

"Food"

by Sarah Ann Frost Stamps

I am awed by the memory of the amounts of food daily consumed by those of us privileged to be young in the magic years of the late thirties and early forties. I was asked to write about the special parties—and they were epic—but what strikes me particularly in thinking about them is not only the excesses of the parties themselves but also the amount of food we had routinely consumed before attending them.

By the time we were teenaged most of our mothers were fixing our breakfasts, but in my early childhood the maids arrived before breakfast. I think my mother always felt a little "put upon" at having to fix breakfast, even though the dishes were left for the maid (in my home a combination maid, cook, laundress, nurse, and babysitter all rolled into our one beloved Catherine Couch, who worked for my family for forty years). I know all mothers were notoriously irritable on Thursday which was the maids' night out all over town. Whether mother or maid prepared them, the breakfasts alone must have supplied enough calories for a full day today. My own favorite breakfast would have been served in the spring when strawberries were in season. (We sometimes drove to Portland to buy strawberries in quantity, but there were always plenty on the market carts all over town in May). The breakfast of my choice consisted of strawberries and cream (poured off the top of the milk, which was delivered everyday in glass bottles) and sausage with buttermilk biscuits. When strawberries were not in season, we had bananas and cereal or grapefruit, followed by bacon or ham, eggs, and toast (homemade bread, of course). In summer we had peaches and cream, followed by the above necessities. In winter we had oatmeal and fresh squeezed orange juice, followed by the routine eggs, bacon or ham, and toast or biscuits. On Sunday we had waffles or pancakes with melted real butter and sorghum, maple syrup, honey, and homemade preserves.

Lunches at Peabody Demonstration School cost fifteen cents for meat, two vegetables, milk and dessert. No wonder all the medical students from Vanderbilt always cluttered our lunch lines. Some of us preferred to bring our lunches of tuna sandwiches or Swiss cheese and corned beef on rye and homemade desserts, but we usually ate those long before lunch and bought another at home on the weekends lunch in the winter was often oyster stew or vegetable soup. In summer lunch was usually platters of tomato sandwiches, made with homemade mayonnaise, and big pitchers of iced tea. When we arrived home from school, there was always the regular after school snack—often gingerbread and cider in the fall, or milk with cookies or left over pie or cake from the night before.

Dinner was an occasion. I remember that my "job" was to light the candles on the table just before we sat down. If it was very hot, my father would ask permission of my mother to come to dinner in his shirt sleeves; otherwise he wore his suit coat, or in the winter a "smoking jacket" which he put on to relax when he came home, retaining starched shirt and tie, of course. Dinner was always served promptly at six because our beloved Catherine had to get home. (Heaven only

knows what she had to do after she got home!) The simplest family supper consisted of salad or fruit, starch, vegetable, meat, hot bread, and dessert. I often helped with the dishes, and then one of us took Catherine home. Often we sat around after dinner and my father read to us. That frequently involved a snack—left over dessert or an apple from the bushel that was on the back porch all fall. Then I did my homework, and before bed I invariably had a snack—usually fruit juice or milk and cookies.

What I have been telling about was just the basic, everyday eating. Every special event involved more eating. Picnics were especially popular. We always took picnics on trips because Mother did not trust small town hotels. I remember going on a trip to Kentucky with my brother and my two cousins, Mary and Billy Cooper. Mother and Aunt Mary Linda had both supervised lunches for us, and since they were both renowned cooks and in perpetual competition, we reaped the benefits. On this particular occasion they had each prepared a huge white suit box filled with wax paper, lace paper doilies and FOOD. To sustain us on a half day's journey we had fried chicken, stuffed eggs, country ham and beaten biscuits, tomato sandwiches, cucumber sandwiches, chicken salad sandwiches, cheese straws, assorted olives, pickles, celery, carrots, etc., and chess and lemon pies. We ate for the entire two hundred and some odd miles. When we arrived in Lexington their relatives entertained us with a fantastic dinner which ended with a special lemon chiffon pie—which I ate with gusto. My brother and I spent the rest of the week in Berea with our grandmother where we ate simple little five course dinners at Boone Tavern every night! Brother left soon after for the Marines. It must have been quite a change!

Parties were special. My parents loved to have company, and we entertained frequently for relatives, Peabody faculty, and my father's students. I remember homemade ice cream parties for as many as a hundred students held in the back yard with Japanese lanterns hung from all the trees. We once served forty students at a seated Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings. My mother always had the first meeting of the Peabody Dames in the fall at our house, and she was often in charge of much larger affairs at Knapp Farm or the Social Religious Building. We once made more than a hundred corn husk dolls as favors for a Peabody Woman's Club party.

The parties given especially for me were usually slumber parties, luncheon parties, or after-the-dance suppers. I never had a formal tea, but I went to a lot. The first one that I remember vividly was given for my cousin, Mary Manier Cooper, by her parents, and I got to "serve" and wear a long organdy dress and flowers. The other girls were the "big girls"—Elise Campbell, Betty Baird, Adelaide Roberts, Mamie Edwards, Betty Maddin and the Keith twins—and I was thrilled to be included. We all wore long dresses, and Uncle Billy must have provided corsages for us all. Perhaps we wore Mary's extras. I do recall wearing gardenias because of the smell. Mary was simply festooned with flowers, and the table in the hall was loaded with the corsages she could not find a place to pin on her person. All the familiar "help" from

all the family were dressed up in black dresses and ruffled aprons or white coats, and they were just as excited as I was. Mrs. E. Akin had catered, and all her specialities were on the table—the famous tomato sandwiches, open faced cucumber sandwiches, ribbon creamed cheese sandwiches, nut bread, puffs filled with chicken salad, and the lovely little rectangular and triangular petit fours iced in the palest pastels with tiny icing flowers on top. The guests all wore silk stockings and hats and white gloves, and they left their calling cards in a silver tray on the hall table.

As I grew older, the war years were upon us, but our parents must have made really heroic efforts to keep our lives full of parties and good times. Not only did they give parties for us, but they drove us tirelessly to a round of parties, especially during Christmas. I really do not know how they managed with rationing of both sugar and gas. Actually, the war began when we were freshmen, and was almost over by our senior year, so the worst of it must have come in our last high school year. Most Christmas seasons of our high school days were filled with coffees, lunches, teas, dances, and dance breakfasts throughout our holidays. Coke parties also came in and were less formal and often more fun than the teas. They were morning affairs with cokes, potato chips, dips, sausage biscuits, and fudge cake and cookies. We wore skirts and sweaters to these. Coffees were more formal, more like morning teas—but we wore suits instead of dresses. Teas continued to be rather formal. Sometimes grandmothers gave them at the Centennial Club downtown. I remember being sent with an extra pair of white gloves in my purse in case the original one got dirty. The food at the Centennial Club was always special and usually included a salad at teas and lovely little flakey pastry butterfies that got powdered sugar all over my navy blue dresses.

Lunches were really elegant. I remember feeling very informal when asked to take off my hat! I also remember that at the Belle Meade Club they had dishes that had a second dish with colored cracked ice to go under melon balls or shrimp cocktail. I thought this was really class! At a Christmas luncheon Mother gave at home for my friends. I remember having red salads made in star shaped molds and individual desserts which were snowmen made of coconut cake and ice cream.

There was an occasional formal dinner party. I only went to a few, probably because so many of the boys started to leave for the service. I vividly remember one that was given for my brother before some dance. We borrowed a white coat for the once-a-week yard man, and we also borrowed several extra maids—all in black uniforms with ruffled aprons and head pieces. There were even finger bowls (actually the cut glass salad bowls) with flowers floating in them and little embroidered mats under them. The guests were all in evening dress. My brother had his own tuxedo which had been bought second-hand for fifteen dollars and was later sold for ten. The highlight of the evening was when one of the girls fell in the Cherokee rose bushes in full evening regalia. I have no memory of what they ate, but I am sure that it was plentiful and filling and also that they dropped in at a couple of

breakfasts after the dance.

Sorority meetings were also occasion to eat. For one at my house Mother asked me what I would like to serve and I chose ham and beaten biscuit, chicken salad sandwiches, cheese straws, and fudge cake—with cokes, of course.

Many of these events occurred either simultaneously or one after the other. Our patient parents would work out hook-ups for taking us from one to the other. Often they would wait out in the cold as we preened and partied. During gas rationing we had to be especially careful about rides. I was always particularly happy when Corinne Craig's father, Uncle Ed to most of us, drove. He invariably handed each girl in and out of the car as if she were the queen of England herself, complimenting her all the while.

I was always encouraged to bring friends in after dances and could be sure to find ham and homemade bread, beaten biscuit, apricot turnovers, date bread, sausage pinwheels, and other odds and ends. Cokes were considered a little wild, but were condoned for special occasions.

When I had friends over, we cooked seasonally. There were cookie cutters of all varieties. One Easter we made elaborate carts of cookie dough pulled by

ducks and rabbits and filled with colored cookie eggs. At Halloween we made orange iced, pumpkin shaped cookies, and at Christmas the kitchen was a mass of colored candies, cookies and cakes—all decorated by guests and carried proudly home.

At slumber parties—which were very popular in those largely manless days—we cooked, and ate, prodigiously. Cookies, pulled candy, cakes, popcorn, grilled cheese sandwiches, and hot chocolate were popular.

I think I am getting fatter just writing this! One final memory is of my first date. I was in the seventh grade and I had been invited to a party with Beverly Douglas, who was a classmate, as my escort. Since he had been forced to go to the party with me in the first place, his mother made him ask me out again (to prove he had enjoyed it). Mrs. Douglas drove us to a movie downtown and arranged to pick us up after it was over. The movie was over before she was due to come for us, and we had time on our hands. Of course we ate—one dozen doughnuts for the two of us bought at the Krystal on Church Street where they turned them out before your very eyes. We ate six chocolate and six plain as we walked up the hill to view the capitol. I seldom enjoyed a date more!

Significant Memories

Part I

by Alice Ann Vaughan Floyd

I had never seen a hackberry tree until my family moved to Nashville in the fall of 1937. Pulaski was a maple town. We moved into an elegant neighborhood with elegant houses and elegant people. The 200 block of 24th Avenue South is a story unto itself.

The homes were mostly three storied with ballrooms on the top level and with unattached garages and servant quarters in the rear.

Among the elegant people were Mr. Ed Lindsey who lived with daughters Martha and Mrs. Hart and grandchildren Alice, Deanie and Pem. Mrs. Eugene Harris, whose daughters, Mrs. John Burch and granddaughters, Alice and Jane Tyne, lived with this grand lady for a short period of time. Mrs. Goulding Marr, Miss Kate Marr, the Reese's, the Green Benton's, the Warleys and daughter Sara, Dr. and Mrs. Joe Minor with daughters, Betty and Floy, the E.C. Marables, Mrs. Eugene Crutcher, the Walshes, the Davises with Eleanor, Tommy, Anthony and Julia Claire, the Dodds. Later the Wallaces moved on the street with Joan, Beverly and Julia (Mrs. Billy Bainbridge). On Vanderbilt Place were the Martins with son, Joe. On Kensington was Mrs. Murfree with children, Jimmy and Mary Elizabeth (Mrs. Houston Roberts) and Dan, Tom and Rog Bunthin.

The Bunthin yard was always full of boys playing football and the Reese's yard was always full of basketball players on a mud court. Billy Stumb, Tony Davis and Bobby Reese became NIL greats at Father Ryan in basketball.

The Delta Delta Delta House and Beta Theta Pi Houses remained in approximately the same locations but were razed and rebuilt. W.O. Floyd, my husband, was the person who broke the ground for the new Beta House.

In retrospect, 24th Avenue

became the geographical center of my life.

Since it has become Vanderbilt's fraternity and sorority row, I felt this bit of information might be of some best orical value in the future.

Part II

by Alice Ann Vaughan Floyd

Every Monday morning most of the student body of Hillsboro High School congregated on the north porch to talk about who did what with whom, where and why. Acceptance by peers was paramount and for that reason looks and lingo were all important. Pleated skirts, sloppy Jo's with a round collar dickey and always a string of pearls seemed to be the standard uniform. Saddle shoes, white socks, moccasins, Old Maine Trotters (loafers) purchased at Tinsley's on the Southwest corner of 7th and Church, brown and white forerunner of the golf shoe manufactured by Spaulding and purchased at Burke's Store on northside of Church Street between 4th and 5th were popular for awhile. Mexican hurrachas that squeaked and smelled terrible were worn to the teachers dismay and the pupils delight. You always knew who was going to the restroom. Ballet slippers were very popular for street wear and especially for dancers (oh so comfortable unless your partner stepped on your foot). For "dress up" shoes, we wore suede in the fall and winter, patent leather and spectators in the summer both blue and white and brown and white. I can also remember wearing bells tied on our shoe strings until we were told to remove them.

The Chesterfield coat with the velvet collar was worn on the street, church and to formals. Sometimes on special occasions the long black velvet evening wrap with white rabbit collar was worn.

Hats consisted of straw poke bonnets, wide brimmed legorns with grosgrain ribbon for summer—felt, trimmed in feathers