



*We walk in the Footsteps of Generations Past*

## Aberdeen Cookbooks

As we step into the festivities of the Holiday Season, we turn our attention to a tradition that brings us all together: food. At the heart of this season lies the act of reaching for a cookbook, and turning words on a page into food all can enjoy. This newsletter will take you on a culinary journey through time, exploring the pages of historical cookbooks that have stood witness to the evolution of tastes and traditions. From colonial kitchens to 1970 tables, each cookbook offers not only recipes, but uncovers new narratives and cultures of the people who wrote them. So, as the holiday aromas fill the air, we hope this newsletter infuses your mind with culinary history and knowledge.

Old cookbooks, with their weathered and stained pages, are just like time capsules that transport us back to a simpler time. In an era where kitchen appliances relied on wood, coal, and ice, and when recipes and culinary techniques were passed down through generations, recipes usually took the form of poetic guidance instead of precise instructions.

Consider the advice to “bake in two square tins in a moderately quick oven.” These instructions do not specify the size of the tins, how to prepare the tins, the temperature of the oven, or length of time for baking. Such ambiguity reveals not only the mastery of home cooks but also their reliance on personal experience and intuition over standardized

PEACH BLOSSOM CAKE.—One cup pulverized sugar and half a cup of butter stirred together until like thick cream, add one cup milk. Beat the whites of three eggs and add to one cup flour, mixed with two teaspoonfuls Rumford's yeast powder. Stir in and add half a teaspoonful cornstarch. Flavor strongly with extract of peach. Bake in two square tins in moderately quick oven and when done sandwich with finely grated cocoanut and pink sugar. Frost with clear icing and sprinkle with pink sugar.—Mrs. Laura Charles.

*Grace Methodist Church Cookbook, 1892*

measurements. Ovens and other kitchen appliances were hand-crafted, each with its own hot and cold spots, so everyone's oven or cooking methods varied in heat. Temperatures and cook times were often omitted from cookbooks. Also, people in those days generally didn't have the luxury of turning a knob to 350 and having it stay at a constant temperature.

However, today's cook will notice that even modern recipes are left to the user's interpretation. An example of this is the phrase “cook until golden brown.” Who knows, maybe in 100+ years, there will be an automated indicator for when a cookie is perfectly golden brown!

## Cookbooks & Cultures

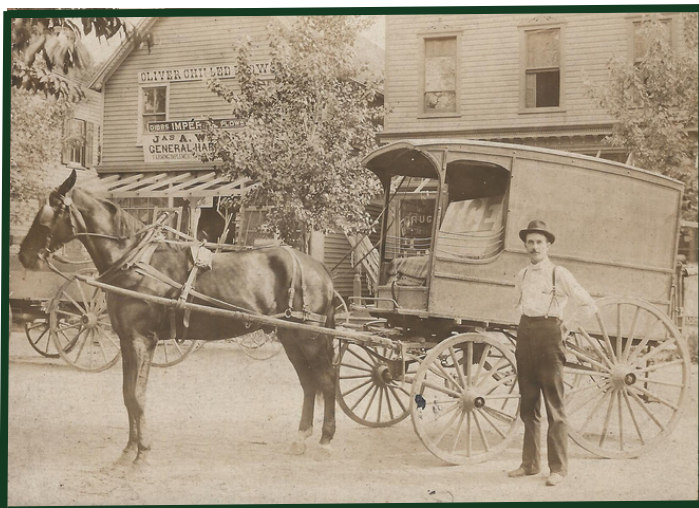
The recipes themselves offer insights into the culture and trends of their time. As one flips through the pages of Aberdeen's 1992 centennial cookbook, *Aberdeen's Cookin'*, a particular recipe in the "Historical" section stands out that provides detailed instructions on how to skin a rabbit. Meats weren't conveniently available in bulk beneath a film of plastic at the back of a refrigerated grocery store as they are today. Instead, they were sold hours after being killed, either from a butcher shop or straight from the farm to the table. This era was characterized by a lifestyle where farm-to-table living was more than just a buzzword—it was a way of life.

**PANNED RABBIT** - Skin, singe and clean the rabbit. Disjoint it, making two pieces of the hindquarter, one piece of the saddle, and two of the forequarter. Put these into an ordinary baking pan; add two ounces of chopped suet, or the same quantity of bacon sliced thin; add one onion sliced, dust with pepper; add a cupful of water or stock; cover the pan and cook slowly for one hour. Lift the cover, dust the rabbit with salt, baste and cook it for half an hour longer. Dish it and serve with a brown sauce made from the liquor in the pan.

*From "Historical" section of Aberdeen's Cookin', 1992*



This is a photograph of Gilbert's Butchery and Grocery store, taken in 1900. Aberdeen residents would have relied on stores like Gilbert's for a supply of fresh meat, especially those without the luxury of owning farm animals.



This is a photograph of Aberdeen's first ice man, Howell-Hal Rogers, which was taken before 1900. An "ice man" was a person who delivered ice to homes and businesses for refrigeration. Their job involved transporting blocks of ice from ice houses to customers using insulated wagons or trucks. Customers would use the delivered ice to keep food cool in iceboxes, an early version of refrigerators. The ice man played a crucial role in preserving food freshness before electric refrigerators became widespread in the early 20th century.



Leaping forward to the 1970s, a decade renowned not only for fights against the status quo but also for the emergence of a new culinary era. It was a time when cold soups, jellied vegetables, and chilled salads became staples on many dinner tables. Nobody can exactly explain why gelatin made its way onto the ingredient lists of vegetable or meat dishes, but one could attribute it to the fact that the 70s were a time of eccentricity and rebellion. And although putting shrimp in jello is now considered a passing fad, the cookbooks that hold such recipes exist to preserve these culinary moments and to show us the changes we've made through the years as a society.

*SHRIMP MOUSSE EN GELEE*

Pink shrimp mousse sparkles in a sheath of clear aspic. A real party maker.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 3 envelopes unflavored gelatine                            | 1 can (10 ounces) frozen cream of shrimp soup, defrosted |
| 3 cups cold Clarified Chicken Stock*                       | 3 cups deveined, cooked shrimp                           |
| Lemon juice  | 2 tablespoons minced green onion                         |
| Salt and monosodium glutamate                              | Tabasco sauce  |
| 1½ teaspoons dried dill or 1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill | Red food coloring, if needed                             |
| ½ teaspoon spice Parisienne†                               | ½ cup dairy sour cream                                   |
|  | 1 cup heavy cream, whipped                               |

*Serve It Cold!, 1968*

*CHICKEN BREASTS EN GELEE*

Luscious black grapes and a light jelly glaze touched with Madeira top these poached chicken breasts. Low in calories, high in flavor and beauty.

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 4 whole chicken breasts, halved | ½ teaspoon tarragon leaves                                      |
| Salt                            | 1 envelope unflavored gelatine                                  |
| 1½ cups chicken broth           | ¼ cup Madeira wine  |
| 1 carrot, peeled, sliced        | Lemon juice   |
| 1 slice onion                   | 1 cup black grapes  |
| 2 whole cloves                  | Long strips lemon peel, bits orange peel, chicory or watercress |
| 1 sprig parsley                 |   |

*Serve It Cold!, 1968*

For complete recipe, see pages 9 & 10



*“Chicken Breasts en Gelee” pictured in the front. Serve It Cold!, 1969*

The recipe below was taken from the "*What's Cookin' in Aberdeen*" cookbook, a publication by the Women's Society of the Grace Methodist Church. The presence of a "Scripture Cake" in this collection aligns with the theme of the cookbook, which integrates culinary traditions with spiritual values. It's intriguing to note how the ingredients and preparation method are connected with biblical references, adding a unique layer to the recipe and cookbook.

Published By

Woman's Society Of Christian Service

OF

Grace Methodist Church

Aberdeen, Maryland

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Woman's Society of Christian Service shall be to unite all the women of the church in Christian living and service; to help develop and support Christian work among women and children around the world; to develop the spiritual life; to study the needs of the world; to take part in such service activities as will strengthen the local church, improve civic, community and world conditions. To this end this organization shall seek to enlist women, young people and children in this Christian fellowship, and to secure funds for the activities in the local church and support of the work undertaken at home and abroad for the establishment of a World Christian Community.

*What's Cooking in Aberdeen*

SCRIPTURE CAKE Jan Robinson

1 c. butter	(Judges 5:25)	Milk
2 c. sugar	(Jeremiah 6:20)	Sweet cane from a far place
3-1/2 c. flour	(I Kings 5:2)	Solomons provisions
2 c. figs	(I Samuel 30:12)	Cake of pressed figs
2 c. raisins	(I Samuel 30:12)	Two clusters of raisins
1 c. water	(Genesis 24:22)	Drinking by camels
1 c. almonds	(Genesis 43:11)	Almonds
6 eggs	(Isaiah 10:14)	As one gathered eggs

*What's Cooking in Aberdeen.* The entire recipe may be found at the end of this newsletter, on page 8.

This recipe originates from a local elementary school cookbook, where both teachers and parents submitted recipes. For those who are old enough to remember, they will recognize the purple printing of the mid-century ditto machine used by classroom teachers before the era of computers and digital printers.

In this cookbook, each recipe was hand-written on a special stencil that was then attached to a ditto machine's drum. When the handle of the machine was cranked, the "master" on the drum would roll across sheets of paper one at a time, transferring the printing onto the paper. The printing method employed an alcohol-based fluid to transfer the image. (And for readers who remember those school days, simply saying the word "ditto" brings up memories of holding cool, damp, purple-inked papers to our faces and sniffing them before beginning our schoolwork!)



*Ditto machine*

Source: <https://www.authorsden.com/visit/viewshortstory.asp?catid=25&id=66170>

Apple Cake (Mrs. Kuhn)

4 cups grated apples	2 tsp. soda
2 cups flour	3/4 tsp. salt
2 cups sugar	1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 cup oil	2 tsp. cinnamon
2 eggs	or
1 cup nuts	1 tsp. nutmeg
	1 tsp. cinnamon

Break egg over apples; mix with a fork. Add sugar, nuts, oil, spice and vanilla. Sift flour, salt and soda. Add to apple mixture. Bake at 325° for about 60 min. in a 9x13 pan.



# Rumford Complete Cookbook

The Rumford Complete Cookbook by Lily Haxworth Wallance was a kitchen staple during the first half of the 20th century, with the first copy having been published in 1908. We do not know for certain which edition the Museum owns, as the cover and first several pages are missing, but we do know it is an earlier edition. As seen in the picture, it includes space for the owner to write notes or her own recipes.

**Delicious Cake**

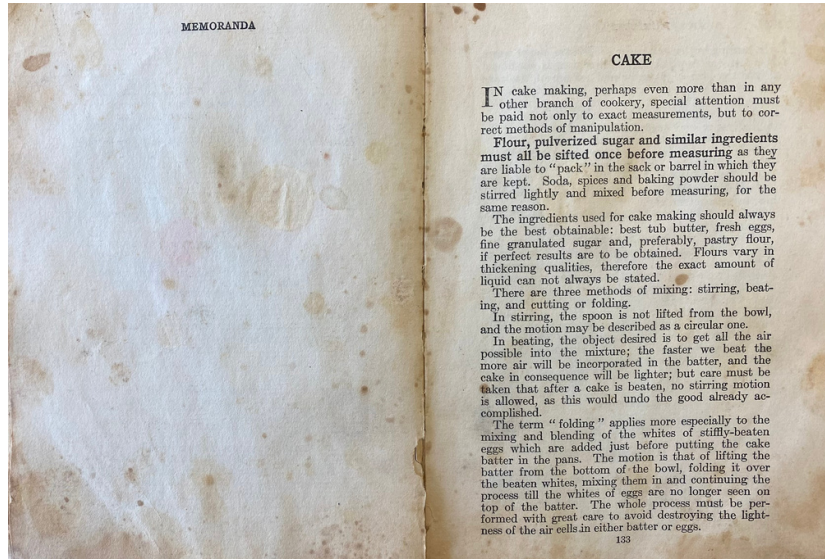
Your Cake, Muffins and Pastry will always be light, delicate, and of the finest texture if made with

**RUMFORD**  
THE OLD RELIABLE

**Baking \* Powder**

It excels all others in strength and healthfulness, and food made with it will always be nutritious and wholesome. The excellent results obtained from its use and its moderate price should make RUMFORD the standard of every family.

**Pure. Healthful. Economical.**



The cookbook was originally published by Rumford Chemical Works, a Rhode Island company famous for its baking powder. While the book specifically recommended Rumford products in its recipes, Aberdeen residents might have used A&P Baking Powder, like this 1890 canister from 477 West Bel Air Avenue.

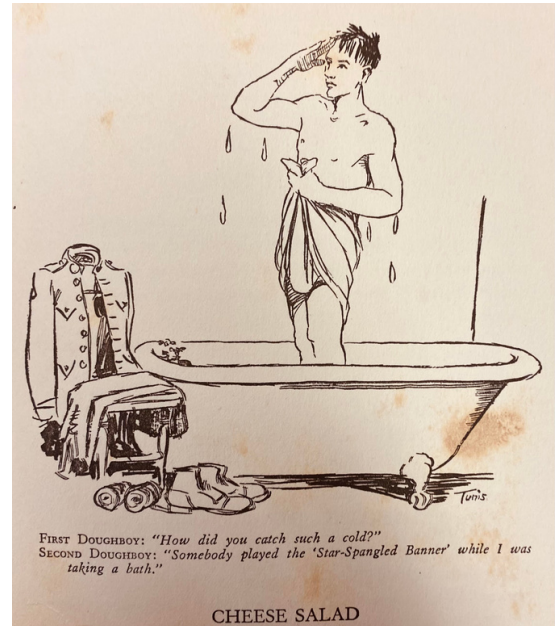


# Cheese Salad

This recipe is from the cookbook *Eat, Drink And Be Merry In Maryland*. The cookbook is unique in its drawings and jokes that accompany some recipes. It's important to note that this cookbook was created in 1932, and therefore contains racist caricatures of Black People. The book has been reprinted and sold without said images.

## Ingredients

- 1 (.25-oz.) envelope unflavored gelatine
- 1 cup hot water
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 2 (8-oz.) blocks cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 (10.75-oz.) can tomato soup
- 1/4 teaspoon salt (*be generous*)
- dash of red pepper (*or several dashes*)
- 1 finely chopped onion (*Vidalia recommended*)
- 3/4 cup finely chopped celery
- 1 small bottle of chopped stuffed olives (*1 cup recommended*)



## Instructions

1. Place gelatin powder in a 2-1/2 quart bowl. Pour in hot water and stir until dissolved. When dissolved, add cold water.
2. In a separate bowl, mix cheese, mayonnaise, salt, and pepper. (We used a potato masher to mix cheese and mayo.)
3. Stir in soup and gelatine, a little at a time until combined.
4. Chill slightly, about a half hour; then stir in chopped onion, celery, and olives.
5. Refrigerate until set or overnight.
6. Serve with veggies or chips.

Enjoy!

### Author's note:

This dip will be stiff enough to use a mold, if desired.

You can find this recipe and many other delicious ones in the Aberdeen Museum Library.







# Ask Mr. History

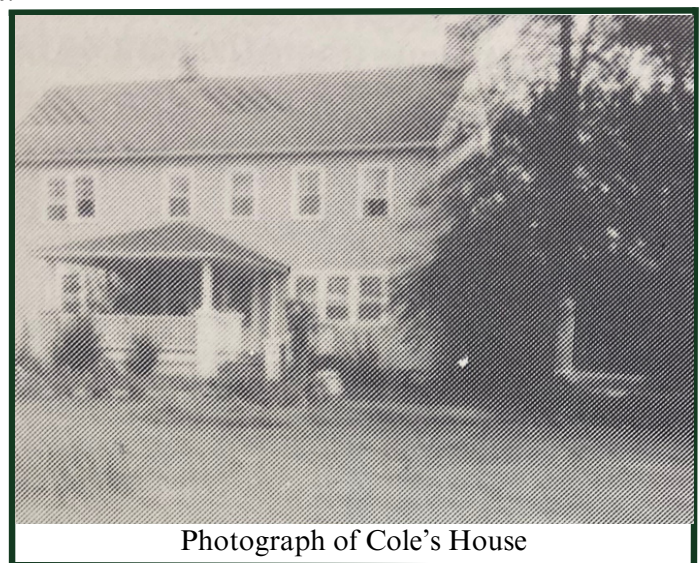
**Q** Question: What is the oldest building in Aberdeen?

**A** & The oldest standing building in Aberdeen is the Cole House, located on Paradise Road, opposite Aberdeen High School. Originally a small log cabin, the house has undergone continuous remodeling. Built in the mid-1700s on a tract of land called the “Royal Exchange,” which spans over one hundred acres, The Cole House has a little-known fact. During the Civil War, when the Methodist church in town split, those with Southern sympathies congregated at the Cole House for services. When the war ended in 1866, a church named Soule’s Chapel was constructed on Law Street. It still stands at 302 W. Bel Air Avenue, serving as the overflow section of the later 1899 building with stained glass windows.

Until recent years, there were older houses than the Cole House, but they have since been torn down. One such house, named the Poplar Hill/Aquilla Hall Mansion was built in 1749, and George Washington reportedly slept there. However, the house was demolished to make room for the Fantastics warehouse behind Walmart.



This is a photograph of a door from Poplar Hill. Note the old world style and size of the hinges – They cross the entire door.



Photograph of Cole’s House

If you have a question and want it answered on the next “Ask Mr. History” column, please submit it to [info@aberdeenmuseum.org](mailto:info@aberdeenmuseum.org)

If you have an older cookbook, especially one from Aberdeen, Harford County, Maryland, APG, military wives cookbook, or of other local interest that you would like to donate to the Museum, please contact us at [info@aberddeenmuseum.org](mailto:info@aberddeenmuseum.org) or bring it in person to the Museum during regular Museum hours.

See below for the full recipes featured the newsletter.

## Scripture Cake

### SCRIPTURE CAKE

Jan Robinson

1 c. butter	(Judges 5:25)	Milk
2 c. sugar	(Jeremiah 6:20)	Sweet cane from a far place
3-1/2 c. flour	(I Kings 5:2)	Solomons provisions
2 c. figs	(I Samuel 30:12)	Cake of pressed figs
2 c. raisins	(I Samuel 30:12)	Two clusters of raisins
1 c. water	(Genesis 24:22)	Drinking by camels
1 c. almonds	(Genesis 43:11)	Almonds
6 eggs	(Isaiah 10:14)	As one gathered eggs

### SCRIPTURE CAKE (Continued)

A little salt	(Exodus 2:13)	Every meal seasoned with salt
1 tbsp. honey	(Exodus 16:31)	Manna described like wafers made with honey
Spices to taste	(I Kings 10:2)	Sheba came with spices

Cream butter and sugar in a large bowl, stir in 1/2 of the sifted flour until smooth. Chop figs and raisins and cook in a cup of cold water for 5 minutes. Cool while blanching and chopping the almonds. Beat egg whites with a pinch of salt until stiff enough to hold a peak. Combine the yolk and honey mixture alternately with remainder of flour to butter and sugar. Beat well, adding a dash of cinnamon or allspice to flavor. Fold in egg whites. Bake in a foil or waxed paper lined pan about 50 minutes or until cake leaves sides of pan. Cool before cutting. Serves 10 to 12. Directions for mixing cake: Follow Solomon's advice for making good boys. (Proverbs 23:14) BEAT WELL.



# Shrimp Mousse En Gelee

## SHRIMP MOUSSE EN GELEE

Pink shrimp mousse sparkles in a sheath of clear aspic. A real party maker.

<i>3 envelopes unflavored gelatine</i>	<i>1 can (10 ounces) frozen cream of shrimp soup, defrosted</i>
<i>3 cups cold Clarified Chicken Stock*</i>	<i>3 cups deveined, cooked shrimp</i>
<i>Lemon juice</i>	<i>2 tablespoons minced green onion</i>
<i>Salt and monosodium glutamate</i>	<i>Tabasco sauce</i>
<i>1½ teaspoons dried dill or 1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill</i>	<i>Red food coloring, if needed</i>
<i>½ teaspoon spice Parisienne†</i>	<i>½ cup dairy sour cream</i>
	<i>1 cup heavy cream, whipped</i>

For clear aspic layer, sprinkle 1 envelope gelatine over 2 cups stock; stir over low heat until gelatine melts and liquid is clear. Season rather sharply with about 2 tablespoons lemon juice, a little salt and monosodium glutamate. Strain through several layers wet cheesecloth. Chill until syrupy thick. For mousse, sprinkle 2 envelopes gelatine over remaining 1 cup cold stock; stir over low heat until gelatine melts. Add dill, spice, shrimp soup and 2½ cups shrimp. Whizz in blender until smooth (in two batches if necessary). Add green onion, Tabasco and lemon juice and salt to taste. If mixture is pale, tint a pretty shrimp pink with few drops red coloring as cream will pale it. Chill until thick but not set. Line 6- to 7-cup fish-shaped or other mold with the clear aspic as described in To Line a Mold with Aspic.\* If you wish, decorate aspic layer with thin lengthwise slices shrimp or green pepper crescents cut with small truffle cutter and arranged to look like fish scales. Gently fold sour cream and whipped cream into mousse. Spoon carefully over sticky firm aspic layer. Cover with saran film and chill until firm, 4 hours or overnight. Unmold and decorate with fresh dill and chilled shrimp. It's also pretty with fish Crystal Aspic\* finely chopped and tumbled onto platter around mousse. Makes 8 or more servings.



# Chicken Breasts En Gelee

## CHICKEN BREASTS EN GELEE

Luscious black grapes and a light jelly glaze touched with Madeira top these poached chicken breasts. Low in calories, high in flavor and beauty.

*4 whole chicken breasts,  
halved*

*Salt*

*1½ cups chicken broth*

*1 carrot, peeled, sliced*

*1 slice onion*

*2 whole cloves*

*1 sprig parsley*

*½ teaspoon tarragon leaves*

*1 envelope unflavored gelatine*

*¼ cup Madeira wine*

*Lemon juice*

*1 cup black grapes*

*Long strips lemon peel, bits  
orange peel, chicory or  
watercress*

Sprinkle chicken very lightly with salt, place skin-side up in saucepan. Add broth, carrot, onion, cloves, parsley and tarragon. Cover and simmer gently until tender, about 30 minutes. Cool slightly in broth and pull off skin. (Lift meat off bones, if you wish.) Wrap chicken in saran film and chill. Chill broth enough to skim off fat layer; strain. There should be 1½ cups. Add water if necessary. Sprinkle gelatine over broth in saucepan; stir over low heat until it is melted, 2 or 3 minutes. Add Madeira, a few drops lemon juice and salt if needed. Chill until syrupy. Brush lightly over chicken breasts. Halve and seed a few of the grapes; press cut-side down on chicken in a pretty flower design using long, thin strips of lemon peel for stems and orange for centers of flowers. Glaze with second coat of thick-but-not-set aspic. This requires about ½ to 1 cup aspic. Chill rest of aspic firm in shallow pan; cut into tiny cubes and pile around chicken on platter if desired. Decorate with rest of grapes and chicory or watercress. Makes 4 servings.

All recipes and cookbooks in this newsletter are from the Museum's very own library bookshelves. If you're interested in learning more about old cookbooks or want to try some of Aberdeen's yummy recipes, feel free to stop by!



# The Aberdeen Historical Museum on 18 Howard Street

invites you to attend its annual



## Christmas Street Open House

Saturday, Dec. 2nd

10 AM to 5 PM

Live Music, Local History,  
Refreshments, & Holiday Festivities!

Strolling Violinist

Watch the Parade (3 pm) from our Sidewalk,  
Just 1 block from Reviewing Stand



# Join Us!

Recently our volunteers enjoyed a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon at Golden Corral.

We have one of the best teams ever! Would you like to join us in volunteering?

Click [here](#) to learn more.



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Regular Hours:

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Thursday, 10 AM - 1 PM

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