

**Kathy NEUSTADT, *Clambake : a History & Celebration of American Tradition* (Amherst, The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992, xi and 227 pp., illus., ISBN 0-87023-782-3, paperback)**

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Kathy NEUSTADT, *Clambake : a History & Celebration of American Tradition* (Amherst, The University of Massachusetts Press, 1992, xi and 227 pp., illus., ISBN 0-87023-782-3, paperback).

Clambake, written by a folklorist, is more than an ethnographic study of the clambake in Allen's Neck, Massachusetts. While the author did extensive interviewing, she also studied the clambake's history, and, as well, archaeological records. She then divided her book into three sections: history, ethnography, and "Clambakes and Meaning."

While clams, raw and smoked, were exploited by the Wampanoag Indians in Massachusetts, and folklore suggests that clambakes are of aboriginal origin, historical and archaeological records do not provide this proof. Neustadt suggests that the Allen's Neck clambake is an "invented tradition." It is interesting, then, to add a Canadian component. If there was evidence of clambakes in the Atlantic Provinces this could provide the proof needed.

According to records by early French Canadian explorers, the Micmac dug clams in the winter when the hunting was poor and left heaps of shells behind, but the explorers did not describe a method of cooking clams on the shore; they appear to have been eaten raw (and recently have been shown to be a fair source of ascorbic acid). Marie Nightingale and Estelle Reddin, who both study the culinary history of the Eastern Provinces, are not aware of clambakes in the east similar to the Allen's Neck bake. Estelle Reddin told me that the typical method of cooking clams on the shore is to boil them in a pot. I am unfamiliar with archaeological records on the east coast and thus cannot comment on this, but if a reader does have knowledge of clambakes on the east coast I would be interested in learning about it.

On the west coast, however, pit cooking is a traditional aboriginal method for cooking camas roots, fish, and shellfish, as described by Nancy Turner, ethnobotanist, and others. John R. Jewitt documented the aboriginal people's method of steaming clams and other foods very much like the way they do it on Allen's Neck (in Stewart 1987:78). One can say with certainty that pit cooking and steaming clams were an aboriginal practice in North America before contact.

But why do hundreds of people yearly return again and again to Allen's Neck in Southeast Massachusetts to eat clams, tripe, corn, brown bread, bread-cracker-salt pork dressing (as in stuffing), sweet potatoes and pie? Certainly not for furthering gastronomy, although occasionally the clams are brought in from Nova Scotia. Neustadt concludes that the Allen's Neck clambake is about identity. "Its power and perpetuation emanate from its ability to act as a mirror for Allen's Neck, wherein the community sees itself and simultaneously projects an image to the outside world....The clambake at Allen's Neck is inextricably

bound up with the overall cultural pattern, values, history, and aesthetic of the Allen's Neck Friends...a sacrament of season, a blessing on abundance, and a performance of family" (p. 164).

When academics write about foodways, to set their work in a conceptual framework, they generally draw upon the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss and the "Culinary Triangle" (redefined by Jack Goody). Neustadt is no exception. Lévi-Strauss presents problems to many who attempt to apply the culinary triangle model to specific situations and, indeed, Neustadt has difficulty with an application. The triangle moves food from raw to cooked (a cultural transformation) or raw to boiled or rotten. Roasted is associated with men, prodigality, and aristocracy while boiled is typically female, frugal, and plebeian—or, nature vs. culture. The clambake, while seemingly "male" because it is a "roast," is actually a form of boiling—that is, steaming. While Neustadt identifies the clambake as "male" because of its closeness to nature, I would tend to align the clambake with "pit cooking" which on the west coast is "female"—the women do the cooking, and as well, dig the clams and the camas. Pit cooking on the plains, today, however, is a male enterprise. Pit boss Harry Smith of Alberta explained the method of cooking: a bobcat digs a pit and a couple of cords of wood are burned down to make the fire. Then the beef is put on top of the coals and immediately covered with a metal plate and dirt to keep all oxygen out—the meat is, in effect, steamed. The men then drink an assigned amount of whisky while the beef cooks. This is the difficulty of the culinary triangle; while the concept seems logical, when it comes down to earth—the pit—it doesn't work.

There is no question but that Neustadt's study is thorough. But, there is a key piece missing, and this is specific recipes. (Perhaps it's because recipes are on the wrong side of the clambake culinary triangle along with women, boiling, and plebian.) This is like writing about song and omitting the score. As Estelle Reddin said,

*Recipes as recorded, encoded instructions, preserved and exchanged either orally or in written form, are available to us over time and allow us to reconstruct foods of the past. For centuries recipes like folk stories have been transmitted by word of mouth, but modified both by sensory memory and by temporary technology (Reddin forthcoming).*

How else can you try to duplicate this clambake in another hundred years unless you have some kind of instructions? For a culinary historian this information will be invaluable in the future to explore how and why change takes place. Chapter 6 is said to be a "detailed description of the technical and culinary components" (p. 5), but it would not be possible to duplicate the clambake from a lack of specific directions. We don't know, for instance, how many clams are put onto a rack,

what they do to the tripe, how long foods are cooked, etc. I hope that folklorists who study food will go a bit further and, at least, include an appendix with exact directions.

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Mark DUGAN and John BOESSENECKER, *The Grey Fox : the True Story of Bill Miner--Last of the Old-Time Bandits* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1992. Pp. 260 ISBN 9-780806-124353 (cloth).

Bill Miner's criminal life spanned fifty years, from the 1860s to the early twentieth century. He achieved notoriety robbing stagecoaches and trains throughout the western and southern United States. He also had a Canadian connection. In 1904, Miner successfully held up a Canadian Pacific Express train at Mission, British Columbia. This was Canada's first train robbery, and the police and the CPR were determined that it be the last. After an extensive search failed to locate Miner, authorities assumed that he had crossed into the United States; however, Miner had done no such thing. He was living contentedly as a refined and cultured gentleman in Kamloops. Quickly making friends with many of the local residents, including the local RCMP officer, Miner remained in the town until his whereabouts were discovered by federal authorities. He fled the town when the local police officer warned him indirectly that his arrest was imminent. However, Miner soon was captured and imprisoned in New Westminster. After a short stint in jail he escaped under suspicious circumstances, some critics believing that he was let go in exchange for disclosing to police the location of the loot from the train robbery. Sympathy for Miner was widespread in British