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Claiming a Piece of Tradition: Community Discourse in Russian Mennonite Community Cookbooks

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Abstract: Russian Mennonite immigrants who settled south central Kansas in the late 19th century and their descendants naturally developed a discourse community that differentiates them from the dominant culture in which they reside. Changing regional dynamics regarding diversity along with continued acculturation impacts this ethnoreligious community in a kind of dual displacement; the descendants of these Russian Mennonites not only live in the shadow of their ancestors' collected memories and traumas related to migration but have and are currently witnessing further shifts away from the once agricultural lifestyle they previously observed. Therefore, heritage preservation is increasingly vital for stakeholders engaged with the history of Anabaptist life in Kansas. This article elucidates aspects of the Russian Mennonite discourse community of south central Kansas by engaging with regional foodways as they appear in community cookbooks. Employing Anne Bower's "cookbook narratives," I explore texts that are representative of the Russian Mennonite community and assess the attitudes and assumptions each book exemplifies in regard to its intended audience. I also explore the positionality of these community cookbooks as important artifacts; community cookbooks in this region provide a history of women's writing and exemplify how food traditions have altered throughout the decades. [Abstract by author.]

Keywords: Mennonite Church; culinary; ethnic cuisine; German cuisine; verenika; peppernuts

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INTRODUCTION

Relationships almost always occupy a central place in women's autobiographies; and in the cookbooks too, one finds explicitly stated or subtly implied links to family, friends, and community... Whether the group authors of a particular fund-raising cookbook are actually pursuing the depicted heritage, lifestyle and values, we cannot say. All we can say is that they participated in constructing these texts, usually appending their names to their recipes, so that the recipes and names remain to us as a form of self-representation.

Anne Bower (1997, p. 31)

There's an impression of inevitability that has surrounded this project from its inception. While conducting some exploratory reading, I encountered Margaret Cook's (1997) bibliography of "charitable cookbooks," which lists 3000 titles all published before the 1920s. Regarding Cook's text, Janice Bluestein Longone points out that charitable cookbooks, defined as texts produced for their explicit fund raising powers, were often "the first known cookbook[s] published within [a] state" (Bower and Longone 1997, p. 21). It is too perfect – too fitting – that *The Kansas Home Cookbook* was the first food text produced in Kansas by residents of the now infamous prison town, Leavenworth. Its publication date was 1874, and this is the very year that Russian Mennonites traveled on ships to the railways that would lead them to their farms in the south-central part of what people call the "Sunflower State." The cookbooks that their female descendants produced a century later form the basis of the following article.

FROM THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE TO KANSAS

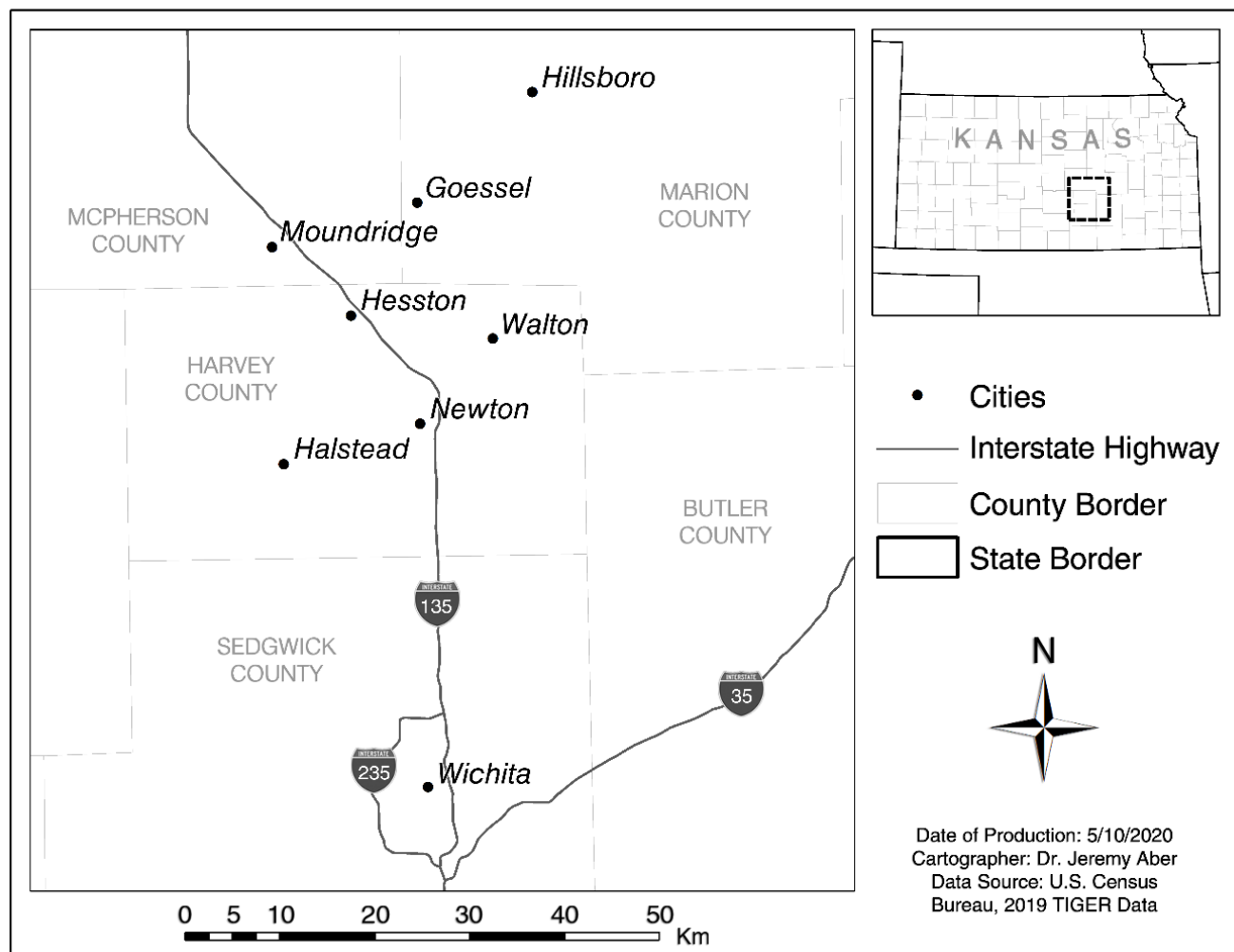
The origins of Mennonite life and culture were established in the 16th century as a group of people separated themselves from the Protestant church during an era known as the "radical reformation." Anabaptists opposed the normative practices of Martin Luther's brand of Protestantism in Whittenburg, adhering to the belief that baptism should be reserved for adults who had joined the church of their own volition. Acolytes of Lutheranism attacked them for being heretical in

their beliefs, and many members of this early sect were tortured and killed. To escape persecution, the Mennonites fled to other parts of Germany, Switzerland, and various other regions of Europe. In the 18th century, Tsarina Catherine the Great offered a group of Mennonites annexed land in exchange for their participation in economic development of the region. The Mennonites were allowed to live in their own communities, speak their own language, practice their faith, and remain exempt from military service as per the requirements of their convictions as contentious objectors.

The succession of Alexander I in the early 19th century ended Mennonites' exemptions from military duty and the government demanded that the religious group further integrate into Russian society. By the 1870s, the Russian empire developed a fervent nationalism and became less tolerant of groups who resisted being part of the whole. At the same time, American land developers were commissioned by railroad companies to convince large groups of Mennonites to immigrate to land in what is now considered the "heartland." Once again, a country was seeking those who might assist with economic development in yet undeveloped spaces. They sent German-speaking agents to isolated Mennonite communities throughout Europe to convince residents to relocate to the United States. The combination of worried Mennonites in colonies such as Khortitza and Molotchna on the Ukrainian steppes and railroad agents promising a new life led to mass migration from the steppes to the similar climate and landscape of the Kansas plains, where the Mennonites could buy cheap land and apply their well-honed agricultural skills. Between 1874 and 1884, 5,000 German-speaking Mennonites migrated from Ukraine to Kansas, and Mennonites from Germany and Poland also relocated to Kansas at this time.

Rural life for these immigrants in Kansas remained consistent in quality until the 1940s and 1950s, when the mechanization of agriculture and the rise of agribusiness displaced large numbers of them from farming. Despite this shift, Mennonite folk culture is still evident in many parts of Kansas. This is particularly apparent in the south central region of the state, near the city of Newton, as seen in Figure 1. The community cookbooks that women in this region produced in the years following the Mennonite transition off

FIGURE 1: MAP SHOWING THE REGION OF STUDY



the farm illustrate attempts at both cultural retention and adaptation, and they are the centerpiece of my analysis.

COMMUNITIES, COOKBOOKS, AND MENNONITE CULTURE

This study owes much to prominent texts such as Mary Emma Showalter’s *Mennonite Community Cookbook* (1950) and Doris Janzen Longacre’s *More-with-Less Cookbook* (1976). Showalter’s book is considered by many to be a foundational text in Mennonite cookery. Her treasury of recipes exemplifies the vital role that community plays in the compilation of culinary traditions. According to a 2015 article in *The Mennonite*, Showalter “ultimately...was able to round up 125 women

to canvass their church communities and collect more than 5,000 recipes” for her book. The result is an impressive and influential tome that has been reissued many times since its first publication in 1950. Alternatively, Longacre’s *More-with-Less* approaches the Mennonite cooking community differently, but it is no less influential than Showalter’s text. *More* is an inclusive text that has an international perspective; stories of mission work and recipes from various cultures fill its pages. This is a wider-reaching sense of community but indicates the evolving perspective of modern Mennonites in the 20th century, which prioritized mission work while demonstrating care for social justice issues such as food scarcity and environmental sustainability.

Aspects of both cookbooks appear in the cookbooks I have selected; both Longacre and Showalter's legacies are recognizable in both audience address and foodway awareness. However, it is the patterns relating to traditional dishes, Mennonite women's writing, and food discourse from south central Kansas that grounds this article. Ultimately, I have elected to engage with the content of primary community cooking texts, as well as their messages regarding readership and audience.

To this end, I have composed a series of charts indicating how many times frequently mentioned recipes appear in each cookbook I selected for this article. I determined that the inclusion or exclusion of these dishes might indicate decisions pertaining to audience and cultural identity. I make observations about cookbook contributors' purposes regarding recipes within each book by considering who the intended readers are. In other words, I want to assess whether readers unfamiliar with Mennonite folk culture are invited in with context surrounding recipes and terminology or if they are disallowed entry into foodways knowledge. Furthermore, I am interested in how the women who compile these cookbooks perceive their roles as writers, editors, and contributors. Do they perceive that they are intentional ambassadors or preservationists? If so, for whom?

Many community cookbooks rely on the contributions of people who add their voices to create a final product. Anne Bower calls them "communal partial autobiographies" (p. 30), and unless an editor has sanitized each recipe in the cookbook, there is usually an indication of several personal approaches to the audience. Recipes are sets of directions that ultimately promise a specific outcome, but the recipe writers tell us much about their intended audience by how they address readers. This is the case with one of the south-central Kansas cookbooks, *Pluma Moos to Pie*, which was first written and published in 1981 for and by the Goessel Mennonite Heritage Museum; not only was it produced "in house," it is still currently sold in the museum's gift shop. *Pluma Moos*' first editor indicates to readers that due to the age of each recipe and the evolution of modern culinary practices, some recipes are vague. The writers of the first edition state,

categorize recipes and provide information for those recipes which were not previously in written form but were passed down through the generations from mother to daughter. Consequently, some traditional recipes may list ingredients only and not complete instructions. Seasonings were usually left up to the individual – according to personal taste and preference (p. 1).

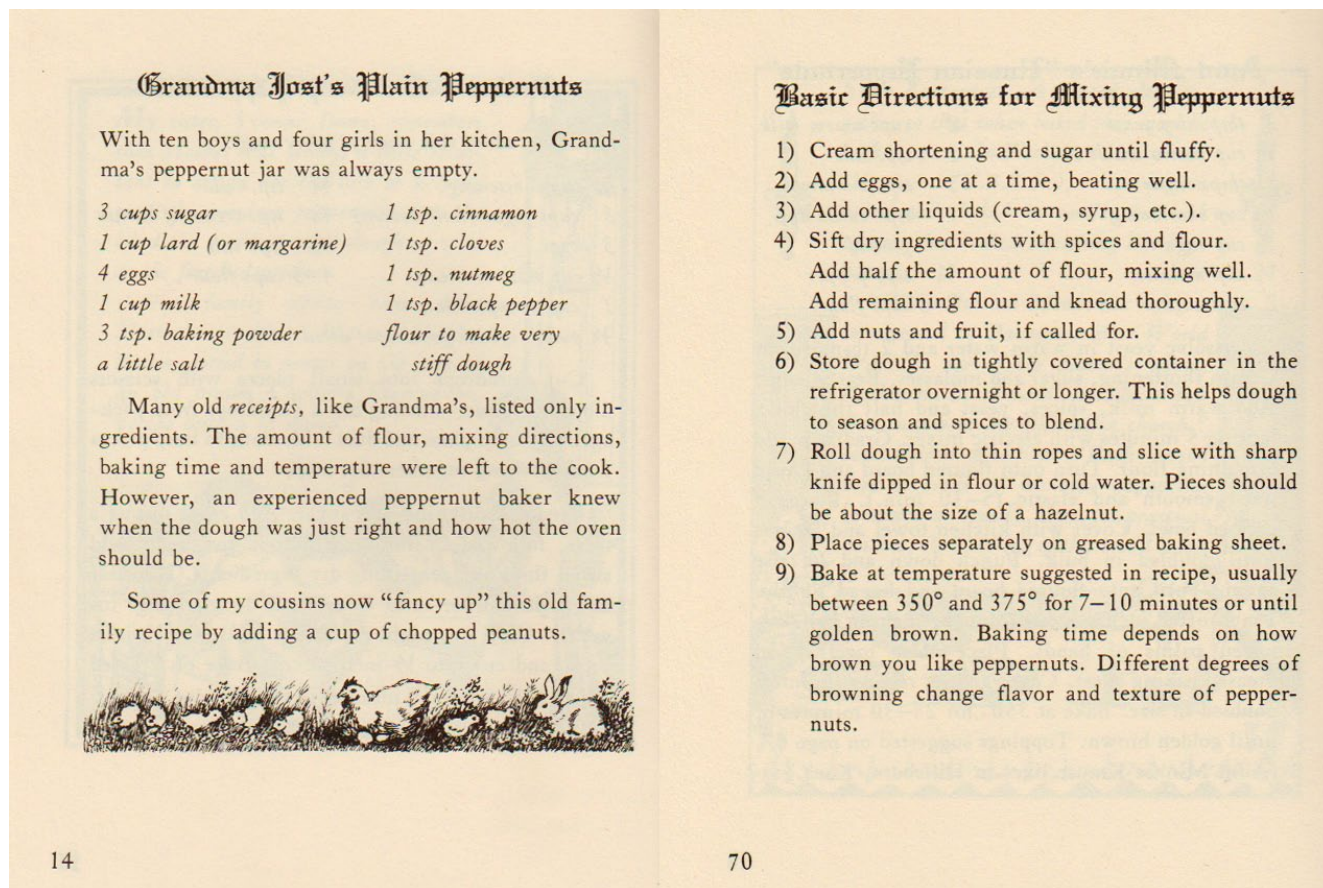
This text also contains information from community insiders who provide insights for *Pluma Moos*' audience; the cookbook is interspersed with information that invites its readers to learn more about Mennonite groups in south central Kansas. Various members of the Russian Mennonite community were interviewed for this cookbook. The result is a series of descriptive passages that recount a number of public and private food practices. Some of these entries include "Memories of Weddings, Funerals, and Zwieback," "Feeding the Threshing Crew," and "Butchering Time."

Norma Jost Voth's (1978) *Peppernuts Plain and Fancy: A Christmas Tradition from Grandmother's Oven* exemplifies the audience address that welcomes people outside the Mennonite community into its folk culture and foodways. In its final pages, this slim 72-page volume printed by the local Bethel College Women's Association includes "Basic Directions for Mixing Peppernuts," which appears in Figure 2 along with "Grandma Jost's Plain Peppernuts" (p. 70). Readers can apply these explanatory, detailed directions as needed. In some cases, a recipe from *Plain and Fancy* will reference the "directions on page 70," and this cross reference allows for variety without additional confusion or ungainly repetition. It demystifies the process of preparation for recipes like the recipe that is formatted like "many old receipts," which "listed only ingredients" (p. 14).

Jost Voth chooses the commentary beneath this "receipt" to acknowledge those inside and outside the community, stating that all elements aside from the ingredients and their allotted amount were "left to the cook" (p. 14). She states that "an experienced peppernut baker knew when the dough was just right and how hot the oven should be" (p. 14). It would seem that even with the decoding of discourse, tensions between those in the know and foodway "tourists" still exist.

We appreciate the guidance from some of the older women in the community who helped us

FIGURE 2: DIRECTIONS FOR MIXING PEPPERNUTS AND JOST VOTH'S PLAIN PEPPERNUT RECIPE ILLUSTRATE THE COLLECTIVE GOALS AND SHARED DISCOURSE BETWEEN COOKBOOK AUTHORS AND AUDIENCE.



COOKBOOK ANALYSIS: CONSTRUCTION, CONTENT, AND CONTRIBUTORS

I have selected eight cookbooks produced in south-central Kansas in the late 20th century or early 21st century. These cookbooks represent a time span that offers a reflection of each era in which they were produced; I would also argue that readers can see the era-specific influence of *Community Cookbook* and *More-with-Less* in each of the texts. Each cookbook in my project was published following the general transition of the region's Mennonites from farm to town. *Reminisce Cookbook*, produced by Bethesda Nursing Home in 2009, is the most recent publication in my collection.

The time frame in which the cookbooks analyzed were published (1964 – 2009) represents a period in which the Mennonite communities of south-central Kansas grappled with the aftermath

of the move from farm to town and took measure of their agrarian history and immigrant heritage. For example, *Pluma Moos to Pie* includes historic interludes that appear as "short articles on the way things were done a long time ago" (p. 2). Two of the cooking texts in my collection were produced specifically as souvenirs, and even with this intention in mind, they contain insider information that creates confusion for those who have no experience with Mennonite food. Such oversights are probably not intentional; the books give disclaimers such as the one in *Pluma Moos* warning readers about the imprecise nature of given instructions. I argue that an individualized approach to recipe reconstruction where people adapt recipes based on space, place, and preference eventually causes germinal changes to traditional dishes in Kansas Mennonite country.

This is unsurprising given the nature of recipe revision over time. In *A Companion to the History of the Book*, Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose theo-

rise that through the act of writing down (and in this case, publishing) recipes, these recipes “[become] fixed, unlike most oral performances. [A recipe] can also be copied, though copying opens up the possibility of variations, intended or accidental” (p. 3). Each of the cookbooks in my sample represents (or indicates) different levels of access and assumed insider status. However, the treatment of readership helps us better define the terminology and assumptions situated within this discourse community.

I attempt to determine the objective of individual group-produced cookbooks, and what Anne Bower (1997) would call the “narrative” of each; Bower approaches community cookbooks as texts produced by “active creators” who use the medium to tell their stories, thus summoning the concept of “‘verbal’ artifact”(p. 30) familiar to those who situate themselves within feminist scholarship.

Bower (1997) breaks down different narrative types as applied to cookbooks, such as the “female plot of ambition” (p. 37) and the “historical plot” (p. 44), which Bower observes “is strictly a twentieth-century plot form for community cookbooks” (p. 44). This is a familiar trope – Bower’s assertion that this particular narrative “construct[s] plots from collected facts, plots which end with the demise or victory of a cause or group” (p. 44) is already familiar; this narrative appears in several of the cookbooks included in my project.

In the succeeding section, I identify recipe variants, content, and physical attributes of each food text. Each book is listed in chronological order, although some publishing information may be incomplete given the limited scope of printed copies and scale of production. I also apply knowledge from Bower (1997) regarding the history of community cookbooks, the various “plots” they may exhibit, and the subtext of specific language use in recipes. I have also constructed a series of charts that exhibit the recurrence of several “traditional” recipes. These specific dishes were selected by way of compiling data available in a series of previously conducted interviews with seven individuals, all from the same geographic region in south central Kansas and all with Russian Mennonite heritage.

I directed my study towards the most prominent recipes in each cookbook with the help of interviewees whose input is part of a larger iteration

of this article, tabulating the number of times each individual mentioned a specific dish. The result is a focus on German borscht (a soup that, unlike the traditional Russian version, usually does not contain beets in its Mennonite iterations), moos (a kind of fruit soup served hot or cold), peppernuts (a small spice cookie), verenika (a fried stuffed dumpling similar to a pierogi), and finally, zwieback (figure-eight-shaped yeast rolls).

Bower’s (1997) list begins with the “integration plot,” which involves “a communal autobiography of social acceptance and achievement” (p. 38). This plot indicates the ways in which the authors have succeeded in becoming accepted members in society. The second category is the “differentiation plot” (p. 40), which prioritizes the unique facets the authors possess, thus separating themselves from the general public. The third category is what Bower calls “the plot of moral or religious triumph” (p. 43) and centralizes women as the spiritual center of a household. These plots may also instruct readers on how to create religious instruction using domestic food-centered practices. Bower mentions that this plot is especially prevalent in community cookbooks. Mennonite cookbooks, with their attention to ethnic culture and ancestry, often include elements of the moral or religious triumph plot, even if it is not the primary narrative. Finally, there is the historical plot where the authors collect information and produce texts that prioritize facts and the construction of cultural events “but always with the victorious ending” (p. 44). These plots, though not strict categories demanding adherence, do provide a format in which women can shape their message in community cookbooks through themes indicated by Bower’s categories that, in the writer’s words, “indicate why plot matters” (p. 47).

In such an analysis of cookbooks, it is useful to speculate on what possible “plot” each text is taking on, and what subtexts might be revealed by applying Bower’s definitions to the material. Truthfully, there is no distinct categorization but a combination of various plots that may indicate several goals. Therefore, I indicate secondary “plots” when appropriate.

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread (1964)

The first page of this book reveals that the recipes inside were “submitted by the women of

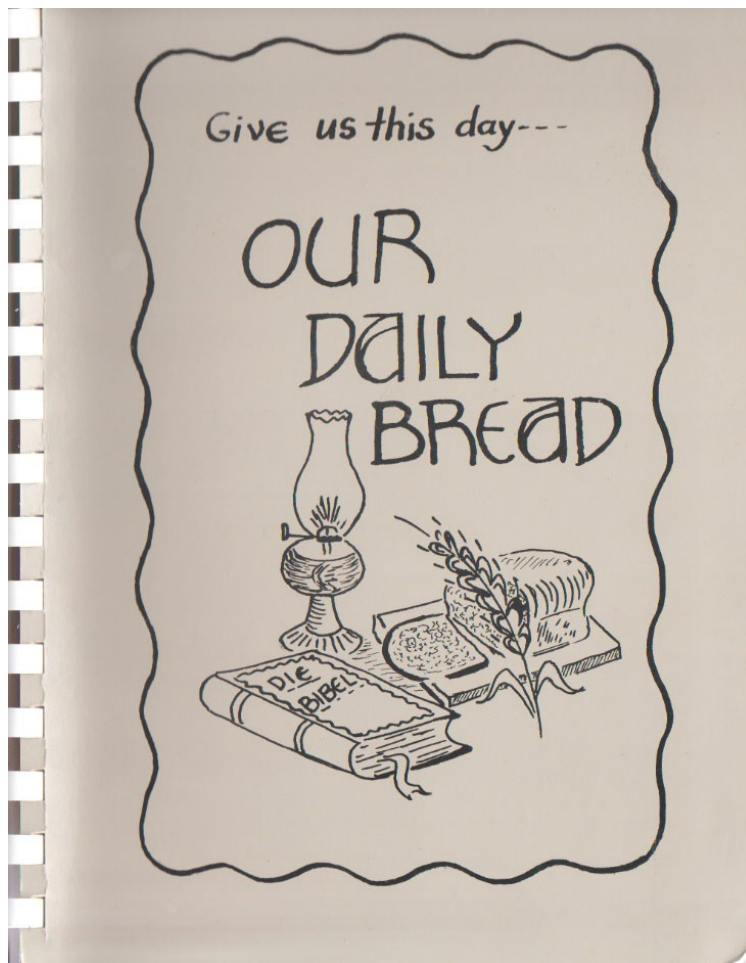
the Halstead Mennonite Church” and that the book itself “includes recipes featured at the annual Smorgasbord, along with other old favorites” (p. 2). The term “smorgasbord” is Swedish in origin and seems at odds with a project that is concentrating on the traditions of Russian Mennonites in Kansas. However, an explanation for this is included within a brief note explaining background pertaining to the church. The writer explains that,

having come from South and North Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France, Poland and South Russia with varying habits, customs and dialects the first Mennonite Church of Halstead became indeed a miniature ‘melting pot’ in the area of religion, culture, and industry. Yet we their grand- or great-grandchildren still retain some of the customs our forebearers had. This booklet is evidence of that fact. We have found the recipes that our mothers used, and gladly share them with you (p. 2).

This “sharing” is a greeting to readers and extends a sense of connection to church outsiders. It has been produced with a historic sense of separateness in mind; the subtext of unique lineage and diaspora is also present. The introduction leaves no doubt that contributors want to preserve parts of their heritage, linking them to another land and time; it is obvious that there is a clearly communicated separateness.

Below the missive on church history is a more detailed rumination on “History of the Smorgasbord,” which reveals that the church’s own Mary-Martha Mission Circle began the practice of holding a smorgasbord for the public in 1957 “during the pastorate of Rev. and Mrs. Roland R. Goering” (p. 2). The event itself served as a reminder of a combined cultural representation of the Mary-Marthas; the writer draws attention to the fact that the event “created interest among its members since the group was made up of women descended from three different backgrounds – the Bavarian German, the Swiss, and the Low German” (p. 2). This information readily ties *Daily Bread* to Bower’s (1997) assertion that,

FIGURE 3: *OUR DAILY BREAD*, COVER DESIGN AND TABLE OF RECIPE INCLUSION AND VARIANTS



Dishes	Recipe Variants
German borscht (spring, summer, cabbage, etc.)	1
moos	4
peppernuts	7
verenika	0
zwieback	2

while community cookbooks are often used as a way to raise money, they also “provide a space in which women assert their values” (p. 47), and we see this happening in a dual sense regarding the Mary-Marthas. Organizing the smorgasbord event and compiling a cookbook after the fact requires complex writing abilities as well as editing skills, an understanding of advertising and community

outreach, the mitigation of strenuous tasks, and the anticipation of needs of a large crowd. *Our Daily Bread* provides the story of professional expertise wielded by a group of women whose combined capability and intelligence creates positive outcomes for their beloved spiritual community. The rest of the introduction tells a story of how the event was attended by over 500 people even though the church had only expected to host approximately 350. Such attention was likely procured by all the “free advertising” afforded the church through “TV appearances and radio announcements” (p. 3) as well as donated posters and newspaper articles that alerted its readership to the event. The smorgasbord meals gained further recognition, and in 1961, the church was “honored to have Clementine Paddleford, food editor of *This Week* magazine” (p. 3) present at the annual event. However, this led to some difficulties; because of the articles Paddleford published, “hordes of people came the following year” (p. 3). In the end, many smorgasbord seekers had to be turned away, and the Mary-Marthas determined that “the largest group for which our group can prepare efficiently is rated about one thousand” (p. 3). It was the continued popularity of the event that eventually prompted First Mennonite of Halstead to publish *Daily Bread*. This sequence of events suggests that, at least in some small part, the resulting cookbook was produced with cultural outsiders in mind. After all, it is illogical to assume that all 500 to 1000 Smorgasbord attendees were Mennonites themselves.

The cookbook is split into nine sections, indicated by tabs, in the following order: Breads, Butchering, Meats, Soups, Vegetables and Salads, Pastries and Desserts, Cookies, Christmas, Soap Making, and the ever compelling “Miscellaneous” category. There is a black-and-white illustrative sketch on each individual tab that precedes each section, and their depictions range from pictures of fruit and pies to symbolic pictures such as a Christmas tree and candle. The cover (Figure 3) also bears one such illustration – under the title, rendered in simple calligraphy, is a still life of a hurricane lamp, loaf of bread partially covered with a single shaft of wheat (in reference, one assumes, to the Turkey Red Wheat that Mennonites planted upon their arrival in Kansas), and a book with the words “Die Bibel” scrawled across the front. Insider audiences who are part of the

Mennonite community are privileged in that they are most likely to understand the Plautdietsch, their ancestors’ Low German dialect, featured in *Daily Bread*. Such linguistic details are consistent throughout the cookbook, creating a separation between the readers who are cultural insiders and those who are not. Several phrases and rhymes in this Low German dialect are present throughout the pages but no accompanying translation is provided for readers.

As a reader of *Daily Bread*, I admit that there seems to be an inconsistency in respect to the writers’ perceptions of audience; I believe that this is an example of Bower’s “differentiation plot.” The Mary-Martha Mission Circle grants a certain level of historic and factual knowledge to readers. Their church affiliation is implicitly engaged in outreach, although in most cases this might be for religious concerns rather than cultural ones. However, providing the public with a popular fund raising event that capitalizes on a unique combination of cultural and ethnic difference is at once a way to separate oneself from a society of non-Mennonites while explicating how the smorgasbord creates a conduit by which the church congregation can share their unique traditions with outsiders, thus remaining a cherished part of the secular community. The variants of recipes in *Daily Bread* (Figure 3) is bereft of *verenika*; this is an important detail in that *verenika* is one of the best-known Russian Mennonite dishes served to the public in contemporary Kansas.

Goessel Centennial Cook Book: Including Traditional Low German Recipes Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Coming of Mennonites 1874-1974 (1974)

This cookbook is another example of the differentiation plot that connects the publication to the cultural event for which this text was produced; the “coming of the Mennonites” refers to a specific group of people who share a history that is unique to them. *Centennial* is far less detailed than *Daily Bread*. In fact, it is more ephemera than cookbook; there is no actual binding. Instead, *Centennial* is stapled together. Thick white bond paper is sealed between one yellow sheet of paper with the approximate thickness of an index card. The front cover of the cookbook (Figure 4) bears a simple black and white outline sketch portray-

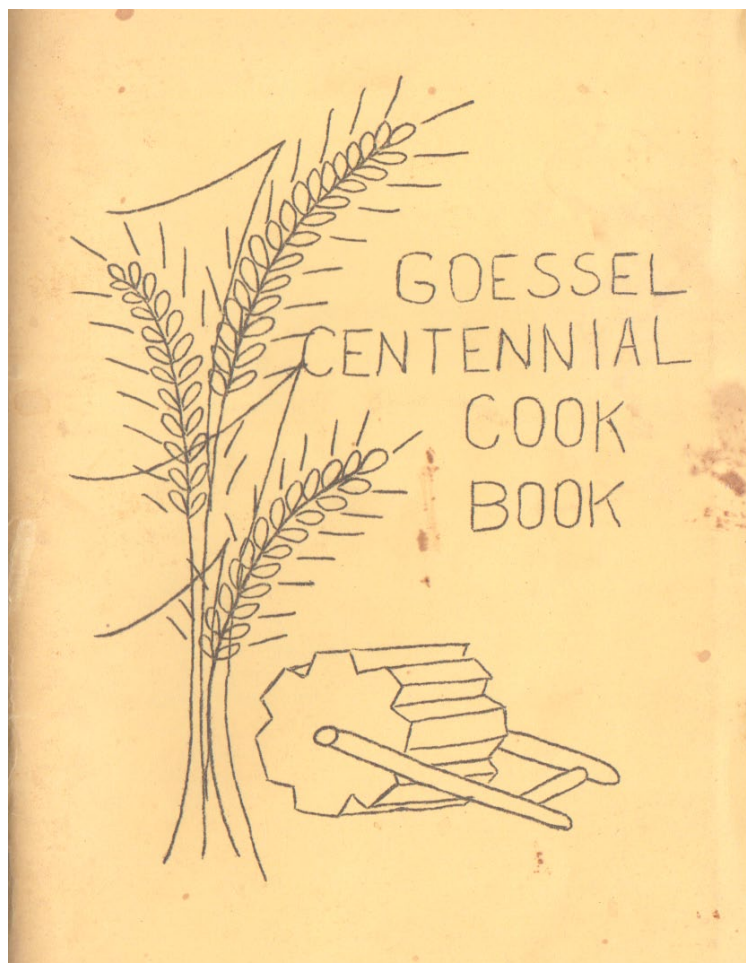
ing a shaft of wheat and the notable threshing stone,¹ symbolic of agricultural Mennonite history. The “title page” also includes a short note stating that the book includes “Traditional Low German Recipes Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Coming of the Mennonites” and provides the corresponding dates “1874-1974.” Another statement indicates that the book has been compiled by “the Goessel Centennial Souvenir Committee.”

The index page provides readers with the nine sections separating recipes; these include main dishes, breads, cookies, pies, desserts, cakes, soups, salads, and beverages. The book’s impermanent qualities extend to the copy itself; the text looks as if it has been produced on a manual typewriter. Less variance of “traditional” recipes occurs in *Centennial*; the book is short, so while some traditional favorites are still present, fewer recipes are included overall. In short, decisions were made that upheld specific priorities related to cultural representation. The number of recipe variations is curious; for example, only two zwieback recipes exist as opposed to nine different variants on peppernuts (Table 2). The listed contributors of the recipes (82 in total) are all women.

There is a clear alignment with history, but a clear focus on differentiation applies to this text as well, though there are precious few narrative contributions. Again, this is due to the length and the impermanent nature of *Centennial*; as far as souvenirs go, a stapled set of papers is harder to preserve than a spiral bound

¹ From the Mennonite Heritage and Agricultural Museum site: “Since ancient times flails had been used to knock the wheat kernels out of the stocks, so during the mid-1870s, the threshing stone was considered *state-of-the-art farm equipment* in Russia. The immigrants brought with them Turkey Red (a variety of hard red winter wheat) to plant as their main cash crop. In order to have the stones made here, they brought along a pattern from Russia. Within only a very few years, the stones had become obsolete as more progressive threshing methods were adopted” (<https://www.goesselmuseum.com/what-is-that-thing>).

FIGURE 4: *GOESSEL CENTENNIAL COOK BOOK*, COVER DESIGN AND TABLE OF RECIPE INCLUSION AND VARIANTS



Compiled by the Goessel Centennial Souvenir Committee of Goessel, KS, 47 pages.

Dishes	Recipe Variants
German borscht (spring, summer, cabbage, etc.)	2
moos	1
peppernuts	10
verenika	10
zwieback	2

book. However, the simple goal of *Centennial* is the commemoration of an ethnic group, bound together with religious conviction, and made transitory by the extenuating political circumstances that led to their departure from Europe. Unlike *Daily Bread*, there are no prayers or maxims relayed in Plautdietsch that cultural outsiders might puzzle

at; this indicates a seeming willingness of the souvenir committee to create a document that serves as a concrete educational document for people unfamiliar with the Mennonites in south central Kansas. I believe that there is a significant shift between *Daily Bread's* sometimes inaccessible material compared with *Centennial's* simplified outward-reaching content; this was, after all, the same decade that Janzen Longacre's *More-with-Less* was published.

The 1970s are also remembered for events like the Vietnam War and an increased awareness of environmental issues; the first Earth Day occurred in 1970. This indicates a zeitgeist that likely influenced the pacifist outreach and relief activities of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and related institutions. The presence in the community of Bethel College, a Mennonite institution of higher education, may have heightened these progressive attitudes among the people of Goessel. A renewed dedication to outreach was a result, as this small accessible souvenir likely reflects.

Kitchen Medley: A Collection of Recipes from the Congregation (1981)

The content for this text was collected, organized, and edited by the Christian Homemaker's Women's Group, which included cookbook committee members Maxine Fast, Marilyn Galle, and Sheri Miller. Paul Unrau created the cover and layout design, and Kurt Becker, Bob Loganbill, and the "boys and girls in Sunday School classes (Grades 3-8)" furnished the illustrations and other artwork. The cover (Figure 5) is laminated with hand lettering and an orange background; the text is spiral bound.

Kitchen Medley is a deviation from fundraising cookbooks; to outsiders, it attends most closely to the plot of integration, although there is Mennonite subtext that would likely be understood only by other cultural insiders. I make this argument because the cookbook lacks culturally specific examples of maxims or pictures that would be coded specifically as "Mennonite." Unlike *Daily Bread* or *Centennial*, *Kitchen Medley* has no illustrations of threshing stones or Plautdietsch phrases. Aside from recipes for zwieback, moos, and peppernuts, there is little difference between the content of this cookbook and other similar community texts. *Kitchen Medley* represents a congregation

invested in a shared goal; this was the effort of a unified people. However, there is a significant detail that "English"—or non-Mennonite—audiences might miss that people in the congregation and in other Mennonite churches would recognize almost immediately. The whimsical play on musical references (i.e. operas, symphonies, etc.) used as a unifying theme in *Kitchen Medley* signifies music's importance within the Mennonite tradition and, one could argue, this specific congregation. Mennonites are invested in singing, thus the prominence in Mennonite worship of hymn number 606, formally entitled "Praise God from whom All Blessings Flow," which, according to folklorist Ervin Beck's *MennoFolk* (2004), is "the Mennonite ethnic anthem" (p. 191). Beck adds that the "hymn became a favorite, especially for large Mennonite assemblies, and has continued to be called, affectionately, '606,' ... [M]any Mennonites sing this difficult hymn from memory" (p. 222).

All recipes in the cookbook are hand-written by contributors or typed out manually. Illustrations appearing in the bulk of *Kitchen Medley* are rendered by the 22 children who attended the congregation's Sunday school classes. This text shares much more with manuscript cookbooks and does not adhere to the conventions of most modern cookbooks. However, the content of *Kitchen Medley* seems far more intimate given the physical acts represented by both word and image in the pages. Hand-written recipes contribute to a feeling of one-on-one knowledge being passed between community members. Likewise, children's artwork is usually associated with refrigerator doors, elementary classrooms, and other spaces that represent domestic realms where women's labor practices are prominent, thus positioning *Kitchen Medley* as a text that places women at the moral center of a household, much in the way Bower describes.

Kitchen Medley elevates the voices of women and children, whose presence and participation are showcased prominently. There are men who aided in the process of producing this text, although their contributions are not food centered. Indeed, there is even a recipe for "Triticale Bread" contributed by a former United Methodist Church pastor, Reverend Laura E. Bradbury of Newton, KS. In many ways, this is not a cookbook of erasure or the text of a community that has been closed off to outside influences. However, insider knowledge

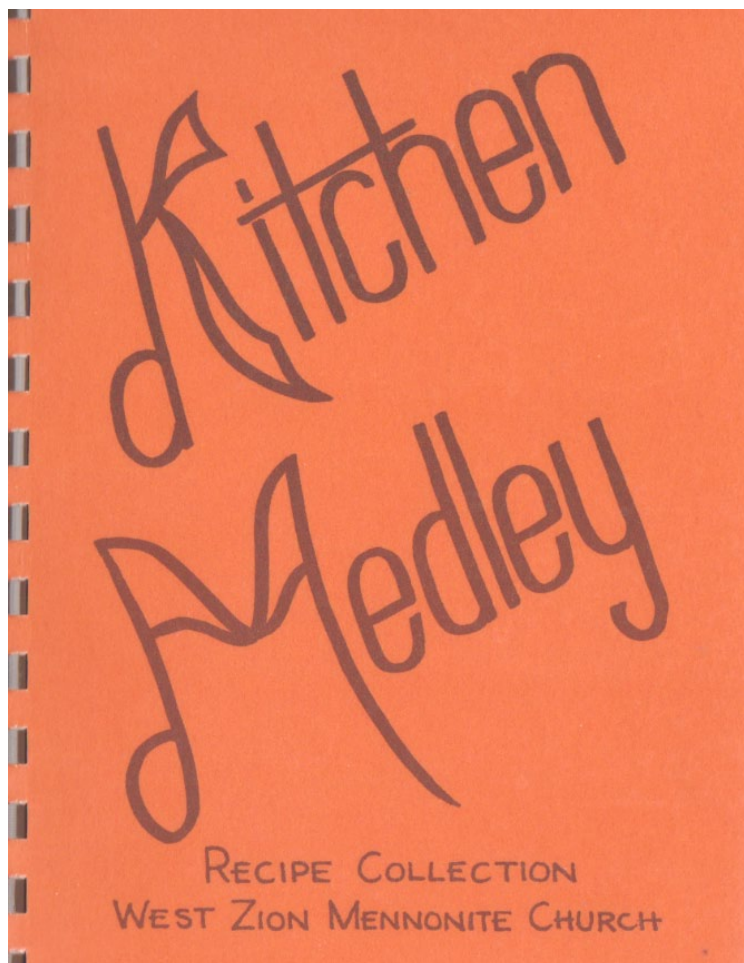
enriches the text, and a privileged audience would understand how music is being employed to frame the text.

Its contents are separated into ten different sections divided by thick yellow cardstock, bearing the section's title on one side and the chapter's contents on the other. These lists are, again, typed. Hand-drawn illustrations are included at the bottom of several pages, and each section's name relates to the musical theme set by the cookbook's title ("*Medley*"). The titles of each section are as follows: Breads – Dough, Re, Mi; Cakes – Fantasia; Cookies – Scrumptious Suite; Desserts – Grand Finale; Dips & Snacks – Preludes & Postludes; Main Dishes – Themes & Variations; Pies – Oven Operas; Salads – Symphony of Salads; Vegetables – Garden March; and Miscellaneous – Potpourri. The book is punctuated throughout with maxims and poems all seemingly collected by contributors Barbara Fast, Gladys Krehbiel, and Brandie Galle. None appear in Plautdietsch; no translations are necessary in order to engage with this text. Again, *Kitchen Medley* has far fewer recipes attributed to "traditional" ethnic Mennonite food (Figure 3) than either *Daily Bread* or *Centennial*. However, due to the nod towards the historic relationship between Mennonites and the placement of music in their culture, I believe that this text is a subtle example of a differentiation plot masquerading as a cookbook of integration.

Book for Cooks: Favorite Recipes From Ladies Attending Koerner Heights Church of the Mennonite Brethren (1982)

This cookbook indicates to readers that it is an "in-house" and "hands-on" congregational project; it is spiral bound with a laminated cover (Figure 6) much like the one from West Zion Mennonite Church. However, this text has no recipes appearing in a contributor's writing, although the illustrations are hand drawn. Every recipe is typed out neatly. Three pages that follow the table

FIGURE 5: *KITCHEN MEDLEY*, COVER DESIGN AND TABLE OF RECIPE INCLUSION AND VARIANTS

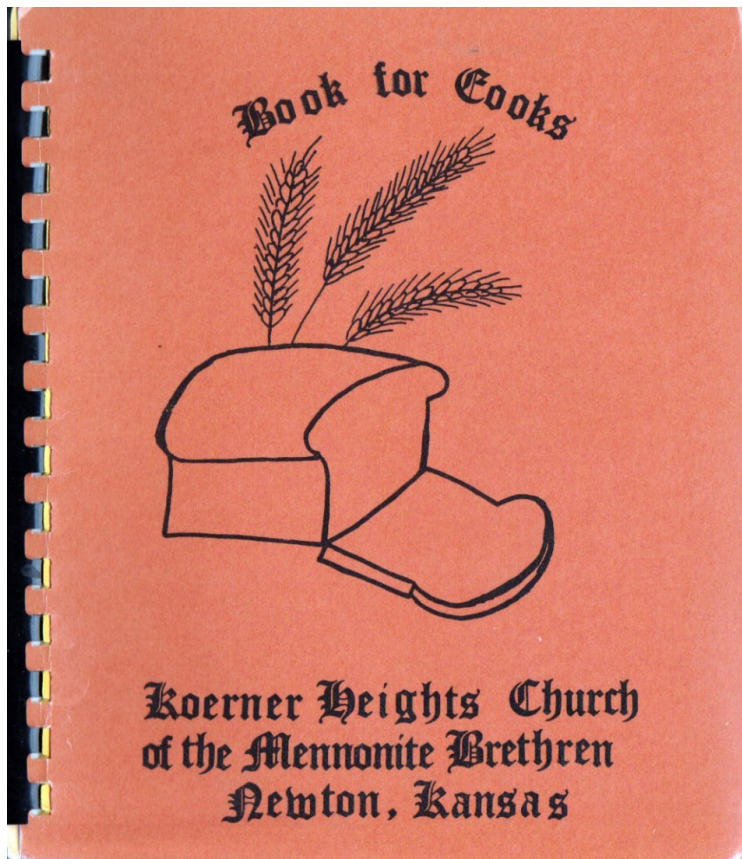


Compiled by West Zion Mennonite Church in Moundridge, KS, Spiral-bound, 200 pages.

Dishes	Recipe Variants
German borscht (spring, summer, cabbage, etc.)	0
moos	4
peppernuts	2
verenika	0
zwieback	1

of contents seem to be printed excerpts provided by another text or perhaps the publisher; this addition is a simple reference to kitchen weights and measurements, metric to imperial system conversions, and a list of "Approximate 100 Calorie Portions" for 89 different foods. Another list tabulates a handy guide for the volume of specific

FIGURE 6: *BOOKS FOR COOKS*, COVER DESIGN AND TABLE OF RECIPE INCLUSION AND VARIANTS



Text compiled in Newton, KS, Spiral-bound, 198 pages.

Dishes	Recipe Variants
German borscht (spring, summer, cabbage, etc.)	1
moos	0
peppernuts	1
verenika	2
zwieback	1

dishes needed to feed approximately 50 people, indicating occurrences of community functions or church potlucks.

The illustrations in *Book for Cooks* appear on thin yellow typing paper that functions as a divider between sections. The sections themselves are conventional in terms of the cookbook genre – recipes towards the beginning deal with “Party Foods” and “Breads” while the middle section

features heavier fare. However, in the back of *Book for Cooks* is a chapter called “This & That,” which includes a subsection labeled “Ethnic.” This is where readers find recipes for moos, two variations on peppernuts, and other “traditional” favorites (Figure 6). Again, we find a smattering of what one might expect in a cookbook distributed by a Mennonite church.

Contributors and editorial staff might have been aware this book would extend to the secular community. However, there is a curious addition to this cookbook – a recipe for sopapillas. I believe this indicates a shift in consideration of what constitutes “ethnic” cuisine, and one wonders what caused such a shift. This dish is a popular dessert in Latinx culture, begging the question, how and why did this recipe appear in *Book for Cooks*? One possibility is the MCC’s devotion to service work around the world. However, I believe that the appearance of this recipe has much to do with the shifting demographics of Kansas communities in the late 20th century. Between the 1960s and 2000, the state’s population went from 95% white to 86% white, and the population of foreign-born residents rose from 1% to 5% (Kulcsár 2007).

Increasing numbers of immigrants certainly change the makeup of congregations, and Mennonite churches have been navigating the challenges of creating environments of welcome and access to all those who wish to join the Mennonite church, regardless of ethnicity. Anita Hooley Yoder (2017) covers this point in *Circles of Sisterhood*, using a 2006 Mennonite Church USA study by Conrad Kanagy that reveals the advantages of this shift. Not only do contemporary immigrants reflect the journeys that the ancestors of Mennonites in North America took, but they may be the key to the long-term survival of the church. Kanagy concludes that, overall, by the early 21st century, the congregations of most Mennonite churches were aging and dying out, “but ‘racial/ethnic’ members were younger and increasing in numbers.” Hooley Yoder (2017) insists that “[a]s the denomination and the country in general be-

come more diverse, the Mennonite Women USA's sentiment that all women in Mennonite churches are Mennonite Women will need to include an increasingly diverse constituency" (p. 240). *Book for Cooks* might be a portrait of an increasingly diverse congregation, and the ways in which this diversity manifested in 1982

Bower (1997) might classify this as a plot of integration due to the lack of overt religious content within the pages. The scant number of verses that are included exist without the biblical chapter and verse reference. "A merry heart doeth good like medicine" is advice that readers can find on page 78, but not every reader will know that these words come from the Biblical book of Proverbs. What is immediately apparent is the inclusion of various maxims typed out just below recipes on many of *Books'* pages. One example, under "Chicken Special," tells readers that "doing a woman's work is like walking down a railroad track; the end seems in sight, but never is" (p. 65). Thankfully, the structuring around progressive participle "doing" does not convey that "women's work" is always done by a woman. However, one wonders what qualifies as this specific kind of "work." More unsettling, however, is the maxim under "Frozen Strawberry Salad" that reads, "There's nothing like a living doll to bring out the Santa Claus – in men" (p. 98). The differentiating messages act as a potpourri of commonplaces, and mixed messages abound within. *Book for Cooks* is also the only cookbook in my project that includes a variation of the "How to Preserve a Husband," a poem which advises readers to "[b]e careful in your selection. Do not choose too young. When once selected, give your entire thought to preparation for domestic use" (p. 15). These asides are not particularly religious, although some might call them "moral" in character. I argue that this step away from purely religious content towards a more secular sensibility is further proof of Bower's integration plot as a key element of this text.

T.G.Y.F. Cookbook: Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread (1982)

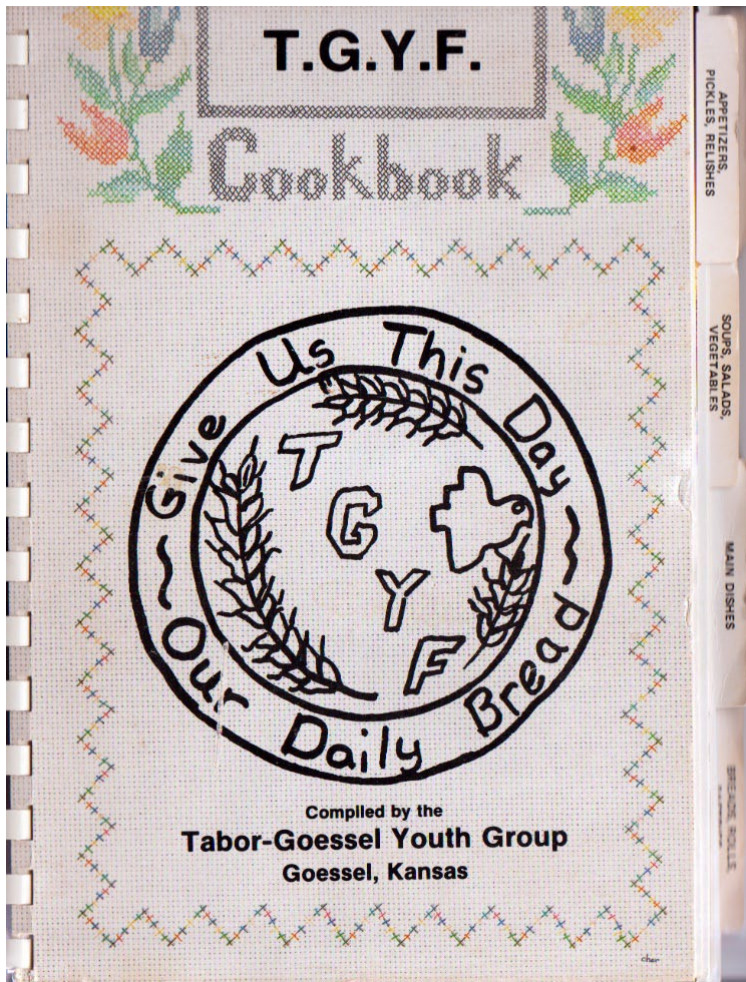
The purpose of *T.G.Y.F. Cookbook* is made clear by the "Expression of Appreciation" on the first page. The youth group thanks "all the cooks who submitted their favorite recipes, all the helpers who took time to recopy and proofread the

recipes, and all the individuals who contributed in some other way to the publication of this cookbook" and informs readers that "proceeds from the sale of this cookbook will help to finance a trip to Pennsylvania in August 1983 for the members to attend the General Conference." Approximately 200 recipes appear in *T.G.Y.F* and each one is attributed to a woman; on a personal note, one of the contributors (Marna Abrahams) is a relative of mine. In fact, I was given several cookbooks from her private collection for the purposes of this study. There is an unquestionable link between *T.G.Y.F* and the community-led efforts by women to fund raise.

T.G.Y.F conveys a more polished aesthetic than other cookbooks in my project; printed by Cookbook Publishers Inc., it has a full-color cover (Figure 7) along with colored photos attached to the divider tabs between each section. Behind each tab, readers can locate helpful general information for cooks at every level, such as "A Handy Spice Guide To Make You Become A Seasoned Seasoner" and a meat roasting guide.

Few recipes are in this cooking text that an outside reader acquainted with this community might expect to see (Figure 7); the lack of a peppernuts recipe is incredible, given that it is such a popular cultural touchstone in south central Kansas. *T.G.Y.F* is the only community cookbook in this project that does not have at least one recipe for peppernuts. There are two recipes for moos, which is something of a surprise; this dish is less well-known in contemporary "English" or non-Mennonite circles. However, in 1982, the people in this area may have been partial to it. Predictably, there is a zwieback recipe, which indicates connectivity to church and heritage. This cookbook is straightforward in its intentions, an impression that consists throughout; there are no maxims or hand-drawn illustrations, prayers, or poems. All text is in English. This might further fall into Bower's integration narrative, even though the youth group is straightforward about their plans to attend the faith-specific conference. There is a sense of restraint within the text, and this may be due to various kinds of oversight necessary to obtain permission for this cookbook to be written and shared. It is possible that the congregation would have wanted members to represent their community in a particular way. A premeditated knowledge precedes *T.G.Y.F*'s circulation beyond the walls

FIGURE 7: *T.G.Y.F. COOKBOOK*, COVER DESIGN AND TABLE OF RECIPE INCLUSION AND VARIANTS



Compiled by the Tabor-Goessel Youth Group of Goessel, Kansas, spiral-bound. Cookbook funded youth group’s trip to the 1983 Mennonite Church General Conference in PA.

Dishes	Recipe Variants
German borscht (spring, summer, cabbage, etc.)	0
moos	2
peppernuts	0
verenika	0
zwieback	1

of Tabor Church. Aside from zwieback, there are recipes such as Schnetcke (a kind of small cinnamon roll whose name is a phonetic derivative of the word “snail”) and the ever-popular New Year’s Cookies (a deep fried ball of dough with raisins

sprinkled with powdered sugar) that do point to Mennonite culture and customs. A variety of instructions for canning pickles and watermelon rinds point towards basic elements of the Mennonite diet. However, there is yet again the inclusion of foods like “Company Enchiladas,” “Gringo Tacos,” and the dubious “American Chop Suey.” A pattern towards integration and diversity rather than a representation of difference begins to emerge. What is excluded in *T.G.Y.F.* is equally important as the dishes that are included, and, as Jennifer Sinor (2002) reminds us, it is sometimes what is discarded that gives us the best picture of a text’s exigence. For example, as noted previously, no peppernut recipe appears in this text – a surprising omission because peppernuts in south central Kansas are all but trademarked by the Russian Mennonites. To me, this indicates the youth group’s step away from expectations of a “Mennonite” cookbook.

In the case of Tabor’s youth group, this book creates a cache of funds necessary for future plans. Bower argues that the integration plot shows the willingness of one culture to become part of a larger culture. However, this assumes that groups such as the Mennonites of south central Kansas are inclusive and can contribute to the English world of outsiders. Such an exchange seems in the spirit of outreach.

Sharing Together: Hesston Mennonite Church Cookbook (1984)

The physicality of *Sharing Together* is similar to others included in my study; it has a laminated manila-colored cover decorated with a simple black and white hand-drawn illustration by Friesen paired with the title. The title script shares similarities to the Fraktur typeface of German origin (Figures 6 & 8). It is spiral bound, and there are illustrated dividers between the content’s chapters. However, what is singular about *Sharing*

Together lies on the last page of the text, opposite the space reserved for hand-written notes. Two paragraphs surrounded by a black-and-white ivy motif reveal that this cookbook has a distinct publishing history:

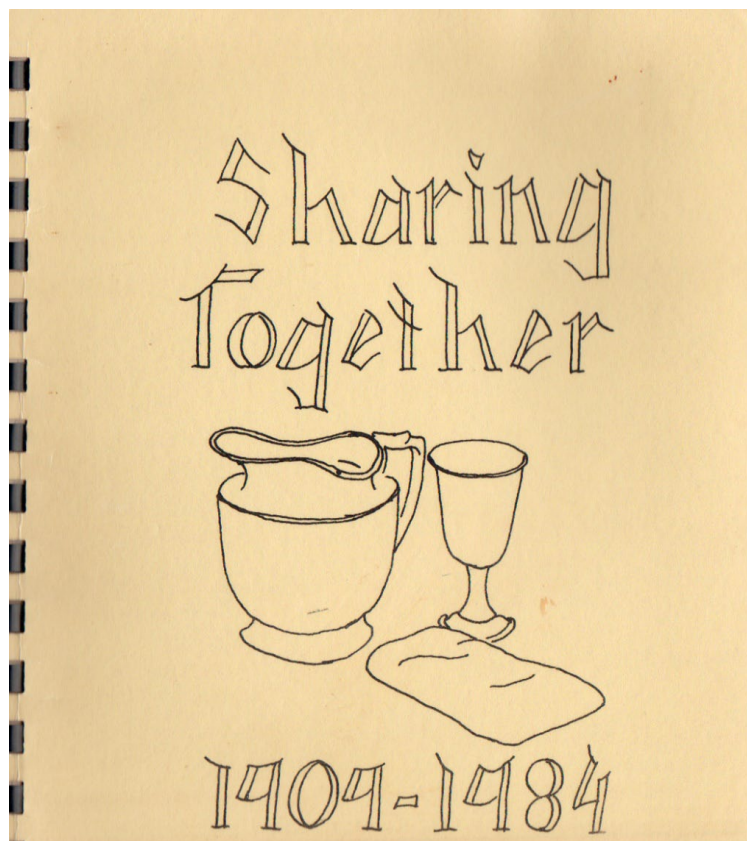
...[P]rinted by GENERAL PUBLISHING AND BINDING of Iowa Falls, Iowa, which is a company that was founded by two women who dedicated their time to printing [c]ookbooks for [c]hurches and other organizations at the cost they can afford to pay. Our aim is to help others with money making projects by printing your favorite recipes in book form (p. 219).

Readers are now aware that *Sharing* was, first and foremost, a community endeavor sponsored by the church for fundraising purposes. It was entrusted to a woman-owned company for binding and publishing. The text itself becomes its own narrative of entrepreneurship largely engineered by women. In truth, there are six possible male contributors in *Sharing*, and half of those contributors have submitted along with their spouses. In one case, a recipe for “Nigerian Groundnut Stew” is attributed to the Clifford Amstutz Family (p. 96), which may or may not include a male figure. Whatever the case may be, this cookbook is largely the result of women-led efforts in terms of publishing, editing, and recipe collection.

Again, a curious trend regarding *verenika* appears in Figure 8; there is no recipe for the cheese-filled dumpling, and this is odd given its consistent appearance at restaurants, local festivals, and public events that occur annually in south central Kansas. In fact, I wonder what decisions led this (admittedly laborious) recipe to be excluded when it is usually so popular with Mennonites and non-Mennonites alike.

The integration plot indicates a concern with inclusion. The trend of non-traditional Mennonite recipes persists, and some featured dishes may represent a commitment to international service work by members in the congregation. This is, as

FIGURE 8: *SHARING TOGETHER*, COVER DESIGN AND TABLE OF RECIPE INCLUSION AND VARIANTS

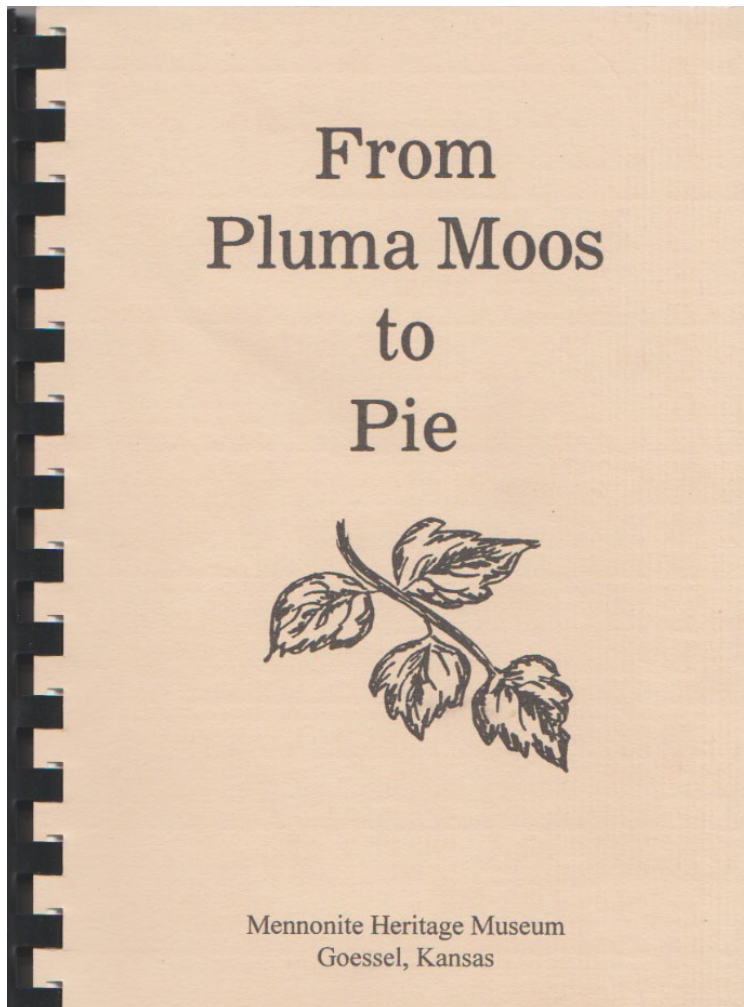


Compiled in conjunction with the 75th Anniversary Celebration (October 3, 1984); art by Joanna Friesen, Spiral-bound, 218 pages.

Dishes	Recipe Variants
German borscht (spring, summer, cabbage, etc.)	0
moos	1
peppernuts	2
verenika	0
zwieback	2

affirmed by the back matter included by General Publishing in Iowa Falls, a fundraising cookbook. However, the particulars of where the funds went is never revealed. Nevertheless, the women of Hesston’s Mennonite Church use their perceptions of taste to create additional resources for their community.

FIGURE 9: *PLUMA MOOS*, COVER DESIGN AND TABLE OF RECIPE INCLUSION AND VARIANTS



Compiled by Ruth Unruh & Jan Schmidt. Illustrations by Em-malyn Hiebert. Translations by Velda Duerksen, Spiral-bound, 151 pages.

Dishes	Recipe Variants
German borscht (spring, summer, cabbage, etc.)	5
moos	6
peppernuts	22
verenika	1
zwieback	6

***From Pluma Moos to Pie*, 3rd ed. (2007)**

The purpose of this cookbook is clear, even if the overall plot is complex; the first edition, published in 1981, was conceived by former di-

rector Jan Schmidt for the benefit of the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Goessel, KS. The cover (Figure 9) is thick cardstock, and *Pluma Moos* is bound with a plastic spiral. However, this book has a combined plot that rests between an historic celebration and the separation of Mennonites from English counterparts. It casually abides by the Anabaptist principal of nonconformity to the world, supported by 2 Corinthians 6:17 and Romans 12:2. It is also important to note that *Pluma Moos* is in its third edition (2007), after the initial production in 1981, and a revised edition finished in 1991. The 1991 *Pluma Moos* includes “a new design and several short articles on the way things were done a long time ago” (p. 1). Alterations to the spelling of various dishes were also made to align with Herman Rempel’s *Mennonite Low German Dictionary*.² Again, the alterations made between the first and second editions of *Pluma Moos* seem to be geared towards demystifying Mennonite culture for the audience. This denotes a desire for further accessibility and may represent an attempt to integrate persons of diverse ethnicity into the Mennonite church in order for it to grow and flourish. The short articles referred to in the introduction may also indicate another attempt at further preserving cultural knowledge for future generations.

Aside from illustrations, there are detailed depictions of traditional life straddling the line between historic fact and nostalgia. The material in *Pluma Moos* is a still life that depicts the past; it is a document that preserves several touchstones of Mennonite life. For example, “recipes and old sayings and proverbs were solicited from friends of the museum organization and descendants of the 1874 Russian immigrants to the Goessel area” (p. 2). In this sense, there is also the

²“Kjenn Jie Noch Plautdietsch? A Mennonite Low German Dictionary,” by Herman Rempel (<http://www.mennolink.org/doc/lg/index.html>)

preservation of the Plautdietsch language, which is a major part of the Mennonite ethnic identity. Where *Daily Bread* gives no translations for the Plautdietsch proverbs interspersed throughout its text, *Pluma Moos* provides an English translation for the various poems, songs, and prayers that are featured, such as “Wea daut niche em Kop hat, Hat daut enna baen,” which, in English means, “If you don’t use your head, you’ll use your legs” (p. 37). There are maxims that appear in English only, but even they have a less secular bent, such as the poem “I am my neighbor’s Bible” (p. 22). This is a text that accomplishes more than one narrative; what it does not attempt is an integration into secular community cookbook conventions by attempting to emulate the favorite material found in other contemporary food texts.

Likewise, it connects to what the Heritage Museum attempts to achieve. This cookbook preserves the account of daily life from longtime residents of the area. For example, Bertha (Mrs. Herb) Schroeder provides a section on “Feeding the Threshing Crew,” which begins much like the first few lines of a favorite relative’s story might. It is not hard to imagine sitting around a table with a cup of coffee as Schroeder tells you that “[i]n describing the threshing days of my youth – I’m now 79 – perhaps I should begin with the harvesting of the wheat” (p. 55). What follows is a primer on one woman’s lived experience. It is storytelling and the explication of cultural practice. She relays to her audience when a Mennonite family could tell it was time to cut the wheat (“when it was ripe, but not ‘dead-ripe’”), the typical machinery used in the fields, and the roles each family member played. Other historic sections on the “long time ago” aspects of Mennonite life in south central Kansas include “Butchering Time,” “Mennonites and Watermelon,” “Memories of Weddings, Funerals and Zwieback,” and “Peppernuts.” *Pluma Moos to Pie* is arguably the most comprehensive food text among the group of cookbooks examined in this project. It attempts to extend a metaphoric hand to outsiders, and there is some sense that if the public responds – if they reach back – the preservation of Mennonite history is likely. Voices that are silenced and disenfranchised by the quick pace of contemporary life are meaningfully present within this text. However, they do not have to remain muted if stakeholders outside

the community are cultivated and understand the nature of *Pluma Moos*’ exigency.

Pluma Moos provides the most variants of any of the community cookbooks in this study for peppernuts, zwieback, borscht, and moos (Figure 9). Again, the text is a celebration of difference while attempting to share information with outsiders who bring their curiosity with them – first to the Heritage Museum, and then to the kitchen.

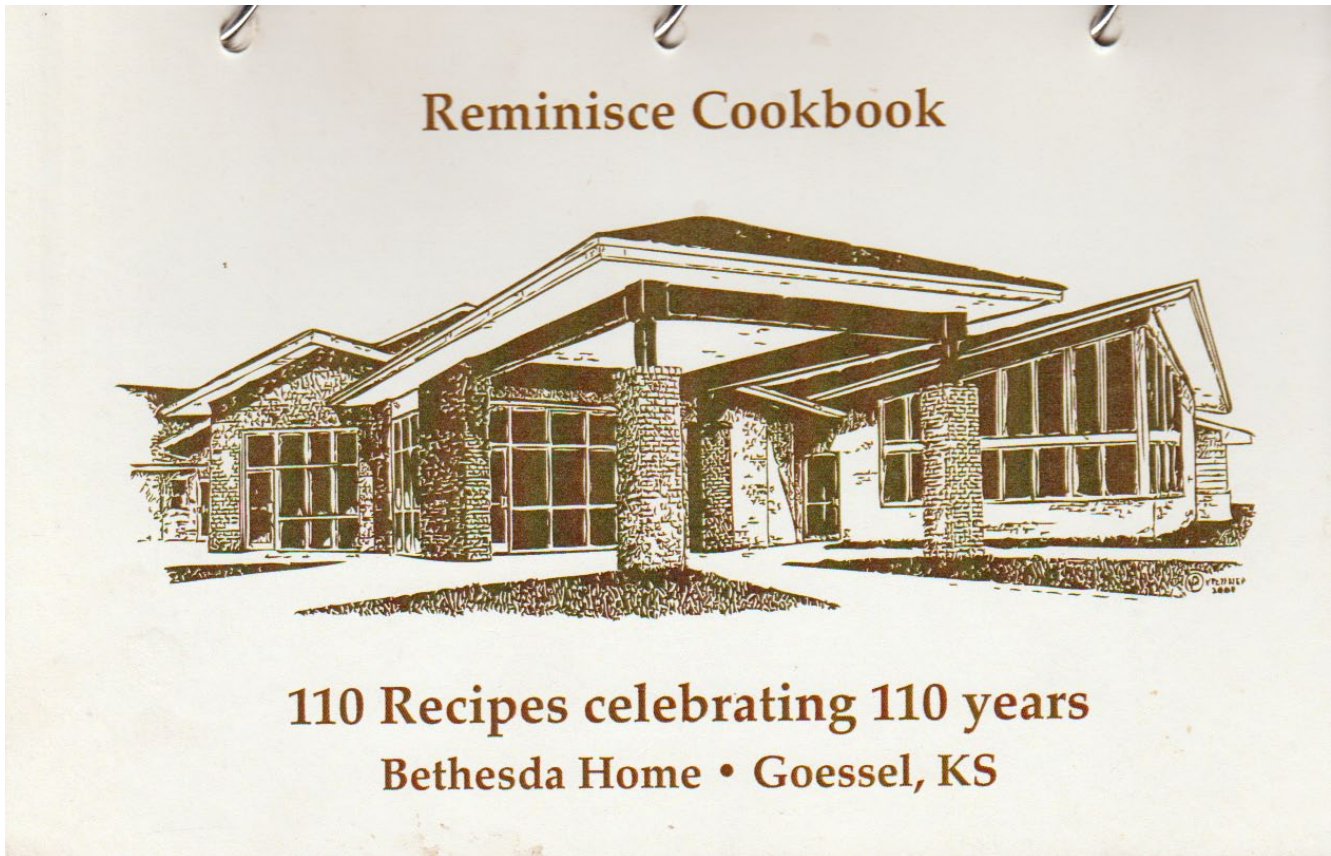
***Reminisce Cookbook: 110 Recipes Celebrating 110 Years.* (2009)**

Reminisce is an outlier among the cookbooks in this sample; it is the most current text within this study, and its purpose is purely nostalgia. This text was compiled by residents and caretakers in Goessel’s Bethesda nursing home, and it most closely follows a differentiation plot, using residents’ memories to communicate an era and specific set of traditions. Many of the recipes are attributed to the “Bethesda Home Kitchen.” There is only one male contributor whose recipes are included; most of the content is provided by women.

The book itself is held together with loose metal binder clasps and printed on plain white rectangular cardstock laid out in a horizontal position. All illustrations are black and white; the few interspersed within the text are clip art or derived from the internet and then placed into position. The single exception is *Reminisce Cookbook*’s cover (Figure 10), which displays a highly detailed hand-drawn picture of the nursing home’s exterior.³ It is evident that computers were used to produce this “in-house” project compiled by staff and residents; there are no names of professional binding or publishing companies printed on the front or back of this text. This may speak to the issue of available means.

Identifying the audience for such a text is not straightforward in that several could exist; it is true that there is very little to engage a general audience of readers. However, the first page of *Reminisce* suggests that the book was not meant to be a profit-making venture or perhaps shared with community outsiders at all. Instead, this sparse introduction reveals that the cookbook represents the work of residents who formed the “Writing and Reminisce” group that met weekly “on Thursday

³ No artist is credited for the illustration on the book’s cover.

FIGURE 10: *REMINISCE COOKBOOK*, COVER DESIGN AND TABLE OF RECIPE INCLUSION AND VARIANTS

Dishes	Recipe Variants
German borscht (spring, summer, cabbage, etc.)	5
moos	6
peppernuts	22
verenika	1
zwieback	6

Compiled by Bethesda Home in Goessel, KS, 115 pages.

afternoons” (p. 1). The introduction goes on to say that “the purpose [of the group] was to recall and write about our lives; record the events and experiences that make us who we are. It seemed that as time went on, we did more reminiscing and less writing, and very often our conversations revolved around food and cooking” (p. 2). Truthfully, audience may not matter in the case of *Reminisce Cookbook*. It is intended to be a keepsake for contributors; it is also an example of cultural practice extending into the local community and out into the secular world. The text explicates cultural pat-

terns of redefinition with feedback loops between the memories of community participants and the texts that they produce.

The cookbook was printed in 2009 and has the added significance in the number of recipes included, which “correspond[s] with the years that Bethesda has been in existence” (p. 2). The end of this introductory note does address readers— “[w]e hope you enjoy the recipes...” (p. 2)—but this does not indicate the number of cookbooks printed or how they were circulated.

The different sections of *Reminisce* are not out of the ordinary, except for the penultimate section entitled “Ethnic Foods.” Ten recipes, excluding borscht and moos (Figure 10) accompany three short nonfiction depictions of the writer’s past; Geneva Bartel takes readers through her recollections of making molasses and provides a curious piece entitled “Weather Wise” (p. 78) that reads like an excerpt from *The Farmer’s Almanac*. In a final aside, Frieda Flaming provides her thoughts on the recipes she submitted for *Reminisce*. Flaming tells readers that she procured a zwieback recipe with a smaller yield from a young woman named Pat Voth: “[Pat] wrote that she introduced the Washburn [University] Volleyball team to Mennonites with these zwiebacks. This caught my fancy, and I’m still using her recipe. Bless her!” (p. 98). This cookbook may not have been widely circulated, but within its pages, readers are given an example of how culinary traditions of the Mennonites spread to curious (and hungry) outsiders.

CONCLUSION

Even though my study is limited to fewer than 10 community cookbooks published over a 45-year span, the centralizing factor of each one is women’s writing. Furthermore, there is a palpable tension between the women who compile these texts and their relationship with not only the secular world but within the communities in which they reside. In *Strangers at Home: Amish and Mennonite Women in History*, Kimberly Schmidt, Steven Reschly, and Diane Umble focus on the conflicting relationship these women have with their denominations, explaining that,

[w]omen are situated differently from men in Anabaptist communities: they are simultaneously insiders and outsiders. Even though women may have a family history that reaches back generations in their community, as members of patriarchal religious groups, their voices are limited. Their community practices, participation, and influence are often exercised through their husbands’ place in the community or through female-centered activities such as the breadmaking ritual and kinship networks. (Schmidt, et al. 2002, 8)

I disagree with any assertion that this is typical of all Anabaptist communities. The reality is far more nuanced, and prevailing attitudes about gender vary greatly. However, these cookbooks, which preserve vital elements of Mennonite folk culture, exhibit – literally and figuratively – women’s work. Additionally, there remains a persistent effort to preserve historic traditions that attend to people who still keenly feel a dualized sense of diaspora because of ancestral narratives and the changing socioeconomic landscape of Kansas itself. Those who create these cookbooks face the challenge of preserving history, representing their respective community, and in the end, representing themselves to audiences. All eight cookbooks convey differentiating attitudes towards their intended audience, and while similarities occur, the texts create their own conversation about discourse among the Mennonites.

Aside from cultural preservation, the fact remains that community cookbooks from this area remain a vital example of women’s writing, the historic exemplification of one unique discourse community, and a valuable contribution to community goals in terms of conserving foodway traditions. Who is “in” and who is “out” now relies a great deal on what is protected and what is lost to time. The question for future writers who compile Mennonite cookbooks, whether printed texts or in the guise of cooking blogs and websites, will likely centralize how best to represent the customs and voices that have come before. There is value in letting the past speak while making space for fresh perspectives.

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