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Dutch Oven Ham

Ben Bowen

benjamin.bowen@aggiemail.usu.edu

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Joshua Amos McKinney
North Logan, Utah
November 26, 2017

Dutch Oven Ham Foodways

Informant: Joshua Amos McKinney was raised in Louisville, Kentucky, but his mother is from Utah. He has learned a number of things from Utah culture and other Western culture, including Dutch Oven cooking. He and his parents drove from Kentucky to Utah for family reunions often each year. He currently lives in Rexburg, Idaho with his wife Jennifer (Jenn) and three children.

Context: The collection took place in Josh's mother-in-law's kitchen, where several people had gathered to share various holiday traditions and other folklore. The topic of foodways during the holidays prompted Josh to share this story.

As is found in the text, Josh recognizes that this foodway began simply as a foodway, but this idea has become more complicated as its popularity increased within both sides of his family; Josh's extended McKinney family—that is, his family from Kentucky, who more rarely use Dutch ovens than some families in the West—considers the foodway to have developed into a Thanksgiving and Christmas tradition, whereas Josh's immediate family, especially his father, consider it to be an exceptionally delicious meal that is usually reserved for a specific or special occasion, such as Christmas, but is not necessarily exclusive to holidays.

Due to the fact that Josh's father, Mark, found or invented this recipe, the regular use of this foodway has remained within Josh's immediate family, although Josh would not consider it odd to share the recipe with, or even make it for, his own family. The recipe for this foodway is not written down, but is passed on orally.

Text:

So, the, my dad started getting into Dutch Oven cooking when he went to Woodbadge I think is when he started getting into it. And, um, so we were out East — and there weren't as many people that did Dutch Oven cooking, my dad's really into it now— he even, designed and had someone manufacture his own Dutch oven table. Anyway so as he started doing this —I'm not sure where he got the recipe, but he makes this, um, Coke ham. So you buy the cheap ham, um smoked ham? Is that right?

Jenn: No.

No, oh, you're right, it's just on the bone, there's a name for it that we — oh, summer Ham, I think that's what they called it — but that doesn't exist out east, west I mean. Um anyway it's just a ham on the bone and use a hacksaw to cut it down, uh so it'll fit inside the Dutch oven, if you have to which, in a small twelve, that's the case but if you have a deep twelve then it'll fit a little bit better, but he eventually bought this deep twelve Dutch oven just so that he could cook ham in it. Um, so we started eating it, um, just here and there Dad would make it — you basically, the recipe is pretty simple — you cook it for, an hour or so so that it will, um, drain out the juices— you pour the juices off and pour a Coke, like a twenty-ounce Coke over the top of it, and then, and then, you just cook it in that for the remainder of the time until it gets to the temperature, and you baste it every so often — I forget how often — and then after that, at the very end at the last ten, fifteen minutes you pour honey over the top of it, and let the honey glaze. Anyway so we just, loved this ham so much it was delicious, and it falls off the bone for the most part and just super super tasty, and um just cook it in a Dutch oven. And, we started eating it so much and liked it so much that, someone requested? Or just Dad maybe said 'Let's have it for Thanksgiving' and we were like, 'yeah let's do that' [laughs] um, so we would um, first started having it for Thanksgiving, and for Christmas, yea, for Christmas and Thanksgiving every year, and sometimes he'll cook, cook it with coals but other times we'll just cook it in the oven, in the Dutch oven so, anyway, delicious.

Texture: At the time of collection, Josh had a very stiff manner of speaking, most likely due to the presence of the audio recording device. However, his bearing was calm and relaxed; he leaned against the kitchen counter and crossed his legs. He gave very close attention to the details of the story behind the foodway. When this dish is served, Josh describes the setting as virtually any other meal, except that the food is generally served during special occasions. The meal would include back-slapping camaraderie among family, often extended family as well. Josh's father Mark is usually the one to make the dish.

Benjamin Wallace Bowen
Utah State University
English 2210
Lynne McNeill
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