipes a reliable guide ... The recipes have all been tried either by me or by friends who have been kind enough to pass them on to me”.⁵⁴ She appears to have “owned” the enterprise almost (but not quite entirely) to the exclusion of the community groups under whose auspices she wrote. Some of her

⁵¹ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 66.

⁵² Alexis de Toqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Reeve (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

⁵³ Jessie Sawyer and Sara Moore-Sims, *The Coronation Cookery Book / Compiled for the Country Women's Association of New South Wales, Australia by Jessie Sawyer and Sara Moore-Sims*, 1st ed. (Sydney: Country Women's Association of New South Wales, 1936), preface.

⁵⁴ Ethel Wald, *The Empire Cookery Book: Containing 500 Selected Choice Recipes* (Adelaide: South Australian Red Cross Society, 1940), preface.

friends contributed recipes (six other people's names appear under recipes in the book), but there is no suggestion that the path was open for general members of either of the named groups to do likewise. The editors of the *SAGM Cookery Book* (1909) deliberated over this problem, ultimately plumping against the democratic approach while still seeking to appropriate some of its principal virtues:

The basis of the recipes in this book have been sent (guaranteed tried and true) by ladies, mostly in Tasmania, but also from other States and Countries. As in a book compiled entirely on this principle there is apt to be the flaw of overlapping in some cases and serious omissions in others, we determined to obtain only a comparatively small number in this manner. The greater number are from our own private collections.⁵⁵

Successive forewords of the most long-lived cookbooks give indications of variation in editorial policies and aspirations. These reflected the books' changing fortunes but also helped, along the way, to shape them. In the tenth edition of the *Presbyterian Cookery Book* the editor's only claim for it was that it was "packed full of true DOMESTIC ECONOMY",⁵⁶ but by the eleventh edition she averred, "the opportunity has been taken to revise many of the recipes, and to add a number of new ones in the form of a supplement. The great aim of the book has been to make the directions so simple that the most inexperienced need not fear failure".⁵⁷ By the twelfth edition, the *Presbyterian* was even more confident in its claims:

The young and inexperienced housekeeper need have no fear of failure, provided she follows carefully the directions given, as the great aim of the book has always been, not only to provide wholesome and economical recipes for capable housewives, but to help those who have not had the benefit of maternal guidance and home training. It is

⁵⁵ *The SAGM Cookery Book*, (Hobart: Home Helpers' Union, Tasmanian Branch, 1909), preface.

⁵⁶ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 10th ed. (1907), preface.

⁵⁷ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 11th ed. (1909), preface.

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significant that many discerning women have made it a habit to give a copy of the “Presbyterian” Cookery Book to every new bride of their acquaintance.⁵⁸

It seems as though a community cookbook ought to be more truly representative the less editorial control is exerted. On the other hand, the larger and more long-lived community cookbooks, some of which have been so tremendously popular, enjoyed this success partly because their editors were prepared to make judgments about quality. In thus reducing the democracy of the enterprise and hence the extent to which their books were simple mirrors of their group’s cookery culture, they made them all the more attractive to a larger segment of their societies. This suggests an aspirational aspect to what Australian women wanted in their community cookbooks: they wanted the best. And if popularity is any indication that a text contains what its public wants, then the foodways represented by the *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, the *Presbyterian Cookery Book*, the *Coronation Cookery Book* and their ilk represented the preferred cuisine of large portions of Australian society of their times and places.

While a community cookbook is indeed undeniably a reflection of the food culture of a group, and, as various scholars contend, probably a more honest reflection than the majority of professionally written cookery books, community cookbooks are also not without artifice. They represent at least to some extent a “buffed” image, the best (according to individual and subjective interpretations) that the group has to offer. Similarly, this aspect of community cookbooks suggests their aspirational element; they represent the desire to live well. Part of the collective narrative of community cookbooks is their construction of images of good food and good living.

Community cookbooks are the embodiment of multiple levels of “ordinary people’s” (mostly women’s) aspiration: for community gain, for personal satisfaction, for self-

⁵⁸ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 12th ed. (1912), preface.

expression and group expression in the wider culture, for an ideal of the happy home and healthy community and for an ideal of good food as the basis of a good life.

What makes a successful community cookbook?

At its heart, a community cookbook constitutes a narrative of a community. It records the community's foodways, or some aspect thereof, as a method of supporting the community either by raising money or by sharing group culture *per se*. A "successful" (meaning commercially and culturally enduring) community cookbook is typically one which embeds its recipes in an interesting context and displays something of the circumstances, practices, beliefs and values of the group.

In considering the criteria for success Alan Davidson's words at the First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy may be useful.⁵⁹ According to Davidson a good cookbook firstly "should be founded ... on direct experience / knowledge". This is the criterion which community cookbooks most conspicuously fulfil, and on which their claim to attention is frequently based; they are "tried and tested". Secondly, according to Davidson, a good cookbook should acknowledge its sources. Community cookbooks typically do this in a personalised way. Contributors may lay personal claim to a recipe, as in Sophy's Biscuits,⁶⁰ or gesture to the proximal source, as in Gran's Tinned Meat Scramble,⁶¹ or "invented by M. Escoffier".⁶² Sometimes an anecdote is given, such as in the wartime *Green and Gold*:

Miss Mildred Sheard, who runs the 'Anne Page' Cake Shop in Windsor, reports that some time ago, Queen Mary's housekeeper came to her shop, and asked for a certain

⁵⁹ Santich, ed., *The Upstart Cuisine*, 17-19.

⁶⁰ Mrs Willie Moffatt, *The Berrambool Recipe Book: Containing over 1400 Tested Recipes* (Melbourne: Specialty Press, 1915), 143.

⁶¹ *Tested Recipes from the CWA of the Air*, (Kalgoorlie, WA: Kalgoorlie CWA of the Air, 1965), unnumbered.

⁶² *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1929), 293.

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chocolate cake. It was the cake made from the above recipe and Queen Mary said that it was the nicest chocolate cake she had ever tasted.⁶³

Such acknowledgment of sources positions the recipe in a matrix of relationships, which are the lifeblood of the community cookbook. It can also confer a form of authority on the recipe; it is Davidson's argument that source acknowledgment says "a lot about the quality" of a cookbook. Davidson's third criterion, that recipes should be clear and precise, is more rarely achieved by community cookbooks, but it is fair to say that the most successful community cookbooks, certainly in the latter twentieth century, did fulfil it. Davidson then asks whether cookbooks should "provide information of an historical or cultural kind" and raises the issue of "literary style". The evidence from community cookbooks suggests very distinctly that historical, cultural or literary sensibilities make a big difference to the perception of quality. This, perhaps, is a consequence of how domestic cookery books are used. As a participant at the First Symposium of Australian Gastronomy commented, "what I want in a cookbook is something that arouses my imagination, gives me an insight".⁶⁴ Later in the discussion, symposiasts' suggestions in response to Davidson's question "is there a text book of cookery which is 100% Australian, and which is good and suitable for use here" were all community cookbooks – *The Country Woman's Cookbook*, the *Green and Gold Cookery Book* and the CWA cookbooks.⁶⁵ Ephemeral as community cookbooks may be, it seems that some examples have fulfilled the real needs of Australian cooks better than anything else on the market.

⁶³ *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 16th ed. (1943), 106.

⁶⁴ Santich, ed., *The Upstart Cuisine*, 20.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

Shortcomings of community cookbooks

Bannerman discusses the shortcomings of community cookbooks, identifying a number of textual characteristics which can pose problems for the researcher. These are the potential for incompleteness, duplication of recipes or dishes, inconsistent recipe quality, and problems of authentication and communication.⁶⁶ A further problem raised by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is the potential for duplicity inherent in the genre. From my own research perspective, these qualities do not necessarily count as deficiencies.

1. Incompleteness

The non-encyclopaedic nature of most community cookbooks (which rarely display any ambition towards comprehensiveness) is a reflection of the preferences and interests of their creators.⁶⁷ Bannerman finds, for example, that “sweetness was the hallmark of contributory books”, which could contain as much as twice the average number of sweet recipes in non-community cookbooks.⁶⁸ I see two main reasons for this focus on sweet foods. Firstly, whereas the savoury stalwarts (roasted, fried and grilled meats) do not typically demand great precision of ingredient quantities or preparation methods, and hence an experienced cook hardly needs a recipe, baked goods are far more technically exacting. As the *Stowport Cookery Book* intoned, “Don’t expect success if you bake your cakes by guess”.⁶⁹ But this does not explain why sweet recipes should be so much more prevalent in community cookbooks than in professionally published cookery books, which after all are aimed squarely at providing what cooks want. Secondly, then, the high proportion of sweet recipes in community cookbooks is an indication of some

⁶⁶ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 143-47.

⁶⁷ For a discussion of this issue see Ireland, “The Compiled Cookbook as Foodways Autobiography”, 112-13.

⁶⁸ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 122.

⁶⁹ *Stowport Cookery Book of 500 Tested Recipes*, 4th enl. ed. (Burnie, TAS: Advocate Print, 1930), 15.

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important cultural aspects of recipe sharing, domestic prowess and community tastes.

As Ross suggests, community cookbooks are “not intended as a manual for a balanced daily diet”.⁷⁰ They reflect our national history of high sugar consumption, but also the fact that during the twentieth century we placed considerable cultural value on novelty and variety in sweet baked goods.⁷¹ They show the Australian tradition of pride in baking, according to which women built their reputations as cooks on the lightness of their sponge cakes and not the excellence of their stews, casseroles or salads.⁷²

2. Duplication

Duplication of recipes is an excellent indication of their popularity as well as a key to understanding regional or temporal variation. It is, of course, an issue that different community cookbooks handle in their own ways. Maude Overell and Annie Barnett, editors of the *Hobart Cookery Book*, apologised for the necessity of omitting some recipes owing to duplication of material.⁷³ The editors of the *21st Birthday Cookery Book* of the Tasmanian Country Women’s Association in 1958 voiced similar sentiments: “As it is desired that this be a truly representative work, we regret that all recipes received, could not be included”.⁷⁴ Many a community cookbook reveals no such compunction, however, happily listing off six or eight nearly identical recipes for Christmas Cake, Sponge Cake or some other common delicacy. The second edition of the *Kookaburra Cookery Book* accounted for the inclusion of apparently similar recipes

⁷⁰ Ross, “Ella Smith's Unfinished Community Cookbook”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 165.

⁷¹ See Peter Griggs, “‘A Natural Part of Life’: The Australian Sugar Industry's Campaign to Reverse Declining Australian Sugar Consumption, 1980-1995”, *Journal of Australian Studies* 87 (2006), Peter Griggs, “Sugar Demand and Consumption in Colonial Australia, 1788-1900”, in *Food, Power and Community*, ed. Dare (Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press, 1999), 74-90.

⁷² See Barbara Santich, “Sponges, Lamingtons, and Anzacs: The Australian Ritual of Afternoon Tea”, *The Journal of Gastronomy* 4, no. 2 (1988).

⁷³ *Hobart Cookery Book*, preface.

⁷⁴ *The 21st Birthday Cookery Book of the Country Women's Association in Tasmania*, (Hobart: CWA(TAS), 1958), preface.

by stating, “on examination it will be found that slight differences do exist, either in quantities or method, and every cook knows that a very slight variation may make all the difference”.⁷⁵

3. Recipe quality, authentication and communication

Problems of recipe authentication and communication (that is, whether the instructions will produce the intended dish, and whether the reader / cook will understand the intention and be able to reproduce it) are more of an intractable issue than duplication. Many community cookbooks do contain poorly written recipes that require the reader to fill in the gaps or untangle the ambiguities. This problem is not particular to community cookbooks, however, though it may be relatively prevalent within their pages. Canadian literary theorist Elizabeth McDougall discusses the recipe’s unique ability to reveal the lack of authority possessed by the writer. Recipes are differently interpreted by every cook, and inevitably the resulting dish is unique, even when the recipe is scrupulously followed.⁷⁶ The community cookbook, of course, as an essentially amateur genre, can be particularly prone to ambiguity. McDougall attributes this to the close relationship of this genre to the oral tradition of recipe sharing amongst women. “The community cookbook maintains the sense of a sharing of ideas, but because recipes cannot duplicate the personal, oral relationships between cook, text and food of the past, gaps in communication arise between the reader and the text.” Quoting Barthes’ concept of the text as process and the reader as co-author, McDougall concludes that using recipes “involves a dynamic response” both through the cooking and through the reading.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 2nd ed., editor’s note.

⁷⁶ Elizabeth J McDougall, “Voices, Stories and Recipes in Selected Canadian Community Cookbooks”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 106.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 109.

4. Duplicity

Community cookbooks may be something other than what they claim to be. For instance, they may purport to represent their communities but not actually do so. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett noted the example of one American community cookbook, whose “editor complained that the response of the women to requests for recipes had been so poor that she and her co-editor ended up contributing most of the recipes under the names of various family members”.⁷⁸ In a similar vein, anecdotal evidence suggests that community cookbooks may be less representative of the community when participation is enforced rather than encouraged. Those lacking interest or motivation may respond to demands for recipes with something copied at random from a back issue of a women’s magazine, rather than a recipe they genuinely use.⁷⁹

There is also the “pseudo”, or manufactured, community cookbook. Longone notes their presence in the USA since at least 1886, though in Australia they seem to be a more recent phenomenon. Professionally published, using “stock” recipes and local advertising, these cookbooks undoubtedly were of financial benefit to their organisations, just as any other community cookbook, and in putting their names to the book the communities concerned may have taken ownership of the content to at least some extent. However, from the standpoint of food and recipes, they are at best an imitation of a genuine community cookbook.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “The Moral Sublime”, *ibid.*, 152.

⁷⁹ Christopher Schach, Personal communication, November 2001.

⁸⁰ For example, two books for two different churches, with identical titles and recipes: *Cookery Book: 160 Tested Recipes*, (Burwood, VIC: Ladies Guild, Trinity Presbyterian Church, n.d.). *Cookery Book: 160 Tested Recipes*, (East Malvern, VIC: St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 1933). And later, from a specialist supplier of such books, *Centenary Cook Book: Everyday Recipes, Country Style*, (Warrnambool, VIC: Leeuwin Uniting Churches Women's Guild, 1970s). *Every Day Recipes: Country Style*, (Warrnambool, VIC: PAP Book Co, 1970s). *Selected Recipes: Every Day Recipes, Country Style*, (Warrnambool, VIC: PAP Book Co, 1960s). *Selected Recipes: St Morris Primary School*, (Warrnambool, VIC: PAP Book Co, 1978).

5. Silences on the record

A further issue is that there are gaps in the community cookbook record; historian Jill Nussel refers to the “uneven core of primary literature” available to the researcher.⁸¹ Not all community cookbooks survive for posterity, and furthermore, not all community groups have chosen to produce cookbooks. Hence the body of community cookbooks does not represent an unbiased picture of Australian community endeavour or of the Australian populace. It is, despite its candour, still a partial and particular image.

Broadly speaking, the different nature of different community groups may have made some more likely to pick up such a project, and others less. The strong presence of the Presbyterian women in early community cookbook projects, for example, is not matched by women from the other churches. Anglican community cookbooks exist but are smaller in scope and number. The same is true of the Methodists. Baptist community cookbooks are not apparent on the public record until the 1920s, and the first Catholic community cookbooks I have found date from the 1950s. Without further research it is not completely clear how to account for this disparity, though differences in religious and social philosophy, church structure and class affiliations may all be factors. The relative scarcity of Catholic community cookbooks is not unique to Australia; Bower notes that in Cook’s USA bibliography, “most cookbook compilers were Protestants”.⁸² Driver suggests that in Canada the paucity of French-language community cookbooks seems to have “more to do with religious denomination than with language *per se*”, relatively few having been produced by “English Catholic institutions or Jewish groups” either.⁸³ Ross has suggested that church denomination

⁸¹ Jill Nussel, “Heating up the Sources: Using Community Cookbooks in Historical Inquiry”, *History Compass* 4, no. 5 (2006): 958.

⁸² Bower, *Recipes for Reading*, 21.

⁸³ Driver, “Canadian Cookbooks (1825-1949)”, 30.

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may be significant in that religious adherence and training may produce different attitudes towards food and the body. In Southold, Long Island, Ross finds that the Presbyterian women were the least active of the three local denominations in food-related fundraising such as community cookbooks, a fact which Ross suggests may be connected to the traditional “Presbyterian value on plainness over sensuality”. They “stood in the shadow of the Methodist-Episcopalians” with regard to their community cookbook production and were even further behind the Ladies Liberal Sewing Society of the First Universalist Church, both groups that showed less concern for plainness and sobriety in dress and diet.⁸⁴ (Notably, Catholics did not appear at all in the Southold community cookbook oeuvre considered by Ross.) Her reasoning, though it makes good sense, does not seem to apply to the Australian experience, where the women of the Presbyterian churches were among the earliest, most active and most successful community cookbook producers. (Perhaps this is not a positive reflection on the long-lived Anglo-Australian preference for “plain cooking”!)

The vision of community articulated in these cookbooks tends to be a women’s vision. Community cookbooks are inextricably bound up with women’s groups, women’s volunteer efforts, women’s histories and identities. Women have traditionally been the prime motivators and participants in community cookbook projects. Though men can and long have participated, they are rarely the instigators or driving forces. There is also a class bias; community cookbooks are most strongly associated with middle-class women’s philanthropic activities. Working-class and upper-class women were, for different reasons, less likely than their middle-class counterparts to engage in this type of project (though all groups are represented overall). Though in later years community cookbooks became significant repositories of “ethnic” cuisines and cultures, their

⁸⁴ Ross, “Ella Smith’s Unfinished Community Cookbook”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 170.

origins were in the Anglo-Australian community and typically reflected the fundamentally racist outlook which prevailed around the time of Federation.

Community cookbooks therefore began as predominantly a female WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) phenomenon. Not until the post-war era did a really broad range of other community groups begin to appear on the community cookbook record. This in itself reflects change and development in the identification of the Australian mainstream, a move from a rigid, exclusivist concept of public culture to an increasingly flexible and inclusive model.

6. Temporal uncertainty – dating community cookbooks

Any researcher wanting to use community cookbooks has to come to terms with issues of dating, as they often are presented without complete bibliographic information. Publication dates are frequently omitted, and in addition, estimated dates in library catalogues can be misleading.

One response would be to exclude from consideration any book lacking full bibliographic details. However, this carries the obvious drawback of excluding a large number (possibly the majority) of texts. In particular, as it excludes a disproportionate number of the humbler, more cheaply produced community cookbooks, to do this would skew analysis towards groups with a greater resource base and more vested interests. It would exclude some of the most fascinating ephemera, and obscure the bulk of information about the otherwise anonymous mass of ordinary Australians. I therefore do not regard this as a useful strategy.

The alternative is to be willing to work with estimated publication dates. This works surprisingly well. To date a book to within a decade is generally not difficult. There are many indications of date which serve the researcher well.

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In rare, lucky, cases, an advertisement or foreword will give information which pinpoints the date to within a one- or two-year range, and sometimes exactly. In cases where such specific information is not available, other clues may come in useful. The most obvious, yet sometimes overlooked, is that a book cannot predate the formation of the group that produced it. The inauguration dates of many community groups are relatively easy to establish. If such details are unavailable or not helpful, then more circumstantial evidence must be taken into account. The owner of a book often dates it to the year of purchase or receipt. The tenure of a club or society president may be traceable through club records. If a prominent local person (mayor, governor-general's wife, etc) contributed a foreword this usually substantially narrows down the date range. The styling of the book - choices of typeface, graphic design etc - may link it to a particular era. Advertisements may contain images emblematic of specific eras (eg the marcel waves, shift dresses and long necklaces of the 1920s, the shirtwaist dresses and swept-roll hairdos of the 1940s, the miniskirts of the 1960s). Paper quality may in some circumstances give useful information (it was, for example, typically poorer during and immediately after the World Wars). The appearance or disappearance of advertised products may tell a story – for example, during the Second World War products such as specific brands of biscuits were unavailable on the home front, production being fully directed to the forces. In these cases companies sometimes continued to advertise, reassuring customers that their products would be available again at the war's end. Such clues may allow the researcher to deduce publication dates to within an acceptable margin of error.

Family history sources may be successfully employed as a dating tool, using the personal details provided about editors and participants to narrow down the possible date range of the text. This is, however, labour-intensive and only worthwhile for texts

of particular interest. Newspaper sources can also be valuable. Especially for the earliest community cookbooks and notably for the *Presbyterian Cookery Book*, “women’s columns” in turn-of-the-century newspapers were often wont to report on the happenings of major women’s groups such as the PWMU, and hence give valuable information for both dating and contextualising community cookbooks. The same is obviously true of newsletters and similar sources.

At the margins of the genre

Bower has discussed what she calls “genre-bending community cookbooks”, which challenge the limits of the classification, and similarly, certain issues arise at the periphery of the definition made here. It will be useful to revisit the two core components of the definition and consider the parameters of community and recipes, plus the important issue of contribution.

1. Community

What kinds of communities do and don’t fit within the definition? Bower explores the ambiguities of a cookbook by the fictitious community of a television show and community cookbooks operating as family memoirs.⁸⁵

What about the community of newspaper or magazine readers? *The Worker Cookery Book* is an example of a compiled cookery book consisting of recipes contributed by women readers of *The Australian Worker*. Compiled by the editor of the *Australian Worker’s* women’s pages, Mary Gilmore, the book had no apparent fund-raising focus, but was compiled for the purpose of sharing, as the foreword noted, “hundreds of practical recipes sent to ‘Our Woman’s Page’ during the many years that popular feature of ‘The Australian Worker’ has been under Mrs Gilmore’s control. They are

⁸⁵ Bower, *Reading Community Cookbooks: Recipes, History, Values, and More*, [Internet] (Culinary Historians of Washington DC, 2003 [cited 3 May 2004]); available from <http://www.chowdc.org/Papers/Bower%202003.htm>.

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mainly the every-day recipes of Australian housekeepers in working-class homes, and their chief value lies in their every-day usefulness”.⁸⁶ It represents one of the few major community cookbooks containing the food of the working class; in this way it is a valuable counterpoint to books like the *Kookaburra Cookery Book*. *The Worker* documented the foodways of a group of people separated by distance but bound together by print technology and the fact of readership. In this it could be regarded as the forerunner of books like those of the Royal Flying Doctor’s Society and the School of the Air, groups which used more modern technologies than print to triumph over the tyranny of distance. Bannerman notes that the *Worker* catered to the needs of station workers and shearers, as well as showcasing the “marvellous resourcefulness of the bush cook”.⁸⁷

Community cookbooks do not always originate within a defined community group; some may be the inspiration of community-minded individuals acting outside of the umbrella of an organisation. The *Victory Cookery Book*, compiled by Mrs LH (Lottie) Jackson in the 1940s to benefit “Prisoners of War and the Gippsland Base Hospital”, appears to be one such community cookbook. Mrs Jackson presented recipes accompanied by donor names, and her charitable object was clear, but she does not appear to have acted under the auspices of an organisation as such, though she clearly had strong associations with the Church of England. Her book was for a community group and even of the community group, but not clearly embedded in that community group.⁸⁸ This is, however, relatively rare.

⁸⁶ Mary Gilmore, *The Mary Cookery Book: The Most Practical Australian Cook Book Ever Printed*, pirated ed. (Sydney: GE Parker, 1920), unnumbered.

⁸⁷ Bannerman, *A Friend in the Kitchen*, 77.

⁸⁸ Mrs LH Jackson, *The Victory Cookery Book* (Melbourne: s.n., 1944).

2. Recipes

Are recipes an absolute element of the community cookbook? Compiled Household Hints books, such as *Invergowrie Household Hints*, by the Household Hints Sub-Committee of the ‘Invergowrie’ Past Students’ Association,⁸⁹ or *Book of Humour: Containing War-time Stories and Handy Household Hints / compiled by A Group of Ex-Servicemen* (which does, admittedly, also include a good handful of recipes),⁹⁰ occupy a similar terrain to the community cookbook, being group publications of domestic lore and/or humour in aid of a common cause. These books are certainly interesting in many of the same ways as community cookbooks: they reflect a community of people, their needs, concerns and culture, and especially in the case of the household hints volumes they reveal much about the workings of home life and other associated fields of inquiry. Yet they are of limited utility in a project of this particular type, focussing as it does on recipes as the substance of the text. I see no firm basis, however, for excluding those food-oriented examples categorically from the genre.

Finally, the issue of temporal gaze. Must a community cookbook focus culinarily on the here and now, or can it concentrate on historical recipes? Bower discusses the example of the Terezin cookbook (*In Memory’s Kitchen*), compiled by women inmates of the Theresienstadt concentration camp, recording foods they remembered from before the war. Australian examples of history-oriented community cookbooks include the many historical, genealogical and “local progress” society books containing historical and nostalgic recipes. These are communities identified partly by their bond to the past. Community cookbooks vary in their sense of historicity, or the degree to which they self-consciously participate in a historical project. Some have forewords written with a

⁸⁹ *Invergowrie Household Hints*, 2nd ed. (VIC: Invergowrie School, 1958).

⁹⁰ *Book of Humour: Containing War-Time Stories and Handy Household Hints*, (Thornbury, VIC: Clyde Press, ca 1946).

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great sense of historical occasion, others have nothing at all. This is just one expression of the fact that community cookbooks can “perform” community in different ways, some of which may impact on the cuisine they choose to present.

3. The contributory principle

Is it possible to have a community cookbook which is not a compilation? Jan Longone notes that there has always been “a small number of books written and/or edited and/or compiled by one individual on behalf of a charitable cause”.⁹¹ For example, *Mrs State’s Australian Cook Book* (1940), written solely by Doris State, directed its entire proceeds to the Lord Mayor of Sydney’s Patriotic War Fund, with the intention of benefiting the community and helping to win the war.⁹² Does it count as a community cookbook?

From a culinary-historical point of view it would be unhelpful to include such books, for the simple reason that they are not the shared voice of a community. Therefore, for my purposes charitable cookbooks such as Mrs State’s must be excluded from the definition on the basis that they do not operate by the contributory principle. Another similar example is *How to Cook Indonesian Food*. This was very close to a community cookbook in being the product of a community group with an outreach focus, but its use of a single author, without any apparent contributory element, means that it cannot be regarded as a community text in the same way.⁹³

In many instances it can be hard to be completely certain about the use of contributed recipes, due to failure to acknowledge recipe contributors; in this instance the reader of the book is left to guess. However, in the absence of any mention of recipe contributors

⁹¹ Longone, “Tried Receipts”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 22.

⁹² Doris State, *Mrs State’s Australian Cook Book / Prepared and Compiled by Doris State* (Sydney: Sydney County Council, 1940).

⁹³ Ailsa Zainu'ddin, *How to Cook Indonesian Food* (Melbourne: Australian Indonesian Association of Victoria, 1965).

(who are usually referred to in publication or introductory information, even if their names are not specified), other indicators may suggest their presence. Clear differences in the format, narrative tone and style of different recipes are the most obvious. For example in *Home Cookery for Australia*, compiled by the Victorian PWMU but without specific reference to contributors, two recipes may be contrasted for a profound difference in narrative style, strongly suggesting two different sources. The recipe for “Orange Cake”, at the end of the method, recommends decorating the iced cake with mandarin orange halves, and proposes “if you like, you can decorate these with icing and write Orange Cake in the middle of the cake”. Compare this chatty and highly specific instruction with the terse method given for Plum Pudding – Plain (1): “Mix and boil 4 hours”.⁹⁴

What about cookbooks that do show evidence of a contributory principle, but not other major characteristics of the genre? Many cookbooks (most often those produced in association with periodic publications, but also those published by individual professional cookery writers) have a strong contributory component. Jean Rutledge, author of the *Goulburn Cookery Book*, was ahead of her time in scrupulously naming her sources, including 37 friends, the pupils of the Goulburn Public School Cooking Class and the National School of Cookery in London.⁹⁵ In fact, many, many cookbooks benefit from the contributory principle, whether or not they acknowledge it. Mrs Beeton herself expressed grateful thanks for recipes contributed from within her “large private circle” and from readers of the *Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine*.⁹⁶ Her biographer Kathryn Hughes, though, suggests that in fact very few recipes in *Beeton’s Book of*

⁹⁴ *Home Cookery for Australia: All Tested Recipes / Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union of Victoria*. 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Gordon & Gotch, 1906), 12, 92.

⁹⁵ Mrs Jean Forster Rutledge, *Goulburn Cookery Book*, 28th ed. (Sydney: WC Penfold & Co, 1921), foreword.

⁹⁶ Isabella Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*, revised ed. (London: Ward, Lock & Co, 1880), iii.

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Household Management appear to have come from these sources, most of them having instead been “borrowed” from Eliza Acton and other cookery writers.⁹⁷ Perhaps the point is that all cookbooks derive from a lengthy cultural history of recipe sharing - and a long publishing history, only recently relinquished, of free and easy plagiarising. The intellectual ownership of recipes remains even today sometimes surprisingly fluid, guided often by communitarian rather than individualising tendencies.⁹⁸ Hence the simple fact of contributed recipes in a cookbook does not bring it within the definition of a community cookbook. A number of fascinating cookbooks, including Mrs Rutledge’s, are excluded on this basis.

Conclusions

The Australian community cookbook is defined in the first instance by its community focus. It is also defined by its use of food and recipes to inscribe ideas of community, through the contributory principle. Community cookbooks are by nature democratic, and it is this very ordinariness, this genesis in the lives of ordinary people, which make them valuable “repositories of social and cultural history”.⁹⁹

Culinarily speaking, compared with today’s crop of modern professional cookbooks, which typically offer recipes distinguished by inventiveness, newness and uniqueness, community cookbooks may tend to lack the cachet of the novel. What they have instead of this is the credibility of precedent. Rather than seeking innovation for its own sake they participate in the time-honoured process of culinary evolution. Their “tried and tested” formulations reflect their roots in long-established tradition. In the manner of classic cookbook authors like Hannah Glasse, Eliza Acton and Isabella Beeton, who

⁹⁷ Kathryn Hughes, *The Short Life and Long Times of Mrs Beeton* (London: Fourth Estate, 2005), 218-19.

⁹⁸ For a study of the dynamics of recipe development, see Symons, “The Cleverness of the Whole Number”.

⁹⁹ Driver, “Canadian Cookbooks (1825-1950)”, 6.

sought to present recipes suitably updated and arranged for their particular times and audiences, Australian community cookbooks reflect the desire to present recipes of a kind and in a format appropriate to their own particular culinary and cultural milieu. Representing their communities in their form and function, they are products of their own times and places, although they may also constitute nostalgic enactments of community food culture. They exist in between the public and private spheres, and mostly in the world of small-scale community enterprise, though they may also make it to the big time. The products and expressions of temporal needs (which hopefully are fulfilled through the funds they generate), they are typically ephemeral. As texts they are rich in possibilities for implicit and explicit narrative, for storytelling about their communities and the values they represent. They are “ideologically motivated, in their form as well as their content”.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Bower, *Recipes for Reading*, 7.

Chapter 3

Subtypes of the Genre: An Overview

The cooks in their kitchens can contribute to the course of history as effectively as any government, for they are responsible for the health and energy, the enjoyment and good temper of the nation.¹

A Taste of Tasmania (1970s)

Historical development of the genre

An outline of the subtypes within the community cookbook genre articulates the development of the genre itself and helps to illustrate the role community cookbooks have played in Australian cultural development. Communities of faith, family, ethnicity, politics, hobby, readership and vocation have all produced community cookbooks in this country. The range of groups is vast. The entry, over time, of different kinds of groups into the community cookbook market illustrates the development of Australian community institutions and amply demonstrates the role played by community cookbooks in the history of Australian volunteering.

In examining the historical development of this genre and the uptake of the community cookbook by different groups, a progression of different types is discernable. I would like to schematise these into nine categories or subtypes, based on the different varieties of community groups that produced them. The chronological appearance of the subtypes for the most part follows a clearly discernable pattern of development, which has its own internal logic and is broadly related to the socio-political changes of the times.

¹ Georgina Simmonds et al., *A Taste of Tasmania* (Hobart: Australian Labor Party, 1970s), compilers' foreword.

Chapter 3 – Subtypes of the genre

This survey, or broad mapping of the field, is the foundation for the close analysis which will form the substance of later chapters of this thesis. Only two of the subtypes discussed here form the explicit basis of later chapters – cultural / multicultural feeds directly into Chapter Four (on ethnicity), and civic / regional into Chapter Seven (on regionality). However, the community institutions, social movements and cultural narratives discussed here are interwoven through all of the subsequent chapters.

It should be noted that the subtypes outlined here are those relevant to Australia. They reflect the social history of this particular nation, and the discussion is focussed on this relationship. They may or may not have equivalents in the community cookbook canon of other places. The starting dates I name for particular subtypes are as accurate as possible based on current research but must be understood as approximate, taking into account the limitations of dating, and also that a verifiably earlier text in a given subtype could later surface. Also, I want to emphasize that the categories defined here are not to be viewed as mutually exclusive. As much as they are a way of defining different types of community cookbook, they are also a way of defining different strands of narrative within the genre. As such, the points of connection between them are many. The concept in defining and discussing them is not to lock into a rigid format for interpreting Australian community cookbooks, but precisely the opposite – to note their variety and flexibility.

The nine categories I define below include: Religious; Patriotic; Educational; Health / Medical; Civic / Regional; CWA; Cultural / Multicultural; Leisure; and a final catch-all, Miscellaneous. For clarity's sake, following is a table which depicts visually the approximate appearance and persistence of these subtypes.

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1. Religious

Communities of faith have been present in Australia from the beginning. Since the 1890s, churches and other religious communities have also been major proponents of the community cookbook genre, which has helped such groups to encourage social growth in accordance with their beliefs.

The first community cookbooks in Australia were produced by the Christian churches, reflecting the great significance of churches, particularly in the nineteenth and early-to-mid twentieth centuries, as cornerstones of the community. Previous chapters have already mentioned the *WMU Cookery Book* (from 1894 onwards), closely followed by the *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts* (from 1895, later named the *Presbyterian Cookery Book*), both produced by the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Unions (PWMU) in their respective states. *The Housewife's Friend: A Book of Tested Recipes* was also published in 1895, by the Grafton Church of England. *A Voice from the Bush*, also a Church of England effort, similarly predated Federation.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett discusses American Jewish women's cookbook publications in the context of "fairs", community fundraising events with which community cookbooks were often associated.² For the Christian women who produced Australia's first community cookbooks, a church "sale of work" was, similarly, a typical forum for the production of a cookbook. All four mentioned above had their origins in such an event. Some cookbooks inscribed this in their titles as an important fact, for example the 1903 *Four Hundred Tested Recipes: issued in conjunction with the Dorcas Street Presbyterian Church Sale of Gifts*.³

² Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "The Moral Sublime" in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 136-153.

³ K McCall and Q McCall, *Four Hundred Tested Recipes: Issued in Conjunction with the Dorcas Street Presbyterian Church Sale of Gifts* (Melbourne: Arbuckle, Waddell and Faulkner, 1903).

The Methodists and the Church of England seem to have picked up community cookbooks early,⁴ but by far the most prodigious early proponents were the Presbyterians.⁵ The Presbyterian church had a strong missionary program, for which the women's missionary unions vigorously pursued fundraising activities. Their cookbooks, which rose to significance in the eastern mainland states during the first half of the twentieth century and in some cases well beyond, were phenomenally successful in this regard. The *Presbyterian*, the most successful of all, was able to assume the cultural weight and authority usually accorded to professional works, the products of the domestic science movement.⁶ (Similar status was accorded, in South Australia, to the *Green and Gold*, produced by the Baptist and Congregationalist churches in aid of King's College, and in other states to various CWA cookbooks.)

On the whole church cookbooks usually focus strongly on fundraising projects as their *raison d'être*. They have been undertaken at many levels of church organisation, including by diocesan groups such as Mothers' Guilds, church schools, outreach programs, Christian groups such as the WCTU or the YMCA, and individual parishes. They are not necessarily religion-focussed in their charitable purpose, though. For example, the Lady Victoria Buxton Club, fundraising focus of the *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, was founded by the Church of England but was open to girls "irrespective of their religious opinions".⁷

⁴ Now known as the Uniting and Anglican churches.

⁵ See discussion of denominational issues in Chapter Two.

⁶ Jennifer Alison, in her case study of Angus and Robertson, notes that the *Presbyterian's* success was instrumental in the publisher's business success as well. Its "phenomenal" sales made it one of the "perennial sellers" which "formed a secure foundation from which A&R was able to greatly expand its publishing program in the 1920s and 1930s". Jennifer Alison, "Publishers and Editors: Angus & Robertson, 1888-1945", in *A History of the Book in Australia*, ed. Lyons and Arnold (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2001), 33.

⁷ "{Untitled}", *Church News*, 5 August 1898.

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Other groups have also contributed to the “religious” subtype. Jewish community cookbooks appeared from the 1940s and more recently Muslim community cookbooks have appeared as well.⁸ These cookbooks frequently have distinct “cultural / multicultural” characteristics, focussing on self-identified “ethnic” foodways; this I discuss in more detail under that heading.

Some religious cookbooks show the dietary and/or social convictions of the associated faith, for example the rules of kashrut in Jewish cookbooks, or the belief in temperance in Presbyterian and Methodist community cookbooks. On the whole, though, religious cookery books typically provide recipes that are ideologically fairly neutral.

Occasionally they may highlight some specific aspect of the faith, as in *Feasts and Festivals*, which took its culinary structure from the festivals of the Christian calendar, beginning with Advent and progressing to All Saints’ Eve.⁹

Religious groups have remained significant producers of community cookbooks throughout the twentieth century and up to the present day. Just as the broader cultural importance of the Christian church has receded over time, though, so the cookbooks produced by church bodies have tended to diminish in their scope and social impact from the heyday of the *Presbyterian*.

2. Patriotic

Community cookbooks were first created in the service of God – after this came King and Country. As Bannerman has noted, “the war and the immediate post-war period

⁸ For example, *The Nu-Kooka: Containing the Best Jewish and Continental Dishes, Cocktails, Savouries, Confectionery*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: Lakes & Ashes, 1940s). *I Love to Eat Jewish: Home Tested Jewish Recipes Collected Throughout Australia*, (East Brunswick, VIC: The Mothers Book Committee of the Bialik College Parents Association, 1960s). Shamim Okera, *Scented Kitchens: Recipes and Remedies by Australian Muslims* (Adelaide: Peacock Publications for the Muslim Women’s Association of SA, 1996).

⁹ Helen Murray and Meg Nicholls, *Feasts and Festivals / by the Parishioners of the Churches of Saint Michael and Saint Wilfrid*, 2nd ed. (Adelaide: The Anglican Parish of Mitcham, 1984).

produced quite a flow of fund-raiser books”.¹⁰ From 1915, in response to World War One, a second category of community cookbook appeared – the “patriotic” subtype. Annie King’s *Australian Missionary Cookery Book* (1915), intended for church missions but diverted to war-related causes, illustrates clearly the point of departure. The Red Cross was a major producer of this type of community cookbook. The secular, nationalist stimulus of the war produced community groups focussed on achieving the patriotic goal of military victory and the very human goal of caring for the country’s troops (husbands, brothers, sons) overseas, as well as extending support to war-torn allied countries such as “brave little Belgium”.

These aims were strongly enunciated in wartime cookery books. The *Red Cross Cookery Book* (1915), for example, referred in its foreword and introduction to the need to support “our splendid lads, stricken for us in the fight for home and Empire”. Raising money for “our own wounded soldiers” was not the only war-theme of the book, however; the *Red Cross Cookery Book* also focused on the war-time “virtues of efficiency and economy”. The editor described the book as “a collection of economical recipes which, it is hoped, will prove useful in the hard times undoubtedly coming after the war”.¹¹

Many families did not have to wait for the end of the war to experience hard times. The First World War changed the food landscape considerably, resulting in food shortages and high prices. Seasonal shortages that previously had been felt more in the country than in town were now widespread. Community cookbooks responded to this situation with recipes that were “meatless”, “eggless” and otherwise thrifty, as exemplified by the *Australian Missionary Cookery Book*’s recipe for “Cheap Gingerbread (When Eggs and

¹⁰ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 10.

¹¹ Mrs Eric Lowe, *The Red Cross Cookery Book* (Sydney: Carter's Printing Works, 1915), foreword.

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Butter are Scarce)”.¹² Additionally, the loss of many breadwinners to the front lines and the need to contribute to essential war work took many women into outside employment for the first time. Changes in the labour landscape of course had significant consequences for domestic life and the kitchen. The patriotic community cookbooks often tried to cater to the increased need this created for recipes, such as “Homemade Bread – Very Quickly Made”, that involved minimal time and fuss.¹³

The spiritual and benevolent impulses that powered the church cookbooks were recorded in correspondingly religious and charitable language, but in the secular patriotic cookbooks a new tone emerged. Some were strongly patriotic or nationalist. The *War Chest Cookery Book* of 1917 depicted on its cover an Australian soldier sitting on a trunk labelled “Australian Comforts Fund” enjoying a smoke and a snack, his bayonet between him and the ominously billowing clouds and barbed wire in the background. The foreword of the book stated its desire “to help our fighting men who have gone out in defence of their country and are suffering and enduring so nobly all the hardships incidental to this terrible war”.¹⁴ The second edition of the *Barossa Cookery Book*, due to the largely Germanic origins of the Barossa Valley community, needed to be at particular pains to declare its patriotism. It assured the reader that recipes had been “donated solely with the object of furthering the patriotic work to which the proceeds of sales are now devoted, viz., The Tanunda Soldiers’ Memorial, in the form of a Hall costing many thousands of pounds”.¹⁵

¹² King, *Australian Missionary Cookery Book*, 90.

¹³ Lowe, *Red Cross Cookery Book*, 80.

¹⁴ *The War Chest Cookery Book*, (Sydney: Websdale, Shoosmith, 1917), foreword.

¹⁵ *The Barossa Cookery Book: 400 Selected Recipes from a District Celebrated Throughout Australia for the Excellence of Its Cookery*, 2nd ed. (Tanunda, SA: Soldiers’ Memorial Institute, 1920s), foreword.

This type of community cookbook receded somewhat during peacetime, without ever dying out completely. (The post-war reissuing of the *War Chest Cookery Book* as the *Kindergarten Cookery Book* was a reassuring transformation.) But the patriotic community cookbooks reappeared in force for World War Two. Community groups like schools, hospitals and housewives' associations, which before and after the wars raised funds for their own purposes, during these years often took on a specific patriotic focus. The *Stirling CWA Biscuit Book* stated, like many others of its era, "all proceeds from the sale of this book are in aid of the Patriotic Fund".¹⁶ Similarly, *The Victory Cookery Book* (1944) directed net proceeds to "prisoners of war and Gippsland Base Hospital".¹⁷ The next edition, released just after the end of the war, stated instead "net proceeds donated to various charities" – wartime priorities were already receding, and this cookbook, like the *War Chest*, aimed to move with the times.¹⁸ This suggests the flexibility of community cookbooks as community narratives and their ability, as records of community concerns, to mesh the personal stories of the kitchen not just with the "communal autobiography" of the group but also with broader narratives affecting region and nation.

I have found no community cookbooks relating to Australia's other wars, such as Korea, Vietnam and Iraq. They seem to be confined to the experience of the two World Wars. Perhaps the war needed to be of an all-encompassing social, economic and political nature before community groups began creating cookbooks in response to them. Why this should be, I cannot rightly say, though I suspect that the sheer numbers of men deployed to the World Wars was a significant factor bringing the issue "close to home". No other war in which Australia has been involved has taken young men from

¹⁶ *The Stirling CWA Biscuit Book*, (Adelaide: SACWA - Stirling Branch, 1940-1945), foreword.

¹⁷ Mrs LH Jackson, *The Victory Cookery Book* (Melbourne: s.n., 1944), preface.

¹⁸ Jackson, *The Victory Cookery Book* (1945 or 1946).

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virtually every family in the nation, with no guarantee of their safe return. These wars were by far the most personal. Even Vietnam, in all its political divisiveness and technicolour televised glory, did not come close.

The need to raise money for returned servicemen, disabled soldiers, and their families, though, has kept the patriotic subtype alive in more recent years. A Legacy cookbook appeared as recently as 1995, proving the longevity of this subtype.¹⁹ (Legacy operates on behalf of the families of servicemen from all Australian military conflicts, so in this sense it does relate to wars other than the World Wars.) However, in general, the more distant the conflict the more the specifically patriotic narratives have receded. As previously noted, patriotic cookery books segue easily into other subtypes when the time is right. The Red Cross, in the absence of Australian wars, has remained active at local branch level in raising funds for the international activities of this organisation. As well as the *War Chest / Kindergarten Cookery Book*, in 1947 the *Miss Australia Exclusive Recipe Book* was sold in aid of both the Returned Servicemen's League (RSL) and the Kindergarten Union. This book, in the same way as its World War One forebear, thus acknowledged both the effects of the war and the community focus of the future.

3. Education Institutions

The association between the agendas of education and civilisation seems to link schools and similar institutions quite naturally to this genre. The first education-related community cookbook on public record in Australia is, as mentioned previously, *The Kindergarten Cookery Book* of 1924. Free kindergartens were being discussed in Australia by the early 1890s but cost was always an inhibiting factor, one journalist

¹⁹ *Cooking with the Blue Belles: Favourite Recipes from the Women's Auxiliary of Sydney Legacy*, (Sydney: Legacy, 1995).

lamenting that “we have no such rich women here in Queensland as are to be found at the head of the free Kindergarten movement in America”.²⁰ It was, therefore, some years before such talk came to fruition. The first Free Kindergarten in Victoria, and possibly in Australia, was not established until 1901, in the Melbourne suburb of Carlton. Historian Simon Smith notes the difficulties posed by fundraising from the very beginning and the consequent importance of wealthy female benefactors.²¹ One such individual, Lady Spencer, put her name to a *Cookery Calendar: in aid of the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria* during the 1920s, which along with the *Kindergarten Cookery Book* marked the beginning of this new subtype.²² It was an expression of a new spirit of hope. Researcher Alison Gregg says of the kindergartens, “arising from the ashes of two World Wars, they were fuelled by a determination to create a better, more peaceable and civilised world. Their supporters believed that education for young children would play a significant part in achieving that end”.²³ In perennial need of financial resources, the free kindergartens were natural candidates for fundraising measures of all kinds, including of course compiled cookbooks. They were the first in what since became an illustrious history of education-related community cookbooks. The first school-associated community cookbook on the public record was really a patriotic publication, the *Favourite Recipes of the Girls Secondary Schools’ Club War Work Circle* (1942), moneys going to the club’s project of packing surgical dressings

²⁰ “The Dominie”, “The Children under Six”, *Brisbane Courier*, 12 September 1893, 7.

²¹ Simon Smith, *Looking after the Little Ones: The St Kilda and Balaclava Kindergarten and Six Very Special Women* [Internet] (St Kilda Historical Society, 2001 [cited 5 October 2009]); available from www.skhs.org.au/~SKHSarticles1/articles/Balaclava_Kindergarten.html.

²² Lady Spencer, *Cookery Calendar: In Aid of the Free Kindergarten Union of Victoria* (Melbourne: Free Kindergarten Union of Vic, 1920s).

²³ Alison Gregg, “The Hope of the Future: The Kindergarten Union and the Campaign for Children's Libraries in Western Australia”, *Issues in Educational Research* 3, no. 1 (1993): 18.

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for the armed forces.²⁴ The first school cookbook aiming to raise money for educational purposes was *Kitchen Gems*, by the mothers of the Epping West Public School in the 1950s.²⁵ Only at this time did cookery books of schools and higher educational institutions begin to appear. With the spectre of war behind them and the baby boom reverberating into the future, Australian communities turned their attention to the citizens of tomorrow.

Many different types of educational institution have published community cookbooks. In 1954 the first known childcare centre compilation was published.²⁶ University groups also produced community cookbooks from the 1950s.²⁷ Technical colleges, distance education centres, the School of the Air, and virtually all types of educational institution have produced community cookbooks. There was also early diversification within this subtype. *Menus Musicales*, for example, was published in the 1950s for the South Australian Schools Orchestra and Concert Band.²⁸

During the 1950s and 1960s school cookbooks tended to be products of the Mothers' Club. They often reflected a socially conservative ideology focussed on the idea of the nuclear family. Sometimes they suggested a sense of the narrow horizons of many members of the generation of women "encouraged" out of the workplace and back into the home after World War Two. In these years, recipes were often fussy and labour-intensive, relatively fad-and-fashion conscious, and the narrative in which they were

²⁴ Ina K Tait, *Favourite Recipes of Some of the Members of the War Work Circle* (Sydney: Girls Secondary Schools' Club, War Work Circle, 1942).

²⁵ *Kitchen Gems: Recommended by Mothers of Epping West Public School Children*, (Epping, NSW: The School, 1950s).

²⁶ *Recipes / Compiled by the Parents and Staff of the Lady Gowrie Child Centre*, (Brisbane: Lady Gowrie Child Centre, 1954).

²⁷ *The Student Representative Council of the University of Adelaide Presents 'A Cook's Tour of Recipes'*, (Adelaide: SRC, University of Adelaide, 1955).

²⁸ *Menus Musicales: A Fund-Raising Recipe Book for the South Australian Schools Orchestra and Concert Band*, (SA: s.n., 1950s).

couched foregrounded the “wife and mother” role played by their donors. In this they were potentially poignant depictions of the hard work required by housewives to keep the wheels on the mid-century domestic idyll.

There is another aspect to the education subtype, however. In contrast to the conservative branch of cookery books is another, more socially progressive branch. The primary school cookbooks, especially from the 1970s onwards, commonly encoded philosophies of social justice and equity. Primary school cookbooks expressed social equity goals in concrete ways. They often made a particular point of reflecting community diversity with regard to ethnicity,²⁹ and they were one of the most likely places for men, in their role as fathers, to contribute to community cookbooks.³⁰ Children were also more likely to gain their own voice in these books than in any others, family recipes occasionally being donated under their names. In *The Walford Recipe Book* of 1966, Mrs Al Sach contributed several recipes and her daughter Penny Sach (later a nationally successful tea entrepreneur) also donated one for Lobster Thermidor.³¹ Children’s contributions became increasingly common from the 1980s. The 1985 *School of the Air Alice Springs Recipe Book* had a whole “Kids’ section” of recipes donated by children;³² and the *Woodcroft Junior School 2003 Anniversary Recipe Book* linked most of its recipes to the names of children rather than their parents.

²⁹ JB Groome, *International Recipe Book* (Adelaide: Hendon Primary School, 1978). P Irwin and S Djoneff, *The Lee Street International Cookbook* (Carlton North, VIC: Carlton North Primary School, 1978). *Recipes from My Grossmutter: A Collection of Recipes from Hahndorf Women of Today and Yesterday*, (Hahndorf, SA: Women of St Michael’s Lutheran Primary School Auxiliary, 1975). A Spencer et al., *United Nations Day Cookbook* (North Turrumurra, NSW: Ku-ring-gai High School, 1970s). *The World of Cooking: Featuring Favourite Dishes from All Countries Plus Selected Recipes / the Oral School of SA*, (Adelaide: The Oral School of SA, 1968). *The World on Your Plate*, 1st ed. (Canberra: Braddon Catholic High School, 1980).

³⁰ *Fathers’ Favourite Recipe*, (Toowoomba, QL: Fairholme College Parents’ and Friends Association, Toowoomba, n.d.). *Too Many Cooks, or, the Taming of the Stew / Produced by the Fathers of Hillsdon Kindergarten*, (Brisbane: Hillsdon Kindergarten, 1980s).

³¹ *The Walford Recipe Book*, (Adelaide: Messenger Press for Walford Church of England Girls’ Grammar School Parents and Teachers’ Association, 1966).

³² *School of the Air Alice Springs Recipe Book*, (s.l.: s.n., 1985).

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Recipe names like “Granny’s Lamb Croquettes”, “Ashlin’s Favourite Lemon Sponge Pudding” and “Joshua’s Rock Buns” indicated the child’s agency in choosing, cooking, perhaps even developing the recipe.³³

Community cookbooks can operate as literacy projects, in adult education as well as within the schooling system, as for example with *Jean Mack’s Book of Food for Diabetic People* (1990), a literacy project at “IAD, Alice Springs”.³⁴ They can also be related to regional or “ethnic” heritage, culture and literacy as taught in schools, as for example the *Torres Strait Cookbook* (1987) or *Kochbuch: Essen fuer den Picknick-Korb*, from a Barossa Valley Lutheran school (1980s).³⁵

4. Health and Medical

From the mid-1920s, a new subset of health and medical community cookbooks started to appear. Through the mid-century period community cookbooks were produced for a wide variety of health-related causes. The first on my records is the 1925 *Strathalbyn Cookery Book No 2* (which evidently had an elder sibling, now in obscurity). Produced for the Braille and Advancement Society for the Blind of Western Australia, it was followed by other health and medical groups like Mothercraft,³⁶ the Mothers’ and Babies’ Health Association,³⁷ and the New South Wales Society for Crippled

³³ *The Source: Recipes from the People of Mildura*, (Mildura, SA: Mildura Wentworth Arts Festival, 2003), 58, 83 and 122. *Woodcroft College Junior School 2003 Anniversary Recipe Book*, (Woodcroft, SA: Woodcroft College Junior School, 2003).

³⁴ Jean Mack, *Jean Mack’s Book of Food for Diabetic People* (Alice Springs: Institute for Aboriginal Development, 1990). *Our Tucker Book: The Centre for Aboriginal and Islander Studies Literacy Project*, (Darwin: Northern Territory University, 1993).

³⁵ *Torres Strait Cookbook. Kochbuch: Essen Fuer den Picknick-Korb {Cookbook: Food for the Picnic Basket}*, (Nuriootpa, SA: Redeemer Lutheran School, 1980s).

³⁶ *The Nursery Cookery Book / Compiled by the Mothercraft Association of Queensland*, (Brisbane: Jackson & O’Sullivan for The Association, ca 1933).

³⁷ *Welfare’ Cookery Book*, (Mt Gambier, SA: Mt Gambier Branch, Mothers’ and Babies’ Health Association, 1939).

Children.³⁸ The symbolic importance of maternalism as a pathway to public participation for women, which will be discussed in Chapter Six, can be clearly glimpsed in this category, with its strong focus on child health and welfare, as well as through the previous category of education, beginning with the young. To the Health / Medical subtype belong also those cookbooks produced by the Nursing Mothers Association.³⁹

These cookbooks often focused on the specific needs of the groups they represented (for example quick, economic and simple recipes for young families). Alternatively, they offered a generalist collection of recipes, but reflected their specific subject in other ways. The *International Family Cook Book* of the Friends of the Disabled Association, which raised money for research into “spinal muscular atrophy”, contained a poem about “special children” in lieu of a foreword and was dedicated to the memory of Piers Souter, founder of the association, whose “strength, courage and determination to overcome his disability of Quadriplegia changed our lives”.⁴⁰

Significant examples of this subtype include the various hospital cookbooks, of which the *Orange Recipe Gift Book* was a particularly long-lived example.⁴¹ Community cookbooks as hospital fundraisers date from the 1930s. The early examples were typically produced by the “ladies’ auxiliaries”, though with the passage of time hospital staff, especially nurses and even doctors, began to appear as recipe donors. These cookbooks suggest much about the development not only of scientific medical

³⁸ *Cookery Book: Including Sections on Child Welfare and Household Hints*, (Sydney: NSW Society for Crippled Children, 1938).

³⁹ For example, *NMAA Cooks: Recipes for Busy Mothers*, 2nd ed. (Hawthorn, VIC: Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia, 1976). *NMAA Cooks*, rev. ed. (1978). *Health Foods Cook Book*, (Belconnen, ACT: North Belconnen Branch of the Nursing Mothers' Association of Australia, ca 1970s).

⁴⁰ *International Family Cook Book / All Proceeds to Friends of the Disabled*, (Adelaide: Menno Hendrikse Research Foundation, n.d. {ca 1980}), 88.

⁴¹ *The Orange Recipe Gift Book*, 3rd ed. (Orange, NSW: Orange District Hospital Auxiliary, 1930s). *The Orange Recipe Gift Book*, 4th ed. (1940s). *The Orange Recipe Gift Book*, 6th ed. (ca 1960).

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knowledge but also social mores and practices related to illness and wellbeing. In the 1950s and 1960s a much wider variety of medical groups began to appear on the record, everything from the Cancer Campaign Appeal to the Royal Flying Doctor's Service.⁴²

Some groups have used cookbooks as an unthreatening, practical way to put a less socially acceptable illness or public health message in the eye of the community. In the 1960s the Victorian Foundation on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence produced a book of *Drinks for Christmas and Holiday Celebrations*, consisting of "Non-Alcoholic Drinks Which The Considerate Host or Hostess May Offer Their Guests As Alternatives To or In Addition To Alcoholic Drinks".⁴³ Two hundred and twenty-two Adelaide ladies contributed their recipes for a cookbook released by the SA Association for Mental Health.⁴⁴ Mental health issues as well as various childhood disabilities and conditions are the subject of many community cookbooks. There was a public relations or social outreach component to such publications, as with some ethnic community cookbooks. The President of Minda Home, a facility for disabled children, expressed the hope in the *Possum Cookery Book* (1967), "that many people will use it in their homes, and will sometimes remember, as they do so, our own big family in Minda Home. For we are proud of our family, and we like to talk about our boys and girls, who can do so many things happily and well".⁴⁵ Raising awareness is a function to which community cookbooks are well suited, and the health community has shown alacrity in realising this potential. Recipe compilations relating to weight control, proper eating,

⁴² *We Cook at Home*, (Melbourne: Women's Committee of the Cancer Campaign Appeal, 1950s). *Cookery Book / Compiled by Royal Flying Doctor's Service, Women's Auxiliary of the Air Branch*, (Alice Springs: The Auxiliary, 1960s).

⁴³ *Drinks for Christmas and Holiday Celebrations: Non-Alcoholic Drinks Which the Considerate Host or Hostess May Offer Their Guests as Alternatives or in Addition to Alcoholic Drinks*, (Melbourne: Victorian Foundation on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, 1960s).

⁴⁴ *Food for Thought: Favourite Recipes / Specially Contributed by 222 Adelaide Hostesses*, (Adelaide: Association for Mental Health, ca 1960).

⁴⁵ *The Possum Cookery Book*, (Brighton, SA: Women's Auxiliary, Minda Homes, 1967), 1.

diabetes management and other common health issues have been produced. In recent years, several community cookbooks have been published by Aboriginal community health groups.⁴⁶

The subject of health also constitutes a narrative strand in community cookbooks generally. In the early years most cookbooks contained sections on Invalid Cookery and often, in their Household Hints sections, remedies for everything from dandruff to diphtheria. As medical services became increasingly professionalised these sections tended to reduce, even to disappear entirely. However, from about the 1930s the health narrative began to be reconstituted as a concern for nutrition and dietary health, with focus on, variously, vitamins, protein, fibre, low-fat and low-sugar eating, demonstrated in nutritional charts in the *Presbyterian Cookery Book* and others. Later, whole cookery books could be conceived on specific nutritional themes, such as the *Better Health High Fibre Cookbook* by the Strathalbyn Kindergarten (1978).⁴⁷

One interesting variation within the health-related community cookbooks is a thread of glamour and celebrity-consciousness. From the early cookery books featuring the recipes or table settings of society hostesses to “celebrity” contributors, the value of status has been particularly freely acknowledged within this subtype of the community cookbook genre. The significance of celebrity in fundraising has been reflected in such works as the Telethon cookbooks, *Recipes from the Stars* for the Yooralla Crippled Children’s Appeal and the *TV Celebrity Cook Book* for Operation Four Minutes (“a life

⁴⁶ For example *The Medina Aboriginal Culture and Community Cookbook / Staff at the Kwinana Community Health Centre and the Local Aboriginal Community of Kwinana-Rockingham Health District*, (East Perth: Health Department of WA, 1993). *Goonimoo Women’s Cookbook*, (Walgett, NSW: Walgett Aboriginal Medical Service Cooperative, 1999). Elizabeth Stuart-Fox, *The Bunya Cookbook* (Woollongabba, QL: Aboriginal and Islander Community Health Service, Brisbane, Ltd, 2001).

⁴⁷ *Better Health High Fibre Cookbook*, (Hahndorf, SA: Strathalbyn Kindergarten Committee, 1978).

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in your hands”).⁴⁸ Forming a counterpoint to the “glitz and glamour” theme were groups like the Leprosy Mission and nursing homes for the elderly, reflecting the unglamorous flipside of this subtype.⁴⁹

The medical and health subtype is notable not only for its encoded narratives of wellness, sickness and public health and the associated histories of nutritional understanding and medical services provision. In terms of its format, this subtype shows particularly great variety, flexibility, quick adoption of new media technologies, and sometimes (though not often) a more didactic tone than usual in community cookbooks, due to a particular health or dietary message they may wish to propagate.

5. Civic and Regional

Civic, regional and municipal groups began to produce community cookbooks during the period between the two World Wars. One of the earliest examples was the *Eclipse Cookery Book* (1922), sold at a fete in the Orrorroo Town Hall the day after a total eclipse of the sun.⁵⁰ The Gawler Charity Carnival of 1927 also gave rise to a cookbook, the *Modern Athens Cookery Book*, which was notable for its emphasis on place and its light-hearted revelling in community. A long, rambling introductory poem entitled “Hash – You’ll Like It” indulged in many plays on names and places, and what appear to have been private jokes. All contributors signed their recipes and included their own

⁴⁸ *Telethon Anniversary Cookbook*, (Adelaide: H&D Publishers, 1990). Helen Sargent, *Telethon Cookbook* (Adelaide: s.n., 1965). *Recipes from the Stars: Recipes, Cooking Hints, Dietary and Food Know-How for Mrs Housewife*, (Melbourne: Ladies, Committee, Yooralla Crippled Children's Appeal, 1960s). Dora Nikoloutsopoulos, *TV Celebrity Cook Book* (Magill, SA: Darryl Stephen Thiselton, 1982).

⁴⁹ *Flavours of the World: A Recipe Book Compiled to Mark the 75th Anniversary of the Leprosy Mission's Activities in Australia*. (Box Hill, VIC: Leprosy Mission, 1988). *Cookery Book / Mayflower Village: Gerringong*. (Gerringong, NSW: Mayflower Retirement Village, 1970s). *Carinya Cook Book*, (Korumburra, VIC: Korumburra Carinya Lodge Project, Elderly Citizens' Homes, 1970s).

⁵⁰ Frances A Moody, *The “Eclipse” Cookery Book of Good and Tried Recipes / Contributed by Ladies Living Chiefly in and around Orrorroo* (Orrorroo, SA: s.n., 1922).

location, which covered quite a bit of regional South Australia; the editors had received “close on 1000 recipes ... from different districts of the state”.⁵¹

These texts could be for general charitable purposes but often had at heart a specific local fundraising cause, such as civic buildings and amenities. *The Mitchell Valley Recipe Book* (1960s), for example, was compiled in aid of the Bairnsdale and District Olympic Swimming Pool.⁵² Commemorations of civic anniversaries,⁵³ the Australian bicentenary of 1988 and other community festivals also can be counted to this category. “Back to Tenterfield Week”, celebrated in 1949, was marked by the compilation of a cookbook by Norman Crawford (incidentally, one of only two examples of which I am aware of a community cookbook compiled by a man).⁵⁴ Service club cookery books by groups like Lions and Rotary (and women’s service groups such as Quota, Soroptimists and Zonta), local history organisations, the heritage movement and civic groups like local youth and community centres reflect the increasing diversity and prosperity of Australian community endeavours from the 1960s.

A much slower-burning development within this subtype was the growth of regional culinary awareness. The *Barossa Cookery Book* (previously mentioned under the “patriotic” banner) was a forerunner in this respect, its celebrated third edition (1932) amounting to a distinguished work of regional cookery.⁵⁵ Comment on local industries, food products and culinary habits was much longer in coming, not developing in any clear way until the later 1970s, and gaining more ground over the 1980s and 1990s. The

⁵¹ Flo Barnet, *Modern Athens Cookery Book: Containing 600 Recipes Signed as Tried by the Givers* (Gawler, SA: 'The Bunyip' for the Gawler Charity Carnival, 1927), unnumbered.

⁵² *The Mitchell Valley Recipe Book*, (Bairnsdale, VIC: Ladies' Auxiliary of the Bairnsdale and District Olympic Swimming Pool Committee, 1960s).

⁵³ For example *Moodiarup to Glenorchy, 1918-1988: Recipes and Recollections*, (Glenorchy, WA: Glenorchy Parents and Citizens, 1988).

⁵⁴ Norman Crawford, *Tenterfield: Prepared for the Back to Tenterfield Week Committee* (Tenterfield, NSW: 1949).

⁵⁵ Heuzenroeder, “A Region, Its Recipes and Their Meaning”.

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Apple Country Fair Cookery Book, circa 1980, was the first community cookbook I have found that specifically celebrated a local product. Focus on regional food culture came in the 1980s in books like the *Torres Strait Cookbook* (previously mentioned as a school cookbook). Early efforts in this direction often took the form of a historical focus, such as *Is Emu on the Menu? Historical homesteads and recipes of Gippsland*, which, like various books later produced by local history societies and progress associations, conceived of local flavour as something fundamentally historical.⁵⁶ *Is Emu on the Menu?* was also a school compilation; there is a distinct overlap between civic and regional cookery books and those in the Educational category.

Many civic, regional and municipal cookery books take pride in the particularities of regional customs and identity, including local businesses and personalities, regional foods and culinary customs. This subtype can have a strong “civic pride” narrative, and often has distinctive local character, perhaps even regional flavour.

6. Country Women’s Association (CWA)

Inaugurated in New South Wales in 1922, the CWA, “that most Australian of institutions”,⁵⁷ was founded on the desire to help women and children in rural areas and to promote the civil society, their motto being:

Loyalty to the Throne,
Service to the Country through
Country Women, for Country Women
By Country Women.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ P Crooke, et al, *Is Emu on the Menu?: Historical Homesteads and Recipes of Gippsland* (Sale, VIC: Gippsland Grammar School, 1965).

⁵⁷ George Negus, *George Negus Tonight: Country Women's Association [Transcript of Show, Aired 04/08/03]* [Internet] (Australian Broadcasting Commission, 2003 [cited 2nd December 2003]); available from http://www.abc.net.au/dimensions/dimensions_in_time/Transcripts/s916937.htm.

⁵⁸ *Calendar of Cake and Afternoon Tea Delicacies: A Recipe for Each Day of the Year*, 4th ed. (Sydney: Country Women's Association of New South Wales, 1932).

From the 1930s CWA branches began producing what started as a trickle but fast became a mighty torrent of community cookbooks. The first in my database is the *Calendar of Cake and Afternoon Tea Delicacies* (1930) by the CWA of New South Wales. CWA cookbooks have been produced in every state and territory and have in many instances been highly successful. They focus strongly on catering to regional women's needs and are typically based around a philosophy of patriotic social conservatism. Collectively the CWA cookbooks show a good picture of food from across the nation, with a bias towards conservative, rural Anglo-Saxon cuisine and social values. They reflect regional differences, but also indicate the extent to which industrial methods of preserving and transporting foodstuffs have shaped rural Australia's food culture. This has tended to foster a certain culinary uniformity, even between distant geographic zones and disparate climates.

Many CWA cookbooks were and are simple compilations by individual branches. However, right from the start of this subtype, especially in New South Wales and South Australia, the CWA often favoured the format of the Recipe Calendar. Produced centrally, with recipes from across the state, they provided a recipe, related to some particular theme, for every day of the year. The first calendars were for puddings, cakes and afternoon tea items, but these were later followed by meats and other savoury foods. These suggest the need for a wide variety of recipes to compensate for the narrower range of ingredients typically available than in urban areas - as well as the need to break the monotony of "same old, same old" experienced by cooks everywhere. In nearly every state of the nation, a CWA cookbook has assumed the role of a kitchen "bible"; the Western Australian one was even printed in Braille.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ *The CWA Cookery Book (Braille) / Country Women's Association of Western Australia*, (Victoria Park, WA: Association for the Blind of WA, n.d.).

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The CWA cookbooks are notable for their depiction of rural and regional domestic life, and their focus on catering to the changing needs of women in regional areas. A recent book from the South Australian CWA, in 2001, was simply descriptive in its title of the kind of food its members wanted: *Quick and Easy*. They depict probably the best of Australian baking. They are widely considered the most “Australian” and the most reliable of cookery books.

7. Cultural / Multicultural

International and ethnic cultural awareness are important themes of Australian community cookbooks, and can be seen as forming the backbone of one subtype. In the 1920s a cookery book by the Inter-National Club of Victoria showcased the “Tried Recipes of 26 Nations”,⁶⁰ suggesting that this subtype might have its roots in the internationalist peace movement stimulated by the First World War (and later the Second). However, it was not until well into the post-war period that this genre really began to flower. Ethnic, international and multicultural cookery books began to appear in the 1950s and thereafter continued to increase in number. *Cooking: Australian Asian*,⁶¹ the *Australian American cook book*,⁶² and many others, attest to a burgeoning of cultural and even multicultural interests and involvements.⁶³ It seems likely that the post-war migrations played a big role in stimulating this development. As suggested by the presence of the Australian-American Association, though, not all were major

⁶⁰ Mrs MR McMillan and Reba Shearer, *Cookery Book: Tried Recipes of 26 Nations* (Melbourne: International Club of Victoria, 1920s).

⁶¹ *Cooking Australian-Asian*, (Adelaide: Community Aid Abroad, 1950s).

⁶² *Australian American Cook Book*, (Melbourne: Australian-American Association Women's Group, 1958).

⁶³ See also *Eating Australian: A Multicultural Cookbook*, (The Ecumenical Migration Centre, 1970s). *I Love to Eat Jewish*, (1960s). *Cooking around the World*, (Canberra: National Memorial Methodist Church, 1971). *International Gourmet Cooking*, (Perth: American Women's Club of Perth, 1972). A Spencer et al., *United Nations Day Cookbook* (North Turrumurra, NSW: Ku-ring-gai High School, 1970s).

refugee or migrant groups – some reflected the increasing mobility of the business world and of private citizens generally.

In the 1960s and 1970s came a series of Asian cookbooks. *Recipes of the Orient: With Easily Obtainable Ingredients*,⁶⁴ *46 Indonesian Recipes For You: To Australians Interested in Cooking*,⁶⁵ *Festival of Asia Cookbook*,⁶⁶ *A Collection of Asian Recipes*,⁶⁷ *Chinese Cookbook No 10*,⁶⁸ and the *East-West Cookery Book*,⁶⁹ all reflected the Asian migrations, the 1960s romance with Asian foods and the growing Australian awareness of Asian culture generally. There does not seem to have been a corresponding wave of cookery books of the other cuisine group that created a seachange in Australian food culture - the Mediterranean cuisines. Greek and Italian foodways were well represented in the community cookbooks of the 1960s and 70s, but were more integrated into mainstream foodways, in contrast to the exotic “otherness” of Asian cuisines. *Cooking the Greek Way* (1970s), from Norwood Primary School, is the only specifically Mediterranean cookery book in my timeframe.⁷⁰ Instead, the ethnicities with a longer tradition in Australia, like Barossa German, were the ones that tended to be affirmed.⁷¹ Much later, two Italian recipe books appeared: *Buon Appetito* and *Amici Nella Cucina*

⁶⁴ Azhar Ilias Abbas, *Recipes of the Orient: With Easily Obtainable Ingredients* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1962).

⁶⁵ *46 Indonesian Recipes for You: To Australians Interested in Cooking*, (Melbourne: Australian Indonesian Association, 1960s).

⁶⁶ *Festival of Asia Cookbook*, (Sydney: Festival of Asia Committee, 1963).

⁶⁷ *A Collection of Asian Recipes*, (Melbourne: The Asian Students' Association, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 1971).

⁶⁸ *Chinese Cook Book No 10*, (ca 1974).

⁶⁹ *East-West Cookery Book*, (Adelaide: Australian Society for Inter-Country Aid Children (ASIAC), 1979).

⁷⁰ *Cooking the Greek Way*, (Norwood, SA: Norwood Primary School, 1977).

⁷¹ *Two Hundred Well Tried Barossa Recipes*, (Tanunda, SA: St John's Lutheran Ladies' Guild, 1975). *Recipes from My Grossmutter*, (1975). Cath Storey, *Recipe Book / Hahndorf Primary School*, 1st ed. (Hahndorf, SA: Hahndorf Primary School, 1979). *Australia's Little Cornwall Cookbook*, (Moonta, SA: Moonta Hospital Ladies' Auxiliary, 1977).

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were products of the very last part of the century.⁷² Included in this subtype are community cookbooks for third-world focused charity groups, such as Community Aid Abroad (CAA – now Oxfam), Concern and Amnesty; these depict the Australian community's increasing "global village" consciousness from the 1960s onwards.

This subtype is especially reflective of the cultural environment. It depicts something of the changing ethnic makeup of Australian society and of the sensibilities and outlooks of the white middle-class dominant culture, as well as the culture and self-concept of specific ethnic groups in the community. It also depicts the acceleration of consumer culture in the post-war era.

8. Leisure

The Boy Scouts Association had produced cookbooks in earlier decades, such as *Camp Cooking* in the 1930s,⁷³ but they were not contributory in nature and hence do not form part of this subtype. They can, perhaps, be regarded as forerunners in that they sought to broadcast group values and ideas. The use of community cookbooks to achieve this, though, did not come til much later. Community cookbooks from hobby, sport and leisure groups appear to have begun in 1958, with a Brisbane Girl Guides cookbook.⁷⁴

This subtype really got going in the 1960s; the Scouts,⁷⁵ the Girl Guides,⁷⁶ and the church sports clubs⁷⁷ all produced community cookbooks during this decade. They were followed in later years by a wide variety of community groups focussed on the use of

⁷² *Buon Appetito: Regional Italian Recipes: Ricette Regionali Italiane / the National Italian-Australian Women's Association*, (Sydney: State Library of NSW Press, 1994). *Amici Nella Cucina = Friends in the Kitchen*, (Perth: Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital Gala Charity Ball Committee, 2000).

⁷³ *Camp Cooking*, (Sydney: Boy Scouts Association, 1930s).

⁷⁴ *Economical Successful & Favoutire [sic] Recipes*, (Brisbane: Trefoil Guild, Girl Guides Association Queensland, 1958).

⁷⁵ *Tested Recipes*, (Wangaratta, VIC: 1st Wangaratta Wolf Cub Pack, 1963).

⁷⁶ *Beginning with Slice Recipes*, (Numurkah, VIC: Numurkah Association of Guides and Brownies, 1960s).

⁷⁷ *Pearl Beach Recipes*, (Pearl Beach, NSW: W Garnsey, 1970s).

leisure time. This category encompasses a vast variety of hobby and special-interest groups, from the prosaic to the whimsical. Community groups can form around the most idiosyncratic, even humorous, self-definitions, such as the Australian Computer Society's Curry-SIG – its “special interest group” in Curry.⁷⁸

Hill and Wilson have noted the importance of sport “as a cultural means for constructing identities at local, national and global levels”.⁷⁹ Sports have certainly played an important role in establishing and maintaining Australian national identity, as well as operating at local and regional levels. As such, the relative paucity of cookbooks by community sporting groups (which certainly have ongoing fundraising needs) is somewhat surprising.⁸⁰ Perhaps it is related to historical notions of gender-appropriateness, as discussed earlier in this chapter, and the traditional Australian focus on the male-dominated sports of football and cricket. Nonetheless, the absence from the public record of community cookbooks by local netball, tennis or hockey clubs would not be thus explained. Certainly, sports cookbooks from the major team and spectator sports take a significant backseat in this subtype to what might be described as more marginal community groups. Bridge associations,⁸¹ local golf clubs,⁸² the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme participants,⁸³ amateur theatre groups,⁸⁴ fine arts groups,⁸⁵

⁷⁸ *Computerists Guide to Adelaide Curries 2 / Prepared by the Australian Computer Society Curry-SIG (Curry Special Interest Group)*, SA, (Adelaide: Australian Computer Society, Adelaide Branch, 1993).

⁷⁹ Jonathon D Hill and Thomas M Wilson, “Identity Politics and the Politics of Identities”, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 10 (2003): 6.

⁸⁰ The rise of the fundraising calendar in recent years has formed one obvious alternative, much used by some sports groups, typically celebrating sporting culture and particularly the sporting physique.

⁸¹ *The Bridge Player's Cookbook*, (Deakin, ACT: ACT Bridge Association, 1978).

⁸² *Wakehurst Golf Club's Selected Recipe Book*, (Wakehurst, NSW: Wakehurst Golf Club, 1970s). *Recipes from the Golf Bags of the Galloping Golfers*, (Canberra: Federal Golf Club, 1973).

⁸³ *Fourth International Gold Award Project: Recipe Book*, (Adelaide: Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme in Australia, 1979).

⁸⁴ *Ensemble's 20th Birthday Cook Book*, (Milson's Point, NSW: Ensemble Theatre, 1970s).

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even the Parramatta lantern club,⁸⁶ all published cookery books during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s which attested to their existence, their activities and their outlook.

The “hobbies, sports and leisure” subtype was really still in its infancy in the period to 1980. It has grown in significance in the ensuing years. In the 1980s and 1990s, choral groups,⁸⁷ craft groups,⁸⁸ the Women’s Australian Travel League,⁸⁹ genealogical societies,⁹⁰ native plant lovers’ societies,⁹¹ embroidery groups,⁹² yacht clubs,⁹³ swimming clubs,⁹⁴ herb societies,⁹⁵ an angling club,⁹⁶ bowling club,⁹⁷ Penguin club,⁹⁸

⁸⁵ *A Cook's Tour of the National Gallery of Victoria*, (South Yarra, VIC: Hyland House for the National Gallery Women's Association, 1978). *The Wheys of Warrandyte: Warrandyte Arts Association Cookbook*, (Warrandyte, VIC: The Association, 1976).

⁸⁶ *Old and New Favourites: Recipes / by the Members and Friends of the Parramatta Lantern Club*, (Parramatta: The Club, 1978).

⁸⁷ For example *The Melbourne Chorale Christmas Book*, (Melbourne: The Melbourne Chorale, 1980). Gwenda Moss, *Austintatious Cuisine / Recipes Collected by Members of the Adelaide Harmony Choir on Tour through Texas* (Adelaide: The Choir, 1986). *The Adelaide Sunshine Chorus of Sweet Adelines International*, (Adelaide: The Chorus, 1990s).

⁸⁸ Fenwick-Williams, *Afternoon Tea with the “PHE”*. *Cookbook, Recipes of Bygone Australia: The Colonial Gourmet Food Guide*, (Mt Gravatt, QL: The Lettering Arts Society of Queensland, 1989). *Recipes: A Collection of Favourite Recipes / Compiled by Members of the Waroona Arts, Craft and Learning Centre*, (Waroona, WA: The Centre, 1991). *A Crafty Cook Book*, (Eagle Heights, QL: Tambourine Mountain Creative Arts, 1992). *Crafty Cooking*, (Mandurah, WA: db Publishing, 2001).

⁸⁹ *The WATL We Cook Book*, (Sydney: Women's Australian Travel League, 1991).

⁹⁰ Irma Deas, *The Ipswich Collection: Recipes, Household Hints and Photographs Mainly from the Nineteenth Century* (Ipswich, QL: Ipswich Genealogical Society, 1994). *Generations of Recipes: A Collection*, (Burnie, TAS: Burnie Branch Members of the Genealogical Society of Tasmania, Inc, 2000). E McDougall, *Grandma's Recipes and Much More* (Albany, WA: Western Australian Genealogical Society, 1985). Margaret Taylor, *The AIGS 1995 Cookbook* (Blackburn, VIC: The Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies, 1995).

⁹¹ Jan Sked, *'Go Native': Wild Food Cookbook* (Lawnton, QL: JM Sked, 1985). Compiled for the Pine Rivers Society for Growing Australian Plants.

⁹² Fenwick-Williams, *Afternoon Tea with the “PHE”*. *Embroiderers' Recipe Book / Compiled by Members of the Embroidery Guild of South Australia Incorporated*, (Adelaide: The Guild, 1986). *Other Days - Other Ways: A Book About Food, Embroidery Fads and Fancies from Long Ago / Issued by the Embroiderers' Guild of NSW*, (Sydney: The Guild, 1986).

⁹³ *Sea Fare: A Collection of Recipes and Hints for the Offshore Racing or Cruising Sailor*, 1st ed. (Darling Point, NSW: Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, 1981 - 1990). Janet Kentish, *Dips 'N Drinks* (Robe, SA: Robe Yacht Club, 1988).

⁹⁴ *Tried and True Recipes*, (Wallumbilla, QL: Wallumbilla Swimming Club, 1991).

⁹⁵ *Claremont Uniswim Pasta Recipe Book: Tucking in with the Target Squad*, (Claremont, WA: Claremont-Uniswim Swimming Club, 1993). *Happy Herbing in Australian Kitchens: A Cookbook*, “Second serve” ed. (Melbourne: Herb Society of Victoria, 1986). *Gathered Herbs from the Kitchen Garden*, (Eastwood, SA: Herb Society of South Australia Inc, 1993).

⁹⁶ *Fish Recipe Book*, (Horsham, VIC: Horsham Angling Club, 1990s).

cake decorators' association,⁹⁹ quilters' group,¹⁰⁰ and yoga association,¹⁰¹ all added their own publications to the body of leisure-related community cookbooks. Interestingly, this assembly of texts shows a marked increase in women exercising community spirit on their own behalf; a large number of these community cookbooks is in aid of women's hobby and leisure groups.

9. Miscellaneous – The Rest

A final category, which could be unhelpfully entitled "MISC", would encompass all those community cookbooks which, since as early as the 1910s, seem to have remained outside of other major groupings. Political compilations (the first of which was produced in 1912, and which, if they had been more numerous, would have constituted another subtype in their own right),¹⁰² vocational groups,¹⁰³ Coastwatch,¹⁰⁴ various

⁹⁷ *The Lucky Wick Recipe Book*, (Clearview, SA: Clearview Women's Bowling Club, 1990s).

⁹⁸ Sue Bolto, *Recipes That Speak for Themselves* (Carine, WA: The Penguin Club of Australia, West Australian Branch, 1990s).

⁹⁹ *Savoury Ideas for Afternoon Tea*, (Bankstown, NSW: Cake Decorators' Association of NSW, 1992).

¹⁰⁰ *Quilters' Cook Book*, (Melbourne: Melbourne Quilt Exhibition, 1992).

¹⁰¹ *Yogic Food for Thought: Vegetarian Recipes*, (Duffys Forest, NSW: The Australian Association of Yoga in Daily Life, 1994).

¹⁰² Schlank, *The Liberal's Cookery Book* (1912). *LCL Cookery Book: Walkerville Branch / Liberal and Country League*, (Walkerville, SA: The League, n.d.). Simmonds et al., *A Taste of Tasmania* (1970s). *The Tasmanian Recipe Book*, (Emu Bay, TAS: Australian Labor party, Emu Bay Branch, 1986). Lucy Angley, *Labor in the Kitchen: Favourite Recipes of Prominent Labor Personalities* (Eden Hills, SA: Boothby FEC, 1995). *Forty Favourites for Forty Cents: For West Australian Cooks / Collected by the Country Party Women's Auxiliary for the Pioneer Women's Memorial Fountain Committee*, (WA: Pioneer Women's Memorial Fountain Committee, 1960s). Fiona Langley, *The Nationals Cookbook: Everything You Need for a Country Party*, 1st ed. (Melbourne: Country Party of Australia, 1990). *Eats from Some Australian Democrats*, (St Kilda, VIC: Australian Democrats Nuclear Disarmament Action Committee, 1986).

¹⁰³ *Selections from the Top: Execsecs Share Their Favourite Recipes*, (Canberra: Ansett, 1983). *Welcome Aboard! High-Flying Dishes: Contributed by Ex-Airline Hostesses of the Down to Earth Club*, (Seaforth, NSW: The Down to Earth Club, n.d.). *Have We Got a Meal for You / Compiled by Staff at Waltons Dept Store Gosford*, (Gosford, NSW: Waltons, 1980).

¹⁰⁴ Sally Jenyns, *Fishing & Feasting* (Sunnybank, QL: Coastwatch, 1996). Sally Jenyns, *The Coastwatch Cookbook* (Brisbane: Coastwatch Publications, 1997).

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Leagues and Unions,¹⁰⁵ groups with particular dietary interests,¹⁰⁶ both historic and contemporary, enrich the record of Australian community cookbooks.

Some must be called “miscellaneous” because they have survived the decades in such fragmentary form that insufficient identifying characteristics remain. The (circa) 1900 *Book of Tested Recipes* exemplifies this. Clearly a contributory work, with contributors’ names appended to recipes and advertisements, it is highly likely that it came from one of the city churches in Adelaide, but the absence of the first few pages from the only known surviving copy means that this cannot be ascertained with certainty.

Some cookbooks were what might be called hybrid forms. *Something Different for Dinner* (1936) was by the Bush Book Club of NSW, which distributed books to country areas for the education and edification of country people. In this sense it might be considered to belong to the educational subtype (the role of wealthy society ladies in this book was consistent with such a categorisation – recipes came from the leading ladies of Sydney society, and reflected their exalted social origins), but it is not a typical example of that kind, being in aid of a club rather than an educational institution *per se*. The organisation’s close links with the CWA and concern for isolated countrywomen push it in that direction as well, but it clearly does not belong to the canon of CWA cookery books, being very much a city publication. Was it an early example of hobby / leisure? This book’s specific positioning within this scheme is not the most important thing. The scheme’s purpose is not to “pin down” cookbooks into a specific category, but to explore the historical and social development of this genre by highlighting some major themes of community cookbook production in Australia.

¹⁰⁵ For example, *Dining Out ... At Home: Special Recipes*, (Melbourne: Union of Australian Women, 1968).

¹⁰⁶ For example, Sked, 'Go Native' (1985). *Satyananda Ashram Vegetarian Recipe Book: Compiled by Satyanasin Disciples of Paramahansa Satyananda Saraswati*, (Mangrove Mountain, NSW: The Ashram, 1982).

In defying neat categorisation, the “miscellaneous” category of community cookbooks reflects the diversity of community endeavour. Each contributes its own part to the multifaceted image community cookbooks create of Australian food and cultural history.

Conclusions

This passing parade of community-cookbook-producing groups suggests the intersections of multiple forms of individual and community identity. From a relatively narrow palette of community cookbooks – until the end of the First World War the only types were religious and patriotic – there was a first significant proliferation in the 1920s, which saw the beginnings of the educational, health and civic subtypes. There was also a forerunner of the later multicultural cookbooks. The Depression years of the 1930s saw the CWA coming to the fore. Country women, who experienced the worst of the economic downturn, strove to spread know-how for managing small household budgets, limited diets and scant resources, as well as their prodigious knowledge of life’s little delicacies, the baked goods. They succeeded in establishing a major new form of community cookbook which would be particularly valued by the Australian public. The Second World War produced another wave of patriotic cookbooks. In its aftermath, as with the previous war, came a renewed proliferation of new community groups, causes and cookbooks. The post-war development of the cultural and multicultural cookbooks and the leisure-related cookbooks was more than matched by the particularly wide variety of “miscellaneous” community cookbooks from these years. These had always been around – causes and groups which broke away from the standard mould – but in small numbers compared with the great increase of the 1960s and beyond.

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The growth and development of Australian community cookbooks is firmly rooted in Australian political, economic and cultural history. The development of different subtypes within this genre mirrors the establishment, growth and proliferation of Australian community institutions. They portray more than merely the minutiae of Australian community life, though they do fulfil this role well. Over and above this, they reveal group and individual identities and as such, a great deal of the history of cultural life. This overview of community cookbook development shows broad agreement with Oppenheimer's discussion of the history of Australian volunteering.¹⁰⁷ Community cookbooks are particularly rich in their reflection of the "capacity for civility" which sociologists Jennifer Wilkinson and Michael Bittman suggest is one of the main significances of volunteer activity in a democratic society.¹⁰⁸ In all, they are manuals of social capital, a microcosm of the civil society as it has developed in Australia since the Federation movement.

¹⁰⁷ Oppenheimer, *Volunteering*.

¹⁰⁸ Jennifer Wilkinson and Michael Bittman, "Volunteering: The Human Face of Democracy", *SPRC Discussion Paper* 114 (2002): 18.

Section 2

The Three Pillars of Cultural History

Chapter 4

Ethnicity, Identity, Food and Community

Chapter 5

Class Associations: Tastes of Luxury and Necessity

Chapter 6

The Gender World of Community Cookbooks

Chapter 4

Ethnicity, Identity, Food and Community

To come from elsewhere, from ‘there’ and not ‘here’, and hence to be simultaneously ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the situation at hand, is to live at the intersections of histories.¹

Iain Chambers (1994)

Spaghetti. To make gravy, cut up ½ lb beef steak and fry same with 2 onions in a little dripping until brown. Add garlic, pepper and salt. Add 2 cups water, 2 or 3 tomatoes or 3 oz conserva. Brown flour in oven, and thicken when cooked. Cook about 3 lbs of Savoy spaghetti in well salted boiling water for half an hour, then strain. Place a layer of spaghetti in dish, sprinkle with cheese then cover with gravy. Do this until all spaghetti and gravy is used up.²

Coronation Cookery Book (1936)

Community cookbooks are a significant repository for Australian imaginings of food and identity. In them can be read the ways in which ordinary cooks have toyed with ideas - both culinary ideas and cultural ones. A consideration of the role of ethnicity in Australian community cookbooks suggests several things. Firstly, it supports the belief that nineteenth-century Australian settlers’ cuisine came from a strongly British base. Secondly, it demonstrates that there was a flirtation with the idea of foreignness in the 1910s to 1940s, which was partly, but not wholly, due to the influence of certain non-British migrant groups during that period. Thirdly, it substantiates much of what is understood about the explosive changes wrought subsequently to the Second World War and the onset of serious Mediterranean and Asian migrations. Overall, community cookbooks reflect a range of ideas and responses to ethnicity in Australian community life, particularly characterised by the elements of playfulness and creative adaptation.

¹ Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 6.

² Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1936), 144. Conserva apparently was a product similar to tomato paste.

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They reveal how Australian cooks have responded to the twin imperatives of continuity and adaptation to which all food, and all cultural identities, are subject.

This chapter firstly addresses the relationship between Australian food, Australian cultural identity and the idea of the ethnic, and secondly expands on the concept of imagination. It presents an analysis of the ways in which recipes from community cookbooks, in the period from the 1890s to the 1950s, dealt with the idea and reality of the Foreign. In the 1960s and 1970s Australians began to come to terms with a far more complex range of identities through food. This chapter draws attention to some of the undercurrents of our pre-and post-multicultural identities. It thereby addresses the key role of the interplay of ethnicity, the Self and the Other in Australian cultural identity, and in mediating the troubled Australian relationship to place.

Defining ethnicity

The idea of ethnicity cuts to the core of who we perceive ourselves and others to be. Linguistically, the word refers to both internal and external group definition. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines “ethnic” as “(of a population group) sharing a distinctive cultural and historical tradition, often associated with race, nationality or religion, by which the group identifies itself and others recognize it”.³ Cultural theorist Raymond Williams notes that our modern understanding of the word comes from the American term “ethnics” and is used with particular reference to “dress, music and food”.⁴

“Ethnicity”, however, presents significantly varying possibilities of meaning.

Philosopher Max Weber saw ethnicity, like nation, as a deeply ambiguous term, defined

³ Lesley Brown, ed., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 857.

⁴ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1988), 120.

by an interplay of factors including language, physical appearance and the “conduct of everyday life”.⁵ Despite his belief that the word “ethnic” should be abandoned as “unsuitable for a really rigorous analysis”, its use has persisted as a way to define some key aspects of identity in a globalised society. Ethnicity as a factor in cultural life has been the subject of many fine interpretive studies, including recently Stephen Spencer’s *Race and Ethnicity* (2006), Eric Kaufmann’s *Rethinking ethnicity: majority groups and dominant minorities* (2004), Christian Karner’s *Ethnicity and everyday life* (2007), and Richard Jenkins’ *Rethinking ethnicity* (2008). According to Gerd Baumann and Thijl Sunier, there is a need for de-essentialised approaches to ethnicity that “explore the ambiguities of commitments and identifications” which characterise a multiethnic society.⁶

“[E]thnicity has both internal and external definitions”.⁷ It can be defined from the outside – that is, by outsiders to the group. This approach is conducive to racial stereotyping – “Asians” of various nationalities, for example, having traditionally been lumped together as one group in the Anglo-Australian gaze. It can also be defined from the inside - a self-defined group of, say, Italians, Vietnamese or Icelanders, living as foreigners in Australia. Both of these ways of defining ethnicity can fall into the trap of essentialising the ethnic, of dichotomising the “non-ethnic ‘us’ and ethnic ‘others’”, as it is put by John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith, who note that this dichotomy has “continued to dog the concepts in the fields of ethnicity and nationalism”.⁸ However,

⁵ Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 393-95.

⁶ Gerd Baumann and Thijl Sunier, *Postmigration Ethnicity: Cohesion, Commitments, Comparison* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1995), 4.

⁷ Stephen Spencer, *Race and Ethnicity: Culture, Identity and Representation* (London: Routledge, 2006), xv.

⁸ John Hutchinson and Anthony D Smith, eds., *Ethnicity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 4.

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there is a third way. In the words of anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen,

“majorities and dominant peoples are no less ‘ethnic’ than minorities”.⁹

“Ethnicity”, then, can be used without prejudice to refer to *all* such self-identified and externally recognised groups. In the 1978 *International Recipe Book*, from Hendon Primary School, for example, families were invited to showcase “their” cuisines and their knowledge of other cuisines. Anglo-British-Australian food was included alongside the Greek, Italian, German, Polish and other food traditions. Mrs Day offered traditional British recipes such as Welsh Rarebit, Old Fashioned Bread Pudding and Yorkshire Pudding and Mrs Jeffery gave her recipe for that (apologies to New Zealand) quintessentially Australian dish, the Pavlova, just as Mrs Njegovan contributed her recipe for Fashirano, introduced as “Yugoslavian Meat Patties”, and Mrs Martucci her Vitello Arrosto in Casseruola.¹⁰ This approach isolates the issue of cultural hierarchy from the issue of cultural specificity. The British have long been the Australian mainstream, it is true, but one can be ethnically English just as one can be ethnically Vietnamese.¹¹ It is in this sense that I will use the word.

Ethnicity, food and identity

Ethnicity functions as both a symbol of cultural belonging and a symbol of cultural difference, a field in which food, as a tangible expression of group culture, plays an important role. Ethnic cuisines are one expression of what Linda Brown and Kay Mussel term “communities of affiliation”.¹² Elizabeth and Paul Rozin, in discussing the structure of cuisine and its relationship to culture, refer to the flavour principles of

⁹ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, ed. Eriksen, et al., 2nd ed., *Anthropology, Culture and Society* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 4.

¹⁰ Groome, *International Recipe Book* (1978), 23, 51-52, 60-62.

¹¹ Robert JC Young, *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (London: Blackwell, 2008), 241.

¹² Linda Keller Brown and Kay Mussel, eds., *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 11.

particular nations and ethnic groups, some of which show remarkable stability over time.

[T]heir psychological importance is evidenced by the fact that emigrant groups characteristically continue to use their traditional flavourings, in spite of limited availability and high prices.... These flavourings are among the last remnants of the 'old culture' to disappear, if they do disappear, among the descendants of immigrants.¹³

With reference again to Eriksen, it is important to remember that that food is not a reflection of ethnic aspects of identity only for members of popularly identified ethnic minorities. Food reflects identity for everyone, the cultural and ethnic mainstream by no means least of all. The Australian mainstream, traditionally Anglo-British, has expressed this cultural affiliation through food just as every other ethnic group has done.

Identity, whether "ethnic" or not, cannot be construed as monolithic. In fact, many theorists identify it as a field of often conflicting imperatives. Claude Grignon's work in "Commensality and Social Morphology", for example, suggests a level of conflict between the desire to be apart and to be assimilated.¹⁴ Rina Benmayor and Andor Skotnes argue that "identities are not homogeneous or fixed" but "in specific situations and moments, people strategically foreground different dimensions of their individual and collective memories to construct who they are and what they are fighting for".¹⁵

Bell and Valentine similarly argue that the "dynamism" of food in "reacting to the host

¹³ Rozin and Rozin, "Some Surprisingly Unique Characteristics of Human Food Preferences", 246.

¹⁴ Claude Grignon, "Commensality and Social Morphology: An Essay of Typology", in *Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages*, ed. Scholliers (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 23-33.

¹⁵ Rina Benmayor and Andor Skotnes, "Some Reflections on Migration and Identity", in *International Yearbook of Oral History: Migration and Identity*, ed. Benmayor and Skotnes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 9.

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culture (and being *reacted to* by the host culture) – shows the malleability of foodways in the negotiation of identifications”.¹⁶

According to Stephen Castles and Mark Miller, “The social meaning of ethnic diversity depends to a large extent on the significance attached to it by the populations and states of the receiving countries”.¹⁷ Throughout Australia’s history, food consumption in all sectors of the population has reflected facets of ethnically defined identities, and has reflected the public’s fascination with the very idea of ethnicity. As Pierre van den Berghe remarks, “ethnic cuisine flourish[es] not only within the confines of the urban ethnic community; it jumps across ethnic boundaries ... What easier way to experience vicariously another culture than to share its food? As an outsider consuming an exotic cuisine, one is literally ‘taking in’ the foreign culture”.¹⁸

Scholars have identified the issues of ethnicity, race and nation as potential key themes of the community cookbook genre. Pilcher, in his study of Mexican nation-building, has examined community cookbooks as a force in the formation of the modern Mexican creole or “mestizo” national identity.¹⁹ He concludes that community cookbooks provided “the first genuine forum for a national cuisine”, through which “women began to imagine their own national community in the familiar terms of the kitchen”.²⁰ This process of *imagining* change is really the coalface of change itself. Before an idea becomes popular on the public stage it must germinate in the mind: it must be imagined into being.

¹⁶ David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat* (London: Routledge, 1997), 116.

¹⁷ Stephen Castles and Mark J Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 2nd ed. (New York: Guildford, 1998), 13.

¹⁸ Pierre van den Berghe, “Ethnic Cuisine: Culture in Nature”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 7 (1984): 393-4.

¹⁹ Pilcher, “Recipes for *Patria*” in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower. See also Jeffrey M Pilcher, *Que Vivan Los Tamales!: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1999).

²⁰ Pilcher, “Recipes for *Patria*”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 211-14.

Foreignness and ethnicity in Australian history

In Australia the idea of ethnicity must be understood within the parameters of this country's history of "discovery", exploration, settlement and the protracted period of continued migrations (variously regulated to suit changing social, political and economic ends) which persists to the present day.

European settlement of Australia in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was dominated by the British, most particularly the English. In the era of colonialism and the nation-state, the cultural parameters of such a project were not open to negotiation with other countries, even friendly ones. Anglo-British culture was posited as the new cultural norm for Australia. Though migrants from other countries arrived too, even from the earliest days, they were foreigners in a way that the English, and to a lesser extent the Scots and Irish, were not. In the nineteenth century, German migrants to the Barossa Valley, Chinese to the goldrushes, the Afghan cameleers and the South Sea Islanders ("Kanakas") who worked in the sugar plantations were all automatically construed as the Other and consequently sidelined from the cultural mainstream.

Cultural intermingling was seen as a grave threat and was strongly discouraged - the only acceptable path into the mainstream was by total and unequivocal assimilation.

The rare examples of foreigners who managed to attain public acceptance, for example the Victorian-era Sydney teahouse entrepreneur Quong Tart, are the exceptions that prove the rule. Quong Tart (1850-1903) was Cantonese but travelled to the Braidwood goldfields as a child with his uncle. Here he received his Western cultural education and picked up a love of all things Scottish. His wide acceptance and popularity within the white community of New South Wales, in spite of his Asian physiognomy and ongoing links to China (the Chinese Emperor appointed him a Mandarin of the fifth degree in 1887), were related not just to his undeniable charisma but also to his complete

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command of British social mannerisms. In addition, the facts of his naturalisation and conversion to Christianity, as well as his marriage to an Englishwoman, made his Europeanisation close to complete.²¹ He was even, through his teahouses, the originator of a popular scone recipe which was printed in some of the early community cookbooks.²² The Chinese market gardeners who were the more common representatives of Asian ethnic groups in colonial Australia did not commonly meet with the same approbation and were relegated to a far more marginal social and economic position.

Marilyn Lake points out that, just as the colonial project required “the construction of a culture and the constitution of new identities”, so indeed did the postcolonial project of Federated Australia.²³ Exactly how these new identities would be constituted was a matter for much debate and anxiety. The Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, which became the cornerstone of the White Australia Policy, was a strong statement of intent that Australia was to be white and European. Nobody put it more clearly than the New Settlers’ League of Australia (Queensland division) in the 1926 foreword to their cookbook *Queensland Fruit and How to Use It*. Quite simply, they stated, “We aim to keep a whole continent all white and all British”.²⁴

“White”, as a category, included immigrants from non-British “white” countries including Germany, the Scandinavian nations, British India, the United States and Italy. Of these groups only Germans comprised more than 1% of the total Australian

²¹ Errol Lea-Scarlett, “Quong Tart: A Study in Assimilation”, *Descent* 4, no. 3-4 (1969-1970): 81-101, 21-40.

²² “Quong Tart’s Scones”. For example, in LE Wiseman, *Uralla Cookery Book* (Uralla, NSW: s.n., 1909), 43.

²³ Marilyn Lake, “On Being a White Man, Australia, Circa 1900”, in *Cultural History in Australia*, ed. Teo and White (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2003), 101.

²⁴ *Queensland Fruit and How to Use It*, (Brisbane: New Settlers League of Australia in conjunction with Committee of Direction of Fruit Marketing, 1926), 16.

population at the 1901 census; the others ranged from 0.428% (Scandinavian) down to 0.15% (Italy). As such, their numbers were never of great national significance (though locally, as with the Barossa Germans, it could be a different matter).²⁵ The Chinese constituted 0.793% of the population at the same census and the Japanese only 0.095%, yet the effect of even these small percentages was far more threatening than any number of Europeans. In raw numbers, 90 000 people of non-white origin were noted to be already resident in Australia. Lake mentions the Commonwealth parliamentary debates of September 1901 concerning the “Afghans, Asiatics, Assyrians, Chinese, Cingalese, Hindoos, Japanese, Kanakas, Malays and Manilamen” already in Australia.²⁶ Their impact on the cultural consciousness may not have been welcomed, but it was nonetheless real.

The Aboriginal population was already in such decline that it was not seen to merit much consideration as a constituent of the Australian nation. The Commonwealth Statistician commented that numbers had sunk so low in the more densely populated south-eastern states as to be “practically negligible”, though he made a rough estimate of 150 000 for the nation (mostly in tribal communities in central, western and northern parts of the nation).²⁷ Intriguingly, it is notable that though this raw number is much greater than the 90 000 non-white foreigners mentioned before, it caused far less anxiety, perhaps due to the invisibility of many Aboriginal people in distant corners of the nation and the general perception that their race was, anyway, in senescence.

²⁵ GH Knibbs, *Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia, Containing Authoritative Statistics for the Period 1901-1907 and Corrected Statistics for the Period 1788-1900* (Melbourne: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, 1908), 145.

²⁶ Lake, “On Being a White Man, Australia, Circa 1900”, in *Cultural History in Australia*, ed. Teo and White, 100.

²⁷ GH Knibbs, *Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia*, (1908), 44.

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All in all, it is clear that what we call “Australian” identity has been subject to contestation for a long time. The New Settlers’ League may have wished for the whole continent to be “all white and all British”, but in reality it never was. In the early twentieth century this challenge was met with a racist immigration plan, in the form of the White Australia policy, racist policies for control of the Aboriginal population, and a correspondingly narrow ethnic definition of the Self and the Other.

Castles et al see Australian ideological responses to the multi-ethnic society as having included “racism, assimilation and multiculturalism”.²⁸ If the pre-World War Two period reflected the phase of racism, it was the post-war migrations that irrevocably changed Australian attitudes to ethnicity. The population of Australia in 1947 was 90.2% Australian-born, but the nation was poised for a massive post-war migration surge. Jim Howe defines three phases of post-World War Two immigration policy: “assimilation” in the 1940s and 1950s, “integration” in the 1960s and early 1970s, and the “multicultural” years of the later 1970s to the present.²⁹ The post-war migrations began with strictly controlled European migrations. Officials initially favoured migrants from the Baltic states for their blonde hair and blue eyes, as it was felt that people with these characteristics had greater prospects of successful assimilation, but even these European migrants, not to mention their darker-complexioned counterparts from the Slavic and Mediterranean regions, still faced ethnic denigration as “wogs” and “dagos”. However, by the 1960s a new phenomenon was underway. In 1962 the four thousandth Asian student arrived in Australia under the auspices of the Colombo Plan, which would

²⁸ Stephen Castles et al., “Australia: Multi-Ethnic Community without Nationalism?”, in *Ethnicity*, ed. Hutchinson and Smith, 358.

²⁹ Jim Howe, *Early Childhood, Family and Society in Australia: A Reassessment* (Katoomba: Social Science Press, 1999), 223-30.

fundamentally change community perceptions of the ethnic makeup of the nation.³⁰

With the official abolition of the White Australia Policy in 1973, Australians of colour began (though the project remains far from complete) to attain proper recognition as social and political equals.

Food, ethnicity and identity in Australian community cookbooks

A survey of community cookbooks, in reflecting the overarching sociocultural trends of the mainstream, reveals prevailing social attitudes towards ethnic groups and the idea of ethnicity. Early Australian community cookbooks were strongly grounded in a concept of ethnicity as meaning the ethnic Other. The most significant early community cookbook, the *Presbyterian*, was to support the missionary projects of the Presbyterian Church, including among Aboriginal groups in the Far North of Australia and the “Kanaka Home” in Brisbane. The *Presbyterian* had sister publications in Queensland and Victoria, the *WMU Cookery Book* and the *PWMU Cookery Book*, which espoused the same racialised ideology of Self and Other. Though the specific charitable (and therefore ethnic) focus varied somewhat, the foreword of the Victorian *New PWMU Cookery Book* (1941) stated, nearly fifty years later, the same concept of the ethnic Other, reporting, “Our foreign work includes the strangers in our own city; we help to support a missionary working among the Jews; and assist in work among the Chinese in Melbourne”.³¹

British cultural hegemony remained strong around the time of Federation. Bannerman notes that “the dominating feature of Federation cookery was not how Australian it had

³⁰ The Colombo Plan was and is a program aimed at facilitating economic and social activity between member countries. These first comprised the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, but the organisation has since grown to include much of the Asia-Pacific region as well as the USA. The Colombo Plan was first devised in 1950 and first operational in 1951. For more information see www.colombo-plan.org.

³¹ AM Campbell, *The New PWMU Cookery Book / Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union of Victoria*, 4th ed. (Melbourne: Brown, Prior, Anderson, 1941), unnumbered.

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become, or even how much it had been influenced by Australia, but how English it had remained”.³² Bannerman’s description of the Britishness of Australian cookery applies to the period well beyond Federation. The broad-brushstroke picture painted at successive Symposia of Australian Gastronomy held mostly true for the time up to and including World War Two. This picture was of a wan, flabby, rigidly British Australian cuisine reliant on the dripping pot (remembered for its penetrating aroma) and comprising badly cooked meat, not much fish, boring vegetables, elaborate cakes and a lot of sugar.³³ It is telling that the adjectives most commonly used in community cookbook forewords of this era to describe their offerings were very modest in scope: “tried / tested / proven”, “wholesome”, “simple” and “economical”.³⁴

The culinary expression of the “white nationalistic settler consciousness”, bland, plain food certainly was the characteristic adornment of Australian tables in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁵ In 1894 Philip Muskett, a prominent medical doctor, decried the poor adaptation of the British to the Australian climate and its culinary consequences, which were excessive meat and tea consumption and insufficient use of vegetables, salads and wine.³⁶ Community cookbooks of the pre-World War Two era are fondly (or not so fondly) remembered for their recording of this plain cuisine. Of course, the plainness of food could be attractive to the home cook, and sometimes

³² Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 209.

³³ Don Dunstan, “Tradition and Renewal in Australian Gastronomy”, in *Food in Festivity: Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy*, ed. Coronos, et al. (Sydney: 1990), 31-33.

³⁴ For example, *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 12th ed. (1912). *Coronation Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1936). *Hobart Cookery Book. Busy Woman's Home Companion*. Agnes KB Barnes, *The CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints / Compiled by a Committee Led by Mrs Agnes KB Barnes*, 2nd ed. (Perth: Wigg, 1936). *Cookery Book of Tested Recipes / the Echuca Branch of the Country Women's Association*, (Echuca, VIC: Country Women's Association, 1939).

³⁵ Ann Curthoys, “Cultural History and the Nation”, in *Cultural History in Australia*, ed. Teo and White, 26.

³⁶ Philip E Muskett, *The Art of Living in Australia: Together with Three Hundred Australian Cookery Recipes and Accessory Kitchen Information by Mrs H Wicken* (London; Melbourne: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1894).

comprised a positive selling-point for the books. Annie Sharman and Constance McRitchie asserted in the ninth edition of the *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, “it is the best seller in South Australia, because it is ‘Home-Made’, and the Recipes are easy to work and understand”.³⁷

Yet, as an image of Australian food culture this picture is only partial. In fact, portrayals of ethnicity, as they appear in community cookbooks prior to 1945, reflect both the attractions of the exotic and the cultural imperative to hold onto the ethnicities of home, a dual imperative similarly noted by Donna Gabaccia in American foodways as tension between longing for the familiar and the novel.³⁸ Australian cooks can be seen posing the question “Who are we?” in relation to their families and communities. The ways in which concepts of ethnicity informed their answers can be viewed as coming under two major categories, corresponding to Gabaccia’s “familiar” and “novel”. In seeking to understand them more on the basis of process and community activity, I will describe them as Maintenance and Evolution.

Maintenance

This category is about authenticity, continuity and stewardship. A recipe can be primarily about recreating (or indeed creating) an “authentic” dish, passing it on, caring for its legacy. These are issues of cultural maintenance which can be experienced most pressingly by first- and second-generation migrants. A vibrant link to the home culture is generally maintained through support structures in which cooking and eating, and hence sharing recipes, can play a central role. By upholding the authentic foods of Home, a group can form and maintain its sense of self, its shared identity. Oral transmission of traditions remains important for recent migrants, but over time is often

³⁷ *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 9th ed. (1938), unnumbered.

³⁸ Donna R Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 8.

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increasingly supplemented by written means - which is where the community cookbook can come into the picture.

One way to track collective imaginings of Self and Other is through place references in recipe names. In community cookbooks of the 1900s, the frequency and the vast array of British place references reveal a strong Anglo-British ethnic allegiance and a determination to commemorate and preserve this allegiance as an aspect of group identity. Canterbury Cake, Durham Cutlets, Exeter Stew, Balmoral Pudding, Aberdeen Sausage, London Buns and a host of other British-named and -pedigreed recipes crowded the pages of the community cookbooks, far outnumbering any other place references.

A small number of recipes had a stronger specific ethnic association. One of the primary examples is Haggis. Haggis recipes abounded in the early books, doubtless related to the early prominence of the Presbyterians in community cookbook projects. The versions of Haggis on offer varied from highly “authentic” (sheep’s stomach bag and all)³⁹ to a simple pudding-type arrangement of oatmeal, mincemeat and onions.⁴⁰ But each in its own way was counted as Haggis, with its associations of highlands, bagpipes and hardy Scots. Similarly, Scots Broth and Scotch Shortbread represent a particularised Scottish cuisine which remained a strong and distinctive presence in community cookbooks through most of the century. Presumably it was not solely Scottish immigrants or their descendants who made and ate these dishes (Haggis could perhaps be an exception). Appearing in community cookbooks across the land and from a wide

³⁹ For example, *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 8th ed. (1904), 36. *WMU Cookery Book: Every One a Tried Recipe*, 7th ed. (Brisbane: WR Smith and Paterson for the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union, 1908), 41. Binny Lum, *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men* (Adelaide: Rigby for the Rheumatism and Arthritis Association of Victoria, 1975), 97.

⁴⁰ For example, *Home Cookery for Australia*, 2nd ed. (1906), 47.

range of different community groups, the Broth and Shortbread certainly appealed to a wide segment of turn-of-the-century Australian society.

Where the cultural link grows weaker, a written recipe can provide a door back to a lost inheritance. Mary Chamberlain discusses the role of cookbooks in helping migrants reconnect to the home culture. Beulah, a Barbadian migrant to Britain, says of her stepsister, “She’s teaching black studies, so she’s come a long way ... She has taught herself to make sweetbread, black cake, souse, cou-cou from a book”.⁴¹ The following anecdote illustrates the even more personal role a community cookbook can fulfil in this regard. A member of the South Australian Country Women’s Association, Mrs Margaret Hampel, described to me how her family, Barossa Germans, had been mixed farmers and made mettwurst from their own pigs since migrating from Prussia in 1850. However, by the mid-twentieth century her family had ceased to keep pigs and hence this practice had fallen into abeyance. After her marriage in 1963, the question of mettwurst returned. “My husband and his family were involved in mixed farming (wheat, barley, oats, rye, sheep, cattle and pigs). They had killed a pig each year for many years, but had never made mettwurst. ... my husband was anxious to make mettwurst, so I began looking for a recipe.” Having received a copy of the *Country Women’s Association Meat and Fish Calendar* from her mother, she checked it for a mettwurst recipe, and lo and behold, the recipe had been contributed by her own great-aunt. “When I discovered it, I knew straight away that it had been used by my family for many years.” Through a community cookbook, one country woman was thus able to

⁴¹ Mary Chamberlain, “Family and Identity: Barbadian Migrants to Britain”, in *International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories*, ed. Benmayor and Skotnes, 31.

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recover her family's recipe after a hiatus of a generation and to resume production of mettwurst according to their age-old tradition.⁴²

The leitmotif is of preservation, authenticity, conservation. Community cookbooks can function as a means of attenuating and re-configuring traditions of oral cultural transmission to meet the needs of a cultural diaspora, and even the needs of life in a market-driven capitalist society. Stephen Steinberg says that eating his beloved grandmother's Challah was "a ritual affirmation of our sense of peoplehood and our place in history".⁴³

Community cookbooks are similarly able to uphold traditional definitions of ethnic identities, and to preserve the associated markers of Self and Other. Their excellent ability to fulfil this role has increasingly been mobilised by ethnic groups within Australia, to record and to share their own particular foodways.

In 1996 the Polish Women's Association of Adelaide published *Polish Cooking in South Australia*. In this cookbook, among a wonderful array of traditional Polish recipes, is one for Pavlova (*pawlowa*), which calls for a meringue made in the classic pavlova fashion, but filled with a twist – the cream should be flavoured with a drop of strawberry essence, and then topped with either fresh fruit (Australian tradition) or nuts, sultanas and chocolate flakes (continental flavour direction).⁴⁴ Such accommodation of the competing demands of cultural maintenance and evolution shows how ethnic communities in Australia have responded to the host culture whilst still maintaining the home culture.

⁴² Margaret Hampel, letter, 13th October 2008.

⁴³ Stephen Steinberg, "Bubbe's Challah", in *Eating Culture*, ed. Scapp and Seitz (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 295.

⁴⁴ Czes Koszyca, *Polish Cooking in South Australia* (Adelaide: Polish Women's Association, 1996), 98-99.

The negative face of the maintenance of ethnic categories is also palpable in Australian community cookbooks, principally in the appearance of racist stereotypes from within the Anglo-Australian community. Recipes can reinforce popular prejudices by referring to ethnic and cultural stereotypes. “Uncle Ike’s Sauce”, from the *Stowport Cookery Book* (1930),⁴⁵ invoked the stereotype of Jewish miserliness in this recipe for a frugal treacle sauce by using the derogatory name “Ike”, from “Ikey Mo”.⁴⁶ This is one way of using “foreignness” as a strong and generally negatively loaded marker of Otherness. It must be said that such uses became rare to the point of extinction in community cookbooks from the second half of the century.

Evolution

The second category under which I have interpreted the expression of ethnicity is about adaptation and change. There are three main points to make under this heading. The first is about play and experimentation - ethnicity as a function of the imagination. The second is about the performance of identity, and hence ethnicity as a cultural reality. The third is about the abstraction of the “ethnic” and the role of key ingredients.

Firstly, ethnicity can appear as a field of play and experimentation. This has received some fairly negative press from scholars concerned with the postcolonial implications, and perhaps fairly so. Lisa Heldke, for example, calls it “cultural food colonialism ... reproduced by food adventurers who seek out ethnic foods to satisfy their taste for the exotic other”.⁴⁷ However, laying to one side this objection, it is possible to view such activity as a needed leavening to the humdrum of daily life in the twentieth-century

⁴⁵ *Stowport Cookery Book* (1930), 41.

⁴⁶ “A racist term for a Jewish person ... From the common names Isaac and Moses.” James Lambert, ed., *Macquarie Australian Slang Dictionary: Complete and Unabridged* (Sydney: Macquarie Library, 2005), 110.

⁴⁷ Lisa M Heldke, “Let’s Cook Thai: Recipes for Colonialism”, in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Counihan and Van Esterik (NY: Routledge, 2009), abstract.

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kitchen. Susan Sheridan, in her study of 1960s *Women's Weekly* magazines, sees “kitchen table tourism” as allowing women to experiment with the exotic and unknown. She finds that “the food of Others serves a variety of purposes – practical ... commercial ... and fantasy”.⁴⁸ In a similar way to popular women's magazines, community cookbooks reveal a strong sense of the exotic attractions of the Other. This was evident even in the most profoundly British-identified cookbooks of the earliest years. Though many recipes evoked the Home Country, as discussed, there were also elements of fantasy, history, aspiration and exoticism evident in recipe names. Tripe a la Lyonnaise [sic] (a much grander name for Tripe and Onions), Turkish Delight, Russian Dainty, Portuguese Rice (with tomatoes, stock, onions, herbs and cheese), Boston Tea Cake and Tomatoes a la Cadiz (with cheese, eggs and seasoning) were all recipes printed in *A Voice from the Bush* (1890s). Some, such as Turkish Delight, had a bona fide cultural association with the particular places they named - but this is not always the point. Mrs Borton's recipe for Russian Dainty (a plain lemon-flavoured butter cake baked in four layers, filled with “different jams” and iced) might have had authentic Russian connections, though I have been unable to uncover any.⁴⁹ Even if not, the exotic name added a welcome fillip to the recipe, which may have helped sustain its popularity. Certainly, as late as the 1930s, Russian Cake similar to Mrs Borton's recipe was a well-known bakery treat in Australia.⁵⁰ Perhaps these sometimes fanciful allusions to far-off places lent piquancy to what was in reality often a fairly monotonous diet. Bower discusses how cookbooks, similarly to romantic fiction, enable readers simultaneously to maintain a traditional role and to escape its mundane aspects by identifying with “a different role or way of life, a different culture”, allowing them to

⁴⁸ Sheridan, “Eating the Other”, 328.

⁴⁹ Mrs Henry Coldham, *A Voice from the Bush: A Book of Tested Recipes* (Clermont, QL: sn, 1890s), 19.

⁵⁰ *Reports of the Advisory Council on Nutrition / Australia - Department of Health*, (Canberra: Government Printer, 1936-1938), 996-4.

imagine new or altered identities for themselves.⁵¹ Certainly, part of their function was to help carry the mind further afield. With place references from Burma to San Francisco to Siberia, the imagining of location and foreignness in pre-World War Two community cookbooks was surprisingly wide-ranging.

Ethnicity can be seen to be a field of play some decades prior to the onset of the post-war migrations, much earlier than generally believed. In fact, since the very early twentieth century, Australians have been publishing community cookbooks reflecting their experimentation, their play with foods and with ideas that departed from the dominant culinary mould. This experimentation was spurred on in part by migrations, such as the Italians who arrived in significant numbers in the 1920s and 1930s, but it also derived from the romance of exoticism, the sheer impulse to play around with the idea of the foreign. In this regard my findings are broadly consonant with Bannerman's argument in *Seed Cake and Honey Prawns*, that fad and fashion have been as responsible for the course of Australian food history as anything else.⁵² To say that this experimental playfulness represented merely superficial culinary activity, though, would be to miss the longer-term ramifications. In the light of subsequent history, this fascination with foreignness, this willingness to flirt and even be seduced by the idea of foreign food, was important as a precursor to the post-War era, when there arose a very concrete need to deal with new concepts of foreignness and the "ethnic" flavours that accompanied waves of new migrants to Australia.

Secondly, ethnicity does not just function as an idea, a means of playing with ideas about culture and identity. It can also, naturally enough, be a reflection of the very real and concrete interactions of the Self and Other in Australian society, and of the ways in

⁵¹ Bower, "Romanced by Cookbooks", 35.

⁵² Bannerman, *Seed Cake and Honey Prawns*, 14.

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which foods brought by migrants are not only preserved but also transformed.

Adaptation of “ethnic” recipes in community cookbooks can be seen as a changing performance of identity. Interesting examples can be found in the *Barossa Cookery Book*. A product of the largely German-descended community of South Australia’s Barossa Valley, the *Barossa Cookery Book* was first published during the First World War. Consequently, the first edition evinced little German culinary content, despite the majority presence of recipe donor names such as Heuzenroeder, Lindner, Seppelt and Hoffmann. Only after the end of the First World War was a much expanded version of the book released, which included recipes for some classic Barossa-German dishes. In this third and definitive edition were many recipes which performed ethnic identity in different ways, showing different types of change, accommodation and adaptation.

The first and most important point is that the emblematically German recipes, even in this edition, remained in the minority. Most recipes were for the Melting Moments, Macaroons and Meringues which could come from any Anglo-Saxon household of the period. The message these recipes seem to send is “total assimilation” – accommodation of the majority culture at the expense of all apparent ethnic identification. This certainly was a safe position for a community that had so recently suffered terrible discrimination (during the First World War their schools had been closed, their language banned, their place names erased from the map, and their men interned as enemy aliens). However, other recipes in the third edition of the *Barossa Cookery Book* sent a secondary message of regional and ethnic pride. Alongside the Prince of Wales Cakes and Cornish Pasties were Honigkuchen (also known as Honey Cake or Biscuits) and German Coffee Cake, often known simply as German Cake.

Coffee Cake recipes have much to say about adaptation, accommodation and change.

The traditional German coffee cake, or *Kaffeekuchen*, is a yeast-raised cake with a

streusel topping and its name refers not to its ingredients but to the fact that it is made to be eaten with coffee. The Barossa Germans, unlike their Northern German forebears, differentiate between *Deutscher Kuchen* (or German Cake), which is the direct inheritor of the *Kaffeekuchen* tradition, and Coffee Cake, by which is meant a much transmuted type of cake, a sponge with a butter-sugar-cinnamon topping, not to be confused with the other.⁵³ It does not appear that other South Australians observed the same distinction; the *Book of Tested Recipes* (1900) included Mrs Howard's recipe for German Cake, which was of the yeasted variety but had a simple sugar-cinnamon topping. Of the fourteen recipes for coffee cake in the *Barossa Cookery Book* (variously named Coffee Cake, German Cake and Yeast Cake, plus some other minor variations), two were labelled "French" and thus excused themselves from this particular ethnic tradition. A further three (Brown Coffee Cake and two Coffee Cakes) were flavoured with coffee or coffee essence and had no topping. One was a layer cake with coffee icing. Four were the kind of sponge-based Coffee Cake which lies outside of the internally defined Barossa-German tradition. One was a Yeast Coffee Cake which appeared to be a hybrid of the German and Anglo traditions, having a traditional yeasted base with the lighter butter-sugar-cinnamon topping, as in the example from the *Book of Tested Recipes*.⁵⁴

The remaining four cakes essentially conformed to the traditional German pattern, though one was called Coffee Cake despite its use of the traditional hearty German Streusel. They each showed different adaptations of ingredients and method. Two used chemical raising agents rather than yeast - a modern adaptation which could considerably expedite the cake-making process, though at a price in terms of flavour

⁵³ Angela Heuzenroeder, Personal communication, September 2004.

⁵⁴ *Barossa Cookery Book*, 3rd ed. (1932), 90-112.

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and texture. Both of these recipes used non-traditional names, Coffee Cake and German Coffee Cake respectively, which suggests the centrality of yeast to the identity of the truly traditional German Cake. They conformed to the traditional German pattern in other respects. Three of the recipes used all butter; one used part lard, the traditional fat, which gives a lighter and slightly firmer crumb but was losing status to butter in the twentieth century, as standards of living rose. (The decline in the practice of pig-keeping, as highlighted by the story of Margaret Hampel, quoted earlier, also meant that lard was less likely to be on hand for use.) Three of the recipes used various combinations of the traditional German coffeecake spices, cinnamon, mace and nutmeg, whereas the remaining recipe, the Coffee Cake with the German-style streusel, used only essence of lemon.⁵⁵

The adaptations variously chosen by these different bakers all suggest modernisation and assimilation to British tastes, though in the *Barossa Cookery Book* as a whole the sweet, sour, smoky flavour principle and methods of German cuisine were clearly present in recipes for mettwurst, several types of dumpling and a very wide array of pickles. Further, the region-specific Barossa-German ethnic identification was apparent in the frequent and highly nuanced calls for different types of grape, wine and spirits. Nor were the Barossa Germans immune to the influence of other, non-British ethnic groups. Fowl Soup, for example, called for “spaghetti (commonly called nudeln)”.⁵⁶

Colliding ethnicities? Certainly a changed performance.

Much greater change was to come in the wake of the post-war migrations. Hendon Primary School’s *International Recipe Book* (1978), for example, emanated from a lower-middle and working-class area with a high percentage of migrant population. It

⁵⁵ Ibid., 96-101.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 5.

contained many recipes showing the competing demands of cultural maintenance, transformation and exploration. Mrs Iosifidis' recipe for Greek Summer Salad (Salata Therini) called for tomatoes, cucumbers, spring onions, capsicums, a garlic clove, oil and vinegar dressing, salt and pepper and chopped parsley *or* dried rigani (oregano). The use of "rigani" shows Mrs Iosifidis cleaving to a cultural, culinary and linguistic ideal, but the suggestion of parsley as a more commonly known and available alternative shows an accommodation to the 1970s Adelaide cultural environment, in which oregano (let alone the specific subspecies known as *rigani*) was not yet a generally familiar ingredient.⁵⁷ Similarly, the suggestion to rub the salad bowl with the cut garlic clove rather than including the garlic in the salad (a French-influenced stratagem often recommended by cookery writers of this era) would have appealed to an unreconstructed Anglo-Australian eater afraid of what were delicately termed "the after-effects".⁵⁸ Mrs Iosifidis' recipe for Skewered Lamb (Arni Souvlakia) involved leg lamb, olive oil, dry white wine, lemon juice, dried rigani *or* oregano, bay leaves, salt and pepper. After marinating the meat was skewered and grilled "under a hot grill or over glowing charcoal".⁵⁹ The second method was more traditional but the first more practical, at least where suburban Australian households were concerned.

Many recipes represent what could be classed as "industrial Australian ethnic fusion", making free use of the tinned, preserved and factory-prepared foods that were so common in these years to incorporate popular "ethnic" flavours.⁶⁰ Mrs Fazzari's Rice Salad was in a classic industrialised Anglo-Australian ethnic mould, calling for fried

⁵⁷ "Greek oregano", or rigani, is a subspecies, *Oreganum vulgare* ssp. *hirtum*, of the common culinary oregano, *Oreganum vulgare*.

⁵⁸ Groome, *International Recipe Book*, 13.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 43-44.

⁶⁰ Danielle Gallegos discusses the question of industrial "ethnic" flavours. Danielle Gallegos, "Mapping Ethno-Foodscapes in Australia" (PhD, Murdoch University, 2002).

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onions, cooked rice, a packet of bacon pieces, green peppers, a tin of green beans, carrots, salt and pepper, frying oil and four eggs, from which were made omelettes to be added in small pieces.⁶¹ The Canteen Ladies donated a recipe for Chinese Salmon Fritters which called for canned John West Pink Salmon, canned bean sprouts, onion, pepper and soy sauce.⁶² Tropical Dip, from Mrs DiSanto, required cream cheese, crushed pineapple and pineapple juice (canned), and salt and pepper.⁶³ She suggested the addition of cheese and/or chopped gherkin by way of variation. Chinese Recipe – Bahmi, from Mrs DeRyke, called for packets of bahmi (noodles), dried bahmi goreng vegetables and prawn crackers as well as meat and seasonings including soy sauce, garlic powder and gherkins.⁶⁴

Some recipes showed a creative disregard for ethnic identifications; they borrowed ideas but mixed and matched them without regard for authenticity. Mrs Morrison's Spicy Steak Pizza is an example. Really a shallow meatloaf quickly cooked and topped with tomato sauce, mozzarella or Cheddar cheese and oregano, the name and generically Italian flavourings probably appealed to the children and the ease and speed of preparation to the cook.⁶⁵ On Rozin's flavour principle theory, the addition of "Italian" flavourings had the effect of "ethnicising" the dish. Greek Macaroni appears to have been another example of the kind of simple improvisation and adaptation to specific tastes and time pressures demanded of family cooks everywhere. It consisted of spaghetti boiled in stock and served with grated Haloumi cheese on top.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Groome, *International Recipe Book*, 14.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

The leitmotif here is of experimentation, adaptation and evolution. The *International Recipe Book* shows some home cooks wanting to recall the flavours of their homelands and others wanting to experiment with the allure of the novel. (Some cooks, indeed, were pulled in both directions.) Industrially canned, packaged, preserved and created ingredients assisted this process by allowing cooks without insider knowledge of a given cuisine nonetheless to approximate some of its identifying flavours. Though the focus of this book was more squarely on “authentic” recipes from families’ ancestral cultures, it also made room for pastiche and invention.

It is worth noting that *The International Recipe Book* belonged to a not altogether common type of community cookbook, in that it represented a conscious drawing-together and celebration of “ethnic” identities and foods, many of which have never been embraced on a large scale by the Australian mainstream, such as the eastern European cuisines. Community cookbooks have not generally been groundbreakers when it comes to inclusion of new recipes or ideas; rather they tend, as Bannerman has suggested, to reflect those ideas that, having been introduced by more progressive organs such as magazine cookery columns and professional cookery books, have been accepted into popular use. (It must be said, though, that this view is complicated by community cookbooks’ prominent role in the dissemination of such culinary innovations as the pavlova, lamington and anzac biscuit - discussed in Chapter Nine. Symons’ research into the origins of Antipodean baked goods suggests that “the clear majority of earliest recordings were in community books”.)⁶⁷

Mrs Lance (Mina) Rawson, a popular cookery writer of the late nineteenth century, was moved in her *Antipodean Cookery Book and Kitchen Companion* (1895) to consider what recipes Australian housewives most needed, and hence to recruit new ones.

⁶⁷ Symons, “The Cleverness of the Whole Number”, 44.

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“American housewives are very clever at both pickling and preserving”, she contended, “therefore I have secured a few of their best recipes from a lady correspondent residing in Virginia”.⁶⁸ Such a progressive approach is rare in community cookbooks except for those which, like the *International Recipe Book*, specifically set out to showcase the ethnic or “foreign” recipes which were the cultural inheritance of that particular community. (It seems to be more prevalent among primary school cookbooks than most other groups, perhaps suggesting the progressive, inclusivist social agenda of many publicly-funded schools from the 1960s onwards.) I do not argue, as does Sherrie Inness in *Secret Ingredients: Race, Gender and Class at the Dinner Table*, that these texts are “transgressive”, or that they aim to subvert dominant norms.⁶⁹ However, consonantly with Inness’ study of American cookbooks and cookery media, it can be said of these Australian community cookbooks that in giving a voice to ordinary people they are able to demonstrate the quiet and often very personal experimentations and accommodations that could take place, even within the matrix of a broader culture in which the question of ethnicity remained problematic.

Thirdly and finally, transformation is also a consequence of a recipe’s entrance into the general community. Elements of an ethnic cuisine may eventually find themselves in the mainstream, by which point they are generally much changed. (The earlier discussion of Barossa-German Coffee Cake / German Cake also highlights some aspects of this phenomenon.) Key ingredients can be strong indicators of ethnic difference; a useful example is garlic.

⁶⁸ Mrs Lance Rawson, *The Antipodean Cookery Book and Kitchen Companion*, facsimile ed. (Sydney: Kangaroo Press, 1992 (c1895)), 24.

⁶⁹ Sherrie A Inness, *Secret Ingredients: Race, Gender and Class at the Dinner Table* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 3.

Garlic long functioned as a marker of foreignness in the Anglo-Saxon mind. Alan Saunders reports that in 1754 a mob in Bristol (UK) shouted, rather longwindedly, “No French... No lowering of wages of working men to four pence a day and garlic”.⁷⁰ In 1818 Percy Bysshe Shelley reported incredulously from a visit to Naples, “Young women of rank actually eat – you will never guess what – garlick!”⁷¹ In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain garlic represented the Continent, it was associated with poverty, and it was scorned as such. Thomas Pellechia argues that garlic’s low status in Victorian-era Britain also reflected its associations with the colonised subjects of the subcontinent.⁷²

Garlic retained this marginal position in early Australian food culture. Community cookbooks show that in the 1900s, and in many communities for much longer than that, garlic was used solely in chutneys and sauces, never in quantity and never in dishes for fresh eating. But change was ahead – and not so far ahead as one might suppose. A turning point came in 1911 when the *Kookaburra Cookery Book* suggested the use of garlic in “Spaghetti or Macaroni (Italian)”, though caution reigned with regard to quantity: the amount suggested was “a speck [the] size of a pin’s head”.⁷³

Looking further down the historical record, the 1920s brought a smattering more of main-meal garlic. The *Kookaburra*’s second edition included a recipe for Pot-au-Feu containing “one small bit” of garlic.⁷⁴ The Presbyterian ladies in 1927 published a

⁷⁰ Alan Saunders, “Why Do We Want an Australian Cuisine?”, *Australian Cultural History* 15 (1996): 5.

⁷¹ Letter dated 22nd December, 1818. Quoted in Victoria Renoux, *For the Love of Garlic: The Complete Guide to Garlic Cuisine* (New York: Square One Publishers, 2005), 19.

⁷² Thomas Pellechia, *Garlic, Wine and Olive Oil: Historical Anecdotes and Recipes* (Santa Barbara, CA: Capra Press, 2000), 73.

⁷³ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1911), 81.

⁷⁴ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1912), 284.

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recipe for Spaghetti involving “a little garlic if liked”.⁷⁵ The *WMU Cookery Book* introduced Pindahu Curry, which used a whopping six cloves of garlic to two pounds of meat and noted its provenance as “a very excellent tried recipe from a Ceylonese cook”.⁷⁶ By the 1930s, garlic was appearing in Schnapper Salad (used to rub the inside of the bowl – some decades before the French bistro fashion popularised this practice),⁷⁷ more Curries – though none with the lavishness of Pindahu Curry,⁷⁸ a range of pies and made dishes,⁷⁹ even Boston Beans – again “if liked”.⁸⁰ Some prominent Brisbane men suggested recipes for Spanish Rice and Indian Curry, each containing one clove of garlic, in *My Favourite Recipe*.⁸¹ The CWA cookery books of the 1930s appear to have been particularly garlic friendly. The *Coronation Cookery Book* of 1936 called for garlic with various roasts, chops, sausages and mincemeat dishes, salads, spaghetti, as well as of course the many savoury preserves. Caution was again the general leitmotif, though not as extreme as that recommended in the *Kookaburra Cookery Book*. The introduction to curry warned, “Some enjoy a little garlic in curry, but it should be a very small quantity. It is so powerful that a scrap too much may spoil a dish. The safest way to use it is to just rub the casserole inside with a piece of cut garlic”.⁸² Another example is *Something Different for Dinner* by the Bush Book Club of New South Wales in 1936. In the recipes of this publication, garlic was consistently associated with exotic, warm-

⁷⁵ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 19th ed. (1927), 72.

⁷⁶ *WMU Cookery Book*, 11th ed. (1920), 23.

⁷⁷ *WMU Cookery Book: Over 900 Tried Recipes*, 14th ed. (1930), 20.

⁷⁸ *Stowport Cookery Book* (1930), 10.

⁷⁹ For example “Clyde Pie” in Mrs RG Beggs, *Birthday Book: Containing over 400 Tested Recipes of CWA Members* (Melbourne: Country Women's Association, 1933), 38. Also several recipes in Dorothy C Hammond, *Calendar of Luncheon and Tea Dishes, Including Soups, Savouries, Salads, and What to Do with Cold Meat: A Recipe for Each Day of the Year / Country Women's Association of New South Wales*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: CWA of NSW, 1932).

⁸⁰ *CWA Olinda Branch Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1930s), 5.

⁸¹ *'My Favourite Dish' Recipe Book / by Well-Known Men of Brisbane*, (Brisbane: Union Jack Club, 1930s), 21-22.

⁸² Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1936), 83.

climate lands. Fish Soup (Spanish Style), Rancho Eggs, Paella, Aubergines a l’Italienne and Eggplant and Tomato a la Turque all show how garlic operated as a marker of the Other, but also as a way of conceptualising warm-climate food - in this instance, mainly through the prism of the Mediterranean.⁸³

By the 1950s, garlic was turning up regularly in community cookbooks, at the same time as the consequences of the Mediterranean and Eastern European migrations began to filter through to the Australian mainstream. The Asian migrations of the 1960s and 1970s gave garlic a further boost. In the 1963 *Festival of Asia Cookbook* appeared a quote from Marcel Boulestin reflecting the new attitude; it also neatly portrayed the complementarity of the Asian and Mediterranean influences in Australia. “Peace and happiness begin, geographically, where garlic is used in the cooking”.⁸⁴ How unthinkable the inclusion of such a *bon mot* would have been in 1900. In 1963 it was still quite daring; today it would be completely unremarkable. Garlic has become such a mainstay of Australian household kitchens it is hard to imagine there was ever life without it, or that it was ever considered “foreign”. As such, garlic can be considered to represent an element of ethnicisation of Australian food culture. Its history shows a progressive relaxation of the culinary boundaries, a decrease in neophobia, and thereby the gradual diminution in meaning of a once significant marker of Otherness.

Could this be a false interpretation? Could it be that, rather than functioning as a way of broaching the Other, these examples of experimentation with “ethnic” food ideas represent a very different dynamic, merely a form of white culinary tourism, or colonialism, as suggested by Sheridan and Heldke? Cultural theorist Elspeth Probyn also argues, “the consumption, the ingestion and the incorporation of difference [add]

⁸³ *Something Different for Dinner*, 1st ed. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson for the Bush Book Club of NSW, 1936), 2, 33, 37, 54 and 56.

⁸⁴ *Festival of Asia Cookbook*, unnumbered.

life to white consumer subjectivity”.⁸⁵ Did the daring use of specks of garlic in 1911 amount to a flirtation which merely served to reinforce the Otherness of this foodstuff and, by extension, the foods and cultures with which it was associated? Given the subsequent history, this seems an unlikely explanation; the trajectory of garlic as an ingredient appears more to suggest the increasing embrace of Otherness.

Garlic remained associated for decades with a succession of “foreign” cuisines and flavours, but the gradual process of experimentation and assimilation of flavours and ideas had the ultimate result that garlic became a legitimate ingredient for general use, without the “foreign” label to justify it. By 1999 in *Republican Delights*, garlic was commonplace in recipes without a distinct “ethnic” affiliation. Leek Soup, from Tiziane and Robert Mignone, was seasoned with two cloves of garlic along with oregano, spring onions and ginger. Pease Pudding, a loved dish from childhood for David Higbed, used garlic as did the patriotically named Eureka Lamb from Peter Beattie (then Premier of Queensland). According to recipe contributor Misha Schubert, Skippy Steaks (ie, kangaroo) were to be served with garlic-mashed potatoes and Australian red wine.⁸⁶ The dynamics of change described here are broadly consistent with Susan Kalcik’s description of “acculturation and hybridisation”,⁸⁷ but the focus on home cookery demonstrates how widespread the phenomenon was, beyond the more commonly acknowledged pressure-cooker environment of the ethnic restaurant trade. It suggests that the intimate setting of the home kitchen has encouraged different types of experimentation to the professional sphere, but nonetheless has been another locus of change.

⁸⁵ Elspeth Probyn, *Carnal Appetites: Foodsexidentities* (London & NY: Routledge, 2000), 82.

⁸⁶ Leigh Evans, *'Republican Delights': Celebrity Chef Cookbook* (Adelaide: Republican Movement SA, 1999), 3, 22, 47 and 48.

⁸⁷ Susan J Kalcik, “Ethnic Foodways in America: Symbol and the Performance of Identity”, in *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States*, ed. Brown and Mussel, 37-65.

It is interesting to note that traditional Aboriginal foodways made vanishingly few appearances in the community cookbooks of the period to 1980, apart from occasional influences evident in the foodways of remote bush areas. In the pre-war era certain indigenous ingredients appeared, for example game such as kangaroo, local fish such as barracouta, emu eggs and fruits such as rosellas. This was a recognised element of settler foodways from pioneer days. In *Is Emu on the Menu?* (1965), an unknown poet nostalgically remarked:

When pioneers, who built these homes,
Set out to fill the pot
The dinner menu every day relied on what was shot.⁸⁸

These indigenous foodstuffs were, however, generally treated in Anglo-Saxon ways which showed negligible adaptation to native foodways. Mrs Rawson suggested in the late nineteenth century that housewives in the bush, where uncertain of a food source, should look to the natives and note what they ate, but beyond this liminal geographic zone it appears that ideas of “native” cuisine in colonial and twentieth-century Australia were largely restricted to such British-influenced food as roasted wildlife, native fruit jellies or baked goods, and damper baked in the ashes. In the twentieth century, as white settlers brought an increasing “civilisation” to bush areas, the social and physical divisions between white and Aboriginal people tended only to increase, and opportunities for cultural exchange diminished further.⁸⁹

Australian community cookbooks reflect the formation of relatively positive relationships with “foreign” cuisines even during the first half of the century, whilst remaining almost completely distant from the indigenous foodways of the country. This

⁸⁸ Crooke, et al, *Is Emu on the Menu?*, unnumbered.

⁸⁹ For an account of attempts to redress this situation by local CWA branches see Jennifer Jones, “Inside the CWA Rest Room”, *History Australia* 3, no. 1 (2006), Jennifer Jones, “More Than Tea and Scones? Cross-Racial Collaboration in the Country Women’s Association of New South Wales and the Ethos of Country-mindedness”, *History Australia* 6, no. 2 (2009).

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suggests that, whereas “ethnic” cuisines from other nations were something Anglo-Australians approached with a degree of interest, Aboriginal foodways were considered beyond the social pale. Where Asian and Mediterranean peoples, notwithstanding the very real cultural tensions and power imbalances with Anglo-Australians, found some basis for cultural rapprochement and ultimately for cultural exchange, Aboriginal Australia was the postcolonial subordinate, its cuisine abjured. Perhaps this can be related to the fact that while cuisine is understood as a mark of civilisation, white society regarded Aboriginal people as uncivilised. Some early community cookbooks, notably the *Presbyterian*, had native missions as their charitable objects. Their forewords demonstrated their paternalistic, if intendedly benevolent, attitude towards the missions, which precluded serious interest in indigenous culture. (The ultimate failure of that benevolence will be discussed in Chapter Nine.) Aboriginal Australia was subordinated to such a thoroughgoing extent that it remained culturally invisible to the majority of the population throughout the twentieth century.

The reasons for this, it must be said, are partly geographic in nature. From as early as 1870 Australia’s population was predominantly urban. Though country people, particularly those in remote areas, commonly had some contact with Aboriginal people, residents of the cities and suburbs typically had little or no exposure to Aboriginal culture or foodways. This geographic divide, together with the profound sociocultural dislocation of Aboriginal groups and the continuation of racist policies and popular sentiments, produced a situation where Aboriginal foodways had a negligible cultural presence in the twentieth-century Australian mainstream as far as 1980. There is only one main exception to this rule of which I am aware. In the *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book* (1979), for the Derby branch, a recipe was given for Baked Barramundi or Salmon (the aboriginal way) from contributor Elkin Umbagai. The

barramundi was wrapped in foil and cooked in a camp oven in the ground, or European-style in the oven. It was seasoned with mixed herbs, pineapple, cooked rice and onion.⁹⁰

Elkin Umbagai (1921-1980) was an Aboriginal leader of the Mowanjum community outside of Derby and a significant citizen of the Kimberley region of Western Australia, including 1967 “grandmother of the year”.⁹¹ A CWA member, she contributed a recipe which reflected her life role as interlocutor between two cultures.

In the 1980s and 1990s the bushfoods movement spearheaded by Vic Cherkoff, Les Hiddens and Andrew Fielke popularised a small range of indigenous ingredients, while television shows explored the theme of “bush tucker”, but the impact of these initiatives did not filter through to the community cookbooks surveyed for this thesis. (The one major exception in this period was the *Torres Strait Cookbook*. This book and the cuisine it represents are discussed in detail in Chapter Eight.) Even *Republican Delights*, more overtly concerned than most with the national culture, identity and cuisine, contained no references to native foodways or ingredients (barring the Skippy Steaks previously mentioned).

This general absence of the indigenous from Australian community cookbooks reflects the sidelining of indigenous culture throughout the twentieth century. The related themes of Australian regionalism and cultural identity will be explored in Chapter Eight. For now, perhaps, it is sufficient to conclude with the following observation. The evidence from community cookbooks suggests that cultural change, as the outcome of both playful experimentation and more purposive activities, occurs only within the parameters deemed culturally acceptable. During the twentieth century this included a

⁹⁰ Eileen Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book* (Perth: CWA Kimberley Division, 1979), 24.

⁹¹ Mary Anne Jebb and Valda J Blundell, “Umbagai, Elkin”, in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 428.

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surprisingly wide range of “foreign” identities but excluded, to a large extent, the indigenous. This may be regarded as the culinary face of Australia’s renowned difficulty in coming to terms with a truly embedded, integrated and organic Australian cultural identity.

Conclusions

Community cookbooks reveal, in minute details in thousands upon thousands of recipes, the accommodations, adjustments and experimentations made by average Australia as the twentieth century unfolded. In this, they reveal some of the processes of thinking about, playing with and beginning to “own” a transformed culinary culture and a new, more flexible and resilient identity. This identity owed part of its strength to the fact that it appropriated elements of the ethnic Other and made them “Australian”. Contrary to the popular conception that contemporary Australia owes its diverse food culture purely and simply to the impact of the post-war migrations, the evidence considered here suggests that change was afoot much earlier than the Second World War, and began in the world of the mind as much as anywhere.

Long before the explosive changes of the post-war era, when first Mediterranean and later Asian migrants helped to change the face of Australian cuisine, Anglo-Saxon Australians were coming to terms with their place in the Antipodes by trying out the exotic, trying on new identities both playfully and purposively, in part through their food. They were also responding to the presence of Others, people of different, non-British culinary and cultural traditions, with whom they shared the “Lucky Country”.

Derek Oddy suggests that from the 1890s to the 1960s Britain was experiencing “the final era of plain fare” and a period of stability.⁹² While Australia might appear to have

⁹² Derek J Oddy, *From Plain Fare to Fusion Food: British Diet from the 1890s to the 1900s* (Woodbridge UK: Boydell Press, 2003), x.

been in a similar phase, at least up until the late 1950s, in fact the groundwork for significant change was already being laid. Food may long have been “the acceptable face of multiculturalism”, in the words of postcolonial theorist Sneja Gunew,⁹³ but well before the development of a multicultural consciousness in Australia food was already at the coalface of social experimentation. To understand how the post-war migrations and the restaurant industry could have such a significant effect upon the diet and outlook of mainstream Australia in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, it is necessary to realise that the apparently innocuous experimentations of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s represented identities already in flux.

Well before the demise of the White Australia Policy in 1973 and even before the Great Depression, Australians were experimenting with other ways of being. As a cultural project, this included the idea of other foods, other ways of cooking, eating and tasting. Hence the idea of the ethnic, or the foreign, represented a useful field of play. This early experimentation was important: it was a vital part of the developmental process which transformed Australian food and the Australian consciousness. The evolution of Anglo Australia from meat-and-potatoes to what has been called a “multi-culinary” culture was already beginning in the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s, with dishes like Siberian Cream, Italian Spaghetti and Oriental Sundae.

⁹³ Sneja Gunew, “Feminism and the Politics of Irreducible Differences: Multiculturalism / Ethnicity / Race”, in *Feminism and the Politics of Difference*, ed. Gunew and Yeatman (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 13.

Chapter 5

Class Associations: Tastes of Luxury and Necessity

Old felt hats will cut up into soles for wearing inside your shoes in winter.
A sheet of brown paper makes a warm counterpane.¹

The Hobart Cookery Book (1908)

On glancing through the names of those from whom the recipes come, I realise that they are mostly from those who know what a good thing is ... so I feel that I can, with confidence, highly recommend this most useful book.²

Mary Bosanquet, *The Kookaburra Cookery Book* (1911)

For cheap paste allow quarter of a pound of butter or dripping to the pound of flour; for richer, half a pound to the pound.³

The Worker Cookery Book (1917)

Food, taste and class

Food is a tool for the definition of social groups, a fact well established in sociological and anthropological literature. In Bourdieu's words, "[t]aste classifies, and it classifies the classifier".⁴ Cultural anthropologist Margaret Visser notes that human beings have made food, among other things, "the source for an intricate panoply of distinguishing

¹ *Hobart Cookery Book*, 117.

² *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1911), foreword.

³ Mary Gilmore, *Worker Cookery Book: Compiled from Tried Recipes of Thrifty Housekeepers, Sent from All Parts of the Country* (Sydney: s.n., 1917), 80.

⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Nice (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 6.

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marks of class”.⁵ Historian Reay Tannahill traces this association as far back as fifth-century Greece, but it has probably existed since prehistoric times.⁶

By association, cooking food and communicating about cooking are acts invested with values and attitudes towards social class. Other scholars to have elucidated some of the connections between food, cookery, cookbooks and class include Goody, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai and sociologist Deborah Lupton.⁷ This chapter, drawing on Bourdieu in particular, explores some of the representations made in community cookbooks that reflect culinary notions of class in Australia. Community cookbooks contributed to a public discussion of Australian foodways from a variety of class stances, creating a picture of twentieth-century Australian foodways which is surprisingly rich in class detail.

Class inflections of community cookbooks

A fruitful beginning point is that community cookbooks have enjoyed a long and close relationship with the middle classes. The very concept of the community cookbook originated in a nineteenth-century American expression of middle-class feminine philanthropy, as the brainchild of Protestant churchwomen who raised funds to assist wounded soldiers and their families.⁸ Historian Bruce Scates argues that charity could be, for middle-class women, “a means to affirm their social status”.⁹ This analysis appears to hold true in the case of many community cookbooks, whose alternate

⁵ Margaret Visser, *The Rituals of Dinner: The Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities, and Meaning of Table Manners* (Ringwood: Penguin, 1991), 2.

⁶ Reay Tannahill, *Food in History*, 2nd ed. (London: Penguin, 1988), 68.

⁷ Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*. Arjun Appadurai, “How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India”, *Contemporary Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 1 (1988). Deborah Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self* (London, et al: SAGE Publications, 1996).

⁸ Cook, *America's Charitable Cooks*, 7.

⁹ Bruce Scates, “Knocking out a Living: Survival Strategies and Popular Protest in the 1890s Depression”, in *Debutante Nation*, ed. Magarey, et al, 44.

designation as “charitable cookbooks” indicates their positioning as the work of the fortunate on behalf of the less fortunate. Hence, any study of community cookbooks is in the first instance a study of middle-class culture. Exploration of the markers of middle-class sensibility is not without value in and of itself. However, attention to the full range of community cookbooks and to the class subtext of all community cookbooks can result in a more detailed picture of class issues in Australian twentieth-century food and community.

It may be argued that neither the highest nor the lowest classes are represented in community cookbooks. This is equally true of the broad spectrum of cookbooks. Emma Spary, for example, notes the particular role of the middle classes in the rise of French gastronomic discourse.¹⁰ Gilly Lehmann shows in *The British Housewife* that cookery texts by the nineteenth century were typically bourgeois rather than elite.¹¹ The tradition of chefs publishing textbooks of high cuisine, common in France, was never as popular in Britain or Australia, so that, in Australia at least, the cuisine of the highest class group is not strongly represented in comparison to France. Similarly, the food of the very poorest is scarcely represented in cookery texts, for the simple reason that the extremely poor have a severely curtailed ability to make choices about what they eat. They usually lack the resources to publish books and their foodways are not widely aped by others. However the working class, certainly at its more prosperous end, is a different matter. Australian working-class food culture is well represented in the historical cookery record. Bannerman defines four main late-nineteenth century food subcultures in Australia, on which foundation community cookbooks can be assumed to

¹⁰ Emma Spary, “Making a Science of Taste: The Revolution, the Learned Life and the Invention of ‘Gastronomie’”, in *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850*, ed. Berg and Clifford (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 180.

¹¹ Gilly Lehmann, *The British Housewife: Cookery Books, Cooking and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Totnes: Prospect Books, 2003), 61.

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rest: these were “working-class, bush-and-camp, middle-class, and elegant” - plus “unlettered wealth” and various eating-out cultures.¹²

Bannerman’s research into the development of Australian food culture through the print media suggests the true class range of Australian community cookbooks and their relationship to other types of cookbook. In line with scholarship from other Western countries, he finds that the Australian print media’s image of culinary culture from 1850 to 1920 was primarily middle-class in nature.¹³ This was reflected in recipe choice; the majority of Australian cookery books of this period contained a core of standard recipes which reflected middle-class tastes and practices. Of cookbooks analysed by Bannerman,¹⁴ only two covered less than 80% of the commonest dishes.¹⁵ It is fascinating to find that these two, each diverging from the middle-class norm, were both community cookbooks. Representing each end of the class scale, they were the *Kookaburra*, which was meant for the “patronesses of Adelaide’s working girls rather than the girls’ mothers”,¹⁶ and the *Worker*, which contained “mainly the recipes of ... working-class kitchens”.¹⁷ This evidence suggests that community cookbooks in Australia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries represented a wider class range than professionally printed cookbooks.

Historical factors in Australia

I referred in Chapter One to the relationship between community cookbooks and the project of civilisation of the nation, a theme I will address in greater detail in Chapter

¹² Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 50.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁴ Bannerman states that, for statistical purposes, these books had to include at least 800 recipes. If smaller cookbooks could have been included, community cookbooks might have played an even more prominent role.

¹⁵ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 189.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

¹⁷ Gilmore, *Worker Cookery Book* (1917), foreword.

Nine. This connection between community cookbooks and the desire for civilisation had profound class ramifications. In the nineteenth century, as historian Amy Bentley comments, “the ‘civility’ of the upper and middle classes – their assumptions about culture and about their rightful place as guardians of society – depended in part on the existence of an underclass designated to perform such activities as cooking and serving meals”.¹⁸ However, around the turn of the twentieth century these assumptions were challenged by the widespread contraction of the servant class (discussed in Chapter Seven). The problem was international. Just as Ross notes the importance of the “servant problem” to American women of the turn of the century,¹⁹ the same aspect of respectability was under threat in early twentieth-century Australia, due to a range of pressures.

One of these was the 1890s depression. Though Australian middle- and upper-class homes in the nineteenth century had typically employed servants, working-class women’s domestic service positions could become redundant, as Scates notes, when “once-comfortable families struggled to economise”.²⁰ Two more pressures consisted in the increase of manufacturing work at the expense of the agricultural sector, and the increasing number of women participating in paid work. This latter issue was viewed with particular concern by men – the country had, after all, long been known as “the working man’s paradise”, after the nineteenth-century novel of that name by socialist dreamer William Lane. Yet this paradise was threatened by the cheap wages employers could pay women (and the Chinese), which undermined the economic position of white male workers. The remedy for the social hardships of this era was found in legislation

¹⁸ Amy Bentley, “Islands of Serenity: Gender, Race and Ordered Meals During World War II”, in *Food in the USA: A Reader*, ed. Counihan (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 178.

¹⁹ Ross, “Ella Smith’s Unfinished Community Cookbook”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 156.

²⁰ Scates, “Knocking out a Living”, in *Debutante Nation*, ed. Magarey, et al, 40-1.

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affirming men's place at the economic head of the family. For much of the twentieth century Australian economic and social structures were based (in theory) on the principle of a man's wage sufficing for the support of his family in at least "frugal comfort" - the basic wage as defined in the 1907 Harvester Judgment.²¹ Though the reality was that for working-class families the female wage often remained vital, many women preferred the relative freedom and high pay of factory work to the tedium, social isolation and even lower status of domestic service.

This combination of economic, social and legislative factors dramatically reduced the pool of female domestic workers, with profound consequences for middle-class homes. Bannerman notes that "[b]y the turn of the century rather less than ten per cent of households still had servants and the proportion was declining rapidly", leaving "a large and influential group of middle class women, quite untrained in culinary skills, with no choice but to do their own cooking".²² Logically, then, Bannerman sees the proliferation of printed recipes at that time as a consequence of the necessity, for increasing numbers of literate women, of engaging in household cookery. He suggests that, if circumstance forced middle-class women into household cookery, their literacy skills allowed them several ways of dealing with this new reality. One was, of course, professionally published cookery books, which were readily available to most middle-class women. However, Mrs Beeton and other similar cookery manuals (which were mostly British) tended to assume that middle-class homes had servants – not helpful to the housewife going it alone. The middle-class twentieth-century Australian woman faced with real and pressing responsibilities in the kitchen needed a more practical guide. The most

²¹ *Commonwealth vs. Mckay*, 6 Commonwealth Law Reports 41 (1908). Evidence presented to the court included household budgets provided by working-class women; Justice Higgins ultimately set the basic wage at seven shillings per week. In 1920 a Royal Commission into the Basic Wage was conducted, resulting in the Piddington Report which investigated the material conditions of family life in further detail.

²² Bannerman, "Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating", 212.

important strategies to which Bannerman describes these women turning are 1) domestic science education in schools - a longer term tactic, 2) newspaper correspondence columns and 3) community cookbooks.²³ Early community cookbook compilers showed that they were conscious of filling a deficit. The foreword of the *Housewife's Friend* (1895) noted that “[m]ost Cookery books, ... being printed in England, are not suitable for the colonies” and therefore endeavoured “to offer to the public a Book to meet the requirements of their own district”.²⁴ This was not only a geographic / climatic issue, but also one of socio-economics and household organisation.

Through the pooling of culinary and domestic ideas in community cookbooks, Australian middle-class women of the 1890s to 1940s did not just raise money to further their social goals or confirm their social status. They also engaged in a domestic project, “pulling themselves up by their apron strings”, if you will. The widespread disappearance of the servant-keeping culture, in forcing middle-class women to increase their kitchen know-how, was one factor that drove the market for community cookbooks. By way of corollary, it was also precisely the increasing kitchen know-how of middle-class women that enabled them to create such works. Community cookbooks allowed women of similar class or class aspirations to share knowledge, give one another advice and learn how to maintain what they considered a class-appropriate home and table. In effect, community cookbooks could function as a way of collectively defining the benchmarks of good, sufficient and appropriate food, and appropriate allocation of kitchen activities, for particular class groups in the community.

²³ Ibid., 66.

²⁴ Doberer, *The Housewife's Friend*, preface.

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There is a notable class differential in the question of women's participation in social affairs. Though many nineteenth-century women had to struggle against the odds to leave their mark on the wider society, a small group of upper-class women was expected and required to work tirelessly for public causes. Historian Frank Prochaska comments, in discussion of Catherine Gladstone, the British Prime Minister's wife in the mid-nineteenth century, that women of her station "rarely relaxed. Pressures from below as well as above made certain of that. ... Appeals came from all directions. There were charities to be visited, bazaars to be opened ... and countless other charitable duties that consumed time and energy." This work was of deep social importance, in that "charities required public figures to give them publicity and respectability".²⁵ At the other end of the social scale were women whom Prochaska terms "working-class philanthropists". They "subscribed to charities, set up visiting and temperance societies, taught in Sunday schools, ran bazaars, and joined in other mercies for their fellow men".²⁶ These women's work was less well-recognised than that of their privileged upper-class counterparts, but equally crucial to the well-being of the community. To the list of activities undertaken by Australian women, in both of the class groupings discussed by Prochaska, was quite soon added a new item: the publication of community cookbooks.

Discourses of class in Australian community cookbooks

Community cookbooks are a valuable source of information about the cultural context of women's class affiliations, and about the class issues which affected women's work, both paid and unpaid. Goody finds that class differentiation can be expressed in 1) the types of foods and meals cooked, as well as the modes of 2) preparation, 3) service and

²⁵ FK Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 162.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 164.

4) consumption.²⁷ Community cookbooks reflect at least the first three of these four categories. They deliver information about class firstly through the socio-historical context of their production and secondly through their content. Recipes and surrounding narratives reflect cultural assumptions and assertions of class and social status. The organisation of the kitchen, the allocation of kitchen work, the convenience foods and technologies employed, the taste preferences expressed and the types of foods cooked all reflect the socio-economic status of the individuals who created them, as do the narratives in which recipes are embedded. These indicators, in a community cookbook, add up to what may be called a discourse of class. This may take a variety of forms.

Bower describes, in her work on community cookbook narratives, a range of different “plotlines” to which community cookbooks may adhere.²⁸ Prominent among these is the “success” plotline, whereby a community cookbook shapes its narrative as the story of the group’s success. This is common to community cookbooks from ethnic groups who want to celebrate their place in their new society, but it also appears in the form of a class dialectic; particular community groups may seek to celebrate their prosperity, often hard-won. This, then, is a discourse of class aspiration, a very common theme in Australian life. However, Australian community cookbooks to 1980, despite the dominance of the discourse of class aspiration, also often reflect non-aspirational class values as part of a wide range of class stances. Working class solidarity, state school egalitarianism and champagne socialism can all be found, as well as the more common middle- and upper-class interpretations of refinement. Hence the “success” plotline may encompass a range of different class inflections - the battlers’ pride of La Perouse Public School’s *Firm Family Favourites* and the studied sophistication of *Cook It Our*

²⁷ Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*, 98.

²⁸ Anne Lieberman Bower, “Cooking up Stories: Narrative Elements in Community Cookbooks”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 29-50. Bower, “*Our Sisters’ Recipes*”, 137-151.

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Way as well as the contented but status-conscious middle-classness typical of, for example, the private-school compilations.²⁹

Though it is rare, some class-related reform agendas are apparent in Australian community cookbooks. For example, Bannerman notes that Mary Gilmore's motivation in producing *The Worker Cookery Book* "was political, not gastronomic", the cookbook being a way of "gain[ing the] attention" of working-class women, by offering them a compilation of their own recipes, in order to attract them to politics. "[R]epresentative of an (almost militant) body of working class cookery", *The Worker* portrayed, therefore, "the cookery of the shearing shed rather than of the station or homestead".³⁰ Additionally, Bannerman notes that by the late nineteenth century the diet and culinary practices of the poor were a "target for 'improvement'" by philanthropists and social reformers.³¹ This type of consumption-related social project does not tend to be advanced through community cookbooks, since the genre does not lend itself to heavy didacticism. The community cookbook's natural *métier*, as an essentially democratic genre, is the sharing of knowledge between equals rather than the instruction of inferiors by experts - as discussed in Chapter Two. Gilmore's editorial style in *The Worker* was unusually didactic for the genre, a fact possibly connected to her lack of class parity with her intended readers. On the other hand, however, her introduction stated an assumption of equality; she did not want to speak down to her readers. "In considering these recipes, readers are asked to note that much that is usual in cookery books is omitted, because the average Australian woman can apply general

²⁹ Battler – in Australian usage ("the little Aussie battler"), descriptive of those lower-middle and working-class adherents for whom life is a struggle against the forces of nature, big business, bureaucracy and/or an unsympathetic government.

³⁰ Bannerman, "Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating", 142-43.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 50.

rules to particular instances, and because she realises that what is applicable to a gas stove has to be modified for a camp-oven and vice versa”.³²

Those seriously concerned with culinary education appear to have left the community cookbook more or less alone; the education department cookery books were a more profitable forum for the “improvers”. One exception was temperance, a theme initially of the Methodist and WCTU (Women’s Christian Temperance Union) cookbooks and later of community health groups combating alcoholism.³³ These, though, were generally not class-specific. The WCTU did consist mostly of working and middle-class women, and hence did have a discernable class profile, but the books, in typical community cookbook style, were conceived for those of comparable rather than subordinate class status. Another possible example is vegetarian community cookbooks.

Most community cookbooks do not address the question of class overtly; they reveal their class allegiances indirectly. This is due to an essential element of their character. As collaborative productions, community cookbooks generally rest upon those shared group values which are so fundamental as to be unspoken (which frequently include class affiliation) and enunciate only those values and attitudes so specific to the group and/or its *raison d’être* as to require explicit mention (which rarely include class).

Hence, to explore the class affiliations they encode it is generally necessary to examine the indirect discourse they contain.

³² Gilmore, *Worker Cookery Book* (1914), preface.

³³ For instance, *Ideal Recipe Book for the Use of Currants, Raisins, Sultanas and Grapes*, (Adelaide: Women’s Christian Temperance Union of South Australia, 1927). Also *Drinks for Christmas and Holiday Celebrations*.

The class relationship of food preference

As well as a purely socio-economic category, class is also a matter of cultural aesthetics. Bourdieu demonstrates how tastes “function as markers of class”.³⁴ His work *Distinction*, a classic investigation of the nexus of taste, class and culture, rests on a snapshot of 1960s France in which distinct social classes and sub-classes could reasonably be discerned. The same does not necessarily hold true of Australian society throughout the twentieth century, but nonetheless Bourdieu offers useful analytic tools. In particular, his distinction between the “taste of necessity” and the “taste of luxury” helps illuminate the class relationships represented by Australian cooking. Class affiliation is reflected in patterns of taste preference and in the ways in which the “taste of necessity” and the “taste of luxury” are defined.

The antithesis between quantity and quality, substance and form, corresponds to the opposition – linked to different distances from necessity – between the taste of necessity, which favours the most ‘filling’ and most economical foods, and the taste of liberty – or luxury – which shifts the emphasis to the manner (of presenting, serving, eating, etc) and tends to use stylized forms to deny function.³⁵

Though, as Bannerman comments, it was servantless middle-class women who “led the push for short cuts through the traditional recipes and for the use of processed food”, working-class migrants also contributed to the egalitarianism of Australian foodways. “Poor migrants to Australia ... [gradually] widened their interests in food, but their tastes remained simple: good food was plentiful, inexpensive and tasty”.³⁶ This is consonant with Bourdieu’s findings on the class associations of taste preference among the French, that taste preferences are rooted not merely in socio-economic status but in a

³⁴ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁶ Bannerman, *A Friend in the Kitchen*, 212.

much deeper definition of class. Bourdieu's distinction between economic, social and cultural capital helps to illuminate some of the class associations of food preference.

Tastes of necessity

An instructive source in defining the tastes of necessity in early twentieth-century Australia is the *Red Cross Cookery Book* compiled by Mrs Eric Lowe of NSW in 1915. This book, of "economical recipes which, it is hoped, will prove useful in the hard times undoubtedly coming after the war", was aimed primarily at country people of moderate means.³⁷ The book accordingly contained special sections on tinned meat and rabbit, the types of meat most cheaply and reliably obtained. Dripping was the fat most frequently mentioned. These, then, were some of the "tastes of necessity" in early twentieth-century Australia. Others included offal (especially the less esteemed cuts such as sheep's head), pie melon preserves,³⁸ corned and pickled meats, and the various "economical" cakes and puddings (of which more later).

The foremost "taste of necessity" in the first half of the twentieth century was rabbit. Introduced into Australia in 1859 for sport, rabbits quickly overran the countryside, becoming nothing short of a national scourge. Their intended high status as game (a vestige of which remains in the 1904 *Presbyterian* comment of Potted Rabbit that "truffles may be put in layers in the potting dish") gave way to a re-evaluated position at the bottom of the protein pile.³⁹ They did, however, constitute a cheap, readily available

³⁷ Lowe, *Red Cross Cookery Book*, preface.

³⁸ Pie melon (*Citrullus lanatus*), also known as citron melon, Afghan melon, paddy melon or wild melon, was once commonly used for sweet and piquant preserves as well as for pies. A hardy and prolific plant, tending to weediness in many regions of Australia, it produces large amounts of bland, sometimes slightly bitter fruit, to be had for the picking. It is, like all melons, prone to hybridise, leading to variations in type. The *Kindergarten Cookery Book* printed a recipe for Native Currant and Melon Jam which advised, "The long green pie melon requires no water, but the round striped citron melon requires water." *The Kindergarten Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (Sydney: Motor Press of Australia, 1924), 133.

³⁹ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 8th ed. (1904), 60.

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meat source and were much eaten, especially in rural areas, so much so that in 1933 an anonymous poet sighed in the Victorian CWA's *Birthday Book*,

Of rabbits young, of rabbits old,
Of rabbits hot, of rabbits cold
Of rabbits tender, rabbits tough,
I think, my Lord, we've had enough.⁴⁰

There was, though, plenty more rabbit in store. Rabbit was a frequent dinner dish for many families in the Depression and again during rationing in World War Two. Rabbits were not only a staple food for the poor and the isolated, they could also be a handy source of income. An advertisement in the *Suttontown Recipe Book* (1945) exhorted readers to "Sell All Your Rabbit and Other Skins to WH Dixon Always the Highest Price Given".⁴¹ The fact that rabbit was the "food of necessity" for Australians is reflected in this association with times of war, depression and financial need. Though rabbit was conspicuously absent from the favourite recipes of Brisbane men as represented in *My Favourite Dish* during the 1920s, the up-market *Something Different for Dinner* contained a Rabbit Casserole in 1936. Rabbit's generally lowly status led to its frequent designation as "mock chicken" after a more desirable meat, or even "mock fish",⁴² for those really in need of a change. It was disguised in curries and casseroles, roasted, potted, creamed and crumbed. The CWA's *Calendar of Meat and Fish Dishes* in the 1950s was particularly rich in ideas for making something different out of rabbit;

⁴⁰ Beggs, *Birthday Book*, 41.

⁴¹ *Suttontown Recipe Book: 600 Selected Recipes / Every Recipe of Proved Merit and Signed as Such by the Donors*, 3rd ed. (Suttontown, SA: Suttontown School Welfare Club, 1945), 18.

⁴² For example, "Mock Chicken with Mushrooms" in *Collegiate Recipe Book*, (Hobart: St Michael's Collegiate School Auxiliary, 1974), 30., "Rabbit Mock Turkey" in AM Campbell, *PWMU Cookery Book: Including Pressure Cooking / Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union of Victoria*, 10th ed. (Melbourne: Hibbins, Taylor, 1955), 44, and "Mock Fish" in the *Barossa Cookery Book*, 3rd ed. (1932), 21.

it contained some thirty-three recipes calling for rabbit in everything from sausage to Swiss Roll.⁴³

Rabbit recipes tapered off in community cookbooks with the coming of post-war prosperity (and scientific efforts to combat the rabbit plague – see below). In the 1960s and 1970s recipes for rabbit became far rarer. Those that did appear were more lavish, Mediterranean-influenced dishes involving wine, garlic and other flavour enhancers.⁴⁴ These enjoyed something of a vogue, but rabbit never regained its status as a staple. It retained to the end of the century its links with isolated regions and bush cookery, with growing overtones of nostalgia. *Spinifex Stew* (1979), from far northern South Australia, included a recipe for “Underground Mutton” (as rabbit had been called since before the Depression) along with the contributor’s reminiscence of having once, due to depleted meat supplies, served it to the visiting Bishop.⁴⁵ In 1985 the *School of the Air Alice Springs Recipe Book* captured, in “How to Cook a Rabbit”, the outback lifestyle with which rabbit had come to be most closely associated. Rex and Doc of De Rose Hill Station instructed,

First shoot rabbit, preferably through the eyes so wife does not know if it had ‘mixo’ or not Stuff with gum leaves and onion if available. Bury under coals and leave overnight. Kick wife out of swag at daylight to remove rabbit from coals and remind her to put billy on.⁴⁶

The introduction of myxomatosis in 1950 meant that, in the later twentieth century, rabbit for the table was generally farmed rabbit (unless the rural shooter could bag a

⁴³ Mrs CE Dolling, *Calendar of Meat and Fish Recipes: One for Every Day of the Year* (Adelaide: SACWA, 1950s).

⁴⁴ For example, “Rabbit in Wine” in *The Walford Recipe Book*, 29.

⁴⁵ *Spinifex Stew: Recipes and Hints*, (Adelaide: Australian Inland Mission, 1979), 3,14.

⁴⁶ *School of the Air Alice Springs Recipe Book*, unnumbered.

healthy one or obscure the symptoms of illness as Rex and Doc suggested).⁴⁷ These developments largely spelled the end of rabbit as a widespread “taste of necessity”. In the late twentieth century, rabbit retained a small culinary niche in urban areas due to its association with the Mediterranean traditions of rabbit cookery, and in the bush as a traditional food, depending on availability.

Flesh foods have long been categorised according to their level of perceived desirability. The meat hierarchy in Australian cooking is clear in the classic division of cookery books (commonly adhered to in the bigger books) into first beef, then lamb/mutton, and only then the lesser meats such as pork. (Veal, interestingly, was often classed with pork.) Corned and pickled meats were traditionally considered lowly. Offal had a scale of its own. Livers, kidneys and sweetbreads were once considered delicacies, tripe quickly slid down the ladder into ignominy and sheep’s head held a consistent position at or near the bottom of the scale, though it had a strong presence in some community cookbooks as it was a staple for farming families. Poultry, though high in status, was rarely eaten for most of the century; even in 1960 Australians only consumed an average of five kilograms per household annually (this did rise significantly by 1979; by 1994 it was twenty-eight kilograms).⁴⁸ Fish came after both red and white meats. Though tripe was more likely to be held beloved further down the social scale, and fish was more likely to be prized further up, these distinctions appear to have held true in community cookbooks across all perceivable permutations of class. Hence, the major “tastes of necessity” appear to have been a matter of broad social consensus.

⁴⁷ The myxoma virus, which causes myxomatosis, was released in Australia in 1950 in an attempt to control the rabbit population. One symptom is watery, diseased eyes. In 1995-1996 another virus, rabbit calicivirus, was released.

⁴⁸ Jane Dixon, *The Changing Chicken: Chooks, Cooks and Culinary Culture* (Sydney: University of NSW Press, 2002), 4.

Red meat, though considered a necessity, was at the same time a somewhat luxurious one, certainly in the early part of the twentieth century. In the *Berrambool Recipe Book* (1915) Mrs Wilfred Austin of Willaura offered some “cheap but nice recipes for hard times” which reflected some of the major methods of economising. These included basic recipes like White Sauce and Cheap Sauce for Cooking, rabbit recipes, leftovers, salad and vegetable dishes, meat dishes using leftovers or cheaper cuts, fruit and starch desserts, two cheese biscuit savouries and a Devonshire Pudding.⁴⁹ The clearest message of this contributor’s recipes was that meat, cheap as it may have been by international standards, was still a major item of food expenditure. Economising meant reducing red meat consumption in favour of vegetables, starches, rabbit and cheese. Recipes using up meat leftovers, and minced meat, tended to be especially prolific in cookbooks of the war years – a response to food shortages and rationing, when every bit of meat counted. Offal also was an answer to this problem.

By the 1960s a significant “taste of necessity” was mince meat, especially sausage mince, which had been available from butchers since the 1930s. Cheap, if often of poor quality, it could be endlessly stretched and a clever cook could ring the changes and make it tasty. *Firm Family Favourites* (1968) from the La Perouse Public School, in a working-class area of Sydney, contained nearly as many recipes calling for mince or sausage mince as for all other kinds of meat put together. Mince meat went primarily into meat loaves, but sausage mince (usually of lower quality than ordinary mince) called for greater ingenuity. It was used for Sausage Cakes with Pineapple and for the evocatively named Chappie’s Cheap Choice, a hearty dish of sausage mince, onion, rice, tomatoes, carrots and peas contributed by Mrs Chapman, a meal in a bowl which

⁴⁹ Moffatt, *Berrambool Recipe Book*, 40-42.

would fill up the hungriest schoolchild.⁵⁰ By contrast the *MCEGS Cookery Book* (1967), produced by the prestigious Melbourne Church of England Girls' School, though it held several mince meat dishes (mostly designated as “family” or “weekend” fare), contained many more recipes involving larger, more esteemed and more expensive cuts of meat. Recipes for Spanish Roast Beef and Chinese Veal and Pineapple balanced the economy fare. This book called for no sausage mince at all.⁵¹

Tastes of luxury

Culinary historian Barbara Santich finds that, though a higher cuisine did exist in colonial Australia, it was probably only the “tip of the iceberg” compared to the “overwhelming dominance of the lower cuisine”.⁵² Community cookbooks suggest she is right, but that the penetration of the *indicators* of high class into middle-class cuisine was significant. For example, Santich discusses “frenchness” (whether “genuine or mere pretension”) as a key indicator of high-class cuisine in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Australia.⁵³ Reference to “frenchness” (rarely displaying much concern for the genuineness thereof) is common in Australian community cookbooks, and it seems that throughout the twentieth century and across all socio-economic groups “frenchness” was acknowledged as high-class. However, the invocation of frenchness does not necessarily connote high class-status on the part of the community group. *My Favourite Dish*, a compilation of favourite recipes of “well-known Brisbane men”, made no French references at all and even *Famous Recipes of Famous Men*, in the *cordon bleu*

⁵⁰ *Firm Family Favourites*, (La Perouse, NSW: La Perouse Public School, 1968), unnumbered.

⁵¹ *MCEGS Cookery Book*, (Melbourne: The School, 1967), unnumbered.

⁵² Barbara Santich, “The High and the Low: Australian Cuisine in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries”, (2004), 9.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 8.

years of the 1970s,⁵⁴ made only two, whereas the *Worker Cookery Book*, so proudly pro-working class, made several - not just French Toast and French Pancakes but the decidedly fancier-sounding Petits Diablotons as well. Even the 1904 *Presbyterian*, which represented an unpretentious middle-class cohort and, as noted by Santich, contained few French recipes, had Jaune Mange, Chaud Froid of Chicken, Lobster Soufflee, French Cream Cake and French Jellies as well as “Cressy” (ie, Crecy) Soup and Mouton a la Jardiniere.

To sort out this ambiguous relationship some rough statistics are useful. The community cookbooks in this study typically contained less than 2% French-identified recipes, and much lower counts are not uncommon. More than two percent was generally characteristic of private schools, charities popular among wealthy women, and other seemingly “higher-class” publications. The *Kookaburra* contained nearly 3% of French references in recipe names and *Cook it Our Way* nearly 4.5%.⁵⁵ Interestingly, the 1936 *Coronation Cookery Book*, in contrast to many other CWA cookbooks, contained a strong upper-class theme, evidenced by 3.3% “French” recipe names as well as sections on use of caviar, table manners and etiquette, waiting at table (addressed to the mistress, referring to the maid in the third person) and notes on wines and wine service. The contributors to *Cook it Our Way* (1974), beneficiaries of the latter twentieth century middle-class travel boom, were able to accompany their recipes with anecdotes about

⁵⁴ I use “cordon bleu” according to its popular understanding in Australia. That is, to refer to the (largely British-mediated) fashion in Australia from the 1960s and 1970s for French-influenced cookery as famously taught at the Cordon Bleu Cookery School in London, to which aspiring Australian chefs of that era went for training. The school’s popular Cordon Bleu cookbook series brought the vogue for *cordon bleu* to Australian home cooks. This term, along with the associated style of cookery, was also popularised through the major women’s magazines.

⁵⁵ Excluding classic sauce names and items like “French beans”, but including other uses of the word “French”, French place-references and French language.

the divine French holidays where they developed their tastes and got their ideas.⁵⁶ This phenomenon is also noted by Harvey Levenstein with regard to North Americans of the same period.⁵⁷ It appears that references to “frenchness” in Australian community cookbooks have long been a trope for the taste of luxury. The longstanding connection of frenchness with the idea of daintiness, as well as with the notion of the exotic and foreign, may be a factor here.

Some items have virtually worldwide currency as tastes of luxury; Visser describes, in this vein, how foods can be used as “proof of prestige”.⁵⁸ Furthermore, such foods can function as symbols of desired class status or simply of “the high life”. Frenchness, as discussed, is an idea that can play this role. An example of a specific foodstuff to do the same could be caviar. Caviar played only a small roll in twentieth-century Australian community cookbooks, but its presence is intriguing. In the *Kookaburra Cookery Book* the very first recipe set the high-class tone of the whole book – “Caviare aux Oeufs”.⁵⁹ The first-edition *Coronation Cookery Book*, at the height of the Depression, contained a whole section of nine caviar recipes (removed by the fourteenth edition in 1978). The *Empire Cookery Book* contained recipes calling for caviar in 1940, during the middle of the Second World War. These three examples suggest that caviar fulfilled firstly a status role; the *Kookaburra* and the *Empire* had among the “highest” class associations of all the community cookbooks in my sample. Secondly, caviar seems to have fulfilled a fantasy role, appearing during times of social and economic duress, when such luxury

⁵⁶ *Cook It Our Way: Entertaining Australians / Compiled by the King George V Appeals Committee*, (Sydney: Royal Prince Albert Hospital, 1974), unnumbered.

⁵⁷ Harvey Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 223-24.

⁵⁸ Visser, *The Rituals of Dinner*, 3.

⁵⁹ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1911), 1.

items were even further than usual out of reach of the average housekeeper (and hence their status value was increased).

Alcohol (in particular wine, spirits and liqueurs) is an example of a cooking ingredient which became a nation-wide taste of luxury. Rarely called for in the early years, it appeared most commonly in those books associated with groups high on the socio-economic scale, like the *Kookaburra*. In the common run of early twentieth-century community cookbooks, alcohol was generally confined to fruit cakes and home remedies. In the post-war era recipes using alcohol gradually increased, until by the flambé-happy years of the 1970s some cookbooks were virtually awash with it. *Cook It Our Way*, which showcased the recipes of well-to-do and celebrity Sydneysiders, called for alcohol in everything from Brussels Sprouts Soup to Canards Sauvages. A cup of white wine even graced that thoroughly reconstructed taste of necessity, Rabbit Pie (reinstated to a higher-status position in the Game section).⁶⁰

This transformation was not confined to the “chattering classes” either. The Women’s Fellowship of Dernancourt Uniting Church, a modestly middle-class Adelaide congregation which a generation earlier would have boasted more than one committed teetotaler, in 1977 published a cookbook containing Pot Roast with Wine and two recipes for sherried Sweet and Sour Pork.⁶¹ The use of alcohol, sometimes lavishly, seems to represent luxury in Australian community cookbooks; it is common to cookbooks created by those living in material abundance. As the century progressed this included more and more Australians, as disposable incomes grew and supplies of luxury items continued to improve. Wine, in addition, represents discerning taste, probably due to its French connections. The *cordon bleu* cooking fashion of the 1960s and 1970s of

⁶⁰ *Cook It Our Way*, unnumbered.

⁶¹ *Recipe Book: Dernancourt Uniting Church Women's Fellowship*, (Dernancourt, SA: The Fellowship, 1977), 53, 61, 78.

course had a significant effect in broadcasting this awareness and promulgating the associated tastes and techniques.

Negotiating the margins of necessity and luxury

There is, undeniably, a direct relationship between the taste of luxury and the purse of plenty. In the *Oodnadatta Cook Book* a recipe for Carrot Halva listed saffron, rosewater and cardamom as optional, noting “optional items are expensive but give all foods that ‘something special’ taste”.⁶² However, this relationship is mediated by differing forms of capital. Where cooks have the money for ingredients like pate de foies gras and saffron the message of luxury is unmistakable, but should such riches be lacking the poorer cook can use his or her talents to produce more modest approximations of the “taste of luxury”. In *Cook it Our Way* home entertainers Donald and Diana Wynne commented on the relationship between price and quality: “if the budget is limited, don’t hunt around for bargain-priced fillet (it will taste just that) but settle for a good mince and do something interesting with it, such as a moussaka”, suggesting that cultural capital (represented here in the form of an “interesting” moussaka) can compensate for deficient economic capital (necessitating the purchase of mincemeat).⁶³

Similarly garnishing, during the housewifely years of the impecunious 1930s and 1940s, had been an expression of “good taste”; it was a “taste of luxury” which required cultural rather than economic capital. The *WMU Cookery Book* commented in 1930 that the art of garnishing was “sadly neglected”, costing “very little trouble”, but their suggestions ran rather to the frou-frou. In between the tufts of parsley and pleated cucumber slices, they proposed, “[t]inned fruits, such as apricots or peaches, look dainty with preserved cherry in the centre of each, and small leaves cut out of angelica round

⁶² *The Oodnadatta Cook Book*, (Oodnadatta, SA: Australian Inland Mission, 1970s), 29.

⁶³ *Cook It Our Way*, unnumbered.

the cherry”.⁶⁴ The fifth-edition *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints* said of hors d’oeuvres that they were “a matter of taste and skill on the part of the cook”, being attractive “if daintily served”, susceptible of endless variation and requiring taste in garnishing.⁶⁵ In this sense, good taste in the cook / hostess was a mark of superiority. The *Coronation Cookery Book* (1938) remarked, at the start of its Hors D’Oeuvres section, “Could we teach taste and genius by rules, they would no longer be taste and genius”.⁶⁶ However, what we call “good taste” was and is a matter of class-based “breeding” (a euphemism for education) and of sheer emulation. This fact is apparent in community cookbooks’ not infrequent appeals to class-based arguments about taste. When the *Green and Gold Cookery Book* presented a chocolate cake with the credentials that Queen Mary called it “the nicest chocolate cake she had ever tasted”, it gave voice to the more blatantly snobbish aspects of class-aspirational cookery.⁶⁷ By sharing tastes with the upper classes one could be more like them: “good taste” is cultural capital.

Similarly to red meat, baked goods constituted staples in pre-1960 Australian cookery, but there were degrees of luxury and necessity in their construction. The cakes of “necessity” were the plain and fruited cakes which filled the pages of virtually every community cookbook prior to 1965. “Cheap”, “Economical”, “Hard Times” and “Halfpay” were some of the terms which denoted the taste of necessity in cakes. “Rich” and “Fancy” were their luxury counterparts. Where an “economical” fruitcake contained a smaller proportion of dried fruits and only sultanas rather than the more expensive currants, a “fancy” fruitcake typically contained more butter, eggs, dried fruit and

⁶⁴ *WMU Cookery Book*, 14th ed. (1930), 60.

⁶⁵ Barnes, *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints*, 2nd ed. (1936), 171.

⁶⁶ Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1938), 21.

⁶⁷ *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 4th ed. (1928), 106.

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alcohol. Some other aspects of the taste of luxury in baked goods included real cream, intricate icing and decorations (which required the expenditure of time rather than money). The idea of luxury could actually be achieved at relatively low cost - one reason why cake, an egalitarian substance, has such a place in Australian self-mythologising, especially those nostalgic views of country life that form the core of the “Australian” mythos.

Class was also unavoidably connected to gender performance, and the tastes of luxury were partly defined by the feminine qualities they embodied. For example, the *Calendar of Cake and Afternoon Tea Delicacies* produced by the NSW CWA in 1931 included some fancy decorating, such as using strips of jelly to represent the butterfly’s body in Butterfly Cakes or the stem in Sponge Lilies.⁶⁸ The title of this cookbook underlined the semantic importance of “delicacy” or daintiness. A signifier of feminine refinement, “delicacy” suggested prettiness, whiteness, softness, smallness and mildness. It was far more difficult to achieve delicacy in baking with coarse ingredients like wholemeal flour, strong-flavoured fats such as dripping, or temperamental technologies like woodfired ovens. The desirability of delicacy was linked to the prevailing concept of middle-class womanhood – the compliantly feminine stay-at-home wife and mother. Here can be seen some of the moral overtones connected with class, as described by Deborah Lupton: “‘Good’ food is bourgeois and refined; it has strongly feminine associations; it is solid, but also light; it is clean, it is associated with slimness and maternal love. ... ‘Bad’ food is polluting and fattening; it is linked with the masculine and the working class; it is heavy and weighs down the body”.⁶⁹ This subject will be revisited in Chapters Six and Seven.

⁶⁸ *Calendar of Cake and Afternoon Tea Delicacies*, 4th ed. (1932), 20 Dec.

⁶⁹ Lupton, *Food, the Body and the Self*, 154.

Tinned foods, which underwent a wave of popularity during the middle part of the twentieth century, represent the murky margins of luxury and necessity. Tins can bring the flavours of luxury to the masses, as in luxury imports of foie gras and lobster. Tinned foie gras appeared in *A Voice from the Bush* in the 1890s (as well as tinned salmon).⁷⁰ On the other hand, tinned foods can also be the food of last resort, store-cupboard meals for the poor, isolated and time-pressed. I have already mentioned the role of tinned meats in the *Red Cross Cookery Book* of 1915. Many varieties of tinned meats, fish and seafood, vegetables and fruit were mentioned in Australian community cookbooks even before 1910; condensed milk was also called for. Even the *Kookaburra* made use of tinned goods, mostly from the more luxurious end of the spectrum: sardines, artichokes, pate de foies gras, cod's roe, peaches, pears and pineapple. Mention of tinned foods in virtually all Australian community cookbooks covered by my research confirms their acceptance by Australians in all areas and all walks of life, for the duration of the study. In many areas early in the century fresh vegetables were barely available, and hence tinned vegetables played not only an important dietary but also a significant symbolic role. Though they were understood as inferior to fresh (*Something Different for Dinner* cautioned, "never use tinned asparagus, fish, or mushrooms, when fresh are in season"),⁷¹ tinned vegetables were nonetheless all about civilisation; they were proof of Europeans' ability to master the landscape. Tins and packets, which brought variety if not freshness to the diet, were in some way symbolic of progress and good living.

Furthermore, some tinned foods seem to have encompassed both categories, luxury and necessity, at the same time. Tinned condensed milk, for example, was both a cheap,

⁷⁰ Coldham, *A Voice from the Bush*, 6.

⁷¹ *Something Different for Dinner*, foreword.

accessible staple and a taste of sweet living – used in tea it was a daily necessity in isolated areas, but used for Caramel Frosting it was literally the icing on the cake.⁷²

“Emergency” (necessity) and refinement (luxury) could also come together in tricky ways, for which tinned food, given its clever ability to cover both bases, could provide a neat solution. The 1944 *WMU Cookery Book* advised housewives to stock up on “tinned goods such as salmon, sardines, spaghetti, baked beans, truford milk, asparagus tips, preserved fruit, glass container sheep tongues, junket tablets, packet rice bubbles, half pound packets plain and sweet biscuits, jar creamed cheese, small bottles capers, olives, gherkins for savouries, tins cream” which would “help out on occasions when interruptions upset catering plans or unexpected visitors arrive”.⁷³ Similarly, in *Cook it Our Way* a contributor suggested tinned beans could help one entertain without becoming what she termed a “sweaty hostess”. She emphasised, however, the need for a certain *niveau* – the beans should be “in cans from France”.⁷⁴ Tinned soups could approximate a taste of luxury when used as substitutes for more labour-intensive sauce bases, but were indubitably a “taste of necessity” in their industrial sameness. *Recipes of the Orient* offered a solution to this conundrum in a series of suggestions to mask the monotony of tinned soups with Oriental garnishes.⁷⁵

For those not of the upper class strata, tins were a safe and accessible way of experimenting with new flavour ideas. The sanitised, industrial flavour of the tin could act as a symbol of the foreign or exotic - traditional symbols of the “high-class”. Some tins could be countenanced by the upper classes.⁷⁶ Barbara Knox commented in

⁷² Beggs, *Birthday Book*, 214.

⁷³ *WMU Cookery Book*, 16th ed. (1944), xxvi.

⁷⁴ *Cook It Our Way*, “Dinner Menu for 8”, unnumbered.

⁷⁵ Abbas, *Recipes of the Orient*, 9.

⁷⁶ For a detailed discussion of this subject see Gallegos, “Mapping Ethno-Foodscapes in Australia”.

Something Different for Dinner (1936) on the widening availability of “uncommon and varied” ingredients, noting for example that “Australian tinned pimentos [were] now procurable”.⁷⁷ Chicken Liver Dumpling Soup from *Cook it Our Way* might be made with “any good chicken stock ... either home-made or commercial”, but tins nonetheless remained somehow antithetical to the idea of authenticity. This is important in that achievement of “authenticity” represents cultural and economic capital – the resources to access unusual, perishable, often expensive ingredients, the time to engage in “authentic” processing (for example, grinding your own coffee beans) and the discerning taste required to recognise and appreciate the difference. The happy resort to industrial approximations, a relaxed approach to the dictates of “authenticity” and refined good taste, traditionally suggested more modest class affiliations.

During the 1970s a trend gathered strength for fresh, non-industrial ingredients as the tastes of luxury. In typical style, *Cook it Our Way* showed the path, defining freshness in part as authenticity: fresh “ripe” tomatoes were specified for Spicy Tomato Soup and a recipe for Ragout stipulated that the chicken stock “should be the real thing”.

Authenticity was defined partly in opposition to commercialism; Mrs Eric Phillips (actress Ruth Cracknell) said of her Prawns in Sour Cream, “I prefer to use fresh cream soured with lemon juice, and a little salt rather than the commercial variety”.⁷⁸ A similar element of protest against industrial foods was palpable in John Pearce’s recipe, in *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men* (1975), for a Paella using “never frozen” lobster tail, “garden fresh, not frozen” peas and “dinki-di not stock-cubed” chicken stock.⁷⁹

Freshness, then, functioned to define authenticity as non-industrial, non-commercial food. This is unsurprising, given that it was the industrial food juggernaut which made

⁷⁷ *Something Different for Dinner*, foreword.

⁷⁸ *Cook It Our Way*, unnumbered.

⁷⁹ Lum, *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men*, 100.

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rich, creamy confections and exotic “ethnic” dishes as available to the Joneses and Smiths as to the servant-keeping Bosanquets and Mortimers, who could afford the extra time and resources it took to grind the spices and simmer the stock.

The hierarchy of fresh over tinned had been long recognised, but intensified in the latter twentieth century, when freshness became revalorised as a mark of quality and an element of authenticity. Issues of supply were relevant, especially to those in far-flung parts of the nation. The 1978 *Darwin Gardeners' Gourmet Guide*, for example, noted the problems of fruits and vegetables trucked up from South Australia and aimed by way of remedy to give “information on the use of locally grown fruit and vegetables”.⁸⁰ Even the 1979 *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book*, despite the manifold difficulties of supply in isolated rural areas (and the difficulty, on a station, of growing vegetables with bore water), specified fresh produce in several instances. The interest in “ethnic” foods and *cordon bleu*, as well as the increase in health consciousness which accompanied breakthroughs in nutritional research and the rise of the counterculture, led many Australians to value freshness in food as a mark of authenticity. This represented high cultural capital, usually high economic capital as well, and therefore class status.

Conclusions

If community cookbooks are middle class, they are not solely so; they represent a broad range of class affiliations. Furthermore, they record the existence and nature of class-related food preferences, suggesting the truth of Kingston's contention that “knowledge about cooking ... may always have had a class dimension”.⁸¹ This is reflected in the tastes of necessity and luxury, which tended to be similar across the class structure but through which different class groups could give expression to their own positions and

⁸⁰ *Darwin Gardeners' Gourmet Guide*, foreword.

⁸¹ Kingston, “When Did We Teach Our Girls to Cook?”, 100.

sensibilities. Where higher class groupings typically expressed their status through recipes involving rarer, more expensive ingredients, more labour-intensive techniques and greater concern for qualities like freshness and authenticity, lower class groupings could articulate their affiliations with economical recipes and by eschewing what could be seen as pretentious higher-class artfulness.

The issues considered in this chapter suggest that twentieth-century community cookbooks in Australia, though they did reflect primarily the experiences and values of the middle class, also reflected the ideas and experiences of both upper- and working-class community groups. This in turn leads ineluctably, and unsurprisingly, to the conclusion that the project of domestic civilisation in Australia was not carried solely on the shoulders of the middle classes. Women from firmly working-class to distinctly upper-class community groups could and did choose to raise money for specified social projects by sharing their cooking culture and their idea of good living, which were expressed within the parameters of their budgets and social milieus.

Chapter 6

The Gender World of Community Cookbooks

We have cookery books without end, but, for all we know of their writers they might be the work of disembodied spirits. Occasionally, however, we are allowed to catch a glimpse of the Lady behind the dinner.¹

Front cover advertisement in *Busy Woman's Home Companion* (1924)

No mean woman can cook well; it calls for a generous spirit, a light hand, and a large heart.²

Coronation Cookery Book (1936)

Poor John! He had to learn to cook,
His wife's been on the recipe book.³

Gunyah Gabba (1967)

Thanking all ladies who made this book possible.⁴

Milthorpe-Carcoar Country Style Cookbook (1970s)

Community cookbooks and gendered narratives

There is general agreement among scholars about the close relationship between the female gender and the community cookbook genre. *Recipes for Reading* takes as its premise that “these cookbooks tell stories ... of women’s lives and beliefs”.⁵ Social historian and folklorist Janet Theophano’s *Eat My Words* discusses cookbooks as women’s biographical literature, positing cookbooks themselves as communities,

¹ *Busy Woman's Home Companion*, cover.

² Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1936), 37.

³ *Gunyah Gabba*, (Barraba, NSW: The Committee of the Barraba Pre-School Centre Association, 1967), 112.

⁴ *Milthorpe-Carcoar Country Style Cook Book / Compiled by the Ladies of the Church of England Parish of Milthorpe-Carcoar*, (Orange, NSW: A Scarr, 1970s), preface.

⁵ Bower, *Recipes for Reading*, 2.

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constituted through the device of women’s collective writing.⁶ Bower characterises community cookbooks in particular as women’s “communal partial autobiographies”.⁷ McDougall remarks that “recipes convey information, but they also record the history of recipes, of food, of women cooking, and of women writing”. She considers that community cookbooks “emphasize the relationship between reader, writer and text” and, in so doing, direct their focus on women’s relationship networks.⁸ Another way of approaching this, more gender-neutrally, is to say that food is a tribal matter – food, family and friends go together. Community cookbooks are a textual expression of this nexus.

Historically, women have been the main participants in community cookbook projects. A search of title and publication details yields some useful rough statistics. Of some 1245 community cookbooks in my database from 1890-1989, around a third were produced by groups avowedly composed of women – as for example the many “Ladies’ Auxiliaries”. Add to this the texts that had a female editor or compiler, books produced by female-dominated professional groups such as nurses, books produced for mother and baby associations and schools, and other groups traditionally associated with women’s volunteer effort, such as the Red Cross, and the number rises to well over half. Of the remaining books, whose title and publication details show no obvious female primacy (“hospital auxiliaries”, parent and friend associations, service clubs, etc), experience indicates that upon opening their pages, typically the overwhelming majority of named contributors are still female. There is, therefore, undoubtedly a special relationship of gender and genre. Furthermore, as anthropologist Carole Counihan

⁶ Janet Theophano, *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives through the Cookbooks They Wrote* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), Chapter 1, “Cookbooks as Communities”.

⁷ Bower, “Cooking up Stories”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 20.

⁸ McDougall, “Voices, Stories and Recipes”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 106.

notes, gender is itself “constituted through men’s and women’s roles in the production, distribution and symbolism of food”.⁹ Gender is perforce a significant theme of these books, deeply embedded in their structures of form and narrative, as well as being a central focus in the social history of the genre.

In the Australian context, community cookbooks are a powerhouse of information about the social history of gender roles. They are filled with both implicit and explicit commentary on gender. Such commentary comes from a wide variety of standpoints and, while foregrounding the female, includes both masculine and feminine voices – a point which has gone under-recognised in the past.

In gender terms, community cookbooks are probably more significant for what they represent in terms of women’s and men’s activity, and for various aspects of their socio-political milieu, than for the recipes they contain. Though I do focus on food-related aspects of the gender discussion, this chapter, due to the subject matter, is more politico-historical and less culinary in tone than those before and after.

Gendered culinary and cultural dichotomies

Goody has discussed the parallels of gender and class in the history of European cooking based on the tradition of male employment in courtly kitchens, noting “It was men who took over the female recipes of daily cooking and transformed them into the *haute cuisine* of the court. In other words the difference between high and low tended to be one between male and female”.¹⁰ This distinction has continued to permeate gender relations in the kitchen. Thomas Adler, in 1983, argued that “Dad’s cooking exists in evident contradistinction to Mom’s on every level”, defining a range of “ideal

⁹ Carole M Counihan, “Food and Power: Identity and Gender”, in *Food and Gender: Identity and Power*, ed. Counihan and Kaplan (Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998), 3.

¹⁰ Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*, 193.

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oppositions” summarised by the observation that “his is play, hers is work”.¹¹ Male / female dualism is one of the key problematics of the community cookbook, but this genre, by inscribing the lived dynamics of the home environment, may encode a less oppositional approach. In her study of *The Home Plot*, looking at domestic ritual in women’s fiction, American literary theorist Ann Romines describes what she calls the “housekeeping plotline” as a “fact, problem, and resource of our common life”, considering that “such writing may postulate a life in which boundaries between public and private spheres and between male and female spheres become elastic, permeable, or perhaps even non-existent”.¹² Bower applies Romines’ model to community cookbooks, finding that their treatment of the “home plot” involves negotiation of the public and private spheres.¹³

Community cookbooks reflect a large number of intersecting dualities, of the kind described by Goody and Romines. Along with male / female and public / private go other gendered cultural and culinary categories that flavour this genre: rough / dainty; nature / culture; professional / amateur; and, as discussed by historian Jessamyn Neuhaus as well as Adler, hobbyist / workhorse.¹⁴ These last two oppositions express different aspects of Goody’s “high” and “low”. In Chapter Two I quoted Sheridan’s view that the foregrounding of the “private” dimension helps to focus attention on some important distinctions of food in family life, such as between healthy and unhealthy choices, innovative and comfort food, or family and company meals.¹⁵ Community

¹¹ Thomas Adler, “Making Pancakes on Sunday: The Male Cook in Family Tradition”, in *Foodways and Eating Habits: Directions for Research*, ed. Jones, et al. (1983), 45-54.

¹² Anne Romines, *The Home Plot: Women, Writing and Domestic Ritual* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 294.

¹³ Bower, “Cooking up Stories”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 47-48.

¹⁴ Jessamyn Neuhaus, *Manly Meals and Mom’s Home Cooking: Cookbooks and Gender in Modern America* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

¹⁵ Sheridan, “Eating the Other”, 327.

cookbooks inscribe these gendered cultural assumptions and the ways in which Australian communities have viewed, approached and used or discarded them over time. Such binary oppositions help to sharpen the image, as defined by any given cookbook, of the “good woman”, the “good family”, the “good meal” and the “good life”.

In this chapter, I consider the dualistic tensions that permeate the community cookbook. I evaluate the image of the “good woman” created in Australian community cookbooks and examine the roles assumed by (or assigned to) men and women who participated in community cookbook projects in twentieth-century Australia. My aim, in exploring these rather small facets of the enormous question of gender, is to arrive at an enhanced understanding of how this genre records community culture, attitudes and practices with respect to the category of gender.

Separate spheres and women’s social agency

Community cookbooks originated in a time when middle-class women were consigned (at least in theory) to a quiet domestic existence. Some intrepid middle- and upper-class Australian women of the 1890s were entering the universities and the professions, and working class women were mostly undertaking work for pay, but women were not yet commonly associated with professional work involving public social standing.

“Women’s work” was held to be housework, fulfilling the role of the “domestic angel” and the heart of the home. Community fundraising was a logical extension of such caring work, even for women who staked no claims on public or professional life.

However, the community cookbook did inhabit a zone just beyond the confines of the family circle, and hence did involve some negotiation of the public sphere.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett finds that community cookbooks “moved the culinary expertise of women from private interpersonal transactions into a coordinated collective

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enterprise, whereby accumulated kitchen wisdom sustained large community organisations”.¹⁶ This apparently transient step into the public sphere, which I will explore in Chapter Nine as a nation-building impulse, was a little cog in a large wheel - a small part of a fateful set of actions which ultimately resulted in profound changes to the gender compact of twentieth-century society. While the Victorian-era rhetoric of the “little woman” sequestered safely in her home was attractive to many, it was an unavoidable fact that women, like men, had a stake in the society around them. Many women wanted to do what they could to support the well-being of the community and to mould community values. During the nineteenth century, public culture increasingly allowed that women had a legitimate role to play in the creation and maintenance of the “civilised society” – a role deriving precisely from their morally exalted position as the “angel of the home”. Women possessed of drive, conviction and social concern were limited in their options for public agency, but not excluded. As consumption theorist Woodruff D Smith describes it:

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, ideologists of domestic femininity had extended the idea of women’s particular role of upholding morality into a transcendental public task: maintaining civilisation itself. This transformation legitimated the active involvement of women in practically any public enterprise that could be framed in terms of protecting or advancing the cause of civilisation.¹⁷

In Australia, community cookbooks began in the time of the women’s suffrage movement, a time when women’s citizenship and women’s social roles were at the forefront of public debate. The subject of gender was hotly contested in Australian society from the late 1880s. Historian Marilyn Lake has characterised the 1890s debate between the sexes and on the nature of gender as a contest between masculinism and

¹⁶ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “The Moral Sublime”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 151.

¹⁷ Woodruff D Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 178.

feminism for control of the national culture.¹⁸ The separation of spheres was an ideological construct that was, as noted by Rowley, under increasing stress in this era.¹⁹ The well-established social conventions of the “domestic sphere” notwithstanding, women in the 1890s were raising their voices in the public sphere more frequently and more forcefully than they had for at least two hundred years. Australian author and women’s rights champion Louisa Lawson argued in her monthly feminist journal *The Dawn* for women’s suffrage and women’s role in the national project, objecting to the notion that “men govern the world” and that “the schemes upon which all our institutions are founded show men’s thoughts only”.²⁰ In South Australia women secured the vote in 1894, second only to the women of New Zealand in 1893. The federal vote came shortly after, in 1902, and the other states were gradually conquered, so that all (white) Australian women had the vote by 1911. It was an era of drought and depression, as discussed in Chapter Two, but also a time of firsts and new beginnings which historian John Docker summarises as “increased entry into education ... a falling birthrate and low marriage rates... smoking, bicycling, Rational Dress and trousers-wearing New Woman”.²¹ Clearly, then, this was a time when the strain on traditional gender roles heightened the need for a popular discourse of gender.

Gender constructions and images of the ‘good woman’

Before it can be “good to eat” it has to be “good to think”. This idea, originally from Levi-Strauss, can be seen played out in gender form in these books.²² Recipes

¹⁸ Marilyn Lake, “The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context”, *Historical Studies* 22, no. 86 (1986): 116.

¹⁹ Rowley, “Things a Bushwoman Cannot Do”, in *Debutante Nation*, ed. Magarey, et al, 185.

²⁰ Louisa Lawson, “Women Warders”, *The Dawn: A Journal for Australian Women* 3 (1890).

²¹ John Docker, “The Feminist Legend: A New Historicism?”, in *Debutante Nation*, ed. Magarey, 25.

²² Claude Levi-Strauss, *Totemism*, transl. Needham (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 89. Levi-Strauss’s original meaning was relatively limited, but the term he coined has since been used extensively to

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individually and collectively constitute a particular narrative of gendered behaviour, a particular image of the “good woman”. Some of the key tropes which appear in this context include mothering, hostessing, wifeliness and community involvement – all expressions of womanhood validated by their focus on caring or nurturing. One of the most consistent themes, though, is that of the “lady”.

The term “lady”, as it developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, had connotations of high class, high sensibility and refined manners, as well as elegant grooming. A “lady” had both moral and aesthetic merit. It also implied not taking part in productive labour. “Ladies” were the first consumers. Mary Poovey’s work on the “proper lady” of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain shows the “lady” to be “a familiar household companion”, possessed of “refinement”, “propriety”, “modesty”, “delicacy” and “virtue” – a normative concept of femininity that retained its currency into the twentieth century.²³ Linguist Lynda Mugglestone, drawing on Poovey, argues that such normative images constituted “abstractions of behaviour to which ... actual behaviour tended of course to conform only to a greater or lesser extent”, but could also “come to dominate ideals of female behaviour” throughout the society.²⁴

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Australian community cookbooks attached themselves to these ideals of femininity. Occasionally titles of books referred to the “lady”, as in the 1905 *Ladies’ Handbook of Tested Recipes*.²⁵ Certainly the term “lady” was liberally used in advertising; it also appeared in recipes such as Ladies’ Cabbage in

interrogate various cultural and ethical aspects of human food choice. For example, Marvin Harris *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985). Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006).

²³ Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 3.

²⁴ Lynda Mugglestone, *Talking Proper: The Rise of Accent as Social Symbol* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 137.

²⁵ *Ladies’ Handbook of Tested Recipes*, (Korumburra, VIC: s.n., 1905).

the *Berrambool Cookery Book*,²⁶ or in their linking narratives, as when the *Maryborough Cookery Book* in 1927 printed an Antidote for Drunkenness “successfully used for many years by a lady engaged in rescue work” – thereby underscoring at one stroke the values of both Methodist temperance and ladylike community caring.²⁷ Principally, though, “lady” was used to name the producers of such books. The consistent performance of “ladies” auxiliaries, guilds and committees in creating community cookbooks (they produced over 15% of all community cookbooks up until 1939; a massive 25% during the period from 1900-1919; dropping to only 6% after the World Wars but returning to about 9% for the remainder of the century) shows the significance of this term in any discussion of socially sanctioned womanly behaviour in the twentieth century.

To which other constructs of femininity did community cookbooks have recourse? The commonest of all – the only one more common than “ladies” – was “women / woman”. One or both of these terms appeared in between one-quarter and one-third of all community cookbook titles and/or publication details to 1979. Community cookbooks were also commonly addressed to, or from, the “housewife” (*The Housewife’s Friend*, *The Housewife’s Companion*, *Recipes from the stars: recipes, cooking hints, dietary and food know-how for Mrs Housewife*)²⁸ and the “homemaker” (*Good cooking with homemakers*, *Homemakers recipes*).²⁹ Terms to be found in titles, prefaces and forewords gradually came to encompass both masculine and feminine, including the

²⁶ “Ladies Cabbage” was boiled, cooled, chopped, enriched with egg and milk, then baked. Apart from the uncabbage-like elegance of this presentation, it would allow any cabbagey smells wafting in from the lean-to kitchen time to dissipate before the meal. Moffatt, *Berrambool Recipe Book*, 112.

²⁷ EE Allen, *The Maryborough Cookery Book and Housewife’s Companion*, 4th ed. (Melbourne: Spectator Publishing Co, 1927), 95.

²⁸ *The Housewife’s Companion*, 2nd ed. (Maryborough, VIC: Inkerman Street Methodist Sunday School, 1902). Doberer, *The Housewife’s Friend. Recipes from the Stars*.

²⁹ *Good Cooking with Homemakers*, (Darwin: Darwin Baptist Church, 1976), *Homemakers Recipes*, (Yokine, WA: Yokine Baptist Church, 1970s).

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“busy woman”, “well-known men”, the “hostess”, later “hosts and hostesses”, “busy mothers” and “mums”, “famous men”, and “fathers”. Apart from references to the armed services, it was only later, from the 1960s, that professional roles began to be represented. These were, to my knowledge without exception, female-dominated ones such as nurses, airline hostesses and secretaries.³⁰

Another theme, which increased in the post-war era, was gender-neutral - the description of women and/or men not by an explicitly gendered social role, but simply in volunteer association with a community organisation, such as Meals on Wheels or Probus Club. Explicit gendering never constituted a totalising narrative. It remained, however, common throughout the century. Women and men were conceived of, and typically addressed, in terms of gendered social roles.

Mothering and hostessing are often foregrounded in community cookbook recipes, these being the two female roles most closely associated with the provision of food for others. Wifeliness was also important. A humorous focus on the selection and management of husbands produced several “recipes” for How to Cook Husbands or “preserve” them.³¹ Men were also commonly acknowledged to be important people to please on the home front. Coq au Vin (Husband’s Joy), containing a pint of red wine, was one recipe bearing testimony to this.³² Men themselves sometimes emphasised other aspects of wifeliness. According to advertising for Alfred Bush’s Store in Bendigo (1924), a good wife was “like roasted lamb – tender and nicely dressed (an impertinent fellow adds ‘and without sauce’)”.³³

³⁰ For example, *Kitchen Kapers*, (Latrobe, TAS: Mersey General Hospital, 1960s). *Adventurous Eating with the Fabulous Five*, (Canberra: Infant Welfare Sisters of Canberra, 1979). *Welcome Aboard! High-Flying Dishes. Selections from the Top*.

³¹ For example in the *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 4th ed. (1928), 178.

³² *Mt Isa Animal Aid Society Recipe Book*, 6.

³³ *Busy Woman's Home Companion*, 37.

Scholarly discussion of community cookbooks has often focused on gendered aspects of the genre. Bower's discussion of themes, focusing on the breaking of silence and "the importance of women's domestic role", as well as cooking as an artform and cookbooks as a literary artform, coalesces strongly around the subject area of women's identity and authority in the single trope of women's voice.³⁴ Her examination of community cookbook "plotlines" offers a useful device for investigating the common images contained in this genre.

In Australian community cookbooks the "good mother" plotline is strongly represented. Historian Alison MacKinnon considers that "at the heart of the model of the family that rose to dominance in the twentieth century was woman, defined as the ideal mother".³⁵ The groundwork had been laid in Queen Victoria's reign; Dorothy Thompson argues that Victoria's political positioning as "mother of the nation" had utilised the fact of her motherhood as a bridge between public and private, rendering her political power culturally acceptable.³⁶ Some decades later in Australia, as Mackinnon proposes, maternalism remained "an important avenue into the public sphere".³⁷ The concept of the "maternal citizen" is also explored in *Women as Australian Citizens*.³⁸ The social justification of maternalism enabled and encouraged early twentieth-century women to enter into the kinds of public participation represented by community cookbooks.

³⁴ Bower, "Cooking up Stories" in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower.

³⁵ Alison Mackinnon, *Love and Freedom: Professional Women and the Reshaping of Personal Life* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 63.

³⁶ Dorothy Thompson, "Women, Work and Politics in Nineteenth-Century England: The Problem of Authority", in *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914*, ed. Rendall (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

³⁷ Mackinnon, *Love and Freedom*, 108.

³⁸ Patricia Crawford and Philippa Maddern, eds., *Women as Australian Citizens: Underlying Histories* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001). In particular, chapters 5 and 6.

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Early cookbooks abounded with representations of woman as mother. From advice on how to deal with childhood illnesses such as diphtheria,³⁹ to recipes for Family Veal Pie,⁴⁰ and cakes “Suitable for Children”,⁴¹ women’s maternal role tended to be front-and-centre. “Motherly” food (meaning food considered good for mothers to give to children) tended to be bland and sweet - a topic explored in “Kiddies’ Delight”.⁴² In that article I also discuss the popular mid-century phenomenon of “recipes” for happy children. How to Make a Christmas Cake, printed in *Feed the Beasts* (1969), captured both the frustration and the humour of domestic life with a toddler in tow. It instructed:

Switch on oven, get out utensils and ingredients.
Remove blocks, fire engine and train lines from table.
Grease pan, measure two cups of flour.
Remove Freddie’s hands from flour, wash Freddie.
Re-measure flour. Put flour, baking powder and salt in sifter.
Answer telephone. Explain you don’t mind at all that it’s the wrong number.
Return to kitchen. Remove Freddie’s hands from sifter.
Wash Freddie.
Pick up cake-pan from floor and grease.
Answer doorbell. Tell him no thank-you, you don’t want any.
Return to kitchen. Remove quarter-inch of salt from greased pan.
Look for Freddie. Find him. Put rest of biscuits back in jar.
Take up sifter. Remove heavy coating of nutmeg from it.
Head for Freddie, who runs, knocking bowl off table.
Wash kitchen floor, table, walls and utensils.
Telephone local baker.
Lie down.⁴³

³⁹ Eg, *WMU Cookery Book*, 6th ed. (1906), 156.

⁴⁰ Eg, Doberer, *The Housewife's Friend*, 8. Also all editions of the *Presbyterian Cookery Book* to 1950.

⁴¹ Eg, Peach or Apricot Trifle in Moffatt, *Berrambool Recipe Book*, 100. Similarly, Rosy Rice in *The Red Cross Recipe Book*, (Longreach, QL: Australian Red Cross Society Queensland Division, 1941-2), 28.

⁴² Black, “Kiddies' Delight”.

⁴³ *Feed the Beasts: Lions Cookery Book / Compiled by the Ladies Committee of the Lions Club of Manjimup, WA, District 201r in Support of Lions Charity Projects*, 4th ed. (Manjimup, WA: The Club, 1969), 66.

Both the child and the cake were posited here as “women’s work”. This neat conflation of food and family demonstrates two areas of women’s most enduring responsibility. “Kiddies’ Delight” further reflects on the significance, in Australian community cookbooks, of recipes and information pertaining to children’s health, diet, literacy and socialisation, finding that throughout the twentieth century, community cookbooks portrayed children (and therewith mothering) as “[central] to the Australian social project”.⁴⁴

Maternalism was not just important for the children’s sake. It was, as Mackinnon suggests, an important aspect of a woman’s social persona. Bush’s Stores’ advertisements in the *Busy Woman’s Home Companion* averred, with obvious self-interest, that “no woman is so good, so intellectual, or so beautiful that she can afford to be careless about the provisions for her family”. Furthermore, “home is the father’s kingdom, the children’s paradise, and the mother’s world – when all the household are nourished and kept healthy with goods from Bush’s.” Less commercially focussed was the simple aphorism, “One ounce of mother is better than a pound of parson”.⁴⁵

A good mother was a good housekeeper - thrifty, careful, her pantry shelves always well-stocked. Community cookbooks before the post-war era typically showed a strong focus on good household management, including information on invalid care and many, varied “household hints” from how to clean chamois gloves to a good recipe for Clever Mary (a popular cleaning agent) and how to keep ants out of a food safe.⁴⁶ In all regards, the “good woman” was a “good nurturer”, who could take effective care of her family, household and wider community.

⁴⁴ Black, “Kiddies’ Delight”.

⁴⁵ *Busy Woman’s Home Companion*, 57, 59 and 65.

⁴⁶ Respectively, Barnes, *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints*, 2nd ed. (1936), 358, and *The Red Cross Recipe Book*, 4th ed. (1927), 124-27.

Female authority and recipe writing style

Mrs Beeton had been the first to codify recipe writing into a standardised style, with ingredients listed at the beginning before a concise method. The ladies of the Domestic Science movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries encouraged even greater rationalisation, aiming for as plain, clear and logical a method as possible. In Australia this recipe-writing style was epitomised in cookery textbooks used in schools, such as the *Commonsense Cookery Book* by the NSW Public School Cookery Teachers' Association, and other domestic-science trained cooking teachers like Amy Schauer. It was later adopted in the popular magazine-based *Women's Weekly* recipe books.

This dispassionate form, in which virtually all twentieth-century Australian women were educated through the schooling system, became the generic “female” recipe-writing style. (Discussion of a “masculine” style later in the chapter will pick up the other side of the story.) It played against a more conversational tone common to some recipes, harking back to older oral traditions of recipe transmission. This conversational style typically bedded the recipe in a narrative of children, husband, family or home-based entertaining, or referred to other ladylike qualities such as refinement or daintiness. Whereas the “domestic science” style appropriated the authority of scientific method, the conversational style allied itself with the semantic field and the emotional overtones of home and family. Either way, the question of authority was a major one, as female identity was closely allied with the perception of competence in this domain. The two main narrative styles adopted by women both reflected the desirability of projecting such competence, either through the appearance of scientific credibility or through the persona of the experienced domestic chatelaine.

Femininity, daintiness and baking

One particular food-related construct of nineteenth-century domestic femininity, around which the gender debate has unfolded, is the idea of “daintiness”. In Australia’s food history during the period between the World Wars, Symons finds a polarisation between “male” roughness, characterised by drinking bad beer, hankering for the bush, meat pies, and wolfing down great slabs of meat, and “female” daintiness, symbolised by tea drinking, baked goods and the love of pink things and consumer embellishments.⁴⁷ He is disdainful of this concept of femininity, branding it the commercially motivated brainchild of the “modern food companies” who undertook “a long campaign to subvert the traditional caring concerns of women into petty materialist preoccupations”. This insidious operation was linked to the national project of civilisation. Symons finds that

against the rough male attitudes to food, formed in our early years, was increasingly pitted the adorning approach of a woman, expected – as childbearer, cook and shopper – to make the society decent. She represented gentility, parsley by the back path, little cakes, pots of tea and teetotalism. If the damper symbolised our first, male century, then now succeeded the pavlova.⁴⁸

I noted in Chapter Five the association of “good taste” and daintiness with the idea of luxury. There is an undoubted socio-economic aspirational aspect to this field. Dainty and ladylike comportment and cookery were (and perhaps still are) conflated with the idea of “culture”.

Though Symons focuses on the interwar period, daintiness has a much longer history in this country. The obsession of the Victorian age with daintiness has been much remarked. In community cookbooks during the years of Federation the Delicate

⁴⁷ Michael Symons, *One Continuous Picnic: A History of Eating in Australia*, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2007), 135-52.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 138.

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Puddings,⁴⁹ the fancy tins for small cakes, the Egg and Violet Sandwiches served on plates decorated with violets,⁵⁰ all functioned as an affirmation of women’s rightful role, identity and preoccupations, as well as reflecting an ongoing resolve to bring culture to the wide, brown land of Australia. The romance of bakery in these years (as well as many to come) demonstrated the broad agreement, among women from many walks of life and many corners of the nation, on one of the necessary facets of “the good life”. Lady Victoria Buxton (wife of the Governor General of South Australia and founder of the eponymous girls’ club supported by the *Kookaburra Cookery Book*) wrote in 1896 that Adelaide should be called the “Land of Cakes”. “The young ladies are remarkably good cake-and-scone-makers and take much part in household work. There are cake stalls at all the numerous sales and strawberry fetes”.⁵¹ It was precisely this skill which Lady Buxton’s successors harnessed in the *Kookaburra*. As Kingston notes, these sweet baked items “really formed the backbone of contributory cookbooks”,⁵² a view supported by Bannerman’s subsequent empirical research.⁵³ Baking, then, as noted in Chapter Two, was a gendered activity at the heart of this genre. The traditional Anglo-European belief in women’s sweet tooth mentioned by Mintz suggests that this may have seemed a natural pairing on many cultural levels.⁵⁴ Discourses of femininity were evident not only through recipes themselves but also in advertising materials, cover illustrations, and the adages, proverbs, and literary quotes which often graced community cookbooks’ pages. The ideal woman, to judge from the

⁴⁹ Mrs H Wharton-Shaw, *Auburn Methodist Church: Methodist Ladies Guild / 600 Tested Recipes* (Melbourne: The Church, 1906), 63. Hereafter known by its popular title, as “*Auburn Methodist Tested Recipes*”.

⁵⁰ *Guild Cookery Book*, unnumbered.

⁵¹ George WE Russell, ed., *Lady Victoria Buxton: A Memoir with Some Account of Her Husband* (London: Longmans Green and Co, 1919), 154.

⁵² Kingston, “When Did We Teach Our Girls to Cook?”, 94.

⁵³ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”.

⁵⁴ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 107, 30, 40-45.

early and mid-century books, was pretty, sweet, merry, hardworking, well-groomed, intelligent but not overly so, and strongly focussed on her husband, children and home. She was also good at baking. The *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints* (1942) printed a poem by Elizabeth Fleming (sent in by Mrs Pollitt of Toodyay, WA) which summarised such “feminine” qualities:

A light heart means light pastry.
Or so I've heard folk say;
So keep your household happy
And make your duties gay;
And when you stir the mixtures
For scones and cakes and pies,
They'll all reflect your spirits
And rise! – and rise! – and rise!⁵⁵

Baking was an important activity for women not only because of its associations with a range of feminine cultural inflections. Also, it was visible (if ephemeral) proof of achievement, competence and industry. Standards of housewifery were judged on baking, and women commonly spent some effort on perfecting their cakes and biscuits. It may seem quaint now, but the editors of the *Coronation Cookery Book* were not joking when they wrote, in 1936, “to achieve success in the making of meringues is the ambition of most women”.⁵⁶

Baking was also important as an aspect of feminine sociability. *Gunyah Gabba* went so far as to entitle its cake and afternoon tea chapter “Lubra’s Tucker” (ie, women’s food). Ross suggests, in relation to nineteenth-century America, “the sweets that predominated in charitable cookbooks were, in fact, the glue of village social interactions. The steady rounds of women’s visits and calls that typified village afternoons were marked by the

⁵⁵ Barnes, *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints* (1942), 209.

⁵⁶ Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1936), 209.

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hospitality one offered and the gifts one brought”.⁵⁷ The ritual of sharing baked goods was also an important aspect of women’s sociability, and one in which the performance of gender was a central theme. This, of course, involved demonstration of ladylike delicacy. The contributor of Quick Apple Sponge to *I Love to Eat Jewish* noted, “Serves 6 man-size or 10 genteel servings for ladies’ lunch or morning coffee”.⁵⁸

Australian women, like their Northern American counterparts, had a traditional horror of being caught out by unexpected guests. The ladies of the Tasmanian CWA remarked in 1958, “from a country woman’s point of view biscuit tins must always be full to meet the many callers of the day”.⁵⁹ The many recipes for cakes and biscuits that were recorded in community cookbooks attest to the common practice of keeping the cake and biscuit tins stocked at all times, just in case. Some biscuit recipes were quick, intended to cater for “emergency” situations. The other reliable standby was to reach for packets and tins and try to make something nice out of them. Various community cookbooks, particularly during the busy, hard-pressed war years, advised women to keep an “emergency corner” of tinned and readymade foods in case of unawaited callers. The *WMU Cookery Book* (1944) advised, as mentioned in Chapter Five, stocking the pantry with a wide range of tinned and packaged goods to deal with unexpected contingencies. The *SACWA Calendar of Puddings* included a Visitors’ Pudding as well as “a Quickly Made Dessert for Unexpected Guests”, comprising a kind of apple and date crumble.⁶⁰ *Gunyah Gabba* contained a whole chapter on precisely this subject, entitled “Feller-Jump-Up-Out-Of-Nowhere”, proposing the same

⁵⁷ Ross, “Ella Smith’s Unfinished Community Cookbook”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 165.

⁵⁸ *I Love to Eat Jewish*, 101.

⁵⁹ *The 21st Birthday Cookery Book of the Country Women’s Association in Tasmania*, 113.

⁶⁰ Mrs AH Watkie, *Calendar of Puddings: A Pudding a Day for the Whole Year* (Kent Town, SA: The Country Women’s Association, 1950s), 19 April.

sorts of packaged-food solutions as the *WMU Cookery Book* a quarter-century previously.⁶¹

Even the earliest proponents of the community cookbook included socially progressive, women's-rights focussed community organisations. The NSW branch of the WCTU produced a *Temperance Cookery Book* in 1896, only months after the South Australian branch had released a female suffrage essay, *Sixteen Reasons for Supporting Women's Rights*.⁶² The WCTU had considerable recourse to community cookbooks over the years, using them to produce alcohol-free recipe collections as well as to promote their pro-suffrage political stance. These strands of WCTU activity were linked through their conviction that alcoholism's toll on women and families could be combated by campaigning both against alcohol and for women's rights; women needed an equal political voice to protect themselves. Community cookbooks were, therefore, not purely a tool for the conservatively minded champions of feminine daintiness; they were able to reflect a variety of socio-political attitudes towards gender.

The major social changes of the post-war era, and in particular the effects of the second-wave feminist movement, were naturally reflected in community cookbooks. Around 1970 the Quota Club of Caloundra released a cookbook containing a poem that expressed the club's shared vision of women's central role in society.

They talk about a woman's sphere as
Though it had a limit.
There's not a place in earth or heaven,
There's not a task to mankind given,
There's not a blessing or a woe,
There's not a whispered yes or no,

⁶¹ *Gunyah Gabba*, 49.

⁶² Olive A Lucas, *The Temperance Cookery Book / Compiled for the Village Fair under the Auspices of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and Local Option League, May, 1896* (Sydney: GE Ardill, 1896).

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There's not a life or death or birth
That has a feather's weight of worth
Without a woman in it.⁶³

The Quota club, which consisted of “Women Who Will ‘Shape Tomorrow’ by Sharing Today”, thus proclaimed its disdain for the concept of separate spheres. Women’s workforce participation rates were shooting up, various forms of equal-opportunity legislation were creeping in and in 1975 Susan Ryan, a Labor party candidate, was elected to the Upper House under the slogan, “a woman’s place is in the Senate”. The idea of separate spheres, which despite its undoubted porosity did seem to have had some applicability fifty years earlier, was by the 1970s largely outworn, as the Quota club’s poem reflected. Or, perhaps, women were finally claiming legitimacy in the public sphere but the private sphere was still a work in progress. At any rate, the sloughing off the vestiges of separate spheres in community cookbooks co-existed with the continuing narrative of the “good woman” who was distinguished by the hospitality and the happy home she provided. Mary Durack wrote in her introduction to the Western Australian CWA’s *Kimberley Division Historical Cook Book* (1979), “the Kimberley district has often been represented as a remote, rugged and forbidding land... But there is another side to its character ... - the home life and the hospitality that has been a feature of the area since the beginning of white settlement. It is of these aspects that this book bears testimony, as well as being a reminder of the important part played by the womenfolk of an essentially man’s country”.⁶⁴ The *Buffalo Cookbook* of the Northern Territory CWA (1981) made use of the same categories, referring repeatedly to the “housewife” and the “host or hostess”, while also including recipes that

⁶³ *Cook Book / Quota Club of Caloundra*, (Caloundra, QL: Quota Club of Caloundra, 1970s), 7.

⁶⁴ Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book*, v.

demanded a degree of athleticism in the making, such as buffalo jerky, which needed to be hung on a fence to dry.⁶⁵

By the 1970s women were contributing to community cookbooks great flocks of recipes that took the hard work out of baking by utilising available technological solutions (of which more in the next chapter). The time-consuming puddings and cakes of yesteryear were replaced by speedy sweets like Lady Bradman's Cheese Tart, made of tinned condensed milk, Philadelphia cream cheese and lemon jelly whipped to a fluff and poured into a crumb crust.⁶⁶ Fluffy, creamy, flashy and fast were the order of the day. Biscuit recipes declined in significance as biscuits were increasingly bought from the supermarket (as for those crumb crusts). The *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book* proposed use of a very wide range of packaged convenience foods, such as (with respect to baking) pastry mix, ready-to-bake scones, and canned apple pie, though this was improved by bringing to a boil with a tablespoon of raw or brown sugar. "For pies, or tarts add a handful of sultanas, mix gently".⁶⁷ The shared imagining of community cookbooks was of a woman who could continue to fulfil the role of the wife, mother and giver of hospitality, while also making it in a man's world.

In summary, the "good woman" of Australian community cookbooks is good-natured, kind, a good wife and mother and a welcoming hostess. She is also community minded; mostly happy in the small sphere of family life and work, but prepared to put herself on the line for the community good. She has always been a fairly strong-minded character, prepared to step into big shoes and to do big jobs, though generally fairly self-effacing. In the first half of the twentieth century qualities of "daintiness" and "sweetness" were more important than later on, but she remained a "lady" until the dying days of the

⁶⁵ *Buffalo Cookbook*, (NT: CWA - Northern Territory, 1981), 42.

⁶⁶ *Food for Thought*, 75.

⁶⁷ Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book*, 89.

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twentieth century. (It is questionable whether such a term would find any great currency now.) As the century progressed she became less likely to ascribe to the idea of separate spheres and more likely to consider herself equally at home in both public and private circles. In general, though, she conforms at least in some degree to the “female” side of the dichotomies proposed at the beginning of the chapter – private, dainty, culture, amateur cook, workhorse. Over time “private” and “dainty” tended to recede in significance, but did not disappear. In certain times and places in Australia the “workhorse” part has loomed large. Underneath her feminine, perhaps dainty, exterior, our “good woman” is tough. The “good woman” of Australian community cookbooks is able to survive the rigours of the Kimberley region, cater to crowds of shearers and dry her buffalo jerky on a barbed wire fence without losing her womanliness.

This idealised composite image, far “too good to be true”, must be taken with a grain of salt. (I will consider further, in the next chapter, the role of technology in enabling Australian women to cover all the bases of home, work and community involvement, while still getting a Pear and Ginger Cream Tart on the table for dessert.) The totality of the picture can never reflect the reality of more than a handful of Australian superwomen, but its facets certainly speak to the aspiration of Australian women, their collective narrative of their lives, and their shared sense of gender and of the common good.

Men and community cookbooks

Community cookbooks do not refer solely to women’s lives, relationships and shared experiences. To gain a more complete picture of the gender world inscribed in these texts I wish to examine the extent to which community cookbooks involve men and images of the masculine. These are of interest as evidence of the terms on which men were “let in” to the community cookbook world by the women who undertook these

projects, and of the acceptable faces of masculinity in twentieth-century Australia. To discuss men's contributions to community cookbooks also throws some small amount of light on the problem highlighted by Alice Julier and Laura Lindenfield, the lack of academic understanding of how prevailing ideologies of men and food relate to actual practice.⁶⁸ Community cookbooks reflect the "male" categories outlined earlier in the chapter, namely public, rough, nature, professional and hobbyist. They particularly reveal men's association with food in the private sphere, away from the "institutional settings where men predominate", an under-researched and under-regarded perspective.⁶⁹

Men's contributed recipes

Men's names appear in community cookbooks not just in the context of women's contributed recipes. From the earliest manifestations of the community cookbook, men themselves also donated recipes. In the 1902 *Housewife's Companion* of the Maryborough Methodist Church, the Gentlemen's Column contained thirteen receipts, mostly physic but also including some puddings and pies, an egg drink for "any person weak or tired" and a recipe to treat a sick horse.⁷⁰ Through the early- to mid-century recipes from men appeared in several community cookbooks. Men's donated recipes nearly always represented a small minority, but there were always exceptions to the rule. The post-war years gave birth to the first community cookbooks compiled from recipes donated by (or solicited from) men alone. *My Favourite Dish* was published in Brisbane in the 1930s for the Union Jack Club, which was a residential charity for men from the armed services - sponsored by Queensland nurses. Containing recipes from

⁶⁸ Alice Julier and Laura Lindenfield, "Mapping Men onto the Menu: Masculinities and Food", *Food and Foodways* 13 (2005), 3.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁷⁰ *Housewife's Companion*, 57-58.

“Well Known Men”, it argued, “this book is a necessity in every home if housewives wish to make their ‘masters’ happy”.⁷¹ Clearly the focus on men’s recipes was a point of difference intended to give them the fundraising edge. Later came school and kindergarten cookbooks that focussed on “father’s favourites”, as well as one about the “fathers” of the Anglican priesthood. Intriguingly, all of the examples of this type that I have found emanate from Queensland.⁷² However this sort of community cookbook remained something of a gimmick, encoding men as, effectively, celebrities. The typical community cookbook throughout the twentieth century showed at most a handful of men’s names on the recipe donor list.

A disproportionate number of recipes contributed in the names of men come from celebrity sources. Since celebrity is so intimately bound up with the currency of a name, the mere fact of celebrity appears to result in a much increased use of personal names. In *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men* (1975), of some 133 recipes, 22 contained the contributor’s name in the title, or over 16 percent - a vastly greater proportion than is typical of the genre. In a typical community cookbook, the proportion would be two percent or less. Additionally, where celebrity compilations are concerned, there are legitimate questions of recipe provenance. In *Look Who’s Cooking*, published by the Claremont Hospital in 1969, the acknowledgements lauded the “well known personalities ... [who] spared time and thought to answer our appeal”, but in the same breath admitted that “in lots of cases, of course, it is the wife who supplied the recipe”.⁷³

⁷¹ *My Favourite Dish*, foreword.

⁷² *Fathers' Favourite Recipe. Too Many Cooks, or, the Taming of the Stew. Fathers' Delight: Recipes of the Wives of Anglican Priests in the Diocese of Brisbane*, (Brisbane: Diocese of Brisbane, Anglican Church, 1978).

⁷³ *Look Who's Cooking*, (Claremont, WA: Claremont Hospital Welfare committee, 1969), acknowledgments.

Even in cookbooks that did not feature men as celebrities, recipe names from men showed a comparatively high incidence of self-reference. The *Kookaburra Cookery Book* held a recipe for The Commander-In-Chief Cup, from His Excellency Admiral Sir Day Bosanquet,⁷⁴ and A Fisherman's Recipe for Garfish, contributed by a Mr Gunson.⁷⁵ (If the social pretensions of the *Kookaburra* were anything to go by, Mr Gunson was a recreational rather than a professional fisherman. His recipe directed to butterfly the fish and fry it on the bone side, to crisp the bones up.) *The National Catholic Rural Movement's Recipe Book* (1954) contained a smattering of recipes with masculine name elements, including Mac's Biscuits, Jim's Ice Cream and Mac's Ice Cream, though no recipes were connected with contributors' names.⁷⁶ My sample reveals only one instance, in the period to 1979, of a man contributing a recipe that named a woman. This was film magnate Michael Edgeley's recipe, contributed to *Favourite Dishes of Famous Men*, for Jeni's Chicken.⁷⁷ Use of relationship designators such as "wife" or "girlfriend" was nearly as scarce within recipes from men, though a contribution to *My Favourite Dish* made a pun involving reference to the significant other, suggesting:

To make a Peach Cordial
Give her a Champagne Supper.⁷⁸

Unlike recipes contributed by women, men's recipes appeared more likely to inscribe the self in individualist terms than as embedded in a relationship network. They were likely to call on different elements of cultural identity, reference to familial relationships being much rarer than in women's contributed recipes. Though the numbers of recipes

⁷⁴ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1911), 208. It was, in fairness, "Sent by Lady Bosanquet", and she could have given it the name.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁷⁶ Bridget Jackman, *The National Catholic Rural Movement's Recipe Book: 375 Tested Recipes* (Melbourne: National Catholic Rural Movement, 1954), 35, 50.

⁷⁷ Lum, *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men*, 89.

⁷⁸ 'My Favourite Dish', 17.

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are low and hence do not allow for any firm conclusions, they do provide enough information to suggest some directions.

“Masculine” flavour associations

Women frequently suggested that men liked cheese, spices, chocolate and coffee. In recipes donated by men the association of strong tastes with the idea of masculinity holds true. However, a different set of strong tastes appears to be in operation to those that women commonly assured one another were “popular with men”. Recipes contributed by men were more likely to revolve around meat and alcohol. (It will be noted that these correspond to the two major “tastes of luxury” discussed in Chapter Five.)

The recipes in *My Favourite Dish* leaned towards fish, garlic, red meat (especially steak) and alcohol. Alcohol appeared in a high proportion of the recipes in the book (over ten percent), linked semantically with men - or gods - in Churchill Cocktail, Tom and Jerry and Bacchus Cream.⁷⁹ In the *Barossa Cookery Book* cocktail recipes were supplied by Mr R Buring. Liedertafel Hot Punch took its name from a men’s choir of the German community (which may also have been the forum of its most enthusiastic consumption).⁸⁰ In the *Woodlands Silver Jubilee Cookery Book* (1948) were recipes from Harry Wallent for Claret Cup, Duke of Marlborough Sherry Cocktail, Vermouth Cocktail, Hock Cup, Glee Wine and Egg Nogg. Of Glee Wine Mr Wallent noted that it was “an excellent warming drink for Test Cricket parties, or the ‘morning after the night before’.”⁸¹ Sport and binge drinking, those two insidiously intertwined signifiers of Australian manhood, thus brought their reflected glory to bear on Glee Wine.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 19, 30.

⁸⁰ *Barossa Cookery Book*, 3rd ed. (1932), 148.

⁸¹ *Woodlands Silver Jubilee Cookery Book*, (Adelaide: Woodlands School, 1948), 43.

In *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men* (1975), alcoholic drinks accounted for nineteen recipes. Of the 98 food recipes, no fewer than 41 contained alcohol – nearly half. Similarly to *My Favourite Dish*, garlic and red meat also predominated. Twenty-four recipes required garlic. Thirty-nine recipes were for red meat dishes and a further two were for sauces to accompany steak. Red meat appeared in over forty percent of food recipes in the book. Some of these were spicy or piquant, such as Extra Hot Le-Ka-Ri Curry or Tiger Smile Stew, but others were plain, such as Irish Stew, Sausages and Mashed Potatoes and Roast Lamb with Mint Sauce. Those favourite “masculine” ingredients touted by women (cheese, chocolate, spices and coffee) were present only in small to moderate numbers. Cheese was reasonably well represented at nine recipes, but only one recipe called for chocolate, plus one for cocoa. Coffee rated no mentions at all. Spices apart from pepper were quite well represented, appearing in nineteen recipes, though herbs were more frequently encountered, featuring in twenty-eight.⁸² “Feminine” baked goods such as breads, biscuits and cakes accounted for a measly five recipes, and desserts for six. Dr JL Matheson (then vice-chancellor of Melbourne University) offered a dessert recipe for zabaglione to make up an anticipated imbalance, as he felt “that the majority of men [would] probably concentrate on savoury dishes”.⁸³ Fully half of the desserts and the cakes contained alcohol, a masculinising element.

Men were generally considered to like plain cooking. *College Cuisine* intoned,

O’ Lady Fair, pray heed my words;
 Though charming how you look,
 If you would keep your husband’s love,
 Become a good plain cook.⁸⁴

⁸² Generally chilli, paprika, curry or cayenne, but also mustard powder and occasionally the “sweet” spices such as nutmeg, cloves, saffron and mace.

⁸³ Lum, *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men*, 107.

⁸⁴ *College Cuisine*, unnumbered.

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The recipes men contributed to community cookbooks offer evidence that this view was fairly widely shared. When Alan Carkeek contributed recipes for Welsh and Irish stews to the *St Paul's Cookery Book* in the 1920s it was in line with the understanding that men had a legitimate connection to and interest in meat, and in good, plain food.⁸⁵ Les White's Fried Tripe Dish from the *Oodnadatta Cook Book* was another example.⁸⁶ Jim's Ice Cream, Mac's Ice Cream and Mac's Biscuits from *The National Catholic Rural Movement* were all plain, sweet creations.⁸⁷ Similarly in *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men* in the 1970s, several celebrities mentioned their love of plain old-fashioned cooking. Unlike Don Dunstan, whose recipe for Forcemeat was "from the sophisticated realms of terrines, pates and galantines", Tim Burstall did "not have an exploratory palate". Val Doonican had "simple tastes", his favourite being "sausages and mash", Rollo Roylance's "really favourite meal" was "roast sirloin of beef, baked potatoes and pumpkin, with green peas" and Michael Williamson preferred "plain food".⁸⁸

In the *Berrambool Recipe Book* some 20 recipes out of 1400 were contributed under men's names. Mr Donald Austin, a local grazier and therefore high in the social pecking order, gave recipes for Tomato Toast, Coffee Rolls, Scalloped Salmon, a Gin, Brandy or Whisky Cocktail and a Sherry Swizzle. These recipes were broadly in line with the "masculine" categories of recipe as thus far discerned, but with other male contributors to the *Berrambool* it was a different story. Mr Ferrier's recipe for Yeast was perhaps not too unusual in a masculine context, linking in with the themes of rural life and self-

⁸⁵ P de Boos, *St Paul's Cookery Book: Selected Recipes Vouched for by Euroa Ladies* (Euroa, VIC: Ladies of St Paul's Church of England, Euroa, 1920s), 17, 24.

⁸⁶ *The Oodnadatta Cook Book*, 16.

⁸⁷ Jackman, *The National Catholic Rural Movement's Recipe Book*, 35, 50.

⁸⁸ Lum, *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men*, 16, 42, 61, 76 and 83.

sufficiency (like Shed Yeast from “The Jew Boy” in *The Worker Cookery Book*),⁸⁹ but Mr McInnes and Mr W Smith each smashed through the stereotypes, contributing half a dozen or more recipes for dainty baked goods such as Wedding Cake, Pasha Buns, Macaroons and Bath Buns.⁹⁰ Mr McInnes’ recipes included one for mixing up “patent” or self-raising flour. Their recipes seem so much more connected with “feminine” daintiness than with “masculine” plain foods, even the plain sweetness of Mac’s Biscuits, that of the various possibilities (that they contributed their own recipes, that they contributed their favourite of their wives’ or housekeepers’ recipes, that women from their households chose and contributed their recipes, or that “Mr” represents a simple typographical error and McInnes and Smith should really be “Mrs”) I consider the first possibility the least likely and the second not far behind it. Or, of course, they could have been professional cooks or bakers; this information is regrettably unavailable. Whatever the truth, the recipes contributed by McInnes and Smith represent an interesting anomaly. They are not the only ones, either. In the Western Australian CWA’s *Cookery Book and Household Hints* (1936) Mr E Halliday of Muntadgin gave a recipe for Bacon Roly Poly, commenting “We have tried this in our home and it is a great favourite. It is a useful and economical dish when meat is scarce”.⁹¹ In this Mr Halliday did two things commonly understood as feminine – he personalised the dish, and he discussed the dish’s role in daily housekeeping, noting it for its frugality and sparing use of meat. Again, I am tempted to wonder, especially in a Country Women’s Association cookery book, virtually always a solely feminine province, whether “Mr” Halliday was not a simple typing error, but the question remains open. The other plausible possibility is that men’s recipes do not all allow

⁸⁹ Gilmore, *Worker Cookery Book*, 151.

⁹⁰ Moffatt, *Berrambool Recipe Book*, 103-4, 33.

⁹¹ Barnes, *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints*, 2nd ed. (1936), 81.

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themselves to be categorised as “masculine”, instead occupying a much broader and more varied position in community cookbooks than it at first glance appears.

A “masculine” recipe-writing style

Recipes contributed by men to community cookbooks sometimes adopted narrative strategies rarely encountered in recipes from women. Rather than the domestic science method of recipe writing, involving a list of carefully measured ingredients and a concise explanation of method, several men adopted a more colloquial tone, also different from the conversational style used by some women as discussed above. This was already evident in *The Housewife’s Companion* in 1902, in the Gentlemen’s Column recipe for an egg drink beneficial to “any person weak or tired, or who feels knocked up”.⁹² Though commonly discernable in humorous, slangy asides of this kind, the style also assumed a more extended form. This typically foregrounded the cook’s expertise or, as the case may be, his lack thereof. A Soldier’s Recipe from France – How to Make ‘Trench Porridge’, printed in the *Barossa Cookery Book*, used humour and also showcased the soldier’s specific expertise in trench cookery.

Take ½ lb. Anzac wafers, commonly known as whole meal biscuits or jaw breakers, powder up, and soak over night in about 1 pint of water – shellhole water if procurable. Care must be taken in the soaking stage, or the biscuits may get too soft (I don’t think!). Next day boil for about 20 minutes, then add a quarter lb raisins, and boil for another 20 minutes. Then add milk and sugar to taste. If prepared in this way a most nourishing and tasty dish will result.⁹³

In *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men* the men in question varied from enthusiastic gourmet chefs to self-confessed kitchen incompetents and their recipes reflected this range of achievement. Father Michael King, director of Catholic Radio and Television

⁹² *Housewife’s Companion*, 57.

⁹³ *Barossa Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1920s), 15.

in Melbourne, for example, said, “if it involves turning the oven on, I can’t do it”.⁹⁴ Twenty-six contributors to *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men* claimed a special interest in food and cooking as against five who had an avowed lack of interest, aptitude or expertise. Recipes written by men often took their tone from one of these polar opposite positions, luxuriating either in the fine detail of a connoisseur’s approach or in the amusing vernacular roughness of the rank amateur. In *Let’s Cook and Relax*, from the South Australian mental health community, contributions by men tended to the specialist end of the spectrum. The Superintendent’s Salad, from Dr Andrew Czechowicz, directed:

First pick your zucchini and slice finely. Add lettuce and a touch of cucumber. Pick chives and/or onions from garden and chop finely. Five leaves of basil and smidgen of mint. A touch of freshly picked thyme and a handful of dill picked from garden. Throw into salad. JUST before serving mix with special Czechowicz dressing. ... Equal parts of tarragon vinegar (prepared three weeks before), Spanish oil, 1 clove garlic crushed and an equal amount of salt. Shake and add to the salad. The effect is devastating.⁹⁵

A typical example from the “rank amateur” end of the spectrum was Teriaki Steak from *The CAS Cook Book* (1977) produced by the Canberra Hospital casualty department. The writer’s instructions included such throwaway lines as “Chop onions into small pieces and chuck in frying pan”, “the garlic is not compulsory but it is nice and gives you peace and quiet for the rest of that day or the next” and finished, “If you don’ like it, give it to the dog, he’ll love it”.⁹⁶ Disc jockey Lionel Yorke managed, in *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men*, to give a recipe aimed at non-cooks that combined the confident, didactic tone of the gourmet with the humorous colloquialisms of the kitchen incompetent. “Yorkesters” came with the following instruction:

⁹⁴ Lum, *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men*, 106.

⁹⁵ *Let's Cook and Relax*, (Adelaide: Stock Journal Publishers Pty Ltd, 1970s), 30.

⁹⁶ *The CAS Cook Book: Food for Thought / Prescribed and Compiled by Canberra Hospital Casualty Staff*, (Canberra: Canberra Hospital Casualty Staff, 1977), unnumbered.

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Drive, fly, swim, boat or walk to Merimbula and get a load of the local oysters. If your bird can open them, bewdy; if not, find an expert, this is not for beginners, mate.

Meanwhile, get someone to make the sauce while you crack a bottle of the best. Mix oil and vinegar, and add other ingredients. Do this in a jar preferably, so you can then shake it well.⁹⁷

Humour was often the key component of the “masculine” recipe writing style, along with the conversational tone. A recipe for Athol Brose from Des Ross in *Let's Cook and Relax*, while it did not draw on the theme of men's skill or lack thereof, did use humour as a distinguishing characteristic. An ancient drink “dearly beloved by Scottish Regiments and used by the Officers and Pipers of the South Australian Scottish Regt.”, Athol Brose was said to “improve piping and sharpen the officers' wits”. Mr Ross cautioned, “Be prepared to restrain Pipers and others wearing the kilt who partake of this beverage. It is more safely consumed whilst sitting down wearing a pair of trows!”⁹⁸

Men's recipes also sometimes focussed on elements of the outdoor life, including fishing, game hunting and bush cookery. There are parallels between this branch of the masculine recipe style and the rough and ready role of the bushman, although it is associated with the “gourmet” narrative as well. Humour, again, can play a key role. *My Favourite Dish* contained a recipe for Wild Duck that began, “Having shot the duck, remove all feathers, and make sure that the duck is quite clean and dry inside, then place in refrigerator for from 2 to 3 days before using” and ended with a “*Note*: The shooting of the duck is generally your greatest trouble.” Quail Loaf, a recipe for six to eight quail with a loaf of bread, commented dryly, “If a poor shot, half the number of quail and half a loaf will do”.⁹⁹ *Is Emu on the Menu?* (1965) began with a special section of seven

⁹⁷ Lum, *Favourite Recipes of Famous Men*, 40.

⁹⁸ *Let's Cook and Relax*, 47.

⁹⁹ *My Favourite Dish*, 12, 16.

“Early Recipes”. Four of the seven were donated by men, including Kangaroo Tail Stew, Wild Duck, Birdsville Track Damper and Burdekin Ducks.¹⁰⁰ Later in the book, Mr Treasure’s recipe for Cattle Musterers’ Tea (a collection of tinned foods boiled together with potatoes, bacon and macaroni) was an only slightly updated version of the same thing - campside convenience food.¹⁰¹

Neuhaus comments on cookbooks written for men that they “often seemed created to be read as much as novels as manuals of kitchen instruction”.¹⁰² Neuhaus particularly mentions their high incidence of commentary of men in the kitchen, earthy humor, cartoon illustrations, travel anecdotes and “hints on choosing a fine wine”. In Australian community cookbooks cartoons and travel anecdotes were not particularly evident but commentary, humour, appreciation of alcohol and extra hints were clearly apparent. As displayed in Private Offe’s recipe for Trench Porridge, these characteristics included a readiness to have a go, a conversational tone, larrikin humour (often involving a little dig at women), the assumption of either particular interest in cooking or a disavowal of any ability, and an enjoyment, either basic and uncomplicated or luxuriantly gourmet, of the food itself. Alcohol often played a conspicuous role, as did those other great indicators of masculinity, the products of hunting, shooting and fishing. The contributor of Teriaki Steak threw in, for good measure, a reference to man’s best friend who, if the food was less than perfect, would wolf it down regardless. Bachelorhood, the barbecue and the bush were other common leitmotifs.

¹⁰⁰ Crooke, et al, *Is Emu on the Menu?*, 5-6.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁰² Neuhaus, *Manly Meals and Mom's Home Cooking*, 73.

Merging spheres: Change in the air

Published during the 1960s, the *Hazaribagh Cookery Book* came from the Australian Jesuit Mission Office in aid of their mission in Hazaribagh, India.¹⁰³ As a muscular, relatively masculinist brotherhood, the Jesuits were not an obvious group to plump for this type of fundraising. The main contributors of recipes to the *Hazaribagh Cookery Book* were female and the brothers seem to have remained at arm's length from the project but nonetheless the appearance of such a community cookbook in these years is intriguing. It suggests not only the widespread change in social roles, but also the changing social role of the community cookbook itself. Its possibilities more and more apparent, it was beginning to burst its traditional gender limitations, becoming attractive to masculine-dominated community groups as well as its traditional champions, women's service groups.

From the 1960s men's role in community cookbooks began to be less restricted to "celebrity" status. There was a small group of community cookbooks prior to 1979 in which men assumed more of a well-integrated role. In 1962 *Recipes of the Orient* (previously discussed in Chapter Four) was published in Adelaide by Mr Azhar Illias Abbas, a local resident closely involved in what was then known as "the ethnic community". His book, which appeared the year prior to Sydney's *Festival of Asia Cookbook*, was among the first of the "ethnic" community cookbooks; it is intriguing that a man should play such a prominent role in the beginnings of this subtype of the genre.

Cook It Our Way: Entertaining Australians was published in 1974 for the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital King George V Appeals Committee. This book showcased the 1970s

¹⁰³ *Hazaribagh Cookery Book: Australian and International Dishes*, (Hawthorn, VIC: Jesuit Mission Office, 1950s).

take on entertaining and was particularly notable for the higher than usual degree of men's involvement. The book presented this as a modern phenomenon, contrasting it with more old-fashioned ways. While Lady Bonython reminisced about her early days of serving her "poor husband" maggoty meat and being ignored, along with all the other female guests, at functions for speedway men, Donald and Diana Wynne wrote about their relaxed approach to entertaining, sharing the shopping and cooking and taking turns to make the main dish.¹⁰⁴ *Cook It Our Way* contained recipes from many male contributors. The contributor list generally was fairly glitzy. Alongside women like Elizabeth Reeve (associate editor of *Vogue*) and Anne Deveson (writer and television personality) were men such as Ray Siede (interior designer) and Charles Blackman (artist). Men's recipes in this book, though still in a clear numerical minority, covered a wider range of recipe types and styles than usual, ranging from Porridge Biscuits through Unplanned Sunday Night Supper to Jazzman's Breakfast and Donald Brown's Canards Sauvages à L'Orange Aux Champignons.¹⁰⁵

In 1978 Queenscliff College, a military training college in country Victoria, released a cookbook entitled *College Cuisine*. Given the conservative origins of the country-based officer training college, it is a surprise to find that contributions of recipes by men to this volume were quite numerous among the collected recipes of "wives, staff and students" of the college. The producers of the cookbook were all female, from the editor Kerin Jacobs to the typists, proof readers, indexers and artists, but among the recipe contributors (and therefore, presumably, the cooks of the community) were men. Again, though their numbers were low compared to recipes from women, men's recipes were more common than usual and, as in *Cook it Our Way* four years earlier, covered a wider

¹⁰⁴ *Cook It Our Way*, unnumbered.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, unnumbered.

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range of recipe types than might hitherto have been expected. Though men's recipes in this book tended to show special focus on fish (Fish Cocktail, Lobster Soup, Bouillabaisse), they also extended to traditionally non-masculine items such as salad (Spinach Salad Tops) and healthy breakfasts (The McNaught Prophylactic Breakfast).¹⁰⁶ Recipes donated by men included Strawberries Romanoff, Meat Loaf, Peking Duck, Sour Cream Enchiladas and Turkey Stuffing, demonstrating a widening range of culinary and social acceptability for men.

All in all, men's contributions to community cookbooks were sporadic throughout most of the century, but they kept on turning up. Men at times, and particularly in the decades from 1920 to 1960, tended to occupy a celebrity role. This, in its stiff, exceptionalist formality, served to underline the idea that the normal state of affairs was for recipes to be women's business. But from the very beginning of Australian community cookbooks there were also examples of recipes contributed by men on a more low-key basis. This became more of a phenomenon as the century drew to a close. In the 1970s it was just beginning, but by the 1990s men's contributions to community cookbooks were less of a special event and more of a natural, everyday occurrence. In 1984 the title of a South Australian church cookbook, *Donga Dishes / Compiled by the Ladies (and Some Men) of the United Protestant Church, Woomera*,¹⁰⁷ made the trend obvious but by the turn of the twenty-first century, for example in *Republican Recipes* (1999), men's contributions increasingly amounted to something approaching equal numbers with women's and went without special mention.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ *College Cuisine*, 6, 22, 67-8, 45, 114, 21, 58, 66, 09 and 05.

¹⁰⁷ *Donga Dishes / Compiled by the Ladies (and Some Men) of the United Protestant Church, Woomera*, (Woomera, SA: The Church, 1984).

¹⁰⁸ Evans, 'Republican Delights'. See also *The Source: Recipes from the People of Mildura*.

Conclusions

In the first part of the twentieth century, community cookbooks were a forum in which women could, without being “unladylike”, discuss and depict their shared vision of gendered labour and female roles. Socially these books performed a dual function. They served to reassure the community of women’s commitment to their work at home and hearth, but they also allowed women the opportunity to push the boundaries of such roles and to participate in shaping the wider society. The resulting partly public, partly private dialectic of the community cookbook results in a forum seemingly tailor-made for problematisation of the gender debate. If the “reconstruction of gender relations within families” was one of the most tumultuous changes of the twentieth century, as proposed by Mackinnon,¹⁰⁹ then community cookbooks, by recording the practices and philosophical stances that were thrashed out on a daily basis by Australian families, became unique primary documents of that change.

In summary, it is clear that participation in community cookbooks has a range of gender inflections. Australian community cookbooks suggest that men’s recipes, like women’s, can function as gendered communications, making use of distinctive characteristics to project certain elements of gendered social behaviour. In the 1960s the rate of male involvement increased. Via ethnic community involvements, the cult of celebrity and other community activities, men became involved in community cookbooks in greater numbers and more central, meaningful ways. That community cookbooks depict such changes suggests their ability to reflect something of the “relationship between practices and beliefs”, which Julier and Lindenfield regard as essential to future study in the field of food and gender.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Mackinnon, *Love and Freedom*, 63.

¹¹⁰ Julier and Lindenfield, “Mapping Men onto the Menu”, 13.

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Men's recipe contributions to community cookbooks in the period to 1979 typically ran to spicy or piquant meat dishes, alcohol and other strongly flavoured foods, but also to plain meats, traditional dishes and plain sweet foods. Recipes donated by men commonly made reference to masculinity under the categories of high culture, high status and professionalism, which was closely allied to the idea of men as gourmets and accomplished chefs. There is evidence of a distinctive "masculine" narrative style, often featuring humour and either the supposition of great ignorance or great interest and/or expertise.

Men could be experts by virtue of occupation, experience or hobby, or they could be clueless in the kitchen, but rarely in the period to 1979 were they depicted as being at home with the everyday tasks of family feeding. This remained women's role, a fundamental continuity that belies the changes I have noted in men's contribution to Australian community cookbooks. Neuhaus argues that cookbooks, in constructing men's cooking as hobby and special-occasion cooking, reinforced women's position as those responsible for the three meals of every ordinary day. This also tended, she suggests, to skew the recipes associated with men towards the "high end" of the spectrum, or to those foods associated with special occasions.¹¹¹ This is broadly true of Australian men's contributions to community cookbooks; men offer recipes for steak, for barbecue, for classic favourites like Irish Stew or Ice Cream, but less frequently for those main-meal foods that feed the family three times a day and comparatively rarely for baked goods. It is even less common to find a recipe from a man for those icons of good housewifery, the sweet or piquant preserves. Though community cookbooks show men entering the kitchen more and more, it appears they did not assume the mantle of "everyday cook" in meaningful numbers, certainly not in the period to 1979. Perhaps

¹¹¹ Neuhaus, *Manly Meals and Mom's Home Cooking*, 75.

not even by the end of the century: according to sociologist Michael Bittman, women aged forty to forty-four in 1974 spent over twelve hours a week cooking. Their age and gender counterparts in 1992, despite only a meagre increase of between one and two hours in men's time spent in the kitchen, spent only eight hours cooking. Bittman comments, "On the whole, the process has been one of women 'doing it for themselves'."¹¹²

In 1976 South Australia's Premier Don Dunstan was scathing of Australians' fond self-image, commenting acerbically in his own cookbook on the way he saw the concept of separate spheres still influencing Australians and their approach to food and cooking.

Australians are still attached to their own myth that the typical Aussie is a sun-bronzed Chips Rafferty type, humping his swag, roughing it outdoors, sleeping beside a camp fire and swilling quantities of bitter billy tea on the track between country pubs. Since Australia is still a very sexist society I suspect that the Mums have happily fostered this nonsense, if only to steer the man of the house into doing the cooking occasionally. Cooking has been regarded for the most part as women's work. If a man is to do it, he likes it to be associated with his rugged outdoors ideal. Hence the barbecue. Dad can be encouraged to take charge of making a fire outdoors, be the leader in camping adventures, and happily sling some chops and snags [sausages] onto a piece of chicken wire suspended over coals of mallee root.¹¹³

Dunstan's evocation of the traditional Australian masculine stereotype is compelling, but the evidence from community cookbooks of the era is that, for women at least, there was a greater degree of change in the air than his words suggest. Not only were women changing their domestic practices, community cookbooks also quite clearly show them reevaluating their public roles.

¹¹² Michael Bittman, "Changes at the Heart of Family Households", *Family Matters* 40 (1996): 15.

¹¹³ Don Dunstan, *Don Dunstan's Cookbook* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1976), 36.

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Kirshenblatt-Gimblett finds that “changes in public culture and the roles of women” ultimately brought about “the demise of the great charity fairs”.¹¹⁴ It seems reasonable to wonder whether similar changes will act to diminish the production of new community cookbooks. As women’s workplace participation rates increase, and their activity in the kitchen decreases, one may ask whether the time and skills women once poured into such community-minded projects are simply disappearing. Even in the 1970s women were increasingly pulled in other directions. The editor of *Sunshine Coast Recipes* commented in 1979,

It’s 50 years since 15 women met in the White Rose Café, Currie Street, Nambour, to form a local branch of the Queensland Country Women’s Association. In that time the organisation ... has continued to grow despite hard times that rock[ed] the 1930s and 1940s and despite the ever-growing demands on modern women to take their places in the work force and in community organisations as well as on the home front.¹¹⁵

Nonetheless, community cookbooks are still being released. Though it is impossible to guess at the comparative numbers, community cookbooks are still very much a feature of Australian cultural life. Certainly their heartland is strong, and perhaps even experiencing a renaissance. The CWA continued for the last twenty years of the century to release streams of community cookbooks. Commemorative editions of such classics as the *Presbyterian Cookery Book* (centenary), the Victorian *PWMU Cookery Book* (centenary) and the *Green and Gold Cookery Book* (75th anniversary) attest to their ongoing appeal. New groups and new books also continue to appear in considerable numbers. A search of the National Library of Australia Dewey decimal number 641.5 during the years 2000-2009 shows that, amid the great wash of celebrity-chef tomes, community cookbooks continue to occupy a significant niche, comprising some 47 of 350 listed cookbooks, or over 13%. This ongoing production, despite women’s

¹¹⁴ Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “The Moral Sublime”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 151.

¹¹⁵ *Sunshine Coast Recipes*, (Nambour, QL: Queensland Country Women's Association, Nambour Branch, 1979), unnumbered.

diminished “free time” and limited kitchen activity compared to earlier decades, suggests that community cookbooks are an expression of community caring more than they were ever a way of soaking up spare time. Historians Patricia Crawford and Philippa Maddern find that in Australia, “women’s concepts of citizenship are not only about formal rights but have a great deal to do with informal grassroots participation.”¹¹⁶ Many women have integrated the grass-roots community involvement symbolised by community cookbooks into lives lived increasingly in public and in the workplace. It seems unlikely that the community cookbook will ever completely lose its special relationship to women and women’s community involvements, but it is clear that the exclusivity of that bond has reduced. On the evidence of more recent community cookbooks such as *The Sauce*, from the Mildura-Wentworth Arts Festival (2003) and *Republican Delights* (1999), while women are still the primary motivators of community cookbook projects in the twenty-first century, men’s involvement has increased substantially, a development that was already underway during the 1960s and 1970s but has gained a great deal more pace since then.

Community cookbooks have remained a strong social force throughout the change and upheaval to gender roles and relationships that occurred during the twentieth century and particularly in the post-war period. Indeed, it could be argued that they have remained strong partly *because* of that upheaval. As discussed earlier, community cookbooks are well designed to help communities deal with questions about traditional gender roles. They allow communities (primarily, though not exclusively, communities of women) to reflect on the gender-appropriateness of kitchen-related activity, and to make representations about it. While in theory the community cookbook could be mobilised to reflect a range of gender attitudes from the most conservative to the most

¹¹⁶ Crawford and Maddern, eds., *Women as Australian Citizens*, ix.

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radical, in practice this has not occurred. Second-wave feminists, eager to escape the traditional semantic link “woman – kitchen”, largely refrained during the 1970s and 1980s from activities (and scholarly pursuits) associated with the traditional “women’s sphere”. Hence, while community cookbooks from radical feminists are quite thin on the ground, those reflecting the practices and beliefs of middle Australia (which also include feminist attitudes, albeit generally of a centrist orientation) are legion.¹¹⁷

Community cookbooks mostly reflect the common, middle-of-the-road attitudes that have characterised Australian communities at any given time. and thus they reflect, primarily, the changes in middle-of-the-road attitudes to gender during the twentieth century.

The evidence here presented suggests that Australian women for most, if not all, of the twentieth century, generally cleaved to the idea that provision of food was part of a wife and mother’s nurturing role and an essential element of home hospitality. More recently they voiced in their community cookbooks both reservations about changes in gender socialisation and great enthusiasm for such changes. By way of reconciling these ambivalences many Australian women ascribed to the view that women should try to be, have and do it all, maintaining a high level of performance in the home, the workplace and the community.

If community cookbooks in Australia are to be believed, the “good woman”, and the “good food” she provided, made a shift during the twentieth century away from daintiness and delicacy. The culinary aspects of this change in the “gendering” of Australian society can clearly be seen in flux. However, throughout the century, the “good woman” was active, capable and socially involved. Australian women, even at

¹¹⁷ The commune cookbooks of the 1970s might have provided some insight into more radical viewpoints. I regret that, as I was unable to locate any, I could not include them in this project. For a discussion of commune cookbooks from the United States see Stephanie Hartman, “The Political Palate: Reading Commune Cookbooks”, *Gastronomica* 3, no. 2 (2003).

their daintiest, never had to make too many bones about this. Community cookbooks of the 1970s (and more so those subsequently and up to the present day) also embraced men's increasing role in nurturing family activities, and traced men's growing involvement in that part of the traditional "women's sphere" where culinary prowess can become an expression of citizenship and the basis for community action.

Section 3

Australian Cultural Life

Chapter 7

Ironing Out the Irony: Innovations in Domestic Technology

Chapter 8

Region and Locality: The Sense of Australian Place

Chapter 9

Nation-Building and the Civil Society

Chapter 10

Conclusion

Chapter 7

Ironing Out the Irony: Innovations in Domestic Technology

[Q]uestions of technology ... are crucial to any understanding of culture, to its physical techniques but also to its psychology, its modes of thinking.¹

Murphy and Potts, *Culture and Technology* (2003)

The advent of refrigeration (preceded, I recall, by an excitingly temperamental apparatus known as an 'Icy-Ball'), brought about many changes in the culinary pattern of the Kimberley district.²

Mary Durack, *Kimberley Division Historical Cook Book* (1979)

Community cookbooks and domestic technologies in Australia

Technology is close to the core of human society. As Bannerman notes, with reference to ancient cultures, "the development of technology for obtaining and preparing food is among the important markers of civilisation".³ Cook, one of the first to identify and discuss community cookbooks as a genre, was quick to note that one of the particular things these texts can do well is document the development of technologies.⁴

Furthermore, community cookbooks suggest patterns of uptake of available technologies, reflect the ways in which domestic technologies were employed, and the use made of the products of industry, in the form of value-added and convenience foods. A study of this genre offers some useful information on the history of domestic technologies in Australia. Even more so, a study of domestic technologies in Australian community cookbooks suggests a valuable set of insights into the nexus of women's

¹ Andrew Murphie and John Potts, *Culture and Technology* (Basingstoke and NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 6.

² Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book*, vi.

³ Bannerman, *Seed Cake and Honey Prawns*, 100.

⁴ Cook, *America's Charitable Cooks*, 7.

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work, the social valuation of their work, and the problematic ideology of separate spheres. In fact, the development and proliferation of these two things in Australia - domestic technologies and community cookbooks - show some interesting conceptual parallels.

The subject of domestic technology has generally been addressed from the standpoint of women's history, with an eye on the gendered nature of home life (the "private sphere") and its attendant labours. Through the twentieth century, as for all known ages before, home management and provisioning were overwhelmingly women's concerns, and hence any question of domestic technologies is first and foremost a question about women's labour.

In Chapter Six I discussed community cookbooks in the context of the ideology of "separate spheres" which marked social organisation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Cowan notes that "industrialization, at least in ... its earliest phases, had in fact created the material conditions under which the doctrine of separate spheres could take root and flourish".⁵ Though the language of separate spheres did undoubtedly play a major role in the social organisation of early- and mid-twentieth century Australian life, and though it was a real enough principle to the millions of people who lived by it or in spite of it, the idea of separate spheres has always been in question.⁶ In point of fact, Australian women often needed strategies for combining the spheres, to enable them to undertake community and/or professional work as well as home duties.

⁵ Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (NY: Basic Books, 1983), 66-67.

⁶ See, recently, Robert Beachy et al., eds., *Women, Business and Finance in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Rethinking Separate Spheres* (Oxford & NY: Berg, 2006). Amanda Vickery, "Golden Age to Separate Spheres?", in *The Feminist History Reader*, ed. Morgan. Also Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

This chapter will engage with the conceptual relationships between the community cookbook genre and the period of great proliferation of domestic technologies in twentieth-century Australia. The key concept around which these two subjects coalesce is women's participation in the life of the community. The tensions between time-consuming home duties and the desire to play a role in community life have been addressed from many angles, and there are some interesting parallels between the issue of domestic technologies in Australia and the social function of community cookbooks. I will discuss some key kitchen technologies in Australian community cookbooks through the twentieth century, as a way of reflecting on the extent to which certain domestic appliances marketed to Australian cooks enjoyed acceptance in home kitchens. The chapter will also discuss the use of industrially-produced food products. These entered Australian homes in what was first a stream but later something nearer to a torrent, during the course of the twentieth century, and made their own unmistakable mark on home cooking.

The issue of automotive technology and its impact on Australian food, though unquestionably important, as demonstrated by Goody,⁷ argued by Symons in *One Continuous Picnic*,⁸ and discussed by Ruth Schwartz Cowan,⁹ regrettably lies outside the scope of this chapter.

Domestic technology and the material conditions of household work

The word "technology", as noted by media theorists Andrew Murphie and John Potts, only arose in its modern meaning in the latter nineteenth century. "Use of the word 'technology' developed, along with other terms like 'Industrial Revolution', to describe

⁷ Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*, 154-74.

⁸ Symons, *One Continuous Picnic*, 206-08.

⁹ Cowan, *More Work for Mother*, 100.

the radical restructuring of Western societies as a result of industrial processes”.¹⁰ The social changes attendant upon industrialisation in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries included the cult of domesticity and the doctrine of separate spheres for men and women, as mentioned above. Two of the main issues with regard to the kitchen were the industrialisation of the food chain (outlined by Goody in *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*) and the industrialisation of the home itself. The material conditions of women’s work were profoundly affected.

First published in 1974, Kingston’s *My Wife, My Mother and Poor Mary Ann* pioneered the study of Australian women’s work from the 1860s to the 1930s, with particular reference to housework, childrearing and access to paid work. British and American studies of the 1980s such as Susan Strasser’s *Never Done* (1982), Caroline Davidson’s *A Woman’s Work is Never Done* (1982), Cowan’s *More Work for Mother* (1983) and Christina Hardyment’s *From Mangle to Microwave* (1988) noted, with a well-developed sense of irony, that technological innovations in the kitchen generally had the effect of increasing, rather than decreasing, the time spent by women on housework, at least during the period from 1850-1950. Priscilla Brewer, in her study of cookstove technologies, argues that even as early as the 1850s, “many Americans ... felt that stoves had created as much work as they had saved. These individuals were responding to an unanticipated effect of the ‘cult of domesticity’ and the partial mechanization of the household”.¹¹

Where did they go wrong? Hardyment views the focus on equipping each household with “mechanical servants” as an error, a lost opportunity to regear domestic provision around communal facilities. This would have freed more women more fully for other

¹⁰ Murphie and Potts, *Culture and Technology*, 3.

¹¹ Priscilla J Brewer, *From Fireplace to Cookstove: Technology and the Domestic Ideal in America* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 150.

occupations - as proposed early in the twentieth century by American author Charlotte Perkins Gilman.¹² The vision of community domestic facilities was shared by certain Australian reformists. According to historian Michael Bogle, Australian author Edward Bellamy's 1887 novel *Looking Backward: 2000-1887*, which proposed a similar domestic vision to that outlined by Gilman, struck a chord with others, including socialist activist William Lane (author of *The Workingman's Paradise*). However, the ideal failed to win sufficient support in the community; Bogle suggests that in part the socialist movement's avoidance of feminist issues may have been a factor.¹³ It remained little more than a utopian daydream, to be superseded in the twentieth century by the scientific vision of "mechanical servants" for every home.

However, the ability of mechanical assistance to ease the load has long been in question. The tendency of technological innovation to save drudgery whilst in fact increasing work itself, Brewer finds, had been noted by Henry Ward Beecher as early as 1869. Beecher's comment, in an article on "The Wear and Tear of Housekeeping", was that "mechanical improvements have rendered each specific art in housekeeping easier than formerly, but in doing so, they have introduced such multiplicity and variety, that *care* is augmented in proportion as labor is decreased".¹⁴ Beecher considered that, of all branches of housework, kitchen work (the "care of the table") was most increased compared to a hundred years previously.

Cowan says the error, from the exhausted housewife's perspective, was that the labour-saving devices of the nineteenth century "reorganized the work processes of housework

¹² Christina Hardyment, *From Mangle to Microwave: The Mechanization of Household Work* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), 179-85.

¹³ Michael Bogle, *The Domestic Revolution* (Sydney: Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, 1994), 5.

¹⁴ Henry Ward Beecher, "The Wear and Tear of Housekeeping", *The Household* 1869, 16-18. Quoted in Brewer, *From Fireplace to Cookstove*, 150.

in ways that did not save the labor of the average housewife”, instead saving the labour of the servants and/or family members who previously would have helped her.¹⁵ “As the nineteenth century wore on, in almost every aspect of household work, industrialization served to eliminate the work that men, children and servants had once been assigned to do, while at the same time leaving the work of housewives undiminished or even augmented”.¹⁶ Kingston, in Australia, sees this transfer of work to the housewife in terms of its class connotations, which in turn are mediated through the technology itself. She argues, “just as computers have made keyboard skills respectable for men who would never have dreamt of touching a typewriter, a gas stove transformed the kitchen for the young middle class housewife”.¹⁷ Whereas solid fuel stoves were hot, dirty and demanded high skill levels, gas was clean, easily mastered, and cooler. A further aspect of the irony was that, as pointed out by historian Ruth Barton among others, the time freed by new appliances was often eaten up again by “rising standards” and by new tasks associated with the new technologies, such as filling up the freezer.¹⁸

In the 1890s (at the same time as Australian community cookbooks were first appearing) the tensions between domestic duty and public agency were strong in the minds of Australia’s first-wave feminists. The kitchen was obviously a key locus in this dilemma. Its rational arrangement as a place of labour was crucial if women’s domestic load was to be reduced. Louisa Lawson published on this theme in *The Dawn* in 1892.

“Don’t let us forget that the kitchen is our workshop, and we do not show good sense when we put our tools out of our reach and cause ourselves extra work. ... [The

¹⁵ Cowan, *More Work for Mother*, 45.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 63-64.

¹⁷ Kingston, “When Did We Teach Our Girls to Cook?”, 97.

¹⁸ Ruth Barton, “Household Technology in Western Australia, 1900-1950”, *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* 7 (1985): 109.

kitchen] must be suited to the work where economy in labour as well as material is considered".¹⁹

Clearly, kitchens were a social and political issue, and the prospect of technological developments was positively awaited by many. In an earlier issue of *The Dawn* JC (James Champlin) Fernald had opined, "many labour-saving inventions are yet possible for the household. There will be a machine to wash dishes and a cooking stove to which no woman should bend the knee. They will come when domestic work shall be held in such high honour as to enlist the best mechanical genius of the age in its behalf".²⁰ (As to the technologies, history shows that Fernald was spot on. As to the high regard for domestic work, one can only hope that he did not hold his breath.)

The 'servant problem'

It is widely considered that, in Australia as in the USA and the UK, the development of kitchen technologies was spurred on by the growing difficulty, in the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, of securing domestic help. The explosion of domestic labour-saving technologies is commonly considered to have been a response, at least in part, to the "servant problem", the contraction of the domestic labour market which was already evident in the later nineteenth century but became increasingly acute over the first three decades of the twentieth century. Kingston articulates the received view as follows:

it is clear that the gradual introduction of labour-saving machinery and equipment, and the simplification of lifestyles which was made possible by better-equipped kitchens, and desirable by the cost of service and the problems attached to its management, did away with the old needs and expectations of service.²¹

¹⁹ Louisa Lawson, "Saving Steps", *The Dawn* 5, no. 5 (1892): 12.

²⁰ JC Fernald, "To Avoid Drudgery", *ibid.*, 3, no. 7 (1890): 5.

²¹ Beverley Kingston, *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1975), 55.

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This view of the primacy of technological developments has since been disputed, however. Higman proposes in *Domestic Service in Australia* that withdrawal from the domestic service labour market was “quite independent of new household technologies”,²² arguing instead that disparity of income between rich and poor was the main factor promoting rates of domestic service, along with the lack of other employment options for women. According to his analysis, households with servants took up new technologies at the same rate as servantless ones; the new gadgets were simply in the hands of the servants and not of their mistress.

Kingston quotes Maude Royden, a renowned British lay preacher who visited Australia in the 1920s:

Nothing has impressed me more than the way in which Australian women carry the double burden of home and public work. Women at Home have more help in the house; women in America more labour-saving apparatus; Australians have neither. Yet they are helping to shape the destinies of a continent.²³

In view of this, perhaps it was simply the case that, for those who could not obtain servants, “labour-saving apparatus”, when and where it became available, filled a need. Higman and Kingston both consider that the rise of egalitarianism accompanied the decline in domestic service,²⁴ the irony noted by Kingston being that this equality of condition between women of different classes had the principle effect of forcing more women into “the equivalent of fulltime domestic service”.²⁵ According to this analysis, class relations were the key factor in the whole issue.

Similarly to domestic technologies, community cookbooks as a social phenomenon in Australia are considered to be linked to the loss of the servant class, a point already

²² BW Higman, *Domestic Service in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 43.

²³ Maude Royden, *Herself*, 1:5, entry from 1st November 1928. Quoted in Kingston, *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann*, 20.

²⁴ Higman, *Domestic Service in Australia*, 276-77.

²⁵ Kingston, *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann*, 55.

noted in Chapter Five. Certainly, the world as viewed through the prism of twentieth-century community cookbooks was a world in which women increasingly did their own housework. Community cookbooks rarely made mention of “help”. Such mentions appear limited to hiring a girl to help with special occasion catering, an idea discussed in only the smallest handful of community cookbooks. There were even rarer references to men for help with farm work – for example, a contributor to *The Kookaburra Cookery Book* mentioned that in converting an old water tank for use as a smokehouse when curing a pig, one should cut “room for the man to enter to make the fire”.²⁶ In her preface to the 28th edition of the *Goulburn Cookery Book* in 1921 (itself not a community cookbook), Mrs Jean Rutledge stated, “I cannot but think that this collection of recipes will meet a want, especially among the women in the bush, who have often to teach inexperienced maids, and would be glad of accurate recipes”.²⁷ However, her words were fast outdated. Higman calculates, based on census statistics, that in 1921 something over 97,000 women in Australia were engaged in domestic service, but by 1947 there were only around 40,000. By 1976 there were fewer than 2,000 nationwide.²⁸

The 16th edition of the *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, published during the Second World War, contained a variation on a popular novelty recipe for Happy Day Pudding, containing children, a puppy, a shady lawn and “one nursemaid”. (The children were mixed with various toys, sprinkled with smiles and unselfishness, stirred til sundown, then covered lightly and left in a cool room until morning.)²⁹ Though the nursemaid was rather unkindly positioned “out of sight”, her unseen presence was a key element of the

²⁶ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1912), 90.

²⁷ Rutledge, *Goulburn Cookery Book*, preface.

²⁸ Higman, *Domestic Service in Australia*, 282.

²⁹ *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 16th ed. (1943), 81.

picture. This “recipe” illustrates the sense of nostalgia for such domestic help (which melted away with astonishing rapidity during the war), and its status as a pleasant reverie, for most, rather than a reality. Again, class issues were at stake. Servants retained a niche in upper-class houses for the longest; middle class homes lost them first. As a genre created and consumed predominantly by the middle class, many community cookbooks reflected this middle-class quandary.

This particular class issue also had keenly-felt gender implications. Kingston proposes that this transition for the middle class from having servants to managing their own houses increasingly impacted on middle-class women’s former ability to involve themselves in public affairs, finding that the “shortage of help at home simply made outside activity impossible”. More specifically, “the disappearance of domestic service may have meant a greater equality among women of all classes in Australia but it also meant that very few women were in a position any more to play active roles in the wider community”.³⁰ Community cookbooks helped to bridge this gap. They were one expedient way for women who were increasingly tied to their homes and domestic duties to continue to play some role in life outside the home.

Australian women’s relative lack of access to domestic technologies to ease their household burdens, especially in the era prior to World War One, may, in fact, have been one factor behind the explosion of popularity of the community cookbook genre at that time. As such, the development of the genre in Australia, if not also elsewhere, must be seen as allied to the forces underlying the market for domestic technologies. Community cookbooks and domestic technologies represent two differing expressions of a common set of socio-politico-econo-historical imperatives.

³⁰ Kingston, *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann*, 28.

The portrayal of domestic technologies in community cookbooks

Mintz, in *Sweetness and Power*, states that “the social history of the use of new foods in a western nation can contribute to an anthropology of modern life”.³¹ This is equally true of the use of new food technologies; innovation shows the process of cultural change.

Community cookbooks throw light on the development and use of domestic technology through two principle avenues. Firstly, through advertisements for products.

Advertisements are a useful source of information about both the technologies available for home kitchens and the industrially produced food products on the market. Secondly, community cookbooks communicate information about domestic technologies through recipes themselves, and via the home hints with which many books are liberally sprinkled. References to products and technologies in recipes and home hints reveal how domestic technologies can be taken at face value and used in their intended manner, but can also be used in creative ways to solve the everyday challenges of kitchen work.

Technology determines not only how we prepare food, but also the types of dishes we create. Recipes which presuppose the availability of a particular item of domestic technology are indicative of that item’s impact on cuisine itself. French historian Pascal Ory, among others, notes the relationship between culinary innovation and technical advance.³² For example, pavlova-type meringue cakes (appearing under the name “Meringue Cake or Fairy Pie”) first appeared in the *Coronation Cookery Book* in 1936. This type of confection could not reasonably enter community cookbooks until at least

³¹ Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, xxviii.

³² Pascal Ory, “Gastronomy”, in *Realms of Memory*, ed. Kritzman, *The Construction of the French Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 460.

some home cooks had the temperature-controlled ovens most suitable for baking it.³³ Furthermore, it could not become a truly popular home baking item until such ovens were in widespread use. The evidence from community cookbooks is surprising here; though there was a dribble of pavlova recipes (showing a distinct lack of standardisation) in community cookbooks through the 1940s and 1950s,³⁴ it was not until the 1960s that recipes began to assume a more consistent character and to appear with much greater frequency. Could there be reasons other than lack of appropriate ovens behind this apparent omission? Certainly it was not due to insufficient popularity of the dessert.

Similarly, effective icebox / refrigerator technology was an essential requisite for the jellies, iced desserts and cool salads which gained in popularity between the World Wars and even more so after World War Two. The *Coronation Cookery Book* (1936) declared salads “invaluable” during hot weather. In directing that all items used in salad making “must be cold, clean and [allowed] to stand in ice-cold water for an hour or two before using”, they emphasised the requirement for cooling, further underlined by their admonition that if its ingredients were “not crisp”, the salad would be indigestible.³⁵

This common refrain of the 1920s and 1930s, when modern refrigerators were all but

³³ It is possible with an old-fashioned range, but requires a certain amount of good luck as well as consummate skill. A previous recipe in the “Meringue” section of the *Coronation Cookery Book* alluded to this possibility, saying “Bake in a very slow oven til set. A good plan is to make meringue at night after the dinner is over, and allow to stay in the oven when fire is out, until morning, but do not forget to remove it before the fire is lighted in the early a.m.” Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1936), 210.

³⁴ *Cookery Book of Tested Recipes [Echuca]*, 27. Wald, *The Empire Cookery Book*, 79. Mrs AH Watkie, *The Housewives' Calendar of Puddings: A Pudding a Day for the Whole Year*, 2nd ed. (Adelaide: SACWA, ca 1948), 30th Dec. *Woodlands Silver Jubilee Cookery Book*. Jackman, *The National Catholic Rural Movement's Recipe Book*, 15. Many of these recipes contain vinegar but not cornflour – cornflour having been the refinement made (at least according to some versions of the story) by Bert Sachse of the Esplanade Hotel in Perth over the progenitor, a New Zealand meringue cake. Several are called Meringue Cake or Pavlova Cake and are baked in tins. Fairy Pie was another early name for a similar dish.

³⁵ Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1936), 170.

unknown in Australia, lapsed by the end of the 1950s, when refrigerator ownership had become widespread.

Home-based technologies

The making, marketing and consumption of kitchen gadgets flourished in the twentieth century. Most of these were fairly inessential, but some of them made a considerable difference to the ease and effectiveness of kitchen work. The appointment of the kitchen was a matter of the first importance to women responsible for kitchen labour. Mrs Rawson, in the *Antipodean Cookery Book and Kitchen Companion* (1895), gave a thoughtful outline of the kitchen (and laundry) tools she considered indispensable:

In the Bush, where servants come and go like angels' visits, the housewife finds the benefit of the many labour-saving machines now in existence. ... [A] lady ... can do the whole of her housework with very little exertion or fatigue to herself if she has the following machines: - 1. A washing-machine. 2. A wringer. 3. A mincing-machine. 4 A knife-cleaning machine. 5. Small kerosene stove. 6. Patent egg-beater. 7. Scrubbing-brush with long handle. 8. A brass box iron. 9. A mangle. 10. A good American stove. 11. A chain pot-cleaner.³⁶

The *Garden and Field*, a South Australian horticultural journal, issued a pamphlet of recipes (many, incidentally, contributed by readers) in 1905. Its editorial foreword focussed, as Mrs Rawson had, on the importance of good kitchen appointments.

The housewife should see that she is provided with the most labor-saving cooking apparatus. The best cooking stove is none too good for the cook who has to prepare the family meals. To some cooking is a pleasure, to others it is a drudgery. The pleasure may be intensified by a good stove and plenty of appliances; the drudgery may be reduced to a minimum. ... To the young lady about to be married we recommend the crusty bachelor's advice, so when the furnishings are being discussed make up the kitchen list first. You can as a rule get more before marriage than after, and don't miss the opportunity.³⁷

³⁶ Rawson, *Antipodean Cookery Book and Kitchen Companion*, 6. Rawson's "washing machine" was a hand-operated apparatus, very distant from what is understood under that term today.

³⁷ '*Garden and Field*' *Cooking Recipes and Home Hints*, (s.l.: s.n., 1905), foreword.

Both sources emphasised the importance of a decent-quality stove. Australian housewives were more likely to be able to rely on a good set of tools and “plenty of appliances” than on hired help. Labour-saving, therefore, was critical.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, according to Kingston, the discovery by middle class women of the unpleasantness of working conditions in the kitchen prompted a re-evaluation of domestic appointments. “As more women were forced more regularly into their own kitchens, they discovered how inconvenient and unpleasant these were. There was a consequent move to simplify domestic arrangements and introduce labour-saving equipment such as hot water on tap, gas stoves with thermostat controls, and, for the very wealthy, electrical gadgets – irons, toasters, vacuum cleaners, coffee percolators, and refrigerators at £100 each”.³⁸ Such luxuries would have been a pipe dream for middle-class households of the same era. What was the average kitchen at the start of the century, according to the community cookbooks? I will focus here on three categories: the stove, the refrigerator, and that broad category I will designate the “small appliances”.

1. Stoves

The most central item in any kitchen is the stove, the place where raw ingredients are transformed by heat into dishes for consumption. It is the oldest and the most meaning-laden item of domestic technology, both culinarily and socially. According to Kingston, “one might almost claim that ... it was the transition from an open fire to more easily controlled forms of heating which wrought the domestic revolution”.³⁹ By 1900 closed woodburning ranges were the norm, although open ranges were still to be found, particularly in rural and remote areas. Eileen Lanagan, in the 1979 *Kimberley Division*

³⁸ Kingston, *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann*, 22.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

Historical Cook Book, reminiscing about “The Good Old Days”, claimed that “the woman was in seventh heaven when she eventually had a wood-burning stove in the kitchen”.⁴⁰ In the early 1900s the cooking ranges advertised were solid-fuel burning and prized for sturdiness above all else. The 1904 *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts* contained advertisements for The New Housewife Stove, “specially suited for the heavy wear and tear of the Colonies”, as well as for the Up-To-Date™ Cooking Range – “The Best Range yet introduced for Wood, Coal or Coke”.⁴¹ Gas stoves were already being marketed, but were not yet in very widespread use. In addition to the main range, there was the tabletop Primus stove (gas- or kerosene-fuelled) as advocated by Mrs Rawson; these were also advertised in 1900s community cookbooks.⁴²

In the later 1900s, 1910s and 1920s advertisements reflected a wide proliferation of stoves, fuelled variously but especially by oil and gas.⁴³ An oil stove was advertised in the 1912 *Liberals Cookery Book*.⁴⁴ In the 1900s “Fred Metters’ new patent cooking stove” was a woodburning range; the advertisement in the *Book of Tested Recipes* (1900) boasted, “being provided with top fire box the wood can be used in longer lengths than any other stove and having a natty little ash pan to carry away”.⁴⁵ By the 1920s, when the second edition of the *Barossa Valley Cookery Book* was released, Metters’ “patent new *improved* stove” was still woodburning, but a range of exciting electrical appliances including “Toasters, Grillers, Kettles, Hot Plates, Ovenettes [and]

⁴⁰ Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book*, 218.

⁴¹ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 8th ed. (1904), unnumbered.

⁴² For example, *Book of Tested Recipes*, (Adelaide: s.n., 1900), 19. *WMU Cookery Book*, 7th ed. (1908), 18.

⁴³ For example, the first gas stove advertisement in my sample was in the *Guild Cookery Book* (1909), unnumbered. The advertisement emphasised its strength, durability, ease of cleaning and economy.

⁴⁴ Schlank, *Liberal's Cookery Book*, unnumbered.

⁴⁵ *Book of Tested Recipes*, (1900), 15.

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Water Heaters” was available at Atkins, Adelaide.⁴⁶ So one may assume that a woodburning range could be complemented with electrical appliances to take over some of its traditional functions, if desired. The nineteenth edition of the *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts* (ca 1927) contained an advertisement for Younger Woodburning stoves which made special mention of “country residents”,⁴⁷ indicating that this kind of technology was already being left somewhat behind. Country residents were more likely to be in the market for woodburning stoves as they were less likely to have ready supplies of alternative fuels.

Not until the 1940s does the evidence suggest that gas and electric stove technologies were really settling down as dominant modes. Wood stoves, even then, were still vital to many country homes. The *Green and Gold Cookery Book* of 1943 announced, “this edition contains detailed information regarding Electric, Gas and Wood Stove Cooking. Many recipes show the specific temperature to be used in cooking by Electricity and Gas”.⁴⁸ So wood, gas and electricity all remained important oven fuels. After the 1940s woodburning stoves ceased to be advertised in community cookbooks; electricity and gas were left to slug it out for supremacy. Both claimed to be more economical, convenient and effective. (The battle continues.) However, the evidence from recipes themselves is that well into the post-war era, rural cooks were still working with wood stoves. Methods for cooking Australian Goose, given in the *Calendar of Meat and Fish* produced by the South Australian CWA in the 1950s, included “roasting” on top of a wood stove, as well as baking in a hot oven or using a slow combustion cooker.⁴⁹ Mrs Macgowan’s Yeast Cake with Compressed Yeast, in *Cooking Country Style* (1965)

⁴⁶ *Barossa Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1920s), 58 and 72.

⁴⁷ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 19th ed. (1927), xlv.

⁴⁸ *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 16th ed. (1943), 172.

⁴⁹ Dolling, *Calendar of Meat and Fish Recipes*, unnumbered.

from the Kybybolite Red Cross, stated that a dough based on three pounds of flour was “sufficient for two oven slides of No 2 wood stove”.⁵⁰

By the 1970s stoves were, however, overwhelmingly gas or electric. The 1976 census indicated that electricity and gas remained co-dominant fuels, though electricity had gained the edge, being used by 2,431,662 households for cooking, as opposed to 1,193,717 for mains gas and 179,066 for bottled gas. Wood, by contrast, was used for cooking in only 206,260 households; coal / coke / briquettes stood at 14,096. Oil, including kerosene, was used by 24,533 households. (Solar, very much a nascent technology, was used by 253 households for cooking power.)⁵¹

As a side note, in the 1960s the barbecue started to rate a mention in community cookbooks. There was a move towards more relaxed outdoor eating and especially entertaining, which developed further in later decades, but was already in evidence at this point.⁵² The writers of the *Buffalo Cook Book* noted the consumer and technological aspects of this fashion: “much cooking in Australia is conducted away from the amenities of the modern kitchen ... be it a small fire on the beach or some monstrous product of modern technology crouching breathing flames in a suburban backyard”.⁵³ Barbecue has continued to expand in popularity and cultural importance in the intervening years, but has never showed any signs of ousting the kitchen stove altogether. Distinguished by its connotations of sociability and leisure, it necessarily exists in relationship with more workaday kitchen technologies.

⁵⁰ *Cooking Country Style: Recipes Collected and Recommended by Members of the Kybybolite Branch of SA Red Cross Society*, (SA: Kybybolite Red Cross, 1965), 35.

⁵¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, “Table 60: Occupied Private Dwelling by Main Source of Power”, in *1976 Census: Population and Dwellings: Summary Tables (2147.0)* (1976).

⁵² For example, Mrs CE Dolling, *Fingers and Forks: Tasty Recipes for Buffet and Barbeque* (Adelaide: SACWA, 1967).

⁵³ *Buffalo Cookbook*, 5.

2. Refrigerators

If stoves signify the basic values of “home”, “hearth” and “dinner” then refrigerators, certainly in an Australian context, signify “comfort”, “civilisation” and perhaps “relief”.

They represent the ability to transcend the most difficult extremes of summer weather, keep the food from spoiling and eat some of it at a refreshingly cool temperature.

Australia was one of the places where mechanical refrigeration was pioneered in the nineteenth century, notably by James Harrison of Geelong. Thomas Sutcliffe Mort and Eugene Nicolle also contributed greatly to the Australian expansion of refrigeration for the export and domestic meat industries. However, in the 1890s household refrigeration technology was still in its infancy. Zinc-lined icebox cupboards were the top-shelf option, but more common was a coolsafe (such as the famed Coolgardie safe, invented in the 1890s) based on evaporative cooling.

Small “freezers” along the lines of handcranked icecream makers, cooled with ice and salt, were available by the start of the twentieth century. The 1908 *Hobart Cookery Book* contained a recipe for a Strawberry Cream which appears to have relied on one of these – it directs the cook to sieve the strawberries, whip the cream, add white sugar “and freeze”.⁵⁴ Similarly, the *Worker Cookery Book* (1914) included recipes for Pineapple Cream and Ice Cream, the latter of which specified, “put into freezer and turn the handle til frozen”.⁵⁵ The 1917 *War Chest Cookery Book* outlined the method in more detail for novices:

To freeze puddings and ices it is necessary to have a freezer. A large and thick bag is needed (to hold the ice while breaking it) and a wooden mallet. The ice is put in the bag and laid on a stone floor or some solid cool place, and the ice is broken up finely. To three parts of ice, add one part of coarse salt. The dasher is then put in the can, which is

⁵⁴ *Hobart Cookery Book*, 53.

⁵⁵ Gilmore, *Worker Cookery Book* (1914), 106-07.

then covered and put in place and the ice and salt packed closely around. When the can is chilled pour in the ingredients and cover. Keep the can well covered with ice and salt, then place the bag on top and turn the handle for ten to fifteen minutes, slowly at first and faster as it begins to freeze. When frozen remove the dasher, cover with ice and salt, drain off water; then place the bag over all and let stand for an hour or more.⁵⁶

Intriguingly, the *War Chest*'s successor, the *Kindergarten Cookery Book* (1924) gave instructions for “How to Freeze Without a Machine”, using a billycan in a bucket of ice.⁵⁷ This method was also advocated in the 1930 *WMU Cookery Book*.⁵⁸ Clearly Australians were committed to the occasional summertime chilled treat, even in the absence of the domestic refrigerator or the hand-operated freezing machine.

I have found one advertisement for a “refrigerator” in the 1900s. Though it was marketed by this name, by design it was what would now be called an icebox. It appeared in the 1908 *WMU Cookery Book*. “Made from Selected Queensland Timbers and Lined with Strong Zinc”, the “Brezzo” was a beautiful piece of furniture; its makers, James Campbell & Sons, were major players in the timber business. They argued it was a necessity in the Queensland climate: “Hot Days, and plenty of them, are not far off. It is time you thought of a Refrigerator to protect your Food from the Summer Heat”.⁵⁹ Though the word “refrigerator” to refer to icebox technology has an honourable precedent in the Australian media, I found no further refrigerator advertisements, of any kind, from the 1910s or 1920s. *The Kookaburra Cookery Book* (1912) showed in its recipes for cold puddings that the expectation was fairly and squarely for an ice chest as the mode of chilling. “Put it on the ice”, “set on ice or freeze”, or “place in ice chest” were typical instructions, along with the vaguer “put in a

⁵⁶ *War Chest Cookery Book*, 102.

⁵⁷ *Kindergarten Cookery Book*, 82.

⁵⁸ *WMU Cookery Book*, (1930), 223.

⁵⁹ *WMU Cookery Book*, 7th ed. (1908), 61.

cool place”, “chill” and “serve cold”. A recipe for Burnt Cream, stating “stand on ice or in a very cool place as the top should be crisp and glassy”, put its requirements the most clearly.⁶⁰

In the 1930s the *Coronation Cookery Book* salad section gave many similar instructions to allow jellied creations to set, such as “chill before serving”, “put in ice chest until needed”, “serve very cold”, and so on.⁶¹ Clearly by this time some sort of cooling apparatus could be taken for granted even in country homes.

Mechanised refrigerators (as opposed to iceboxes or coolsafes) were virtually unheard-of in 1930. Electric refrigerators had been available in Australia from the 1920s but were prohibitively expensive for most, at ten times the average weekly wage (an ice chest cost only one week’s average wage).⁶² Persistent marketing, however, would soon pay dividends for the industry. Moffat-Virtue’s advertisement for their “continuously freezing” Electrolux refrigerators, published in the second-edition *Coronation Cookery Book*, trumpeted “Food Worries Banished! ... Icy cold drinks, crisp salads, and firm desserts can be enjoyed all through the summer. And, more important still, meat, butter and milk are kept perfectly fresh. Protect your family’s health with an ‘Electrolux’.”⁶³

Despite what its name implied, the Electrolux model here advertised was kerosene-fuelled, as were most 1930s refrigerator advertisements I have found. Not only was the unit substantially cheaper than an electric refrigerator; kerosene was also cheaper than electricity, and furthermore it was easier to supply to country areas.

The 1941 *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints* contained a whole section of “Cold Sweets and Frozen Desserts”, suggesting that even households without mechanised

⁶⁰ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1912), 125, 38, 36, 36, 39, 40 and 25.

⁶¹ Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1938), 170-75.

⁶² Eric Jones, *The Record of Global Economic Development* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2002), 179.

⁶³ Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1938), 122.

refrigerator units would go to the trouble to make such items. Refrigerators were still a rarity; in 1946 only 16% of Australian households had a fridge.⁶⁴ As late as 1953 the Western Australian *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints* book gave instructions for how to make one's own ice chest out of an old packing crate.⁶⁵ The Department of Post War Reconstruction commented in 1949 that the home refrigerator was still “regarded as a luxury item by a large section of the community”, though they considered it was “coming to be regarded as a near-necessity”.⁶⁶ Barton's research, drawing on oral history sources, suggests that despite their expense refrigerators were a high priority, becoming common in Western Australia by the late 1940s.⁶⁷

The advertisement for Laurel kerosene on the cover of the Echuca CWA's 1945 *Cookery Book of Tried Recipes* noted that kerosene, “A Necessity in Every Home!”, could be used for refrigeration as well as for cleaning, lighting, cooking, heating and “incubating” – a clear indication that the company had an eye on the country market.⁶⁸ Also in the 1940s, the Electrolux Gas Refrigerator emphasised affordability – “So easy to buy, and so nice to own”.⁶⁹ Electrolux advertised four models in the 1955 *PWMU Cookery Book* as being not only “lovely to look at” and “delightful to own” but also “World famous for efficiency, economy and service”.⁷⁰ (Virtually all refrigerators claimed, as did the makers of Hallstrom kerosene refrigerators in 1938, to be

⁶⁴ George Wilkenfeld and Peter Spearritt, *Electrifying Sydney: 100 Years of EnergyAustralia* (Sydney: EnergyAustralia, 2004). These figures were quoted from the *Australian Women's Weekly* (1963, vol 28).

⁶⁵ Agnes KB Barnes, *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints*, 14th ed. (1953), 352-53.

⁶⁶ Wilkenfeld and Spearritt, *Electrifying Sydney*. Quoted from Department of Postwar Reconstruction, Division of Redevelopment, *Brief Review of the Australian Domestic Refrigerator Industry*, Melbourne (1949), p7.

⁶⁷ Barton, “Household Technology in Western Australia, 1900-1950”, 123.

⁶⁸ *Cookery Book of Tested Recipes [Echuca]*, 2nd ed. (1945), unnumbered.

⁶⁹ *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 16th ed. (1943), unnumbered.

⁷⁰ Campbell, *PWMU Cookery Book*, 10th ed. (1955), inside front cover.

“Unsurpassed for Efficiency, Economy and Trouble-Free Service”.)⁷¹ All of the models mentioned here, in contrast to the one gas refrigerator of the 1940s, were electric or kerosene-fuelled.

Hard data on refrigerator ownership is curiously difficult to find. According to Chris Riedy, for appliances such as refrigerators and clothes washers, which were introduced early in the twentieth century, “the introduction ... is poorly documented”.⁷² Such statistics as are available, having mostly been compiled by private business interests, should be used cautiously. Fortunately, most sources are largely congruent, and point to the 1950s as the decade in which refrigerator ownership became nearly universal. In 1952, economist Eric Jones reports, 73% of metropolitan homes owned a refrigerator; by 1956 this shot to 93% of all households.⁷³ By the later 1950s more modern marketing was beginning to appear in community cookbooks. Reflecting the flourishing state of post-war consumerism, refrigerators were being marketed for their looks and their lifestyle dividends, not just for their function. The 1959 *Totally Permanently Incapacitated Soldier's Association Cookery Book* contained advertisements for two sleek modernist consumer fantasies, the “Sheer Look Frigidaire ... for better cooking” and the “distinctive ... slim and modern” Kelvinator, “For Better Living”.⁷⁴

By the end of the 1950s refrigerators had reached most houses in the nation; cooks just needed lots of products with which to fill them. Certainly by the late 1950s frozen foods were being aggressively marketed in community cookbooks. The Tasmanian CWA's *21st Birthday Cookery Book* (1958) contained numerous advertisements for frozen

⁷¹ Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1938), 38.

⁷² Stuart White et al., “End Use Analysis: Issues and Lessons”, *Water Science and Technology* 4, no. 3 (2004).

⁷³ Jones, *Record of Global Economic Development*, 180-81.

⁷⁴ The *TPI Cookery Book*, (Adelaide: The Totally and Permanently Incapacitated Soldiers' Association of Australia (South Australian Branch), 1959), 40,49.

vegetables and fruit, as well as for fridges themselves. In the early 1960s even Alice Springs, the hot, dry centre of the nation, was blessed with a “full range of frozen foods” at Egar’s Supermarket and Drugstore, as advertised in the Royal Flying Doctor Service *Cookery Book*.⁷⁵ It was in the 1960s that community cookbook recipes began to reflect the uptake of such offerings. For example, the Kybybolite Red Cross’s *Cooking Country Style* wanted frozen or tinned tuna for Chinese Tuna Almonds and *Recipes From the Stars* had a section of “Quick Frozen Foods”.⁷⁶ The 1961 *PWMU Cookery Book* recommended, for meals in a hurry, to “Make use of frozen foods, now readily available”,⁷⁷ and *Menus for Moderns* advised, for unexpected guests, “Left over stews and curries should be placed in plastic containers and covered well, then frozen until required”.⁷⁸ This was a brand of advice increasingly encountered in all sorts of community cookbooks. In 1963 the St Michael’s *Collegiate Recipe Book* advertised frozen chicken and peas, and had recipes calling for frozen peas, beans and raspberries. After that we were up and away – community cookbooks of the later 1960s and beyond showed liberal use of frozen foods. To fruits, vegetables and chickens were added new freezer staples such as pancakes, puff pastry, coconut cream, orange juice, fish fillets and prawns. That great conservative culinary barometer, the *Presbyterian Cookery Book*, in 1979 had whole sections on “Refrigerator Dishes” and “The Freezer”. In the freezer chapter was a how-to section, a discussion of the merits of quick-frozen food and a selection of recipes using packets of the same. Frozen fish and packets of mixed vegetables were particularly prominent choices.⁷⁹ By the late 1980s, according to the

⁷⁵ *Cookery Book / Compiled by Royal Flying Doctor's Service, Women's Auxiliary of the Air Branch*, 14.

⁷⁶ *Cooking Country Style*, 17.

⁷⁷ Jenkins et al., *PWMU Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1961), 67.

⁷⁸ *Menus for Moderns*, (Adelaide: Shipping Newspapers for the SACWA, ca 1960), 45.

⁷⁹ *The Presbyterian Cookery Book of Good and Tried Recipes / Compiled for the PWMU Standing Committee of the Presbyterian Women's Association*, (1979), 265-70.

Australian Standard of Living Study (1987), more households had a fridge (99.2%) than had an indoor toilet (92.9%); the refrigerator's conquest of Australian kitchens was unassailably complete.

Community cookbook sources, including the contemporary evidence from such texts as the *Coronation Cookery Book* and also retrospective comments such as the quote from the *Kimberley Cook Book* with which this chapter began, tend to corroborate the impression that household refrigeration - perhaps even more so than refinements in oven technology - made a profound difference to diet and comfort in Australian domestic life. The spread of the home refrigerator appears to have been possibly the most significant development in kitchen appliances in twentieth-century Australia.

3. Small appliances

Other tools used by the average Australian housewife of the turn of the century included a wide range of different pots and pans and other metal wares. Advertisements for ironmongers listed dozens of kinds of pots, knives, and various "patent" gadgets of greater or lesser utility. Bannerman is of the opinion that "except for the replacement of roasting and grilling by baking and broiling, the steadily increasing stream of new and improved gadgets generally benefited the quality of cooking".⁸⁰ The rotary eggbeater was regularly called for in the recipes of this era, sometimes by proprietary names such as the Dover,⁸¹ but the most commonly invoked appliance of the 1900s was without doubt the mincing machine - there is hardly a community cookbook before 1960 which does not mention it. In the pre-blender, pre-food-processor era, this sturdy machine, clamped to the kitchen table, was used for grinding up all manner of foods, not just meat but also leftovers, sandwich fillings, dried fruit for cakes, even fresh fruit for

⁸⁰ Bannerman, *A Friend in the Kitchen*, 216.

⁸¹ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1912), 125.

preserves. They were built to last, and represented one of the most important workaday appliances. Some maintenance could be required; in 1936 the ladies of the Western Australian CWA advised, “Blades of a mincing machine become blunt after a time, but if two or three small pieces of bath brick are ground through the machine it will sharpen them”.⁸² By this time, of course, mincing machines were starting to coexist with that great mid-century icon of Australian kitchens, the Sunbeam Mixmaster (advertised in community cookbooks since the 1930s and appearing by name in recipes from the early 1960s).

An overview of some of the main developments shows the difference between the fads and the stayers. The casserole was the great innovation of the 1910s and 1920s. More than one community cookbook devoted a special section to casserole methods, the casserole dish itself and also appropriate substitutes, for example the 16th-edition *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, which described casserole as “the French name for stewpan” but noted the casserole dish’s “many advantages over an ordinary stewpan”.⁸³ The *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts* had a special section on “paper bag cookery” in 1912, which, however, did not last many editions. Interestingly, it assumed the cook had a gas stove – “The great thing is to have oven well heated, and then lower gas to half. Put bags on top shelves, away from gas. Cover shelves with fine wire netting, to prevent bars from cutting through bags. All bags must be well greased”.⁸⁴ In the 1910s to the 1930s the *Kookaburra Cookery Book* and the *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts* both championed chafing dish cookery, but this method did not rate many mentions elsewhere until it enjoyed a renewed vogue as part

⁸² Barnes, *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints*, 2nd ed. (1936), 372.

⁸³ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 16th ed. (1920), 15.

⁸⁴ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 12th ed. (1912), 214.

of the French bistro fashion of the 1960s and 1970s.⁸⁵ Pyrex came in around 1930, first mentioned in a recipe for Apple Roll in *My Favourite Dish* (it had been advertised a few years earlier in the fourth-edition *Green and Gold*).⁸⁶ In the 1950s the pressure cooker made a big splash, but whereas the *PWMU Cookery Book* of 1948 had a whole feature section on pressure cooking, it had vanished by the 1961 edition, and there were few references to it in any community cookbooks after the mid-1960s.

The 1960s and 1970s marked an explosion of small appliances for the kitchen. This era really was the final proof that Australian cooks were prepared to be fulsome in their acceptance of new technologies. The electric frypan became very popular in this decade, being used for everything from Sukiyaki⁸⁷ to cooking up a stuffed shoulder of mutton, with or without potatoes, carrots and parsnips.⁸⁸ Blenders quickly became indispensable for pureeing soups and the fashionable pates and dips, but also for making such delights as Date Nut Loaf⁸⁹ and Mango Cheesecake.⁹⁰ Significantly, the wok made its first appearance during the 1960s, first in Asian-themed community cookbooks, but later also in mainstream texts.⁹¹

⁸⁵ In the 1960s and 1970s, for example, the *Hazaribagh Cookery Book* and Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book*, 165.

⁸⁶ *My Favourite Dish*, 6.

⁸⁷ *I Love to Eat Jewish*, 53.

⁸⁸ *Menus for Moderns*, 3,9.

⁸⁹ Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book*, 181.

⁹⁰ *WMU Cookery Book*, 21st ed. (1976), 113.

⁹¹ *CAA Cook Book*, (Adelaide: CAA, Glen Osmond Group, 1970s), 2,12. Abbas, *Recipes of the Orient*, throughout.

Factory-based technologies: Industrially preserved foods

Flandrin finds that “the rise of the food-processing industry is perhaps the most notable” effect of the Industrial Revolution on the history of food.⁹² The industrialisation of the food chain began early, picked up pace in the second part of the nineteenth century, and continued to develop at seemingly breakneck pace in the twentieth century (which, after all, is the century that gave us the TV dinner, the microwave pizza and the drive-through). This process has traced the rise of what we now call globalisation, a phenomenon which has had distinct formative and normative effects on Australian cuisine. Goody’s work on “industrial food” in *Cooking, Cuisine and Class* emphasises the importance of nascent methods of preserving, particularly canning and freezing, in the context of a nineteenth-century world politics of colonial domination. He also discusses the important role of branding, marking, advertising and packaging in securing the hegemony of the industrialised food supply chain, as well as the crucial aspects of mechanisation and transportation.⁹³ Changes in retailing involved, in the latter nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the creation of worldwide markets for industrial food products. This “led to a considerable degree of homogenisation and was dependent on the effective increase of demand from the ‘working class’, which now had no direct access to ...primary production”.⁹⁴

In Australia, discussion of domestic technologies has, in recent years, mostly taken place under the auspices of culinary history research. Most significantly, taking his cues from Goody, Symons argues in *One Continuous Picnic* that Australia since European settlement has suffered from an overly industrialised food culture, leading the

⁹² Jean-Louis Flandrin, “From Industrial Revolution to Industrial Food”, in *Food: A Culinary History*, ed. Flandrin and Montanari, 435.

⁹³ Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*, 154-74.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 170.

Australian people to accept what he dubs “the world’s worst cuisine”.⁹⁵ He identifies three waves of industrialisation – first the industrialisation of the farm (agricultural revolution), second the industrialisation of food handling, which allowed the “distribution revolution”, or the rise of the supermarket and the weekly car trip to stock up. The third wave was the “industrialisation of domestic culture”, or rise of takeaway and convenience foods. In a later paper he refined this analysis, characterising the major historic shift as involving “three cuisines” (of which “three levels of cookery book” are also a part). These represent “orderly steps in the industrialisation of our feeding”: first agriculture, then preservation and distribution, and finally cooking itself.⁹⁶

As dire (and broadly accurate) as Symons’ account is, the fact remains that Australians have been fairly enthusiastic about industrially prepared foodstuffs since the beginnings of white settlement (the early colonies being initially dependent on preserved, imported food supplies) and certainly since the nineteenth century. This has been associated with various cultural factors. I discussed in Chapter Five the luxury status of some tinned goods. Historian Adele Wessell connects it to Australia’s remoteness and wide distances; she contends that in the late nineteenth century, industrialisation of the food supply offered the promise of “overcoming the tyranny of distance white Australians felt”.⁹⁷ Kingston suggests that Australians’ ready uptake of convenience foods may have been related to the haphazard nature of cookery training in the nineteenth century – middle-class women learned by puzzling out Mrs Beeton, or from chance exposure to

⁹⁵ Symons, *One Continuous Picnic*, 298.

⁹⁶ Symons, “The Postmodern Plate: Why Cuisines Come in Threes”.

⁹⁷ Adele Wessell, “Between Alimentary Products and the Art of Cooking: The Industrialisation of Eating at the World Fairs - 1888/1893”, in *Consuming Culture in the Long Nineteenth Century: Narratives of Consumption, 1700-1900*, ed. Wagner and Hassan (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007), 108.

experienced and competent cooks. Servant girls learned, if at all, in an “informal apprenticeship in the kitchen of an experienced cook”.⁹⁸

All protestations from culinary perfectionists aside, the question begs itself when considering the use of convenience foods: why not? Custard powders offered a quick, easy and acceptable alternative when eggs and milk were unobtainable due to the location, the season or the exigencies of wartime. Tinned fruit had undeniable attractions when stewing one’s own made the kitchen swelteringly hot and attracted the ants. Furthermore, products such as commercially made tomato sauces remained stable in inclement weather longer than homemade products were apt to do, due to their inclusion of more preservatives and use of more reliable packaging. Even in the very earliest community cookbooks, liberal use was proposed of products such as tinned meat, tinned fish, tinned or bottled fruits, tomato sauce, packaged gelatine and proprietary sauces such as Worcestershire and Tabasco.⁹⁹

Goody’s point about class associations is apt. The more socially elite community cookbooks were more likely to stress the desirability of fresh produce, a point also already discussed in Chapter Five, where I mentioned the admonition in *Something Different for Dinner* “never [to] use tinned asparagus, fish, or mushrooms, when fresh are in season”.¹⁰⁰ This would have been useless advice to the majority; the country was still edging its way out of the Great Depression. A more apt set of instructions for many at this time would still have been how to make the ubiquitous rabbit taste more like chicken, a feat usually attempted with the aid of still-fashionable casserole technology (the rabbit being disguised with other ingredients in the dish).

⁹⁸ Kingston, “When Did We Teach Our Girls to Cook?”, 96.

⁹⁹ See, for example, Coldham, *A Voice from the Bush*. Also the *Book of Tested Recipes* (1900).

¹⁰⁰ *Something Different for Dinner*, preface.

Chapter 7 – Domestic Technology

The material conditions of Australian life in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – the difficulties of supply, the lack of domestic servants, the climatic extremes, perhaps also the egalitarian ideal – seem to have engendered a propensity to feel good about value-added food products. Why stink up the kitchen, dirty the dishes and get hot and sweaty over the stove if you didn't need to? Add to this Kingston's remarks on the inadequacy of domestic education, and it is easy to understand why such foodstuffs found a ready market in this country, all compromises on taste and quality notwithstanding. Later in the century, as Flandrin notes, the rise in women's paid employment and concomitant loss of time in the kitchen promoted "both the household-appliance and processed-food industries".¹⁰¹

Community cookbook recipes suggest that some of Australian cooks' favourite industrial food products by the 1970s were: packaged biscuits (often used as the basis for more elaborate sweets); packaged chicken-noodle soup, for a time (again, used as a base for other dishes); tinned fish, soups, fruit and vegetables; condensed and evaporated milks; and the great range of proprietary sauces, such as tomato, Worcestershire, soy, et al. One community cookbook which demonstrated some of the fullness of use of such products was the *CAS Cook Book*, from the busy workers of the Canberra Hospital Casualty department. Broccoli Soup was a packet of frozen broccoli with a packet of cream of onion soup; Superb Coffee Mousse was based on condensed milk and instant coffee powder.¹⁰² The book fairly reverberates with the clang of empty tins being thrown in the garbage, the rustle of discarded packages and the slam of the freezer door. The very frequent use of these products of industry as the basis of more elaborate dishes (tinned soups as a base for casseroles and mornays, packet biscuits for

¹⁰¹ Flandrin, "From Industrial Revolution to Industrial Food", in *Food: A Culinary History*, ed. Flandrin and Montanari, 436.

¹⁰² *The CAS Cook Book*, unnumbered.

crumb crusts or sweet slices, etc) suggests, though, that labour-saving was not always the principal intention. The urge to make light of kitchen work is often subordinate to the urge to ring the changes. It almost seems as though Australians have long harboured a morbid fear of culinary boredom.

Technology and the performance of gender

Joy Parr notes two chains of signification surrounding kitchen design, one focusing on gender and the other on civic welfare: “good kitchen / good wife / good cook / good meals / good home”, and “good kitchen / efficient production / nutritious fuel / productive citizens / strong nation”.¹⁰³ This thesis has already explored some byways of the nexus of technology and identity. In Chapter Four I discussed the role of industrial food products in allowing experimentation with “ethnic” flavours, and in Chapter Five I referred to tinned foods and their intriguing ability to straddle class categories. The performance of gender was, likewise, intertwined with the march of technology – both home-based and factory-based technologies. This link became strongly articulated in World War Two, due to the difficulties of housekeeping under rationing, pressures of work and patriotic activities. In the 1945 *Coronation Cookery Book* Margaret Wakehurst’s preface began

Dear Friends, since I wrote the second preface to this excellent volume, the problems of the housewife have become much more difficult, though still not nearly as great as those problems the housewives in Great Britain have to face. Food does need a lot of planning...¹⁰⁴

The advertisements in the *Coronation* expanded on this theme in a technological direction. Foster Clark’s Custard Powder, for example, “solve[d] the problem of

¹⁰³ Joy Parr, “Modern Kitchen, Good Home, Strong Nation”, *Technology and Culture* 43, no. 4, Kitchen Technologies (2002): 657.

¹⁰⁴ Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 4th ed. (1945), preface.

providing nourishing food for the family, despite shortages of eggs and fresh milk”.¹⁰⁵

Australian General Electric focussed the solutions on household appliances. “Little Susan” thought to herself, when she was all grown up she would be a fine lady, have electric servants do all her work and “always be happy”. GE responded, “Yes Susan, when this war is over, lots of people ... will be able to buy Hotpoint Electrical Servants to make their homes happier”.¹⁰⁶ Of course, as has been much noted, industry needed post-war markets, and the household was targeted for this purpose. The recipes in the 1945 *Coronation* were virtually unchanged from pre-war editions, but the advertisers were planning for a major change in kitchen outfitting. The performance of gender was re-gearred around a higher input of technology. Middle-class women, having lost their real-life servants, could remain “ladies” with the assistance of the “electrical servants” provided by industry. Within a few short decades it would include not just the middle classes, but virtually the whole of Australian society.

Bush cookery: an example of low-tech cooking culture

A consideration of bush cookery, the most “low-tech” form of food preparation represented in Australian community cookbooks, helps to throw light on its conceptual opposite.

Camp foods are typically associated with low-technology, fireside cooking methods. This is true of both the start and the end of the twentieth century, though cooks from the colonial era were likely to display greater assuredness in dealing with raw fuels. The recipe for damper found in *A Voice from the Bush* (1890s), contributed by “A Bush Cook”, gave simple directions for making the fire: “make a fire of small sticks, and

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 109.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 88.

when reduced to ashes put in the dough”.¹⁰⁷ This lack of technological aid, this reliance on raw nature over machinery, is central to the idea of a camping quickbread. Even in 1970 the *Presbyterian Cookery Book*’s recipe for damper, making minimal concession to more than eight intervening decades of technological innovation, instructed to cook the dough “in hot ashes or wrapped in greased foil in hot ashes or on barbecue hot plates”.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, *Spinifex Stew* (1979) contained recipes for two kinds of damper, both of which included clear instructions for cooking over the open fire.¹⁰⁹ This, then, represented a longstanding ideal.

Of course, once damper was removed from the bush there were other ways of making it. Compare the foregoing recipes with the Chatsbury Damper contributed by Mrs John Nilon of Goulburn to *Cook it Our Way* in 1974. Baked “in a moderately hot oven till brown”, it was not only modernised but also domesticated.¹¹⁰ Differences of ingredients and method between the “high-technology” and “low-technology” versions of damper demonstrated the conceptual and practical gulf between the two types. Damper from “A Bush Cook” consisted of flour, soda, cream of tartar, salt and water - all staples that would keep well in bush camp conditions. The *Presbyterian Cookery Book* damper was the same – nothing but self-raising flour (no need to add your own raising agents any more), salt and water. Chatsbury Damper, with self-raising flour, margarine, milk, egg and salt (plus optional fruit, or dates and lemon peel), was a very different beast indeed, tethered to the confines of the kitchen and to refrigeration for the perishables.

The (somewhat) unifying element of these recipes lies in the simplicity of mixing the batter. “A Bush Cook” directed merely to “mix quickly and slack, and do not work too

¹⁰⁷ Coldham, *A Voice from the Bush*, 18.

¹⁰⁸ *Presbyterian Cookery Book of Good and Tried Recipes*, (1970), 173.

¹⁰⁹ *Spinifex Stew*, 43-44.

¹¹⁰ *Cook It Our Way*, nr 274.

much”. He or she would have used the camp oven to mix the dough in, or if that were otherwise employed could have done it on a piece of clean canvas, oilskin or even a sheet of bark as suggested in the *Kookaburra*.¹¹¹ The *Presbyterian’s* damper recipe advised to mix the salt and water together before “mix[ing] quickly with a knife into the flour”. Chatsbury Damper employed a basic melt-and-mix method. While certainly fussier than the other two examples, and more reliant on pots, bowls, spoons and trays for baking, it was still a simple quickbread as opposed to a yeasted bread that required kneading and proving. Bush cookery’s defining characteristic is necessarily a certain simplicity in the despatch, and it seems that recipes for damper retain echoes of this even when transferred to the high-tech environs of the domestic kitchen.

The simplicity of damper suggests a potential snarl in the technological debate. If this kind of ultra low-technology cookery is loved for its qualities of no-fuss simplicity, where is the gain in a kitchen stacked to the gills with appliances that only create more work? One may pose the question: whose damper was more trouble? The bush cook needed a fire anyway; the damper itself was merely a matter of mixing the ingredients and raking the ashes flat. Mrs Nilon had to wash up at least a saucepan, a mixing bowl, a wooden spoon and a baking tray – not to mention a sticky knife, a cutting board and a grater or zester if the fruit were included. The tension between domestic technology as labour-saver and domestic technology as labour-creator has been remarked for many decades, as noted above, and the subject of bush cookery is particularly prone to highlight it.

At the end of the day, though, Australian women of the nineteenth century were keen to leave open-air and open-hearth cookery behind because of the dirtiness, the heavy work and the culinary restrictiveness (it takes a very clever fire-wrangler to bake good cakes

¹¹¹ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1911), 208.

in a camp oven over an open hearth). Kitchens with running water, remotely powered cooktops and ovens, cool storage for food and a range of appliances and implements are a part of the compact of modern Western life. They allow a more diverse and more heavily acculturated cuisine, consistent with modern Western notions of nutrition and good living. Cooks can produce a broader range of dishes and have cleaner clothes, hands and environs at the end of it.

The enduring symbolic value of bush cookery in Australian life and culture is associated with ambivalent feelings about modernity. Although Australia on the whole has embraced the technologies of modern life, Australian culture also is defined by an elemental (and nostalgic) love of the campfire. There is an important temporal element here, which serves to elucidate some of the factors informing the Australian response to domestic technology. Most kitchen technologies have been introduced and accepted by users in the name of saving time, effort, mess, money or a combination of the four. But the most evocative of these is time. Bogle reflects that in bush cookery,

Time is not an issue. The ambience of a campfire is one of leisure and the meal is a reward for the day's labour. The preparation of the food ... is no more than a formality. There is an implicit ease in having 'no fixed address', eating stretched out on the ground without any regard to clocks or 'Town Time'. Enclose this bucolic setting, however, within four walls, and the revolution begins.¹¹²

Damper remains a deeply symbolic dish, representing the legend of the Outback, and the ease and freeness of the simple life. These cultural values were even evident in Mrs Nilon's "domesticated" damper of 1974. Bush cookery can be construed oppositionally to the twentieth-century growth in domestic technologies and the creation of the domestic kitchen as a place where culinary miracles could be wrought in mere minutes. In this sense the technological discourses of Australian community cookbooks,

¹¹² Bogle, *The Domestic Revolution*, 1.

enthusiastic though they often are, are marked by a recurring undercurrent of ambivalence.

Tension of “high” and “low” technology

The *Buffalo Cook Book* was an interesting representation of rural needs. It made a great virtue out of using different gadgets and appliances to ring the changes on buffalo meat.

As well as the wok, it also referred to the hibachi (Japanese table top grill), barbecue, pressure cooker, crockpot, fondue pot, sausage-making equipment, jaffle iron, pasta machine, deep fryer and electric blender. However, the book aptly illustrates the contrast I have described between the “high” and the “low” of available technologies.

On the one hand, the books’ creators effectively showcased a range of up-to-the-minute consumer items (mass-marketed to enable the population at large to ring the changes on lamb chops – or in this case buffalo - whilst simultaneously propping up the economy).

On the other, they validated the impulse, borne out of the traditional scarcity of modern conveniences in isolated regions, to use even the most basic tools creatively. The

Northern Territory CWA women recommended a barbed wire fence for the drying of buffalo jerky, commenting, “Never before, to our knowledge, has a barbed wire fence appeared as a culinary tool”.¹¹³ However, viewed in the broad scheme they were merely

the latest in a long and illustrious line of Australians using available tools with

ingenuity to cure their meat products. Some seven decades earlier, the contributor to the

Kookaburra Cookery Book of a recipe for curing a pig had commented, “We have had great success in our smoking since we utilised a high round water tank, which was worn out, as a smoking place ... hanging all the bacon, hams, etc from hooks at the top”.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ *Buffalo Cookbook*, 42.

¹¹⁴ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1912), 90.

The tension between the high and the low in domestic technologies seems to have come out more clearly with each passing decade. As Barton notes, this was partly due to practical factors: as much as householders in remote areas may have been keen to use new labour-saving devices, uptake was constrained by limits to the gas and electricity supply grids.¹¹⁵ However, it cannot be ascribed to this effect alone; by all appearances, it was cultural as well. In the 1980s came the rise of the microwave, but there was also a counterwave of interest in indigenous and heritage cooking technologies. One example was the *Torres Strait Cookbook*, released in 1987 by the Torres Strait Island High School, which celebrated traditional indigenous foodways. Western ovens and stovetops were routinely called for in this book, it is true, but alongside them were rocks, hessian bags, firewood, sand – earth oven technology, thousands of years old, but still used, at least for special occasions, by the islanders to cook foods wrapped in banana or coconut leaves (or alfoil).¹¹⁶

Many of the appliances “demonstrated” in the *Buffalo Cook Book* are entirely mainstream now. It is a rare kitchen which does not have a wok, for example. Australians now take a great variety of appliances for granted, and our kitchens are more versatile, and more cluttered, as a result. However, along with our embrace of this incredible domestic technological plenitude, it appears from the community cookbooks that we also feel a certain nostalgia – or perhaps some tentativeness or disquietude. It is particularly in relation to the avalanche of small appliances that this ambivalence seems most justified. Michal Bosworth, in her study of domestic technology in Australian life, puts a voice to some of the questions that may underlie the problem:

Just because the modern house is connected to... electricity and gas, should we then judge that the ‘quality of life’ (whatever that means) has been improved? ... How has

¹¹⁵ Barton, “Household Technology in Western Australia, 1900-1950”, 108.

¹¹⁶ *Torres Strait Cookbook*, 3-9.

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domestic technology changed the lives of those who use it, particularly women and children? Who makes [and profits from] the appliances we use ... Are they really necessary?¹¹⁷

Perhaps it is this sense of uncertainty about the excesses of the domestic technology sector in late capitalist society that has caused Australians to look back to the old ways, and attempt to revalidate older traditions.

Conclusions

Two main conclusions are suggested by this study of domestic technologies in community cookbooks. Firstly, community cookbooks reflect some otherwise obscure aspects of the public / private divide and the negotiation of women's work in the twentieth century. Secondly, they suggest an ongoing ambivalence towards the "technological revolution" in the kitchen, despite a basically enthusiastic embrace of technological means and methods. Perhaps it is partly a response to this tension that has encouraged Australian housekeepers' long history of creatively using non-kitchen implements to augment their culinary armoury.

Kitchens are a powerful symbol of the private sphere and the work which sustains it, but also a symbol of suppression of women, of all classes bar the very highest, through menial tasks. The public discussion of domestic technologies around the turn of the twentieth century, such as by Louisa Lawson in *The Dawn*, was not only geared towards social reform, therefore, but also political reform. Feminist historian Heather Radi considers that through *The Dawn* "Lawson created the public knowledge of women's affairs which helped to move opinion towards enfranchising women".¹¹⁸ As a pathway for women's participation in public life, and one sanctioned from early on due to its

¹¹⁷ Michal Bosworth, *Australian Lives: A History of Clothing, Food and Domestic Technology* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1988), 145.

¹¹⁸ Heather Radi, "Lawson, Louisa (1848-1920)", in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1986), 24.

very association with the private, domestic sphere of home life, community cookbooks share with the domestic technology debate a set of common concerns with women's work and women's ability to participate in life beyond the home, as well as the very large issue of industrialisation of more and more sectors of capitalist society. In fact, it appears that the great popularity of this genre in the early twentieth century could have been directly related to the high levels of domestic burden which impinged on women's ability to contribute to public life, inasmuch as the community cookbook was, for women who were tied to their kitchens and houses, an ingenious way to turn a liability into an asset.

The history of domestic technologies embedded in community cookbooks reflects the consequences of these powerful public debates in Australian homes and in Australian women's lives. Australian women did move on, eventually, from the regrettable condition noted by Maude Royden in 1928 of having little help, either human or mechanical. In the post-War era mechanisation saturated seemingly every kitchen in the land. Community cookbooks show Australian women, on the whole, electing to utilise those products marketed to them as labour-savers. Some products lasted the distance while others didn't, but many have had the opportunity to prove their worth in Australian kitchens.

This general receptiveness towards domestic technological products, however, is counterbalanced by the theme of recurrent ambivalence, explored through the device of "bush cookery", an increasingly anachronistic but deeply loved element of Australian culinary lore. The attractions of the open fire, the roasted meat or fish and the (usually) sooty, even charred damper represent a symbolic return to an earlier stage of industrialisation and a simpler, if harder, way of life. Do domestic technologies, with the large houses required to keep them, the cleaning, the fussing and (hopefully) the

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concomitant greater variety in cuisine, have some resonance of a “pact with the devil”?

However this may be, the evidence considered suggests that Australians, while fundamentally welcoming of convenience, especially the industrialisation of the food supply, were not completely culturally at ease with the high-technology milieu that penetrated the furthest recesses of their kitchen cabinets during the course of the twentieth century.

The ironies of domestic technological development increasing workload for women, highlighted by scholars since the 1970s, seem, based on the evidence of these texts, to have been addressed in Australian homes through a combination strategy. Women enthusiastically trialled various kitchen technologies in their search for an easing of the load, but were also open to technologies that removed the work from home kitchens, such as value-added and convenience foods. (Not to mention take-away foods, which perhaps most closely resemble the communal kitchens imagined by late nineteenth and early twentieth century reformers.) Furthermore, community cookbooks show that Australian women have often elected to take a creative approach to technologies of food preparation, using available materials in innovative ways or even constructing their own where required. A certain inventiveness, and taking the “broad view” of domestic food preparation technologies to include barbed wire fences, old rainwater tanks and disused packing crates, was a quietly consistent theme from the beginning to the end of the century.

Chapter 8

Region and Locality: The Sense of Australian Place

I love a sunburnt country, a land of sweeping plains,
of rugged mountain ranges, of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons, I love her jewel sea,
Her beauty and her terror – the wide brown land for me.¹

Dorothea Mackellar (1911)

‘Buderim Bouquet’ will give you the flavour of this area.²

Buderim Bouquet (1975)

Community cookbooks and regionality

Asked to define the most enduring characteristics of the community cookbook, Bower proposes that “something about a local situation is featured”.³ Many community cookbooks are strongly rooted in specific localities. As such, the body of community cookbooks can have something very particular to contribute to the tracing of local and regional cultures and foodways; there is a natural match between this genre and this subject area. Heuzenroeder proposes that a regional cookbook ought to contain “recipes ... contributed by the local community and draw on the produce and culture of the region in order to present the region’s cooking to the rest of the world”.⁴ Community cookbooks, then, clearly have outstanding potential to form publications of regional cookery and foodways. This is a fact well understood in the United States, which has a

¹ Dorothea Mackellar, *The Closed Door and Other Verses* (Melbourne: Australasian Authors' Agency, 1911).

² *Buderim Bouquet: A Collection of Tested Recipes and Historical Reminiscences*, 2nd reprint ed. (Buderim, QL: Historical Book Project Committee, 1978), unnumbered.

³ “*Remembering the Big Picture: A Conversation with Anne Bower*” (Fall 2003) [Internet] (WimmerDish, 2003 [cited 7 September 2009]); available from www.wimmer.com/about/bower_article.pdf.

⁴ Heuzenroeder, “A Region, Its Recipes and Their Meaning”, 46.2.

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long-established network of regional cuisines; it was noted already by Cook in her 1971 bibliography of the genre.⁵ Shortridge, reviewing Richard Pillsbury's *No Foreign Food* (1998), comments that "perhaps Pillsbury should have looked to regional cookbooks, especially those fund-raising publications compiled by church and service organisations, to put geography into his discussion".⁶ As Shortridge suggests, I would like in this chapter to throw some geography into the mix, by interrogating the utility of community cookbooks in illuminating elements of regionalism in twentieth-century Australian food and life.

In Australia, the question of culinary regionalism has been the subject of much derision and handwringing; many commentators express outright disbelief in the concept of food regionalism in this country. I dispute this analysis, and consider that such opinions tend to be based on unrealistic expectations that fully-fledged regional cuisines should have sprung up, relatively speaking, overnight. Having destroyed much of the memory and practice of traditional Aboriginal foodways, modern Australians are developing a new understanding of how locality informs food culture. I see this as very much a work in progress. I therefore want to emphasise that this chapter is concerned with the building blocks of food regionality, not with regional cuisines *per se*. Although I offer evidence and speculate as to the possible existence of two definable regional cuisines over and above that of the Barossa Valley (currently the only recognised regional cuisine in Australia), this chapter is fundamentally concerned with understanding the process, so crucial to ongoing Australian cultural evolution, of linking together land, locality, culture and nourishment.

⁵ Cook, *America's Charitable Cooks*, 7.

⁶ Barbara G Shortridge, review of Richard Pillsbury, *No Foreign Food: The American Diet in Time and Place*, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 89, no. 1 (1999): 177.

In this chapter I propose that elements, at least, of regional foodways have been present in Australia for some time, predating the development of a widespread tourist industry and the cultural role of food “experts”. Furthermore, I contend that such elements can be discerned by reference to the most regionally distinctive of all Australian cookbooks – the community cookbooks of different localities and regions.

Defining regional cookery

Firstly, what is regional cookery? Mintz, along with Alan Saunders, agrees with Revel (1982) that “for any serious purpose” the only real cuisines are regional cuisines.⁷ This is “because of the enduring distinctiveness of local ingredients”.⁸ Cuisines, according to Mintz’ analysis,

are never the foods of a country, but the foods of a *place*. The place might be quite large – Emilia Romagna, or Bearn, or Bavaria – but it is a geographically definable place with some sort of borders. Its size will be determined partly by social and not geographical considerations. The foods that compose its cuisine come from that place. Such foods are notably *regional*.

Furthermore, Mintz argues that “a cuisine requires a population that eats that cuisine with sufficient frequency to consider themselves experts on it. ... In short, a genuine cuisine has common social roots; it is the food of a community – albeit often a very large community”.⁹ His analysis rests on the assumption that the region is a natural unit, having physically and culturally distinctive boundaries, whereas the nation is manifestly a geo-political construct.

⁷ Alan Saunders, “Why Do We Want an Australian Cuisine?”, *Australian Cultural History* 15 (1996): 11. Jean-Francois Revel, *Culture and Cuisine: A Journey through the History of Food*, trans. Lane (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 214.

⁸ Sydney W Mintz, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture and the Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 95.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

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Regional cuisine, as a product of the land and of the people who inhabit it, is often considered to be a timelessly organic entity. However, even in countries renowned for their regional cuisines, the boundaries of regions have often been politically defined. The region of Alsace, for example, was disputed between France and Germany for many years before its modern borders were set, allowing it to take its permanent place in the French pantheon of regional cuisine. Furthermore, regional cuisines are not as eternal as they may seem either, a point made by Julia Csargo.

The first ‘regional’ cookbooks were published in France at the turn of the nineteenth century. They were the work of both professional cooks and ordinary housewives. ...Through historical commentary coupled with naturalistic, providentialist arguments adducing the natural diversity and richness of the soil and climate, the succulence and variety of local produce, and the cleverness and skill of the local populace, regional cuisines were given timeless roots in the local landscape. Regional cuisines are thus cultural constructs, rooted in the supposed eternity of the soil and in local memory.¹⁰

This point is also made by culinary anthropologist Amy Trubek.¹¹ However, as Bell and Valentine note, humans often prefer not to acknowledge the constructed nature of regional identifications. “The region is often seen by those evoking a regionalist discourse exactly as ‘natural’ in every sense of the word”.¹²

Food regionalism in Australia

What is food regionalism in the Australian context? In a vast nation-continent, characterised by widely divergent climate zones, varying patterns of settlement, an increasingly mixed ethnic palette and strongly nationalised systems of supply from an early date, what does it mean for food to be different in different places?

¹⁰ Julia Csargo, “The Emergence of Regional Cuisines”, in *Food: A Culinary History*, ed. Flandrin and Montanari, 505-06.

¹¹ Amy B Trubek, *The Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey into Terroir* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 33-34.

¹² Bell and Valentine, *Consuming Geographies*, 152.

The trouble, from an Australian perspective, is that the model of regionality defined by Revel and Mintz does not reflect conditions in this country. Australia, though manifestly variable in culture, agriculture, climate and geography from one place to another, does not for the most part have the centuries of continuous relationship between a particular population and their cultivation of the land which forms the crux of European regional identities and associated cuisines. (One major exception to this, discussed later, is the Torres Strait Islands.) Australia's regions, as defined both geographically and culturally, are in some cases enormous. The Gascoyne in Western Australia is one such region, with an area of some 137,938km² (Bavaria, Mintz's largest example, has 70,548km²).¹³ Additionally, Australia's food supply has been strongly nationalised and export-oriented for most of its settled history. Many areas producing distinctive foodstuffs have favoured export over local markets for economic reasons (for example Port Lincoln tuna, which is mostly exported to Japan). These are not promising preconditions. In this country, regionalism has a somewhat different cast and requires a different set of guiding parameters.

Australia's regions, as understood today, are defined by geographic characteristics, by agricultural features (for example the wine regions) and by cultural factors (which may include ethnic heritage, religion, class, occupation and a host of others). Brown and Mussel emphasise "internal definitions" - ie, self definition - as the best way of determining "the boundary definitions" of a group.¹⁴ If a community (meaning that community at large, not just its local tourism authority or food producers' association) regards itself as regional in definition, then quite possibly it is. In Chapter Four I proposed "self-identified and externally recognised" as a way of understanding the

¹³ As defined by the Regional Development Commissions Act (1993), which corresponds reasonably closely with the definitions favoured by geographic and regional climate indicators and local food groups.

¹⁴ Brown and Mussel, eds., *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States*, 5.

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boundaries of an ethnic group. The same formula can equally be useful for thinking about regional identities.

Santich finds that regional cuisine, in both Europe and Australia, is “usually epitomized by a collection of recognized dishes that depend on certain locally available ingredients and illustrate certain flavour combinations and cooking preparation methods characteristic of, if not particular to, the region”.¹⁵ It also requires cultural cohesion and a distinguishing regional identity – the “internal definition” described by Brown and Mussel. More recently, Alexandra Peters has argued for a model of New World regionalism which differs somewhat in character from the Old World regionalism described by Mintz and to a lesser extent as described by Santich. Peters’ conception of Australian regionality is “a late twentieth century phenomenon which focuses on the produce of a region and the deliberate use of that to create a food-based identity ... reflective of its physical and cultural environment”.¹⁶ In identifying this form of regionalism with the late twentieth century, Peters links it with a time period subsequent to my study of community cookbooks. In its focus on tourism and promotion of regions for business purposes, this model is only secondarily concerned with internal group culture and identity issues. This is its main potential weakness as a tool for discussing food regions in a cultural, rather than commercial, context. However, Peters’ model remains worth evaluating here as a tool for examining some cultural and historical elements of food regionalism. It bears some similarity to the idea of “invented tradition” discussed by Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, which is also a useful concept to apply here. It includes “both ‘traditions’ actually invented, constructed and formally instituted and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and

¹⁵ Barbara Santich, *Looking for Flavour* (Adelaide: Wakefield Press, 1996), 130-31.

¹⁶ Alexandra Peters, “Food and Place in Australia: The Rise of New World Regionalism” (MA (Gastronomy), University of Adelaide, 2005), 48.

dateable period ... and establishing themselves with great rapidity”. Their notion of “custom”, by which they mean the substantive activities contained within the ritual and symbolic framework of tradition, is perhaps even more pertinent.¹⁷

Peters comments on the sometimes fuzzy boundary definitions of Australian food regions and finds that they are associated with lack of clarity about what the regional community actually is, “where they begin, where they end, what defines them and sets them apart”.¹⁸ In fact, in the process of shoring up their regional identity, regional food groups in contemporary Australia often expend considerable energy and resources in connecting local foods with local people - seeking to promote, even create, a basis for regional consumption of local produce. The growth of farmers’ markets around the nation since the turn of the twenty-first century is one notable outcome of this effort. A farmers’ market in itself, as a hub of community activity, has an effect in strengthening community bonds and fostering regional identity. In this sense, the process of New World regionalism is rather opposite to the processes underlying Old World regionalism – community culture and identity are seen to be grounded in activities relating to local foodways, rather than the other way around. But perhaps it is a bit of a “chicken and egg” question, and really the two tend to evolve together. As Santich proposes, “if culture can be represented in cuisine, so cuisine can be developed as an expression of culture”.¹⁹ This suggests to me that the difference between Peters’ New World regionalism and the Old World models advanced by others is principally a difference of emphasis. Old World regionalism emphasises continuity (or at least the appearance of it). In this understanding, regional identity cannot be artificially created, though it must

¹⁷ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-2.

¹⁸ Peters, “Food and Place in Australia”, 47.

¹⁹ Santich, *Looking for Flavour*, 87.

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be maintained and it may, within limits, be subject to change over time. New World regionalism emphasises the potential for change and adaptation. According to this model, regional identity is something that can accrue over time, or even be created by a collective act of will.

Lack of regional cuisine in Australia

According to Bannerman it is generally agreed amongst gastronomic writers that Australia “is largely without regional cuisines”.²⁰ However, Beverley Kingston demurs from this position, suggesting “there was probably much more regional variation in Australian food consumption until at least World War Two than recipe books now convey”.²¹ The delegates to the first Symposium of Australian Gastronomy in 1983 showed shades of grey in their discussion of the question. They regretted the lack of regional nuance in Australian cookery and expressed their confidence that regional cuisine could be developed over time, resolving to act as a “ginger group” to spur such developments along. It was also noted, though, that Adelaide’s well-regarded Regency Park Hotel and Catering School (now the Regency Hotel School) was teaching a course on the regional cuisines of South Australia. Symposium delegate Derrick Casey asserted “there are distinct regions in South Australia which we have identified, with particular characteristics and produce.” The discussion betrays the lack of clarity on the subject of culinary regionalism, and the presence of conflicting views as to its existence or not.²²

The symposiasts enjoyed a level of success in their aim to foster regional awareness. Over the ensuing years regional produce, at least, began to enjoy an enhanced profile in Australia. Santich (who was closely involved in the establishment of the Symposiums)

²⁰ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 15.

²¹ Kingston, “When Did We Teach Our Girls to Cook?”, 92.

²² Santich, ed., *The Upstart Cuisine*, 49-51.

commented in 1996, “there is increasing recognition of regional specialities – Young cherries and Bowen mangoes, King Island beef and Kangaroo Island sheep milk cheeses; Queensland mud crabs and South Australian King George whiting; Tasmanian leatherwood honey and Riverland dried fruit. Oysters are increasingly identified as to their place of origin and Mudgee wines have their own appellation.” But looking at the broader picture she wondered,

Is it now, and will it ever be, possible to speak of regional cuisines in Australia? Or will we have to be content with showcasing the bounty of a particular area and inciting ingenious chefs to create one-off dishes ... Can regional cuisines be invented by compiling an inventory of local resources and announcing a recipe competition? Should a regional cuisine reflect the practices and preferences of the inhabitants, so that it develops from the ground up, as it were – or can it be imposed by ‘experts’?²³

Though it is often considered that New World regional cuisines are created by the activities of local restaurateurs and chefs (who admittedly can be instrumental in fostering local food producers and awareness of local foodstuffs - Trubek describes their role as “significant tastemakers”),²⁴ the reality is that such professionals often are late arrivals in the regional landscape. To view their role in creating regional cuisine as definitive is to overlook the more longstanding relationship between the landscape and the non-experts who lived and cooked there for decades or centuries prior. These are often the people who have grown the produce which has become characteristic of the area, providing ripe pickings for regionally inclined experts. They are the people who have cooked under local conditions with locally available materials. In doing so, and in living and sharing within their local community, they have contributed to the creation of local habits and tastes which give rise to the building blocks of regional particularity. Their role in creating the building blocks of regional cuisine is the truly definitive one.

²³ Santich, *Looking for Flavour*, 128-29.

²⁴ Trubek, *The Taste of Place*, 94-95.

Food regionalism, regional identification and community cookbooks

What might one be looking for, in seeking a regional dimension in Australian cookery books? Fully articulated regional cuisines? Local dishes? Use of local produce?

Responses to climate and locality? A sense of regional pride? A regionally differentiated vocabulary of food? Each of these elements can be found in the broad sweep of Australian community cookbooks.

I have chosen, in the following analysis, to address the category of fully articulated regional cuisines before the other categories, which are further down the scale of regional food culture. This presents me with a difficulty. A fully developed regional cuisine, having the full range of regional culinary hallmarks, will have examples, possibly numerous ones, to include in each subsequent category. However, for the purposes of discussion, to enumerate these would lead to unhelpful focus on a small range of regional cuisines and source materials. In the comments that follow, I have aimed to avoid such repetition, on the whole, in favour of focussing attention on less well known examples. This allows me to present a broader range of the regional elements discernable in Australian community cookbooks, even where a complete “cuisine” may not be present.

1. Fully articulated regional cuisines

Australia’s only generally recognised regional cuisine is that of the Barossa Valley. The cuisine of the Barossa has been studied by Heuzenroeder, whose research on the *Barossa Cookery Book* and the Barossa cuisine as a whole gives a sensitive, well-historicised discussion of this distinctive cuisine.²⁵ Historian Noris Ioannou’s work on the material culture of the Barossa Valley also elucidates some special characteristics of

²⁵ Angela Heuzenroeder, “The History of Barossa Valley Food”, in *Food, Power and Community*, ed. Dare, 54-64. Angela Heuzenroeder, *Barossa Food* (Adelaide: Wakefield, 1999). Heuzenroeder, “A Region, Its Recipes and Their Meaning”.

Barossa foodways.²⁶ I previously discussed some small aspects of Barossa regional cuisine in Chapter Four. In brief summary, the key elements of the Barossa cuisine, as present in its most significant public record, the *Barossa Cookery Book*, are the influence of nineteenth-century Silesian peasant food traditions, married with the Anglo-British food culture encountered in South Australia, and producing, over time, some regional adaptations unknown anywhere but in the Barossa. The smoky-sweet-tart flavours of smoked and cured pork products are joined by the fermentation principle of yeast cookery and fermented pickled vegetables. Local dishes such as German Cake are unique to the region.

Bannerman's statement that none of the community cookbooks investigated by him claimed to present a "regional cookery" is not strictly true; the *Barossa Cookery Book* is the one major exception.²⁷ Heuzenroeder points out that right from its first edition, the *Barossa* proclaimed its credentials in regional terms: the title page highlights it as "a district celebrated throughout Australia for the excellence of its cookery".²⁸

Heuzenroeder is succinct on the issue of regionality with regard to the *Barossa Cookery Book*:

To the extent that the publication claimed to represent the cooks of a region, it was a regional cookery book. To the extent that it circulated signed recipes, it created psychological links and articulated regional practices. The use of local produce in large numbers of dishes made the recipes representative of the region and accessible to most local cooks. Those factors, together with the title created in 1917 and the deliberate promotion of the Barossa to the rest of the world, made it a regional cookbook.²⁹

²⁶ Noris Ioannou, *Barossa Journeys: Into a Valley of Tradition* (Kent Town: Paranga Press, 1997), Noris Ioannou, "The Material Culture of Barossan Regional Cuisine", in *Food, Power and Community*, ed. Dare, 65-73.

²⁷ Bannerman, "Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating", 15.

²⁸ *Barossa Cookery Book*, 3rd ed. (1932), title page.

²⁹ Heuzenroeder, "A Region, Its Recipes and Their Meaning", 46.8.

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It is interesting that the book's creators evidently intended to promote the Barossa Valley as a tourist destination and investment opportunity; Heuzenroeder describes the photographs and advertisements offering mail order facilities and "names and views of local hotels".³⁰ In this sense, even back in the 1910s, Australia's regions may be seen to conform surprisingly closely to the "New World Regionalism" described by Peters, but also to the French nineteenth-century regional situation described by Csergo. Both writers acknowledge the role of regional food culture as a key element of culture and identity, the performance of which fosters group cohesion, but they also show that regional communities both historically and contemporarily recognise their regional character and cuisine as assets which can be promoted to the world and used to court business.

Subsequent Barossa community cookbooks, such as *Two Hundred Well Tried Barossa Recipes* (1975), showed the persistence of Barossa regional cuisine. This cookbook included some of the key recipes identified by Heuzenroeder as Barossa-German, including Honey Biscuits (albeit made with soda, not ammonia),³¹ Dill Cucumbers³² and a section on yeast cookery with recipes for German Yeast Cake and Yeast Cake with Streusel Topping.³³ In recipes for Bienenstich and Gugelhupf (Viennese Coffee Cake), specialties imported by more recent German migrants attracted to the Barossa, *Two Hundred Well Tried Barossa Recipes* also demonstrated the continuing evolution of Barossa regional foodways.

Peters nominates the Orange district as another Australian region that might qualify as having a regional cuisine under the terms of the New World paradigm. In that it

³⁰ Ibid.: 46.7.

³¹ *Two Hundred Well Tried Barossa Recipes*, 48-9.

³² Ibid., 69.

³³ Ibid., 59-63.

vigorously markets its equable climate and “four distinct seasons”, rich farmlands and concomitantly varied local foodbowl, Orange is a New World region. It comprises a distinct area, with a range of well-known local temperate food products. It was, for a long time, Australia’s “Apple Country”. Cabonne Shire, part of the district, calls itself “Australia’s Food Basket”. It was a significant producer of wheat, rabbits, potatoes and peas, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but is most renowned for its temperate-climate fruits. Apples are the best-known example but the Orange region also produces cherries, peaches, plums and pears.³⁴

Unfortunately, only a few community cookbooks from the Orange district have come to light. It seems that either the citizens of Orange were not motivated to produce many, or they did not observe the copyright deposit law and send a copy to their State or National Library. The only titles I have found are the *Orange Recipe Gift Book*, produced in aid of the Orange District Hospital during the 1930s-1960s and evidently enjoying some success; the *Apple Country Fair Cookery Book* by the Ladies of the Apple Country Fair Committee, circa 1979; and the *Milthorpe-Carcoar Country-Style Cookbook* compiled by “the ladies of the Church of England Parish of Milthorpe-Carcoar” in the late 1970s.

The *Apple Country Fair Cookery Book* was an ingredient-themed book. From Apple and Raisin Soup to Apple Curry and a whole slew of Apple Pie recipes, this cookbook aimed to showcase the district’s most famous product. The *Milthorpe-Carcoar Country-Style Cookbook* contained, it is true, a high proportion of recipes involving potatoes and apples and, unsurprisingly for an inland district, few recipes for fresh fish or seafood.

More unexpectedly, few fresh berries were called for, in contrast to at least two specifications of tinned berries. More recent cookbooks from this area celebrate the four seasons of the climate and the local agricultural bounty. *Flavours of the Four Seasons*,

³⁴ Peters, “Food and Place in Australia”, 52.

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by Yolanda Torrasi and Elisabeth Edwards in 2003, is in fact a contributory cookbook with recipes mostly supplied by locals (but appears to have been compiled for private profit, not for community purposes). It does, however, bear many of the classic features of the community cookbook – contributor names (and photographs) appended to recipes; an introductory section focusing on local history, with particular reference to local agriculture and foodways; and notes on local custom such as the Orange Cherry Blossom Festival. Very few recipes are specifically associated with the local area, but the presence of numerous primary producers, local hospitality professionals and vignerons on the contributor list help to underscore the use of regional products. The cookbook's special chapters on olives, herbs and honey, nuts, figs, pome fruit, stone fruit, cherries and berries mark its particular focus on regional produce.³⁵

It could not be said, from these texts alone, that a body of shared culinary lore is evident in the Orange region, or a regional culinary style. However, it must be said, there is an obvious increase, over time, in the sense of regional particularity and desire to celebrate it. This, perhaps, is the typical trajectory of New World regional food culture. From taking local produce for granted, or even not using it at all, local areas may experience, through the work of key players in agriculture, hospitality and community institutions, a growing sense of food-related community.

Another candidate for regional cuisine status in Australia is the Torres Strait. This distinctive island region, situated at the northernmost extremity of Australia, annexed to Queensland in 1879, is inhabited principally by an indigenous population known as the Torres Strait Islanders. Their ethnic heritage includes Australian Aboriginal but also elements from the Melanesian and South-East Asian populations who for centuries were

³⁵ Yolanda Torrasi and Elisabeth Edwards, *Flavours of the Four Seasons: Orange, Cabonne and Blayney* (Orange: Torrasi and Edwards, 2003).

their trading partners to the north. (Many of the islands are closer to Papua New Guinea than to the Australian mainland.) In recent years, with many Islanders now living in mainland Queensland, they have increasingly intermarried with the white Australian population as well. Ethnological, anthropological and cultural studies amongst Torres Strait Islanders have revealed a vibrant, living culture which has changed markedly over the last two hundred years but kept certain core elements, including a strong sense of spirituality, family and community - all of which find expression in various food-related activities.³⁶ Nineteenth-century commentators noted that the Islanders showed a strong sense of their ownership of the land. Furthermore, it took a form similar to the common European pattern of primogeniture, and hence Europeans were able to understand and respect it.³⁷ Various patterns of cultural organisation including the Islanders' choice to embrace Christianity, marrying it with their indigenous spiritual traditions, may also have played a role in promoting nineteenth-century Westerners' propensity to view them as "capable of exercising all the rights of British citizens".³⁸

Torres Strait Islander culture revolves around the sea; one indigenous self-description is "the salt-water people". Their maritime culture means that their foodways involve a great many seafoods - many more sea species than land species go to make up the traditional diet. Processes as well as foodstuffs themselves are central to the culture; a boy's spearing of his first sardine is an important symbol of his growing up and beginning to contribute to the life of the community. Islanders' history of regional trade means that they have long used foodstuffs, and enjoyed culinary influences, from other

³⁶ Eg J Douglas, "The Islands and Inhabitants of Torres Strait", *Queensland Geographical Journal* XV (1899-1900), J Douglas, *Past and Present of Thursday Island and Torres Straits* (Brisbane: Outridge, 1900), Jeremy Beckett, *Torres Strait Islanders: Custom and Colonialism* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Steve Mullins, *Torres Strait: A History of Colonial Occupation and Cultural Contact* (Rockhampton, QL: Central Queensland University Press, 1994).

³⁷ Mullins, *Torres Strait*, 176-71.

³⁸ Douglas, "The Islands and Inhabitants of Torres Strait", 35.

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parts of the Asian-Pacific region, as far afield as the Philippines. Unlike mainland indigenous societies, Islander culture includes a tradition of garden cultivation. The arrival of Christian missionaries and other groups since the 1870s has had its own effect on Islander foodways, introducing wheat flour, rice, sugar and other elements of the colonial / Anglo-Australian diet – Mullins notes “fowls and various kinds of tinned and preserved foods” in particular.³⁹ Some Torres Strait Islanders, of course, took longer than others to accept such items, with their connotations of cultural dependence. Au Bala, born in 1912 on the island of Mer (Murray), recalled that his parents “planted gardens; they used their own hands. We had enough; we didn’t depend on store food. No! Flour and rice were foreign food for my father and mother”.⁴⁰

Though elements of the Torres Strait Islands’ food economy were described in early ethnographic works, it seems that for a very long time there was no culinary literature representing Islander cuisine. The first cookbook on record is in fact a community cookbook - the Thursday Island High School’s *Torres Strait Cookbook* (1987). It included recipes for traditional local dishes such as Wongai Sabbi Domboy. Domboy describes a boiled dumpling; Wongai Sabbi Domboy is these dumplings cooked in coconut milk with wongai, a local native fruit.⁴¹ The dumpling was made with wheat flour, demonstrating an adaptation to introduced foodways within an indigenous matrix. “How to Kup Mari” described the version of underground oven technology traditional in the Torres Strait Islands and on Cape York Peninsula.⁴² Sop Sop, a method of preparing vegetables by folding them in a banana leaf with coconut milk, and Pakalulu, a preparation of cassava and pumpkin with sugar and coconut milk cooked in the kup

³⁹ Mullins, *Torres Strait*, 171.

⁴⁰ Cited in Nonie Sharp, *Stars of Tagai: The Torres Strait Islanders* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, 1993), 80.

⁴¹ *Torres Strait Cookbook*, 6.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 3.

mari, Curried Trochus Shell, Curry Gravy Turtle and Simured Chicken were just a few of the distinctive Islander dishes on offer. The book's introduction described its genesis in a senior class Applied Food Skills program, where "students began writing recipes of the Island food they liked to eat. These recipes show influences from other cultures: Malay, Chinese, Japanese and European. These cultures are part of the Torres Strait, especially on Thursday Island".⁴³ Written and illustrated by students and staff, it depicted the wide variety of distinctive produce and methods used in Torres Strait Island foodways.

The *Torres Strait Cookbook* was followed in 1988 by folklorist Ron Edwards' *Traditional Torres Strait Island Cooking*, which remains the most in-depth work on the subject, based on his experiences living among mainland-dwelling islanders in 1950s Queensland. Although Edwards had written the book by the early 1960s, the publishers to whom he sent it "all rejected it as being of little interest to the average city dwelling Australian".⁴⁴ Hence his work could have been on the market a quarter-century earlier, if the major Australian publishers had not perceived it to lack a ready market.

Little seems to have followed these two works. More recently, an episode of popular television program *The Food Lovers' Guide to Australia* looked at the regional dishes of the Torres Strait Islands associated with their annual Coming of the Light feast, particularly the kup mari method of hot stone / earth-oven baking.⁴⁵ "My Island Home", a song about the tropical coast, was performed by renowned Torres Strait Island singer-performer Christine Anu at the 2000 Sydney Olympics closing ceremony. Her version of the song keens, "I come from the salt-water people" and muses,

⁴³ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁴ Ron Edwards, *Traditional Torres Strait Island Cooking, Australian Folklore Occasional Paper No 18* (Kuranda, QL: The Rams Skull Press, 1988), 9.

⁴⁵ Aired on public network SBS (Series 5 Episode 3, aired 1994)

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I close my eyes and I'm standing
In a boat on the sea again
and I'm holding that long turtle spear...⁴⁶

Torres Strait food culture entered the national symbology at that moment, if not before.

In the absence of a strong body of published information on the subject, more research would be necessary to form a conclusion as to whether the food of the Torres Strait Islands qualifies as “regional cuisine” according to the parameters discussed. Upon the evidence available, though, I think it likely. Edwards certainly thinks so. He discusses the basis of Islander foodways with a folklorist’s eye for cultural detail and a scientist’s interest in system.

Cooking in its regional forms is a logical art, with a sound reason behind every peculiarity. The characteristic Island method of preparing vegetables, by wrapping them in banana leaves and cooking them on hot stones, was not the brainchild of some Pacific Einstein but is the result of a whole chain of conditions. It will be realised that without any ... method of boiling available, it became necessary to prepare vegetables by some other method.

The most simple and primitive method of preparation would be simply to throw the food into the hot ashes until it was cooked. A step from this would be to protect it from the sand and ashes by wrapping it in a layer of green leaves, and having once wrapped vegetables in such a bundle it would not require much imagination to realise the possibilities of adding a few pieces of meat and pouring over the ingredients a quantity of the always available coconut milk.

In this way sop sop may have developed, a regional dish in which the vegetables acquire a delicious flavour compounded of smoke, coconut milk and the trace of flavour that comes from the banana leaf wrapping.⁴⁷

He comments with regret that “island cooking [remains] a purely domestic art, and probably one of the few forms of regional cooking in the world that the casual visitor cannot try”.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Lyrics sourced from www.lyricsdownload.com/christine-anu-island-home-lyrics.html

⁴⁷ Edwards, *Traditional Torres Strait Island Cooking*, 16.

It is noteworthy that for both the Torres Strait Islands and the Barossa Valley (two communities at opposite ends of the nation and representing themselves, culinarily, at opposite ends of the twentieth century) a community cookbook was the leading text in representing regional foodways to the broader community. The perception within the publishing community that there was no market for regional works appears to have been unfounded, yet sadly self-fulfilling. With reference to Edwards' difficulties in getting his work published, it is tempting to conclude that community cookbooks may have some inherent advantage. The *Torres Strait Cookbook* was a very simple pamphlet identified as a "Thursday Island State High School student publication" and printed by GK Bolton in Cairns; there would have been no trouble with finding a publisher ready to take it on. Cookbooks showcasing the Orange region, too, seem overwhelmingly either to be community cookbooks or to utilise many of the same characteristics, including self-publication. Their often low-key production values and local distribution, which allow for very simple means of self-publishing, mean that community cookbooks can ultimately, by bypassing the publishing market and its concern for bottom lines, have more success than a would-be pioneering professional work in bringing their subject to a wider audience. As the ladies of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union and other church organisations had found decades before, a work modest in scope and presentation can nonetheless have a startling impact.

2. Local dishes and regional specialties

In Chapter Six I discussed the German Cake of the Barossa Valley. This is an example of a regional specialty. Dishes particular to the Torres Strait Islands, such as Domboy, Sop Sop and Kup Mari, also. Symons has written about the Jubilee Cake as a South

⁴⁸ Ibid., 10.

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Australian specialty, as well as the regional specificities of other baked goods.⁴⁹ But what about areas which show no evidence for a regional cuisine as such, yet do offer up distinctive local or regional dishes?

The *Norfolk Island Cookery Book* contained a section of recipes for Pilhi. Pilhi is a common Pitcairn and Norfolk dish; the word is related to “pillau”. Pilhi designates a category of baked dish, consisting of soft mashed or grated fruit or vegetables – usually root vegetables but also banana or corn, often moistened with coconut. Of ten different recipes offered, three were cooked in banana leaves and the rest in greased tins, a modern adaptation. One called for a hybrid which presumably captured the best of both options, instructing to put the mixture in a banana leaf inside a tin.⁵⁰

What about Burdekin Duck? Burdekin Duck, or Ducks, means corned beef fritters.

These are an old English / Irish recipe but in Australia became very characteristic of Queensland, particularly the rural areas of the north-west and also the Northern Territory. The name of this dish references the bird, Burdekin Duck (*Tadorna radja*), which is found throughout the coastal tropical north. In the associated hot and humid climate where fresh meat spoiled with great speed, settlers were typically dependent on long-keeping stores like salt beef for their staple diet. (At the time of Federation the average salt consumption per Queenslander was calculated at 61.5 lbs per annum - over twice the average for the Commonwealth and over four times as much as in Victoria.)⁵¹ Perhaps they wished they had a real Burdekin Duck in the pan instead of their salt meat fritters, although as an omnivorous feeder in mangroves and swamps this bird’s muddy taste would not be hugely appetising.

⁴⁹ Symons, “The Cleverness of the Whole Number”.

⁵⁰ *Norfolk Island Cookery Book: With Local Words and Phrases / Compiled by Members of the Sunshine Club*, (Norfolk Island, QL: Sunshine Club Committee, 1970s), 33-35.

⁵¹ TA Coghlan, *A Statistical Account of Australia and New Zealand 1903-4*, 11th ed. (Sydney: WA Gullick, Government Printer, 1904), 889.

It is believed by some that the recipe for Burdekin Ducks first became naturalised to the Antipodes in the area along the Burdekin River, although I am not aware of any concrete evidence for this apart from the name. Sharon Robards quotes this belief in *Australian Flavour*, referring to a 2006 document by the Queensland National Trust.⁵² In Australian community cookbooks Burdekin duck / corned beef fritter recipes are strongly associated with the north of the country. They are not common in other areas, and where they do occur are not typically called by their distinctive northern name. One recipe for Burdekin Duck came from a Gippsland source, but the fact that it was offered together with one for Birdsville Track Damper suggests a possible Queensland link. The contributor, Mr Rogers, also proposed that after making Burdekin Ducks one should fry up the remaining batter and eat it with treacle as dessert.⁵³ The National Trust document relied upon by Robards refers to the use of treacle with damper as a Queensland custom, due to butter not being easily portable in the heat (treacle, by contrast, was carried in a tin).⁵⁴ Mr Rogers' suggestion appears a related habit. The association of treacle with bread, cake and puddings is nation-wide, but the specific use of treacle as a stand-in for butter is distinctly associated with Queensland and the outback. It is clearly connected to the broader phenomenon of "Cocky's Joy", golden syrup as the farmer's answer to butter.

Cornish Pasties are considered to be a South Australian specialty, due to their association with the "Copper Coast" mining area centred on the Yorke Peninsula towns of Moonta, Kadina and Wallaroo. This region was settled by hundreds of Cornish miners in the nineteenth century and is known as Australia's "Little Cornwall". But

⁵² Sharon Robards, *Australian Flavour: Traditional Australian Cuisine* (s.l.:G MM Press, 2008), 22.

⁵³ Crooke, et al, *Is Emu on the Menu?*, 5.

⁵⁴ The National Trust document cited by Robards appears to be a Heritage Centre Education Kit on "Food". It is available online at www.nationaltrustqld.org and states in its discussion of Johnny Cakes (small dampers), "Butter did not carry well, so the johnny cakes and damper were frequently eaten with treacle (which could be carried in a tin) or sometimes with pickles."

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recipes for Cornish Pasties appear in community cookbooks from all states of Australia bar the Northern Territory. Are the South Australian ones the most “authentic”, and/or do they show a regional distinctiveness?

The Cornish Pasty in England is defined by the Cornish Pasty Association, which is currently seeking Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status for its product from the European Union. According to the definition published on their website, the filling ingredients should include beef, swede or turnip, potato and onion. They may be minced or roughly cut. The pastry’s specific composition is not defined, but it must be “golden ... savoury... and robust”. It is crimped on one side, not over the top.⁵⁵

Australia’s Little Cornwall Cookbook, produced in 1977 by the Moonta Hospital Ladies’ Auxiliary, showed a strong Cornish self-concept, as the title indicated. The first section, “Early Day Recipes”, gave 77 items of Cornish provenance including such delights as Stargazy Pie (using pilchards or Tommy Ruffs), Cornish Bobbity, Saffron Yeast Cake, Cornish Cream Splits, Special Auld Reeky Cake, Pancakes Cousin Jack Style⁵⁶ and Swanky (beer) made using a “jamtin of wheat”.⁵⁷

Pastry rolled out like a plate, piled with ‘turmut, tates and mate’, doubled up and baked like fate, that’s a ‘Cornish Pasty’!⁵⁸

Following upon this opening quote, the Meat Dishes section commenced with five recipes for Cornish Pasty. For meat, the recipes specified variations on mutton and beef, the most common recommendation being a combination of the two in proportions of about half and half. The meat should be cut up into small pieces; the first recipe, which

⁵⁵ Cornish Pasty Association, *What Is a Genuine Cornish Pasty?* [Internet] (2007 [cited 3 March 2009]); available from www.cornishpastyassociation.co.uk/pasties.html.

⁵⁶ “Cousin Jack” was the name given to the estimated 250,000 Cornish emigres, principally miners, who left Cornwall during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in search of a better life, emigrating around the world, including to the Moonta region.

⁵⁷ *Australia’s Little Cornwall Cookbook*, 1-19.

⁵⁸ *Australia’s Little Cornwall Cookbook*, 5.

was the most detailed, admonished “do not mince”. Vegetable-wise, potatoes were always specified, also onions or leek. Four of the recipes specified turnip (one cautioning “always taste ... this governs the amount used – if sweet use full amount, if rank or bitter use little or none”). Three used swede,⁵⁹ and four used trombone.⁶⁰ Two recipes directed to “chip” the vegetables, meaning to slice as thinly as possible, one stating “do not mince or dice”. One recipe said to dice the potato and finely chop the onion; one to “cut” and one gave no direction. All specified short pastry, four naming dripping as the fat to use. As to filling and crimping the edges, one recipe directed to “join just off centre top”, one along the top, one along the side, and two did not specify.⁶¹

This collection of recipes gives a good outline of the Moonta-style Cornish Pasty to the period of the mid-late twentieth century. The meat was not all beef as in Cornwall, but a combination of mutton and beef. The vegetables were similar to those used in Cornwall, but the use of trombone marked a regional subset. The processing of the vegetables and meat was somewhat variable, but with a strong leaning towards thin slicing and away from dicing. Mincing, unlike in Cornwall, was beyond the pale. Dripping was a strong characteristic of the pastry. The positioning of the crimp was seemingly a matter for personal taste, although straight down the middle was the most common version (and the one favoured commercially in South Australia), again unlike the specification in the pasty’s native land.

Is the Copper Coast version of the Cornish Pasty a case of local variation in the Cornish Pasty’s furthest flung regional outpost? The Cornish Pasty in Cornwall has spawned a great string of variations, with everything from cheese and leek to chicken tikka fillings,

⁵⁹ Known in the United States as “rutabaga”.

⁶⁰ A type of vegetable marrow or squash, similar to pumpkin.

⁶¹ *Australia's Little Cornwall Cookbook*, 5-6.

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but the Cornish and the Australian-Cornish appear united in their belief that items like carrots and peas have no place in the classic Cornish Pasty.

Australian community cookbook recipes for Cornish Pasties began with the *Hobart Cookery Book* in 1908 and carried on, with no real interruption, to the *School of the Air Recipe Book* from Alice Springs in 1985 (and doubtless beyond as well).⁶² Recipes for the Cornish Pasty were concentrated in the southern states, no more than a handful hailing from NSW, Queensland or the Northern Territory. Recipes in Western Australian cookbooks came from the southern regions of that state.

The *Worker Cookery Book*, in the World War One era, called for a pastry made with dripping and filled with mutton, potatoes and onion, the edges being crimped on the side, or alternatively two rounds of pastry could be crimped together, creating a circular pasty.⁶³ The dripping and mutton bring the Copper Coast to mind, but the style of shaping the pasties was clearly idiosyncratic. The recipe's origin was not stated in the cookbook.

Recipes from South Australia showed a general but not total adherence to the Copper Coast style. The SACWA *Calendar of Meat and Fish* included three versions of Cornish Pasty. Mrs Holds, from Port Lincoln on the other side of the gulf, gave a recipe which used mutton, swede, potato, onion or leeks, and dripping in the pastry. "Cut meat and vegetables very small", "place [filling] in centre, wet edges of pastry and crimp together". Miss Symons, from Robertstown, further inland, suggested using white turnip instead of swede – a variation within the "normal" Copper Coast range. Mrs Kloeden, from more distant Ceduna, suggested mincing the meat not too finely, with some

⁶² *Hobart Cookery Book*, 55. *School of the Air Alice Springs Recipe Book*, unnumbered.

⁶³ Gilmore, *Worker Cookery Book*, (1914), 31.

vegetables,⁶⁴ thereby placing her Cornish Pasties outside the “authentic” Copper Coast style.

The *Barossa Cookery Book* had a recipe from A Rigby in Tanunda which used steak only, plus potatoes, onion and turnip – all finely chopped or diced. The pastry could be short or suet crust, an unusual variation. In other respects it corresponded broadly to the Cornish Pasty as defined either by the Cornish or the Copper Coast.⁶⁵ The *Green and Gold Cookery Book* had two recipes, one from an unspecified source and one from Kadina. The first used steak, potatoes and onions, cut finely, and placed in the centre of the pastry with the crimp presumably over the top (so far so good) but later stated “a little carrot or turnip may be added”.⁶⁶ Carrot, it must be remembered, is a no-no, and turnip is a must. The Kadina recipe, by contrast, specified “lard or dripping” for the pastry, and called for “beef or mutton”, potatoes, onion and “swede or turnip as liked”. It did, however, allow that the meat might be finely cut or minced.⁶⁷

Western Australia’s *Cookery Book and Household Hints* provided a recipe from a contributor in Bunbury which specified mutton or beef, onions and potatoes (for which turnips could be substituted) but did not specify the mode of preparation of meat or vegetables. Its instruction to “place ingredients in centre [of pastry] and crimp edges” suggests that the crimp would go down the middle of the pasty.⁶⁸

In Victoria, Cornish Pasties were offered in *Is Emu on the Menu?* This, though, was a recipe which clearly departed from both United Kingdom and Copper Coast Cornish

⁶⁴ Dolling, *Calendar of Meat and Fish Recipes*, 15 Nov.

⁶⁵ *Barossa Cookery Book*, 3rd ed. (1932), 16.

⁶⁶ *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 16th ed. (1943), 36.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁶⁸ Barnes, *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints*, 14th ed. (1953), 50.

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Pasty styles, including carrot and parsley along with minced steak, onion and potato.⁶⁹

The *PWMU Cookery Book* of 1970 had a recipe which was very much in keeping with a UK-style Cornish Pasty, containing finely diced beef with potatoes and a “very small” onion (no turnip, though), and was crimped shut on the side.⁷⁰

Tasmania’s *Kitchen Kapers* offered a recipe for Cornish Pasties which included parsley and thyme, and steak only, but otherwise seemed to offend against neither of the pasty paradigms. Its pastry used butter not dripping, but it called for the meat and vegetables to be finely diced.⁷¹

From the above, it seems that there is a loose but distinct regional style of Copper Coast Cornish Pasty. In particular, it is notable that Cornish Pasty recipes from elsewhere did not use trombone, or any other form of pumpkin, and were much less likely to specify dripping for the pastry. Recipes from other regions of Australia, even within South Australia, were more likely to allow mincing of the filling ingredients, less likely to insist on the inclusion of turnip or swede and more likely to suggest carrots or other vegetables for inclusion.

While not having any inherent link with the landscape in terms of its ingredients or method (unless you count its frequent consumption down in the local copper mines worked by the Cornish) the Cornish Pasty is a distinctive dish long associated with the Copper Coast region, Australia’s “Little Cornwall”. In the modern era, it is promoted as an authentic regional specialty for tourism purposes, especially in conjunction with the biennial Kernewek Lowender, or Cornish Festival. Held in Kadina, this is the largest Cornish festival in the world and besides other events and attractions sells many

⁶⁹ Crooke, et al, *Is Emu on the Menu?*, 15.

⁷⁰ Jenkins and McMillan, *PWMU Cookery Book* (1970), 22.

⁷¹ *Kitchen Kapers*, 24.

thousands of pasties. Even at the very first Kernewek Lowender in 1973, 8,000 Cornish pasties were sold and the Kernewek Lowender website records that “the local bakery at Moonta had to sweep the flour mill floor to get enough flour for the pasties at the Fer Kernewek [Cornish Fair]”.⁷² In 2009 the Moonta and District Progress Association reported that some 16,600 Cornish Pasties had been sold at that year’s fair and festival.⁷³ The Cornish Pasty’s particular composition remains a matter of local concern even today: the chipping (not mincing) of the vegetables, slicing of the meat and body of the pastry are remarked upon by the local tourist office.⁷⁴ In its mobilisation as a tool for tourism, the Cornish Pasty, like the *Barossa Cookery Book*, seems to fulfil at least one of the criteria for Peters’ New World regionalism, but also reflects the Old World French experience described by Csergo.

3. Regional produce

Calling attention to regional produce, while by no means universal in Australian community cookbooks, is not uncommon. In some books it is a marked feature. The *Torres Strait Cookbook*, for example, is the only community cookbook I have found that called for dugong or turtle. These are both highly significant food sources in traditional Torres Strait food culture.

More broadly, use of particular ingredients can be seen to typify certain areas; regional foodstuffs are often called for and sometimes are central to the concept of the cookbook. The 1983 *Seafood Cookery of the Northern Territory* took a regionalist approach to its subject, offering descriptions and recipes for some of the Northern Territory’s “common

⁷² Ros Paterson, *History of the Kernewek Lowender* [Internet] (2009 [cited 27 February 2009]); available from <http://www.kernewek.org/History.html>.

⁷³ “Moonta on Show for Cornish Festival”, *Community News / Moonta & District Progress Association*, May 2009, 1.

⁷⁴ Christine McCabe, “Yorke on the Wild Side”, *The Australian*, 10 Nov 2007.

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fish species”, and including a recipe for Territory Bouillabaisse. (This recipe did not actually specify local species, calling simply for unspecified mussels, prawns, fish fillets and scallops.)⁷⁵ Northern Territory fish, comprising some 29 varieties listed, including barramundi, red emperor and various kinds of snapper, may be contrasted with southern fish varieties such as the perch and trumpeter for which Tasmanian coastal waters are famous. The *Australian Fish Cookery Book* produced by the Bermagui Branch of the NSW Country Women’s Association in 1965 aimed to be “Australia-wide in scope”, with recipes sent from CWA branches around the nation.⁷⁶ Unfortunately, the recipes tended not to be associated with the regions of their origin, apart from one for Tasmanian Trumpeter.⁷⁷ Comments on the smoking of fish noted that different leaves impart different flavours and advised “the newcomer to fish-smoking ... to discuss the matter with local fishermen to see what is offering in the way of bush flavourings on that particular part of the coast”.⁷⁸ A table of different names for fish in different states was the only other indication of regional specificity. The *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book* (1979) gave recipes particular to each of its branches. The Broome branch, for example, representing a coastal area with a significant pearling industry, gave recipes for Pearl Shell Meat in Mornay Sauce, Mangrove Crab Entrée and Pearlmeat, as well as various uses for mango.⁷⁹

Community cookbooks from the tropical north used more tropical fruits and vegetables than those from the temperate south. Books such as the *Darwin Gardeners’ Gourmet Guide* used local (backyard) produce as a defining principle. The Darwin Gardeners’

⁷⁵ *Seafood Cookery of the Northern Territory*, (Darwin: CWA(NT) and the Northern Territory Fishing Industry Research and Development Trust Fund, 1983), 6-12,16.

⁷⁶ Lawre Bruce Steer, *The Australian Fish Cookery Book* (NSW: CWA(NSW)-Bermagui Branch, 1965), foreword.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁷⁹ Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book*, 4-17.

Club gave recipes for climate-adapted fruits, vegetables and herbs including banana, cashew, chinese cabbage, coconut, cumquat, “five corners” (now commonly known as star fruit or carambola), ginger, granadilla, guava, jackfruit, lemon grass, lime, lychee, mango, melons, okra, passionfruit, paw paw, pineapple, pumpkin, rosella, sweet potato and tamarind. The mayor of Darwin remarked in his foreword on the need for local food culture, for both economic and health reasons:

The production of this book, so full of information on the use of locally grown fruit and vegetables, will be a boon to the people of Darwin. One of our main problems up here is this long and expensive haul of fresh fruit and vegetables from the south. It is a well-known fact that vitamin content of fruit and vegetables reduce according to the length of time that elapses between picking fruit and eating it.⁸⁰

Buderim Bouquet, from southern Queensland, included a chapter on “Our Regional Riches”, the cover page illustrating both fishing and tropical fruits.⁸¹ This chapter outlined “the story of ginger”, as well as recipes for avocado (“probably the most popular of our local products”), beans, cucumbers, mushrooms, onions, pineapple, tomatoes, bananas, apples, yoghurt, broccoli, red cabbage, carrots, corn, eggplant, oranges, peas, potatoes, kumara, coffee, citrus, choko, guava, pawpaw, rosellas and strawberries. A “Buderim Special Menu” was composed of local delicacies. It comprised Avocado and Grapefruit Appetiser, Garlic Prawns, Baked Schnapper with Saffron Rice and Tomato Baskets, Ginger Souffle, Queensland Coffee, Rum Balls and Glazed Strawberries. A later chapter, “Today’s Talents”, also made liberal use of those ingredients previously identified as regional, as did the dessert chapter. The preponderance of subtropical and tropical fruits and vegetables, plus fish, along with a

⁸⁰ *Darwin Gardeners' Gourmet Guide*, unnumbered.

⁸¹ *Buderim Bouquet*, unnumbered.

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wide range of temperate-climate fruits and vegetables, makes the case for Buderim as a subtropical cornucopia.

This consciousness of regionally distinctive fruits has a long history. The 1908 *WMU Cookery Book* called for plenty of temperate-climate fruits such as apples, peaches, quinces, cherries and pears, but other fruits mentioned included granadilla, guava, cape gooseberry, rosella, cumquat and green mango. This is a range of fruits well differentiated from those included in the *Hobart Cookery Book* of the same year. The sweet preserves recipes in that book encompassed apple, melon, marrow, citrus, shaddock, pear, pineapple, quince, red currant, rhubarb, melon & ginger, melon & pineapple, plums and strawberries. There is a certain crossover here, in that pineapple is clearly a subtropical and not a temperate fruit, but the general trend to temperate fruits is clear. (Where melon was used in preserves recipes, it typically meant pie melon, *Citrullus lanatus*. This melon has a high pectin content but its bland, rather rank taste means that it needs strong flavour additions, such as the ginger and pineapple suggested in the *Hobart*, to render it palatable.)

Raspberries are one example of a temperate-climate fruit not typically grown in tropical areas. Raspberries are traditionally grown in Tasmania, the south of Victoria, and limited areas of South Australia, Western Australia and New South Wales. As a delicate fruit they do not travel well, and their season is fleeting. In Australian community cookbooks, though, the flavour of raspberry is reflected as desirable in many parts of the country. Where or when fresh raspberries were not available, tinned raspberry jam, raspberry jelly crystals, raspberry essence, raspberry custard powder and raspberry cordial or syrup were often used to create raspberry flavours in such items as Mock

Raspberry Jam,⁸² Melon and Raspberry Jam (pie melon jam combined with tinned raspberry jam for flavour),⁸³ the ubiquitous Raspberry Slice,⁸⁴ Raspberry Syrup,⁸⁵ or Raspberry Creams.⁸⁶ Fresh raspberries were in fact far more rarely used.

One of their earliest appearances in a community cookbook is most intriguing. The *Berrambool Recipe Book* (1915) called for a most unorthodox use of raspberries - in a curry. The recipe called for red currant or raspberry jam “or fresh raspberries if in season”.⁸⁷ The origin of this cookery book in the central Victorian highlands area, south-east of the Grampians, suggests that raspberries would have been locally grown. A recipe for Diabetic Raspberry Jam appeared in the Tasmanian CWA’s *21st Birthday Cookery Book*.⁸⁸ Raspberry Meringue and Raspberry Jam in the *Coronation Cookery Book* from New South Wales called for fresh berries;⁸⁹ the numerous other raspberry recipes required jam, essence or tinned fruit. In the South Australian CWA’s *Menus for Moderns*, one recipe used fresh raspberries.⁹⁰ *Australia’s Little Cornwall Cookbook* gave a recipe for Raspberry Jam.⁹¹ A Raspberry Jam in the *Orange Recipe Gift Book*, from a raspberry-growing area, gave only relative quantities, meaning that it could be

⁸² For example, Barnes, *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints*, 2nd ed. (1936), 272. Tomato and Quince Jam also appears in its own right, for example in *More Recipes from Kangaroo Island*, (Kingscote, SA: Kingscote Area School Welfare Club, 1979), 71.

⁸³ *WMU Cookery Book*, 21st ed. (1976), 202. *The South Australian Country Women's Association Presents a Collection of Recipes for Pickles, Sauces, Jams and Jellies*, 2nd ed. (Kent Town, SA: SACWA, 1961), 19. Both recipes in the CWA calendar used a combination of tinned raspberry jam and bottled raspberry cordial extract; the second version also added half a small bottle of cochineal.

⁸⁴ For example, *Cookery Book / Compiled by Royal Flying Doctor's Service, Women's Auxiliary of the Air Branch*, 39.

⁸⁵ *WMU Cookery Book*, 6th ed. (1906), 142.

⁸⁶ *Calendar of Cakes: 365 Days in the Year, 365 Cakes in Season: With Supplement / the South Australian Country Women's Association, Inc*, 9th ed. (Adelaide: The South Australian Country Women's Association, 1961), 22nd January.

⁸⁷ Moffatt, *Berrambool Recipe Book*, 33.

⁸⁸ *The 21st Birthday Cookery Book of the Country Women's Association in Tasmania*, 193.

⁸⁹ Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1938), 105, 204.

⁹⁰ *Menus for Moderns*, 36.

⁹¹ *Australia's Little Cornwall Cookbook*, 35.

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used for a large or a small amount of fruit.⁹² In Tasmania's *Esk Valley Cookery Book* a recipe for Raspberry Jelly took a similar tack.⁹³ Particularly frequent use of raspberry jam in this book, and lack of recipes calling for raspberry substitutes, suggest that raspberries were a fresh local fruit in the cool temperate climate of the Esk Valley. No recipes calling for fresh raspberries appeared in community cookbooks from the subtropical and tropical north of the nation. They, by contrast, were often notable for the substitute products mentioned above.

The recipe category of jams and preserves is particularly likely to reveal local produce use, since this subject naturally deals with gluts. Recipes involving large amounts of a particular ingredient usually indicate plentiful local supply, and suggest the development of cultural responses to that glut. For example, in the tropical north in the early part of the twentieth century, a glut of mangoes meant only one thing to an British-Australian housewife: mango chutney. *A Voice from the Bush* in the 1890s gave a recipe for Mango Chutney using 50 mangoes.⁹⁴ Such recipes remained common in Queensland community cookbooks for many years, though the quantities of produce involved tended to decline – the mango chutney recipe in the 1979 *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book* was for the modest number of six mangoes only.⁹⁵ Mango chutney recipes were not given in any community cookbooks from the southern parts of Australia, where the mango does not fruit.

In some books and some areas, it is the very *lack* of local produce (or at least perception of such absence) which is the key factor. Western Queensland seems to stand out in this

⁹² *The Orange Recipe Gift Book*, 3rd ed. (1930s), 97.

⁹³ *The Esk Valley Book: Treasured Recipes of the Country Women of the Esk Valley*, 3rd ed. (s.l.: The New Idea, for the Esk Valley Group of the CWA, ca 1960), 60.

⁹⁴ Coldham, *A Voice from the Bush*, 27.

⁹⁵ Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book*, 92.

regard. In 1937 Dr Phyllis Cilento, then President of the Mothercraft Association of Queensland, wrote in her introduction to the QCWA's *Cookery Book: Northern Division*, "The country women of the North-west have learnt, through necessity, to prepare dainty and appetising dishes from the monotonous food supplies available in the bush".⁹⁶ A generation later, in 1968, the women of the Wangi Club reiterated this problem. While Australians were sometimes accused of being lackadaisical about cooking due to the abundance, variety and high quality of available foodstuffs, this was not so in Western Queensland, they wrote. Their supplies comprised "a steady diet of mutton and only a small range of fruit and vegetables". *Once a Jolly Jumbuck!*, their recipe book, was therefore "a collection of ideas which will add spice and variety and keep the diet full of interest". They summed up their central problematic in a poem:

We introduce, for daily use,
A meaty book wherein to look
For dishes we can sup on.
A handy tome for every home -
On every page are comments sage
On how to cook with mutton.

Let's variate and applicate
And alterate and combinate
Like Gourmets (never gluttons!);
The meat of sheep is fairly cheap,
It's tender, sweet; it's good to eat;
So let us to our muttons!⁹⁷

Perhaps these housewives would have benefited from Mrs Rawson's encouragement to try out the bush foods of their area. In 1895, having spent years living as a grazier's

⁹⁶ Ethel Crowther and I Humphry, *Cookery Book: CWA Northern Division* (Townsville: DW Hastings & Sons Ltd, 1937), 5.

⁹⁷ *Once a Jolly Jumbuck: A Mutton Cookbook / Compiled by Members of the Wangi Club*, 2nd ed. (Brisbane: Bush Children's Health Scheme, 1968), foreword.

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wife on cattle stations in far north-west Queensland, Mrs Rawson wrote, “I would advise every housewife in the Bush to experiment and try everything; the blacks or her own common sense will soon tell her what is edible and what is not. There is a great amount of pleasure to be gained in trying new dishes with primitive materials. The Bush teems with animal life, and are we not told that the Almighty has placed it there for the benefit and sustenance of man?”⁹⁸ Yet it seems this approach never took off; white Australian settlers would, on the whole, rather accept severe dietary restriction than eat native foods. In 1962 Jock Marshall and Russel Drysdale’s *Journey Among Men* reported, “On Cape York Peninsula one of us was fascinated to see white stockmen almost invariably confine their diet to salt beef, damper and bushpickles.”⁹⁹ In the Aboriginal camps nearby the menu consisted of barramundi speared in the rivers, wild sucking pig, geese and ducks, scrub turkey and squatter pigeon. One wondered who really were the savages – the white or the black?”¹⁰⁰

There is evidence in community cookbooks of the use of local native foods, at all stages in the twentieth century. Rosella Jam, for example, is a recipe distinctive to Queensland and the north, the rosella (*Hibiscus sabdariffa*) being native to the tropical north of Australia.¹⁰¹ A Kangaroo Island community cookbook in 1979 gave a recipe for Muntries Jam – muntries, or munthari (*Kunzea pomifera*) are indigenous to Australia’s southern coastal areas.¹⁰² In South Australia, much of which is semi-arid, recipes for quandong jam were found, as well as in the Kimberley, the quandong (*Santalum*

⁹⁸ Rawson, *Antipodean Cookery Book and Kitchen Companion*, facsimile ed., 56.

⁹⁹ Bush pickles: a bottle of Worcestershire sauce stirred into a tin of plum jam.

¹⁰⁰ Jock Marshall and Russell Drysdale, *Journey among Men* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1962), 170.

¹⁰¹ The rosella is common in many tropical countries and is elsewhere known as the roselle.

¹⁰² *Island Recipes*, 63.

acuminatum) being an indigenous fruit local to arid and semi-arid areas.¹⁰³ In *Spinifex Stew*, a 1979 cookbook from inland South Australia, quandong recipes from half a dozen contributors covered jam, dried fruit, stewed fruit, pie, pudding, relish and chutney.¹⁰⁴ Other distinctive ingredients in *Spinifex Stew* included rabbit and kangaroo. Notes on the witchetty grub stated, “Found in the roots of acacia bushes, Mrs E Morton assures us that the ones got from the bark of a gum tree, cooked in hot ashes are delicious, superior to the expensive snails of France!”¹⁰⁵ Other community cookbooks have been notable for their reference to local game, such as for example the 1937 *Queensland Cookery Book: CWA Northern Division*.

The South Australian CWA’s *Calendar of Puddings* also included recipes for Quandong Pie, Quandong Pudding and Dried Quandongs. In its section on Recipes Using Native Plants it also discussed the use of native swan’s egg and emu eggs in cooking.¹⁰⁶ Emu eggs were discussed in similar terms in other community cookbooks, mostly but not solely ones with an outback connection, such as the *Coronation Cookery Book*, the *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book* and a *Cookery book / compiled by Royal Flying Doctor's Service*.¹⁰⁷ By 1972 things had progressed so far that a community cookbook compiled in Perth by an American women’s friendship club could include a recipe from an Australian contributor for an omelet of emu eggs.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book*, 211. Watkie, *The Housewives' Calendar of Puddings*, 2nd ed. (ca 1948), unnumbered. Mrs F Allen Box, *Red Cross Jam Recipe Book*, 1st ed. (Adelaide: The Advertiser Printing Office, 1941), 45.

¹⁰⁴ *Spinifex Stew*, 38-39.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁰⁶ Watkie, *The Housewives' Calendar of Puddings*, 2nd ed. (ca 1948), unnumbered.

¹⁰⁷ Sawyer and Moore-Sims, *Coronation Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1938), 230. Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book. Cookery Book / Compiled by Royal Flying Doctor's Service, Women's Auxiliary of the Air Branch*, 29.

¹⁰⁸ *International Gourmet Cooking*, 106.

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In 1961 the nineteenth edition of the *WMU Cookery Book* suggested “Queensland nuts” (macadamias) as an alternative to walnuts in Kentish Cake.¹⁰⁹ *Sunshine Coast Recipes* similarly called for them under this regional name for Sunlit Salad, an American-style jellied salad, in 1979; later recipes in the same book called them macadamias instead.¹¹⁰ (They are also known within Queensland as “bopple nuts” or “Bauple nuts”, but I have not found these terms used in community cookbooks.) Macadamias were first successfully commercialised in Australia in the 1950s, some years after the Hawaiian trials had resulted in the American macadamia industry’s success. The increasing use of macadamias after this time could be due to their increasing availability; it could also be related to the fact that their popularity in America had the effect of “acculturating” them in Australia, increasing their popularity by providing outside corroboration of their deliciousness.

4. Cultural and technological responses to climate, locality and lifestyle

The earliest community cookbook recipes demonstrated a great ambivalence to the dictates of the Australian continent and particularly its climate. Recipes were, for the most part, overwhelmingly identified with European traditions of cooking and eating. Rare was the recipe which did not involve hours of cooking. Even where native ingredients were involved, such as native game or fruits, the methods by which they were cooked tended to be stolidly Anglo-Saxon (or Anglo-French for special occasions). However, even in these early years cooks were showing the beginnings of acceptance of local conditions. *A Voice from the Bush* gave a recipe for Hot Weather Pastry (butter or lard, 6oz to the pound of flour, plus a whole egg and a teaspoon of

¹⁰⁹ *WMU Cookery Book*, 19th ed. (1961), 130.

¹¹⁰ *Sunshine Coast Recipes*, 3.

sugar, gave a short, reasonably tender but robust pastry for sweet tarts and so forth),¹¹¹ an indicator of the culinary evolution British-descended cooks in Australia were already undertaking.

Weather conditions are the most relevant and the most palpable of local conditions in Australian community cookbooks. This country's extreme climate variations, from alpine to desert to tropical, and susceptibility to drought and flooding, are a matter of legend – as immortalised in the poem by Dorothea Mackellar quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Community cookbooks show Australian women working out the consequences of their own particular locality, while also holding onto dearly loved traditions from other lands.

Home hints in the *Hobart Cookery Book*, as quoted at the beginning of Chapter Four, were more likely to relate to cold-weather than to hot-weather contingencies.¹¹²

Cookery books from warmer areas were more inclined to feature sections on Cooling Summer Drinks, as in the 1908 *WMU Cookery Book* – though in other regards this book bore a marked culinary similarity to works from further south. In its eighth edition (1904) the *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts* included new sections of Summer Drinks and more “fancy” hot-weather recipes, such as Strawberry Cream and Chaud Froid of Chicken.¹¹³

Dry seasons affected the supply of milk and dairy products, in particular, and the want was felt most keenly in country areas. The 1915 *Red Cross Cookery Book*, written for country people, included recipes for Dry Season Pudding and Mary's Pudding (Without

¹¹¹ Coldham, *A Voice from the Bush*, 22.

¹¹² *Hobart Cookery Book*, 117.

¹¹³ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 8th ed. (1904), 72, 195.

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Eggs) with this problem in mind.¹¹⁴ Eggless and butterless puddings and cakes were common community cookbook inclusions in the early part of the twentieth century, and again during the years of wartime rationing.

Choice of cooking fats can be a strong regional indicator. One well known example is that in Europe, notably in France and Italy, butter is classic for the north and oil for the south. In 1900s Australia it seems dripping was universally used for savoury purposes and often for sweet things as well. In baking, butter was regarded as the counsel of perfection but was in many places only seasonally available, or else highly salted, expensive and of poor quality. That is if it could withstand the climate at all: North Queensland prided itself on rich dairying due to its excellent rainfall, but butter didn't have much of a chance in the steamy heat of the wet season. The *Hobart Cookery Book*, coming from a cool climate, recommended use of butter with a fairly free hand compared to other states. Its Queensland contemporary, the 1908 *WMU Cookery Book*, was more likely to call for a choice of fats, eg "butter or dripping". In the hot north of Western Australia, Mary Durack recalled that before refrigeration arrived in the Kimberley butter was "restricted to the brief cooler weeks of the year".¹¹⁵ It was not until towards the middle of the twentieth century, with the evolution of household cooling technologies, that it became an item of daily diet. The Queensland CWA Northern Division's *Cookery Book* had a recipe for Syrup Scones in which syrup (presumably golden syrup, first cousin to treacle) took the place of butter. This substitution of syrup for butter seems to bear a relationship to the characteristic Queensland custom of treacle with damper and/or fritters, as described previously.¹¹⁶ Even long after the introduction of domestic refrigeration, which has obviated the need

¹¹⁴ Lowe, *Red Cross Cookery Book*, 59 and 54.

¹¹⁵ Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book*, vi.

¹¹⁶ Crowther and Humphry, *Cookery Book: CWA Northern Division*, 35.

to find substitutes for butter, the impact of early local climate conditions on regional food can be observed in this kind of localised culinary habit.

5. Expressions of regional pride and loyalty

Csergo finds that “regional foods became symbols of historical continuity and shared memory as well as tokens of community”.¹¹⁷ This nexus of regional food, local history and local memory is clear in many community cookbooks. From about the 1960s local history groups began to produce community cookbooks, which preserved for posterity local historical information and images. Other groups such as schools were increasingly wont to make historical-minded community cookbooks as well. Many of these works also defined their culinary subject in the context of their own region.

Buderim Bouquet defined its regional subject as the Buderim plateau and embedded its recipes in a strong discourse of local food products, local history and local personalities. This cookbook construed the “flavour of the area” in historical terms, giving a rich narrative of historical recipes and reminiscences about the town, its residents, their produce and their cooking. *The Norfolk Island Cookery Book* presented “Norfolk’s choicest recipes and other specially selected ones”, plus “Norfolk phrases and words we wish to perpetuate”.¹¹⁸ It focussed closely on a range of subtropical fruits and vegetables, plus fish. *Stumps, Stews and Stories* was a collection of reminiscences and recipes from local community members of the “Peake, Jabuk, Geranium and Parrackie districts” by the Parents and Friends association of the Geranium Area School. Among the many items of local historical lore, tips on local gardening and discussion of the

¹¹⁷ Julia Csergo, “The Emergence of Regional Cuisines”, in *Food: A Culinary History*, ed. Flandrin and Montanari, 504-05.

¹¹⁸ *Norfolk Island Cookery Book*, 2.

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renowned local Mallee stump,¹¹⁹ it contained recipes for, among other things, kangaroo and quandong.¹²⁰ Consciousness of regional industry is also evident among recipe contributors - for example the specification to use “Mildura apricots” for Apricot Cream Cakes, in *Home Cookery for Australia*.¹²¹

Advertisers often sought to harness the power of local and regional allegiances, which centres on a combination of local patriotism and commercial self-interest. The Arab Brand of Goods stressed to their home market that they were “made by Tasmanian Labour” in the *Hobart Cookery Book*.¹²² “‘Sunny West’ Butter – For All Recipes – Will Assure best results – Made in your own State” appeared in the *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints*.¹²³ Gippsland dairy products were similarly advertised to the locals in *Is Emu on the Menu?*¹²⁴ “Buy Flair Fish Cutlets and Salmon ... caught in the sparkling seas of Tasmania and processed in our many factories throughout the Island” trumpeted the Eastern Tasmania Fisherman’s Co-op Society, in the 1963 *Collegiate Recipe Book*.¹²⁵ Advertisers’ choice to draw on these bonds is illustration of their perceived importance. Regional awareness, pride, patriotism and loyalty were characteristics that could be leveraged for business. Consumers’ choices did not have to be made for purely culinary reasons to have both economic and cultural weight.

¹¹⁹ Mallee stump - enlarged rootstock of one of a particular group of eucalyptus trees, known for its excellent burning qualities.

¹²⁰ *Stumps, Stews and Stories: A Collection of Local Recipes, Hints, Anecdotes and Sketches from the Peake, Jabuk, Geranium and Parrakie Districts*, (Geranium, SA: Geranium Area School Parents and Friends Association, 1986).

¹²¹ *Home Cookery for Australia*, 2nd ed. (1906), 113.

¹²² *Hobart Cookery Book*, unnumbered.

¹²³ Barnes, *CWA Cookery Book and Household Hints*, 5th ed. (1941), 186.

¹²⁴ Crooke, et al, *Is Emu on the Menu?*, 120, 39.

¹²⁵ *Collegiate Recipe Book*, (Hobart: St Michael's Collegiate School Auxiliary, 1963), 20.

6. Regionally differentiated language

Regional language can be a significant indicator of regional self-awareness and/or regional food culture. Items of regional parlance were sometimes used to distinguish community cookbook titles, imbuing a book with a particular local flavour. *Donga Dishes*, a cookbook from Woomera in far north SA, used “donga”, a word connoting barren and remote outback areas, to signal its regional specificity. Beyond simple physical regionality, however, there is a regionalised food lexicon in community cookbooks.

Some community cookbooks invoked regional dialects. In Torres Strait Island creole, for example, the word “sabbi” was used for coconut; the *Torres Strait Cookbook* used this as well as many other Torres Strait creole words. In the *Barossa Cookery Book*, as I noted in Chapter Four, was a recipe for Fowl Soup which used the traditional “Barossa-Deutsch” language, explaining that spaghetti was “commonly called nudeln”.¹²⁶

An example of a simple regional variant, with inter-state ramifications, is “Fritz”. Fritz is the South Australian term for a particular type of mild, highly processed, fatty sausage product. It has a long provenance in South Australia. In 1900 it was advertised among other cured meat products (“Corned Beef, Fritz, Polony, Savaloys”) by J Bullock, Provision Dealer of Pulteney St, Adelaide, in the *Book of Tested Recipes*.¹²⁷ In the first half of the twentieth century, Fritz frequently appeared in community cookbooks as a recipe, not just a readymade coldcut. In 1912 the name was applied to a Galentine [sic] of Beef (Fritz) in the *Liberals Cookery Book*.¹²⁸ Fritz Sausage appeared in the *Kookaburra* (made with finely minced steak, bacon, breadcrumbs, egg and

¹²⁶ *Barossa Cookery Book*, 3rd ed. (1932), 5.

¹²⁷ *Book of Tested Recipes*, (1900), 21.

¹²⁸ Schlank, *Liberal's Cookery Book*, unnumbered.

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seasonings, rolled in a cloth and boiled)¹²⁹ and a plainer version in the *Green and Gold* a few years later.¹³⁰ Later in the century it appears as though the commercial version of Fritz overcame the homemade one; there was no further reference to it. Fritz as a commodity, though, continued to be called for. The *CAA Cook Book* used commercial Fritz to make Fritz Cornucopias, little rolled savouries.¹³¹ Fritz was used in a Savoury Tidbit in the *Red Cross Cookery Book* of the South Australian Division.¹³² *Recipes from Kangaroo Island* included one for Fritz Cups with the admonishment “do not use fritz with plastic skin”, this being regarded by South Australian Fritz connoisseurs as an inferior product, sometimes called “bung fritz”.¹³³ The 1906 *Auburn Cookery Book* also had a recipe for Fritz, using only rump steak and no bacon.¹³⁴ This is the only non-South Australian appearance of Fritz that I have encountered.

Kel Richards argues that the word “Fritz” is interchangeable with a whole bevy of other names used in other parts of the nation, including Baron Sausage, Beef Belgium, Byron Sausage, Devon, Empire Sausage, German Sausage, Luncheon Sausage, Mystery Meat, Polony, Pork German, Strasburg, Wheel Meat and Windsor Sausage.¹³⁵ Bearing in mind that Polony was a different product advertised alongside Fritz back in the 1900 *Book of Tested Recipes*, I believe this may be drawing rather too long a bow; there are subtle but significant differences between some of these products. However, a search of these terms among community cookbooks turns up a few items of interest.

¹²⁹ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1911), 90.

¹³⁰ *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 4th ed. (1928), 9.

¹³¹ *CAA Cook Book*, 35.

¹³² *Red Cross Cookery Book / Compiled by Southern Region (SA Division)*, (Adelaide: Charles Brown and Associates, 1965), 107.

¹³³ *Recipes from Kangaroo Island*, (Kingscote SA: Kingscote Area School Welfare Club, 1980), 23.

¹³⁴ Wharton-Shaw, *Auburn Methodist Tested Recipes* (1906), 19.

¹³⁵ Kel Richards, *Word Map: What Words Are Used Where in Australia* (Sydney?: ABC Books, 2005).

A recipe for Beef and Ham Polony immediately preceded the recipe for Fritz Sausage in the 1911 *Kookaburra Cookery Book*. They were, indeed, very similar. Polony called for ham and Fritz for bacon, to be finely minced with a quantity of steak. Polony called for equal weights of each and Fritz for considerably more steak than bacon. Each was bound with breadcrumbs and eggs, seasoned, and boiled in a cloth, Polony for rather longer than Fritz per weight of meat.¹³⁶ Each was to be rolled in breadcrumbs (or the Fritz could be glazed) and eaten cold, being good for picnics, lunches, etc. The *Worker Cookery Book*, a few years later, had a recipe for Bologna Sausages - “commonly called ‘polony’”. This recipe was quite different from the Polony of the *Kookaburra*, being a sausage in a skin, though the recipe pointed out “It is cheaper to buy the skins than to make them, and, if hard put to it, a floured cloth is better than nothing”. The recipe used equal parts of bacon, beef, veal, pork and beef suet, thyme, marjoram and sage, seasoned and filled into the skins before boiling and later smoking.¹³⁷

Baron / Byron sausage merited no mentions in any of the community cookbooks I have studied; neither did Empire Sausage, Pork German, Beef Belgium,¹³⁸ Wheel Meat, nor Mystery Meat. German Sausage is a term, however, which did appear. *The Worker Cookery Book*’s recipe for German Sausage called for bacon, beef, breadcrumbs, eggs and seasoning, minced together and boiled in a cloth “like a roley-poley pudding”, to be eaten cold – just like polony and fritz.¹³⁹ In the 1920s the contributor of the Aberdeen Sausage recipe to Euroa’s *St Paul’s Cookery Book* instructed to shape it “like a German sausage”.¹⁴⁰ The *Barossa Cookery Book* from its first edition had a German Sausage

¹³⁶ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1911), 90.

¹³⁷ Gilmore, *Worker Cookery Book* (1914), 30.

¹³⁸ Nor Belgium Beef, Belgium Sausage nor Belgian Sausage.

¹³⁹ Gilmore, *Worker Cookery Book* (1914), 29.

¹⁴⁰ de Boos, *St Paul’s Cookery Book*, 17.

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(but no Fritz); the recipe was of the type already described, but flavoured with quite a lot of nutmeg.¹⁴¹ The *Green and Gold*, in addition to its recipe for Fritz Sausage, had a recipe suggestion for a sandwich filling made of “German sausage and capers”.¹⁴² The *Berrambool Cookery Book* had a German Sausage, which like that in the *Barossa* was precisely similar to recipes for Fritz, but with a lot of nutmeg.¹⁴³ The *Stowport Cookery Book* directed for Hamburg Steak, “Roll it the size of a German sausage, tie in a cloth, and boil in a little water for about two hours. When cooked, take out of the cloth, roll in breadcrumbs, and eat cold”.¹⁴⁴ This is all starting to sound terribly familiar.

Windsor Sausage turned up in only one community cookbook; the *WMU Cookery Book*'s sixteenth edition, in 1944 as the war ground on, introduced a special section called the “Emergency Corner”, suggesting use of storecupboard convenience items and including some quick recipes, including one using “Windsor Sausage” (no recipe provided).¹⁴⁵ Was this a wartime patriotic phrase for what would previously have been termed German Sausage? According to Robards this was what happened in Queensland; the recipe did not change, just the name.¹⁴⁶

Luncheon Sausage was the subject of recipes in *The Red Cross Cookery Book* from South Australia in the 1960s,¹⁴⁷ and earlier in the *Calendar of Luncheon and Tea Dishes* from the CWA in New South Wales, their version being lightly curried.¹⁴⁸ Strasburg was mentioned by one community cookbook – in the 1904 *Cookery Book of Good and*

¹⁴¹ *Barossa Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1917), 18.

¹⁴² *Green and Gold Cookery Book*, 9th ed. (1938), 212.

¹⁴³ Moffatt, *Berrambool Recipe Book*, 57.

¹⁴⁴ *Stowport Cookery Book*, 6.

¹⁴⁵ *WMU Cookery Book*, 16th ed. (1944), xxvii.

¹⁴⁶ Robards, *Australian Flavour*, 79.

¹⁴⁷ *Red Cross Cookery Book / Compiled by Southern Region (SA Division)*, 96.

¹⁴⁸ Hammond, *Calendar of Luncheon and Tea Dishes*, 2nd ed. (1932), 4 Feb.

Tried Receipts a recipe for Epigrams (slices of cold meat spread with sausage meat, battered and fried) mentioned that “Strasburg tinned meat” could be substituted for the sausage meat.¹⁴⁹ This sounds like a very different product to the recipes so far identified under the name of Fritz / German / Windsor Sausage.

Devon, as far as South Australians know, is the eastern states’ term for Fritz. It was called for in Devon Fritters in the *CWA Calendar of Luncheon and Tea Dishes*.¹⁵⁰ Confusingly, sliced Devon was also required in a 1969 South Australian publication, the *Port Broughton Area School Welfare Club Recipe Book*, to make Devon Lilies.¹⁵¹ Recipe contributed by an interstater, perhaps?

Overall, it is an unresolved question whether all of these terms describe exactly the same food item; it is a matter for the food sociologists. Whether all the words meant the same thing earlier in Australia’s food history is perhaps one for the historians, but not answerable at this juncture. It does seem probable, though, that regional variation is at the heart of some of the differences noted. What can be seen with reasonable clarity is that Fritz is a South Australia-specific term for a type of sausage that either does not appear in other states or goes by one or more other names. It seems likely that historically Fritz and German Sausage, at least, were closely related, if not exactly the same thing, German Sausage being the nationally recognised term (also used in South Australia) and Fritz the South Australian regional variant.

The effects of national food supply on regional character

National supply chains tend to work against regional character, by homogenising the food supply. Michael Symons’ argument about Australia’s lack of a cuisine due to its

¹⁴⁹ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 8th ed. (1904), 191.

¹⁵⁰ Hammond, *Calendar of Luncheon and Tea Dishes*, 2nd ed. (1932), 31 July.

¹⁵¹ *Port Broughton Area School Welfare Club Recipe Book*, (Port Broughton, SA: Port Broughton Welfare Club, 1969), 98.

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lack of a peasant past is founded upon this observation.¹⁵² Santich comments, “Years ago, when people in Australia were far more reliant on local produce, you could find regional specialities based on ingredients proper to the region. Most of them are probably now extinct”.¹⁵³ Bannerman dryly comments, in like vein, “there has been some talk of an emerging ‘regionalism’ in Australian food, though it is not clear how a nation of kitchens that obtain almost all their supplies from major supermarket chains will ever make much of it”.¹⁵⁴ Elsewhere he suggests that in the twentieth century, rapid population expansion and infrastructure meant that local networks were of declining importance, “mass networks being rising influences on culture”.¹⁵⁵

In Australian community cookbooks, I have argued that evidence exists of regionally based variations in foodstuffs. It must be noted, however, that, just as the specifically Barossa-German recipes are in the minority in the *Barossa Cookery Book*, regionally specific ingredients tend to be minority appearances in community cookbooks generally. This does not undermine their symbolic, cultural or dietary importance, but it does draw attention to the fact that, when Coles and Woolworths stock the same items in virtually every outlet across the nation, Australians from Tasmania to Arnhem Land end up buying the same ingredients, which has the inevitable effect of diminishing regional particularity.

The role of adversity

Flandrin and Montanari, examining the economic and class structures underlying this issue, find that regional food traditions were not always positively viewed, particularly by the poor, being associated with privation and lack of opportunity. This was due to the

¹⁵² Symons, *One Continuous Picnic*.

¹⁵³ Santich, *Looking for Flavour*, 129.

¹⁵⁴ Bannerman, *Seed Cake and Honey Prawns*, 54.

¹⁵⁵ Bannerman, “Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating”, 15.

historic association of local cuisines with “the local system of food production”. The elites, by contrast, could luxuriate in what they wanted, when they wanted it. “In a sense, the food industry has today realised this ancient dream. Democratic as well as oblivious of regional differences, it has made it possible for everyone to eat whatever they like wherever they like, albeit at a price”.¹⁵⁶

In this sense, there is a clear connection between food regionalism and adversity – though not necessarily, or not only, economic adversity.

It may be cultural adversity (as with the Barossa Germans); isolation; poverty; colonial oppression; or even the pressures on livelihood which have led formerly agricultural regions to diversify into tourism and value-added foods. Perhaps the most significant form of adversity encouraging regional adaptations early in Australia’s history was the cultural dislocation of Britons (and other aliens) dropped into landscapes which did not lend themselves to simple reproduction of their accustomed foodways or lifestyles. Also, problems of supply are frequently cited as reasons why Australian cooks, particularly those in isolated country areas, had to be inventive.

Community cookbooks sometimes played a significant role in community responses to adversity. Obviously, financial adversity often leads to the bright idea of creating a community cookbook in the first place. But there can be other motivations drawn from cultural pressures, and other benefits drawn from community cookbooks when weathering adverse cultural conditions. The *Barossa Cookery Book*, for example, was instrumental in documenting and helping to perpetuate Barossa regional cuisine through the vicissitudes of a century in which a German cultural background was a political and social liability rather than an asset. The *Torres Strait Cookbook* celebrated a culinary tradition which had survived over a hundred years of colonial trauma and dislocation.

¹⁵⁶ Flandrin and Montanari, eds., *Food: A Culinary History*, 552.

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Adversity, in this general sense, may be viewed as the crucible which refines what is most important and most distinct in a regional culture.

The role of culinary literature

Literature, it seems, is a vital organ in the communication of regional foodways.

Heuzenroeder makes the point that a regional cookbook does not have to be, and probably cannot be, a comprehensive account of a regional cuisine. The *Barossa Cookery Book* had several notable omissions, particularly local adaptations of traditional German dishes.¹⁵⁷ To this extent, community cookbooks need to be viewed collectively, as a body of literature, more than as individual texts, in order to represent a rich, diverse and nuanced account of regional foodways.

It must be observed, in the Australian context, that some regions (notably those most isolated in the centre of the nation) until not terribly long ago were still creating the community institutions that might support the body of “provincialist culinary literature” which, according to Csergo, is “the first important step towards the emergence of regional cuisines”.¹⁵⁸ Community cookbooks, due to their qualities of rootedness within the locality and the lives of its inhabitants, have the distinctive potential to contribute to such an enterprise. Heuzenroeder finds that the *Barossa Cookery Book* assisted in strengthening local culture by reinforcing “existing networks in the region”.¹⁵⁹

Conclusions

I am not convinced that Australia has spent the last decade or two “try[ing to] develop regionality – retrospectively”, as proposed in the 1990s by food journalist Cherry

¹⁵⁷ Heuzenroeder, “A Region, Its Recipes and Their Meaning”, 46.10.

¹⁵⁸ Csergo, “The Emergence of Regional Cuisines”, in *Food: A Culinary History*, ed. Flandrin and Montanari, 505.

¹⁵⁹ Heuzenroeder, “A Region, Its Recipes and Their Meaning”, 46.8.

Ripe.¹⁶⁰ It seems to me that efforts to “develop” or “create” regional character and cuisine tend to be rather forced affairs, and are nearly always undertaken with money in mind. These things must evolve more organically. It is a matter of identity and culture more than commercial motivation. This takes time, yes, but it is the journey that counts. Nor do I agree with those who suggest that Australia, culinarily, is an undifferentiated, regionless monoculture; this chapter has considered numerous examples to the contrary. Supermarkets and the associated national food-supply culture may have been a detriment to our sense of local culture and regional differentiation, but they cannot cancel out the combined forces of geography, climate, ethnic background, agriculture and local way of life that underpin regional cooking and eating habits in Australia. Culinary literature, and specifically the unique form of the community cookbook, is instrumental in giving a voice to local and regional culinary cultures, to preserving them and to developing them.

In answer to the question posed by Santich, I believe that it is possible to speak of regional cuisines in Australia. It is certainly very possible to speak of a twentieth-century history of regionally differentiated foodways in different parts of the nation, the “distinctive regional characters” Santich describes, which professionals in the 1990s sought to “create” but which were in fact already evident, if often in raw form, in home kitchens around the nation.¹⁶¹

In this chapter I have drawn on both the Old World and the New World models of regionalism. I found that their main relevant differences, with regard to the discussion of regional foodways and community cookbooks, are differences of emphasis more than substance. Similar processes underlie each form of regionalism, although in the case of

¹⁶⁰ Cherry Ripe, *Goodbye, Culinary Cringe* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1993), 160.

¹⁶¹ Barbara Santich, “Regionalism and Regionalisation in Food in Australia”, *Rural Society* 12, no. 1 (2002): 129.

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the New World, regional produce consciousness is largely a matter of cultural will and perhaps of convenience, but not of implacable necessity.

Australian community cookbooks, dating as they do from the last years of Australian colonialism, reflect the experience of place and landscape of several generations of Australians, in particular the continuing effort to come to terms with what remained, for the British majority, a bewilderingly foreign land. Community cookbooks contained recipes which cleaved to Old World norms of ingredients and cooking methods, on the whole, but also showed attempts (each generation in its own way) to get to grips with the new environs they faced. Climatologically, from the desert to the tropics, each climate type was represented in some way at some time.

I am, however, conscious that many of the examples in this chapter are from the north, and most specifically the tropical areas of the country. Perhaps this is due to the ongoing hegemony of European-derived cultural patterns in mainstream Australia.

Because conditions in the south of the nation were more conducive to reproduction of familiar European styles of agriculture, foodstuffs, cultural habits and culinary patterns, the culinary culture of Anglo-European populations in southern regions of Australia did not differentiate as readily or as clearly. Conditions in the north, by contrast, were so materially different that the food culture necessarily entered a period of evolution.

Tropical-zone foods are “distinctive”, within a cultural matrix based on temperate-zone living. They are, in a sense, the Other. As Edwards notes, historically “the white man in the tropics [has tended] to bring with him his eating habits based on a temperate climate”, remaining “mentally tied ... to hard to obtain or perishable ingredients”.¹⁶² In eventually relaxing this cultural requisite (by choice or severest necessity), settlers of

¹⁶² Edwards, *Traditional Torres Strait Island Cooking*, 10-11.

the north developed distinctive new cultural habits surrounding food, including eating different foodstuffs, and/or using familiar foods in different ways.

Regions with distinctive socio-historical features reflect this in their cookbooks; agricultural pursuits that drive the identifications of regions can also be clearly identified. The role of adversity in shaping regional particularity is key. Community cookbooks are one stratagem for strengthening, preserving and even developing regional food culture, in the face of such adversity. They are also used to celebrate survival. Due to negative perceptions about regional cookery works within the publishing industry community cookbooks, as mostly self-published works, seem to have an advantage over professional cookery publications in representing the foodways of regional communities.

Well before the 1990s “regionalising impulse” described by Santich,¹⁶³ Australian community cookbooks showed the bones of regional awareness and food-related behaviours. It may well be true, as proposed by one of Trubek’s interviewees, that “it takes a long time to make a regional cuisine”.¹⁶⁴ However, elements of regionalism – potentially the building blocks of such cuisine – characterise many locations in Australia. Some of these may yet develop a fully-fledged regional cuisine. Others may stop at “local flavour”, or “local foodstuffs”, a perfectly legitimate place to be.

The growing contemporary concern with climate change contributed to by excessive “food miles” is feeding renewed regard for the importance of place and the phenomenon of the “locavore”, the eater of local foods. Climate change could be the form of adversity which leads to a revitalising of local and regional foodways. (Australia in 2009, the year of writing, affected by years of drought and a recent economic crisis,

¹⁶³ Santich, *Looking for Flavour*, 126.

¹⁶⁴ Trubek, *The Taste of Place*, 133.

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seemed strangely reminiscent of the 1890s.) If it is accompanied, over time, by strengthening community bonds (perhaps spurred on and strengthened by future community cookbooks), then more regional cuisines may yet come to be discernable on the Australian map. The study of community cookbooks shows that after a century or more of often faltering steps, many of the historical building blocks are in place. In this we may follow the example of some of our forebears, who inscribed in their community cookbooks, alongside sometimes their reluctance to change, a parallel story of their ultimate willingness to explore a new, easier and healthier relationship with their local landscape and its products.

Chapter 9

Nation-Building and the Civil Society

The idea in producing this book was to raise funds for the Royal Flying Doctor Service which plays such an important part in the lives of the folk of the outback ... We hope the book will find its way into many kitchens throughout Australia and in so doing help a very worthy cause.¹

Cookery Book (ca 1960)

By purchasing this recipe book you are helping a deserving and humanitarian organisation to carry out its wide programme of work in the interest of those who did play a vital part in maintaining the freedom of this truly wonderful country in which we live.²

John Carpenter, MBE, *The TPI Cookery Book* (1959)

A state exists for the sake of a good life.³

Aristotle, *Politics* (350 BCE)

The argument has already been made that this unique cookery genre was an excellent medium through which nineteenth- and twentieth-century women could participate in the building of their societies. Longone suggests that community cookbooks represent “a prime example of female bonding and collective civic virtue”.⁴ Driver finds that in Canada, community cookbooks allowed women to “contribute to the building of ... civil society”.⁵ Pilcher notes the role of community cookbooks in helping to redefine

¹ *Cookery Book / Compiled by Royal Flying Doctor's Service, Women's Auxiliary of the Air Branch*, preface.

² *TPI Cookery Book*, preface.

³ Aristotle, *Politics / Translated by Benjamin Jowett* [Internet] (Ebooks@Adelaide, c2007 [cited 18 May 2009]); available from <http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/a/aristotle/a8po>.

⁴ Longone, ““Tried Receipts““, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower, 20.

⁵ Driver, “Cookbooks and Community-Building”, 1.

Mexican gender roles and national identity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁶

Bower concludes that “community cookbooks do more than simply ‘reflect’ the society in which they were published. These books demonstrate the participation of the women who wrote them in the *creation* of that society”.⁷

In Australia it has been a popular recent view that an “Australian cuisine” is or will be a badge of national maturity. However, whereas this public discourse has traditionally been dominated (like that surrounding food regionalism) by various forms of culinary, literary and intellectual professional, I am in agreement with Bannerman that cuisine is more fundamentally organic and therefore democratic than that: “it must come from the people”. “Food scholars, journalists and chefs can continue to define the national cuisine with little expectation that people in the suburbs and the bush will take much notice of them” states Bannerman defiantly, “for Australian cuisine is the cuisine Australians *experience*”.⁸ In discussion of the “tastes of nation” in this chapter, I am concerned with identifying elements of that common culinary experience. I therefore focus on a selection of those dishes or flavours which have proven themselves enduringly popular across the nation and across the decades, and which, in most cases, have come to bear some distinct popular and/or historic association with the idea of “Australian” food and cooking.

In Chapter One I outlined the history of Western thought regarding the civil society and premised this thesis on the idea that community cookbooks can be mobilised to fulfil nation-building and civil-society-promoting functions. This chapter now investigates how community cookbooks have performed these functions in Australia. I also noted in

⁶ Pilcher, “Recipes for *Patria*”, in *Recipes for Reading*, ed. Bower.

⁷ Bower, “*Our Sisters' Recipes*”, 138.

⁸ Bannerman, “Indigenous Food and Cookery Books” in *Culinary Distinction*, ed. Constantino and Supski, 35-36.

Chapter One that community cookbooks first appeared during times of national crisis and/or critical nation-building moments in several countries, including Australia, the USA and Mexico. It seems they may have some special affinity with this theme.

Just as Pilcher shows how Mexican women's re-imagining of Mexican society and nation in their compiled cookbooks helped to fuel a new national identity, so in Australia community cookbooks have contributed not only to the nourishment of the people, but also, amongst other things, to the basic conventions of social interaction. As Bannerman has shown, being an avenue through which people could share their private experience, knowledge and opinions, community cookbooks were significant contributors to the "development of a public discourse" about cooking and eating.⁹

In 1975 Kingston formulated the questions "what part ordinary women had played in constructing Australian society [and] how women had contributed to and responded to the goals and value systems on which the society was based".¹⁰ Community cookbooks provide a useful perspective on this line of inquiry, which, though pertinent, is much neglected. Not only in Australia – civil society theorists Jude Howell and Diane Mulligan argue that the "gulf between gender studies and civil society studies" has been very widespread. "This is all the more curious when one considers how the spaces, organisations and forums of civil society have served as arenas for women activists across the world, contemporarily and historically, to articulate and organise around their demands of gender equality".¹¹ By and large, the makers of community cookbooks in Australia have not been noted for feminist activism. (For example, there has emerged no Australian equivalent of the suffrage cookery books common to the United States and

⁹ Bannerman, "Print Media and the Development of an Australian Culture of Food and Eating", 184-5.

¹⁰ Kingston, *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann*, 3.

¹¹ Howell and Mulligan, eds., *Gender and Civil Society*, xiv.

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England.)¹² They have, though, demonstrated strong commitment to the institutions of the civil society. Annie King reflected the broad conception of this commitment in her foreword to the *'Carry On' Cookery Book*, stating, “we issue this, as we did the last edition, for patriotic, philanthropic, and missionary purposes”.¹³ Visible in Australian community cookbooks is something of the role and contribution made by women to the development of community institutions and social culture in Australia. As well as the publicly feted processes of nation-building (railway construction, establishment of public institutions, going to war) there are many humble and often overlooked aspects of the development of a national culture. The activities of ordinary people in everyday life contribute in small and generally unremarkable ways to the shared project of fostering civic pride, national pride and the lively community life that underlies the two.¹⁴

Community cookbooks represent one such longer term nation-building project by a historically invisible group of stakeholders – the homemakers and home cooks of Australia. By publishing recipe collections, groups of (primarily) women were able to turn a major element of their collective intellectual and cultural property – their kitchen lore – to broader financial and cultural account. In so doing, they were able to be a significant voice in the broader community debate over what it was to live in Australia – not just to cook and eat in Australia (though this in itself was important enough) but to be a member of an “Australian” society, bound by a common set of rules and norms governing social and cultural behaviour.

¹² For example, Hattie A Burr, *The Woman Suffrage Cookery Book* (Boston: Mrs Hattie A Burr, 1886), Mrs Aubrey Dowson, *The Women's Suffrage Cookery Book* (London: Women's Printing Society, 1910).

¹³ King, *'Carry on' Cookery Book*, 4th ed. (1920), foreword.

¹⁴ For a in-depth study of volunteering in Australia see Oppenheimer, *Volunteering*.

Food and Nation

Benedict Anderson characterises nations as “imagined political communities”.¹⁵ The imagining of nation in Australia has been one of the most significant cultural preconceptions of the last 120 years. Nation-building is myth-making; Australian nationalist writer and social reformer Vance Palmer, reflecting on the development of the nationalist tradition in Australian literature, commented, “myth-making is an important means of communication, of bringing people together, of giving isolated communities something to hold in common”.¹⁶ Food is often central to this project. Flandrin and Montanari rightly caution against “the narrow national outlook that shaped most of the gastronomic myths”,¹⁷ but the fact remains that food, as a central expression of personal and communal identities, has a potent force in the discourse of nation. Appadurai and Cusack, among others, have argued for the important relationship between cuisine and nation-building.¹⁸ Cusack’s point is that nationalism is one of a range of ideologies that serve to shape cuisine. Wessell argues, in her study of colonial Australian foodways as an expression of empire, that “food is a crucial element in defining historical identity” and, in colonial Australia, constituted “a device to reaffirm cultural and historical bonds and sustain a shared sense of British identity”. She also notes cookbooks’ role in passing on “certain types of memories and histories”, and the important change that came in the 1890s with a well secured food supply and a “larger

¹⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 6.

¹⁶ Vance Palmer, *The Legend of the Nineties* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1954; reprint, 1983), 52.

¹⁷ Flandrin and Montanari, eds., *Food: A Culinary History*, 6.

¹⁸ Appadurai, “How to Make a National Cuisine”. Igor Cusack, “African Cuisines: Recipes for Nation-Building?”, *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 13, no. 2 (2000).

body of locally written books”.¹⁹ Part of this wave of local culinary literature, at the very end of the colonial period, community cookbooks reflected a public increasingly engaged with the idea of nation, the question of what an “Australian” identity would be in the twentieth century. As a means of community building and as an important part of the public debate over food and taste, community cookbooks are a natural tool for nation-related discourse.

Community cookbooks and nation-building in Australia

Since its inception, nationalism has been a more powerful organising concept in Australian culture than regionalism. However, the concept of the nation has taken much of its guiding mythology from the regions – the legends of the Outback, the untamed, wild character of various parts of the Australian landscape. Russel Ward wrote in *The Australian Legend* (1958) of frontier conditions as “a unifying, nationalist influence”.²⁰ More recently, Tom Griffiths has argued that “the writing of Australian history has always been suffused with a sense of the land and its difference – the observed peculiarities of antipodean nature”.²¹ If the nation is created in part through imagination, resting on shared myths and experiences, such imagining can be seen taking place in Australian community cookbooks, not just in the years immediately before and after Federation, but throughout the twentieth century.

The 1890s were a time of particular patriotic and national foment, as the country edged towards Federation. Community cookbooks’ first appearance at this time positioned them within the debate on nationhood. The name of one of the earliest, *A Voice from the*

¹⁹ Adele Wessell, “There’s No Taste Like Home: The Food of Empire”, in *Exploring the British World: Identity, Cultural Production, Institutions*, ed. Darian-Smith, et al. (Melbourne: RMIT Publishing, 2004), 811-12.

²⁰ Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend*, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1965), 223.

²¹ Tom Griffiths, “The Nature of Culture and the Culture of Nature”, in *Cultural History in Australia*, ed. Teo and White, 71.

Bush, drew on the “Bush Controversy”, a literary stoush between famed nationalist poets Henry Lawson and “Banjo” Paterson, conducted in the *Bulletin* in 1892.

Paterson’s last contribution, “A Voice from the Town” (a “parting shot” published later, in 1894) purported to be a sequel to a much earlier poem, “A Voice from the Bush”, anonymously published in the *Adelaide Advertiser* in 1871.²² All of these poems allude to the figure of the drover and the environment of the bush – either as a space of freedom and adventure or as an oppressive, ruinous place of hardship. The unique physical and cultural spaces of the Australian outback formed a key locus of nationalist sentiment. A writer in *The Bulletin* asked in 1898, with grand rhetorical flourish:

Who has never thrilled with exaltation that, come what may, he is part of Australia and she of him; that his life has been fed at her generous sources; that the destiny of himself and his children is inextricably involved with the destiny of this hostile, mysterious, magnificent island.²³

Community cookbooks were able to be positioned in this national dialogue, both explicitly, like *A Voice from the Bush*, and implicitly, like the *Presbyterian*, with its fundraising focus on the nation-building project of inland missions. Community cookbooks are part of the public discourse of Australian nationalism.

Viewed in the context of national integrity and nation formation, war tends to function as a nationally galvanising crisis, and hence a strong nation-building moment.

Community cookbooks have been significant in their response to war, and the aftermath of war. During both World Wars many community cookbook revenues were directed to local, international and not-for-profit groups involved in war work. These included both made-for-purpose cookbooks such as the various Red Cross cookbooks and also revenues diverted from other pre-existing community cookbooks, as discussed in

²² Warren L Ham, *The 'Bush Controversy'* [Internet] (University of Queensland, 1998 [cited 13th May 2009]); available from www.uq.edu.au/~mlwham/banjo/bush_controversy.html.

²³ *The Bulletin*, 4th June 1898.

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Chapters Two and Three. This was one essential way (apart from knitting socks and blankets, driving the city trams and fruitpicking during harvest time) that women could make a practical contribution to the war effort. After the wars, community cookbooks continued for many decades to be produced in aid of the war wounded and other social consequences of military conflict, for example through such community groups as the Returned Servicemen's League, the Society for the Totally and Permanently Incapacitated, the Disabled Soldiers' Association, and Legacy, which supports the families of those who died in consequence of their military service. The caring work continues long after the heads of state have kissed and made up. Though in Australia the State has taken responsibility for many aspects of post-war welfare, non-government and volunteer bodies are in perennial demand to meet remaining needs.

Culinarily speaking, community cookbooks also disseminated one of the enduring "tastes of nation" that came out of the wars – the Anzac biscuit. Sociologist Sian Supski argues that Anzac biscuits can be viewed as a "culinary memorial", the consumption of which affirms "membership of the Australian nation".²⁴ She notes the important role played by community cookbooks in establishing this tradition. In Australia, Anzac biscuits can be traced back to the *War Chest Cookery Book* created by the Citizens' War Chest Fund of NSW in 1917. The "Anzac Biscuits" in that book were a different type of biscuit, but what we now know as Anzacs were also present, under the less impressive name of Rolled Oats Biscuits.²⁵ As is so common with much-beloved Antipodean baked goods, there is a tussle with New Zealand over who had it first. It was not until 1923 that Anzac Biscuits of the now-traditional variety appeared under that name in an Australian cookery book (two years later than in New Zealand). The book was a

²⁴ Sian Supski, "Anzac Biscuits - a Culinary Memorial", *Journal of Australian Studies* 87 (2006): 52.

²⁵ *War Chest Cookery Book*, 91.

community cookbook – Mrs Wharton-Shaw’s *Six Hundred Tested Recipes*, also known as *Auburn Methodist Tested Recipes*. Community cookbooks have also been significant resources in dissemination of other recipes tasting strongly of nation, such as the lamington, which can be traced back as far as 1908, in both the *WMU Cookery Book* and the *Hobart Cookery Book* of that year.

Community cookbooks and the Australian civil society

The development of the civil society is reflected in the evolution of distinctive shared tastes, such as tastes for food. Sociologist Norbert Elias notes how, in the process of State formation that took place in Western Europe, notably in France and England, from the end of the Middle Ages, literacy helped to drive the transformation while shared taste was at its essence. “The members of this multifarious society spoke the same language ... they read the same books, they had the same taste, the same manners and – with differences of degree – the same style of living”.²⁶ The relatively high literacy level in Australian society around the time of Federation was a necessary precondition for the success of community cookbooks as a social phenomenon, as well as the shared general interest in the question of good taste (discussed in Chapter Five). Cultural anthropologist Margaret Visser discusses in *The Rituals of Dinner* how conventions relate to communication, to human interconnection and to manners and civility.²⁷ Civility is learned only in company; “polite behaviour is ritual performed for the sake of other people, and for the sake of our relationship with other people”.²⁸

For Australians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, inhabitants of a vast, untamed continent and from 1901 a new nation, bringing civility to all corners of the land was a

²⁶ Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 190.

²⁷ Visser, *The Rituals of Dinner*, 22-33.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

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major aim of the nation-building project. As Mrs Beeton notably argued, the practices of the table were at the heart of it all. “Dining is the privilege of civilization. ... The nation which knows how to dine has learned the leading lesson of progress”.²⁹

The practice of a “civilised” way of life, including at its core civilised eating, was a fundamental part of defining what the nation would be. But this enormous landmass was inhabited by a mere few million people; in 1901 the population was 3.8 million, by 1950 it had reached 7.5 million and even in 2009 it amounted “only” to some 22 million. Community cookbooks, therefore, were a valuable medium for overcoming the effects of distance and isolation. They functioned as a forum for people (even when separated by distance, as so often in a large and sparsely populated land) to share their concept of civilised living and collectively to define it. They allowed women to transcend the limitations of their life in the private sphere; they allowed the members of far-flung communities to transcend the effects of their isolation from one another and from the rest of the nation; they allowed communities across the nation, indeed, to pool their ideas and practices in pursuit of good, right, meals, which met the requirements of civilised life within the various parameters of time, place, finance, culture and environment.

In Australia, community cookbooks arose in the context of a perceived need to define a body of cookery relevant to Australian life. Such discussion had been raging as early as the mid-nineteenth century. Edward Abbott, the “Australian Aristologist”, purported in 1864 to have written “the first cookery book devoted to the Australian cuisine”, suitable for those who were “endeavouring to adjust themselves to a more temperate climate

²⁹ Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*, (1880), 945.

than they have otherwise been used to” and to “the foods of Australia”.³⁰ His book is not today considered especially “Australian”, but by throwing his hat in the ring Abbott became the first to start defining the terms of the debate. In the 1890s Dr Philip Muskett, as I noted in Chapter Four, decried the Australian reliance on excessive amounts of meat. He expressed the hope that a national dish, “composed and formally approved of by the nation”, would consist of a “macedoine of vegetables, or a vegetable curry, or some well-concocted salad”.³¹ Various efforts have been made over the years to put forward typically “Australian” menus - mostly, it must be said, without making any great impact on the national consciousness.

The discussion of “Australian” food and cookery, carried out in cookbooks of all kinds as well as in the newspapers, inevitably addressed the question of what it was to be “Australian”: to work with Australian materials and to have Australian tastes and sensibilities. “Delphia”, reviewing a new cookery book in *The Brisbane Courier* in 1898, observed, “The modern housewife has quite a multitude of cookery books to choose from: hardly a house but possesses a Mrs Beeton ... yet there are omissions even in a work of those dimensions. We looked for Swiss roll, sponge roll, kangaroo tail soup, beche-de-mer soup, and found them not”.³² Swiss and sponge rolls are baked goods with long British provenances, but kangaroo tail soup was an obvious reference to Mrs Beeton’s specific inadequacy for Australian cooks. Beche de mer soup, made of the dried and smoked “sea cucumber” harvested off the North Queensland coast and in the Torres Strait Islands,³³ was a traditional Asian delicacy for which (according to

³⁰ Edward Abbott, *The Colonial Cook Book: For the Many as Well as for the 'Upper Ten Thousand'*, by an Australian Aristologist, facsimile ed. (Sydney: Summit Books, 1864 (1970)), preface.

³¹ Muskett, *The Art of Living in Australia*, 125.

³² “Delphia”, *Brisbane Courier*, 10th February 1898, 7.

³³ Phylum Echinodermata, various species, particularly *Holothuria* but also *Stichopus* and *Thelonata*. Also known as trepang (Malay), se-ok-sum (Cantonese), and Wunyami (local Aboriginal language). See

journalist EJ Banfield as well as Delphia)³⁴ Australians were starting to get a taste around the turn of the twentieth century.³⁵ (*Mrs Maclurcan's Cookery Book* contained a recipe for it in 1898. Time-consuming and laborious, it appears more of a “restaurant” than a home dish.)³⁶ Beche de mer was not a taste brought from the Mother Country; its inclusion in this list of Mrs Beeton’s shortcomings, similarly to kangaroo tail soup, reflected an emergent set of “Australian” tastes and sensibilities.

The term “civil society” denotes “social consensus based on agreements about norms and values”.³⁷ Community cookbooks were a forum for building such consensus; they allowed women and community groups to reflect corporately on what constituted sound domestic practice. Cookbooks, as Tobias has it, “are central to the establishment of the socially sanctioned ordering of the private sphere”.³⁸ Any community cookbook, no matter how humble, constitutes in essence a group statement (though it may be diverse and even self-contradictory) about the nature of good cooking, the characteristics of tasty and nourishing food, and appropriate ways of incorporating cooking and eating into daily life. In sharing their recipes for good food, the members of community groups could build a collective image of “the good life”.

Community cookbooks were a forum in which women could work out social distinctions and agreed ways of expressing both social and familial identity. Bannerman proposes that “there can hardly be a church, charity or community organisation ... that

Edwina Toohey, *Before the Aeroplane Dance: The Torres Strait and Cape York: Islanders, Aborigines and Adventurers. From the 1860s to 1914* (Rockhampton: Central Queensland University Press, 2000), 11.

³⁴ EJ Banfield, *Confessions of a Beachcomber* (University of Adelaide online edition, 1908).

³⁵ For an account of the beche de mer fishing industry in Australia, see Toohey, *Before the Aeroplane Dance*, 11-14.

³⁶ Hannah Maclurcan, *Mrs Maclurcan's Cookery Book: A Collection of Recipes, Specially Suitable for Australia and New Zealand*, 1st ed. (Townsville, QL: T Willmetts, 1898), nr 15.

³⁷ Turner, “Civil Society”, in *Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, 70.

³⁸ Tobias, “Early American Cookbooks as Cultural Artifacts”, 16.

has not at some time rallied its members to a fundraising cause and put together a cookery book”.³⁹ Their sheer ubiquity was part of their strength, in terms of acting as a forum for discussion which was able to engage women in all parts of the country and at nearly all levels of society.

The finer points of social differentiation are sometimes mentioned in recipes. For example, *The Kookaburra Cookery Book* informed the reader that Brownie was “The Shearer’s Loaf”, and that Damper was “A Bushman’s recipe”.⁴⁰ *Auburn Methodist Tested Recipes* assured the harried housewife and mother that Sponge Pudding was “A Favourite with Children” – a reminder that food can be socially differentiated in many other ways than just in terms of ethnicity, class and gender.⁴¹ To these must be added age, health status and even such mundanities as location and time of day. Foods are also differentiated according to their specific social context. For example, certain foods in community cookbooks were defined as appropriate to the family sphere, such as Family Soup⁴² or Joan’s Busy Day Dish,⁴³ whereas other foods or ways of cooking were appropriate for more public forums. Even here, specific foods could have very particular relationships to specific kinds of events – such as Wedding Cake, for example, which is appropriate to one event only.

Sample menus were common in community cookbooks for most of the century, and tended to fulfil two main roles. Firstly, they often reflected on the social roles claimed or aspired to by the creators of the books. Secondly, they constituted a guideline for appropriate social and culinary behaviour. The *CWA Cookery Book and Household*

³⁹ Bannerman, *Acquired Tastes*, 49.

⁴⁰ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1911), 214, 19.

⁴¹ Wharton-Shaw, *Auburn Methodist Tested Recipes* (1906), 59.

⁴² *Home Cookery for Australia*, 2nd ed. (1906), 24.

⁴³ *Once a Jolly Jumbuck: A Mutton Cookbook*, 71.

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Hints from WA, supremely practical, contained a week's worth of sample menus for breakfast, lunch and dinner, intended for a farm relying mostly on home production. The great social and geographic shifts experienced by so many as a result of migration to Australia, in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, created a real need for this kind of information. Women needed to know how to deal with unfamiliar landscapes, new foods, more advanced or (in many cases) more primitive domestic technologies, and new social milieus. How does one know - unless one can refer to the experience of others - the best, easiest, most economical and most socially approved way to cater for the three hundred people who will shortly be descending on one's property to buy cattle? Community cookbooks allowed women to disseminate, for their own and one another's reassurance, the agreed social formats as well as the necessary practical know-how. The preface to the fifteenth edition of the *Presbyterian*, in 1918, stated its goal in precisely such terms: "not only to provide wholesome and economical recipes for capable housewives, but to help those who have not had the benefit of maternal guidance and home training".⁴⁴ Especially in the early years of this genre, by sharing their recipes and home hints women could help one another to ameliorate their common domestic burden.

'The good life' in Federation-era community cookbooks

In the Federation era, during which the community cookbook first flourished in Australia, a collective imagining of the "good life" was likely to be characterised by the image of plenty. Good eating involved substantial cuts of meat, hefty puddings and dainty baked goods. It had an element of romance; most community cookbooks of this era contained recipes for such delicacies as Kiss Cakes and Love Cakes.⁴⁵ Bannerman

⁴⁴ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 15th ed. (1918), preface.

⁴⁵ Eg, Wharton-Shaw, *Auburn Methodist Tested Recipes* (1906), 60, 91, 104.

identifies the romance of Federation cookery with sweetness, novelty and the romanticising of bush foods.⁴⁶ (An element of romance must have been a welcome distraction from weary and worrisome hours of domestic care; national prosperity notwithstanding, memories of tough times were fresh, and life remained a struggle for many.) It was not always easy to produce the culinary manifestations of the good life, a fact underlined by such recipes names as Half-Pay Pudding,⁴⁷ Economical Rissoles,⁴⁸ and Poor Man's Goose (made of sheep heart and liver with potato and onion).⁴⁹ The existence of these recipes reflects the depth of the cultural value placed, in the Federation years, on a well-laden table. The full figure which was fashionable for women in early twentieth-century Australia is evidence that the hearty food on the groaning board was intended for consumption as well as for display. Furthermore, full stomachs and sturdy limbs were a sign and a celebration of the fledgling nation's claim to prosperity.

There was a distinctive aroma of nationalism about certain Federation-era recipes. Many recipes invoked Australia, its people and its places in various ways. Sometimes the association was intended to honour a prominent Australian person, as in Crème Caramel à la Melba.⁵⁰ Other times the recipe was named for a place, usually on the basis that its inventor lived there, rather than any more intimate or intrinsic link with the locale. Broken Hill Pudding, Terang Cake, Killoolah Cakes and Leura Sauce (for Fish) all likely owed their names to this phenomenon.⁵¹ (Alternatively, as suggested by Philip

⁴⁶ Bannerman, *A Friend in the Kitchen*, 145,212-13.

⁴⁷ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1911), 113.

⁴⁸ *Hobart Cookery Book*, 24.

⁴⁹ *Book of Tested Recipes*, (1900), 5. *WMU Cookery Book*, 6th ed. (1906), 40.

⁵⁰ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1911), 132.

⁵¹ Leura Sauce appears to have been named after a very specific place – the contributor's property in Hamilton, Victoria, not the more well-known town named Leura in the NSW Blue Mountains. Naming

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Muskett, it could have been “for the sake of giving it a name, and for no other reason”).⁵² In rarer cases, foods were marked as Australian by their use of a key indigenous ingredient, such as Baked Barracouta⁵³ or Kangaroo Tail Soup - which in the *Kookaburra*'s recipe also called for a spoonful of native currant jelly.⁵⁴ Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, foods could be “Australian” due to a particular cultural condition or habit of settler communities, such as Colonial Goose or Queensland Duck.⁵⁵ Each designating one of several variations on mutton baked with a herb (usually sage) and onion stuffing, these recipes were attempts to make the eternal mutton taste like something else.

That most archetypally Australian of foods, damper, with its echoes of bush, outback and the settler lifestyle, by the early twentieth century was rapidly being romanticised. (By this time already two-thirds of Australians were urban dwellers). In these years, the unique and generally difficult conditions which gave rise to distinctive settler dishes (such as Colonial Goose) were fast disappearing from most areas, and the new era of industrially-produced icons of Australian food such as Vegemite had not yet begun. As such, foods like damper were a natural focus for patriotic sentiment. The upmarket *Kookaburra Cookery Book* in 1911 included two recipes for damper. The first was very rustic. “A Bushman’s recipe, which some people swear by and others swear at”, it called for a quart of boiling water to be poured into the flour bag and stirred with a stick “until you have a lump of dough” which could be taken out and baked in the ashes of

recipes, even cookbooks, after the family property was a method of personalising (without using their own name) sometimes used by upper-class women in this era.

⁵² Muskett, *The Art of Living in Australia*, 125.

⁵³ *WMU Cookery Book*, 6th ed. (1906), 33. *Home Cookery for Australia*, 2nd ed. (1906), 43. Gilmore, *Worker Cookery Book* (1914), 53.

⁵⁴ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1911), 5.

⁵⁵ For example, *WMU Cookery Book*, 6th ed. (1906). and subsequent editions. Also Lanagan, *Kimberley Division Historical Cookery Book*, 143.

the campfire. “A more luxurious way to mix it is to take off your leather legging and mix it on that, or a piece of bark”. The second damper, from Alison Field, was “more modern”, requiring “1 ½ lbs of flour; a little salt; 2 teaspoonfuls of cream of tartar; 1 teaspoonful of carbonate of soda; enough butter milk, milk or water to make a fairly stiff dough.” It was to be baked in a well-floured camp oven, though it could be cooked in the ashes in case of need.⁵⁶ Clearly neither of these dampers was intended to enter the closed wood-fired or gas ranges of upper middle class homes. They did however, by their mere presence, forge a symbolic connection to the world of the Outback, the realm of the drover who was such a potent symbol in nationalist poetry, and bring a specific “taste of Australia” to the cookbook.

The desire of recipe contributors to connect with the idea of “Australia”, to make the land a part of their traditions, did not always manifest in the form of rough-and-ready bush foods. Sometimes the patriotic impulse took a more high-cultural road. *A Voice From the Bush*, emanating from subtropical outback Queensland, contained a rusticated damper recipe from “A Bush Cook”, but also a recipe contributed by its editor Mrs Henry (Helen) Coldham for “Mount Kosciusko”.⁵⁷ Named for Australia’s highest peak (much further south, near the NSW / Victoria border) this milk-rice pudding, flavoured with cocoa and sugar, unmoulded and topped with beaten egg white and sugar, modelled an icon of the Australian landscape in edible form. Mrs Coldham, as the wife of a local grazier, could aspire to some rarer treats on her table (other recipes contributed by her included Pate de Foies Gras Sandwiches and Chocolate Almonds). Her “Mount Kosciusko” appears to have been a culinary once-off; I, at least, have not encountered it anywhere else. However, its type is quite common. In the grand tradition

⁵⁶ *Kookaburra Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1911), 219.

⁵⁷ Coldham, *A Voice from the Bush*, 13.

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of *trompe l'oeil* food, Mount Kosciusko was an Antipodean cousin to the European classic chestnut pudding, Mont Blanc. Attempts of this kind to render the landscape in food are (perhaps mercifully) rare. Such set pieces can be an artful and self-conscious pursuit. Nonetheless, they participate in that process of national myth-making described (and warned against) by Flandrin and Montanari (see above). As such, they are a meaningful element of the national culinary journey.

Other examples of self-conscious Australianism include a range of variations on the theme of Australian Salad. One may wonder if the contributor of Australian Salad to the 1904 *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts* had heard Philipp Musket's argument in favour of a national salad. Australian Salad involved three large lettuces, a bunch of radishes, spring onions, a cup of finely chopped mustard and cress, four tomatoes, parsley and lemon thyme, the chopped whites of two hardboiled eggs, and dressing made of the boiled egg yolks, a large steamed potato, half a cup of grated coconut, shredded sweet almonds, a cup of cream, half a cup of vinegar, and seasoned with mustard, curry powder, pepper and salt. It was, incidentally, the only salad in that edition of the book.⁵⁸ This was followed a few years later by Australian Salad Dressing in the *Hobart Cookery Book* (1908),⁵⁹ a cooked cream-style dressing using butter, mustard, flour, salt, white pepper, vinegar and eggs. Federation-era "Australian" salads, it seems, were hearty creations, with a lot of greenery, a lot of protein and a rich, creamy dressing, pepped up with a bit of mustardy spice.

Indigenous ingredients

Indigenous foods are an interesting category with regard to national culture. I discussed these in the context of regionalism in Chapter Eight, which seems a more apt location

⁵⁸ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 8th ed. (1904), 50.

⁵⁹ *Hobart Cookery Book*, 9.

for them, given that not many foodstuffs are indigenous to the entire Australian continent. However, the idea of indigenous foods is a significant one in discussing the national culture. Wessell finds that in general, “native foods were largely overlooked or translated as inedible”.⁶⁰ Bannerman’s assessment is that apart from the early period of European settlement, when eating native animals was a necessary alternative to going hungry, “bush food never became the food of popular choice – indeed, it often represented economic and social failure”.⁶¹ Bushfoods were, of course, not unique in this regard - consider also the lowly status of the introduced rabbit (discussed in Chapter Four). Fittingly, Bannerman calls rabbit “*de facto* bush meat”.⁶² It must be understood, moreover, that bushfoods such as kangaroo were not allowed to be consumed by humans in many states of the country for many decades. Kangaroo’s recent return to gustatory favour has been accompanied by concerns over the methods by which wild kangaroo meat is hunted, and a newly acquired cultural squeamishness over “eating the coat of arms” (kangaroo and emu are Australia’s heraldic animals) which have hampered its general acceptance. Many other native animals are subject to strict controls over hunting. Meat-based bush foods, during much of the twentieth century, did not have the opportunity of becoming “food[s] of popular choice”; they were, for most Australians, simply unavailable for the table. A recipe for Tasmanian Roast Wallaby in the *Oakburn Recipe Book* (1973), though, bears witness to the history of exceptions to this rule.⁶³

⁶⁰ Wessell, “There’s No Taste Like Home”, 813.

⁶¹ Bannerman, *Seed Cake and Honey Prawns*, 121.

⁶² Bannerman, “Indigenous Food and Cookery Books”, 22.

⁶³ *Oakburn Recipe Book*, (Launceston, TAS: Oakburn College Old Girls' Association, 1973), 57.

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The situation with regard to other indigenous foods is rather different. As Cherry Ripe notes, we have always made good use of indigenous fish species.⁶⁴ The forageable “nuts and berries” and fruits (such as muntries, bunya nuts, native currants, quandongs and rosellas) made rare but consistent appearances in community cookbooks through the twentieth century. The foraging impulse that was vital at times for the early settlers seems to have remained in place for some Australians even when no longer strictly necessary. Perhaps the value earlier twentieth-century Australians placed on thrift (and to which the current generation may possibly be returning, after a hiatus of fifty years) encouraged an interest in the foods of one’s own environment as a neat bit of economy, as well as a distinctive taste of one’s “own” area.

The theme of nation in twentieth-century Australian food

Do community cookbooks deal particularly intensively with “Australian” dishes and ingredients? Not really. Some, notably the CWA cookbooks, tend to have an overtly patriotic edge, but on the whole twentieth-century Australian community cookbooks were involved with the business of living out the realities of Australian cookery, not reflecting on it. Australian recipe names were mere gimmicks as often as anything. Recipes discussed by twentieth-century commentators as examples of Australian cookery typically are present in the span of community cookbooks, and usually are very well represented. For example, WP Thornton in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (1953) proposed some Australian national dishes, drawing heavily on the mythos of the bush. His chosen menu included Diamantina Cocktail (condensed milk, rum, and emu egg), the Murrumbidgee Oyster (a pickmeup made of raw egg with vinegar, pepper and salt), post-and-rail tea made in a billy, damper with “cocky’s joy”, kangaroo tail soup,

⁶⁴ Ripe, *Goodbye, Culinary Cringe*, 5 and 160.

colonial goose and quandong pie. The drinks are conspicuously absent from any community cookbooks I have examined, but the dishes are all present.⁶⁵

In *Looking for Flavour* Santich names a selection of dishes as having Australian roots. They include Crumbed Cutlets - a very common dish that tended to go in community cookbooks under a range of names, including “fried cutlets” (*Presbyterian* 1979)⁶⁶ and “lamb” or “mutton cutlets” (*Ladies’ Handbook of Tested Recipes* 1905, *PWMU Cookery Book* 1961),⁶⁷ also Carpetbag Steak, Kangaroo Steamer, Lamingtons, Anzac Biscuits, Pumpkin Scones and Sponge Cake. All of these dishes are multiply represented in the body of community cookbooks. Two of them were less common than the others; Kangaroo Steamer died out by mid-century and Carpetbag Steak (scotch fillet steak stuffed with oysters and wrapped with bacon before grilling) never seems to have been particularly widespread. The other dishes, though, belonged to the core culinary repertoire of Australian community cookbooks until at least the 1960s. Though the 1970s produced an increasingly heterogenous recipe mix, these old favourites kept returning.

Santich argues that of the many recipes with British origins used in Australia (notably in the realm of baking), some could be seen to develop distinctive Australian characteristics over time.⁶⁸ An example of this is the use of passionfruit icing and filling for butter cakes – the great Australian tradition of the Passionfruit Sandwich, which appeared in the *Presbyterian* from 1931.⁶⁹ Passionfruit has been present in Australian

⁶⁵ WP Thornton, “Our Own National Dishes”, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20th June 1953. quoted in Barbara Santich, *In the Land of the Magic Pudding: A Gastronomic Miscellany* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2000), 164-66.

⁶⁶ *The Presbyterian Cookery Book of Good and Tried Recipes*, rev. ed. (1979), 56.

⁶⁷ *Ladies' Handbook of Tested Recipes*, 7. Jenkins et al., *PWMU Cookery Book*, 2nd ed. (1961), 25.

⁶⁸ Barbara Santich, “Sponges, Lamingtons, and Anzacs: The Australian Ritual of Afternoon Tea”.

⁶⁹ *Cookery Book of Good and Tried Receipts*, 20th ed. (1931), 147.

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cakes for a long time – even *A Voice from the Bush* included a Passion Fruit Cake, a rich butter layer cake with a tablespoon of the fruit in the batter. Filled and topped with an unspecified icing, it seems likely the cook might have been tempted to put a spoonful of the delicious pulp in that too.⁷⁰ Passionfruit Butter, a variation on Lemon Butter (also known as Lemon Cheese) is found in Australian community cookbooks from both north and south of the nation, and is used among other purposes for filling sponge cakes. Passionfruit made their way down south quite early on – the *Hobart Cookery Book* had a recipe in 1908 for Passionfruit Cream.⁷¹ In 1916 at the Bruny Agricultural Show there was a produce category for passionfruit, won by J Craig.⁷² In view of the cold, windy climate of Bruny Island (which lies south of Hobart off the Tasmanian coast), these must have been hothouse grown, suggesting that fresh passionfruit was popular enough to justify going to some lengths to cultivate it. Passionfruit was available tinned by the 1920s. Another distinctive use of passionfruit was and is as a topping for that great co-creation of Australia and New Zealand, the pavlova.⁷³ Passionfruit was also popular for light, fluffy, cold puddings – variations on flummery, chiffon, mousse and cream. The use of passionfruit was particularly lavish in community cookbooks from subtropical zones where the passionfruit grows (in the *Norfolk Island Cookery Book* recipes called for as much as 6 cups of pulp),⁷⁴ but passionfruit use has been common in all the states and territories of Australia throughout the period of the twentieth century. Furthermore, during the twentieth century passionfruit became a central flavour in several recipes with national

⁷⁰ Coldham, *A Voice from the Bush*, 24.

⁷¹ *Hobart Cookery Book*, 46.

⁷² “Bruny Show”, *Mercury*, Monday 24 April 1916, 6.

⁷³ For book-length coverage of the “pavlova wars”, from a New Zealand perspective, see Leach, *The Pavlova Story*. Leach identifies the community cookbook as a particularly useful source in determining the history of pavlova (p15).

⁷⁴ *Norfolk Island Cookery Book*, 29-31.

affiliations. Passionfruit could be argued, despite its specific climatic origin in the subtropics, to have evolved culturally as a “taste of Australia”.

A body of agreement can be seen slowly building up over the course of the century on the “Australian” way of eating and socialising. Much of this centred around adaptation of cultural traditions from a cold-climate home country to new conditions in areas of Australia which were seasonally hot (or hot all the time, as in the tropical north).

Cooling Summer Drinks was a popular recipe category in early community cookbooks, from both southern and northern climes. Cool main dishes also became more common over time, though the Australian love, noted by Muskett, of smoking-hot meats in all weathers seems to have persisted as well, in the more climate-friendly form of the barbecue. The introduction to the South Australian CWA’s successful *Fingers and Forks* (1967) stated, “this attractive book with Buffet and Barbecue recipes, typically Australian in character, reminds us of our sunshine and outdoor and casual living”.⁷⁵

The book contained recipes for various sweet and savoury dishes suitable as buffet or finger food. An illustration depicting this “typically Australian” character was worth the proverbial thousand words: teenaged children outside playing tennis, watching Dad swat flies away from the barbecue while Mum threw together the salads and arranged the fruit on the pavlova. This middle-Australian nuclear-family idyll was expressed as much by the food as by the family configuration and the outdoor setting.

A similar picture of Australian food and eating appeared a decade later in *Cook It Our Way*, which purported to answer the question “What do Australians eat, and how do they entertain their friends?” In addition to the casual, outdoor themes expressed in *Fingers and Forks*, *Cook it our Way* could also include a consciously multicultural cast to its proffered cuisine. “Many of the recipes, like many of the contributors, can trace

⁷⁵ Dolling, *Fingers and Forks*, 1.

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their ancestry back to different parts of the world ... but all have been tried, tested and proved successful under Australian conditions – that’s why we say ‘Cook It Our Way’.”⁷⁶ Again, the “Australian conditions” (material and cultural, we may fairly assume) were the thing which made the recipes in this collection “Australian”.

The 1999 *Republican Delights: Celebrity Chef Cookbook*, compiled for the nation-wide Australian Republican Movement, was a community cookbook with a strong nation-building project and a very specific ideology of nation. Culinarily, this comes out in a very similar expression to the themes already explored: meat (particularly kangaroo and lamb), cake (particularly anzac biscuits, pavlova and lamingtons), some seafood, some salads, a taste of passionfruit (on the pavlova), and a multi-ethnic approach. *Republican Delights* was even more multicultinarity than *Cook it Our Way*, with recipe influences from Poland to Vietnam and all points in between. Recipe contributions from many prominent politicians and cultural commentators positioned themselves in regard to “Australian” food as well as Australian forms of government. It is not surprising to find that Tasmanian seafood was the essence of the recipe from the Tasmanian premier, beefsteak from the Northern Territory chief minister, and lamb from the Queensland premier and a former prime minister, as well as from Australian cooking legend Margaret Fulton. Anzac biscuits came from Rosemary Crowley, a South Australian senator, and Christmas Pudding from Cheryl Kernot, a federal politician and former leader of the Australian Democrats. Pavlova was contributed by a (female) former Lord Mayor of Brisbane. Many contributors referred with their recipes to their family heritage, for example Franca Arena’s Insalata di Caterina, Sanh and Dau Chau’s Vietnamese Spring Rolls, Vini Ciccarello’s Spaghetti alla Puttanesca, Cheryl Kernot’s Mum’s Christmas Pudding, Alina Kamelski’s Bigos and Robert Tan’s Chicken in Soya

⁷⁶ *Cook It Our Way*, back cover.

Sauce (Semur Ayam). The multicultural cuisine can, though, also be seen to have sprung the “ethnic” boundaries – Amanda Vanstone, then Minister for Justice and Consumer Affairs, offered an Asian-style duck and noodle soup, and Ray Martin, television journalist, a spaghetti marinara.

Some of the recipes showed the changes of time. The salads did not have the heavy, creamy dressing proposed by the “Australian Salad” creators, but still showed a taste of spice. Lamb cutlets had metamorphosed into short-loin lamb chops grilled with olive oil and soy sauce. Kangaroo was manifestly a taste of the younger generation – both recipes involving it came from contributors then in their twenties. Absent were, notably, Carpetbag Steak, Colonial Goose, Pumpkin Scones and Damper. Pumpkin Scones would have been difficult to include based on their strong public association with former Queensland Senator Lady Flo Bjelke-Petersen, who was avowedly against the republican cause.⁷⁷ Damper, however, could be viewed as a surprising omission. Indigenous foods were limited to kangaroo, seafood and yabbies, not including any of the “nuts and berries” discussed earlier. The lifestyle component of Australian cooking and eating – “doing it our way”, was evident in the emphasis on barbecues and other forms of casual, outdoor eating and entertaining.

Were these “national” recipes included as mere culinary clichés of nationhood, or were they elements of a genuine set of “Australian” tastes that had emerged over the course of the preceding century? This particular community cookbook was more ideologically driven and image-conscious than most. However, with reference to the general conviction that community cookbooks are typically quite a candid reflection of the

⁷⁷ Robyn Hughes, *Flo Bjelke-Petersen* [Internet] (Australian Biography Project, 1994 [cited 18 May 2009]); available from www.australianbiography.gov.au/subjects/bjelkepetersen/intertext5.html. Lady Bjelke-Petersen, incidentally, had in her youth been involved in church fundraising for Mapoon and related missions, which were the main charitable object of PWMU cookbooks. The Mapoon mission is discussed later in the chapter.

kitchen, we can be reasonably confident. The fact that each of these “tastes of nation” was significant not only in this book but in many others, in previous decades of community cookbooks of far humbler pretensions, suggests that, however culturally charged these recipes and flavours were, people did actually like to eat them.

Community cookbooks and community values

Part of “imagining the nation” involves formulating the values on which it should be based. This is perhaps the most deadly serious aspect of the community cookbook. Although fundraising was a very typical organising focus for community cookbooks, other agendas and social purposes were also important. Community cookbooks could provide a project for a group, make a statement of group identity, or simply enable a group to present a public face to the world. At the heart of the matter, in all cases, is that these cookbooks have given community groups a public forum through which to “project their values”.⁷⁸

Sometimes community cookbooks aimed to represent group values which had specific ramifications for food and eating. Some groups, for example, produced vegetarian cookbooks,⁷⁹ or made reference to the kosher kitchen.⁸⁰ A broader instance of a specific social/religious value with dietary ramifications is teetotalism. *The Housewife’s Companion* (1902), published for the Inkerman Street Methodist Sunday School, contained two recipes for alcohol substitutes. The first, “Temperance Brandy”, recommended as “a good restorative in shock or faintness”, consisted of rather a lot of cinnamon powder in hot water. The second, entitled a “Substitute for Brandy, etc (To be

⁷⁸ Bower, “*Our Sisters’ Recipes*”, 137.

⁷⁹ For example, *Satyananda Ashram Vegetarian Recipe Book. Community Aid Abroad Vegetarian Cookbook*, (Kilkenny, SA: Community Aid Abroad Trading, 1989).

⁸⁰ *I Love to Eat Jewish. Lox, Stocks and Bagels: Australian Gourmet Kosher Cookbook: A Collection of Recipes*, (Melbourne: Women Caring for Women Australia, 1994).

used in sudden illness or pain)”, was composed of ginger, sal volatile, and chloric aether.⁸¹ Either of these recipes would have produced quite a stimulant! Together they offer a glimpse, tantalisingly brief, of Maryborough Methodist teetotalism in theory and practice. *Auburn Methodist Tested Recipes* (1906) advertised Dr Shaw’s Anti-Alcohol Cure, “for use in your home either voluntarily or SECRETLY”.⁸² The *Busy Woman’s Home Companion* (1924), compiled by the WCTU’s Bendigo Branch, represented the hard core of the temperance-related community cookbooks. Recipes for alcohol-free Trifle, Chilli Wine, Chilli Beer, Ginger Ale and Cream or Soda Beer gave the temperance-minded all the tools they needed for alcohol-free celebration. The book had recruited its advertisers among sympathetic businesses. One advertisement warned “Mothers! Think it Over! Your child may become a drunkard, see that they join a temperance lodge”; the Independent Order of Rechabites urged that “every Abstainer should join”. Bush’s Grocer’s advertisements in this book included some temperance-related items to demonstrate their support, such as:

Work, temperance, repose
Slam the door in the doctor’s nose
And feeding the house on Bush’s Groceries keep it slammed.⁸³

The WCTU ladies saw nothing wrong with topical application of drugs that today are viewed far more darkly than alcohol – a Valuable Remedy for Earache and Deafness called for “wine of opium” to be dropped in the ears mixed with oils of anise and sweet almonds. Liniment required laudanum, to be mixed with turpentine, hartshorn, salad oil and egg white. Alcohol, and none other, was the enemy of temperance in their eyes. The Home Remedies section contained a further injunction against the giving of alcohol in

⁸¹ *Housewife’s Companion*, 61.

⁸² Wharton-Shaw, *Auburn Methodist Tested Recipes* (1906), 6.

⁸³ *Busy Woman’s Home Companion*, footer advertisement.

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case of accidents: “In sudden illness, the majority of people seem to think that brandy is a sovereign remedy for everything. As a matter of fact, it is the principle of first aid to the injured, that when there is bleeding, even when fainting has ensued, alcohol should never be given, for it causes increased heart action, with a subsequent loss of blood”.⁸⁴

In 1972 the WCTU’s *Drink to Your Health* followed up this message with a whole book celebrating the notion of alcohol-free beverages (and, by implication, festivities).⁸⁵ The WCTU was not just a religious organisation. It entered squarely into the political domain, was closely linked with the cause of female suffrage, and in many states its campaigning was instrumental in achieving the vote for women. However, teetotalism as a religious conviction lost its social force later in the twentieth century, and the WCTU slowly entered the realms of anachronism. This was not, though, before they had helped to usher in the era of early closing of hotels – the famous “six o’clock swill” that was the Australian alcohol-drinking public’s stubborn response to the temperance movement.

Charity, paternalism and democracy in the vision of the civil society

Community cookbooks are fascinating, perhaps more than anything, for their representation of a group’s outlook – its most deeply held (and sometimes least consciously articulated) social, religious and political values. An acrostic poem on the title page of the *WMU Cookery Book*, referring to the mission at Mapoon, on the Far Northern Coast of Queensland, reflected some of the worldview behind the charitable projects of the Presbyterian Women’s Missionary Union:

⁸⁴ Ibid., 120.

⁸⁵ Millicent Harry, *Drink to Your Health: Alcohol-Free Recipes from All Australian States and Other Parts of the World* (Melbourne: Women's Christian Temperance Union of Australia, 1972).

M ay those who buy this little Book
 Find its contents a boon;
A nd as they work its dainties up,
 Remember far Mapoon!
P revent, as far as in them lies,
 The dying out too soon
O f Queensland's Aborigines -
 By helping on Mapoon!
O ur duty stares us in the face -
 Our hearts should beat in tune;
N or mar by want of harmony
 The mission at Mapoon!

A.S.L.⁸⁶

This poem, which remained in the cookery book for several decades, reflected the PWMU ladies' sense of religious mission, but also their racial outlook. It echoed the then general belief within the white population that the Aborigines were, for reasons of natural selection, a doomed race that would disappear in due course. They should, however, not be allowed to die out "too soon" – charitable white society owed them, if nothing else, a chance at what life they could grab, a comfortable-enough cultural senescence on missions like Mapoon. To help in facilitating this was the "duty" of right-thinking people. The sixth-edition *WMU Cookery Book* quoted Inspector Fitzgerald's belief that the mission deserved "the support of every humane man in Queensland".⁸⁷ This vision of Mapoon crystallizes the charitable version of nineteenth-century white Australian paternalism. The *WMU Cookery Book* in 1908 also mentioned another charitable enterprise, the Kanaka Home, "a real home for 'boys' passing through the city, either to plantations, or going home to their islands".⁸⁸ The word "kanaka" was used (sometimes but not always derisively) to designate the indentured South Sea Island

⁸⁶ *WMU Cookery Book*, 7th ed. (1908), iv.

⁸⁷ *WMU Cookery Book*, 6th ed. (1906), unnumbered.

⁸⁸ *WMU Cookery Book*, 7th ed. (1908), preface.

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workers who were drafted in to the Queensland sugar plantations. The phenomenon of calling dark-skinned men “boys” is described by American philosopher Richard Baker under the name of “metaphorical identification”.

If the persons the terms apply to are adult Afro-Americans [or other people of colour], then ‘girl’ and ‘boy’ are metaphorical identifications. The fact that the metaphorical identifications in question are standard in the language reflects the fact that certain characteristics of the objects properly classified as boys and girls (for example, immaturity, inability to take care of themselves, need for guidance) are generally held by those who use [such] identifications to be properly attributable to Afro-Americans. One might say that the whole theory of ... white paternalism is implicit in the metaphorical identification ‘boy’.⁸⁹

Ironically, the word “kanaka” derives from the Melanesian word for “man”.

The various PWMU cookery books noted the purpose of the fundraising for the Aboriginal missions: Mapoon Mission Station, begun in 1891 (the same year as the formation of the Women’s Missionary Association, which became the PWMU), and later the missions at Weipa (1898) and Aurukun (1904), all located on Cape York Peninsula, in the far north of the nation. The Moravian missionaries, acting for the Presbyterian Church and with the support of the Queensland government, intended the missions for the conversion and salvation of the indigenous population. Forewords of the cookery books emphasised the great difficulties of the mission work, and the missionaries’ need for both practical and moral support - “their work is arduous and isolated”.⁹⁰ The Presbyterian women, through their cookbook project, supplied practical support in spades – sales of the *Presbyterian Cookery Book* alone totalled 440,000 by 1944.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Richard Baker, “‘Pricks’ and ‘Chicks’: A Plea for ‘Persons’”, in *Sexist Language: A Modern Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Vetterling-Braggin (sl: Littlefield, Adams & Co, 1981), 162.

⁹⁰ *WMU Cookery Book*, 7th ed. (1908), unnumbered.

⁹¹ The NSW Presbyterian Church’s *Centenary History* (1905) describes the success of the Women’s Missionary Association’s 1895 Sale of Work, at which the *Presbyterian Cookery Book* was first sold.

Originally Reverends Ward and Hey aimed to bring the local community into the European culture and economy through various farming pursuits, the traditional nomadic lifestyle now becoming impossible - and from a missionary standpoint incompatible, anyway, with the objectives of Christian mission work. However, by the end of the nineteenth century Aborigines were effectively segregated on the missions (in the name of protection). The people of Mapoon were a heterogeneous group. World Vision Australia leader Tim Costello describes the human makeup of Mapoon as “people from Indigenous groups from the immediate area, including the Tjungundji people whose land it occupied. Later Aboriginal children from across Queensland who had been removed from their parents were brought to Mapoon, as well as some Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander people”.⁹² From 1901 Mapoon was designated a “reformatory” by the Queensland government and became a destination for children of the Stolen Generation, an episode considered by many to be Australia’s greatest shame. It is perhaps with this in mind that historian John Singe argues “it was Mapoon which became the focus of the more repugnant features of Queensland’s ill treatment of Aborigines in the far north”.⁹³

Though the Presbyterian missions’ aim was to extend the embrace of the civil society along with that of the church, in the long term their effect was brutalising and demoralising. The mission as run by Reverend Hey seems to have been judged by historical commentators a generally benevolent enterprise; Costello describes his

Held on behalf of the church’s Foreign Missions Committee, the sale raised over a thousand pounds and “wiped out” the committee’s heavy debt. The *Centenary History* makes no specific mention of the cookery book, which in 1905 was already a phenomenon and would be even more successful in the future. *Centenary History*, (Sydney: Presbyterian Church of NSW, 1905), 113.

⁹² Tim Costello, *The Journey Is Healing: How We Go Forward after 'Sorry' / Lowitja O'donoghue Oration* [Internet] (Don Dunstan Foundation, 2008 [cited 18 May 2009]); available from www.dunstan.org.au/events/lowitjaoration/the_journey_is_healing_tcostello_ao.pdf.

⁹³ John Singe, *The Torres Strait: People and History* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979), 213.

“unusual approach to community development”, which involved encouraging married couples to set up their own households and subsistence farms, reserving any wages earned for their own use rather than subsuming them into the mission’s general revenues.⁹⁴ (Such histories are strongly contested, though, and rightly so. An example of a major exception, and alternative point of view, is the “whipping incident” of 1907 discussed by Rebekah Crow, who describes it under the apt category, “The Road to Hell is Paved with Good Intentions”.)⁹⁵

With the passage of decades, hard times came on Mapoon. As the mission became more rundown and the authorities more heavy-handed, people living on the missions faced not only loss of traditional livelihoods and ways of life, but also the attempted obliteration of their language and culture. Terrible stories are recorded of the mistreatment of Mapoon people, the missionaries’ misuse of power and government callousness.⁹⁶ Mapoon’s later incarnation has been referred to as an example of the kind of prisonlike “total institution” used to cow communities of people.⁹⁷ Once mining opportunities were identified on its lands in the 1950s Mapoon’s days were numbered. The hard-fought closure of Mapoon mission and forced relocation of residents to Bamaga and “New Mapoon” became what Costello calls a “watershed political event in the Indigenous history of Queensland”.

Mapoon has always been closely associated with the Torres Strait Islands and their people. Torres Strait Islanders lived at Mapoon, and the missionaries reported to the

⁹⁴ Tim Costello, *The Journey Is Healing*, available from www.dunstan.org.au/events/lowitjaoration/the_journey_is_healing_tcostello_ao.pdf.

⁹⁵ Rebekah Crow, “Colonialism's Paradox: White Women, 'Race' and Gender in the Contact Zone 1850-1910” (PhD, Griffith University, 2004), 132-60.

⁹⁶ See, for example, JP Roberts, ed., *The Mapoon Story by the Mapoon People* (Fitzroy: International Development Action, 1975).

⁹⁷ Mary-Jean Sutton, “Re-Examining Total Institutions: A Case Study from Queensland”, *Archaeology in Oceania* 38 (2003).

Governor of Thursday Island.⁹⁸ Monthly food packages were delivered from Thursday Island in the early days. The opening of New Mapoon in the 1960s actually strengthened that link, as it was situated near to mainland Torres Strait Islander communities at Bamaga and Seisia. Linguist Anna Shnukal writes that the political region of the Torres Strait “has expanded since the war to encompass northern Cape York communities. The Northern Peninsula Area (NPA) reaches from north of the Jardine River to the Papua New Guinea border and includes ... the islands of Torres Strait ... the communities of Bamaga, Seisia, Injinoo, ... Alau ... and New Mapoon. These communities are inhabited by both Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, who have increasingly intermarried”.⁹⁹ Kup Mari, one of the distinctive cooking methods described in the Torres Strait (see Chapter Eight) is also used in the Cape York region, as mentioned in an article by journalist Sue Farley (in which she notes Mapoon’s “definite Pacific island flavour from its Torresian people”).¹⁰⁰

Here comes an interesting twist. Over 100 years since the beginning of their contact with white missionaries and nearly 100 years after the inception of the mission at Mapoon, the people of the Northern Peninsula Area produced their own community cookbook. The *Torres Strait Cookbook* (1987) celebrated traditional foodways and the survival of a regional food culture which I discussed in some detail in Chapter Eight. Despite the best efforts of the missionaries and the Queensland government to discourage traditional ways, to break down traditional communities and to enforce adherence to European cultural norms, Torres Strait Islanders in the 1980s were still able to cook dugong Kup Mari and eat dombo sabbi and curried trochus shell. The

⁹⁸ As mentioned in the “Mission Facts” printed in *WMU Cookery Book*, 6th ed. (1906), unnumbered.

⁹⁹ Anna Shnukal, “Torres Strait Islanders”, in *Multicultural Queensland 2001: 100 Years, 100 Communities. A Century of Contributions*, ed. Brandle (Brisbane: The State of Queensland, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 2001), 20.

¹⁰⁰ Sue Farley, *Guardians of the Waterways: Tour of Aurukun Wetlands* [Internet] (Tourism Australia, [cited 30 September 2009]); available from www.australia.com/contentimages/Aurukun.pdf.

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subtext of the *Torres Strait Cookbook*, in contrast to the concerned paternalism and eurocentrism of the early editions of the *Presbyterian*, could be read as: “We have survived. Our culture has survived.” The ultimate failure of the vision of the civil society supported by one community cookbook was celebrated by a later one – a neat parable of the profound change in Australian concepts of place, race and nation during the twentieth century.

This little piece of historical circularity raises an important point about the nature of the civil society compact in late-nineteenth and twentieth century Australia. Charity, the underlying purpose of virtually all the early community cookbooks, is an inherently undemocratic project. Instead, it is at heart paternalistic. Charity relies on the inequitable distribution of social and economic capital. Similarly, its cousin paternalism rests on “the assumption that the more powerful and the better-off in any society have obligations towards the less powerful and the poor”, without disturbing existing power relations or making provision for the poor or powerless to improve their own lot. Both are “organised around the presumption of the authority of the powerful ... over the less powerful”.¹⁰¹ This was a point of concern later in the century, to groups such as the CAA (now Oxfam), who engaged closely with the ethical and political aspects of aid work. The *CAA Cook Book* quoted Tolstoy on this subject: “I sit on a man’s back choking him and making him carry me and yet assure myself and others that I am sorry for him and wish to lighten his load by all possible means – except by getting off his back”.¹⁰²

The dark side of the Presbyterian women’s long-term charitable missionary project points to flaws in the received concept of the civil society, resting as it traditionally did

¹⁰¹ Mary Evans, “Paternalism”, in *Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, 432.

¹⁰² *CAA Cook Book*, 33.

on the sanctity of private property and the benevolence of the powerful towards the powerless. The PWMU's well-meant charitable works, intended for the benefit of less fortunate people, indicate how fraught is the charitable project in practice. One person's entirely genuine definition of "benefit" may be another's "cultural catastrophe". PWMU members worked hard to support these missions, with lofty ideals, yet the ultimate result was not the benevolent institution of their imagining. In the Introduction I mentioned Volpi's argument about the "epistemological implications" of democracy – "no citizen can claim to know better than his or her neighbor what is politically desirable and achievable".¹⁰³ "Democracy as a form of government simply reflects this equality of judgment in political life and its institutionalisation in a political system".¹⁰⁴ The colonial and post-colonial histories in which the PWMU ladies involved themselves are an apt illustration of the perils of democracy and the civil society as created and practiced in Australia. To borrow the words of Canadian historian and author Ronald Wright, "'Civilisation', like 'freedom' and 'democracy', is a word that kills".¹⁰⁵

The establishment of the Australian constitution in 1901 was an important political watershed, but it is a matter of historical note that the constitution itself was democratic only in a limited way. Much as a great social advance was made by enshrining women's right to vote, the Aboriginal people of Australia were not granted such rights, nor were they even to be included in the census. Citizenship rights extended, in the early twentieth century, only to the non-indigenous (white) people of Australia. Efforts to extend the embracing arm of the civil society were ultimately hampered by the paternalist outlook enshrined in nineteenth-century Christian charitable ideals. Not until

¹⁰³ Volpi, "Democracy", in *Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, 128.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁰⁵ Ronald Wright, *Stolen Continents: Five Hundred Years of Conquest and Resistance in the Americas* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 100.

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after the World Wars did the ideal of a more democratic model of Australian citizenship begin to spread. With this change came a diminution of the “charitable” model of helping, in favour of an increased focus on self-help.

If feminist historian Susan Magarey is right that economic dependence erodes one of the platforms of citizenship,¹⁰⁶ then the Presbyterian women, dependent on male breadwinners, and the Aboriginal mission people, dependent on charity, were in some senses in the same boat. For both groups, one mode they used to express their citizenship, put their cultural values in the public domain, support their communities and raise funds to support their cultural activities was the creation of community cookbooks. In this sense their community cookbooks can be seen as exemplary of what Crawford and Maddern call “informal or ‘subterranean’ citizenship” - an alternative to the traditional white male model of citizenship, grounded in praxis, in the action of being good citizens.¹⁰⁷ They demonstrate one way of enacting the “more participatory notion of citizenship” which contemporary theorists view as necessary to a robust democracy.¹⁰⁸ By bringing the private into the public the makers of community cookbooks advocated for their own culinary and social values, portrayed and practiced democratic citizenship and expressed their own stake in the life of the nation.

Conclusions

The story of nation told in the pages of community cookbooks is a complex one indeed, suggesting the development of Australian democracy in social and political form and

¹⁰⁶ Susan Magarey, *Passions of the First Wave Feminists* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2001), 7.

¹⁰⁷ Crawford and Maddern, eds., *Women as Australian Citizens*, 216.

¹⁰⁸ For example, see Seymour Martin Lipset, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Democracy* (London: Routledge, 1995), 220. Australian sources also emphasise the importance of “unofficial, voluntary forms of citizenship” for example Brian Galligan and Winsome Roberts, eds., *Oxford Companion to Australian Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2007), 105.

portraying the contested site of Australian citizenship.¹⁰⁹ Ultimately the narrative available from Australia's community cookbooks seems to suggest the evolution of an increasingly egalitarian Australian public culture. Australian community cookbooks have participated in the attempt to evolve toward what Palmer optimistically called "that egalitarian democracy that will have to be the basis of all civilised societies in the future".¹¹⁰ The written record they have left behind shows both their successes and their failures along the way.

Australian civil society may be, as Richard Nile proposes, "never quite an achieved state ... always developing but not quite yet developed".¹¹¹ Community cookbooks illustrate the importance of the civil society from a grass-roots level. They show how the people - and especially the women - of Australia imagined their nation and worked to create it. The evolution of shared tastes and shared cultural values can be traced through both recipes and embedded discourses of this genre, foodways and extra-culinary narratives all contributing to a popular understanding of nation. Do community cookbooks have a special relationship with the theme of nation and the project of nation-building? If they do, it is because of the way in which they engage ordinary people both in practical maintenance of the civil society and in debate on the cultural compact of "the good life", with special reference to that central life activity, cooking and eating food.

Community cookbooks suggest a range of "tastes of Australia"; recipes and ingredients with a strong association to the national culture. Above all, they show the concern of the Australian people to live well, to achieve a "good life". The specific Australian and

¹⁰⁹ Joan Eveline, "Feminism, Racism and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century Australia", in *Women as Australian Citizens*, ed. Crawford and Maddern, 177.

¹¹⁰ Vance Palmer, "Meanjin Papers", March 1942. Cited in Ian Turner, ed., *The Australian Dream* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1968), 7.

¹¹¹ Richard Nile, ed., *Australian Civilisation* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), 6.

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culinary flavour of this is crystallised in a focus on the outdoor life, the casual way of life, easy hospitality and the trope of the warm climate and hot-weather food.

Australia's community cookbooks bear in them not only the stories of scones baked and middle-class ladies gainfully occupied. They carry the traces of blood, tears and struggle. In telling the story of what it is to be "Australian", they show the flaws in the received conception of the civil society in early twentieth-century Australia, the practical ramifications of these for the individuals on the receiving end of the charitable project, and the cultural transition from "charity" to plurality during the twentieth century.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

What was it, to live, cook and eat in twentieth-century Australia? What was it to be a member of a community and to live the “good life” in the “Lucky Country”? What was it, to create, buy and use community cookbooks in the pursuit of these aims and activities?

In this thesis, my aim has been to “open up” the genre of the community cookbook as it developed in twentieth-century Australia, and, in doing so, to throw some light on the above questions. My hypothesis has been that community cookbooks reflect the drive to define and live out the “good life” and to create and nurture the civil society, and that as such they are valuable source materials for the study of many branches of social and cultural history.

In Chapter Two, “Defining the Genre”, I found that community cookbooks have various distinctive features of both form and content, including ephemerality, liminality, and a democratic ethos which has particular implications for issues of editorship and cultural authority. The foodways they represent are principally the “cuisine of home”, the foods commonly cooked and eaten in a domestic setting, though with an element of aspiration. Grounded in the principle of voluntarism, these cookbooks express the significance of volunteer community groups in creating and maintaining the civil society.

In Chapter Three, “Overview of the Subtypes”, I outlined the development of the genre over time. I identified nine subtypes based on contributory community, each with its own distinctive characteristics. Though church groups were the first in Australia to take on the community cookbook genre, they were not long alone. Community groups of all kinds were quick to realise the potential of this activity for direct and indirect public and

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social influence. As time went on many kinds of (primarily women's) charitable groups, such as Hospital Auxiliaries, Mother's Clubs and civic service groups produced their own cookbooks. The Country Women's Association's body of community cookbooks, in particular, is a national treasure-trove. By the 1970s there were many hundreds, probably thousands, of community cookbooks across the country, and in them can be seen something of the growing diversity of Australian communities, social networks and group enterprises. The Girl Guides, the Rotary Club, the Isolated Children's Parents Association, golf clubs, political parties, the Soroptimists, disability support groups, the RSPCA, the Yass Town and District Band, and a vast range of others, reflect the incredible diversity of twentieth-century community enterprise. The financial outcomes could range from something as humble as new hymn books for the choir to a new town swimming pool, an extension of a hospital, a school canteen or immunisation for Third World children. What they all had in common was that the money the public spent on community cookbooks added up to meaningful amounts of money (some very small, some very large, but all useful) to be outlaid for their chosen cause by the groups who produced them.

On the basis of the understanding of the genre obtained in the first two chapters, I have used a large sample of community cookbooks to interrogate various questions about Australian culture and history in Chapters Four to Nine. In each of the key subject areas - ethnicity, class, gender, technology, regionalism and nation / civic culture - various themes have emerged.

Ethnicity

Community cookbooks embody middle Australia's responses to waves of migration and have been one forum for the unfolding of Australia multicultural identity. Despite the social influence of the White Australia policy, community cookbooks showed an active

engagement with both real and imagined ethnic influences from the very beginning of the twentieth century. By the 1960s such engagement had an increasingly practical edge: an ever wider range of community groups wanted to celebrate their multicultural composition through cookbooks, and in many cases their individual ethnic heritages as well. Multiculturalism was the great new name for Australian social heterogeneity, replacing nearly a century's worth of official policy focused on keeping the country white. Though angst over Australia's multicultural policy continues to this day, latter twentieth-century community cookbooks showed Australians of all origins revalorising the foreign connection. By participating in the public discourse of ethnicity and multiculturalism, community cookbook creators took an active role in one of the most sweeping changes in Australian social history, offering an account, for the community, of how individuals and families were digesting social change. Some books expressed tensions about "foreign" food (studiously sticking to Toad-in-the-Hole and mutton chops),¹ but others led by example in offering recipes for Satay.²

Class

In this chapter I discussed the expression of class consciousness in community cookbooks. Community cookbooks were directed at the improvement of society, in a variety of material and non-material ways, and at the alleviation of suffering among various groups of people, but they stopped short of any form of class critique. The rarity of class-based social improvement agendas in community cookbooks reflects both their democratic nature (they tended to be aimed at the same socio-economic group as they were made by) and also the Australian self-image of easy egalitarianism. Rarely has a community cookbook reflected any effort or desire by the upper classes to educate or

¹ *Recipes*, (Flinders Park, SA: Flinders Park Methodist Women's Fellowship, 1973).

² Abbas, *Recipes of the Orient. Festival of Asia Cookbook. {Untitled} / Darlington Kindergarten Mothers' Club*.

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“raise” the lower classes, and in fact books such as *The Worker Cookery Book* specifically disavowed the necessity of any such project. Despite the professedly egalitarian nature of Australian society I found markers of class identification strongly embedded in community cookbooks. Notwithstanding its predominant association with the middle classes, it was clear that working-class and upper-class women also used this genre to serve their purposes in the community.

Using Bourdieu’s “taste of necessity” and “taste of luxury” as a framework of analysis for recipes revealed a set of common associations. The tastes of necessity tended to be concrete (rabbit, dripping, pie melon, mince meat) and clear in their association with economic deprivation. The tastes of luxury, on the other hand, were sometimes concrete (caviar, truffles) but more often took a conceptual form (“frenchness”, “freshness”, “authenticity”) which points to the association of class with cultural as well as economic capital. In particular, certain forms of gender performance such as daintiness and elegance were strongly associated with the idea of luxury.

Gender

Community cookbooks are a genre that historically has been the principal domain of women. This genre has played certain specific roles in relation to women’s participation in public life. Community cookbooks have been a vehicle for women’s public participation – a journey from, at the start of the century, the Missionary Associations and church guilds into the Hospital Auxiliaries, the Parent and Friend Associations, the Family Planning Societies, the Third World development groups, and ultimately into the paid workforce.

Community cookbooks are mostly but not wholly feminine in function and symbolism. Discussion of images of the “good woman” suggested certain key associations of character (daintiness and toughness in sometimes uneasy coexistence, often resolved by

the trope of nurturing, grounded in maternity) with activity (homemaking generally and baking in particular) as central to the performance of womanhood in twentieth-century Australia.

Reflection on the distinctive characteristics of men's contributions to community cookbooks brought out evidence of the Australian conception of "masculinity", revealing some enduring masculine taste associations and narrative styles. Community cookbooks also show the increasing validation of men's role in domestic and caring situations, at the same time as the traditions of the "good woman" were being either attenuated or discarded, with the latter twentieth-century reassessment of the "separate spheres" model of gender relations. These books thus reflect some of the great changes that occurred in the gendering of twentieth-century Australia.

Technology

A study of domestic technology in community cookbooks gives insight into women's work and the social valuation thereof. It draws together some threads of the chapters on class and gender and prefigures some of the issues developed later, in the chapter on region.

The relatively heavy domestic burden shouldered by early twentieth-century Australian women gave way to a new era of labour-saving technologies, which were enthusiastically embraced but always accompanied by an undercurrent of ambivalence. Women's participation in the life of the community was undoubtedly facilitated by various technological changes, but questions remained about domestic technology and the "quality of life" arguments often advanced in its favour. Discussion of "high technology" and "low technology" models of cooking in Australia suggested the role of Australia's deep bush symbolism in fuelling and giving expression to such ambivalence. Community cookbooks show a continuing value placed on low technology cooking

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methods and a love of ingenious personal solutions, such as drying your buffalo jerky on the barbed wire fence. This reflects a deeply held sense of one “Australian” persona – capable, no-nonsense, practical. The primitivist values encapsulated in the figure of the bushman percolated down the twentieth century, particularly in country areas but also among urbanites. On the other hand, the convenience foods and domestic technologies which swept twentieth-century Australian kitchens were not just about labour-saving but also reflected a growing cultural value placed on novelty.

Region

The different history of settlement and industrialisation of Australia, along with the unique qualities of the Australian landscape, contributed to a different type of regional awareness in this country as compared to other places. Using Peters’ model of Old World and New World regionalism as a way of interrogating such difference, I found that community cookbooks do convey a regionalised set of foodways. “Regional cuisines” *per se* may be few and far between, but I have outlined the case for the Barossa, the Torres Strait Islands and the Orange region of NSW, three areas which might, according to varying interpretations, be considered to qualify for this status. On a smaller scale, regional variations in preferred cooking methods, recipes and ingredients can be observed in different parts of the nation. These can be attributed, for the most part, to factors including climate, historical settlement and migration patterns, remoteness and associated factors of supply. Responses to location in Australian community cookbooks highlight various features of Australia’s unique biome. Examples include the use of indigenous foods and the role of weather conditions, especially dry seasons, in determining what could be cooked and in particular which fats could be used in cooking. Adversity seems to play a significant role in promoting

regional differentiation. Community cookbooks have been important in recording and helping to codify regional foodways.

Nation and Civil Society

I argue in favour of the special status of this theme in Australian community cookbooks, based on both the circumstances of community cookbook production and the foodways they contain. The “tastes of nation” in Australia are many and varied but the evidence from community cookbooks suggests the privileged status of meat and cake; a limited but important symbolic role for salads; and particular status for the flavour of passionfruit. Furthermore, community cookbooks in Australia were “born” at more or less the same time as the nation itself and their history parallels some key points in the development of Australian national culture. The years of the 1890s and 1900s, during which community cookbooks seeded across the nation, were the years leading up to and immediately following Federation. From that time onwards, community cookbooks were a way for Australian women to “participate in the life of the nation”, as Longone has it. Even more than that, they represented an aspect of the Australian nation-building project which reflected the fond Australian self-image of the “little Aussie battler”, simultaneously independent and community-minded. Whatever needed to be done, whatever institutions needed support or people needed a helping hand, these little texts were one way ordinary people could band together and do something useful for the cause.

The “dark side” of this principle is revealed in a historic tracing of community cookbooks’ cultural role in Far Northern Queensland. The paternalist underpinnings of charity, such as the charitable project pursued by the PWMU with the aid of the *Presbyterian Cookery Book*, can result in much harm done in the name of good. Broad surveying of community cookbooks shows both sides of this story, for example through

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the narratives and history of the PWMU cookbooks juxtaposed with those of the *Torres Strait Cookbook*.

What conclusions may be drawn from this study?

Community cookbooks, collectively viewed, are “more”. Their particular characteristics, in comparison to professionally authored cookbooks, allow them to be: *more* accurate accounts of the food culture of the home; *more* reflective of social mores; *more* regionally inflected; *more* able to reflect different class and ethnic groups; *more* faithful accounts of the Australian way of life in general. Insofar as food is a facet of culture, insofar as the process of cooking represents a person’s or a group’s participation in the most basic and perhaps the most meaningful cultural activity, community cookbooks reveal more about how Australians have done it than any other type of cookery publication, and hence more about the real, lived food culture and social culture of twentieth-century Australia.

One of the valuable outcomes of this study is, I hope, a balancing perspective to the recently popular view that chefs and other culinary professionals “create” local, regional and national cuisines. Community cookbooks show the role of home cooks and eaters in responding to personal and local situations, cooking the things that made best sense to them in terms of finance, logistics, community culture and taste. Australia may have missed out on the “peasant” phase of cultural history, as regretted by Symons and others, but the evolution of food culture remains a distinctly ground-up phenomenon nonetheless. Today’s chefs may promote particular trends and, at their best, educate and inspire, but it is the food cooked and eaten in private homes which is the most telling index of our culinary culture. Community cookbooks show the active processes of cooking, discussing, experimenting, maintaining traditions and refining methods undertaken in twentieth-century Australian home kitchens.

Discussion of community cookbooks in Australia has revealed some continuing undercurrents. I seem to have returned again and again to such central themes as the symbolic importance of the bush in Australian culture (and damper as a trope of bush life which remains available to modern urban Australians); a recurring focus on the performance of femininity and the roles and attributes, variously defined, of a good woman; and the liminalities of cultural identity in Australia. The theme of difficulty surrounding the concept of indigeneity comes through also. Community cookbooks, quite naturally, attest plentifully to the importance of the family, in particular the nuclear family, in Australian social organisation and cultural life. They demonstrate the often rich civic life of Australians - in the “workingman’s paradise”, activities apart from work have assumed a great importance in the national culture, and have been proving grounds for the development of shared values, outlooks and ways of life. Social work theorist Laksiri Jayasuriya remarks that “for social integration, perhaps more important than citizens’ rights is the status of citizenship and participation”,³ a view widely disseminated by Robert Putnam in *Bowling Alone*. Community cookbooks are a valuable record of this nation’s social capital.

My reading of community cookbooks suggests that some of the commonly held views of Australian food are myth, the product of our cultural cringe rather than our cultural practice. We have, I propose, tended to underestimate the multiplicity of Australian identities. Contrary to popular belief, Australia does have regions with a culinary as well as an economic aspect. Active personal engagement with the idea and the reality of ethnic difference goes back (at least) to the time of Federation, not merely to the post-war era. The “masculinism” of Federation-era Australian society may have masked female involvement in social and political affairs, but women can be seen in community

³ Laksiri Jayasuriya, “Citizens”, in *Australian Civilisation*, ed. Nile, 107.

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cookbooks weaving their own values into the fabric of Australian society. As well, men appear in community cookbooks expressing their connection to the values of home, family and hearth, and to the field of physical sustenance and enjoyment.

In general, the relationship to indigenous peoples and indigenous foods can be seen to be culturally problematic and sometimes embarrassing – this is an area in which we modern Australians have certainly not covered ourselves with glory. Indigenous people, images and foods keep cropping up in community cookbooks, though, suggesting that there is an evolving process at work. Australian settler culture has scratched around on the surface of the land for over 200 years now, but we are continuing to toy with the idea of putting down some real culinary and cultural roots. The apparent difficulty of reconciling settler and indigenous foodways, the widespread alienation of indigenous Australians from mainstream culture and the difficulty experienced by white Australia in accepting Aboriginal participation in the project of the civil society have been inglorious aspects of our social history. The effort to share with indigenous Australians the benefits of the civil society (foundering for many years on the rock of white paternalism and later on the shoal of – what was it? uncertainty? plain old racism?) is reflected in the history of community cookbooks. This is one area in which we may hope the future has more to offer.

The importance of “imagining” as a means of creating has been another common thread in this discussion. Imagination is the foundation of action. Community cookbooks are at once imaginative works and highly practical ones. Any cookbook marries the practical and the theoretical; Heldke’s concept of cooking as a “thoughtful practice” infuses this genre. This double essence fits community cookbooks, and fits them to be very particular reflections of the philosophical and practical discourses of cultural life.

The “two steps forward, one step back” process of cultural change can be seen in motion in these books. Community cookbooks portray ambivalences and tensions in Australian society; this was clearly evident in the study of ethnicity. “Two forward, one back” seems too linear a model, though, for the process observed; it suggests a slow but steady progress from point A to point B. Really the procedure is more erratic. If it were a dance, it might go something like “two steps to the right, one forwards, three north-westerly, half a step back to where you came from, a pirouette and a doh-sie-doh, then step outwards again”. The process appears random but ultimately comes to make some sense, and it is at least as interesting as the outcome.

In this thesis I have aimed to note both the mainstream and the departures therefrom; hence I have paid repeated attention to divergences. In some ways, though, Australians are a homogenous lot. For a nation that “rode to success on the sheep’s back” it is not surprising that lamb / mutton chops should form such a consistent part of daily fare, across time, space and socio-economic groupings. Our chosen “national” sweet dishes are loved everywhere. Whether or not the New Zealanders invented them first, pavlova, anzac biscuits and lamingtons are embraced by Australians in the heart and on the plate. As the preserve, by and large, of caring institutions and independent community groups, community cookbooks have continued to mirror the lives of ordinary Australians. They depict a panorama of community volunteer effort, and show the range of social institutions behind which Australians have chosen to throw their weight. As historical documents they reflect, on one hand, the Australian concern for heritage and, on the other, the increasingly innovative activities of our kitchens and our communities. Ultimately, community cookbooks bear testimony to the Australian response to social change.

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More than anything, community cookbooks in Australia are related to the project of creating and maintaining the civil society. The discourses of class, gender and ethnicity in Australian community cookbooks can each, in their own manner, be read as a way of collectively defining the elements of the good life. Moreover, as much as community cookbooks construct a shared image of the “good life”, they also discuss some of the many, varied, frequently contradictory qualities of the “good Australian”. Each community cookbook shows one tiny facet of the identity of the nation, and together they form a composite picture which reflects in fascinating detail the face of Australia. For various reasons, some groups remain excluded from this shared discourse. It is well to remember that, detailed as the portrait may be, it can never be comprehensive. This project is and always will be partial and particular, a work in progress, though its multiplicity is staggering nonetheless.

Scope for further research

There are many elaborations on this research that would help to clarify various aspects and to increase knowledge and understanding of specific areas of Australian food culture.

Methodologically speaking, even closer survey of a wide number of community cookbooks, using a database to log systematically the use of ingredients, methods and recipes, similarly to the method espoused by Bannerman, would make it possible to identify regional and temporal variation more minutely. The time and therefore expense of such research, given the large numbers of texts in question, has been prohibitive for this project, but the marriage of such techniques of minute analysis with a broad survey would be hugely worthwhile.

Beyond the “three pillars” of cultural history (gender, class and ethnicity), there are many other ways of interrogating community life and values which could profitably be

pursued through community cookbooks. For example: religion; education; health discourse; family structure and leisure activities. This thesis has not been able to do more than touch upon such subjects; there is more to know.

There are many dishes it would be of value to trace through community cookbooks as a way of measuring their place in Australian foodways. A study of curry and curried dishes in Australia, for example, would illuminate some of our best and worst culinary achievements as well as our changing global ties. I wish that this thesis had been able to include a more sustained focus on the significant role of cake in Australian culture, and that I could have devoted some space to the study of that curious category, the “mock” dishes, of which Colonial Goose is but one example.

Those recipes which have been the great “stayers” of Australian community cookbooks deserve some attention. Two recipes notable for their great longevity in community cookbooks adhere to the Australian food themes of meat and baking. Aberdeen Sausage, a kind of steamed minced-meat sausage rolled in breadcrumbs (akin to the early recipes for Fritz), is to be eaten cold. Bachelor’s Buttons are a small, rich biscuit flavoured with almond essence. These recipes were both present in Australian community cookbooks with great frequency, from south to north, east to west, and from one end to the other of the “long” twentieth century. This itself is something of a mystery – I, for one, cannot imagine a less appetising lunchtime repast than Aberdeen Sausage (unless it be “folded eggs for two” made with paraffin oil, from the *CWA Olinda Cookery Book*).⁴ But Aberdeen Sausage, as a survivor of a century of often tumultuous change, deserves a monograph at the least. Similarly Bachelor’s Buttons

⁴ *CWA Olinda Branch Cookery Book*, 1st ed. (1930s), 7. Perhaps somebody complained – though the book remained otherwise unaltered, all references to paraffin oil were omitted from later editions.

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(now there is something I *could* stand to eat), their unassuming nature clearly no impediment to their continued enjoyment by many generations.

Most significantly, an in-depth study of CWA cookery books would be of great value. This profoundly influential Australian women's organisation has produced several state and national-level histories over the years but these have tended to chronicle the development of the organisation and none, to my knowledge, have made more than short shrift of the foodways championed by the CWA. A study of the CWA's contribution to the socio-culinary history of the nation is currently lacking. A study of CWA cookbooks would document one of the community-building activities of a great Australian community institution. It would serve as a way of interrogating regional variation and as a close study of a community cookbook subtype named by many Australians as the most reliable and influential cookbooks of all. Other community organisations whose books have been numerous and of considerable social and culinary significance, and which therefore would also merit a study of their own, include the Red Cross and the PWMU.

Certain individuals also stand out as champions of this genre, for example Annie Sharman, the leading light of the *Green and Gold Cookery Book*. Her work in this genre dovetailed with a notable career as a South Australian educator. Such women often are unsung heroes; Annie Sharman's work in community education deserves greater recognition. There are many other examples of women who merit similar acknowledgement, their community cookbook involvements having formed part of a greater portrait of noteworthy community service and/or personal achievement. Such a project would help to elucidate twentieth-century women's role in community building. Their relegation, often, to these and similar forms of "subterranean citizenship" has

tended to obscure women's contribution to the building of the Australian nation and the growth of social capital.

A few individual community cookbooks of particular interest for their history, their recipes and their framing narratives, despite much re-reading and some investigative research, remain somewhat mysterious in terms of who produced them, under what conditions and with what guiding social and culinary ideas in mind. The time involved in mapping these texts more clearly has not been available within the parameters of this project, but further investigation would help illuminate some intriguing corners of the history of community cookbooks in Australia. Foremost among these is probably *Gunyah Gabba*, a text whose relationship to indigenous culture remains oddly unclear, but several others belong in this category as well.

Most of all, enhanced insights would result from extending the number of texts consulted. This thesis has involved close analysis of some 200+ titles and consultation of a couple of hundred more, but the 1000+ identified and not consulted would doubtless yield deeper and broader understanding.

So many cookbooks, so little time.

I have begun each chapter of the thesis with quotations that I felt helped to capture the essence of the subject. In this final chapter, it seems more fitting to let a community cookbook have the last word, reflecting on the collectivist impulse and the service ethic that are the heart of the genre. In an undetermined year of the 1930s, Aimee Lane, President of the Orange District Hospital Auxiliary, opened the *Orange Recipe Gift Book* with the observation:

It has been said: 'Each can do but little; but, if each will do that little, all will be done'.⁵

⁵ *The Orange Recipe Gift Book*, 3rd ed. (1930s), foreword.

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Appendix 1: Research Template

Section A:

Bibliographic and Formal Features

1. Index?
2. Publishing format (eg, hardback/paperback/spiralbound/pamphlet/ other)
3. Copy quality (handwritten/ handtyped/ computer formatted/ professional, etc)
4. a) Cover and b) flyleaf layout and illustration
5. Number of pages
6. Signs of use
7. Advertisements? What for?
8. Illustrations? Describe.
9. Foreword? Note significant points, and the general 'tone' it sets for the book
10. Linking narrative for a) chapters b) individual recipes?
11. Quotes or other bon mots?
12. Any other form of prose, illustration or commentary? (Overall tone)

Section B:

Recipes

1. Individual recipes credited to individual donors?
2. How many donors? (1-5, 6-20; 20-50, 50-100, >100)
3. Specialist topic? If so, name.
4. a) Recipe categories + number of recipes in each category. b) Approx total
5. a) Convenience foods / "modern" ingredients b) brand consciousness
6. Domestic technologies mentioned
7. Oven temperatures used: Fahrenheit / Celsius / Regulo / Descriptive
8. Measurements given in: Metric / Imperial / Volume / "Weight of..." / other
9. Prominent / unusual / noteworthy ingredients, methods or recipes
10. Curry recipes / uses of curry powder (/other 'hot spice' recipes)
11. a) cooking fats called for b) baking fats
12. Recipes titles indicating a foreign place
13. Recipe titles indicating an Australian place
14. Recipe titles indicating a person (eg name, title, relationship, "role")
15. Specifically thrift-conscious recipes
16. Specifically health-conscious recipes
17. Recipes designated 'easy' or 'quick'
18. Recipes designated 'old-fashioned' or 'traditional'
19. Recipes designated festive (eg, religious festivals, birthdays, etc)
20. Other interesting designations

Appendix 1

21. Overall tone of recipes: frugal / average / lavish / very variable
22. Overall skill and care-level required: low / average / high / very variable
23. Specificity of instructions: very casual / average / very specific / very variable
24. Speed and convenience of preparation: low / average / high / very variable
25. Recipes a) donated by b) designated popular with c) assume a male cook
26. Recipes a) donated by b) designated popular with c) assume a female cook
27. Recipes a) designated popular with b) good for c) assume a child cook
28. How many recipes refer to family?
29. How many recipes refer to working life / outside demands?
30. How many recipes refer to leisure time?
31. Other references to social/family/domestic/working life
32. " <u>Mock</u> ":
33. " <u>Love</u> ":
34. <u>pork/rabbit</u> :
35. <u>wholewheat</u> :
36. <u>alcohol</u> :
37. <u>whimsical</u> :
38. " <u>German</u> ":
39. <u>mincemeat</u> :
40. <u>oil</u> :
41. <u>garlic</u> :
42. " <u>Italian</u> ":