



~ Part 16 ~
Reflections on a Common Theme
Food

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CLOUD COUNTY

In a Corner of Cloud County

by Joan Nothern

In a community surrounded by miles of farmland, fields of wheat, and pastures with cattle bound for distant markets, food is a popular topic. It is what keeps eyes posted on the weather and what establishes the rhythm on Main Street. Food is another name for a job.

But it has a different role within the community. It defines who we are—as growers and bakers, marketers and hosts. Perhaps there is not a single food or dish that stands out, but rather the unique creations and events that have taken on that character now labeled “tradition,” that has shaped Glasco’s food profile.

In the 1990s, when solar car races traveled Highway 24, the word was passed to stop in Glasco, it was the Pie Place! Lutheran women lined the street outside the church, providing hot fresh fruit pies. Their reputation stretched to Manhattan and lingered to Colby.

The local Bohemian heritage is captured in bierocks—beef, cabbage, and cheese wrapped in white bread dough and baked. They are sold at the Farmers’ Market, held every Tuesday at the Corner Store, prepared and frozen, ready for a solitary lunch or drop-in company.

The Farmers’ Market marked ten years this last summer. It has created its own heroes. Betty has baked pies, year around, for all ten years. At 85, she has a following she does not want to disappoint.

Milt, a remarkable gardener, supplies the bulk of fresh produce, from April through November. Three festivals have grown around the market: In June, the First Ever Annual Rhubarb Festival and Tasting Tea; In July, the Red, White, and Brew Salad Festival; and in August, a Salsa Festival. All are excuses to gather as a community to celebrate the gifts of the garden.

The Glasco Locker Plant draws hunters and farmers from miles away to have deer and beef processed. It serves as a super meat market for Glasco.

The Hodge Podge, a soda fountain on Main Street, serves malts and limeades, cokes and coffee, that can be enjoyed in a booth or on a stool at the counter. Many hikers and bikers on 24 find their way to the Hodge Podge.

The rhythm goes on. In winter, soup suppers. Over the holidays, Open Houses and Holiday Suppers. In the summer, picnics and ice cream socials in the park. Each month, a potluck at the Senior Citizens. During the school year, school lunches that feature from scratch homemade meals. Sunday noons the café welcomes a community of worshippers as they come from four churches to eat together.

And that may be the heart of the matter. Eating together what has been prepared with care, from the garden to the table, the community becomes a family.

MITCHELL COUNTY

Childhood Memories

by Carldon Broadbent

Wash day on Monday morning. Mother thinks, what can I get ready for the noon meal? It must be quick and easy and as the time period is 1920s and 30s she can’t just grab a package such as macaroni and cheese!

But the farm wife had two items generally on hand: bread and her own canned tomatoes. Behold! A quick and easy meal soon appears. Since she bakes bread several times a week, chances

are there is a loaf or two which needs to be used up. And she has a cellar full of glass jars filled with last summer's crop of tomatoes.

With a large sauce pan she quickly boils the tomatoes, and smashes and stirs, adds salt and a little sugar, some pepper or basil, chopped onions, butter to suit the amount of mixture. Behold! Breaded Tomatoes.

When testing this recipe I followed "Fannie Farmer's Cook Book" suggestion of adding 1/8 teaspoon of ground cloves. I thought this was a very nice addition to the above recipe.

Our neighbor lady, feeding 12 children, although some were out of school, baked almost daily. Think of the flour that took! We went to a country school house, and when we went home with them to play, Mrs. E. would be taking bread out of the oven. It couldn't be sliced hot of course, so tearing it in chunks and slathering it with butter and sprinkling with sugar, she handed the treat around to anxious kids.

The mill in Beloit was one of three elevators that bought wheat at harvest. When dad took a load to the mill he would designate so many bushels to be ground into flour. The flour sold under the name of Gold Coin. So for the next months or year, whenever she needed flour, a sack would be thrown onto the running board, nestled down in the depression beside the motor, arriving safely at home.

I wanted to tell about the sandwiches Mrs. E. made for the school lunch pail: slices of bread, buttered and spread with peanut butter, and that was covered with dill pickles. Once I traded at noon with George for his sandwich and got hooked on that peanut butter-dill pickle combination, and still love them.

A lot of lunch items were traded in those country school houses at noon. Your seat mates seemed to have some store bought item you wished to taste. A lot of fun was had at lunch. One game was to guess the brand name of your orange. There were many names of the California orange farms. One favorite was "Blue Goose." Foods of one's childhood bring back many fond memories, don't they?

OSBORNE COUNTY

Food in Bohemian Country & Bull City Cafe in Alton

by Carolyn Williams

Let me preface my essay by saying it's easy to live close to another and not know that person. The same goes for our communities, doesn't it?

I lived a mere four miles north of the Bohemian Hall in Smith County yet knew little about it, only that they had dances there and there was always a law officer who monitored the parking lot!

It wasn't until I moved to Alton nearly 23 years ago that I really "knew" about their food heritage. The kolaches that my mother learned to make in the old Home Extension Unit were a signature of the Bohemian community. The beirocks that my Hutchinson mother-in-law called "dutch biscuits" is also a signature staple in that community. How odd that these "came to roost" in my kitchen in Alton.

Recently we hosted the Mystery Tour organized by Von Rothenberger, Chamber of Commerce director in Lucas, another Bohemian community. With our plans for dinner that Saturday we included a dessert of kolaches and coffee. That was the first thing one of the tourists noticed. "Oh, kolaches, I haven't had those in years!" Makes one feel they've truly found their calling.

When Mom made the kolaches I grew up with, they were not the petite ones I make now. She used the sweet dough recipe we grew up with in 4-H and made them considerably larger! You do that with four kids on a farm. The filling was most often crushed pineapple because that was something we didn't get very often. And she frosted them! (I still do that with my kolaches. I don't know if that ruins the authenticity of them, but it sure tastes good on the poppy seed, prune, or apricot filling I now use).

The recipe for kolache dough I use is a combination of one from the late Irene Phalen of Osborne and a lady from Wilson who offered hers to me when I ate in her little antique and kolache store about ten years ago. It's a very fine sweet dough and makes almost six dozen petite kolaches when you cut them out with a doughnut cutter (minus the center cutter!)

Kolache Dough follows:

Mix together: 2 Tablespoons dry yeast,
1 cup warm water
1 Tablespoon sugar.

Let rise while you mix the rest of the ingredients

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup Crisco canola oil
- 1 cup potato flakes
- 1 cup powdered milk
- 3 cups hot water
- 1 Tablespoon salt

Gradually add: 7 cups flour and mix well, then add yeast mixture that should already be risen. Mix carefully to make a soft dough. It won't be sticky.

Cover and let rise until double in bulk.

Punch down and let rise again. This time for only 30 minutes.

Roll out half, cut with doughnut cutter, place on lightly greased pan.

Let rise until nearly double. With first 2 fingers of both hands, spread dough in the middle half way to the edges without breaking. Place a teaspoon of filling—your choice—in the depression you made.

Let set about 5 minutes.

Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes. Makes nearly 6 dozen.

If you like frosting, use regular powdered sugar frosting.

Beirocks are made with nearly the same ingredients, only not as much sugar and filled with ground meat, cabbage, and onion. My family likes a bit of cheese as well.

Happy Eating like the Bohemians!

ROOKS COUNTY

The Lord's Acre Supper

by Sherry Brown and Ada Cooper

The Lord's Acre Supper of the United Methodist Church in Woodston is an annual affair held in the fall of the year. It started out in the early 1900s in the United Brethren Church as the "Calendar Supper" and continued into the 1930s as such.

An explanation of "Calendar Supper" pertains to the seasons of the year. The seating was arranged around four tables that had decorations for the seasons. Individuals who ate the supper were seated at tables according to the date of their birth. Some people seemed to end up at tables where their favorite food was located regardless of what month they were born.

The day of the event started with the ladies doing a lot of cooking while the men folk would set up the tables for all those attending. These suppers were planned well in advance since most of the food used was canned months earlier. Even the decorations were worked on weeks ahead of the event. The event was looked forward to by the whole community.

The charge for the meal was simple, if your birthday fell on the first, then you paid a penny. Those whose birthday fell at the end of the month had to pay the most. It was later changed to a set charge of not more than 25 or 50 cents. The money raised from these dinners was used for worthy missions or other church projects.

In later years various organizations of the church would set up booths to sell all kinds of homemade goodies. After WW II, a program for financial support to the church came into being, entitled "The Lord's Acre Auction." The plan was for each farm to donate the produce of one acre to the Lord. These items were auctioned and the proceeds were used on the church budget. The program, independent from any organized group in the church, still operates, but now has a different format. The meal is followed by an auction of donated items. It still provides generous support to the church budget as well as providing a time of fellowship for the people of the community.

GRAHAM COUNTY

Nicodemus Food

In 1886, the Western Cyclone, a weekly newspaper once published in Nicodemus, first printed the ad "Looking for a good flour mill." More than 100 years later descendants of Nicodemus's early settlers rallied to build that long sought-after flour mill. In 2000 five farmers with connections to the area joined together to establish the Nicodemus Flour Co-op. With support in its initial stages from the Kansas Cooperative Development Center in Manhattan, Kansas, and Langston University in Oklahoma, the co-op received a grant from the USDA for start up. The organizers named their

product Promised Land Flour, with the goal of growing, grinding and selling a value-added product directly to customers.

The first batch of flour was ground in July 2001. Only small batches are being produced at a time using a small mill. After a while, the co-op began selling Nicodemus Pancake Mix. You can try the Nicodemus Flour Co-op pancake mix at the free pancake breakfast during the Annual Nicodemus Homecoming Celebration, held the last weekend in July. Promised Land Flour and Nicodemus Pancake Mix is sold in a 2 pound decorative cloth sack and can be purchased by mail or online from the Nicodemus Flour Co-op. They are also available at a few area stores and the Nicodemus National Historic Park.

Nicodemus was famous a generation ago for Ernestine's BBQ. Today Angele Bates has opened The Nicodemus Livery and Mercantile Gift Shop and Ernestine's BBQ at First Street and Highway 24 (grand opening was December 7). Stop by and eat and shop. For more information, call Angela at 785-839-4050.