

## ABSTRACT

Title of thesis: A CONSUMING HERITAGE: BALTIMORE'S EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWISH IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY AND THEIR EVOLVING FOODWAYS, 1880-1939

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This study explores how Baltimore's Eastern European Jewish immigrants and their American-born children engaged with American foodways during the period 1880-1939. Food-related charitable aid and food education were used as tools of Americanization and moral uplift by public health officials, middle-class charitable workers, and social reformers between 1880 and 1920. The home economics classrooms of Baltimore's public schools continued this work in the early twentieth century, teaching the immigrants' American-born children lessons about food and middle-class domesticity. Although somewhat influential in reshaping the immigrants' food habits, the Eastern European Jewish immigrants and their children largely retained their traditional foodways, making their own choices about how to adopt American foodways.

Interconnected issues of food, health, economics, middle-class domesticity, citizenship, and identity are evident in this study. Using sources such as cookbooks and oral histories, this study demonstrates how foodways expressed and continue to express Jewish, American, and Jewish American identities.

A CONSUMING HERITAGE: BALTIMORE'S EASTERN EUROPEAN JEWISH  
IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY AND THEIR EVOLVING FOODWAYS, 1880-1939

by

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

2013

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## Acknowledgements

I owe many debts of thanks to those who assisted me as I researched and wrote my thesis. Dr. Lisa Mar, my adviser, has been incredibly supportive, affirming, and wise in her guidance, scholarly and professional. I appreciate the time she shared with me to talk about my research and my career plans, as well as her efforts to review several drafts of my work. Dr. Psyche Williams-Forsion graciously agreed to take me on as a student in the spring of 2012 for an independent study in foodways and history, despite the fact that I was not an American Studies student. I am grateful for her expertise and continued involvement in this project. Dr. Marsha Rozenblit joined my committee toward the end of the academic year, and her expertise in American Jewish history undoubtedly improved my thesis.

My research experiences at the Maryland Historical Society, the Jewish Museum of Maryland, and the Special Collections of the University of Maryland, College Park were fruitful and enjoyable, thanks to the archivists who assisted me. Jennifer Vess, the archivist at the Jewish Museum of Maryland, always welcomed me, set aside her own work to help me find what I needed, and made my research days quite pleasant.

My friends and family supported me with their love, humor, encouragement, and unflagging faith in my abilities to write this work. I look forward to sharing celebratory meals with each of them. My great-grandmother Katie, my grandma Frances, and my grandma Mary are still with me when I prepare their signature dishes. My mother Connie knows that I am still waiting for her to make lasagna for me.

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## Introduction

Addressing the members of the Politico-Literary Club, Austin McLanahan, a prominent Baltimore banker, remarked on the unsuitable nature of the immigrants who pervaded American society. He decried their ignorance of English, their unfamiliarity with American modes of living, and the persistence of their attachments to their native countries, encouraged by ethnic-national social, political, and religious groups. Likening the immigrants not to blemishes, which mar one's face, McLanahan made a far more insidious comparison, calling the immigrants marks of disease which signaled the ruin of "our fair country."<sup>1</sup> In proposing solutions to this vast problem, McLanahan again employed medical language to make his point; to alleviate the old-fashioned and foreign habits and customs of the immigrants, they "must be treated and cured, made wholesome and blended into the background of our national life."<sup>2</sup> A medical cure, indicated in the loss of the immigrants' original ethnic-national identity, would restore the nation to health. McLanahan summarized this section of his talk by asserting "in short we must stop gorging and digest; eat sparingly and carefully."<sup>3</sup> McLanahan concluded his presentation by stressing the importance of schooling as the vehicle through which the immigrant "could learn what America means."<sup>4</sup> Education would guide and instruct the immigrants in the ways of proper American living, rendering them capable of the responsibility of cultural citizenship in the nation.

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<sup>1</sup> Austin McLanahan, "Immigration," May 8, 1924, p. 4, Politico-Literary Club Papers, Maryland Historical Society (hereafter cited as MdHS).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 14.

McLanahan's talk brought to the forefront a number of important concerns about assimilating Southern and Eastern European immigrants into American society, concerns which he shared with his fellow club members and Baltimore's educated, affluent middle-class and elite citizens. These Americans worried that immigrants would ruin the country with their uncivilized ways, including their poor hygiene, their lack of refinement, their lazy attitude and unwillingness to work, and their strange foods and customs. Assimilating these aliens held out the only hope these Americans could see to save the nation, and education was the key method of sharing these lessons. But education was not to be accomplished solely in a formal classroom setting. Using a network of medical professionals and public health officials, friendly visitors and charity workers, social reformers and social settlement workers, and cooking instructors and home economics teachers, the American middle-class sought to remake the undesirable immigrants in their own image. Using food as one focal point for their assimilative instruction, these reformers were able to teach important lessons about nutrition, health, domesticity, and middle-class American values to their pupils.

Using powerful imagery, Austin McLanahan evoked issues of health and concerns about disease in his lecture on immigration. His metaphors were quite familiar to his peers, as they were deeply tied to rhetoric about cultural citizenship and assimilation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>5</sup> Americans feared that

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<sup>5</sup> Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001) and George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican-American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) both discuss the health inspections conducted at immigration stations, a process which the government hoped would stop unhealthy and undesirable immigrants from entering the country and spreading their ill health among American citizens. Shah also discusses the linking of San Francisco Chinatown and its Chinese residents with tuberculosis and immorality, and the government's attempts to protect the larger city's public health from this neighborhood's poor physical health and moral values. Sanchez describes the assimilative

immigrants were disease-ridden and would pollute the people of the nation with their poor health habits, and by extension would corrupt the moral values of their country with their sickened behavior. His solution to the immigrant problem, which relied on formal education as a primary means of assimilation, also constituted a popularly-held belief in this period; education, especially for immigrant children and children of immigrants, would instill American habits and values in the young students and interrupt the transmission of their ethnic-national heritage from their parents.<sup>6</sup>

McLanahan's talk also employed food and the act of eating as a way of understanding assimilation. The image of gorging represented the massive tide of immigration which began during this period, swelling the American population. McLanahan's choice of gorging was apt, for overeating was viewed as an unhealthy act which medical professionals in this period cautioned against. His call to digest the immigrants was closely entwined with the goals of assimilation, the blending or total incorporation of one's previous ethnic-national identity into a new American one, as food is converted from its original state into nourishment and energy for the body. Eating sparingly alluded to the recent passage of the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1924,

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instruction directed at Mexican women in terms of the home, diet, and childrearing, all of which were grouped in the rubric of cleanliness. Natalia Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens? Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) demonstrates how public health policy in Los Angeles intertwined with political and moral values in identifying who was fit to claim American citizenship.

<sup>6</sup> See John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 189-197 for a discussion of education in urban public and parochial schools, as well as educational classes sponsored by ethnic-national organizations, as a method of Americanization. Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), 100-103, and Irving Howe and Kenneth Libo, *World of Our Fathers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 229-235 and 274-280 offer similar observations for the Eastern European Jewish immigrants who settled in New York City, focusing in large part on the role of the Educational Alliance. Middle-class reformers and the U.S. government employed similar tactics to reeducate the Native Americans; see David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1995).



which enacted restrictive quotas based on national origins, while eating carefully introduced notions of selection of the right kind of immigrants. By limiting new immigration and allowing only the right kind of immigrant into the country, and by working to integrate the existing immigrant population into American modes of living, McLanahan believed that America could eliminate its immigrant problem.

McLanahan's brief metaphor, while only intended to indicate assimilation in a broad sense, also suggested the many ways that food itself would become a locus of assimilation activity in this period. Food, as embodied in the ingredients used, the recipes prepared, and the methods and rituals of cooking, serving, and eating, marks a key element of domesticity and an important component of American cultural citizenship. McLanahan and others like him expressed their deep concerns about the lack of Americanness in the immigrant population, desiring to remake their disparate and foreign lifestyles in a homogenous American lifestyle centered on middle-class values and modes of living. By adopting this lifestyle, immigrants would prove themselves Americanized and worthy of American cultural citizenship. However, these reformers neglected to account for the multitude of new food encounters which Eastern European Jewish immigrants would experience in Baltimore, the possibility of a strong persistence in the immigrants' traditional and religiously-based foodways, the expansion of food choices due to technological advances, and the immigrants' agency in making their own food choices. These interactions which attempted to influence, form, and reform the Eastern European Jewish immigrants' foodways in Baltimore between 1880 and 1939 form the basis of this study.

Beginning in 1880, hundreds of thousands of Eastern European Jews immigrated to the United States each year, seeking a better life for themselves and their children. Living in Russia and the Pale of Settlement, which included Poland, Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, and Belarus, these Jews fled the poverty, religious persecution, and violence which characterized their lives. Anti-Semitic policies restricted Jews' economic opportunities in Russia, and poverty and hunger were ever-present factors of their daily lives. They hoped for better economic opportunities in America, where food was said to be abundant and inexpensive.<sup>7</sup> The violence against Jews, which increased dramatically with the pogroms of Kishinev in 1903 and did not abate in succeeding years, provided further impetus to leave their countries and to seek a new land. Half a million Eastern European Jews, primarily from Russia, immigrated to the United States between 1881 and 1900, and 1.4 million Eastern European Jews arrived between 1900 and 1914, when the start of World War I in Europe made immigration extremely difficult.<sup>8</sup> While most Eastern European Jews did not settle in Baltimore, the Jewish population of Baltimore doubled in size between 1900 and 1914, as the Jewish population reached 50,000 individuals by the start of World War I.<sup>9</sup> The Eastern European Jews who did make Baltimore their home settled predominantly in the East Baltimore neighborhood.

In East Baltimore, a microcosmic urban space within the city of Baltimore, Jewish immigrants formed an enclave neighborhood in which they could maintain many of their traditional religious, ethnic, national, and cultural customs. Yet the American middle-class expressed grave concerns about these future citizens, believing that their foreign

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<sup>7</sup> Hasia Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 16.

<sup>8</sup> "HIAS Remembered" Press Release, August 1988, folder 151, box 10, The Associated Collection (hereafter cited as MS 170), Jewish Museum of Maryland (hereafter cited as JMM).

<sup>9</sup> *HIAS-Baltimore Golden Jubilee Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society*, 1953, folder 150, box 10, MS 170, JMM.

customs threatened the values and morality of the nation. Many middle-class reformers, Christian and Jewish, undertook assimilative tasks through public health, charitable aid, and social reform work in order to Americanize the immigrants' ways of life, transforming their appearance, their language, and their modes of domesticity to conform to the American middle-class standard. Food represented one aspect of domesticity which concerned these reformers, and the methods employed by these middle-class reformers in Americanizing the Jewish immigrants' food habits were received with varying degrees of interest. The Eastern European Jewish immigrants also reshaped their own foodways in America as they encountered new foods, used familiar ingredients like meat more frequently, and considered whether to uphold the Jewish dietary laws in their homes.

As the temporal distance from their European traditions increased, and as the children of Baltimore's Eastern European Jewish immigrants grew up knowing only an American experience, Jewish immigrants continued to redefine their own foodways, even as the home economics teachers in Baltimore's public schools sought to instruct all female students in scientific cookery and modern home management. The influence of home economics classes in the public school system contributed to the American-born children's understanding of food, including matters of nutrition and middle-class homemaking. Yet as they entered adulthood, these young Jewish women and men continued to make their own decisions about what they and their families would eat, resulting in an American Jewish cuisine which affords space to all dietary choices: kosher and non-kosher; regional, national, and international; traditional and fusion; and always both Jewish and American.

Food serves as an important cultural marker, preserving traditions and ensuring continuity in families, communities, and ethnic groups. It can powerfully recall the past with aromas and sounds, textures and colors, while remaking the experience of the present into a food memory to be recalled in the future. What people eat is often entangled with issues of identity, family, gender roles, health, morality, and the nation. Food, as it is presented in recipes and cookbooks and as it is served at the table, disseminates social mores and values; engagement with food can reinforce a traditional cultural past or defy customary practice. For immigrants particularly, food is an especially delicate matter. What immigrants choose to eat can express a connection to their past and their heritage, convey a new blended cultural and national identity, or distance them from tradition and history. Food can ease immigrants' entry into a new community through the adoption of local culinary customs, while their unfamiliarity with or refusal to share in those customs can mark them as outsiders.<sup>10</sup> A study of food with respect to American immigration is valid and desirable within this larger framework. As a component of cultural citizenship, food consumption and habits serve as symbols of the

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<sup>10</sup> Food is an emerging category of analysis in historical studies, and there is a good deal of scholarship in associated fields like anthropology, American Studies, English literature, and sociology. For background information on food and its cultural significance, as well as immigrants' relationship to food, see *The Recipe Reader*, edited by Janet Floyd and Laurel Forster, particularly the essays "The Recipe in its Cultural Contexts" and "Adapting and Adopting: The Migrating Recipe." For theories regarding immigrants and their foodways in a new country, see also *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States*, edited by Linda Keller Brown and Kay Mussell. Sherrie Inness has authored one study and edited several collections of essays of various aspects of food, gender, class, and ethnicity in America; see *Cooking Lessons: The Politics of Gender and Food* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2001), *Pilaf, Pozole, and Pad Thai: American Woman and Ethnic Food* (Amherst MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), and *Secret Ingredients: Race, Gender, and Class at the Dinner Table* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). For the history of cookbooks, especially community or charitable cookbooks, and a discussion of cookbooks as women's autobiographies, see Anne L. Bower, ed., *Recipes for Reading* and Janet Theophano, *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives through the Cookbooks They Wrote* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). For an overview of the history of American foodways, see Laura Schenone, *A Thousand Years Over A Hot Stove: A History of American Women Told Through Food, Recipes, and Remembrances* and Barbara Haber, *From Hardtack to Home Fries: An Uncommon History of American Cooks and Meals*.

adoption of societal norms, as do other domestic tasks such as cleaning and decorating the home and caring for the family. Numerous studies on immigrant groups, either singly or in comparison to one another, address many aspects of cultural citizenship, but most fail to remark on immigrants' foodways at length.<sup>11</sup> Other studies consider the foodways of immigrants in a particular urban setting or more broadly within a regional or national setting.<sup>12</sup> By studying the foodways of Jewish immigrants in Baltimore, this study seeks to broaden and to complicate the discussion of immigration history and matters of assimilation by examining food as a target of Americanization work; Jewish history by looking beyond the experience of New York City to consider Jewish immigrants' lives in other regions of the United States; and the history of American foodways by examining the process by which a particular group of Jewish immigrants' foodways changed over time.

The selection of Baltimore as the setting for this study serves several purposes. Baltimore receives little historical scholarly attention, despite its lengthy history. This study adds another layer of understanding to the city's complex past. It also extends the scholarship on the urban immigrant experience, the experience of Jewish immigrants in

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<sup>11</sup> For a small sampling of the scholarship on immigrant and ethnic groups and cultural citizenship, see David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1995), Martha Gardner, *The Qualities of a Citizen: Women, Immigration, and Citizenship, 1870-1965* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> Studies of Jewish immigrants' foodways have largely focused on New York City. See essays by Jenna Weissman Joselit and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in *Getting Comfortable in New York*, Jane Ziegelman's *97 Orchard* and Hasia Diner's *Hungering for America*. Donna Gabaccia's *We Are What We Eat* takes a national approach, and Marcie Cohen Ferris's *Matzoh Ball Gumbo* focuses on Jews in various regions of the American South. For a collection of essays on various ethnic and regional foodways in America, see *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States*, edited by Linda Keller Brown and Kay Mussell.

America, and the particular experience of Jewish immigrants in Baltimore.<sup>13</sup> Since the 1700s, Baltimore had a small but significant Jewish community which expanded rapidly with the arrival of the German Jews in the antebellum period, and again with the arrival of the Eastern European Jews in the late nineteenth century. During this latter period, Baltimore's Locust Point was the third largest port of immigration in the United States, making it an important site for immigration studies; yet historical studies have largely ignored Locust Point in favor of the iconic Ellis Island, Boston, and more recently, western ports of entry. Studies of Baltimore's immigration station, as well as its immigrant communities, would enrich and possibly complicate the field of American immigration and ethnic history.

Baltimore's urban setting and the dense settlement pattern of Eastern European Jewish immigrants in East Baltimore have led to assumptions that this neighborhood was simply a smaller version of New York's Lower East Side, an immigrant neighborhood which receives a great deal of scholarly attention. In her *Lower East Side Memory*, Hasia Diner argues that American Jewish memory honors the Lower East Side as the point of origin of all Jewish immigrants, and that this memory work has resulted in elevating the history of the Lower East Side as a simulacrum for all Jewish immigrant experiences.<sup>14</sup> While the Lower East Side's representativeness may be appropriate for popular memory, it should not function this way in historical scholarship. Jewish immigrants contended with a different set of issues in their lives in Baltimore, a Southern city with a different built environment, population distribution, economic base, and socio-political leadership.

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<sup>13</sup> The last significant study of Baltimore's Jewish population was Isaac Fein's *The Making of An American Jewish Community*, which ends in 1920.

<sup>14</sup> Hasia Diner, *Lower East Side Memories: A Jewish Place in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 8, 13-14.

These factors shaped the city's historical trajectory and its residents' lives, resulting in their unique experience. This consideration can and should be applied to all population groups and all cities; historians should not assume parallel experiences until historical study demonstrates their similarities. Thus, this study seeks to expand the understanding of Jewish immigrants' urban experiences outside of New York City, counterbalancing the memorialization of the Lower East Side in popular memory and the use of this location in historical scholarship as the epitome of the Jewish immigrants' experience in America.

The first three chapters of this study explore the experiences of the Eastern European Jewish immigrants who settled in Baltimore between 1880 and 1920. Jewish immigrants contended with a variety of messages about food as they learned about American diets and dining habits and as they encountered medical professionals, public health officials, philanthropic volunteers, social reformers, and settlement house workers, all of whom expressed opinions about how the immigrants should prepare and consume their food. The members of these groups introduced the immigrants to many interconnected ideas about food, such as what foods were nutritious, the importance of cleanliness and sanitation in one's environment, and the implications of one's dietary choices for one's own health and that of the nation. At the same time, they also articulated ideals about middle-class domesticity, offering instruction in etiquette, guidance in serving attractive meals at a well-appointed table, as well as discussing how familial happiness would be achieved through properly cooked and served meals and how useful and productive citizens contributed to the well-being of the nation.

Chapter 1 describes the various diets and eating habits of Americans and American immigrants during this period, with a particular focus on where Baltimore's

Eastern European Jews shopped and how they cooked and ate. This chapter also considers the role of popular medical beliefs about diet and nutrition during this period and the connections between proper diet, health, and citizenship. Chapter 2 examines the actions of Protestant charities and settlement house workers in Baltimore, their assimilative and uplift efforts, and their interventions into the food habits of working class men and women, including immigrants. Although these groups may not have worked with Jewish immigrants specifically, they disseminated the dominant American values regarding food and eating among the working class and immigrant populations of Baltimore generally. Chapter 3 considers the German Jewish and Eastern European Jewish communities in Baltimore, their food-related charitable work, and the ongoing negotiation of the role of food within the Jewish religious tradition. It also explains the Jewish communities' activities with regard to assimilation, which focused on achieving political citizenship and English language skills rather than pressing for changes to foodways as a means of demonstrating fitness for cultural citizenship.

The fourth chapter and the Epilogue consider the changes to the Eastern European Jewish immigrants' diet as it becomes an American Jewish diet. While the immigrant generation was exposed in haphazard ways to American middle-class values regarding food, their children were uniformly exposed to the dominant beliefs about food, home, domesticity, and gender roles through their home economics classes in Baltimore's public schools. Technological developments in food processing, refrigeration, and transportation widened food options from local and regional to national and international for all Americans, and food advertising began to influence food choices in significant ways. Chapter Four describes how the children of Eastern European Jewish immigrants



engaged with a diversity of food experiences, learning and enacting middle-class American food values, functioning as consumers in a broader food marketplace, and making decisions about whether to keep kosher.

The Epilogue brings the story forward to the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Baltimore's Jews experimented with other regional American and national cuisines, sometimes resulting in a fusion of traditional Jewish dishes made with non-traditional ingredients. Some who were raised in non-kosher homes began to follow the Jewish dietary laws of *kashrut* to regain a sense of cultural Jewish identity, while others maintained their Jewish identity despite publishing *treyf*, or not kosher, recipes in community cookbooks. Many remember their mother's cooking fondly, indulging in nostalgia by preparing dishes in an old-fashioned way or recreating specific food settings from the past. In considering the Eastern European Jewish immigrants and their foodways as they were transformed into an American Jewish diet, we can begin to see a part of ourselves in this story. We recognize the importance of food in our own lives, in the connections it makes to people and places of the past, its central role in participating in cultural and religious traditions, and the similarities of cultural experience among Americans of diverse ethnic-national and religious backgrounds.

## **Chapter 1: New World, New Foods: Immigrant Engagements with American Foodways, 1880-1920**

Anna Rabinowitz, a young Lithuanian Jewish immigrant, had eaten the familiar foods of home, like zwieback and challah, on her journey to Baltimore. Arriving in her new city in 1910, two relatives met Anna and her family at the Locust Point immigration station and helped them to settle into their new home. As a treat, her uncle bought bananas for Anna and her siblings, something which they had never seen or tasted before.<sup>15</sup> With this introduction to a single new food, perhaps Anna paused to consider how many more novel and strange foods she would encounter in her new life in Baltimore. Anna's experience with bananas was but one instance of immigrants discovering the new ingredients, dishes, and eating habits which suffused their adopted homeland. How immigrants managed the barrage of new food opportunities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflects upon their overall strategies for negotiating issues of cultural identity and Americanization.

As immigrants, predominantly from Southern and Eastern Europe, started their new lives in America, they soon discovered that the average American diet in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was anything but uniform. Ingredients and dishes varied widely, depending on where and how one lived. The food supply in America was still largely locally sourced, allowing Maryland residents to eat a variety of fresh produce from the region's farms and to incorporate the abundant and inexpensive local seafood into their diets. One's social and economic status likewise determined what and how Baltimoreans ate. While elite Americans and some members of the middle-class chose to

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<sup>15</sup> Anna Rabinowitz Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0202), JMM.

eat extravagant French-inspired dishes, the urban poor and some immigrants struggled to put food on the table. Providing a middle ground, the middle-class dining style, suggested by cookbooks specific to Maryland and Baltimore, demonstrated an affection for meat, Maryland seafood, and desserts.

Every American knew, or soon learned, the food he or she consumed was vitally important, in terms of health, nutrition, and nation.<sup>16</sup> These messages were encoded in the domestic manuals and cookbooks of the day, as well as popular health and nutritional publications, endowing the women who oversaw their families' meals with an enormous civic responsibility. Middle-class reformers who examined the institutional diets of orphans and the elderly, and who proposed healthful yet economic dishes and menus for poor families, sought to ensure their wholesome and nutritional value, not only to bolster the individual but to make him or her a strong, useful American citizen. The ambiance and setting of the meal proved to be as important as the food itself in the advice on diet and health written by medical professionals. Eating habits and well-being were again connected through the charitable distribution of a specific sick diet, while a study of Baltimore's tenement districts and public health work to eradicate tuberculosis focused on personal hygiene habits and cleanliness of the home, including food preparation and consumption. Doctors, nurses, public health officials, and nutritionists, along with social reformers, strove to make healthy, capable citizens of the newly arrived immigrants, ensuring that they understood the nutritional and health values of food. They also sought to fashion the immigrants into citizens who followed a certain code of behavior and held a shared set of values.

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<sup>16</sup> Susan Williams, *Savory Suppers and Fashionable Feasts: Dining in Victorian America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 94.

Amid the multitude of food choices which confronted them in America, the majority of Eastern European Jewish immigrants maintained their traditional foodways in Baltimore. Jewish women shopped within their enclave neighborhood at the local specialty stores along Lombard Street, and Jewish families continued to eat within the traditional religious dictates of *kashrut*. While doubtless absorbing messages about nutrition and the importance of certain foods, like milk and eggs, Eastern European Jewish immigrants struggled with some of the new health ideas as they intersected with the religious dietary laws which separated meat from dairy. Easier to incorporate into their daily lives were ideas about the décor, cleanliness, and management of the home, adopting middle-class modes of domesticity.

Despite the middle-class reformers' desire for a homogenized, healthful national diet, the food landscape of Baltimore proved to offer too many choices for a single American diet, as Eastern European Jewish immigrants quickly discovered. In Maryland, the state's vast gifts of natural resources, including rich agricultural land and plentiful shores and waters, shaped its foodways and most popular traditional dishes. Maryland's bountiful local food supply yielded a wide variety of fresh produce amenable to the state's temperate climate, such as corn, tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, strawberries, apples, melons, and peaches. Fresh produce arrived in Baltimore daily from the truck farms which ringed the city. Maryland's shores provided an impressive array of seafood, including oysters, crabs, and fish, as well as water creatures like terrapin and duck. As a transportation hub, other food items from around the country flowed through Baltimore's ports for distribution while also making their way into her food markets. Built on this cornucopia of choice, Maryland's cuisine focused on incorporating all of these primary

ingredients. The only decision for Maryland's cooks to make was how to season and prepare the meat, fish, fruits, and vegetables they planned to consume. "Traditional Maryland cooking maximized on these ready fresh ingredients and tended to make the rich richer."<sup>17</sup> Dishes often employed milk, cream, butter, bacon, salt, and pepper with the occasional addition of onions, potatoes, or celery for more body and flavoring. Marylanders enjoyed oysters in hundreds of different preparations, ranging from raw to steamed to baked to fried, and very often cooked in butter with an occasional addition of bacon or cream. Terrapin was plentiful and local, and younger females were preferred by chefs and the gourmants they served. Preparation of the tender terrapin meat was a slow, complex process; when completed, the dish was served immediately with wine, sherry, or Madeira on the side. Maryland-cured ham was first salted and seasoned with brown sugar, pepper, and saltpeter, then smoked; afterward, the ham rested for five to six months before it was ready to eat. Maryland's variety of ducks, like the canvasback, the red head, and the black, likewise required multiple steps of preparation and an extremely hot oven for optimal cooking.<sup>18</sup> Some of Maryland's favorite proteins, like oysters, terrapin, and duck, were equally popular with other diners throughout the country.

Like the diversity of local ingredients which Maryland cooks could choose from, American and Baltimorean dining styles varied widely in the late nineteenth century, a variety based largely on social class. Until approximately 1840, middle-class and elite American dining was a relatively simple affair. Dinners were composed of one, two, or occasionally three courses; each course offered several dishes of meats, vegetables, and

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<sup>17</sup> Robert J. Brugger, *The Maryland Club: A History of Food and Friendship in Baltimore, 1857-1997* (Baltimore: The Maryland Club, 1998), 344.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 345-348.

other dishes, concluding with the dessert course. Diners began with soup and a fish course, which were followed by side dishes, known then as entrees. Meat dishes of roasted beef and lamb also appeared on the table or were delivered by servants during the first course. The second course continued in a similar vein, serving poultry, game, and more side dishes. Dessert concluded the meal with servings of sweets and fruit.<sup>19</sup> Such meals were served in the Old English style; all of the dishes for one course were spread on the table at the start of the meal, and during the first course, additional dishes replaced those which had been emptied. When the second course was ready to be served, the entire table was cleared of food and china, the top tablecloth was removed to reveal a second, clean table covering, and new place settings were laid on the table on which to eat the next course. Old English service could be accomplished by a servant or two.

After the Civil War, elite American diners adopted a new service method which further demonstrated their social status, affluence, and refinement. The introduction of service *à la russe* required servants to place food on sideboards in the dining room and to carve the meats there. One servant then circulated around the table serving each diner individually, followed by a second servant who offered sauces or other condiments. Service *à la russe* de-cluttered the table of all the food dishes, allowing the hostess to decorate her table sumptuously with vases of flowers and other decorative flourishes. With this new mode of service, she now had an opportunity to showcase her good taste and refinement not only with the fine foods she served, but also with her table's

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<sup>19</sup> Wendell Schollander and Wes Schollander, *Forgotten Elegance: The Art, Artifacts, and Peculiar History of Victorian and Edwardian Entertaining in America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 7.

embellishments. Such ornamental actions both announced and reinforced the hostess's class status.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to preferring Continental styles of service, members of America's upper middle class and elite social groups favored European and especially French preparations of foods. Many admired the French style of cooking, noting its appeal to the tastes and its attractive sight, as well as its careful technique. Others worried that sauces were used so frequently in French cooking to hide what was underneath. Many dishes found on American tables in the late nineteenth century, such as fondue, ices, salads, bonbons, tomatoes, and fricassee derived from the French culinary example. French desserts like the charlotte russe, an elegant and impressive dish composed of a rich custard within a tall sponge cake, were also quite popular.<sup>21</sup> In contrast to America's staid and practical colonial cookery, the embrace of complex French-style dishes indicated the sophistication that middle-class and elite Americans desired to achieve.

At the height of elite and upper-middle class Victorian dining, the meal had expanded to over a dozen courses: cold appetizer, soup, hot appetizer, fish, main course, intermediate course, sorbet, roast with salad, cold roast, vegetable, sweet, savory, and dessert. While most meat dishes were straightforward roasts, entrees offered cooks and chefs a chance to showcase their talents and make a statement. Fortunately for diners, the multitude of courses set before them on the table or served by a servant from beside their chair, were not to be consumed in full portions. Rather, diners may have taken small tastes of each dish or refused certain courses. The large number of courses had a health

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<sup>20</sup> Susan Williams, *Savory Suppers and Fashionable Feasts: Dining in Victorian America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 151-152.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 105, 112-117.

rationale behind it. Many Americans believed that all of a meal's dishes should be consumed separately for best digestion, which explains the alarming number of courses served. As food trends and dining habits changed again and the multi-course dinner was somewhat reduced, the hot appetizers, game dishes, and cold roasts served toward the end of the meal were frequently omitted from the extensive menus.<sup>22</sup>

Certain foods in nineteenth century conveyed one's wealth and status to family members and dinner guests. Beef and game like the canvasback duck were high status foods, as were sugar and later ice cream; these items were expensive or required complex maneuvers to prepare. Oysters in America were common because they were so plentiful; they were not a status food as they are today. Because of their seasonal nature, if foods like tomatoes were served out of season, a hostess achieved a great coup because of the extra expense involved in procuring these items from a hot house or a distant part of the country.<sup>23</sup> Celery required a great deal of effort to grow, making it an expensive food with status implications as well.<sup>24</sup> As options expanded for purchases in canned and prepared foods, these products became desirable as well. By paying for someone else's time and labor along with the ingredients, those who purchased canned goods garnered a bump in status as well as the convenience of using prepared foods. Processed and canned

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<sup>22</sup> Wendell Schollander and Wes Schollander, *Forgotten Elegance: The Art, Artifacts, and Peculiar History of Victorian and Edwardian Entertaining in America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 16, 21-22, 25. Margaret Visser suggests that the American habit of separating foods on the plate and throughout the meal is perhaps older than the late eighteenth century, citing what some have called our "puritanical heritage." She also notes that the separation of foods is an ongoing dining habit for many twentieth century Americans. See Margaret Visser, *Much Depends on Dinner: The Extraordinary History and Mythology, Allure, and Obsessions, Perils and Taboos, of an Ordinary Meal* (New York: Grove Press, 1986), 17-18.

<sup>23</sup> Wendell Schollander and Wes Schollander, *Forgotten Elegance: The Art, Artifacts, and Peculiar History of Victorian and Edwardian Entertaining in America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 22-29. Susan Williams, *Savory Suppers and Fashionable Feasts: Dining in Victorian America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 170.

<sup>24</sup> Susan Williams, *Savory Suppers and Fashionable Feasts: Dining in Victorian America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 110.



foods were seen as modern, scientific and safe, and thus a savvy purchase conveying the buyer's taste and education. Canned foods expanded the food choices and geographic ranges of food transportation throughout America, changing regional food habits by expanding their options. Canned foods also democratized American food to a small extent, giving working class and middle-class families access to a wider range of foods, some of which had previously been the exclusive domain of elite diners.<sup>25</sup>

For the American middle-class and elites, eating a meal became a complicated process full of opportunities to demonstrate one's values and status, not only by the food served but also by the setting in which the meal was shared. By the 1880s, it was important to have a separate dining room for eating and entertaining one's guests, and its decoration reflected upon the homemaker's domestic abilities and her family's status and values. The decisions about the foods to serve and their meanings were further complicated by the selection and use of china, silverware, stemware, and table linens and decorations.<sup>26</sup> Elite homemakers purchased specialized china items such as terrapin pots and oyster plates, along with specific utensils for eating these items.<sup>27</sup> New food items like bananas and oranges, imported from distant locales, were eagerly incorporated into the American diet, necessitating the production of fruit-specific serving dishes and utensils marketed to the middle-class and elites.<sup>28</sup> Tea, coffee, cocoa, beer, and wine all

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 94-100, 103.

<sup>26</sup> Clifford E. Clark, Jr., "Vision of the Dining Room: Plan Book Dreams and Middle-Class Realities," in *Dining in America, 1850-1900*, ed. Kathryn Grover (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press; Rochester, NY: The Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum, 1987), 147, 155-157.

<sup>27</sup> Wendell Schollander and Wes Schollander, *Forgotten Elegance: The Art, Artifacts, and Peculiar History of Victorian and Edwardian Entertaining in America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 72-73, 98, 101-102.

<sup>28</sup> Susan Williams, *Savory Suppers and Fashionable Feasts: Dining in Victorian America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 108-109.

required their own unique beverage services.<sup>29</sup> Status and modernity could also be expressed in the kitchen through the cooking vessels, utensils, and appliances utilized to produce the meals, and women who owned such items and prepared meals using these varied pieces of equipment would demonstrate their culinary savvy as they cooking happily and efficiently.<sup>30</sup> Eating an elegant meal required far more than delicious foods; these dishes must be consumed using the proper dining accoutrements.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Baltimore's finest hotels and social clubs, like the Maryland Club, continued to serve locally sourced foods in traditional preparations, even as transportation made more distant delicacies a possibility and as French cuisine became the fashion of the day. The French influences slowly overtook Baltimore's culinary establishments, and by the late 1890s, the Maryland Club and other restaurants throughout the city succumbed to its charms and popularity.<sup>31</sup> Members of the middle-class and elite often attended large dinners held at hotels or other venues in honor of an organization to which they belonged, or to honor an esteemed guest. Dinner menus from these events demonstrate the extensive, rich meals served and the French culinary influences. Blanchard Randall, a prominent Baltimore businessman who also engaged in civic, philanthropic, and religious activities, attended The Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland Annual Dinner, held in Baltimore on February 22, 1902. The lavish menu for this event boasted nine courses, with five wines accompanying most of

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 126-136.

<sup>30</sup> David W. Miller, "Technology and the Ideal: Production Quality and Kitchen Reform in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Dining in America, 1850-1900*, ed. Kathryn Grover (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press; Rochester, NY: The Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum, 1987), 70-73, 82-83. Eleanor T. Fordyce, "Cookbooks of the 1800s," in *Dining in America, 1850-1900*, ed. Kathryn Grover (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press; Rochester, NY: The Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum, 1987), 105.

<sup>31</sup> Robert J. Brugger, *The Maryland Club: A History of Food and Friendship in Baltimore, 1857-1997* (Baltimore: The Maryland Club, 1998), 351, 356.

the courses. Guests started their meal with a course of cherrystone oysters, followed by a simple soup, and then two entrée courses: terrapin accompanied by celery and mutton served with turnips. Next, a lighter and refreshing dish of frozen lemon allowed the diners to pause and to digest some of what they had consumed before moving into the second part of the dinner. Resuming the meal with several heavier meat-based dishes, diners relished Jersey capon, served with potato croquettes and Fresh mushrooms, then Old Smithfield ham with champagne, and a course of lettuce which might have resembled a simple salad. To conclude their meal, guests enjoyed an omelette soufflée followed by cheese, coffee, and liqueurs.<sup>32</sup> Such a sumptuous dinner represented the typical modes of elite American food consumption at the turn of the twentieth century.

Women from the upper reaches of the middle class likewise dined at such abundant meals and often had the added responsibility of hosting such functions. Mrs. Annie Leakin Sioussat, daughter of an Episcopal minister, was herself an active historian, church and club woman, and social reformer. Her church and club work brought her into the circles of other prominent Baltimore women, such as Mrs. Alice Garrett, wife of B&O President John Work Garrett. Mrs. Sioussat attended a luncheon of the Maryland State Federation of Women's Clubs on April 27, 1916, where she and her fellow club women dined on an elaborate multi-course meal. The women began their meal with grapefruit with maraschino cherries, followed by model broth; salted almonds and olives were also available with these early courses. The ladies then continued with a fish course of Shad Roe Hollandaise, followed by the main course of broiled squab chicken au Cresson, served with new potatoes in parsley butter, and green peas. A Waldorf salad

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<sup>32</sup> Menu Card, The Society of the Cincinnati of Maryland Annual Dinner, February 22, 1902, folder entitled "Blanchard Randall Incoming Letters 1905 (1 of 7)," box 67, Brune-Randall Papers, MdHS.

and cheese wafers followed, and the meal concluded with dessert items including fresh strawberry blocks, petits-fours, and demi tasse.<sup>33</sup> Although they did not eat as many courses, and they were served on the whole lighter dishes and less meat than the gentlemen of the Society of the Cincinnati ate, this meal was still quite refined and indulgent.

Earlier that same year, Mrs. Souissat planned a dinner for Lord and Lady Aberdeen at the Hotel Stafford, located in the elite Baltimore neighborhood of Mount Vernon. The proposed dinner was for 12 to 20 people and consisted of far more courses than the club women's luncheon would serve three months later; the foods also offered an unusual mixture of some French-style dishes interspersed with courses which highlighting American ingredients and recipes in other courses. Diners would begin with Cape Cod Oysters with cocktail sauce, followed by a course of olives, celery, salted nuts, and bon bons. A clear chicken gumbo would be served next, and then Bass Saute Meuniere for the fish course. Diners would then be presented with two vegetable entrees: potatoes Parisienne and fresh mushrooms under glass. Lamb Chops stuffed maison d'or, offered with new green peas marked the midpoint of the meal. Diners would rejuvenate themselves and their palates with Sorbet Abricotine before the meal resumed with the main course: young guinea hen en casserole with an entrée of potatoes duchesse. This course used game instead of meat such as roast beef for the main course, allowing Mrs. Souissat to acknowledge the titled status of her guests by using more expensive meats. In the European style, a salad of hot house tomatoes en surprise would follow the main

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<sup>33</sup> Luncheon Menu, Maryland State Federation of Women's Clubs, April 27, 1916, folder entitled "Maryland State Federation of Women's Clubs Programs," box 19, Leakin-Sioussat Papers (hereafter cited as MS 1497), MdHS.

course. Finally, diners would conclude their meal with a sweet course of ices in fancy forms, cakes, and coffee. The proposed menu would cost \$2.50 per guest, a price which did not include wine or floral decorations, which assuredly Mrs. Souissat would have added to complete the elegant dinner and to make it worthy of Lord and Lady Aberdeen.<sup>34</sup>

In stark contrast to the extravagant luncheons and dinners of upper middle-class and elite Baltimoreans, the diet of the poor, particularly those who resided in public and private institutions, was far more basic, bland, and repetitive. In 1910, a study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture surveyed the diet of residents in Baltimore institutions which sheltered children and the elderly. While much was known at this time about the appropriate diet for healthy adults, less was known about what these two demographic groups required to maintain proper health and nutrition. The investigators, H. L. Knight, H. A. Pratt, and C. F. Langworthy, wanted to ensure that the diet provided by these institutions was appropriate for its wards.<sup>35</sup> The investigators selected Bayview, which served as Baltimore's almshouse and also contained hospital and insane wards, as the representative government facility which cared for the elderly; they also examined a home for aged women and the German Aged People's Home, both of which were under private management. For the children, the investigators selected fewer institutions. The Maryland Home for Friendless Colored Children served as the representative public institution, while the German Orphan Asylum was chosen for the privately funded

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<sup>34</sup> Dinner Menu for Lord and Lady Aberdeen, January 19, 1916, folder entitled "Annie L. Sioussat Correspondence, January-March 1916," box 10, MS 1497, MdHS.

<sup>35</sup> H. L. Knight, H. A. Pratt, and C. F. Langworthy. *Dietary Studies in Public Institutions in Baltimore, Md* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1910), 3.

orphanage.<sup>36</sup> This mixture of public and private would allow the investigators to assess institutional settings where economy was a necessity as well as some places where there was a bit more flexibility with the budget.

Bayview served a fairly repetitive menu to its patients, typically providing a thick soup composed of meat and vegetables, bread, and coffee or tea. The facility made its own bread, had a garden which provided some relief from the monotonous diet, and maintained a herd of dairy cows. The bread particularly drew praise both for the mixture of flours used to make it, adding nutritional value to the residents' diets, and the excellent taste of the baked loaves, which might be unexpected in an institutional setting. Bayview rarely served dessert to its patients, adding sugar only to the coffee and tea, and seasoned its dishes simply with salt and pepper, using vinegar on the few occasions when bacon, cabbage, or greens were served. Portions were generous, and the kitchen prepared enough food so that residents could have second and occasionally third helpings. To relieve the monotony of the institutional diet, the investigators suggested adding a few new dishes, such as baked beans, ginger cake, baked chopped hash, potatoes, rolls or biscuits, Frankfort sausages, and macaroni with tomatoes or cheese, to the rotation in Bayview's kitchen. These additions, although not nutritionally required, would be simple to prepare, cost-effective, and would undoubtedly please the residents.<sup>37</sup>

The investigators found a better diet overall at the private home for aged women.

Because the facility had no cold storage, the matron shopped daily for meat and

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<sup>36</sup> Although the Maryland Home for Friendless Colored Children was the representative public institution for children, issues of race may have negatively affected the finances of the institution and the diet the children received. The report on this institution was not reviewed for this reason.

<sup>37</sup> H. L. Knight, H. A. Pratt, and C. F. Langworthy. *Dietary Studies in Public Institutions in Baltimore, Md* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1910), 19-23.

vegetables, obtained other groceries twice a week, and purchased butter and eggs weekly. Potatoes, sugar, flour, coffee, and tea were purchased in bulk. The residents' meals were supplemented by food donations to the institution and individual treats brought by friends. The investigators were critical of the use of expensive cuts of meat for dishes like stew and soup, where cheaper cuts of meat often fared better due to the long cooking time.<sup>38</sup> They also suggested altering the policy with regard to donations of food to the home, suggesting that cash donations would be preferable and would enable the staff to purchase "similar luxuries at discretion rather than ... depend[ing] on the irregular donations in kind for this part of the diet."<sup>39</sup>

The German Aged People's Home, located in western Baltimore, housed elderly male and female residents. Their kitchen was equipped with a new range and a bread slicer, and one of the residents raised chickens. The matron shopped for food daily and was a savvy shopper. A sample menu for the residents showed that the main meals were in the morning and at noon, while the evening meal was quite light in comparison. For breakfast, residents might have eaten smoked sausage, bread, butter, and coffee with milk and sugar. For dinner, the residents were served a two-course meal, starting with barley soup and then enjoying boiled lamb, string beans, stewed canned tomatoes, potatoes, bread, and coffee with milk and sugar. In the evening, the residents' supper consisted simply of bread and butter, accompanied by tea with milk and sugar. This arrangement of foods throughout the day and the relative monotony of the diet which the investigators found were noted as part of the Germans' usual food customs.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 48-53.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 59-63.

The German Orphan Asylum was able to purchase more goods in bulk, stocking up on such items as cereals, canned goods, apple butter, syrup, sugar, sauerkraut, and potatoes. The foods purchased were of good quality. The orphanage also received a good number of food donations, ranging from meats, to fruits and vegetables, to breads and cakes. The German Orphan Asylum also considered the needs of its residents and diversified the standard menu according to age. Beginning at age 8, children ate the regular diet. A sample of the regular diet would include bread with apple butter, coffee, and rolled oats with milk and sugar for breakfast; bread, rice, boiled potatoes, and stewed prunes for dinner; and bologna sausage, bread, and tea with milk and sugar for supper. The younger children, those under 8 years in age, received the regular diet supplemented with milk at every meal; they were not allowed tea or coffee. The eleven oldest girls, who had regular household duties, were given the regular diet which was supplemented by coffee with milk and sugar at dinner time, and fried potatoes and some kind of meat, usually cold, at supper. These diets considered the age and the activity level of the orphans, supplying milk on a regular basis to the young children who needed it most and providing additional fuel for the oldest girls who performed domestic labor throughout the day.<sup>41</sup>

Between these two extremes of extravagant dinners and staid institutional fare was found the cuisine of the middle-class of Baltimore and Maryland. A popular published cookbook by Mrs. Benjamin Chew Howard entitled *50 Years in a Maryland Kitchen* promised to reveal the culinary secrets of Maryland cookery. This extensive cookbook was republished several times between its initial sale in 1877 and the early

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 69-71.



twentieth century. The fourth edition, published in 1881, included a brief addendum of new recipes for crab, turkey, duck, goose, and beef. Mrs. Howard, assured her readers that the recipes included in her compendium had been tested in her own kitchen and by her family. She also ensured that the recipes were simple enough for young housewives to understand, yet still quite useful for experienced cooks. Written in a narrative style without a separate list of ingredients, most recipes included detailed instructions for preparation to assist the novice cook.<sup>42</sup>

Mrs. Howard's recipes presented a cuisine with strong European influences, particularly English and French, along with dishes shaped by Maryland and Southern food traditions. Many recipe titles had parenthetical notes after them, indicating that they were "a French receipt" or "from an old English receipt book." Others included the national identity within the recipe's name, in English or in French; dishes like French Carrot Soup, Turbot à la Crème, and Mushrooms à la Marquese signaled their European origins and superior taste. Such notations lent authority and style to the recipes. One chapter of *50 Years in a Maryland Kitchen* was devoted to Entremets, a French word indicating a light morsel served between more substantial dishes.<sup>43</sup> A glossary of French cooking terms at the back of the cookbook indicated not only the interest in French cooking but also the possibility that American cooks might be unfamiliar with these technical terms. The recipe for Bouquet of Herbs, described as a term of French cookery,

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<sup>42</sup> Mrs. Benjamin Chew Howard, *Fifty Years in a Maryland Kitchen*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1881). Often cookbook recipes in this era would only list ingredients and offer a brief description of how to prepare the dish. These recipes were meant to be reminders and memory aids, rather than fully instructive. See Eleanor T. Fordyce, "Cookbooks of the 1800s," in *Dining in America, 1850-1900*, ed. Kathryn Grover (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press; Rochester, NY: The Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum, 1987), 94-95.

<sup>43</sup> Wendell Schollander and Wes Schollander, *Forgotten Elegance: The Art, Artifacts, and Peculiar History of Victorian and Edwardian Entertaining in America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 4.

enumerated the required elements for this common flavor combination; its inclusion in this cookbook likewise demonstrated both the popularity and the unfamiliarity with more elegant French cookery. Mrs. Howard's cookbook aided not only novice cooks, but also those women who aspired to serve sophisticated European meals but were unfamiliar with French cooking methods.<sup>44</sup>

The influences of Maryland and Southern cookery were also evident in Mrs. Howard's cookbook. The numerous recipes for oysters, as well as crabs and terrapin, allowed cooks to take advantage of Maryland's local ingredients and to prepare them in a variety of flavorful ways. Oyster recipes in the Fish chapter occupied one quarter of the chapter's 20 pages, and other preparations which included oysters were found throughout the cookbook, particularly in the Soups chapter. Recipes for Gumbo Filet and Okra Soup, along with several variations, aligned cookbook users with ingredients and dishes familiar in the Deep South. Recipes with names like General Lee's Jelly Cake, Confederate Punch, and Bene Cakes also evoked a connection with Virginia, Louisiana, South Carolina, and other Southern states.<sup>45</sup>

Other chapters discussed familiar categories of nineteenth century foods, like Wines and Cordials, Sauces, and Vegetables. The Vegetables chapter included recipes based on rice and hominy among its dishes, familiar produce which might have been raised locally, like cabbage, corn, cucumbers, onions, peas, potatoes, tomatoes, and turnips, and more exotic items like artichokes, asparagus, lima beans, cauliflower, celery,

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<sup>44</sup> Mrs. Benjamin Chew Howard, *Fifty Years in a Maryland Kitchen*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1881).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* Some nineteenth century spelling variations are evident in these recipe titles, when compared with contemporary French and Creole spellings. Gumbo Filet would be Gumbo File. Bene Cakes would be Benne Cakes (also known as sesame seed cakes or cookies); sesame seeds were an ingredient introduced to American cuisine by slaves from West Africa.

eggplant, and spinach. Sweet dishes to conclude meals were popular, spanning three chapters and nearly 25% of the entire volume. A chapter on bacon discussed curing procedures for this meat, as well as for sausage, ham, and bologna; the cookbook contained few, if any, recipes which used pork. A recipe for Passover Balls for Soup completely misunderstood the tenets of the holiday when the recipe instructed cooks to pour a hot mixture of suet and chopped onion “upon eight table-spoonfuls of the finest white flour.”<sup>46</sup> Despite these few recipes which diverged from the primary culinary styles of French, Maryland, and Southern cuisine, Mrs. Howard’s cookbook served for several decades as a popular reference work for middle-class cooks throughout Maryland.

Charity cookbooks from three of Baltimore’s Protestant congregations were also representative of what middle-class families ate in Baltimore at the end of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth. The nature of charitable cookbooks was a bit different from those which were commercially produced. Intended as fundraisers, these volumes solicited contributions from the members of a particular group to compile a volume of that community’s best recipes. They also commonly solicited advertisements in order to fund the publication of their books. The Ladies’ Foreign Missionary Society of the Eutaw Place Baptist Church published *The Oriole Cook Book* in 1890; the Ladies’ Guild of the Associate Reformed Congregation offered their *Tried Recipes* cookbook in 1896; and parishioners at the Lafayette Square Presbyterian Church published *The Lafayette Square Presbyterian Cook Book* in 1905. With slight variations, these cookbooks included a number of similar recipes in categories such as Soups, Fish, Meats and Entrees, Cakes, Desserts and Puddings, and Pickles and Preserves. Each volume was

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. See page 118 for the Passover Balls for Soup recipe.

just over 100 pages in length, and each included advertisements for local businesses which occupied approximately fifteen to forty pages of the cookbooks.<sup>47</sup>

With perhaps a more humble audience than those who consulted Mrs. Howard's *Fifty Years in a Maryland Kitchen*, these cookbooks did not exhibit a great deal of European or French influence beyond the names of some recipes, like French Chow Chow, Spanish Pickles, Italian Custard, or Irish Stew. The cuisine favored English and American dishes, with numerous recipes for plum pudding, as well as instances of Yorkshire Pudding, Philadelphia Pepper Pot, Boston Baked Beans, Boston Brown Bread, Indian Pudding, Virginia Pickle, and the very descriptive An Old Creole Way of Preparing Tongue. These cookbooks associated Maryland cookery with both the North and the South but did not proclaim a strong affiliation with either region.<sup>48</sup>

Maryland cookery, based upon specific local ingredients, prevailed as the unifying theme in these three cookbooks. Oysters frequently appeared in the recipes for soups, salads, and main dishes found throughout these volumes; one cookbook included oyster dishes which were creamed, escalloped, spiced, grilled, or boiled, as well as oyster croquettes and an oyster filling for fowl. Recipes for two of Maryland's other popular ingredients, crab and terrapin, likewise appeared in each volume. A few recipes in these cookbooks, like Maryland Biscuits and Anne Arundel Pickle, claimed a hyper-regional identity by including the state or county name in the recipe title. In other respects, these Baltimorean charitable cookbooks generally resembled recipes found in other standard

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<sup>47</sup> Ladies' Foreign Missionary Society of the Eutaw Place Baptist Church, *Oriole Cook Book* (Baltimore: The Society, 1890). Ladies' Guild of the Associate Reformed Congregation, *Tried Recipes* (Baltimore: William J.

C. Dulany, 1896). *The Lafayette Square Presbyterian Cook Book* (Baltimore: The Junior Society, 1905).

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

domestic guides of this period. Meat dishes focused on beef, veal, tongue, sweetbreads, and chicken, and occasionally offered preparations for organ meats, turkey, sausage, lamb or mutton, and ham. A recipe for roast loin of pork with apple stuffing suggested an unusual dish to cooks, since pork was typically considered a working class or rural food. Vegetable dishes concentrated on potatoes, tomatoes, and corn, while occasionally employing eggplant, cabbage, asparagus, and sweet potatoes. Spices like cinnamon, ginger, allspice, cloves, mace, and nutmeg flavored desserts, as did molasses, the juice and peel of lemons and oranges, and rose water. Ingredients like coconut, walnuts, almonds, raisins, currants, and prunes added substance and flavor to desserts, as did seasonal fruits like apples, peaches, and strawberries. Chocolate was used in a limited way in the dessert recipes found in these cookbooks, as it was throughout American cookery in this period. Only one of the cookbooks included recipes which used alcohols, like wine, port, Madeira, sherry, brandy, and whiskey, as ingredients, evoking the growing temperance movement among America's Protestant middle class. In contrast to Mrs. Howard's cookbook, the recipes found in these charitable cookbooks privileged English cookery and Maryland's favorite local ingredients while reflecting other culinary trends found throughout the nation.<sup>49</sup>

A third style of cookbook, the manuscript cookbook, provides an even closer gaze into the food habits of a particular family and the city or town they inhabited. Two such cookbooks from the Cohen family of Baltimore illuminate what an upper-middle class German Jewish family would have eaten in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Born shortly before the Civil War, Eleanor Cohen, along with her siblings

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

Benjamin, Joshua, and Anna Maria, was raised in a privileged setting. Their ancestors, including the Cohens and the Ettings, were among the earliest Jews living in Baltimore; they fought in the Battle of Fort McHenry and had been instrumental in passing Maryland's "Jew Bill" in 1826, which removed the religious barrier which had prevented Jews from holding public offices. Their father Israel was a respected financier, and their mother Cecelia Levy Cohen came from a well-known Philadelphia family. Benjamin moved to Portland, Oregon between 1879 and 1881, where he married Ella Harper in 1881; they had no children. Joshua died at the age of 25 in Los Angeles. Anna Maria married Abram Minis of Savannah, Georgia in October 1890; within a year of her marriage, she had died. Eleanor never married and lived in Baltimore until her death in 1937; she was the last member of the Israel and Cecilia Levy Cohen family.<sup>50</sup>

In 1886, Cecilia, Eleanor, and Anna Maria Cohen compiled a cookbook of favorite family recipes for Benjamin. These treasured family recipes served to remind him of childhood and home, a connection which was more tenuous now that he lived on the other side of the country. Perhaps the cookbook included recipes that Benjamin requested or those which his mother and sisters thought he liked or thought he should have; regardless of the selection process, this carefully curated cookbook represented the Cohen family's dining habits and what they found appropriate for a married son and brother to eat. The majority of the recipes were for puddings, cakes, and desserts; other significant sections were titled For Dinner and Miscellaneous, with shorter sections for Pickles, Breads, Fish, and Soups; an index at the end of the volume provided easy access

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<sup>50</sup> Undated family history documents, folder entitled "Genealogical Notes," box 5, Cohen Collection (hereafter cited as MS 251), MdHS. There is some confusion about when Benjamin Cohen moved to Oregon. The genealogy sources in this file indicate that he moved there in 1879; however, the 1880 Census records Benjamin living with his family in Baltimore.

to the desired recipe. Some recipes have attributions in their titles, and others contain parenthetical notes that the recipe was easy, delicious, superb, or splendid. The narrative style of the recipes did not list the ingredients before the method, but Cecilia, Eleanor, and Anna Maria provided some guidance by underlining certain instructions for emphasis.<sup>51</sup>

Benjamin Cohen's cookbook contained recipes from various traditions, including French, and American Southern, as well as German and German Jewish recipes. The fish recipes included several options for baking or stewing various kinds of fish, preparing Benjamin for whatever seafood he found in the Portland markets; Salmon or Halibut à l'Italienne required baking fish covered in cheese, breadcrumbs, and butter, with no seasonings other than salt and pepper. Soup a la Palestine, or artichoke soup, paired a sophisticated French name with an unusual vegetable. Recipes for sauerkraut and various kinds of pickles were more familiar to German and German Jewish cooking. Other dinner recipes included Scotch Stew, which combined lamb, tomatoes, okra, cucumbers, onion, and eggplant; Chicken Pillau, a traditional Southern dish of chicken and rice with tomatoes and okra; and Brunswick Stew, another dish of Southern origin which mixed chicken and beef with corn, tomatoes, lima beans, and Irish potatoes.<sup>52</sup> A recipe for mock terrapin, another for cold rock fish dressed as lobster salad, and the absence of recipes which listed *treyf* ingredients indicated that Benjamin preferred kosher cookery. Yet the Cohen women included only one Passover recipe, entitled Pesach Cake, in Benjamin's cookbook. The other dessert recipes represented the standard middle-class

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<sup>51</sup> Benjamin Cohen's manuscript cookbook, folder entitled "Recipes for Benjamin I. Cohen (Eleanor S. Cohen Bookplate) 1886," box 4, MS 251, MdHS.

<sup>52</sup> Chicken Pillau would today be considered Chicken Pilau.

fare for closing a meal. Gelatin-based desserts, puddings, custards, blanc mange, pound cake, gingerbread, and frosted cakes made frequent appearances, and ingredients like apples, coconut, almonds and other nuts were used repeatedly, while other flavorful ingredients like seasonal fruits, lemon, jelly, and chocolate were used more conservatively.<sup>53</sup> Benjamin's mother and sisters hoped that with these recipes, he could recreate a bit of his Baltimore home and his family through the foods he ate.

In the year of her marriage, Anna Maria Cohen compiled a cookbook of her own in preparation for her new role as a wife and homemaker; after her untimely death, the cookbook passed to her sister Eleanor, who wrote in new recipes and pasted in newspaper clippings to fill the over 200 pages of this bound volume. Her recipe collection grew too large for the confines of one book, so she tucked other newspaper clippings and scraps of paper with recipes written on them, inside the book's covers. As Eleanor's personal cookbook which grew considerably over almost 40 years, this volume was a working document which represented her favorite foods, preferred tastes, recipes she might like to try, and the popular recipes of the day. Eleanor's active interest in food and cookery and her middle-class tastes were reflected in this cookbook.<sup>54</sup>

Many of the characteristics of Benjamin's cookbook were carried through in Eleanor's volume as well; recipes were organized in categories such as Drinks, Miscellaneous, Hot Breads, Candies and Desserts, Soups, Fish, Meats, Salads, Entrees, Vegetables, Puddings, Desserts and Sauces, Preserves and Jellies, Catsups and Pickles, Cakes, and Sauces. Many recipes were attributed to family members like Coz Belle,

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<sup>53</sup> Benjamin Cohen's manuscript cookbook, folder entitled "Recipes for Benjamin I. Cohen (Eleanor S. Cohen Bookplate) 1886," box 4, MS 251, MdHS.

<sup>54</sup> Anna Maria Cohen's manuscript cookbook, folder entitled "Cookbook of A. M. Cohen, 1890," box 3, MS 251, MdHS.



Cousin Mendes, Uncle Josh, her grandmother Anna Maria Levy, her aunt Septima Levy, and her mother Cecilia, as well as individuals who were likely friends and neighbors, like Mrs. Dardie and Molly. Comments about the recipe, such as “delicious” or “perfect,” sometimes appeared with the recipe. In addition, the recipe index was updated faithfully as new recipes were added, indicating a reliance on the index as a ready reference tool.<sup>55</sup>

Among Anna Maria’s, and later Eleanor’s recipes were five recipes for homemade wine, which used either corn, raisins or pineapple as ingredients, as well as recipes for alcoholic and non-alcoholic cordials and cocktails. The recipe for Soup a la Palestine appeared again in this volume, resembling the version in Benjamin’s cookbook; interestingly, this recipe was nearly identical to one found in Mrs. Howard’s *Fifty Years in a Maryland Kitchen*. Recipes for meats, like tongue with raisin, corned beef, and calf’s head, were found beside recipes for croquettes and canvas back duck, a local and exceedingly popular Maryland specialty. A recipe for terrapin and another for partridges with oyster stuffing represented the few recipes for *treyf* foods. Both recipes appear to have come from Septima Levy, Anna Maria’s and Eleanor’s aunt. A recipe for mock terrapin used calf’s livers, imitating the taste of the dish without violating *kashrut*. To celebrate Passover, the cookbook offered recipes for charoseth, Passover balls for soup, and Passover puddings and cakes.<sup>56</sup> The Passover soup balls, seasoned with ginger, allspice, onion, parsley, salt, and some of the soup stock, would have been far more flavorful than the regular soup dumplings, which were seasoned only with salt and pepper. Among the later additions to the cookbook were recipes for Chop Suey, Italian

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Charoseth is a traditional dish for Passover; it is made of fruit, nuts, and honey and represents the mortar which the Israelites used to make bricks during their enslavement in Ancient Egypt.

tomato sauce, and curried chicken, showing a broadening of flavors and tastes in Eleanor's diet.<sup>57</sup>

A wide variety of fruits and vegetables, such as watermelon, cantaloupe, mangoes, peaches, plums, strawberries, pears, quinces, currants, tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, peppers, and even walnuts were pickled or preserved, while cooked vegetable dishes focused on tomatoes, corn, okra, and eggplant. Desserts resembled those in Benjamin's cookbook, both in type and ingredient, with further recipes for Orange Cake, Mocha Tort, Fruit Cake, Caramel Cake, and Sponge Cake. A recipe for Nut Cake, or Lady Baltimore Cake, from Georgina, likely Aunt Georgina Cohen, was marked private; the sharing of a recipe was not always freely done, and while content to give her nieces the recipe for her best cake, Georgina Cohen did not want her culinary secrets to be shared widely.<sup>58</sup>

While the recipes in these two manuscript cookbooks were eaten by the Cohen family, Cecilia and her daughters did not do the majority of the cooking for the family's daily meals. Census records indicate that the Cohens had several live-in female domestic servants between 1860 and 1910; these women would have performed the majority of the cooking in this upper middle class home, as well as serving meals in the dining room and executing other domestic tasks. The scant evidence about these domestic servants found in the Census illustrates the shifting ethnicity among this group of working women in American society. Several of the Cohen's domestic servants in the 1860 and 1870 Census were African American women. In 1870 and 1880, the Cohens' servants were

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<sup>57</sup> Anna Maria Cohen's manuscript cookbook, folder entitled "Cookbook of A. M. Cohen, 1890," box 3, MS 251, MdHS.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

largely Irish immigrants or the daughters of Irish immigrants, while in 1900 and 1910, their servants were predominantly American-born women.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, Benjamin Cohen and his wife employed a servant in 1900 and 1910, bringing into question who cooked the recipes written in Benjamin's and Eleanor's cookbooks.<sup>60</sup>

In many ways, Baltimore's middle-class diners followed the elite's fascination with French cooking; even if the Continental influence was limited to recipe names rendered in French rather than English, the elevation of a European cuisine as a part of a sophisticated American lifestyle indicates that affluent Americans still struggled to define their prominent social status in American terms. English cookery and regional American culinary influences, such as Southern cooking and dishes made with Maryland's seafood, also constituted a significant part of the middle-class Baltimoreans' diet. Dishes which revealed one's ethnic-national origins were largely omitted from cookbooks; in an upper middle-class family like the Cohens, Jewish recipes were limited to special dishes for holiday celebrations. These cookbooks reinforce the absence of a single national cuisine in America while illustrating the complicated foodways to which immigrants were introduced upon arrival. The cookbooks also provide evidence of food procurement; with many recipes for making condiments, jelly, and preserved and pickled fruits and

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<sup>59</sup> Year: 1860; Census Place: *Baltimore Ward 11, Baltimore (Independent City), Maryland*; Roll: *M653\_463*; Page: 477; Image: 39; Family History Library Film: 803463. Year: 1870; Census Place: *Baltimore Ward 11, Baltimore (Independent City), Maryland*; Roll: *M593\_576*; Page: 53B; Image: 110; Family History Library Film: 552075. Year: 1880; Census Place: *Baltimore, Baltimore (Independent City), Maryland*; Roll: 501; Page: 444B; Enumeration District: 103; Image: 0150. Family History Library Film: 1254501. Year: 1900; Census Place: *Baltimore Ward 13, Baltimore (Independent City), Maryland*; Roll: 613; Page: 14A; Enumeration District: 0162; Family History Library Film: 1240613. Year: 1910; Census Place: *Baltimore Ward 11, Baltimore (Independent City), Maryland*; Roll: *T624\_556*; Page: 7B; Enumeration District: 0161; Family History Library Film: 1374569.

<sup>60</sup> Year: 1900; Census Place: *Portland Ward 2, Multnomah, Oregon*; Roll: 1348; Page: 9A; Enumeration District: 0043; Family History Library Film: 1241349. Year: 1910; Census Place: *Portland Ward 2, Multnomah, Oregon*; Roll: *T624\_1285*; Page: 6B; Enumeration District: 0135; Family History Library Film: 1375298.

vegetables at home, and few brand names among the ingredients, the foods which Maryland residents purchased, produced, and consumed came to them through home production and a localized marketing experience. Finally, annotations in the Cohen family's two manuscript cookbooks such as "good" or "delicious" demonstrate that for at least one family, the taste of food mattered and pleasure could be derived from a meal. These middle-class foodways represent some of the cultural habits which reformers transmitted to immigrants as they started their American lives.

Beneath these middle-class meals, and approaching the institutional diets of Baltimore's aged homes and orphanages, were the foods eaten by the Eastern European Jewish immigrants, and Baltimore's working class and urban poor, who were sometimes one and the same. Immigrants brought their own foods with them to Baltimore, while the poor ate what they could afford within the American regional tradition, along with foods derived from their own heritage. The women in these households did not rely on others to do the cooking and to feed their families. They assumed the weighty responsibility of procuring the necessary ingredients, usually on a daily basis, and assembling and serving the dishes in their small but often well-appointed homes.

Lombard Street functioned as the Jewish marketplace, where many East Baltimore residents and Jews who lived in other parts of the city did their daily or weekly shopping, especially for the Sabbath. Eggs, milk, butter, sour cream could be bought at dairy stores like Salers. Live chickens could be selected and killed according to Jewish law by a *shochet* (a Jew specially trained for the ritual slaughter of cattle and fowl), while butchers sold kosher meats. Jewish bakeries, both kosher and non-kosher, sold a variety of breads including challah, rye, and pumpernickel, as well as tempting rolls, bagels,

cakes, and other sweet treats. Jewish merchants and a few Italian merchants operated small produce and grocery stores, displaying the produce on stands on the sidewalk to invite customers to inspect their products. Kathryn Sollins remembers eating a variety of fruits in her childhood, such as bananas, oranges, apples, cantaloupe from Anne Arundel county, and watermelon, which was sliced into individual portions and displayed on blocks of ice. Despite Maryland's rich agricultural tradition, the vegetables in Baltimore's Eastern European Jews' diets were more limited, including potatoes, onions, and carrots. The Lazinsky family started their business by selling fish on the streets of East Baltimore, carrying them in slat baskets, one on each arm. Later when they had some capital, the family rented an apartment on the first floor which they transformed into their storefront every Thursday and Friday, moving furniture, setting up tables with ice, and conducting business from their home for a day and a half. Delicatessens also placed some of their products on the street; immense barrels of pickles and herring marked the store's entrance, promising even more attractive comestibles inside. Confectionaries, drug stores, and soda fountains enticed children, teens, and adults with penny candy, chocolate sodas, coddies, ice cream, and other delicacies.<sup>61</sup> Competition for customers' business was intense on these densely populated few block, which boasted numerous stores of each type.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Gilbert Sandler, "Romancing the Coddie," in "Jewish Foodways," special issue, *Generations: The Magazine of the Jewish Museum of Maryland*, 2011-2012, 51-53. A coddie is a Baltimore snack made of a fried mashed potato ball flavored with codfish flakes, salt and pepper. It is then sandwiched between two crackers and served with mustard.

<sup>62</sup> Kathryn Sollins Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0164); Paul Wartzman Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0686); Edward Attman Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0678); Seymour Attman Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0162); Milton Schwartz Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0676); Rena Kolman Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0684), JMM.

Jewish women became savvy shoppers in this arena, seeking the best bargains on food and other items for their families and mediating what influences, American or otherwise, entered their homes. As American consumers, they extended their familial role as *baleboste*, or domestic manager, which had been their domain in Eastern Europe. They oversaw the family's adherence to *kashrut* and other religious dictates and selected the food products they considered to be pure. Honoring the Sabbath and holidays, they marked these days with special foods, table wares, and clothes. In the larger markets of America, their consumerism reflected the opportunity to introduce more American foods and products into their home lives, influencing their families' adoption of more assimilated habits, or to eschew these new items in an effort to maintain the traditions of their Judaism.<sup>63</sup> In this respect, Jewish women bore a great responsibility in shaping their families' tastes and habits in America.

Eastern European Jewish families ate well in America and in East Baltimore. They could more easily afford items like meat on a regular basis; they incorporated other high protein foods like milk and eggs into their diets, ate larger meals, and enjoyed the abundance of food choices which America offered.<sup>64</sup> Yet in East Baltimore, food and religious observance remained closely entwined in the eating patterns of these immigrants. Memories of the foods that Eastern European Jews ate in the late 1800s and early 1900s in East Baltimore centered around the Sabbath. Women prepared gefilte fish, a whole fish deboned and stuffed with a mixture of ground fish and a binder of bread or matzoh, for the Friday night meal; they also baked or purchased challah, a special egg

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<sup>63</sup> Andrew R. Heinze, *Adapting to Abundance: Jewish Immigrants, Mass Consumption, and the Search for American Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 105-107, 110, 115.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-24, 44.

bread eaten on the Sabbath. Paul Wartzman and brothers Edward and Seymour Attman remember their mothers purchasing live fish at the fish markets on Thursdays and storing them in the bathtub until later that night or the next day, when their mothers would transform the carp, pike, or whitefish into gefilte fish.<sup>65</sup> Isidor Terrell remembers the preparations for gefilte fish. “If you came to East Baltimore on a Thursday night you’d think [there was] an earthquake ... hundreds of Jewish families chopping up the fish for the gefilte fish for the next night.”<sup>66</sup> Wives and mothers also prepared cholent, a slow-cooked stew of beef, potatoes, and lima beans, on Fridays so that it would be ready to eat on Saturday. To follow the laws of the Sabbath, which prohibited them from lighting a match during the Sabbath, they assembled the ingredients in advance and allowed the dish to cook overnight at a low heat until lunchtime on Saturday. Often Jewish women would take their pots of cholent to a local baker’s establishment rather than cooking it at home.<sup>67</sup> Reba Silver explains why many Jewish women in East Baltimore relied on the local bakers’ ovens. “Few of the people around there had other than the two burner stoves. On Friday the average Jew likes to bake, make a big dinner for Saturday, which requires all night cooking. Mr. Silber [owner of Silber’s Bakery on East Lombard Street] used to let all the women who wanted to, put their little pots of food into the oven, since the oven had to be kept going anyhow. Those who wanted to bake their own bread his wife would teach how to make that plaided [sic] challah.”<sup>68</sup>

As Baltimore’s immigrants, working class, and urban poor carried out their daily routines of work, school, leisure, family, food, and home, Baltimore’s social workers,

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<sup>65</sup> OH 0686, OH 0678, OH 0162, JMM.

<sup>66</sup> Isidor Terrell Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0260), JMM.

<sup>67</sup> OH 0686, OH 0164, JMM.

<sup>68</sup> Reba Silver Oral History Interview, 1976, p. 24, Oral History Collection, MdHS.

medical professionals, and charitable workers worried about their health, as it related to diet and nutrition. They stressed the importance of eating a varied diet and expressed particular concern for the diets of the children. Also bound up with issues of health and nutrition were matters of the home environment, noting the close connection between personal and environmental cleanliness and the prevention of disease. Economic factors such as unemployment also played a role in the maintenance of good health; a living wage was necessary if a family hoped to be able to purchase the more healthful foods they should be consuming. As recipients of charitable aid, and as residents of a tenement neighborhood, Eastern European Jewish immigrants fit the criteria for attention to many of these issues.

Julius Friedenwald, a Jewish doctor from a prominent Baltimore family, published an article about nutrition in the magazine *Hygeia*, which was affiliated with the American Medical Association. *Hygeia* was circulated among the general public, allowing medical professionals the chance to share with them useful and interesting information on health. Dr. Friedenwald's article in October 1928, "The Food We Eat," discussed current dietary principles and recommended a specific style of eating. Meals should be served at regular intervals, allowing five to six hours between each meal. No one should skip lunch, as has become the habit of some whom Friedenwald addressed. The central issue which concerned Friedenwald was a varied diet, a factor he stressed repeatedly throughout the article. A healthful meal should consist of a variety of food items, in order to aid with the digestion and the absorption of nutrients. Food should be cooked, to aid in mastication and digestion, to kill any persistent germs that existed in the raw state of the food, and to improve the flavor of the dish. Obtaining a sufficient



quantity of vitamins was vitally important, especially for young children who were constantly growing. Friedenwald discussed the perils of undereating and overeating, citing various ailments and conditions which could result from either condition. He suggested specific foods and various dietary adjustments for the sick, depending on the complaint. In discussing the proper foods for a sick person, Friedenwald followed the medical standard of the day by recommending a liquid diet which emphasized milk, with the gradual incorporation of soft foods until the patient was fully recovered and could resume a regular diet.<sup>69</sup> He urged his readers not to follow dietary fads, like vegetarianism or consuming only whole wheat bread; although not specifically mentioned, the ascetic diet proposed by Sylvester Graham and carried forward by John Henry Kellogg at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, was surely considered by Friedenwald to be bad for one's health.<sup>70</sup> Returning to the idea that a varied diet was the best way to achieve and support good health, Friedenwald stated that relying heavily on only one or a limited number of food types would be deleterious to the individual. The guidance in his article proposed the proper American diet for immigrants, the poor, and all classes.

Friedenwald presented many notions of civilization and middle-class mores in this article. His statement at the beginning of the article noted that "it has been shown that nations that subsist on a mixed diet of both animal and vegetable food have accomplished most in the way of progress."<sup>71</sup> He asserted not only his medical viewpoint in favor of

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<sup>69</sup> Julius Friedenwald, "The Food We Eat," Abstract, *Hygeia* (October 1928): 8. In discussing the sick diet, Friedenwald wrote "Of liquid foods, milk is the most nutritious and most easily assimilated." His use of "assimilated" to invoke digestion is a telling word choice, reminiscent of Austin McLanahan's food consumption imagery in discussing immigrants and assimilation.

<sup>70</sup> For additional information about Graham, Kellogg, and the Battle Creek Sanitarium, see Barbara Haber, "They Dieted For Our Sins: America's Food Reformers," in *From Hardtack to Homefries: An Uncommon History of American Cooks and Meals* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 61-86.

<sup>71</sup> Julius Friedenwald, "The Food We Eat," Abstract, *Hygeia* (October 1928): 1-2.

the varied diet, but also indirectly compared the American diet to those of other nations. Taking progress to mean modernization, industrialization, and economic success, all elements of American notions of civilization, Friedenwald assessed other nations as weak because of their incomplete diet, whereas American citizens who ate a varied diet were more productive. Productive citizens helped their nation achieve greatness through progress, and if Americans ate as Friedenwald suggested, America could not fail to advance continuously, leading the world in its civilization.

The illustrations which accompanied this article further reinforced certain ideals about civilization, diet, and societal values. Interspersed throughout the text of the article, these illustrations do not relate to the text in their immediate vicinity; rather they visually support the article's overall message about diet and its impact on the standing of one's nation. An African, barefoot and dressed in a grass skirt, sits outside and consumes a banana underneath a tree which boasts a bunch of bananas. An Asian woman, elegantly attired in a dress and heeled shoes, considers her bowl of rice as it sets on a table. She too seems to be sitting outside, with a tree in the background. She holds a single chopstick in each hand, poised to begin her meal. A rotund gentleman, perhaps an American of English or German descent, wears a suit and bow tie as he sits at a dinner table. Before him are three plates of varying sizes; those versed in middle-class American dining values would recognize that the largest plate held the entrée, a smaller one a salad, and the smallest proffered bread. A glass of wine also sits on the table. An Italian gentleman attired in a shirt with the sleeves rolled up, a vest, and a neckerchief, sports a cartoonish moustache which stands straight out from his face. He eats a large dish of spaghetti, perhaps struggling a bit with the long strands. His eyes seem to pop a

bit at the size of the portion, delighted that there is so much to eat. A small bowl of cheese or some other condiment rests above the spaghetti. Finally a Middle Eastern man in loose clothes and a head covering kneels before a pedestal dish of fruits and a fancy pitcher which emits a strand of smoke, indicating that he will be drinking a hot beverage like tea. These images of ethnic-national stereotypes supported Friedenwald's assertion that a varied diet makes for a nation which enjoys much progress. Most of the figures are shown eating only a single item, marking their national diets as unvaried and their countries as less advanced and modern. In contrast, the rotund gentleman, representing an American citizen, has before him several plates on which rest a variety of foods: an entrée, likely composed of meat or another protein, a salad, representing the vegetable, and bread. Assuming his readers believed their nation already superior to the African, Asian, Middle Eastern nations and the Southern Europeans, Friedenwald simultaneously made his case and proved his point that a varied diet was essential for national success and dominance.

In discussing appetite, Friedenwald noted that not only hunger, but senses like sight, smell, and taste were crucial to consider. "The appearance of a badly prepared or improperly served meal will often dispel the appetite."<sup>72</sup> Although Friedenwald mentioned several senses including taste, his statement about the loss of appetite focused only on sight. The notion that the appearance of the dish or meal or an improper table setting could dispel appetite was powerful middle-class rhetoric. Though Friedenwald did not describe the elements which make an attractive presentation, he clearly supported middle-class dining and etiquette standards. If a homemaker did not know how to make

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 4.

an attractive presentation of the meal, or did not care to do so, the implication was that she endangered her family's health and by extension, the well-being of the nation.

Why all the concern with diet? Friedenwald responded to this question, bolstering his assertion from the beginning of his article. "...The food we consume bears a distinct relationship to our usefulness and in consequence to our happiness."<sup>73</sup> Eating a proper diet, comprised of regular meals and a variety of foods, avoiding starvation or overindulgence, and eating amid attractive surroundings, would produce useful and therefore happy American citizens who would in turn strengthen the nation. As a member of the middle class, Friedenwald deeply believed that his advice about diet, the health of the individual and the nation, and civilization had its grounding in medical fact. As a Jewish doctor, his medical training coupled with his ethnic and religious background, may have lent more authority to his views on diet and nutrition among Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Yet it is clear from his article that translating his message of diet, health, and nation to the immigrants and working class was still a work in progress in 1928.

Friedenwald was not the only medical professional working to disseminate dietary advice during this period. In *Food, Nutrition and Health*, a volume produced in several editions between 1925 and 1933, E. V. McCollum, a doctor at Johns Hopkins University's School of Hygiene, and J. Ernestine Becker argued in favor of a diet similar to what Julius Friedenwald suggested. In their volume, written for a general audience with some scientific information about nutrition, they urged a varied diet but were careful to point out that the variation must be carefully constructed so that certain foods,

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 10.

including milk, eggs, meats, and green vegetables, were consumed regularly. A haphazardly varied diet or one that consisted solely of meats and grains would not suffice and could result in stunted growth, skeletal defects, underdeveloped muscles, problems with fertility, a poor emotional state, and premature aging. A poor diet created weak individuals and inadequate citizens.

Characterizing the American diet as one of meat, potatoes, white bread, and sugar, McCollum and Becker advocated in the strongest terms for the consumption of milk and leafy greens, which were classed as protective foods. They noted that in Europe and America, the primary “protective food” had been milk, and that leafy greens had not been widely incorporated into diets.<sup>74</sup> Noting that most Americans had “a “sweet tooth” and an appetite for meats which he has difficulty in controlling,” McCollum and Becker counseled for the reduction of these items in the diet.<sup>75</sup> Yet they did not understand the immense appeal of meat to immigrants, including Eastern European Jews. In Europe, meat was a rare and expensive commodity, consumed perhaps a few times a year on holidays and special occasions. In America, meat was readily available and affordable, so that many immigrant families could enjoy it on a weekly or even a daily basis. As beef and duck were status foods among the American middle-class and elites, so too was meat a status item among immigrants.

Like Friedenwald, McCollum and Becker lauded the qualities of milk.

“Experience, as well as scientific studies, has demonstrated that milk is the only food for

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<sup>74</sup> E. V. McCollum and J. Ernestine Becker, *Food, Nutrition and Health*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: E. V. McCollum and J. Ernestine Becker, c. 1933), 53.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

which there is no effective substitute.”<sup>76</sup> It was practically a perfect food and worked well as a complement to many other foods, enhancing their nutritional value. The authors’ strategy was to pair or combine specific ingredients or dishes together at each meal to gain complete nutrition. “We no longer condemn any food because it is incomplete in the nutritional sense. The important thing is to understand that most of our foods are incomplete, and must be combined with others which make good their deficiencies.”<sup>77</sup> McCollum and Becker advised that milk should be consumed at a rate of a quart a day per person. They considered other dairy products as well, but generally find them lacking when compared with milk. Interestingly, ice cream was promoted as a beneficial way of acquiring protective foods, despite its negative connection to sugar and sweetness. “Because of its attractiveness in flavor it is frequently purchased by children in the poorer parts of the cities, who have a few pennies to spend. The selection of ice cream rather than cheap candies, etc., has doubtless been a safeguard to health.”<sup>78</sup> In favoring ice cream above candy, the authors hoped to improve the health of immigrant, working class, and urban poor children surreptitiously.

McCollum and Becker supported Friedenwald’s idea of the importance of the proper setting for a meal. They too discussed the importance of the senses, particularly the sense of smell, and how the proper state of mind helped with digestion. “...it is unfortunate that so much of the food is cooked outside the home. The odors of cooking food as mealtime approaches, tend to create an anticipation of eating which produces a proper psychic condition for the secretion of the digestive fluids and consequently

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 74.

promotes the utilization of food.”<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, McCollum and Becker encouraged pleasant conversation at the dinner table; however, any negative or stressful topics, any uncertainty with business concerns, and any scolding of children was best done away from the table. Strong and orderly food habits denoted good character; those who were underweight might have reached that condition not due to poverty but because of a lazy nature which is indulged by staying up late, sleeping late, and eating or snacking whenever hungry, rather than following a regular schedule. “One should strive to have a well organized life and to have the appetite and the emotions under control.”<sup>80</sup> Chaotic lives, irregular meals, and wild feelings would not contribute to a healthy life.

McCollum and Becker made three final recommendations for optimal health and nutrition, reminding readers that “the secret of successful nutrition lies in the proper combination of foods such that what is lacking in one is provided by another.”<sup>81</sup> Individuals should consume at least one quart of milk a day, a generous serving of cooked greens daily, and two servings of salad daily. The salad need not be entirely composed of vegetables; herbs, fruits, and meat or fish can be mixed in. However, the salad was primarily a means of consuming raw vegetables. Finally, they advised readers to “eat what you want after you have eaten what you should.”<sup>82</sup> Gustatory pleasure must be secondary to the health of the individual.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>83</sup> The nutritional patterns which McCollum and Becker promoted resemble the beliefs of the domestic scientists who taught scientific cookery in Boston, New York, and other American cities in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Food combinations accentuated nutritional value, with no emphasis on taste or pleasure in eating. Cooking and eating were to be orderly, rational activities. These women were the forbearers of the home economists who will be discussed in Chapter 4. For more information, see Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

Menus provided at the end of the book offered three suggestions for each meal of the day for the four seasons of the year. These menu plans boasted many servings of a broad range of fruits and vegetables. A wide range of meats, including beef, duck, lamb, veal, chicken, halibut, ham, sausage, and bacon, were generally to be served at breakfast and dinner. Oysters and crabmeat were both suggested for the autumn lunch menus, and cream-based soups were standard luncheon fare throughout the year. Every single meal contained a serving of milk as a beverage, or in some cases for variety, cocoa or egg nog was substituted for the plain milk.<sup>84</sup> The menus suggested here, and the overall dietary plan which McCollum and Becker suggested, presented several challenges for the observant Jewish diet. While dishes consisting *treyf* ingredients like ham, sausage, bacon, oysters, or crabmeat could use other proteins as substitutions, the imperative to consume milk was a more serious obstacle. According to Jewish dietary law, meat and milk must never be eaten together, and several hours must elapse between meat meals and dairy meals. If Jews followed a diet which emphasized dairy consumption at every meal, they would never be permitted to consume meat, invalidating the nutritional and medical benefits of the overall regimen. American dietary patterns which emphasized nutrition and health often conflicted with Jewish immigrants' religious beliefs about food consumption.

As Friedenwald and McCollum and Becker noted, medical professionals and nutrition experts of the early twentieth century considered milk and eggs to be excellent foods for acquiring the necessary nutrition to build strong bodies. Friedenwald also noted that milk especially was a nutritious food to serve to the sick. This philosophy prevailed

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<sup>84</sup> E. V. McCollum and J. Ernestine Becker, *Food, Nutrition and Health*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: E. V. McCollum and J. Ernestine Becker, c. 1933), 126-129.



not only in the 1920s and 1930s when these authors wrote about nutrition, but was also a widely-held medical tenet in the last years of the nineteenth century. Baltimore's charities, knowledgeable about current medical and nursing practices, enacted programs to provide milk and eggs, the sick diet, to those who could not afford to purchase those items. The Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, also known as the Poor Association, began distributing a sick diet to those in need in 1898. They furnished the sick poor with "pure milk and fresh eggs" because it was sometimes difficult to get these food items in the poorer districts of the city. The provision and delivery of these supplies assisted the recipient families by reducing the amount of time they expended in purchasing these items, saving them not only the cost of the milk and eggs but also the possibility of lost wages if a family member had to leave work in order to find a reputable vendor from whom to purchase these items. Sick diet orders consisted of a quart of milk and two eggs delivered daily for a period of ten days, at which time the order could be extended as needed. Friendly visitors from the Poor Association or other charities, nurses from the Instructive Visiting Nurses Association, or physicians could request the sick diet for patients in need.<sup>85</sup> In way of explanation of the importance of this work, the Poor Association noted that "to restore a wage-earner to health is a direct way of putting the family out of need, and often the cheapest way of caring for them."<sup>86</sup> Independence through work had always been a primary goal of middle-class charitable organizations, and the provision of the sick diet would directly support this goal.

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<sup>85</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *49th Annual Report*, 1898, 6.  
Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *50th Annual Report*, 1899, 9.

<sup>86</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *50th Annual Report*, 1899, 10.

Demand for the sick diet grew steadily in the ensuing years, in part because of public health campaigns to educate the public about tuberculosis and how it can be cured. “The crusade against tuberculosis and the emphasis placed upon a milk and egg diet as an important curative agency has helped to swell the demand for diet.”<sup>87</sup> Many who now received the sick diet were its beneficiary for sixty days or more; of those patients in this group, 44% suffered from tuberculosis, pointing to a serious ongoing public health issue.<sup>88</sup> By 1904, the Poor Association proudly announced a food safety innovation with the sick diet. The milk would now be delivered in bottles “...to avoid contamination through exposure or through use of receptacles such as are too frequently provided by the poor.”<sup>89</sup>

Due to immense demand, the sick diet distribution had increased dramatically in the six years between 1899 and 1904, and the cost had quadrupled in that short period. Unable to meet the cost of the sick diet program as it had previously done and unwilling to reduce or eliminate it, the Poor Association inaugurated the Special Sick Diet and Ice Fund to meet the ever-growing demand for pure milk and fresh eggs among Baltimore’s sick poor. Formally combining the sick diet program with the distribution of ice to Baltimore’s sick and poor was a logical as well as a financial decision for the Poor Association. Begun in 1896, the free ice distribution served the dual purpose of keeping perishable foods, like the milk and eggs which comprised the sick diet, cold and offering relief to from the summer heat and humidity of the city.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *55th Annual Report*, 1904, 7.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>90</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *49th Annual Report*, 1898, 28. Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *50th Annual Report*, 1899, 10-11.

In 1900, a mere two years after the Poor Association began its sick diet and free ice projects, the Instructive Visiting Nurse Association remarked on the public health benefits of these services. The visiting nurses were pleased to be able to request the sick diet and free ice, knowing that these items would be supplied on a regular basis. Noting the health benefits of the milk and eggs and the comfort which ice brought to those who ailed, “it is easy to understand the benefit to sick children alone of an ample supply of ice during the hot weather in homes where otherwise it would be impossible to insure fresh milk.”<sup>91</sup> These two charitable works, seemingly separate, were in fact closely entwined in an era when perishable foods like milk and eggs relied on ice to ensure freshness and a longer shelf life.

The Poor Association’s interest in alleviating poverty encompassed far more than the provision of free ice and the sick diet. They were generally concerned with the wellbeing of Baltimore’s working class and urban poor, including immigrants, and all aspects of their lives. In 1907, the Poor Association commissioned a Special Committee to investigate housing conditions in Baltimore. Miss Janet E. Kemp studied four neighborhoods overall throughout Baltimore, two each in the tenement districts and the alley districts; each neighborhood was typical of the blocks which surrounded it. The tenement dwellings in East Baltimore housed a majority of immigrants.<sup>92</sup> The first tenement district encompassed a rectangular area longer than it was wide, on the western edge of the East Baltimore neighborhood and was called the Albemarle district. The majority of residents in the Albemarle district were Russian Jews, with a smaller but

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<sup>91</sup> Instructive Visiting Nurse Association of Baltimore, *Fifth Annual Report*, 1900, 16.

<sup>92</sup> The two alley districts were predominantly occupied by African American families and will not be discussed here.

significant population of Italians, and much smaller populations of Lithuanians, Germans, and Americans.<sup>93</sup> The second tenement district, roughly the shape of a trapezoid, was named the Thames district; it ranged from Lancaster Street in the north to within a block of the waterfront and was bounded on the east and west by South Caroline Street and South Broadway. The Thames district was occupied almost entirely by Poles, with approximately 10 % of residents who were German and 10% who were American.<sup>94</sup> The survey encompassed 315 families in the Albemarle district and 400 in the Thames district.<sup>95</sup>

At the beginning of the report, Kemp stated that it would be a mistake to think that Baltimore did not have tenements. While the residences in question did not resemble the cramped and unsafe six story tenement apartment buildings of New York's Lower East Side, the homes in East Baltimore housed multiple families in cramped and often unsanitary conditions. These houses had served as single family dwellings for Baltimore's more affluent citizens a generation or two earlier, but as that population moved out and sold their homes, the new owners often subdivided the interiors into apartments. The tenants who occupied the tenement district homes were generally too poor to live somewhere nicer, and they needed to live close to where they worked; they also preferred to live close to their co-nationalists and/or co-religionists.<sup>96</sup> Kemp's study drew attention to the overcrowded lots, overcrowding within the houses, the need for exterior repairs, the state of interior lighting, the condition of the rooms, halls and

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<sup>93</sup> Janet E. Kemp, *Housing Conditions in Baltimore: Report of a Special Committee of the Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor and the Charity Organization Society* (Baltimore: n.p., 1907), 12.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, Table XI: Nativity of Heads of Families.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

stairways, the buildings' protection from fire, and sanitary conditions, such as the toilets and bathing facilities. She also considered municipal issues such as water supply, drainage, the disposal of household waste, and the practice of keeping live stock in the basements and yards of the tenements.

Kemp defined the standards which should constitute the minimum acceptable conditions for these, or any apartments. "...For a family of average size [defined as 3-8 people] an apartment of less than three rooms falls below what should be regarded as the minimum requirement for health, decency and comfort."<sup>97</sup> The two tenement districts, although occupied by different ethnic-national groups, were surprisingly similar in their residential patterns. Each district had fewer than 20% of its dwellings classified as one room apartments. There were more overcrowded apartments in the Thames district than in Albemarle, a fact which Kemp attributed to employment patterns. She noted that the Poles had arrived in Baltimore more recently and worked largely in unskilled and low-paying jobs, while in comparison their Russian Jewish neighbors in the Albemarle district had lived in America for a longer period of time and were largely working at skilled positions for a higher wage.<sup>98</sup>

Despite the more crowded homes in the Thames district, the inspectors found that the Thames district houses were generally better kept and cleaner than those in Albemarle. Only 10% of the Thames homes were classified as dirty, while twice as many of the Albemarle houses were judged to be dirty.<sup>99</sup> Describing seven Italian street merchants who occupied a small and extremely dirty two-room apartment, Kemp noted

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 38-39.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 36-40.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 74-75.

that the men slept in the same room with the foodstuffs they vended on the street during the day. They sold ice cream in the summer and peanuts and chestnuts in the winter. The sharing of space like this not only calls into question the sanitation of the home and the men within, but also the condition of the food they sold, which had the potential to spread dirt and disease to those who purchased their snacks.<sup>100</sup> In contrast, when describing one Polish household, the inspector described the apartment's cleanliness as meeting "standards that would not have disgraced a Puritan housekeeper." The report of this immaculate interior continued, expressing admiration for the effort expended by the homemaker in attaining this high level of sanitation under difficult circumstances. "If, as is often the case, the home consists of a crowded one or two-room apartment, occupied by six or eight people, and located two floors above the common water supply, household cleanliness must mean an expenditure of labor and time that may well be termed heroic."<sup>101</sup> This rare acknowledgement of the practical arrangements of tenement life praised the housewife's diligence in keeping her home clean despite difficult circumstances.

The inspectors voiced a unique complaint against the Russian Jewish residents of the Albemarle district. They decried the numerous Jewish *shochets* who operated in close proximity to other businesses and homes in highly unsanitary conditions. Reporting on one such operation, an investigator noted quickly that the "... "fence, yard and house wall were coated with layers of coagulated blood. Flies and feathers everywhere." In hot weather the smell from such yards is sickening."<sup>102</sup> Assessing these

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 79.

procedures, Kemp wrote that “the flesh of chickens slaughtered in these places is considered to be ceremonially “clean,” but killing is done under conditions which are diametrically opposed to any Western conception of cleanliness.”<sup>103</sup> Yet the Russian Jews were not alone in their habit of keeping ducks and chickens in one’s residence, in the cellar or a yard, was universal in Thames and highly common in other areas.<sup>104</sup> That people shared such close space with fowl instantly made the sanitation of the neighborhood suspect. Kemp, her investigators, and the Poor Association worked to improve cleanliness and sanitation in these neighborhoods, hoping to prevent the spread of disease and to improve the lives of the districts’ residents. Kemp’s report strongly urged for stronger regulations in Baltimore’s housing code legislation and annual inspections to enforce the new laws.

Like Kemp and the Poor Association’s tenement study, public health workers like the Instructive Visiting Nurses Association worked to educate Baltimore’s poor about the dangers of illness and its root in unsanitary lifestyles. In 1900, the five nurses of The Instructive Visiting Nurses Association made over 2400 visits to families in Baltimore who had been reported to them by concerned doctors, clergy, social workers, relatives, friends, or even strangers. These visits were not to provide medical care; rather the nurses visited with the sick and their family members in order to give “advice, or instruction in proper modes of living.”<sup>105</sup> The proper modes of living encompassed lessons in cleanliness for the home, personal hygiene, housekeeping, proper diet, the harm of overcrowding, and sources of disease, as well as implicit messages about middle-

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Instructive Visiting Nurse Association of Baltimore, *Fifth Annual Report*, 1900, 11.

class domestic values, such as private bedrooms. For those afflicted with tuberculosis, “patients are provided with sputum cups and instructed in the use of them; also as far as possible they are made to sleep in a bed, if not in a room, to themselves, and the family is instructed in the care of the linen, isolated dishes and the like.”<sup>106</sup> While overcrowding in tenement apartments could contribute to the spread of diseases like tuberculosis, the visiting nurses’ activities and instructive lessons addressed disease prevention and conveyed an abhorrence for the small crowded rooms, the cohabitation of the nuclear family with borders, and the chaos they observed within the apartments.<sup>107</sup> Yet these nurses chose not to acknowledge the economic situations that may have made such living arrangements necessary.

Other public health officials observed similar problems with the poor home environment among the working class, urban poor, and immigrants of Baltimore. Reporting on the Charity Organization Society’s District Nursing program in 1891, Miss Isabel A. Hampton, Superintendent of Nurses at Johns Hopkins University, remarked that it was a bit absurd to expend so much money and effort to cure patients in sanitary hospitals, only to send them home to unclean environments knowing that they will likely return and be sicker than before.<sup>108</sup> She continued “When a nurse enters the abodes of disease for an express purpose and meets the people on a common ground of interest, what better field for teaching, without seeming to do so, than this constant and personal contact right in these homes, with simple object-lessons in household economy, sanitation, nursing; showing that there is a healthier, better way of living, and one that

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<sup>106</sup> Instructive Visiting Nurse Association of Baltimore, *Report of Mrs. Osler’s Tuberculosis Nurse for the Year Ending October 31, 1906*, 3.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> Charity Organization Society of Baltimore City, *Tenth Annual Report, for the Year Ending November 1, 1891*, 30.



helps to bring comfort and happiness?”<sup>109</sup> Describing the skills that visiting nurses must possess, Miss Hampton noted that medical training simply was not enough for an effective visiting nurse. To accomplish her work fully, visiting nurses must “...have the keenest knowledge of mankind, household economy should be at her finger-ends and on her tongue, she should know practically how to cook, how to clean, what is wrong with the plumbing, and besides these household arts even have a knowledge of bacteriology.”<sup>110</sup> Performing this multitude of tasks, the public health nurse was called upon to carry out her work in a tactful and polite manner to ensure that her friendly visiting and domestic guidance would be more easily accepted.

As he addressed the audience at the Seventh Maryland Conference of Charities and Corrections, Louis H. Levin, a wealthy Baltimore Jew, attorney, and prominent philanthropist, summarized the concerns of many public health workers and social workers in this period about the relation of the home environment to disease, specifically tuberculosis. He lamented the lack of understanding by the patients that their work environment was not solely to blame for their illness, emphasizing that their home environment was equally critical to the prevention of disease. Upon leaving a hospital or sanitarium, “...the patient goes out with the idea that he out to get outdoor work and that his trade has given him the disease. He lives in a home under no better conditions than before. He does not bother about the places where he lives and sleeps, but only where he works.” Levin stressed to the audience the importance of educating the patients about the role their living quarters and their sanitary conditions play in the transmission of disease. “Often we find that patients have worked under good conditions and have not had to

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

work very hard, but they return from work to living conditions which are bad and they probably get the disease at home.” Levin concluded his remarks with this powerful thought, moving the impetus for disease prevention from the patient, doctor, and social worker to the employers and capitalists of the country. “Employers will have to pay more salary to give them better housing and better food, and it comes back to the statement that it is an economic trouble, which forces these people to live under such conditions.”<sup>111</sup> Improved economic status, rather than public health education, would be the most effective method of improving the health of the nation’s workers.

Fifteen years later, the Family Welfare Association again noted the connection between economics and health as achieved through proper diet. When husbands and fathers were unemployed, the entire family felt the effects. “Health standards are lowered early, for food presents an opportunity for economy more readily than do some other budget items. The baby’s milk order is reduced or discontinued altogether, and green vegetables are likely to disappear from the menu, for the starchy foods are cheaper and go further.”<sup>112</sup> The specificity of this anecdotal scenario demonstrated the continuing emphasis on protective foods in one’s diet as a primary means of achieving and maintaining good health. In times of economic crisis, the purchases of crucial diet items of milk and leafy vegetables, promoted by McCollum and Becker, were curtailed, and the breads, biscuits, muffins, and other refined starches which they cautioned against became central to the struggling family’s survival diet. Familial budget cuts, practical and necessary in the short term, may have had long term effects as the family member’s

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<sup>111</sup> *Proceedings of the Seventh Maryland Conference of Charities and Correction Held at Osler Hall, Baltimore, Maryland, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, and 29<sup>th</sup>, 1911* (Baltimore: J. H. Furst Company, 1913), 56.

<sup>112</sup> The Family Welfare Association of Baltimore, *Annual Report*, 1927, 9.

health was put at risk in order to pay other bills. Rather than holding the employer or national economic problems accountable, the responsibility for failing his family with regard to its health and wellbeing was again unsympathetically directed at the head of household.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, a Polish Catholic immigrant family living in Canton, a neighborhood to the southeast of East Baltimore, struggled with hunger and finances. The father had died, and the mother struggled to support herself and her sons. They received orders for milk for the children from a local charity, perhaps the Poor Association. When they redeemed these orders at a local grocer's store, the family tried to convince the store clerk or maybe the owner to give them bread instead of the milk, because bread was more filling.<sup>113</sup> This situation is not specific to one ethnic-national or religious group; hunger is universal. The middle-class ideas about what everyone, including the poor, should eat, stressed milk as one of the best foods, especially for children. But their charitable acts, based on academic theories and a specific standard of living, did not match the experiences of the urban poor with regard to actual hunger and want and what they considered the best foods for themselves in their situation. Social reformers' and charitable workers' ongoing attempts to influence and reshape the food habits of Baltimore's working class, urban poor, and immigrants to match their own middle-class standards will be discussed in Chapter 2.

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<sup>113</sup> Paul Iwancio, "A Family History on the Iwancios of Poland," c. 1977, Maryland Family History Research Papers, MdHS.

## **Chapter 2: Charity and Social Reform, Americanization and Moral Uplift: Reconstructing Foodways in Baltimore, 1880-1920**

In the early years of the twentieth century, Reba Silver, a young Russian Jewish immigrant living in East Baltimore, and her friend entered a mission building next door to the dispensary on East Baltimore Street, near Central Avenue. “Nice little old ladies used to stand outside and beckon us in,” and on that particular day, curiosity or perhaps the promise of a treat or an adventure lured Reba and her friend through the doors. Finding nothing suspicious or harmful inside, Reba stayed for the afternoon and returned many times, continuing her association with the mission ladies for some time. The “nice little old ladies” taught Reba and girls like her to sew, entertained them with cookies and lemonade, taught them to sing Christian songs, and once took them on a picnic. In reporting on her initial adventure, Reba told her mother “I’m sewing and I know how to sing a pretty little song...” Reba’s mother did not recognize who Jesus, the subject of the song, was or his religious significance in the Christian tradition. As long as her child was safe, she was content for Reba to continue her association with the women of the mission.<sup>114</sup>

While not all social reformers and charitable workers initiated such solicitous contact as the “nice little old ladies” at this particular mission, they nonetheless expressed deep interest in meeting and interacting with immigrants like Reba, as well as members of the working class and the urban poor. They hoped to improve the lives of these people through personal contact, where middle-class reformers might lead by example and gently guide others to adopt their own deeply-held middle-class American values of

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<sup>114</sup> Reba Silver Oral History Interview, 1976, p. 16, Oral History Collection, MdHS.

domesticity, gentility, and respectability. Overall the Protestant and non-sectarian organizations in Baltimore which addressed social and economic problems like the emerging class of working girls and poverty in the tenement neighborhoods expressed minimal interest in immigrants as immigrants, grouping them instead into larger populations of concern, such as the working class and the urban poor. Yet their moral uplift activities among these groups mirrored and supported the Americanizing activities undertaken by several of Baltimore's settlement houses who focused on immigrant communities, as these social reformers and charitable workers espoused the same middle-class American values.

Using food as one focus for their work with the city's immigrants, working class, and urban poor, Baltimore's privately-funded charities, like the YWCA and its settlement houses, orphanages, and charities, entered into the lives of the immigrants, working-class, and urban poor at several levels. They attended to fulfilling some of their more basic food-related needs, like distributing food to the poor while helping them to know what to buy and prepare when they faced difficult economic times; serving a healthy diet to children in orphanages and occasionally allowing them to enjoy sweet treats; providing hot and inexpensive lunches for downtown's shop girls; and arranging cooking classes and domestic training for women and girls, including orphans and immigrants. By working to prevent hunger and starvation, to promote nutrition and health, and to help women in caring for their families by teaching them to cook, the reformers who worked through these charities helped those in need in traditional ways, and the goals of such assistance were clearly understandable to those whom they helped. These same charitable acts and community services also functioned to promote the reformers' moral

uplift and Americanization agendas, as their programs conveyed more tacit messages about food, domesticity, and middle-class American values. Through food-related activities, the reformers also suggested middle-class values such as the proper setting and behaviors for respectable dining; the correct attributes of the home environment; the importance of supporting oneself through wage labor rather than relying on charity; and the correct roles for American girls and women to fulfill. Reformers expected that the transmission of these middle-class American values would homogenize American society, incorporating the working class, the urban poor, and the recently-arrived immigrants into their middle-class lifestyle. While immigrants, and specifically Eastern European Jewish immigrants, may have interacted only minimally with these Christian reformers, the activities they carried out and the messages they transmitted regarding food, nutrition, home, work, and women defined the world of Baltimore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Organizations like The Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, or the Poor Association, saw to some of the most basic needs of Baltimore's urban poor, including immigrants, by providing aid through the provision of food goods rather than money.<sup>115</sup> Dividing the city into districts to organize their work, the Poor Association's workers in the First District served the citizens of East Baltimore. In their work throughout the city between 1898 and 1900, they assisted just under 30 Russian and Polish families each year, while helping a substantially larger number of German and

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<sup>115</sup> The Poor Association's charitable aid was multi-faceted, ranging from a daycare for working mothers and an employment bureau, to the collection and distribution of used clothing, to the distribution the sick diet and free ice discussed in Chapter 1.

Irish families.<sup>116</sup> Throughout the 1890s and into the early part of the next century, donations of food made to the Poor Association amounted to a small portion of their relief work. Sporadic donations of such staple items as tea, coffee, sugar, flour, along with perishables like turnips, oranges, meat, breads and cakes, and pantry items like noodles, spaghetti, macaroni, sardines, and tins of scrapple could not hope to feed the poor throughout Baltimore in a uniform fashion.<sup>117</sup> The Poor Association's primary food relief did not involve its maintaining a pantry of its own from which to distribute food to the poor. Rather, they formed arrangements with local grocers to supply those in need with a grocery order from the Poor Association with the items specifically noted on the list; the grocers were then reimbursed based on the orders they filled. Giving relief through grocery orders rather than providing money for the purchase of food ensured that the recipients used the charity for the intended purpose and did not waste the money on inappropriate items like candy and alcohol.<sup>118</sup> The Poor Association's workers could reinforce an American diet through the specific food choices which comprised the grocery order; however, they could not ensure that the foreign families would use these food items to create American dishes and meals.

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<sup>116</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *49th Annual Report*, 1898, 11. Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *50th Annual Report*, 1899, 20. Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *51st Annual Report*, 1900, 9.

<sup>117</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *44th Annual Report*, October 1893, 54. Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *46th Annual Report*, October 1895, 73-74. Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *47th Annual Report*, 1896, 58-60. Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *49th Annual Report*, 1898, 28. Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *50th Annual Report*, 1899, 38. Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *51st Annual Report*, 1900, 22. Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *52nd Annual Report*, 1901, 23. Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *55th Annual Report*, 1904, 30.

<sup>118</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *36th Annual Report*, October 1885, 13.

In addition to providing food for the urban poor through grocery orders, the Poor Association concerned itself with how much food was necessary to feed the poor adequately, given their meager budgets. In 1900, they developed a set of weekly menus for poor families, in order to show them how to serve adequate and slightly varied meals.<sup>119</sup> To compile these menus, the Poor Association consulted with several families who received aid from the organization, employing personal contact in this project to ensure that the resulting menus would be useful and appealing to families of various nationalities. These menus accommodated families of different sizes, feeding a household comprised of from one to four adults, a family of two adults and a young child, or a mother with five children. The menus and shopping lists were printed and distributed to families to educate them in the ways of “economical living.”<sup>120</sup>

Costs for the weekly grocery order, which included baking ingredients for bread, a box of matches, and a bar of soap, ranged from \$1.00 to \$2.25.<sup>121</sup> Lunch would be the largest meal of the day, often including the only meat serving of the day. Breakfast and dinner were far more limited, consisting mainly of bread and coffee or tea, with the occasional addition of a starch such as rice or oatmeal, syrup, meat once a week in the morning, and a meat or other carbohydrate in the evening. The family with one small child had two types of meat in their diet, which they ate in seven of the 21 weekly meals.

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<sup>119</sup> Similar recipes and menu plans, based largely on a family’s income, were produced by several famous home economists, including Mary Hinman Abel’s *Practical Sanitary and Economic Cooking Adapted to Persons of Moderate and Small Means* and Juliet Corson’s *Fifteen Cent Dinners for Workingmen’s Families*. See Eleanor T. Fordyce, “Cookbooks of the 1800s,” in *Dining in America, 1850-1900*, ed. Kathryn Grover (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press; Rochester, NY: The Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum, 1987), 109-111 and Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 127-133.

<sup>120</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *51st Annual Report*, 1900, 5.

<sup>121</sup> The box of matches and bar of soap was not listed on the grocery order for the mother with five children.



The widow with five children, one of whom was also quite young, ate one inexpensive meat only 3 times a week. The adult households consumed meat or fish nine times a week; though this figure was not significantly greater than the quantity of meat consumed by the small family, the adult menu allowed for much greater variety, encompassing sausage, liver, cod fish, pork, corned beef, and two other inexpensive cuts of meat.<sup>122</sup> Even with an extremely limited income, meat was included in each family's diet, representing its importance in the American diet.

In addition to meat, home-baked bread, and coffee or tea, the hypothetical families ate potatoes, onions, tomatoes, cabbage, beans, rice, barley, often only once or twice a week.<sup>123</sup> Vegetables and fruits would have been considered luxury foods which an extremely poor family could not afford; during this period, their nutritional value had not yet been discovered, lending a further justification for their exclusion from a subsistence diet plan. Milk and eggs were not included on these menus, a surprising omission given the importance accorded these foods by domestic scientists and nutritionists. Perhaps these essential items were to be purchased from a dairy rather than a grocer, or perhaps they would be supplied by the Poor Association or another charity. The Poor Association offered another possible answer, and a harsh one, in its caveat about these menus. The menus were not intended to "point out an ideal manner of living, but to show what can be done in times of stress."<sup>124</sup> They clearly stated that these diets were not to be considered a guide to complete nutrition, but rather one of survival. The Poor Association was silent about how long a person or a family should live on such a

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<sup>122</sup> Menus for the households containing only adults were identical, with the grocery orders scaled appropriately.

<sup>123</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *51st Annual Report*, 1900, 24-28.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

limited diet before experiencing serious nutritional deficiencies; one wonders how many Baltimore families followed this kind of diet on a regular basis. With its subsistence diet for times of extreme financial duress, the Poor Association did not promote, and perhaps even damaged, the prevailing concepts of nutrition and health among Baltimore's urban poor.

Optimistic that if their subsistence diet had to be used, it would only be a temporary measure, the Poor Association began offering cooking classes, intended to improve women's culinary skills as well as to demonstrate the connection between diet and health, the importance of well-prepared food in maintaining familial happiness, and the economic benefits of careful shopping and food preparation. In 1899, in cooperation with the Baltimore Association of Sewing Schools, the Poor Association proposed an expansion of the skills taught at these schools to include cooking and housekeeping for those who were already proficient in sewing. Miss Richardson, the sewing instructor, was also trained in scientific cookery and could teach the new classes as well. Their urgency in forming a cooking school resulted from the belief that "...the training of poor girls to be better home-makers is a true means of improving the condition of the poor..."<sup>125</sup> The following year, Miss Richardson had taught ten cooking classes among the many Sewing School affiliates; "wherever the building was equipped with a kitchen, a class was formed."<sup>126</sup> Each course consisted of twelve lessons of instruction, and they were held after school. Each girl who attended paid 5 cents to cover the cost of materials. Miss Richardson carefully selected dishes to teach her pupils, being sure that they would be able to afford the ingredients so they could duplicate their classroom efforts in their

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<sup>125</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *50th Annual Report*, 1899, 11.

<sup>126</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *51st Annual Report*, 1900, 29.

own homes. She also encouraged her students to try the recipes they learned at home and to report the outcome. One student informed Miss Richardson that her mother liked the creamed cod-fish her daughter prepared “better than any she had ever tasted.”<sup>127</sup> Two of the ten cooking classes were for married women; they learned to make bread, and Miss Richardson learned to her dismay that few nutritious foods were served in their homes. One student praised the classes and expressed her hope that more would be offered.<sup>128</sup>

The success of these classes led to a gradual shift away from sewing instruction and more cooking classes. In explaining this shift, the Poor Association stated their belief “...that the happiness and welfare of many homes would be advanced by better cooking, and more economical purchase of food.”<sup>129</sup> In 1901, terming the schools Industrial, the classes now taught sewing, cooking, dish-washing, waiting, and chamber-work.<sup>130</sup> In 1904, the Poor Association sponsored thirteen cooking classes throughout the city, which were attended by 135 students, primarily married ladies and young women who worked in stores and factories. The success of these classes was not only attributed to the new recipes, but in large part to the spirit and enthusiasm of the teachers like Miss Ruth Mintzer, Miss Edith A. Brown, and Miss Alice D. Hanson. “...The trained teacher in her dainty cap and apron” insisted on cleanliness and made a routine, dull task into something delightful.<sup>131</sup> Students in these classes received another lesson of indoctrination into the American middle-class value system and the important work which women should enjoy doing in their homes.

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *52nd Annual Report*, 1901, 5.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>131</sup> Baltimore Association for the Improvement of the Condition of the Poor, *55th Annual Report*, 1904, 37.

The Poor Association's charitable provision of food to Baltimore's urban poor had little effect in influencing their adoption of mainstream American cultural norms, while their cooking classes proved immensely popular and instructive, transmitting encouraging messages about how food could improve health, family life, and economic status. Other charitable institutions, such as orphanages, proved much more adept at providing only positive messages about food to their intended audience. As institutions which managed all aspects of the lives of children who had lost one or both parents, orphanages filled a surrogate parental role. The matrons and administrators of these orphanages strove to recreate a homelike environment for their young wards, providing a proper nutritious diet in a homelike environment and teaching them middle-class values relating to food and domesticity. The three orphanages discussed here further instructed their charges in another aspect of American cultural norms, teaching trades to both boys and girls in order to prepare them to enter the workforce and become self-supporting adults.

The Kelso Home for Orphans of Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1878, served orphan girls of the Methodist faith. In order to gain admission, one parent must have been a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1912, the Home housed 43 girls from ages 4-17. The Home had three locations in its history, first on East Baltimore Street until 1889, and then in a large house on St. Paul Street between 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Streets for the years 1889-1903. After 1903, the Home moved to Forest Park in the northwest part of the city. The orphans attended public school until the age of fifteen, and then they received manual training until they reached eighteen years of age and must leave the Home. To supplement their academic educations, the girls were "taught sewing

and needle-work constantly in the Home, and make all the clothing worn by them. They do all the house-cleaning and assist in laundering and cooking.”<sup>132</sup> Such living arrangements mediated the costs of the orphanage while preparing the girls to become wives and mothers or to support themselves as domestic servants. Additionally, if an outside donor, a family member or friend, would provide financial support, the child could receive musical instruction. This extra instruction added to the middle-class respectability the administrators of the Home wished all of its residents to achieve.<sup>133</sup>

The administrators of the Kelso Home expressed their great concern with the children’s diet. The By-Laws of the Kelso Home included Diet among the Home’s other standing committees, demonstrating an ongoing concern with this facet of the girls’ lives. With three members, the Diet Committee’s work was “to look after the diet furnished the girls in the Home; to see that the character of food is such as will properly nourish them, that the same is properly prepared and served, and to make such recommendations to the Board from time to time as occasion may suggest.”<sup>134</sup> Their attentions to the girls’ food proved a success, for in 1912, House Physician Alfred B. Giles reported that the girls’ diet was nutritious and comprehensive; nothing more could be added to it. To support this claim, Dr. Giles noted that those who entered the Home were often malnourished and anemic; after eating the Home’s diet for a few weeks, these newly arrived residents usually showed a marked improvement. He praised the superintendent and other staff for

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<sup>132</sup> Kelso Home for Orphans of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Baltimore, *Annual Report*, 1912, 10.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

providing their charges with such a good diet and taking the proper measures with regard to their welfare.<sup>135</sup>

Like other orphanages of this era, the Kelso Home received generous donations of clothing, shoes, accessories, sewing supplies, toys, books, and food from its many co-religionists and from local businesses. Among the food donations were staple ingredients and dry goods, along with local Maryland foods, imported produce, home-canned items and mass-produced canned and packaged items. Many gifts included seasonal produce which was likely grown locally, ranging from summer's watermelons, plums, peaches, and tomatoes to fall and winter's potatoes, cabbage, pumpkin, turnips, and apples. Other produce items, like oranges, cranberries, grapes, and bananas, grew in more distant climates and would have been purchased at Baltimore's markets. Some donations were small in size, like the gift of two jars of preserves, perhaps from a Methodist housewife who had canned the summer's bounty and wished to share some of her preserves with the orphans. Other modest donations included the six quarts of preserves and twelve quarts of canned vegetables, which might have been assembled as a gift from the female parishioners of a local Methodist church. Tomatoes and corn also appeared in cans on the shelves of the Kelso Home's pantry, as did jellies, preserves, pickles, catsup; these items, which had traditionally been canned at home, could also have been purchased for the orphanage. Donations of Uneda Biscuit, U. Want Relish, Cream of Wheat, and Quaker Oats illustrated the growing use of mass-produced and packaged foods. The older orphan girls who helped with the cooking would have come in contact with these foods from various sources, introducing them to concepts of food production and

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 17.

consumption from a cook's perspective rather than a diner's gaze. The Kelso Home received turkeys particularly around Thanksgiving and Christmas, and an increase of indulgent sweet treats of chocolate, ice cream, popcorn, candy around the holidays; they enjoyed candy canes at Christmas and chocolate eggs at Easter.<sup>136</sup> Such gifts allowed the orphaned girls to enjoy the holidays in a festive and homelike environment and to take pleasure in the special dishes of the season.

In addition to providing a healthy diet and lessons on the sources of food, Kelso Home's rules instilled several middle-class ideals about dining in the girls. The Home's By-Laws described in great detail the duties of the Superintendent in managing the girls and establishing a proper tone for the home. The Superintendent was to share all of her meals with the girls and to supervise the table to ensure that the meals were "properly served." She was further charged with saying a blessing before each meal and monitoring the girls' table manners and decorum throughout the meal.<sup>137</sup> Teaching domestic details such as these at every meal for a period of years would imbue the orphans with a strong sense of middle-class manners and values with regard to food and dining. As a religious orphanage, the By-Laws contained a section of guidelines for observing Sundays. "The Sunday dinner shall be prepared on the previous day as far as practicable."<sup>138</sup> This entry expressed a practical concern for the Methodists. They could not attend church and cook a large dinner afterward and expect to eat on time. Often a pot of baked beans and bread was made ahead of time on Saturday and warmed up on

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<sup>136</sup> Kelso Home for Orphans of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Baltimore, *Annual Report*, 1912, 29-33.  
Kelso Home for Orphans of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Baltimore, *Annual Report*, 1915, 28-31.  
Kelso Home for Orphans of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Baltimore, *Annual Report*, 1916, 28-33.  
Kelso Home for Orphans of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Baltimore, *Annual Report*, 1917, 28-36.

<sup>137</sup> Kelso Home for Orphans of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Baltimore, *Annual Report*, 1912, 39.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

Sunday.<sup>139</sup> This food issue, connected to the Protestant religion and middle-class respectability, bore a striking resemblance to the Jews' prohibition of working, cooking, or lighting a fire on their Sabbath, and their common Sabbath meal of slow-cooked cholent.

Another of Baltimore's orphanages for girls shared the Kelso Home's Protestant background and concern with its charges' relationship to food, focusing intensely on the domestic training and the moral upbringing of its charges. Samuel Ready, a wealthy bachelor and a Methodist, established a highly selective non-sectarian female orphanage, admitting only the most qualified girls for a rigorous educational experience. The Samuel Ready Asylum for Female Orphans opened on November 1, 1887 with seven pupils and grew steadily in its early years, housing and educating sixty girls by the 1896-1897 school year.<sup>140</sup> At this time, the institution's name changed from Asylum to School, but its students remained orphans.

For its young wards, the Ready orphanage "must take the place of home and parents, and ... these girls must be provided for until such time as they are able to go out into the world and support themselves."<sup>141</sup> The school not only educated its female students; it also shaped their characters to that they would lead productive and moral lives as adults. Academic training prevailed until the early teenage years, when more practical training for the working world, such as secretarial skills or millinery, took its place. The home-like setting of the orphanage allowed for daily instruction in "the habits of industry,

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<sup>139</sup> Susan Williams, *Savory Suppers and Fashionable Feasts: Dining in Victorian America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 184.

<sup>140</sup> *Catalogue of the Samuel Ready School, 1895-1896*, 12.

<sup>141</sup> William Allan, *The Organization of the Samuel Ready Asylum for Female Orphans: A Letter from Col. William Allan, Principal of the McDonogh School, to the Trustees* (Baltimore: Press of Isaac Friedenwald, 1883), 8.



of neatness, and of helpfulness” and would guide the orphans in their moral and religious education. The girls participated in household tasks such as cooking, mending and sewing their own clothes, tending to the younger children, learning sick care, laundry, and cleaning. Through their experiences at the Ready orphanage and school, they became useful American women, able to support themselves, willing to help others, unlikely to become dependent upon others, and built of strong moral fiber, all of which are qualities which the middle-class deemed pertinent in good citizens.<sup>142</sup>

As part of its program to mold the bodies and minds of America’s future female workers, wives, and mothers, the Ready School required classes in cookery and other domestic science topics. In 1889, the school’s principal Miss Rowe reported to the trustees that two cooking classes had been inaugurated, instructed by the matron; in these classes the students were being “initiated into the mysteries of healthful, nutritious cooking.”<sup>143</sup> After a visit to the Drexel Institute in Philadelphia in 1893, Miss Rowe arrived at a new understanding of the vital purpose the school’s cooking classes could fill. The study of cookery not only prepared young women to become housewives and mothers, but such studies might also allow young women to achieve economic independence by becoming cooking teachers themselves. Upon her return to Maryland, Miss Rowe urged the Trustees to open a school of domestic science at the Ready School. In support of her request, she emphasized the economic benefits to the young women and the need for qualified teachers in this rapidly growing field. “This opens an industry for women, and the demand for teachers in this line will increase when cooking is introduced

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>143</sup> Frances S. Meginnis, *Samuel Ready: The Man and His Legacy* (Baltimore: University of Baltimore, 1987), 28.

into the Public Schools of Baltimore as it already has been introduced into the Schools of Boston, NY, Philadelphia, Washington, etc.”<sup>144</sup>

The Trustees responded quickly to Miss Rowe’s request; within a year the gardener’s former house had been converted to the cooking school.<sup>145</sup> By the start of the 1895-1896 school year, the scientific cookery curriculum had been established. Starting in the sixth year of school, girls took weekly lessons in scientific cookery, which continued through their final year of school.<sup>146</sup> They first learned domestic cookery, which prepared them to cook for their families and small groups. The older students who were interested in pursuing careers as cooking teachers were permitted to enroll in the scientific cookery classes. Wearing white aprons and hats, the girls stood at semi-circular tables and learned to prepare ingredients for cooking and to assemble nutritious and appealing meals, as well as the niceties of how to serve them elegantly. Miss Hutchinson, a graduate of the Drexel Institute, served as the cooking school’s teacher. Her lectures explained the origins, qualities, and nutritional value of ingredients as the students prepared them. In learning about fish, students prepared a variety of dishes, including fish chowder, baked fish, stuffing and sauce for the fish, as well as a salad with dressing. A reporter observing the class remarked positively on the presentation of the fish entrée; “the eyes of an epicure would have been delighted by the artistic arrangement of the noble trout and his fastidious palate would have reveled in its savory seasoning.” Further expounding on the presentation of the meal, the reporter noted that the students learned not only cookery, but also “to serve and to arrange the table tastefully” using

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>146</sup> *Catalogue of the Samuel Ready School, 1895-1896* (N.p.: N.p., n.d.), 17-21.

“prettily-decorated china and various ornamental appliances.”<sup>147</sup> The reporter and Miss Rowe both understood the importance of serving meals properly and elegantly, embellishing the table with attractive china and lovely decorations, and the Ready School’s cooking classes facilitated the acquisition of such middle-class food values while preparing its students for productive lives in the home and beyond. Miss Rowe’s astute and middle-class leadership, which lasted until her death in 1919, was crucial in establishing the cookery school at the Samuel Ready School for Female Orphans and the teaching of middle-class domesticity to motherless girls, transmitting messages rife with American values which they otherwise might not have received.

Combining elements of the educational, moral, and vocational training received by female orphans at the Kelso Home and the Ready School, The Baltimore Orphan Asylum (BOA) aspired to provide a nutritious diet to its charges and to train them for their futures as productive citizens. Founded in 1778, the BOA was one of the oldest orphanages in the country. Originally they cared only for girls, but after nearly 60 years, they widened their admissions policy to include boys as well. This orphanage was non-sectarian and was carefully managed by a board of sixteen ladies of diverse denominations. The BOA had occupied their home on Stricker Street in the western environs of Baltimore since 1852, caring for between 100 and 130 children, divided relatively evenly by gender. To illustrate their diligent attention to the children in their care, the board of managers stressed that the BOA exercised good judgment in its expenditures, yet did not economize too stringently when it came to matters of the

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<sup>147</sup> *Sunday News* article, February 2, 1894, as quoted in Frances S. Meginnis, *Samuel Ready: The Man and His Legacy* (Baltimore: University of Baltimore, 1987), 29.

children's diet, which was always plentiful and wholesome.<sup>148</sup> The children's diet was also evaluated by medical professionals to guarantee that they were receiving the best foods for their development and overall health. "The House Committee is investigating the subject of the diet of the children, and through the advice of an expert and with the same expenditure of money, hope to be able to vary the daily bill of fare."<sup>149</sup> Even in difficult economic times, when the prices of food soared, the BOA did an admirable job in carefully procuring food to feed the children more than adequately, and in maintaining or surpassing the former daily rations of milk for each child.<sup>150</sup>

Donations of food to the BOA were generous, as they were at the Kelso Home, and reflected similar trends in the foods supplied and their sources, ranging from local to imported produce and home-canned items to brand-name items like Campbell's Soup and Jell-O. Local citizens, organizations, and businesses like the Olive Dairy provided some of the children's diet, offering a bit of variety throughout the year and ensuring that holiday celebrations served the traditional festive foods; the BOA's orphaned children received indulgent food gifts of chocolate eggs at Easter and nuts, raisins, oranges, cakes, and candy at Christmas. The BOA received far more diverse foodstuffs, including an impressive array of meats, such as roast beef, beef tongue, salt beef and spiced beef, corned beef, mutton, turkey, and chicken, spare ribs, sausage, breakfast bacon, and ham; gifts of pork and fish occurred much less frequently. The BOA also received a wider variety of produce, including celery, bananas, strawberries and other summer berries, apples, and oranges; grapefruit, grapes, pears, and pumpkin were given as well, but far

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<sup>148</sup> Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *88th Annual Report*, 1887, 4.

<sup>149</sup> Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *96th Annual Report*, 1895, 6.

<sup>150</sup> Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *122nd Annual Report*, 1921, 8.

more infrequently. Starting around 1910, two local bakeries took a special interest in the BOA, delivering large quantities of bread, biscuits, and sweet cakes, cookies, pies, pastries, and donuts. The similarity of the BOA's food donations to those received by the Kelso Home reflected the local food habits and what Baltimoreans considered important foods for children to eat, both for their nutrition and their pleasure. They also showed the shift from home-made to processed foods, the changing consumer market for food, and the importance of meat and sweets in the American diet. Childhood foods would become adult food habits for Baltimore's orphans, and such habits and preferences would influence dietary and consumption habits in the next generation.<sup>151</sup>

Like other orphanages, the BOA prepared its young wards for their adult lives, including skilled training so that they could enter the workforce. The gendered belief that men would work and support the family, while women's proper place was in the home, was reflected in the training opportunities offered at the BOA. The boys' opportunities began to expand in the late 1880s with offerings like carpentry and other manual labor classes. The situation for the female orphans, however, was less salubrious. "Among the girls...we have not the means to do all we would like, having to limit ourselves to

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<sup>151</sup> Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *85th Annual Report*, 1884, 6-7. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *86th Annual Report*, 1885, 7-8. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *88th Annual Report*, 1887, 8-9. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *89th Annual Report*, 1888, 7-8. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *90th Annual Report*, 1889, 8-9. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *91st Annual Report*, 1890, 8-9. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *92nd Annual Report*, 1891, 10-11. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *93rd Annual Report*, 1892, 10-11. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *94th Annual Report*, 1893, 8-9. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *96th Annual Report*, 1895, 9-10. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *111th Annual Report*, 1910, 9-12. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *112th Annual Report*, 1911, 8-11. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *113th Annual Report*, 1912, 13-16. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *114th Annual Report*, 1913, 11-14. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *115th Annual Report*, 1914, 12-14. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *116th Annual Report*, 1915, 13-14. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *122nd Annual Report*, 1921, 12-14. Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *124th Annual Report*, 1923, 13-15.

teaching them plain sewing, and the first principles of housework and cooking. We greatly desire to have the best system of dress-making and more advanced classes in all the departments of domestic science, but our income does not permit it.”<sup>152</sup> The prioritization of male occupational training reinforced the roles these children were expected to fill as adults. Within a few years, the BOA was able to provide some rudimentary domestic science lessons. “After they [female orphans] are fourteen we strive to give them a practical knowledge of domestic work. This winter we have had a trained cooking teacher, who has given lessons every week to a class of the older girls.” The report noted that most of the girls were “very good seamstresses.” The BOA based the training of its girls on the roles they were expected to play as adults, as homemakers, while still struggling to find ways to provide them with job training so they could support themselves as adults.

Through the end of 1890s and well into the new century, the BOA exhibited an ongoing concern about how best to prepare their girls to take on household responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, sewing, and home nursing. They also continued to focus on the best ways to ready them to enter the working world. Cooking classes continued to occupy a central position in the BOA’s childrearing and job training strategies for its female orphans. Supplementing their regular education with outside opportunities, “eight of the girls who are in Miss Whitehorne’s class also attend the “Cooking Centre” at School No. 75 once a week and have received a good report from their teacher, Miss Randall.”<sup>153</sup> In 1914, the BOA’s board of managers purchased an adjacent property to the orphanage to be used as a training school for girls over fourteen,

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<sup>152</sup> Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *91st Annual Report*, 1890, 6.

<sup>153</sup> Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *109th Annual Report*, 1908, 8.

preparing them for jobs in bookkeeping, dressmaking, and factory work.<sup>154</sup> A year later, with Mrs. H. A. Upham as matron and seven students in attendance, the school offered classes in Domestic Science and evening classes in basic arithmetic and writing. "...Our aim is first of all to make them thorough housekeepers, we therefore insist before we will try them in any outside position, that they must understand cooking scientifically, with house cleaning—sewing, &c."<sup>155</sup> With additional vocational training offerings, domestic skills like cooking and cleaning remained important to a young woman's education, preparing her to assume her adult role as wife, mother, and homemaker.

Employing similar child-rearing ideologies, the Kelso Home, the Samuel Ready School, and the BOA all demonstrated the importance of food in the lives of their orphan charges. Building their children's health through a nutritious diet, nurturing their future food habits, and offering them special foods and treats at the holidays, the orphanages impressed upon their young wards the importance of eating the correct foods and the pleasure in enjoying them on special days. The orphanages created a home-like environment, teaching the children table manners, and cooking classes conveyed not only culinary skills but also the importance of food presentation and an attractive table. Finally, the orphanages prepared Baltimore's orphans to make useful contributions to society through their productive work as adults, providing domestic and vocational training and instilling in them the importance of supporting oneself. Using food in these diverse ways, Baltimore's orphanages shaped their young charges into future citizens who conformed to American values and cultural norms.

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<sup>154</sup> Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *115th Annual Report*, 1914, 6.

<sup>155</sup> Baltimore Orphan Asylum Board of Managers, *116th Annual Report*, 1915, 7.

While children and particularly orphans were easily molded to reflect middle-class values, adults posed a different set of challenges for Baltimore's reformers and charitable workers. Seeking to improve the lives of Baltimore's working class, urban poor, and immigrants, charities and social settlements entered into their home and work lives, exposing them to middle-class habits and values. Foodways proved to be a popular avenue by which reformers interacted with these groups of Baltimoreans, offering tangible services and suggesting changes to their lifestyles and values. Practical efforts, like lunchrooms which offered inexpensive hot meals to working women and cooking classes which promised to improve families' meals at home, represented the surface of these reformers' goals. Other educational efforts, like libraries, also supported the reformers' goals. Underneath the surface lay a more covert agenda; using the same activities and programs, reformers intended to convey subtler messages about dining habits, domesticity, respectability, and middle-class values to the working class, urban poor, and immigrants. While only the settlements considered immigrants as a specific group within their constituency, all of the reformers' work was applicable to them, because Americanizing activities centered on the transmission of the middle-class lifestyle and values. The only distinguishing activity in settlements was English language classes.

Established in 1883, Baltimore's Young Women's Christian Association provided a wide range of services which they hoped would improve the lives of working class women by encouraging them to adopt middle-class values centered on respectability and gentility. Despite their religious name, the Baltimore YWCA claimed to offer assistance to anyone who would accept. "We propose a mission of Christian sympathy, with



practical help. Whosoever needs it and will accept it, can have it. No proviso intervenes, except a testimonial of good moral character.”<sup>156</sup> Their non-sectarian work freed them from proselytizing activities and allowed them to concentrate on social and economic problems throughout the city and to serve young women, regardless of their religious background. Although the YWCA designated working women as their core constituency, the YWCA’s programs likely reached young immigrant women as well. Of the 936 workingwomen in Baltimore around 1889, approximately half were the children of at least one immigrant parent; seventy-two were themselves foreign-born.<sup>157</sup> Thus the YWCA’s programs of moral uplift for working women also contributed to the assimilation of immigrant women; their messages of moral uplift, aimed at working class women, closely resembled the mainstream cultural traits which Americanizers sought to instill in the immigrant population.

The YWCA sought to shape their organization into “a corporation for the improvement and education of young women, having in view the improvement of the condition of the working women of Baltimore, by providing for them a Reading Room Lunch Room and such other departments as may be found necessary...”<sup>158</sup> The ladies of the YWCA identified hot lunches as an immediate need of these young women, realizing the potential of these lunches, and later food and cooking classes, to become useful tools in teaching their lessons of moral uplift.

The specific mention of a reading room and lunch room in the YWCA’s certificate of incorporation, usually a generally worded statement, indicated the great

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<sup>156</sup> Young Women’s Christian Association of Baltimore City, *First Annual Report*, February 1884, 16.

<sup>157</sup> Herbert Baxter Adams, *Work among Workingwomen in Baltimore: A Social Study* (N.p.: n.p., 1889), 10.

<sup>158</sup> Young Women’s Christian Association of Baltimore City, *First Annual Report*, February 1884, 5.

need these socially-minded women saw in providing for the comfort and edification of working women. These rooms were indeed the first actions undertaken by Baltimore's YWCA. The lunch room opened in February 1883 with 4 customers on the first day, and 10 on the second; by the end of the first week they had served 93 meals. By the end of the year, they had served 17,865 meals in what had quickly become a cramped dining room and kitchen.<sup>159</sup> Located in the downtown commercial district, the lunch room would serve any working woman between the hours of noon and 3 pm. The YWCA initially determined to serve a simple meal consisting of soup, bread and butter with coffee or tea to drink; due to their customers' wishes, they soon expanded the menu to include meats and vegetables while still keeping the cost at 5 cents. Their intent was to serve "...home cooking, simple though it must be, for such prices..."<sup>160</sup> The lunch room provided its customers with an affordable but filling meal to bolster them for the afternoon's work and offered them a moment of repose from their hectic working lives.

Within a few years of opening, the lunch room was serving over 43,000 meals annually. Having moved to a larger facility, the lunch room reopened without much change. The menu remained the same; the YWCA felt that this was best in order to continue serving inexpensive meals and that they should not compete with local restaurants. The YWCA noted with much thanks the donation of groceries, provision, linens, china, furniture, and a refrigerator for the new lunch room.<sup>161</sup> Linens and china would allow for an appropriate, home-like table on which to serve the meal, and the

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>161</sup> Young Women's Christian Association of Baltimore City, *Fourth Annual Report*, January 1887, 10.

refrigerator provided cold storage for perishable foods and reduced the frequency of shopping for certain types of foods.

In its early years of operation, Baltimore's YWCA recognized the need for an inexpensive hot lunch for the many shopgirls in downtown Baltimore, but they also knew that this work would give them further opportunities to work with these young urban women and to shape their values and beliefs toward the dominant middle-class American ideologies. "Good food is, and always has been, a good physical basis for social work. It promotes good-will and healthful, cordial co-operation among members of any society."<sup>162</sup> In defending the existence of the Entertainment Committee, which some members felt strayed too far from their true mission, they reiterated these same ideas regarding the importance of personal contact in achieving their larger purpose of education, moral, and spiritual guidance. "We seek further to elevate tastes, refine manners, and purify morals, so making woman more womanly; and influence on these lines is strengthened by personal association and example..."<sup>163</sup> If an entertainment or a hot meal could serve as the first point of contact to form a deeper and more edifying relationship with a young working woman, then the women of the YWCA believed that the event or program was certainly a worthwhile endeavor.

Supplementing their lunchroom work and hospitality with other educational opportunities for their members, the YWCA's Library Committee formed a lending library. Noting that borrowers were mainly interested in novels, the women on this committee hoped to "raise the standard and make the Library a help to those who desire

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<sup>162</sup> Herbert Baxter Adams, *Work among Workingwomen in Baltimore: A Social Study* (N.p.: n.p., 1889), 4

<sup>163</sup> Young Women's Christian Association of Baltimore City, *Fourth Annual Report*, January 1887, 21.

to improve themselves.”<sup>164</sup> The tone of dissatisfaction with the working girls’ reading choices was resounding; novel reading was a pleasurable pastime but far less suitable for the education and edification of working women than the materials selected by the ladies of the committee. Several years later, the Library Committee reported that “the improvement in deportment and dress also deserves special notice, this has mainly resulted from personal contact of the ladies with the girls.”<sup>165</sup> That the Library Committee reported on anything other than the reading habits of the young ladies demonstrates the interconnected nature of the reformers’ work. Through personal contact with members of the Library Committee, working class women had improved their dress, posture, and manners. If a Library effected such behavioral changes, so too could hot lunches alter the working women’s lives, making positive changes and moving them toward middle-class modes of appearance and expression. This personal contact was the very essence of charitable and settlement work in the late nineteenth century, allowing reformers to associate with others in different classes to influence and to change behaviors or attitudes.

The YWCA’s other standing committees at the end of the nineteenth century, including the Employment Committee, the House Committee, and the Educational Committee, demonstrated that the ambitious women of the YWCA sought to enter into every facet of the lives of working women. Providing a comfortable, home-like environment for young women, even for those who merely boarded there temporarily, was of great concern. The women of the Lodging House Committee expressed their gratitude to the other members of the YWCA “...who with their love and refined taste

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<sup>164</sup> Young Women’s Christian Association of Baltimore City, *First Annual Report*, February 1884, 11.

<sup>165</sup> Young Women’s Christian Association of Baltimore City, *Fourth Annual Report*, January 1887, 13.

have made our rooms so attractive...”<sup>166</sup> Described as pleasant and beautiful, the new building was indeed a home. “In a “Home” a pure sentiment is ever a fitting guest, and with us whatever inspires a home feeling, and tends to create a softening and elevating influence becomes an educational force of significant value.”<sup>167</sup> The importance of a comforting, beautiful setting indicates the values of middle-class gentility which the women of the YWCA hoped to instill in their young residents by example.

Domestic employment proved to be an ongoing concern of the Employment Committee, as job availability and girls willing to fill such positions ebbed and flowed. The Employment Committee regularly received inquiries from employers who wished to retain the services of a domestic; in 1887, the Employment Committee noted “that the employers are in excess of the applicants, is due to the fact that many ladies apply to us for cooks and general house workers, while we have but few of this class among our applicants.”<sup>168</sup> Many young women who moved to urban settings in search of work and a bit of freedom from their parents and homes were not interested in domestic work, particularly live-in situations. They could also earn more money in factory jobs than as a domestic, and so did not seek opportunities for this kind of employment through organizations like the YWCA. The women of the YWCA’s Employment Committee were also concerned that working girls who had sought their assistance in finding domestic employment were not refined enough to be in service in middle-class and elite Baltimore homes. In 1890, many of the young girls boarding at the YWCA had moved to Baltimore from the country seeking employment, preferably domestic work. However,

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 12.

the YWCA felt that these girls needed domestic training before they could be recommended for such positions. They asked for volunteers to assist these girls in place of other outdoor mission work; “if ladies who are unable to do outside mission work would take these young girls and train them, they would be doing them an inestimable service, and in many instances would secure valuable and reliable help. Failing to find homes in families, they take positions in factories...”<sup>169</sup> This would not be the last call to train young women for domestic service.

With education as one of their primary goals, the YWCA offered a variety of learning opportunities to working class women. In the early years of the organization, the classes covered more basic school subjects like reading, writing, and spelling, as well as bookkeeping and knitting. Within a few years, they had added more classes which instructed students in subjects such as literature, dictation, penmanship, math, calisthenics, and dressmaking; these subjects would refine the young women’s sensibilities further and enhance their character. Training in more practical areas, like domestic duties, was not neglected. In the late 1880s, the YWCA moved to a larger building so they could establish a “department of domestic economy, where the young may be initiated into the mysteries of cooking a good family dinner, of which so many confess their utter ignorance.”<sup>170</sup> Domestic economy classes fulfilled several of the YWCA’s goals simultaneously. By preparing young women for their homemaking responsibilities, including cooking and serving meals properly, they would learn to manage a household according to middle-class values. This domestic training likewise would make the young women productive citizens, and if it became necessary for them to

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<sup>169</sup> Young Women’s Christian Association of Baltimore City, *Seventh Annual Report*, 1890, 9.

<sup>170</sup> Young Women’s Christian Association of Baltimore City, *First Annual Report*, February 1884, 18.

seek paid employment, they would be properly trained to enter domestic service and support themselves financially.

Having established their core programs in their downtown location, the YWCA's members expanded their activities in Baltimore by forming clubs in the neighborhoods where other groups of women and girls worked. Inspired by a talk by Grace Dodge on her work with girls' clubs in New York, several YWCA members formed the Helping Hand Society of East Baltimore in 1887. They recruited members from the factory girls in East Baltimore, offering entertainments, games, talks, and classes in sewing and fancy work. The club idea proved popular with the teenage workers, and the Helping Hand Society gained 40 members in its first nine months. After their first year, the Society planned to add a cooking class, if a stove and utensils could be acquired, and expanded the club work into other industrial sectors of the city.<sup>171</sup> Membership blossomed to just over 100 members by 1890, eleven of whom were teenage girls and those up to the age of 25 who worked in factories. The Helping Hand Society offered them classes in the evenings to accommodate their work schedules, teaching classes in several kinds of sewing, basic academic subjects like math, writing, and spelling, and cooking. They also hosted a Bible Class on Sunday afternoons; while attendance at this particular weekly class was not mandatory, the members of this group were more likely to be Christian than Jewish, despite their focus on the young women working in East Baltimore.<sup>172</sup> By reaching out to new groups of working girls and women where they worked and lived, the YWCA sought to replicate and expand their moral uplift work through their activities, classes, and programs.

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<sup>171</sup> Young Women's Christian Association of Baltimore City, *Fifth Annual Report*, January 1888, 13-15.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

Hoping to affect change in the lives of working girls and women, the YWCA's work continued into the twentieth century, with new branches throughout the growing city, new programs to address the problems related to urban life, and new facilities. In 1917, the Central Branch of the YWCA opened its new Cafeteria with stunning results; more popular than ever and in a larger space, they served 11,825 meals in just three months. "The girls who patronize the Cafeteria are very enthusiastic about it. Most of them look on it as a kind of eating club, where they can meet their friends, and it may be regarded as a social as well as a financial success."<sup>173</sup> An advertisement for the Cafeteria stated that they catered to shoppers, business girls, and men when accompanied by women, broadening their clientele, their service hours, and their menu. Serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner, the YWCA's Cafeteria offered a la carte options at affordable prices. Bread was sold at 1 cent per portion, while hot breads were a penny more. Soups ranged in price from 5 to 8 cents. Meats were the most expensive menu item, ranging from 10 to 20 cents. Vegetables, salads, and desserts cost diners 5 to 10 cents. In encouraging people to try the Cafeteria, the YWCA reported that the Cafeteria was "...a place where many more important things are done than merely eating lunches."<sup>174</sup>

Constructing their new building at 128 West Franklin Street, the YWCA planned for an impressive array of activities throughout their vast rooms, which included several parlors, 70 bedrooms, a kitchen, a cafeteria, the laundry, a roof garden, a swimming pool, and many club rooms and specialized classrooms. The Domestic Science School,

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<sup>173</sup> Young Women's Christian Association of Baltimore City, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report*, 1917, 12.

<sup>174</sup> Young Women's Christian Association of Baltimore City, *Fall Announcement 1917* (Baltimore: Schneidereith and Sons, Printers, c. 1917), 12.



estimated to cost \$1500, was the most expensive room to construct and to outfit, costing as much as the gymnasium and swimming pool combined; such a significant investment demonstrated the YWCA's commitment to domestic training and their belief in its importance in educating girls and young women. The School advertised classes in sewing, dress-making, millinery, and fancy sewing in the Domestic Arts Department, and many levels of cookery classes in the Domestic Science Department. Dr. Leila H. Powers, Director of School of Domestic Science, and Miss Rhoda White, Assistant, organized and likely taught these classes. The Elementary Cooking class was offered during the day for three hours and repeated in the evening for working women; comprised of 15 classes, the course cost \$5.00 to \$12.00, with the evening classes being less expensive. Day and evening classes for Advanced Cooking were also offered for either \$7.00 or \$15.00. The School also offered other more specialized courses, such as a Housekeepers' Course, Scientific Household Management, Dietetics for Home, and Home Nursing. The Housekeepers' Course "...covers the purchasing of meats, fruits and vegetables; foods for children, students and brain workers; planning of meals; choice and care of utensils; budgeting and table service."<sup>175</sup> Invalid Cookery was arranged by Miss Adelaide Nutting, Professor at Columbia University, and was ideal for nurses who worked at hospitals without registered dieticians. The Home Nursing course was recommended especially for mothers, social workers, and companions, so that they could learn the "...care of convalescents, feeble persons and light forms of illness, at home."<sup>176</sup> Classes in Chafing Dish and Camp Cookery could be arranged upon request.<sup>177</sup> These rather extensive and varied courses were the realization of the YWCA's wishes in

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

throughout the 1880s and 1890s for cooking classes and domestic servant training courses. With their new facilities, they could finally provide domestic training in a standardized way, teaching practical cookery lessons while instilling middle-class food and domestic values in their pupils.

The success of the Helping Hand Society, which offered the YWCA's classes and activities to girls and young women in their own neighborhood, began an expansion program for the entire organization, resulting in the establishment of various branches of the Y throughout Baltimore. Continuing to focus their work on working girls and women in Baltimore's factories, in 1916 the YWCA's Industrial Department proposed meeting industrial girls where they worked, during their lunch hours, to form clubs and bring them "in touch with all that will make them best for home, business and community."<sup>178</sup> The ongoing personal contact efforts of the branches and the Industrial Department indicate that the YWCA still strove to understand the needs of the working girls and women of Baltimore, to meet them in their own neighborhoods and at their jobs, and to work with them toward the adoption of American cultural norms as expressed by the middle class.

By 1917, the Helping Hand Society had become the East Baltimore Branch of the YWCA, located on the western edge of that neighborhood at 26 South Broadway. The branch members were quite active with Bible study groups, gymnasium class, sewing and typewriting classes, crocheting and home nursing classes. Fundraising efforts, especially an Oyster Supper held in December, allowed them to decorate their rest room in a most attractive fashion, with new chairs, a lamp, and a Victrola.<sup>179</sup> While the music produced

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>179</sup> Young Women's Christian Association of Baltimore City, *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report*, 1917, 15.

by the Victrola certainly would have provided amusement for the girls in this branch, it also represented a middle-class consumer item which marked the rest room, and those in it, as cultured.

In describing the initial ventures of the YWCA in the 1880s, Dr Herbert Adams noted the connection between their work and the civilizing work of others who conducted social work among immigrants and the urban poor. “Good taste in habits of person, dress, and conduct is characteristic of civilized life. It is the thousand and one things of manner and speech that mark the progress of a human being from ignorance to cultivation, from rudeness to refinement.”<sup>180</sup> Good food and a brief respite from the trials of sales work were simply the beginning of a larger civilizing project undertaken by the women of the YWCA in the nineteenth century and continuing well into the twentieth. Like the YWCA, the settlement houses of Baltimore stressed personal contact as a means of interacting with and improving the lives of the communities with whom they worked. Four of Baltimore’s Protestant settlement houses, located in neighborhoods which encircled the harbor, established programs of work in the 1890s and 1900s to provide immigrants and working class citizens with educational and recreational opportunities, in the hopes of making physical, cultural, and moral improvements to their lives. And like the YWCA, Baltimore’s settlement houses utilized food as a means of entering their constituency’s lives and of reforming them, connecting one’s diet to health, one’s cooking abilities to familial happiness, and one’s dining experience to respectability, refinement, and cultural citizenship.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Herbert Baxter Adams, *Work among Workingwomen in Baltimore: A Social Study* (N.p.: n.p., 1889), 5.

<sup>181</sup> Historical sources for Baltimore’s settlement houses are scant, at best. The archival record for the Reid Memorial Settlement House is limited to a few photographs discovered at the Maryland Historical Society.

Locust Point, Baltimore's port of entry for so many European immigrants who sailed from Bremen, Germany, hosted its own neighborhood settlement. Located at 1504 and 1506 East Fort Avenue, this settlement was almost directly across the harbor from East Baltimore's Jewish neighborhood and Little Italy. Founded in 1896 by Mrs. J. S. Dinwoodie, the settlement was first located at 1409 Hull Street, moving from that location after eight years. Their organization's aims would have been familiar to any settlement in Baltimore or other American cities; Article II of the Constitution stated plainly, almost vaguely, that the goal of the Locust Point Social Settlement Association was the establishment of a settlement house and through it, the physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual improvement of people. The Constitution also explicitly stated that it was a non-sectarian and non-partisan organization.<sup>182</sup> Reporting on the Bureau of Immigration's findings for 1906, the Locust Point staff noted that of the 5,574 immigrants who arrived and settled in Baltimore, 20 percent of that number, or roughly 1100 individuals, settling on Locust Point, making it a large immigrant neighborhood.<sup>183</sup> Of the local residents' ethnic and national composition, the majority, fully 90%, was either born in Germany or their parents had been born there. The remaining 10% was evenly divided between Americans and an aggregate category which grouped Bohemians, Poles, Irish, and other nationalities together.<sup>184</sup> In the year 1906-1907, 360 Baltimore residents were enrolled in the clubs and classes offered at Locust Point, and 600 people a week were reached in some way.

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Baltimore also had some Catholic settlement houses, organized under individual parishes which had affiliated with the Associated Catholic Charities. These settlement houses are not discussed in this paper.

<sup>182</sup> Locust Point Social Settlement Association, *Report of Locust Point Social Settlement Association* (Baltimore: Locust Point Social Settlement Association, c. 1907), 2.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

Locust Point's major activities included a day nursery, which it ran almost continuously from 1901 through 1905. In the summer of 1905, the Thomas Wilson Modified Milk Station opened at the settlement, distributing milk to mothers with infants and young children.<sup>185</sup> Two years later, this same milk station distributed nearly 1500 milk orders to local families and provided just over 200 free feedings.<sup>186</sup> Given the importance of pure milk, especially for infants and children in poorer neighborhoods, the location of the milk station at the settlement, where it could easily be reached those who lived nearby, was a logical and efficient choice. Its placement at the Locust Point Social Settlement also allowed settlement workers to promote the service and the health benefits of milk for children to those attending other settlement activities.

Weekly activities for children included several art classes, a chorus, assorted children's clubs, a story hour and library, a woman's club, an American boys' club, a Hungarian boys' club (senior and junior divisions), junior and senior cooking classes, and two sewing schools. The junior and senior cooking classes met in the evenings in order to accommodate the work schedules of their members. Dues for all of the clubs and classes ranged from one to five cents. The senior cooking class had some of the highest dues, at five cents, and one of the lowest membership rates, with only seven individuals. Other clubs had twenty to thirty members, while the Busy Bees' Sewing School had 55 members and required only a penny in dues; the story hour and library, with no dues collected, boasted 80 members.<sup>187</sup> The higher dues for the cooking classes were likely driven by the need to acquire cooking utensils and equipment and food supplies in order

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

to conduct such classes, yet their higher dues may have made them unappealing to immigrant girls.

The settlement workers at Locust Point received many food items as donations, ranging from fruits like apples, lemons, and oranges, to sweets like cakes, ice cream, and candy. Other food donations included tea and coffee, sugar, nuts and raisins, crackers and cereal, eggs and chicken, preserves and pickles, and bread.<sup>188</sup> These kinds of food donations were largely secondary to meeting one's nutritional needs, consisting of more superfluous treats for children, delicacies for parties, and items necessary for creating a special meal for the occasional event like a Mothers' Dinner or a holiday festivity.

Locust Point's settlement workers were not deeply concerned with providing a varied diet or plain but nourishing food either to individuals who ate at the settlement house or in assembling and distributing food to needy families. Yet their food concerns resemble those of Baltimore's orphanages and the role of enjoying sweet treats and celebrating events and holidays by eating special foods.

The Channing House Association illustrated another type of social settlement in Baltimore which focused primarily on the working class, rather than immigrants. Located in South Baltimore at 527 South Charles Street, Channing House opened in February 1905 under the direction of Resident Director Miriam Gover, an unmarried woman who also served as Secretary on the Board of Officers. Channing House was located in one of the most populous and neglected areas of the city and was conveniently located near a trolley stop. Similar in mission and activities to Lawrence House and Warner House, Channing House offered the local neighborhood residents a place of

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 15-16.

respite, socialization, educational opportunities, and emotional support. A rest room for working girls, a library, dancing classes, sewing classes, evening entertainments, lectures, parties and various clubs were all among the settlement work at Channing House. An office of the Visiting Instructive Visiting Nurses' Association was also located within the settlement, making advantageous use of the settlement as a community center.<sup>189</sup>

Channing House's chief activity for the community, however, was running a lunch room for working girls, which supplied a hot, wholesome lunch to 60-70 girls who worked in nearby factories. Over 2000 girls worked in local factories in this part of Baltimore, primarily tobacco and biscuit outfits, and they benefitted immensely from the opportunity to purchase an inexpensive, hot lunch in close proximity to their place of employment. The meals cost six cents on average, and the lunch room operated with a small profit. The lunch room was extremely popular, limited only by its seating capacity. Describing the benefits of the lunch room, the managers of Channing House first stated that "the good food, well served" is one of many attractive features that make it popular among working girls.<sup>190</sup> An a la carte menu offered soups for 3 cents, a meat and two vegetables for 5 cents, dessert at 1 or 2 cents, as well as bread and coffee. A typical day's offering might include Vegetable Soup, Beef Stew, Potatoes, Cornbread, and Apple Sauce. While these choices constituted the "good food" which Channing House workers promised, their attractive presentation on the plate, the pleasant arrangement of the table, and the dining room furnishings and decorations in which they were enjoyed comprised the "well served" portion of Channing House's lunchroom mission. Their lunchroom

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<sup>189</sup> Channing House Association, *Annual Report: The Channing House Association* (Baltimore: [The Association], 1911), 3-5.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

taught its diners by example, conveying lessons about what foods to eat and how to eat them.

The Channing House staff also noted that the girls who ate there regularly have noticeably improved in health, linking their foods to a nutritious diet. The staff did not miss an opportunity to reach out to these girls, “to come into closer touch with the girls, gain their confidence, and so to maintain some oversight over their moral welfare.”<sup>191</sup> Such encounters could result in the bestowal of advice or assistance with certain situations, which was the root of the cultural and moral work that settlement workers strove to achieve. Channing House’s work in South Baltimore mirrored the YWCA’s lunch room in downtown Baltimore; although they served a different group of working women in a different neighborhood, each organization saw the opportunities for further instruction and cultural influence among their diners, once the way had been paved with a meal and some pleasant conversation.<sup>192</sup>

Lawrence House and Warner House, both administered by the Lawrence Memorial Association, engaged Baltimore’s working class and immigrant communities in the southwest part of the city with both assimilative and moral uplift work, using social and recreational activities, English language classes, educational and vocational classes, and food lessons to move these populations toward a more homogenous, middle-class American lifestyle. Lawrence House began its work in 1895, two years after the untimely passing of Reverend E. A. Lawrence, who pioneered settlement work in the southwest part of the city. By 1900, the settlement’s building at 816 West Lombard

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.



Street was ready to open as Lawrence House.<sup>193</sup> Located in a densely settled immigrant neighborhood, Lawrence House was adjacent to the downtown business and shopping district. Many residents of the southwest part of the city worked at such industrial sites as the Baltimore and Ohio Shops and Bartlett & Hayward's Iron Foundry and earned a steady, comfortable living. In considering the programmatic elements that Lawrence House should offer, its administrators noted that the people of the neighborhood "are independent in character and self-respecting. They do not need material relief. They are ready for the kind of opportunity the Settlement can give."<sup>194</sup> The stable economic status of the neighborhoods' residents allowed the Lawrence House workers to move beyond thoughts of charitable aid to sustain these families and consider instead a variety of edifying activities which would contribute to the moral uplift and cultural citizenship of the residents of this neighborhood.

By the beginning of 1904, Lawrence House was well-established in its Southwest Baltimore neighborhood and popular with residents; it offered social, recreational, and educational programs for children and teens, as well as their parents. Lawrence House had sponsored a kindergarten since its inception; offered gymnastic classes and numerous clubs focused on athletics for young men and boys as well as for women and girls; hosted a Bible study, a story-telling class, and a library; and sponsored lectures and concerts.<sup>195</sup> It further offered industrial classes, including several skill levels of sewing, paper sloyd, cane seating, basketry, and cooking, which was offered on Friday nights at 8 pm with Miss Jennie Daves as the instructor. The cooking class of twelve lessons was small, held

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<sup>193</sup> Lawrence House Memorial Association, *The Ninth Annual Report of the Lawrence House Memorial Association of Baltimore, Maryland From October 1, 1902 – October 1, 1903* (Baltimore: Lawrence House Memorial Association, c. 1904), 7.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

in the winter months, and aimed to instruct its students in the art of simple cookery for the family.<sup>196</sup> Plans to expand Lawrence House's programs included offering music lessons for piano, violin, mandolin, and guitar; the choice of these particular instruments was based on feedback from the residents of the neighborhood. They also aspired to start a chorus for young people, open a carpenter's shop, and offer free concerts and stereopticon lectures using their own equipment.<sup>197</sup> All of these activities, clubs, and classes served to entertain and to enlighten the neighborhood's residents, acquainting them with middle-class cultural ideals about how to live in America.

Lawrence House sponsored three mothers clubs, which hosted entertainments and practical talks to meet the social and educational needs of these women. The settlement also served as the base of operations for a visiting nurse, who was glad for the cooperation offered by the mothers clubs, whose members often assisted the nurse with preparing her supplies and escorted patients to see her. In turn, the nurse reported that she saw the difference that Lawrence House was making during her visits to her patients' homes. "In the homes of her patients the nurse is often able to see the results of the Settlement's work, as it has reached different members of the household through cooking and sewing classes, gymnasium, mother's clubs, and so forth."<sup>198</sup> By reaching out to every family member with its comprehensive roster of programs and activities, Lawrence House achieved these positive cultural changes in the neighborhood's homes.

Settlements like Lawrence House also supplied information, expertise, and authority within their communities. An anecdote about a mother with a young child and

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<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>198</sup> Lawrence House Memorial Association, *Lawrence Memorial Association* (N.p., n.p., 1895), n.p.

a sick infant illustrates this point. The older child shared his advice with his mother, who was perhaps a bit overwrought with two young children, one of whom was sick.

“Mother, just you go down to Lawrence House – they’ll tell you what to do for the baby. Why they can tell you anything you want to know down there.”<sup>199</sup> The settlement house served as a community resource for all aspects of life, ranging from health issues to child rearing advice and proper modes of living.

Perhaps this child’s absolute faith in the abilities of the Lawrence House residents came from his experience attending their kindergarten or library program. The kindergarten and library programs served American children, as well as Lithuanian, Jewish, German, Irish, Bohemian, Italian, French, and English youngsters.<sup>200</sup> The summer playground provided a respite for these children and encouraged them to join the activities held at Lawrence House during the rest of the year; indeed, after participating in the summer playground, many Lithuanian and Italian children, who had previously only participated in the library activities and kindergarten, joined other clubs and classes at Lawrence House. The librarian supervised the reading habits of children, linking her selections with their school work and sending them to the public library when they were old enough. “This supervision has been a great help to the boys and girls, who have no assistance at home and would otherwise not develop the reading habit. This is especially true in the case of children of the immigrant population.”<sup>201</sup> Other immigrant children,

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Social Service Corporation, Baltimore, *Second Report, September 30, 1913* (N.p.: n.p., 1912), 40.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 38.

primarily Lithuanians, learned their first words of English through the kindergarten at Lawrence House, as did their parents.<sup>202</sup>

A group of Lithuanian women learned English at Lawrence House, and English classes were the most requested service among immigrants in the neighborhood. Young immigrant women who worked in sewing factories were the most eager students, accompanied by mothers of children who participated in the settlement's activities. The Lithuanian men were a more difficult constituency to reach for these classes. Lawrence House residents stressed that the English classes and other work they conducted "...should be a common endeavor to conserve the racial traditions and good qualities of these people, on the one hand, while on the other introducing and assimilating them to American standards and ideals."<sup>203</sup> The settlement workers were not interested in fully eradicating the immigrant identity but recognized the importance of incorporate it into an American way of life. Learning English would be an important first step for these immigrants. They could continue to speak their native tongue, at home and with fellow immigrants, but the necessity of learning English in order to function in an American urban society would start the process of Americanization.

Lawrence House focused on its work with Lithuanian immigrants for several years in the 1910s, as they were the residential majority in Southwest Baltimore. While adults concentrated on learning English, the children learned gender-appropriate life skills, such as carpentry for boys and homemaking for girls. The Lawrence House staff was careful to emphasize that their work supplemented the work done in public schools

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>203</sup> Social Service Corporation, Baltimore, *Third Report, September 30, 1914* (N.p.: n.p., c. 1914), 39.

and night schools.<sup>204</sup> Lithuanian girls who ranged in age from 10 to 13 years, attended the homemaking courses at Lawrence House, which were taught by members of the Maryland Line Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. They were instructed in housekeeping and cooking. “This course fills a great need among the foreign girls, who often, if not usually, leave school before cooking is taught and go into the factories to work.” Miss Mabel Hutchens, a former resident of Lawrence House, taught practical domestic instruction in the homes of the neighborhood, but this experiment was short-lived. Although it yielded good results, they were felt to be indirect, and Lawrence House lacked the money to continue the project.<sup>205</sup>

Warner House, the second of the two Lawrence Memorial Association’s settlements, was founded in 1905 and likewise served the people of Southwest Baltimore. Located at 918 Russell Street, it was situated to the south of Lawrence House. By 1914, the Baltimore residents who lived in proximity to Warner House were native born Americans of predominantly German and Irish descent. They were solidly working-class, had achieved some economic success and lived comfortably, and were described as fully Americanized. There was also “an intersprinkling of Italians and Hebrews,” but with the exception of the Lithuanians, “the recent immigrant is only gradually entering the district.”<sup>206</sup> Reminding its supporters that their work was not the relief of material poverty, but rather centered on the educational, social, recreational betterment and neighborhood improvement, Warner House offered an expansive array of activities similar to those offered at Lawrence House, intended to achieve similar goals of

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 25, 44.

educational, cultural, and moral uplift in pursuit of American cultural citizenship.<sup>207</sup> Children's activities at Warner House included a kindergarten, a library, domestic and industrial instruction in topics like cooking, sewing, millinery, chair caning, and carpentry. They also offered social and recreational opportunities like dancing, social clubs, and athletics. One of the girls clubs which focused on the household arts claimed 14 members on their rolls.<sup>208</sup> By the spring of 1914, Warner House needed to expand its facilities and leased the building next door at 920 Russell Street. This additional space would allow them to provide a better room for cooking with improved equipment.<sup>209</sup> Like the YWCA, Warner House was willing to invest its financial resources in facilities to provide domestic training, indicating the importance of food, cooking, and eating in a middle-class American lifestyle. Through Warner House's diverse programs, the children and parents who attend such programs began to understand the benefit to themselves and their families when they created an attractive home or when they learned marketable skills which resulted in a better economic situation.<sup>210</sup>

Middle-class reformers, acting through charitable institutions, orphanages, and social settlements, employed food, eating, and cooking in various ways to promote moral uplift and assimilation among Baltimore's working class, urban poor, and immigrants. Relying largely on personal contact to initiate their relationships, the reformers attempted to influence their constituents by example, hoping to improve not only the outward appearance and behavior, but also the inner belief systems of these groups. Direct intervention into the foodways of these Baltimoreans through the provision of food and

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<sup>207</sup> Social Service Corporation, Baltimore, *First Report, March 31, 1912* (N.p.: n.p., c. 1912), 33.

<sup>208</sup> Social Service Corporation, Baltimore, *Third Report, September 30, 1914* (N.p.: n.p., c. 1914), 43.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.

<sup>210</sup> Social Service Corporation, Baltimore, *First Report, March 31, 1912* (N.p.: n.p., c. 1912), 33-34.

cooking classes allowed reformers to attempt to reshape their diets in overt ways; these methods also provided the opportunity for reformers to insert more subtle messages about the relation of food to good health and familial happiness, middle-class domesticity and the importance of eating and living in an attractive and refined setting, and the imperative of becoming productive, self-supporting citizens. The reformers' actions, successful or not in changing the lifestyles of Baltimore's working class, urban poor, and immigrants, reflected the dominant cultural values about food, domesticity, and women's roles in late nineteenth and early twentieth century America. These organizations may have interacted with and influenced some Eastern European Jewish immigrants, but they were still considered religious outsiders by the members of that community. Chapter 3 examines how food was utilized by similar charitable and social reform institutions in Baltimore's Jewish community, sharing some common concerns with the Protestant reformers about food while mediating their own specific cultural and religious food concerns.

### **Chapter 3: Matzohs and Mitzvahs: Jewish Foodways in America and the Jewish Charities of Baltimore, 1880-1920**

Announcing the upcoming opening of their new Home for Working Girls, located on 1200 East Baltimore Street in a predominantly Jewish immigrant neighborhood of Baltimore, the Daughters in Israel proudly extolled the virtues of the site in the local press, noting its fine architectural and decorative aspects, its distinguished residential history, its affordable rental price and thorough housekeeping arrangements, its pleasant activities and outings, and the extensive and balanced diet of its residents. The Daughters in Israel reassured readers that “the marketing is done very carefully, only the best material being bought.” The girls enjoyed a large breakfast and dinner at midday, dining on fish or eggs and fruit every day in season. “Poultry is served once a week; beef, mutton or lamb on other days, with three vegetables. Soup is served every day and a dessert other than fruit twice a week.” Near the end of the lengthy paragraph about the residents’ culinary experiences at the Home for Working Girls, the author noted that “everything is well cooked and nicely served.” And lest the reader worry about the working girls who were employed too far from the Home to return for dinner, readers learned that Home provided such girls with a box of cocoa so “she may prepare something warm for her midday meal.”<sup>211</sup> These well-fed working girls could have little to complain about with such bounty before them, and the Daughters in Israel, the Jewish

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<sup>211</sup> Transcribed newspaper article from unidentified newspaper, circa March 1911, folder 2, box 1, Jewish Family and Children’s Services (Baltimore) Records (hereafter designated MS 138), JMM.



charity which administered the home, took immense satisfaction in the generous table they set and the homelike atmosphere they created for these girls.<sup>212</sup>

The Daughters in Israel, a charitable organization managed by middle-class women of German Jewish descent, were not alone in their careful attention to food and eating habits in the Jewish enclave in East Baltimore. All of the Jewish charitable organizations which served this immigrant neighborhood, where thousands of Eastern European immigrants had settled beginning in the 1880s, exhibited similar concerns about matters involving food. Their concern did not concentrate on the preparation or consumption of food, the maintenance or abandonment of the traditional Jewish dietary laws of *kashrut*, or the possibility that exposure to new foods might in some way erase the immigrants' Jewish identity as it Americanized them. Rather, their food concerns focused on preventing malnutrition and hunger among the many impoverished Jewish families, providing for the nutritional needs of children and the specialized diets of invalids, educating Jewish children in the dietary laws of *kashrut*, ensuring that Jewish holidays were celebrated with the proper foods, and helping Jewish immigrants experience the pleasure and enjoyment of eating. Intimate knowledge of the religious beliefs and historical experience of their co-religionists enabled the German Jewish charities to determine a prudent and practical course of action for their food-related good works among the Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Knowing their constituency's devotion to *kashrut*, the German Jews ignored their own personal patterns of

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<sup>212</sup> *Third Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities of Baltimore*, 1910, p. 109, folder 138, box 10, MS 170, JMM. A 1909 report on the Maccabean Country Home, an affordable country vacation home for Baltimore's working class Jews and their families, also describes the diet of the residents in great detail. The report enumerates the variety of foods available at each meal and notes that a glass of milk was served to each person at bedtime. Meat was reserved for dinner, and supper was a milk meal which featured no meat.

consumption and made a tacit decision to provide kosher food assistance, allowing them to serve the largest possible population of Jewish immigrants and impoverished Jews without a constant negotiation of the Jewish dietary laws. This strategy of accommodation on the part of the German Jewish charities minimized the impact of the vast cultural, socio-economic, and religious divide between these two groups of Baltimorean Jews. In an urban Jewish community divided by many characteristics, Baltimore's Jews avoided the possibility of an incredible food fight over Jewish eating habits in America.

The Protestant charitable workers and social reformers discussed in Chapter 2 shared several common goals with Baltimore's Jewish charitable organizations, as both groups focused on relief work to alleviate hunger, concerned themselves with the diets of children and the sick, endorsed the connections between food, nutrition, and health, and provided special foods to mark the holidays. The work of these groups diverged, however, with regard to the use of food to instruct immigrants, the working class, and the urban poor in matters of middle-class values and cultural citizenship. Baltimore's social reformers sought to leverage food as a tool in their educational, cultural, and moral uplift work, hoping that their lessons would influence these groups to adopt their ideas about dining, family life, domesticity, and productive work. In contrast, the Jewish charities worked within their established religious traditions to accomplish certain food-related goals without interfering with the beliefs of the more observant Jewish immigrants or attempting to transform them into assimilated Americans.

The religious beliefs of Judaism, specifically those relating to food and to charity, combined powerfully to motivate the Jews of Baltimore in the creation of their charitable

institutions and in shaping their philanthropic work. Judaism forged direct links between the preparation and consumption of food and religious observance. The dietary laws of *kashrut* governed the eating habits of all Jews, forbidding the consumption of certain foods like shellfish and pork, enforcing the separation of meat from milk at each meal, and guiding the butchering and preparation of meat, including the salting of meat prior to cooking to drain it of any blood. The proper celebration of the Sabbath and the many Jewish holidays required Jews to consume certain dishes and to eat in specific ways. Jews ate a special meal every week during the Sabbath meal on Friday night. This repast, which included challah, marked the start of the Sabbath as different from the rest of the week, as Jews ate more and better food than they did during the week. Because Jewish laws forbade work on the Sabbath, including the lighting of a match, Jewish women could not cook after sundown on Friday night. To serve their families a warm meal on Saturday, they often prepared slow cooked stews like cholent, which could be maintained at a low heat and served warm on Saturday without breaking Jewish law. The observance of Jewish holidays likewise revolved around food, or the absence of it. Specific types of dishes were served at Rosh Hashanah and Hanukkah, while feasting and drinking marked Purim and fasting emphasized the solemnity of Yom Kippur. Passover, which marked the Jews' exodus from Egypt, dictated the avoidance of all leavened items, and the Passover Seder plate contained several symbolic foods each of which represented a part of the exodus story.<sup>213</sup> In addition to the religious nature of food at Sabbath and holiday meals, Judaism transformed everyday eating into a sacred act. Jews who delighted in

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<sup>213</sup> Laura Schenone, *A Thousand Years Over a Hot Stove: A History of American Women Told Through Food, Recipes, and Remembrances* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), 212-214. Jonathan Deutsch, and Rachel D. Saks, *Jewish American Food Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2008), 69-103.

each meal they ate not only nourished themselves, but they also expressed their thanks to God. Jews' food-joy, the pleasure of the secular experience of eating and the exaltation of the sacred aspects of their lives, merged in a unique way to formulate Jews' immense gratification in all of their dining experiences.<sup>214</sup>

The tenets of Judaism also required a strong commitment to charitable works, and this religious mandate likewise shaped the philanthropic work of Jews in Baltimore. In an address to the Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1903, Professor Jacob H. Hollander of Johns Hopkins University reflected upon the nature of Jewish charity and its religious origins. Hollander noted that Judaism was not merely a religion but a complete way of life; as such, "ceremonial observance, ritual conformity and spiritual rapport suggest the distinctive needs of the Jewish dependent." In mentioning the distinctive needs of the Jews, Hollander indirectly referred to the dietary laws of *kashrut*. Hollander also observed that Jewish charity is "no mere optional exercise nor alternative policy, but a primary, imperative, unavoidable obligation." By assisting a fellow Jew through acts of charitable kindness, or *mitzvahs*, Jews fulfilled their moral and religious duties.<sup>215</sup>

Imbued with this sense of communal obligation to those in need, Jews cared for and supported their co-religionists who experienced hardships or misfortunes in their lives. Jewish women prepared extra food for the Sabbath meal in order to invite a neighbor or stranger to share their meal. More affluent Jews provided support for poorer families at the holidays to ensure that they had a decent meal, and they monitored the members of

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<sup>214</sup> Jane Ziegelman, *97 Orchard Street: An Edible History of Five Immigrant Families in One New York Tenement* (New York: Smithsonian Books/HarperCollins, 2010), 119. Hasia Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 151-156, 175. "Food-joy" is Ziegelman's term.

<sup>215</sup> Hebrew Benevolent Society, *47th Annual Report*, 1903, pp. 10-11, folder 1991.219.001, JMM.

their communities to make sure that no one fell below a certain standard of living.<sup>216</sup>

Through religious dictates regarding food and charity, Jews developed a tradition of caring for the poor and their food needs.

In addition to their religious beliefs, the Jews' experience of living in a Diaspora for two thousand years also informed the charitable work of the Jewish community in Baltimore, particularly as it related to food. Scattered throughout the world, Jews became familiar with a wide variety of regional cuisines. Curious and adventurous eaters, they often incorporated local ingredients and regional recipes into their culinary repertoire, making the necessary modifications to meet the rules of *kashrut*. Many dishes which are today associated with Jewish cuisine, such as gefilte fish and challah, were in fact borrowed from Gentile kitchens in Europe.<sup>217</sup> Jewish peddlers and merchants in Prussia and Central Europe further aided the culinary exchange between different regional communities as they traveled and ate new foods, and adopting those foods which pleased them.<sup>218</sup> The Jews' adaptive approach to new food, rendered acceptable within confines of *kashrut*, shaped their experiences of cooking and eating in America.

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<sup>216</sup> Jane Ziegelman, *97 Orchard Street: An Edible History of Five Immigrant Families in One New York Tenement* (New York: Smithsonian Books/HarperCollins, 2010), 152-155. Hasia Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 168-170.

<sup>217</sup> Joan Nathan, "Social History of Jewish Food," in *Food and Judaism: A Special Issue of Studies in Jewish Civilization, Volume 15*, ed. Leonard J. Greenspoon, Ronald A. Simkins, and Gerald Shapiro (Omaha, NE: Creighton University Press, 2005), 1. Marcie Cohen Ferris, *Matzoh Ball Gumbo: Culinary Tales of the Jewish South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 19. In America, Jews' adherence to and interpretation of *kashrut* was more flexible, based on the availability of ingredients and local ethnic, religious, and class circumstances. Ferris notes that Jews in the North and in urban locales in the South were (and are) more likely to follow *kashrut* more closely, while those in rural areas were more isolated and would have adapted or abandoned *kashrut*.

<sup>218</sup> Jane Ziegelman, *97 Orchard Street: An Edible History of Five Immigrant Families in One New York Tenement* (New York: Smithsonian Books/HarperCollins, 2010), 87-92.

Seeking better economic opportunities and a life free of religious persecution and violence, two million Eastern European Jews emigrated to the United States between 1880 and 1920, settling in large part in urban areas like New York City. Baltimore's Jewish population doubled in size between 1900 and 1914, representing 10% of the city's population. Settling in the neighborhood of East Baltimore, these immigrants embarked upon their new lives in an enclave community which surrounded them with familiar elements of their former homes. Yet Eastern European Jews arrived in America to find another community of Jews who were quite different from themselves. These Jews, predominantly of German and Central European descent, had settled in the United States between 1830 and 1880; having lived in America for at least a generation, they had established their families and communities, and many were living an assimilated, comfortable middle-class life. In Baltimore, the German Jews resided in neighborhoods throughout the city in order to live in close proximity to their work places. Their communal cohesion resulted not from residential patterns, but from the formation of congregations in East Baltimore, which was a centrally located destination and therefore easily accessible for the Jews who lived in different parts of the city.<sup>219</sup>

These differences in economic and social status between the two groups of Jews perhaps could have been ignored. But the German Jews practiced a more moderate, liberal version of Judaism than the Eastern European Jews, who practiced a strict Orthodox version of Judaism. In their yearning to be accepted in American society, many German Jews had abandoned *kashrut* in part or in total so that they could enjoy the bountiful oysters and shellfish which America offered and to fit in with Gentile American

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<sup>219</sup> Deborah R. Weiner, Anita Kassof, and Avi Y. Decter, eds, *Voices of Lombard Street: A Century of Change in East Baltimore* (Baltimore: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2007), 26-27, 31.

society, particularly at dinners and banquets. The selective *kashrut* practiced by German Jews took many forms. Some may have maintained a kosher kitchen at home while eating *treyf* foods in public settings. Many adopted a “no-pork” version of *kashrut* while consuming oysters and other shellfish. This selective *kashrut* diet found support in Gentile American society and the scientific community, which considered oysters to be nutritious, while pork was deemed unhealthy because it was often contaminated.<sup>220</sup> While many German Jews modified *kashrut* to meet their own needs and preferences, a small but vocal minority in the early part of 20<sup>th</sup> century continued to follow and to support *kashrut*.<sup>221</sup>

Jewish cookbooks of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries confirm this variety of practice in *kashrut*. Jewish cookbooks of this period promoted middle-class foodways while generally ignoring the laws of *kashrut*. “*Aunt Babette’s*” *Cook Book*, first published in 1891, and *The Settlement Cook Book*, first published in 1901, were enormously popular cookbooks which went through multiple printings. Both cookbooks eschewed kosher laws, instead offering elegant, cosmopolitan, and internationally-flavored dishes. These two cookbooks, written by Jewish women, published by a Jewish press, and intended for a Jewish audience, retained their Jewish character despite the abandonment of *kashrut* in their recipes. “*Aunt Babette’s*” *Cook Book* included a chapter of Passover recipes, while *The Settlement Cook Book* indexed recipes appropriate for Passover which were found throughout the extensive cookbook. Both cookbooks also

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<sup>220</sup> Lance J. Sussman, “The Myth of the Trefa Banquet: American Culinary Culture and the Radicalization of Food Policy in American Reform Judaism,” *American Jewish Archives Journal* 57, no. 1 & 2 (2005): 29-52.

<sup>221</sup> Jenna Weissman Joselit, “Food Fight: The Americanization of Kashrut in Twentieth-Century America,” in *Food and Judaism: A Special Issue of Studies in Jewish Civilization, Volume 15*, ed. Leonard J. Greenspoon, Ronald A. Simkins, and Gerald Shapiro (Omaha, NE: Creighton University Press, 2005), 342.

demonstrated their middle-class, assimilated American perspective by suggested menus for elegant luncheons, teas, dinners, buffets, and for Jewish, Christian, and other holiday meals.<sup>222</sup> Those cookbooks which retained *kashrut* practices, such as Esther Levy's *Jewish Cookery Book on Principles of Economy*, published in 1871, and Florence Kreisler Greenbaum's *The International Jewish Cook Book*, presented recipes and suggested menus which were elegant and middle-class while still remaining kosher. Cookbooks such as these four examples, whether kosher or not, would have appealed to and been used by the German Jewish community, who demonstrated their middle-class status through their food practices, particularly entertaining.

Regardless of their stance on *kashrut*, cookbooks like these four examples would have been largely inaccessible to Eastern European Jews, who could not afford to purchase the cookbook itself or the ingredients required to create its fine dishes and meals. Nor could they invest the time and effort in preparing these more elaborate dishes in their tiny tenement kitchens. In fact, they may not have been able to read these cookbooks, which were published in English, at all. However, Eastern European Jewish women could turn to Jewish cookbooks written in Yiddish. This genre of cookbooks disseminated a wide variety of viewpoints, aiming to make food fancier, or more kosher, or more American, or more nutritious. These cookbooks provided a window through

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<sup>222</sup> *The Settlement Cook Book* has menus for Valentine's Day, Washington's Birthday, St. Patrick's Day, and Thanksgiving. It also provides three Lenten menus, Easter dinner, and Christmas dinner, and Christmas supper. The Passover Seder is the only Jewish holiday included. "*Aunt Babette's*" *Cook Book* has a chapter for Passover dishes (entitled Easter Dishes) which first describes how to set the table for the Seder before presenting the recipes.



which Eastern European Jewish women could begin to learn about American food without compromising *kashrut* and its religious principles.<sup>223</sup>

German Jews and Eastern European Jews in Baltimore lived with a keen awareness of the divide between their two groups, despite their common religion. The German Jews, also known as uptown Jews, resided in more affluent Baltimore neighborhoods along Madison Avenue and Eutaw Street and in the northwest sector of the city. They had struggled to establish themselves in America, and addresses such as these denoted their achievement of a comfortable middle-class American lifestyle. With the arrival of the Eastern European Jews, who were deeply devout and highly visible as foreigners by their distinct dress and behavior, the uptown Jews feared that they would be linked with these strange individuals from the Old World on the basis of their shared religion, and that their own social and economic position would falter by association. This anxiety over America society's perception of the Eastern European Jewish immigrants and the attendant decline in status for themselves provides a second, less well-intentioned, impetus for the many charitable activities of the German Jews in Baltimore. By assisting the Eastern European Jews in adjusting to life in America, the German Jews hoped to erase their foreignness and preserve their own economic and social status.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> For further discussion of the Jewish cookbooks of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Avi Y. Decter and Juliana Ochs Dweck, eds, *Chosen Food: Cuisine, Culture, and American Jewish Identity* (Baltimore: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2011), 39-44 and Susan L. Braunstein and Jenna Weissman Joselit, eds, *Getting Comfortable in New York: The American Jewish Home, 1880-1950* (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1990), 77-102.

<sup>224</sup> Isaac M. Fein, *The Making of an American Jewish Community: The History of Baltimore Jewry from 1773 to 1920* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1971), 144. Deborah R. Weiner, Anita Kassof, and Avi Y. Decter, eds, *Voices of Lombard Street: A Century of Change in East Baltimore* (Baltimore: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2007), 69.

Starting in the 1850s, the German Jews of Baltimore founded a number of charities to address the problems associated with poverty. They established institutions to care for Jews at every phase of life and in every adverse situation; Jewish orphans, working girls, widows, and families abandoned by the father, as well as the elderly, the sick, and the blind benefited from the work of the German Jewish charities. Among the oldest German Jewish charities in Baltimore, the Hebrew Benevolent Society provided general aid to the impoverished, while the Hebrew Ladies' Sewing Society sewed clothing for the poor and provided linens for various Jewish institutions. The Hebrew Hospital and Asylum provided medical services, while the Hebrew Orphan Asylum cared for children without parents, and the Council Milk and Ice Fund supplied milk and ice to those who could not afford such items, particularly families with infants and young children and the sick. Beginning in the 1880s, the uptown Jews expanded the work of their established network of charities to assist Jewish immigrants arriving from Eastern Europe. The Hebrew Ladies' Sewing Society greeted arriving immigrants and ensured that they food and shelter during their first days in America. The Hebrew Benevolent Society often assisted Eastern European immigrant families who were struggling financially. Two organizations which were founded in the 1890s engaged in settlement work in the East Baltimore neighborhood and provided additional services for recent Jewish immigrants. The Maccabeans provided educational and recreational opportunities, and the Daughters in Israel engaged in a wide variety of charitable activities to assist female immigrants, later focusing on providing safe and affordable housing for working girls. In 1909, the Maccabeans and the Daughters in Israel joined their settlement activities under the auspices of the newly formed Jewish Educational

Alliance. Established in 1907, the Jewish Home for Consumptives cared for Jewish patients who suffered from tuberculosis. All of these charities strove to relieve the poverty of the Eastern European Jewish immigrants and to improve their lives permanently through better homes, better food, adequate clothing, and productive employment.

By the 1890s, the earliest of Eastern European Jewish immigrants, or downtown Jews, had settled into their new lives in America and were prospering economically; they realized that they owed charitable support to more recent Jewish immigrants and the East Baltimore community. However, rather than working with the established Jewish charities in Baltimore, they began to form their own charities, which often overlapped with the German Jewish charities in terms of their functions. The downtown Jews created the Hebrew Children's Sheltering and Protective Association, to care for orphans; the Talmud Torah, to instruct children in Judaism; the Hebrew Friendly Inn and Aged Home, to provide temporary shelter for immigrants and transients as well as to care for the elderly; the Home for Aged Incurables, to care for the elderly who suffered from tuberculosis; the Hebrew Immigrant Protective Association (later named the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and affiliated with a national organization by the same name), to assist immigrants before, during, and after emigrating to the United States; and the Young Ladies' Benevolent Society, to assist women and girls with their particular needs.

Several factors, ranging from practical to philosophical, likely motivated the Eastern European Jews to create a separate but parallel charitable structure. The Eastern European Jews initially approached the uptown charities, expressing a desire to join these organizations and to assist in their administration; the leadership of the uptown charities

rebuffed these overtures.<sup>225</sup> The daily operations of the German Jewish charities also contributed to the development of the downtown charities; reflecting on the recent history of the uptown charities since the mass immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe, a speaker lamented that the German Jewish charities had begrudgingly provided aid and services to the Eastern European Jews, whom the uptown Jews viewed as “a distinct class, different in speech, tradition and origin, unsought in arrival and unwelcome in presence, whose only claim was a tenuous tie of emotional appeal and an identical negation in religious belief.”<sup>226</sup> Charity begrudgingly given may have influenced the Eastern European Jews to provide support within their own community, which understood and accepted them. The remarks of the Rev. Dr. J. L. Magnes of Temple Emanuel in New York City to the leadership and the members of the Eastern European charities in 1909 also support this justification for charitable organizations dedicated to serving and administered by Eastern European Jews. Magnes discussed the difficulties of charity work when affluent Jews worked within the poor Jewish communities. He noted a lack of understanding of “the customs, the life and the language of the people with whom they were to deal,” even when the charity’s workers and recipients shared the same faith. “Many of the self-constituted officers in the societies formed by the well-to-do class have never been able to get down into the heart of the Jew with the long beard and dirty coat.”<sup>227</sup> Uptown and downtown Jews alike considered the religious and cultural chasm between themselves to be too great to bridge in their charitable work.

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<sup>225</sup> *First Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1908, p. 7, folder 138, box 10, MS 170, JMM.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>227</sup> “United Hebrew Charities Meeting,” *The Jewish Comment*, February 12, 1909. Found in scrapbook, folder 118, box 7, MS 138, JMM.

Despite these problems of empathy and understanding, the German Jewish and Eastern European Jewish charities displayed a common concern for the immigrants' most basic needs. Each group provided legal services relating to immigration, deportation, and naturalization; the basic necessities like shelter, food, and clothing; economic opportunity through employment bureaus and vocational training. They also urged all immigrants to further their education, particularly by learning English. To support these activities, Baltimore's Jewish charities initially conducted their fund-raising efforts by hosting annual banquets, dances, charity fairs, and other entertainments. The Hebrew Ladies' Sewing Society held an annual banquet and their Calico Ball, while Band Number 3 of the Daughters in Israel hosted a smaller event, a tea at one of their members' homes which raised approximately \$80.<sup>228</sup> However, in 1907, in response to overlapping initiatives within their own communal charity and the increasing fiscal demands of their work, the disparate German Jewish charities proposed a radical solution. Nine of the major German Jewish charities united under the administrative body of the Federated Jewish Charities and reorganized their financial structure. Viewing events like banquets and dances as fiscally inefficient, the Federated Jewish Charities instituted a strict subscription structure to raise the necessary funds for their work.<sup>229</sup> The following year, the major Eastern European Jewish charities in Baltimore adopted a similar administrative organization, the United Hebrew Charities. The centralized structure of

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<sup>228</sup> Typed report, "Introduction to The Jewish Women's Work of Baltimore," 1893, folder 2000.028.002, JMM.

<sup>229</sup> For a discussion about the purpose of forming the Federated Jewish Charities, the previous methods of fund-raising, the rationale behind the new subscription-based fund-raising, and the efficiency and economic benefits of such a charitable structure, see *First Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1908, pp. 18-19, folder 138, box 10, MS 170, JMM.

the uptown and downtown Jewish charities of Baltimore allowed for more efficient and effective service to the community.

This dramatic structural and financial change may have served a second, unspoken purpose. By moving away from event-based and social fund-raising, the Federated Jewish Charities and the United Hebrew Charities excluded food from their public gatherings. The contentious Jewish food landscape in America, rife with debates about *kashrut*, made public eating problematic, fraught with unpleasant tension which interfered with the experience of “food-joy.” The infamous Trefa Banquet, held in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1883, would have been well known to the Jewish community in Baltimore, especially since several prominent Baltimoreans including Rabbi Benjamin Szold and his daughter Henrietta, had attended. The banquet, held in honor of the ordination of the first class of American Reform rabbis, featured a lavish French-inspired menu composed of nine courses that included oysters, clams, lobster, and unclean meats. Although this meal would have been a typical banquet meal in America at the time, many felt it was highly inappropriate for such an event and for the diners.<sup>230</sup> The furor over this culinary faux pas reverberated throughout Jewish communities in America, opening debates about kosher and *treyf* food and the practices of *kashrut* in modern times.<sup>231</sup> By removing food from their fund-raising activities, the Jewish charities in Baltimore sidestepped this important and divisive issue and avoided making any of their members uncomfortable.

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<sup>230</sup> Lance J. Sussman, “Myth of the Trefa Banquet: American Culinary Culture and the Radicalization of Food Policy in American Reform Judaism,” *American Jewish Archives Journal* 57, no. 1 & 2 (2005): 31-34.

<sup>231</sup> Jenna Weissman Joselilt, “Food Fight: The Americanization of Kashrut in Twentieth-Century America,” in *Food and Judaism: A Special Issue of Studies in Jewish Civilization, Volume 15*, ed. Leonard J. Greenspoon, Ronald A. Simkins, and Gerald Shapiro (Omaha, NE: Creighton University Press, 2005), 336.

Although food had been excluded from their fund-raising activities, Baltimore's Jewish charities engaged with food in many other ways in their work with the Eastern European immigrants. To combat hunger, they served meals to immigrants who had just arrived in Baltimore, and they provided groceries to families who were in need. They concerned themselves with the health and nutritional benefits of food for children and the sick, providing milk and eggs and consulting with medical professionals about the specific dietary needs of these groups. To ensure the continuity of the Jewish dietary laws, they saw to the education of children in the laws of *kashrut* and taught kosher cooking to orphaned girls. By distributing matzoh and other food during the Jewish holidays, they ensured that all Jews could celebrate the religious holidays appropriately. Finally, they supported the "food-joy" of Jewish orphans and elderly through donations of staple foods and treats like ice cream and cake. The Jewish charities, uptown and downtown, conducted all of food-related charitable work within the framework of the dietary laws of *kashrut*, seeking to serve the unique religious needs of the Eastern European Jews and to support the broadest possible group of Jews in Baltimore without raising serious objections to their work.

In the first years of mass immigration, members of the Hebrew Ladies' Sewing Society, including its long-time president Mrs. Betsy Wiesenfeld, volunteered to greet Eastern European Jewish immigrants at the Locust Point, Sparrows Point, and Canton immigration stations and helped to settle them into their new lives. "Clothing, furniture and food were given with a lavish hand; the president personally supervised the purchase

of daily supplies and looked after their prompt distribution.”<sup>232</sup> Charity workers like Miss Martha Reizenstein of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) also ensured that immigrants would be provided for once they left the immigration station. These workers ascertained whether recent arrivals had relatives or other points of contact in the city with whom they could stay temporarily; for those immigrants who arrived without any sort of local network of relatives or friends, HIAS workers arranged for temporary lodging at the Hebrew Friendly Inn.<sup>233</sup> Founded in 1891, the Hebrew Friendly Inn fed and temporarily housed both immigrants and indigents. They served thousands of meals to immigrants in the course of a year, and later expanded their services to care for elderly Jews.<sup>234</sup> Food donations arrived in the form of basic ingredients, like milk, meat, matzoh, eggs, potatoes, sugar, and herring, and donations of whiskey allowed elderly Jews a bit of “food-joy” on occasion.<sup>235</sup>

To combat malnutrition and hunger, the Hebrew Benevolent Society (HBS) and the Har Sinai Congregation’s Social Service Case Committee, which assisted the HBS in its work, sent friendly visitors like Sadie Coplan, Martha Reizenstein, Doris Dettelbach, and Ida Goldstein to the homes of families experiencing financial hardship to assess their condition and to provide for their needs.<sup>236</sup> An anonymous individual contacted the

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<sup>232</sup> Booklet, “Golden Jubilee Fiftieth Annual Report of the Hebrew Ladies’ Sewing Society of Baltimore, MD, 1906,” p. 34, folder 2000.028.001, JMM.

<sup>233</sup> *HIAS-Baltimore Golden Jubilee Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society*, 1953, folder 150, box 10, MS 170, JMM.

<sup>234</sup> For example, the Friendly Inn served over 7400 meals to residents in 1917, per *Annual Joint Report, United Hebrew Charities of Baltimore and Constituent Organizations*, 1917, p. 35, folder 280, box 19, MS 170, JMM.

<sup>235</sup> Hebrew Friendly Inn Minute Book, April 1, 1903, p. 98; March 23, 1904, p. 232; November 23, 1904, p. 354, folder 1982.025.005, JMM.

<sup>236</sup> HBS friendly visitors were not prominently featured in their reports or in annual reports. They generally only initialed their reports. Sadie Coplan’s name was discovered in reports. MR was likely Martha Reizenstein, and DD was likely Doris Dettelbach. Miss I. Goldstein is presumed to be Ida Goldstein, the



Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1908 to report that the Schapiro family, Samuel and Rosa and their six children, were near to starvation. Those who worked as tailors and in the garment industry, like Samuel Schapiro, often struggled to make ends meet and were subject to seasonal fluctuations in their work. A friendly visitor gave the family a small sum of cash in addition to the aid they received monthly.<sup>237</sup> Harry and Annie Goldsmith received frequent aid from Jewish charities. In 1915, the friendly visitor talked with Annie and discovered that the family was “in want of food. ... Family fare on bread and herring. Cannot afford meat even once wkly.” Later that year, Annie confessed to the friendly visitor that she and her husband Harry had not “eaten anything that day; giving it all to children.”<sup>238</sup> The Hebrew Benevolent Society provided the Goldsmith family with food staples like flour, sugar, rice, barley, oatmeal, beans, potatoes, and salt.<sup>239</sup> On different occasions in 1916 and 1917, Har Sinai’s friendly visitors provided the Phillips and Rusti families with similar staple food items, including in these families’ allotments some more substantial items like apples, oil, tea, bread, butter, and meat. They also allotted quantities of herring, raisins, prunes, beans, onions, beets, and tomatoes to these two families.<sup>240</sup> Through the selection of these diverse ingredients, the Har Sinai visitors demonstrated their understanding of the Eastern European Jewish diet and supported such culinary preferences. The friendly visitors made no overtures to alter these families’ familiar diets, nor did they provide items like pork and shellfish which would have been abhorrent to Eastern European Jews. The friendly visitors did not comment on the

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visiting housekeeper mentioned in the *Fourth Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1911, p. 22, folder 139, box 10, MS 170, JMM.

<sup>237</sup> Schapiro Family Case File, folder 4, box 1, MS 138, JMM. Samuel and Rosa Schapiro were Russian Jews who immigrated to the United States in 1896. They received aid from 1899-1908.

<sup>238</sup> Goldsmith Family Case File, folder 4, box 1, MS 138, JMM.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> Letters to Mrs. Herman, February 16 and March 7, 1917 and letter to Dr. Rubenstein, January 13, 1916, folder 122, box 8, MS 138, JMM.

cooking methods or the foods that the families ate; rather, they concentrated their efforts on providing an adequate quantity of food for immigrant and poor Jewish families and occasionally intervened in the families' health matters when children were thought to be undernourished.

The Jewish charities of Baltimore demonstrated a marked concern with providing for the special dietary needs of children and invalids, particularly those with tuberculosis. Medical professionals considered milk to be essential in the diet of young children and helpful in the recuperative efforts of invalids. The Council Milk and Ice Fund had as its primary task the distribution of pure and modified milk, and ice in the summer, to families with infants and small children and to invalids. Noting the importance of milk to a healthy diet, Mrs. Isidore Ash, President of the Council Milk and Ice Fund noted that "every charity worker is constantly coming in contact with the aenemic ill-fed element in the community; the first need considered is food, and the proper food in many cases is milk."<sup>241</sup> The Council received each application for milk with a certificate from a doctor, which buttressed the health and nutritional need for the milk.<sup>242</sup> In a report to the Jewish Educational Alliance's Board of Directors in 1920, Head Resident Jess Perlman noted with some amusement the recent discussion in the press which urged the public schools to provide milk to its young students. Proudly proclaiming the progressiveness of the Jewish Educational Alliance and the Jewish charities in general, Perlman noted that "the Alliance long ago saw this need and ever since the establishment of the Kindergarten has given milk to these children."<sup>243</sup> Although the proper diet for children included milk, the

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<sup>241</sup> *Second Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1909, 114.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> Head Resident's Board Report, March 1920, folder 213, box 14, MS 170, JMM.

Jewish charities engaged in a much broader interest in the nutrition of children. In 1920, Dr. McCollum worked with Perlman and Miss Brodie at the Jewish Educational Alliance to evaluate the food provided to the children who attended the Day Nursery. “The doctor is very much interested in giving the children two meals a day – breakfast and dinner instead of the present dinner and milk in the afternoon.”<sup>244</sup> For the 100 children living at the Betsy Levy Memorial Home, the Hebrew Children’s Sheltering and Protective Association’s orphanage, “much attention is given to the diet, meals being provided for a healthy development.”<sup>245</sup>

Food was a critical element not only in the treatment of the sick, but also in the maintenance and improvement of working adults’ health. Medical knowledge at the end of the nineteenth century directed those caring for the ill to treat them in part by feeding them specific foods. The preferred diet for invalids generally included milk and eggs. *The Settlement Cook Book* included a section on invalid cookery, while the conversational recipes in *Aunt Babette’s Cook Book* included asides to indicate when certain beverages or soups were appropriate for the sick and convalescing. Mrs. Ash of the Council Milk and Ice Fund was exceedingly pleased that for some patients in the early stages of tuberculosis, “the disease has been conquered with proper nourishment,” including milk.<sup>246</sup> Doctors who worked with the HBS wrote orders for eggs on a daily basis to aid in Annie Goldsmith’s recuperation from an operation, and Dorothy Goldstein received eggs and milk to speed her recovery.<sup>247</sup> A diet full of milk and eggs benefited not only the sick but also the working class Jews. A report discussing the Maccabean

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<sup>244</sup> Resident Director’s Report, c. spring 1920, folder 213, box 14, MS 170, JMM.

<sup>245</sup> *United Hebrew Charities of Baltimore Annual Report*, 1911, folder 280, box 19, MS 170, JMM.

<sup>246</sup> *Second Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1909, 115.

<sup>247</sup> Goldsmith Family Case File and Goldstein Family Case File, folder 4, box 1, MS 138, JMM.

Country Home noted in several places that many individuals who sojourned at the house during the summer had gained weight, and Miss M. S. Hanaw, the former Head Resident and author of the report, stressed that the Country Home served generous meals using fine ingredients from the best suppliers, noting that “the best of food is none too good for working people whose vitality is usually very low.”<sup>248</sup> By strengthening the working class Jews through access to plentiful and nutritious food, Jewish charities discovered the potential of food to work as preventative, as well as curative, medicine.

Tuberculosis afflicted a disproportionate number of Jews who worked as tailors and seamstresses in the garment industry, and charities like the Hebrew Benevolent Society sought to treat it through a specialized diet which they furnished to many Jews who remained confined in their own homes.<sup>249</sup> When physicians advised Mrs. Rachel Lowenthal, chairman of the Hebrew Ladies’ Sewing Society’s grocery committee, that a more nutritious diet could be provided for the sick and consumptive, she promptly revised the list of food items in accordance with their recommendations.<sup>250</sup> The illness of one family member could also have adverse economic consequences for the rest of the family. The Grocery Committee of the Hebrew Ladies’ Sewing Society provided fourteen families with groceries on a monthly basis because the head of the family was confined at the Jewish Home for Consumptives and could not provide for his family.<sup>251</sup>

Addressing the immediate needs of their community, the Jewish charities operating in East Baltimore provided several forms of food-related aid to their co-

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<sup>248</sup> *Third Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1910, p. 108, folder 138, box 10, MS 170, JMM.

<sup>249</sup> *Fourth Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1911, p. 21 and *Fifth Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1912, p. 21, folder 139, box 10, MS 170, JMM.

<sup>250</sup> *Second Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1909, 84.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

religionists, developing programs and methods which closely resembled those of the Protestant charities and social reformers working throughout Baltimore. Representatives of these philanthropic organizations, Jewish and Protestant, arranged to provision families in need with groceries, ensured that children ate a nutritious diet which included milk, and supplied invalids and the sick with appropriate foods to restore them to good health. Those providing aid also understood the connection between diet, health and productive work; those who were too sick to work would not be useful citizens who supported the nation, nor would they be able to support their families financially. While Baltimore's Protestant charities emphasized the former notion, which furthered their moral uplift work, the Jewish charities concentrated on health and productive work in a smaller and more practical way, noting the interventions they would have to make to support a family when its breadwinner was unable to work.

Moving beyond the physical concerns of diet, nutrition, and health, Eastern European Jews strove to protect and to uphold their religious observances by honoring the dietary laws of *kashrut* and by providing the requisite food for the Jewish holidays. Baltimore's German Jews, despite their personal beliefs and practices of *kashrut*, likewise upheld this tenet of Judaism and acknowledged the importance of holiday food in their own charitable work. Members of the Hebrew Ladies' Sewing Society who worked with immigrants upon their arrival from Eastern Europe provided meals which met the standards of *kashrut*. "Instead of purchasing food, unwelcome and forbidden, they stood over the fires they themselves in their ardor had kindled, and cooked food

according to religious rites.”<sup>252</sup> Observant Jews’ religious concern for protecting their kosher diet prompted the creation of numerous Jewish charitable institutions, such as hospitals, invalid and old age homes, and orphanages, in Baltimore and other American cities.<sup>253</sup>

Working to secure the continuity of *kashrut* into the next generation, institutions like the Talmud Torah, the Betsy Levy Memorial Home, and the Hebrew Orphan Asylum transmitted the many and complicated rules of *kashrut* to the Jewish children who represented the future of Jewish life in America.<sup>254</sup> For the orphaned girls at the Betsy Levy Memorial Home, practical lessons in cooking reinforced the theoretical lessons of *kashrut* which they learned in Hebrew School. Lacking a maternal role model to teach them to cook, the Levy Home staff established a Domestic Science department, where Miss Julia Handschuh taught the older girls “the rudiments of Jewish cookery and baking” and emphasized “the nutritive value of foodstuffs, and the proper combinations in daily menus.”<sup>255</sup> “The proper combinations in daily menus” doubtless referred to the kosher practice of separating meat and milk in cooking and at each meal.

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<sup>252</sup> Booklet, “Golden Jubilee Fiftieth Annual Report of the Hebrew Ladies’ Sewing Society of Baltimore, MD, 1906,” p. 45, folder 2000.028.001, JMM.

<sup>253</sup> *The UHC: Its Organization Activities and Needs*, 1915, p. 17, folder 280, box 19, MS 170, JMM. *Second Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1909, 119. Lance J. Sussman, “Myth of the Trefa Banquet: American Culinary Culture and the Radicalization of Food Policy in American Reform Judaism,” *American Jewish Archives Journal* 57, no. 1 & 2 (2005): 38.

<sup>254</sup> *United Hebrew Charities of Baltimore Annual Report*, 1911, folder 20, box 19, MS 170, JMM. Talmud Torah instructed boys and girls in Shulchan Aruch, which conveys the Jewish dietary laws of *kashrut*. The Levy home provided religious education classes for its orphans. See also Levy Home’s Superintendent’s Annual Report, 1920, folder 12, box 1, MS 138, JMM. A description of the religious instruction received at the Hebrew Orphan Asylum is found in the *Fifth Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1912, p. 80, folder 139, box 10, MS 170, JMM.

<sup>255</sup> *Hebrew Children’s Sheltering and Protective Association Annual Report*, 1920, pp. 19-20, folder 7, box 1, MS 138, JMM.

To ensure the proper celebration of Passover, which prohibited leavening in any food, several Jewish charities distributed matzo to the Jewish families of East Baltimore. The United Hebrew Charities' Matzo Fund distributed "over 5000 pounds matzos, 150 bushels potatoes, [and] 1800 pounds meat and other necessities" in preparation for Passover in 1908.<sup>256</sup> Similarly, the Federated Jewish Charities managed the Jonas Friedenwald Matzoth Fund for distributing unleavened bread during Passover. Rather than attempting to modify their co-religionists' eating habits in order to make them less traditionally Jewish and more American, the workers in the German Jewish charities understood how closely connected food was to the expression of Eastern European Jews' religious beliefs, and they exhibited a continuing respect for the religious and dietary needs of the Eastern European Jews.

To provide "food-joy" to the less fortunate in Baltimore's Jewish community, many individuals and businesses made in-kind donations of food; however, these donations often were not in the form of staples like flour or potatoes. Instead, charitable Jews in Baltimore provided chicken and turkey dinners, ice cream, cakes, treats, and other food donations to the orphans who lived at the Betsy Levy Memorial Home and the Hebrew Orphan Asylum.<sup>257</sup> Other organizations provided celebrations for holidays like Purim, or special treats for Hanukkah. In 1893, the Helping Hand Band of the Daughters in Israel, a group of children who studied at the Sabbath School of the Baltimore Hebrew

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<sup>256</sup> "Passover Bread Given: United Hebrew Charities Makes Liberal Distribution," unidentified newspaper, undated article found in United Hebrew Charities scrapbook, folder 117, box 7, MS 138, JMM.

<sup>257</sup> *First Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1908, pp. 70-71, folder 138, box 10, MS 170, JMM lists the donations in-kind to the HOA, including chicken and turkey dinners, ice cream and cakes, apples and oranges, and other candy and treats. Similar lists can be found in each successive Joint Report. For Levy Home, see *Hebrew Children's Sheltering and Protective Association Annual Report*, 1920, pp. 25-28, folder 7, box 1, MS 138, JMM and Superintendent Benjamin Weinfeld's monthly reports in HCSPA Minutes, 1920-1921, folder 10, box 1, MS 138, JMM.

Congregation, distributed candies for Hanukkah to the children of the Frank Free Sabbath School and the children who lived at the Hebrew Orphan Asylum.<sup>258</sup> The delicious pleasures of “food-joy” were not reserved exclusively for the young. In 1903, the residents at the Hebrew Friendly Inn enjoyed a Purim Dinner, sponsored by the Ladies’ Auxiliary Society.<sup>259</sup> Fourteen years later, eighty-six elderly residents of the Hebrew Friendly Inn and Aged Home enjoyed a summer outing by rail car while delighting in cake, soft drinks, ice cream, and fruit.<sup>260</sup> Through these donations, less fortunate Jews could maintain the proper relationship between food and religion through “food-joy,” the earthly savoring and enjoyment of the sustenance provided by God.

Among the charitable endeavors of Gentile and Jewish Americans, settlement houses figured prominently in the turn-of-the-century American urban landscape, where they served poor and immigrant neighborhoods and often functioned to assimilate recent immigrants into American society through English and citizenship classes and a host of other educational, domestic, social, cultural, and recreational activities. Many offered cooking classes and food-themed lectures to their members as part of their well-intentioned Americanizing agenda. Two of the German Jewish charities in Baltimore, the Maccabeans and the Daughters in Israel, operated settlement houses in East Baltimore between 1891 and 1907, where they served the Eastern European Jewish immigrants of the neighborhood. With their services divided roughly along gender lines, with the Maccabeans serving boys and men and the Daughters in Israel assisting girls and women, the two organizations consolidated in 1907 to form the Jewish Educational Alliance

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<sup>258</sup> “Report of Helping Hand Band of the Daughters in Israel” found in typed report “Introduction to The Jewish Women’s Work of Baltimore,” 1893, folder 2000.028.002, JMM.

<sup>259</sup> Hebrew Friendly Inn Minute Book, March 4, 1903, p. 85, folder 1982.025.005, JMM.

<sup>260</sup> “Treat for Old Folks,” *Jewish Comment*, July 27, 1917, folder 118, box 7, MS 138, JMM.



(JEA), which continued their early settlement work and expanded their programming through the 1950s.<sup>261</sup> Of these three organizations, only the Daughters in Israel engaged actively with issues surrounding food during the period of mass Eastern European Jewish immigration. The Maccabeans and the JEA, in contrast, concentrated their efforts in other areas which affected the Jewish immigrants.

The Daughters in Israel operated the Neighborhood House, a settlement house at 117 Aisquith Street; the settlement served 1425 individuals a week in the largely Jewish immigrant community of East Baltimore.<sup>262</sup> Professing their devotion to a Jewish lifestyle while attempting to combine it with a modern and American sensibility, the Daughters desired “to impart the new opportunities and responsibilities of this country, while still preserving a positive Jewish spirit. We stand for the interpretation of all that makes for helpful Jewish womanhood – cleanly personal and domestic habits, enlightened private and civic morality, healthy tastes and pleasurable imagination.”<sup>263</sup> Serving children in the daytime and working people during the evening, the Neighborhood House was staffed by superintendent Rosa Fried, two workers, and many volunteers; the settlement offered activities for children such as Hebrew education, a variety of sewing classes for girls, housekeeping and cooking classes, dramatics, a game room, singing and folk dancing, and clubs. The cooking department, comprised of one room, featured a kosher kitchen; Miss Mary Kraus taught classes on Tuesday afternoons, and Miss Schuerman, a cooking instructor who worked in the Baltimore public schools, instructed the young women on Thursday afternoons. Adult activities included English

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<sup>261</sup> Upon consolidation, the Maccabeans ceased to exist as an organization. The Daughters in Israel, who had opposed consolidation, continued their charitable work with a narrow focus on the problems of working girls. This compromise was reached with the assistance of the Federated Jewish Charities.

<sup>262</sup> *Second Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1909, 92.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

classes, classes in dressmaking and stenography, dramatics, piano, dancing, literary clubs, and social events like Russian teas.<sup>264</sup> The Daughters expressed a special concern for the welfare of working girls, and after the consolidation of their other activities into the JEA, the Daughters focused all of their attention on the problems facing these young women.

The Jewish Educational Alliance functioned as Baltimore's primary settlement house serving the Jewish community from its founding in 1909 through its closure in the early 1950s. Located at 1206 East Baltimore Street in the heart of East Baltimore, this building was remembered fondly as a home away from home.<sup>265</sup> Like its predecessor organization, the Maccabees, the JEA attempted to alleviate and solve a wide variety of social problems which affected their immigrant constituency. In its early years, the JEA focused on children, working to reduce the growing juvenile delinquency problem within the neighborhood.<sup>266</sup> At the dedication of the JEA's new building in 1913, Julius Levy addressed the audience and said "I know of no nobler endeavor than the desire to develop and equip boys and girls so that they may become desirable citizens."<sup>267</sup> The Alliance ran a kindergarten and day nursery and offered a multitude of recreational and educational activities for children and teenagers. The JEA also offered English and citizenship classes for recent immigrants and considered hosting an employment bureau. In 1911, the JEA's class offerings expanded to include millinery, sewing, and stenography, skills which young women could use to earn money and to support

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid., 92-93.

<sup>265</sup> Dr. Philip H. Block, "East Side Story," folder 1992.231.336, JMM.

<sup>266</sup> *First Joint Report of the Federated Jewish Charities*, 1908, pp. 13-14, folder 138, box 10, MS 170, JMM discusses rising juvenile delinquency and the need for a "Jewish social center, well equipped for building character, for strengthening the latent good impulses of boys and girls, for taking firm hold of those who have developed anti-social tendencies, and patiently and resourcefully working with them until their character has been formed and the danger point passed." The resulting JEA and its emphasis on recreational activities for youth was a direct response to this situation.

<sup>267</sup> Dr. Philip H. Block, "East Side Story," folder 1992.231.336, JMM.

themselves.<sup>268</sup> A few years later, in 1914, the JEA had expanded its offerings to include dressmaking and embroidery classes, a dance class, a game room for boys, and a Hebrew School.<sup>269</sup> The JEA's offerings continually expanded with the addition of more trade classes, citizenship classes, lectures and concerts, declamation contests, debates, dramatics, music, billiards, and boxing, and as its members formed a large number of athletic, literary, current event, and social clubs.

The JEA evinced little concern with food for the first ten years of its existence, and only minimal interest after that time. The Alliance did employ a cook and fed its Day Nursery students, and it likely maintained a kosher kitchen. In listing the items to be purchased for the Nursery Room, a JEA worker included an entry for two new 6 quart soup pots, one for meat and one for milk.<sup>270</sup> Because of the imperative in *kashrut* to separate milk and meat, it follows that the need for separate soup pots would be required only in a kosher kitchen. The JEA cooperated with various organizations stationed within their building, including the Babies' Milk Fund Association, the Instructive Visiting Nurses Association, the Health Department Nurses, the Babies' Clinic, the Council Milk and Ice Fund, the Maryland Social Hygiene Society, and the Hebrew Benevolent Society.<sup>271</sup> Perhaps because these organizations had a vested interest, and often a scientific one, in the immigrants' food habits and the related issues of health and nutrition, and because they were loosely associated with the Alliance, the JEA felt that it could concentrate its resources on other activities, particularly English and citizenship classes, vocational training, and recreation.

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<sup>268</sup> Jewish Educational Alliance Minutes and Financial Records Book, 1909-1914, folder 212, box 13, MS 170, JMM.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Jewish Educational Alliance Minutes and Finance Book, 1914-1921, folder 213, box 14, MS 170, JMM.

<sup>271</sup> Jewish Educational Alliance Historical Report, January 1921, folder 214, box 15, MS 170, JMM.

With the hiring of the fourth Resident Director, Maurice Bisgyer, the JEA began to exhibit some interest in food. In 1920, the JEA started a Food Talks Class for Jewish mothers. At their own request, the class soon transformed itself into the Mothers' Club, which operated as a social and recreational group. The members governed their club and shaped its programming to suit their own interests, reducing the Food Talks to a minor role in the club's activities.<sup>272</sup> Perhaps these women longed for their time at the JEA, away from the pressing duties of home and children, to be social rather than instructional. Perhaps they would have preferred cooking demonstrations and classes rather than dry lectures about food and nutrition. For whatever reason, the mothers who attended this particular JEA club showed minimal interest in the Food Talks as conceived and presented by the JEA workers.

JEA workers believed that assimilation would be achieved more easily and quickly through avenues other than cooking and diet. Reporting on the decision of the Young Ladies' Benevolent Society, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and the Hebrew Free Loan Society (all UHC members) to share office space in the JEA building, Head Resident Jess Perlman noted the wisdom and the positive outcome of such a cooperative decision. "Every immigrant bureau should have close contact with the follow-up work in Americanization, the English, Citizenship, Millinery, and Dressmaking classes as well as assimilation into our American ways of enjoying ourselves – our recreational activities, and of course our clubs."<sup>273</sup> His focus on these civic, vocational, and recreational activities as the nexus for assimilation reflected the interests and the work of the JEA and

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<sup>272</sup> Board Notes from Resident Director, November 8, 1920, folder 213, box 14, MS 170, JMM.

<sup>273</sup> Jess Perlman Report to Board of Directors, March 1920, folder 213, box 14, MS 170, JMM.

excluded cooking and other domestic skills from consideration as significant Americanizing forces.

In its lack of interest in food-related programming, the JEA differed significantly from other settlement houses throughout the United States. Settlements in New York, Boston, Chicago, and Milwaukee all offered cooking classes to immigrant women; these classes likewise employed a subtle Americanizing agenda. Extremely popular, the cooking classes filled rapidly and served as social and recreational outlet and an entrée into the American lifestyle particularly for married Jewish women. For the most part, these classes honored *kashrut* while introducing new ingredients and suggesting economical ways of feeding one's family. They also added an awareness of health and nutrition to Jewish women's culinary tasks, which meshed well with the older tradition of *kashrut* and its stress upon the purity of food. Yet the nutritionists and home economists who taught these classes often denigrated the traditional and familiar Jewish ingredients and foods, like cholent and other one-pot meals and the pungent seasonings which Eastern European Jews favored. Nutritionists and home economists considered Eastern European Jewish cookery to be unbalanced, too rich, highly salty, and overly spiced. One-pot meals, which mixed food groups together, and heavy seasonings used to make inexpensive foods palatable, wasted the immigrants' energy by the excessive digestion required to process such foods. To replace these dishes, students learned how to cook simple American foods which were often bland and unappealing to the students.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> Avi Y. Decter and Juliana Ochs Dweck, eds, *Chosen Food: Cuisine, Culture, and American Jewish Identity* (Baltimore: Jewish Museum of Maryland, 2011), 16. Susan L. Braunstein and Jenna Weissman Joselit, eds, *Getting Comfortable in New York: The American Jewish Home, 1880-1950* (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1990), 29-30, 98-100, and 104, footnote 36. Jane Ziegelman, *97 Orchard Street: An Edible History of Five Immigrant Families in One New York Tenement* (New York: Smithsonian

While generally supporting the Jewish tradition of *kashrut*, home economists and cooking instructors promoted an assimilative agenda through the American and scientific cooking methods they demonstrated.

Although an anomaly in the American settlement movement, the JEA's stance on food as an ineffective tool for the assimilation of Eastern European Jews mirrored Baltimore's Jewish charities' opinion on the matter. The leaders of the Federated Jewish Charities, the United Hebrew Charities, and their constituent organizations understood both the Eastern European Jews' religious belief system and their unique cultural and historical experience which shaped their attitudes toward food. Because of their experience in the Diaspora, Jews proved to be adventurous eaters, willing to try new foods and to incorporate the dishes of other cultures into their culinary repertoire. Yet because of their adherence to *kashrut*, Baltimore's Jewish charities also understood the ways in which Eastern European Jews would limit their food adventures. Their adoption of American dishes and American cooking styles, adapted to meet the Jewish dietary laws, would certainly occur, as it had happened in other places and in other times throughout Jewish history; because of their long tradition of cultural and culinary borrowing, the adoption of an American diet would not necessarily be an indication of Americanization. Thus Baltimore's Jewish charities chose to focus on other aspects of food, such as alleviating hunger, promoting good nutrition and improving health, educating Jewish children in the laws of *kashrut* and occasionally kosher cooking, providing appropriate holiday foods, and facilitating "food-joy." The Jewish charities also supported activities and programs which would allow Eastern European Jews to

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Books/HarperCollins, 2010), 160-162. Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 103-105.

adjust to life in America, which they enacted through their recreation and especially their employment bureaus and vocational training.

In 1921, Baltimore's Jewish charities once again consolidated, merging the Federated Jewish Charities and the United Hebrew Charities into the unified organization which they named the Associated Jewish Charities. The consolidation promised to make Baltimore's Jewish charities more effective and efficient than in the past, allowing them to expand their service to the community. The consolidation also indicated the gradual disappearance of the divide between uptown and downtown, German and Eastern European, suggesting the possibility of a culturally unified American Jewish community in Baltimore. In the discussions which preceded this merger, the leaders of both charities voiced numerous concerns, among which were the necessity of continuing to provide a kosher diet at institutions like the Hebrew Hospital and the homes which cared for the sick and the elderly. The charities' leadership also agreed that the banquet to celebrate the start of a campaign for the new organization would serve kosher food.<sup>275</sup> These discussions reveal a continuing respect of the dietary differences within Baltimore's Jewish community in 1920 and intimate that the food strategies which predominated in Jewish charities during the decades of mass Eastern European Jewish immigration would persist in the charitable work of the Associated Jewish Charities in the coming decades.

Displaying great cultural sensitivity within their own religious community, Baltimore's Jewish charities did not promote an agenda of Americanization using food. They acknowledged the religious dictates which governed the Eastern European Jews' diet and worked to ensure that their food needs would be met, regardless of their own

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<sup>275</sup> Federated Jewish Charities Minutes, July 19, 1920, folder 318, box 21, MS 170, JMM.

personal religious beliefs and dietary habits. Concentrating on food as it interacted with health, religion, and pleasure, the Jewish charities successfully served the members of the East Baltimore community as they adjusted to life in America. Their successful inter-group relations contributed to the process of forging an American Jewish identity. As these processes continued to germinate in East Baltimore, a new institution joined the ranks of the charitable organizations and social reform bodies, joining the moral uplift and assimilative work undertaken by Baltimore's Protestant organizations. Public schools and their home economics classes promised to educate all of Baltimore's children, including Eastern European Jewish immigrants and the children of these immigrants. With standardized curriculum, the same messages about food, domesticity, and American cultural norms which the Protestant reformers tried to inculcate in Baltimore's working class, urban poor, and immigrants, could now be easily and widely distributed among children. These cooking lessons, while certainly influencing food choices and attitudes and transmitting middle-class values of domesticity, contended with the agency of Jewish children and young adults who began to make their own food choices. Chapter 4 explores Baltimore's first American-born generation of Eastern European Jews and their encounters with food at school and throughout the city.



## **Chapter 4: Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Recipes: Culinary Education and Personal Choice Among Baltimore's Jewish Community, 1920-1939**

In her famous *Treatise on Domestic Economy*, published in 1841, Catharine Beecher popularized the connection between cookery and other homemaking duties and the welfare of the nation. Beecher identified the American housekeeper as the individual who would lead her family to a bright future; collectively, all American housekeepers would lead their families forward to meet the nation's future, which promised to be magnificent. To accomplish such an important task, Beecher proposed the introduction of formal domestic science training in the schools; such training would ensure that American women were properly prepared to meet their weighty responsibilities in the home. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Protestant reformers in Baltimore had worked toward Beecher's goal in a haphazard way, offering cooking classes as part of their larger moral uplift work. Yet the influence of the cooking classes offered by the Poor Association, the YWCA, and Baltimore's settlement houses was constrained by the voluntary enrollment of interested students. It was not until domestic scientists like Ellen Richards introduced the discipline of scientific cookery in the late 1800s, and public schools adopted its successor discipline, home economics, into their curricula that Beecher's idea was fully realized. The Baltimore public schools effectively made the lessons which scientific cookery taught mandatory through their home economics courses.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Eleanor T. Fordyce, "Cookbooks of the 1800s," in *Dining in America, 1850-1900*, ed. Kathryn Grover (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press; Rochester, NY: The Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum, 1987), 85-113. Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

Home economics courses in the public schools took over the role many social reformers had played in Baltimore in earlier decades, instilling the messages about food, domesticity, respectability, and cultural citizenship in the city's children uniformly. Scientific cookery, one of the foundational pieces of the discipline of home economics, stressed that cooking must be a far more orderly and complex act than simply putting ingredients together, cooking them, and then serving the resulting dish to one's family. Instead, scientific cookery proscribed a methodical set of rules, based on the chemical composition and nutritional value of foods, for preparing foods and combining them into meals which would be easily digested and fortifying. Home economics courses also transmitted American middle-class values, such as table etiquette, the proper way to set a table, how to adorn the table and the dining room, and party planning and hostessing skills. The Maryland Home Economics Association, a professional organization for home economics professionals, further strengthened the messages of the public school's home economics courses; their activities, such as forming clubs in high schools, supported the middle-class message of the importance of proper cookery, nutrition, and the home.

Exposure to these domestic ideas for the children of Eastern European Jewish immigrants through the public schools was widespread in Baltimore, given changes to the state's compulsory attendance and child labor laws in the first years of the twentieth century. Advertising food products, particularly the new processed and canned foods, also became important in these decades. Homemakers were guided to the best products for their families, often through product demonstrations. The lessons and values taught in home economics courses in America's public schools and disseminated through

advertising campaigns shaped American attitudes toward food, including its preparation, serving, and consumption in these decades.

The personal choices about consumption made by ordinary people likewise impacted the foodways of Baltimore's Jewish community in the early twentieth century, as the American-born children of Eastern European Jewish immigrants experienced dramatic changes in their relationship with food beyond the public school setting. As their families achieved economic stability, they often moved out of East Baltimore's small apartments to houses in new neighborhoods, notably Park Heights and Forest Park. Although they had left the old neighborhood of East Baltimore, in many cases Baltimore's Jews reestablished enclave neighborhoods in their new environs, due to housing restrictions. In their more affluent circumstances, many incorporated American modes of decoration and domesticity into their Jewish celebrations, beginning a process of merging identities.<sup>277</sup> Many returned to Lombard Street to buy their familiar food, especially on Saturday nights. This generation also experienced struggles as they reached their teenage years and adulthood, as they faced choices about their own food habits, deciding whether to experiment with *treyf* foods or to hold fast to their families' and their religion's traditions and laws. Such choices were an ongoing negotiation of personal and national values, one in which each child of Eastern European Jewish immigrant parents would have to make his or her choices. Oral histories and memoirs of many of these individuals vividly describe their poignant encounters with food and the decisions they made.

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<sup>277</sup> For a discussion of the Jewish Home Beautiful, see Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Kitchen Judaism," in *Getting Comfortable in New York: The American Jewish Home, 1880-1950*, ed. Susan L. Braunstein and Jenna Weissman Joselit (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1990), 100-102.

Public school attendance in America had not always been mandatory. Children living in rural areas often missed school as they helped with harvesting and other agricultural tasks, while urban youth worked in factories to help support their families or roamed the streets unsupervised, raising concerns about juvenile delinquency. The importance of education to the nation's progress became apparent in the late nineteenth century, especially in light of the influx of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. Schools were viewed as civilizing and assimilative institutions which would teach the immigrants English and the ways of American living. In 1899, as Baltimore prepared to consider legislation which required compulsory attendance, the Charity Organization Society conducted a special study on school attendance in Baltimore's public schools. The results revealed that a great number of children who should be in school were not enrolled or did not attend regularly. There were also certain ages and grades at which conspicuous changes in enrollment occurred. By the fifth grade, the number of students enrolled in schools dropped significantly, and a second noticeable decrease in the schools' population occurred in the eighth grade. The report noted that generally, students left school at the age of twelve.<sup>278</sup> The report noted that children of immigrants typically attended school more regularly, due to their desire to learn English. However, because of their initial lack of language skills, they often did not advance to the next grade annually as did their American-born classmates. In these situations, the children might be embarrassed at being older than their classmates and start avoiding school. The report suggested ungraded classes for this type of student, to concentrate on the gaps in their education, particularly with the English language. Once the student had

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<sup>278</sup> Charity Organization Society of Baltimore, *Sixteenth Annual Report for the Year Ending November 1, 1897*, 33-34.

caught up to the appropriate grade level, he or she could rejoin the graded class. This arrangement was successfully employed in other cities with large immigrant populations and was expected to encourage the immigrant students to continue attending school.<sup>279</sup>

Other factors also contributed to the decreasing school attendance figures for Baltimore's older students. The report attributed the widespread truancy in Baltimore to several factors, such as the child's lack of interest in attending school, the parents' failure to enforce attendance, and the economic imperative for children to contribute to the family's income, either directly through work or indirectly by caring for younger siblings or taking meals to relatives who were employed. Those who were employed seasonally missed several months of school in the fall and the spring, as they worked as migrant agricultural laborers within the Mid-Atlantic region. Others found work in factories, canneries, bakeries, and the sewing and tailoring industry, as well as manual labor employment and domestic service.<sup>280</sup> The report did not remark on the overcrowded Baltimore schools and their poor heating and ventilation and unsanitary conditions, another reality which might have acted as a deterrent to school attendance.<sup>281</sup>

The mandatory school attendance laws and the child labor laws which Maryland enacted in 1902 worked in concert to ensure that children attended school, rather than working, until they reached the age of twelve.<sup>282</sup> Children between the ages of twelve and sixteen could apply for a work permit, but they had to pass a health and a literacy test

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 33-35.

<sup>281</sup> Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland, A Middle Temperament, 1634-1980* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 391.

<sup>282</sup> "State Department of Education," Maryland Manual On-Line, Maryland State Archives, accessed March 23, 2013, <http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/mdmanual/13sdoe/html/sdoef.html>. An article by Mary Faulkner indicates that in the late 1930s, students were required to attend school until the age of 16.

to demonstrate their knowledge of English. As a result of these two laws, as well as ongoing population growth caused in part by the continued mass immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, Baltimore's school enrollment surged in the early twentieth century. School enrollment throughout Baltimore expanded rapidly, increasing from 97,000 students in 1919 to 128,000 students in 1934, at which time the enrollment numbers leveled off. The number of high school students doubled in this period.<sup>283</sup> To keep pace with the large numbers of students now studying in their schools, Baltimore's municipal government began an impressive building program to accommodate their rapidly increasing student population.<sup>284</sup>

By 1902, home economics had become a small but significant part of the Baltimore public school curriculum. A decade earlier, Baltimore's public schools established the city's first home economics course by introducing a weekly hour-long sewing lesson for girls in the third through eighth grades. The following year, members of the Arundell Club, a women's club affiliated with the Maryland State Federation of Women's Clubs, offered to open a cooking school for 100 girls in South Baltimore, teaching them for one hour a week. The offer was made in order to demonstrate to the School Board the importance and demand for cooking instruction. Throughout the rest of the decade, cooking was taught at School #75 on Lexington and Carrolton Avenues. In 1902, a cooking center opened, providing 300 students in the seventh grade with a 90 minute cooking lesson once a week. The next year, five new cooking centers were

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<sup>283</sup> Sherry H. Olson, *Baltimore: The Building of an American City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 307.

<sup>284</sup> Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland, A Middle Temperament, 1634-1980* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 411. Sherry H. Olson, *Baltimore: The Building of an American City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 267-268.

opened, and nearly 1400 students from over half of the city's grammar schools attended these classes.<sup>285</sup>

Soon, Baltimore's female high schools were holding their home economics classes in large classroom suites and practice apartments. In 1908, a Household Arts Suite was installed in the new Eastern High School, and throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Baltimore continued to expand the home economics classroom facilities in all of its schools. Modern home economics classroom suites were included in every newly built school, and renovated schools acquired new or improved facilities for home economics instruction. "These schools were equipped with kitchen and clothing laboratories, and a model apartment which provided for a less formal and more practical and valuable type of home making work for the student."<sup>286</sup> The commitment of large financial and physical plant resources, which allowed home economics students the chance to enact what they had learned in the classroom, indicated the importance of a certain style of homemaking and domesticity in the eyes of not only the city's home economics teachers, but Baltimore's school administrators, school board members, and the city's political leaders.

Having the appropriate facilities to instruct students in home economics, educators and home economics professionals had to develop a curriculum for Baltimore's students. They did so in large part by drawing on the predecessor to the home economics

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<sup>285</sup> Mary Faulkner, "Baltimore Public Schools," *Maryland Home Economics Association News Letter* 10, no. 2 (April 1939): n.p., found in folder entitled "History of Home Economics Education, 1939," box 6, series 1, MHEA, UM. "What and Who' Honoring Leaders of MHEA, Maryland Home Economics Association Annual Luncheon Meeting, March 14, 1959, found in folder entitled "History of Maryland Home Economics Association, 1926-1976 (folder 2 of 2)," box 6, series 1, MHEA, UM.

<sup>286</sup> Mary Faulkner, "Baltimore Public Schools," *Maryland Home Economics Association News Letter* 10, no. 2 (April 1939): n.p., found in folder entitled "History of Home Economics Education, 1939," box 6, series 1, MHEA, UM.

discipline, scientific cookery. Developed in the late nineteenth century, scientific cookery offered an antidote to the traditional modes of domestic instruction, whereby cooking knowledge and recipes were transmitted individually from mother to daughter through daily practice. In contrast to the transmission of this sort of folk knowledge, scientific cookery relied on a formal classroom setting to teach women ways of preparing dishes and assembling meals using nutrition and scientific principles as guides. This new discipline emphasized the rational, orderly management of the cooking process, the kitchen, the diets of Americans, and all other aspects of the home. Through innovations like standardized measuring implements, scientific cookery aimed to produce the same results for dishes every time they were prepared, leaving nothing to chance in cooking.<sup>287</sup> Proponents of scientific cookery believed that all women needed to learn, or relearn, their domestic skills in carefully formulated classes; all girls and women in America, whether they were native-born or foreign-born, needed such instruction. Whatever they had learned about cooking and menu planning did not conform to scientific cookery standards. Cooking schools in Boston and New York taught classes in scientific cookery, hoping to enroll a wide variety of students, including working class women, domestic servants, immigrants, middle-class housewives, and future home economics teachers; classes proved most popular among the last two groups.

Scientific cookery not only sought to teach all women their method of cooking; they also desired to remake the American diet into a cohesive, healthful cuisine which would make the nation's citizens productive in their daily tasks. The new schools,

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<sup>287</sup> Eleanor T. Fordyce, "Cookbooks of the 1800s," in *Dining in America, 1850-1900*, ed. Kathryn Grover (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press; Rochester, NY: The Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum, 1987), 85-113. Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).



especially the Boston Cooking School, relied largely on English and New England culinary traditions and rarely ventured to instruct their pupils in the art of French cookery. Using scientific information at the time, they favored proteins, sugar, and fats because even small portions of these kinds of foods were full of calories, which translated to energy. Scientific cooks viewed fruits and vegetables as superfluous to a well-balanced diet, as their nutritional value was not understood until the early 1910s. A rational meal, composed using the principles of scientific cookery, relied only on the necessary chemical elements to nourish the body. Other scientific rationales dictated the flavors of foods and their presentation at mealtime. Flavors should stimulate the appetite but not be too intense so that they interfered with digestion. An attractive presentation, both of the dinner plate and the table, likewise contributed to the stimulation of one's appetite and helped with digestion. In the logical creation of an orderly meal, creativity, spontaneity, and instinct in the kitchen were strongly discouraged, and pleasure derived from the tastes of foods and the act of eating discarded as relevant factors in scientific cookery.<sup>288</sup>

Baltimore's home economics curriculum, standardized in the early 1920s, reflected many of the tenets of scientific cookery. Designed by the city's home economics educators and other professionals who belonged to the Maryland Home Economics Association, the foods and cookery portion of the home economics curriculum incorporated nutrition, presentation, etiquette, and entertaining into discussions of meals and the execution of recipes. By 1921, home economics was a required course for the city's female students in grades 5 through 10, and an elective

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

course for the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades; students typically spent two class periods a week in home economics classes, learning cookery, sewing, and home management.<sup>289</sup> In 1930, the second edition of *Home Economics Education*, the course of study for Baltimore's public school students, noted that the classes had been designed to teach students more than just technical skills in sewing and cooking. Now, the new home economics curriculum balanced these more practical lessons with instruction in the "ideals of right habits, attitude, health, thrift, citizenship, leisure and work."<sup>290</sup> Moral uplift and the dissemination of middle-class values were directly incorporated into the home economics classes in Baltimore's public schools.

In fifth grade, the first year of mandatory home economics coursework, students concentrated on sewing. The following year, in sixth grade, students began their first year of cooking instruction. "The dominant thought ... should be the study of foods needed by children of this age for growth and health. Simple habits of usefulness in the home and training concerning food in relation to health and housewifery are the chief topics."<sup>291</sup> Sixth graders first received an introduction to the kitchen and its equipment, and then moved forward with lessons on breakfast, special occasions, luncheon, and care of the sick. Teachers tried "to develop in the girls an appreciation for order and cleanliness in the home and to establish good food habits."<sup>292</sup> Sanitation lessons, such as

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<sup>289</sup> There was some variation throughout Baltimore schools. Forest Park Junior High School required four class periods a week for seventh grade, while eighth graders had four classes a week in one semester and only 2 classes a week in the other semester. Beginning in ninth grade, it dropped to two periods a week. See *Handbook of The Forest Park High School, 1927-1928* (N.p.: n.p., c. 1927), 22-24, 30-31, in folder 1991.198.007, JMM.

<sup>290</sup> Baltimore (MD), Department of Education, *Home Economics Education: Course of Study for Elementary Schools (Grades 5 and 6), Junior High Schools (Grades 7, 8 and 9) and for Senior High Schools (Grades 10, 11 and 12) City of Baltimore, Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education* (Baltimore: Department of Education, 1930), 9.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

washing dishes, cleaning the refrigerator, and tidying the kitchen, stressed the importance of cleanliness and how habits in the kitchen connected to health. As students received instruction in the preparation of simple breakfast dishes, they also learned what they should eat for breakfast and why it was such an important meal; these lessons directly connected food to nutrition and health in the young minds of Baltimore's students.<sup>293</sup> Classes also stressed the correct accoutrements and manners for eating the morning meal; the Course of Study suggested that teachers guide their students in setting the table, holding utensils, using napkins, and convey the importance of a pleasant disposition and a tidy appearance in the morning.<sup>294</sup> Lessons progressed in this manner throughout the school year, as sixth graders studied the other units; teachers shared information about the nutritional value of specific foods, and they discussed in detail the particulars of home management tasks like menu planning, cleanliness, and entertaining skills such as invitations, table décor, and place settings.<sup>295</sup>

The seventh grade home economics class built upon the previous year's foundation, reviewing lessons about breakfast and lunch while learning how to prepare new dishes for these meals. Students considered marketing issues, such as purchasing with cash or on credit, and gained further knowledge about meal planning, etiquette, and entertaining.<sup>296</sup> In introducing new recipes for the Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter holidays, teachers emphasized "color scheme and attractive service" as well as the mechanics of creating the new dishes.<sup>297</sup> Reinforcing nutrition lessons throughout the year, the Luncheon unit in particular stressed the importance of vegetables and leafy

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid., 14-19.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 14-15, 19-21.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., 21-33.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 38-50.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 50.

greens. One classroom activity suggested the preparation of a variety of greens, such as spinach, kale, Brussels sprouts, beet tops, and dandelion greens, so students could taste each one and learn which vegetables they liked; the home economics teachers doubtless hoped that after this taste test, students would tell their mothers to buy and prepare these vegetables at home. If the mothers were unfamiliar with the ingredients or the preparation, their children could guide them using their recent home economics lesson, reversing the traditional educational process for cooking.<sup>298</sup>

Spending only one semester of the school year learning about foods, eighth graders moved through a number of new topics while reviewing food's nutritional value, meal planning techniques, and hostessing skills.<sup>299</sup> Students received instruction in canning seasonal fruits and making preserves and marmalades, and learned about selecting and cooking meat, fish, and shellfish; along with the dietary value and preparations of seafood, students acquired useful information about Maryland's fishing industry and Baltimore's fish markets.<sup>300</sup> Eighth grade students learned that preparing the dining room, purchasing food, and creating a balanced menu were equally important factors in serving a proper dinner. To reinforce middle-class ideals of domesticity, teachers prepared lessons about the ideal dining room location within the home, appropriate wall and floor coverings, tasteful furniture, the best designs for dishes and silver, and the preference for linen over cotton tablecloths and napkins.<sup>301</sup>

In ninth grade, students entered their final year of junior high school and enrolled in a survey course in home economics, which reviewed the previous years' learning while

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<sup>298</sup> Ibid., 44-45.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., 51-61.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 51-52, 54-55.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 59-61.

instilling in the teenage girls a further appreciation of home making as a vocation. Divided into five units, the ninth grade home economics course studied Food and Cookery, Child Care, and Home Management in one semester, followed by Budget and Thrift and Clothing and Textiles in the other semester.<sup>302</sup> The Food and Cookery unit synthesized the students' learning about menu planning, efficient and cost-effective marketing, and nutrition as they planned and prepared two breakfasts, two luncheons, and a dinner which emphasized the proper appointments in table linens, china, and silverware. Distinctions between simple home dinners, dinners served in courses, and formal dinners were covered, including the types of silverware required for each type and the service acts performed by a family member or a maid.<sup>303</sup> Students continued to learn about food production and marketing, evaluating foods served in lunchrooms or restaurants and foods purchased in bakeries or delicatessens and calculating the cost of preparing one's own food instead of purchasing it.<sup>304</sup>

Tenth grade marked the final year of mandatory home economics classes for Baltimore's students, who were permitted to choose between the foods and cookery course or the clothing and textiles course. As with the foods and cookery electives offered in the eleventh and twelfth grades, these classes for older students augmented their technical food skills with further lessons in food preservation and meal planning, as well as practical concerns like nutrition and marketing and economics. They honed their

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., 72-76.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 73.

hostessing skills by focusing on special occasions like afternoon teas, birthday parties, and picnics, planning each event carefully to achieve effortless entertaining.<sup>305</sup>

Throughout the Course of Study, teachers were inundated with adjectives like proper, attractive, and appetizing, which indicated the types of life lessons their students were to learn from their home economics classes. Lessons in foods and cookery taught students a wide range of lessons which merely began with the technical skills of cooking. Classes also emphasized selecting the right foods, learning how to store and prepare them, and their nutritional value. Matters of health included not only nutrition, but also cleanliness in preparing foods, in the kitchen, and throughout the home. Teachers discussed marketing issues, such as cost and quality and offered suggestions on using leftovers and purchasing inexpensive cuts of meat; lessons reflected the changing consumer market of foods, making students aware of prepared foods and canned foods and asked them to consider the differences between them and home-cooked foods. Lifestyle issues, including comportment, manners, and etiquette, formed a part of most meal-based lessons, as did concepts of the importance of one's surroundings and being an accomplished hostess. One curriculum unit for seventh grade students stated that during the lesson, students should gain "an appreciation of good taste and good form in table decorations and service" as well as learning "the responsibility of a charming hostess."<sup>306</sup> By planning menus and preparing meals, home economics students enacted the lessons about health and nutrition, along with middle-class values about food, sociability, and the home.

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<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 84-111.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 42.

Just over a decade later, in 1933, the elementary home economics courses for the fifth and sixth grades were removed from the curriculum, due to budget constraints; although students were not exposed to home economics classes quite as early in their school years, the classes remained mandatory for 7<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> grades and were based on the curriculum from the 1920s.<sup>307</sup> Perhaps in anticipation of these cutbacks, Baltimore's home economics teachers published *Foods and Cookery for Instruction in Home Economics Education* in the early 1930s. The booklet, part textbook and part cookbook, was distributed to every 6<sup>th</sup> grade student in the city who had taken or would be taking classes in food preparation and cookery. The booklet was intended to prepare students more fully for the first year of home economics instruction, hoping that more material could be covered in the classroom if the basics were taught through this booklet. The committee who prepared this booklet consisted of five female teachers from schools throughout the city, as well as Mary Faulkner, Supervisor, and Merle Ford, Assistant Supervisor, in the Home Economics Education in the Baltimore schools. The information in the booklet mirrored the majority of the sixth grade food and cookery lessons included in *Home Economics Education*, yet as a publication intended for students rather than teachers, the informational content in this booklet was far more detailed.<sup>308</sup>

Introducing the content of the booklet, students learned that it "...contains some very important [sic] facts about foods, meal planning, and table etiquette." The recipes

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<sup>307</sup> See Mary Faulkner, "Baltimore Public Schools," *Maryland Home Economics Association News Letter* 10, no. 2 (April 1939): n.p., found in folder entitled "History of Home Economics Education, 1939," box 6, series 1, MHEA, UM; this article shows that home economics classes were mandatory for these grades through 1939.

<sup>308</sup> Baltimore (MD), Department of Education, *Foods and Cookery for Instruction in Home Economics Education. Elementary Grades 5 and 6. Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: Department of Education, 1932), n.p. Found in folder 7, box 2, Paul Henderson Manuscript and Ephemera Collection (hereafter cited as MS 3089), MdHS.

had been tested and were both inexpensive and healthy. “If used wisely, they should help you in forming good food habits, which will influence your health now and as an adult.”<sup>309</sup> Beginning with a chapter which discussed the basic mechanics of cooking, the booklet next proceeded in the next chapters to introduced different categories of food like Carbohydrates, Proteins, Minerals, and Fats and Oils. The main part of the booklet concluded with recipes for One-Dish Meals, Desserts, and Sandwiches, and then moved forward to cover the related topics of meal planning and etiquette, and home nursing.<sup>310</sup> Appropriate recipes accompanied each section of the booklet, as did scientifically-based nutritional information which emphasized what to eat, what foods should be eaten together, and how much should be eaten in a day.

In tutoring Baltimore’s children in matters of diet, the booklet introduced popular health ideas in non-intimidating ways, hoping to shape the youngsters’ food habits. Protective foods like eggs, green leafy vegetables like lettuce, spinach, kale, and cabbage, and raw vegetables in the form of salads were highly recommended.<sup>311</sup> Once again, milk was lauded for its excellent nutritional qualities; “milk is a very valuable food, in fact, it is the most nearly perfect food we have, for it contains the materials which help to build and repair body tissues and bones; and materials which help to prevent certain infections and diseases.”<sup>312</sup> Echoing the advice of medical professionals like Dr. Julius Friedenwald, the booklet informed readers that children should have at least a quart of milk daily to achieve full nourishment. Age-appropriate notions of nutrition were also

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

<sup>310</sup> The final chapter, Laundering, is not discussed.

<sup>311</sup> Baltimore (MD), Department of Education, *Foods and Cookery for Instruction in Home Economics Education. Elementary Grades 5 and 6. Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: Department of Education, 1932), 24, 31, 33-36. Found in folder 7, box 2, MS 3089, MdHS.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., 25.



suggested through modifications to popular items in children's diets; for example, cookies could be made more healthful by using ingredients like molasses, raisins, oatmeal, and peanuts.<sup>313</sup> The meal planning chapter reiterated many of the nutritional lessons from earlier chapters, emphasizing that properly nourished bodies would have plenty of energy and strength to complete the tasks of the day.

As home economics classes discussed matters of marketing and the cost of food, so too did the booklet introduce simple lessons in food economy to Baltimore's children. The booklet noted rice's versatility in many dishes, such as soups, stews, croquettes, casseroles, stuffings, and desserts, noting that leftovers could be served at breakfast with fruit and milk or mixed with vegetables and a cheese sauce or mayonnaise for a lunch salad.<sup>314</sup> To stay healthy during the winter, the booklet advised purchasing dried fruits, which were much less expensive than fruits which were out of season.<sup>315</sup>

Recipes, as well as recommendations in the Meal Planning and Food for the Sick chapters focused on middle-class gentility and stressed the importance of an attractive place setting for each meal and the use of good table manners during meals.<sup>316</sup> A recipe for Daisy Salad suggested an attractive arrangement for basic ingredients; the whites of hard boiled eggs, cut into the shape of petals, were arranged on lettuce leaves to resemble a daisy. The egg yolks were used as the flower's center, and the salad was served with

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<sup>313</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid., 22-24.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>316</sup> Pages 47-48 are missing. A new sub-section of the Meal Planning chapter is introduced on one of these pages. The sub-section concludes on page 49 with the final item, number 10, on a list.

mayonnaise.<sup>317</sup> In preparing a tray of food for a sick relative, pre-teen girls should use good china, silver, and linens, adding a flower to achieve a cheerful meal with a touch of beauty.<sup>318</sup> The etiquette section in the Meal Planning chapter listed twenty instructive behaviors, instructing young diners in how to eat and how to interact correctly with others at the table; specific guidelines on the proper use of utensils and napkins and one's posture and demeanor at the table improved the table manners of Baltimore's children.<sup>319</sup> The final reminder in this lengthy list explained the necessity for all of these rules. "A well-bred family uses graceful and easy table manners and knows how to serve and be served. Good table etiquette adds to the pleasure and comfort of everyone."<sup>320</sup> Manners and etiquette structured the meal and its social interactions, allowing everyone to demonstrate their knowledge of and belief in the prevailing American values surrounding food and dining. Meals with prettily designed dishes of food and pleasing china and other decorations likewise allowed diners to communicate their knowledge of middle-class values and signaled gentility and respectability to others at the table. Teaching such lessons to Baltimore's children, including the children of Jewish immigrants, would shape their adult behaviors to the preferred American middle-class standard.

In some significant ways, *Foods and Cookery for Instruction in Home Economics Education* marked the culmination of scientific cookery in Baltimore's public schools, as it united food preparation with nutrition and health and the dominant American cultural values about eating and domesticity. Yet this booklet strayed from the dictates of

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<sup>317</sup> Baltimore (MD), Department of Education, *Foods and Cookery for Instruction in Home Economics Education. Elementary Grades 5 and 6. Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: Department of Education, 1932), 36. Found in folder 7, box 2, MS 3089, MdHS.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 49-51.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

scientific cookery in allowing students to learn cookery on their own. Although the booklet was prepared by home economics professionals according to their exacting standards, they could not guarantee whether the booklet would be used in students' homes, or whether it would be understood correctly. Nor did the home economics teachers know how the kitchens in the students' home were equipped; they may have lacked the required ingredients or utensils to execute these dishes, in comparison to the home economics classrooms which stocked all of the necessary equipment. Nor could young girls learn to cook on their own simply through reading a cookbook, even one which was based on scientific cookery principles. Personal instruction was still a necessary component of learning how to cook. A teacher, whether a mother or other female relative or a home economics teacher, was an important component of conveying cookery skill, as well as middle-class mores regarding food, home, domesticity, and gender roles. Meant as an intermediate measure, this booklet never intended to replace completely the personal instruction in the schools' home economics courses. Baltimore's home economics teachers still had much to teach the city's young female students, among who were the daughters of Eastern European Jewish immigrants.

Education, whether secular or religious, had always been an important part of Jewish culture in Europe and in America. Parents like Daniel Cohen, a Russian Jewish immigrant who settled in East Baltimore in the early 1910s, loved the opportunities which Baltimore's public school system offered to his children, including his daughter Blanche. Increasingly in the 1920s and 1930s, the daughters of Eastern European Jewish immigrant did not have to leave school at an early age to care for younger siblings, to help around the house, or to go to work in sweatshops, factories, or department stores.

Many young Jewish women like Blanche Cohen, Rena Kolman, Blanche Brave, and Mildred Goldman graduated from Baltimore's high schools in the 1920s and 1930s. Others, like Ann Adelman, only attended school through the eighth grade, preferring to seek work instead.<sup>321</sup> These young women, and countless other Jewish teenagers, attended home economics classes in junior and senior high school and were exposed to its teachings about food, health, and middle-class American domesticity. They were not alone in attending these classes.

Baltimore's working class adults also had the opportunity to take home economics classes as part of the city's night school curriculum, along with other vocational classes like Millinery, Tea Room Service, and Personal Hygiene. In 1931, these popular courses ran for six months at locations throughout the city, enrolling 1472 students. Baltimore's night school classes offered her working class citizens an opportunity to learn vital lessons about food, nutrition, and domesticity which her younger citizens absorbed during the day in their home economics classes.<sup>322</sup>

A number of male students in Baltimore's public schools likewise expressed an interest in what was happening in the home economics classes, particularly the food classes. Baltimore's home economics teachers embraced the opportunity to teach a new group of students about food, nutrition, and manners and other middle-class values appropriate for young men. In 1929, a pilot program for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at School No.

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<sup>321</sup> Blanche (Cohen) Green Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0681), JMM. OH 0684, JMM. Blanche Agnes Brave Abrams, box 1, Memoir Collection, JMM. Gail E. Goldman Davis, "The Last Jewish Girl to Leave East Baltimore" (hereafter cited as Memoir 11), box 1, Memoir Collection, JMM. Ann Curasik Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0275), JMM. Mildred Goldman was Gail Goldman Davis's mother; Goldman is her married name; her maiden name was not mentioned in her daughter's memoir. Ann Curasik's maiden name was Adelman.

<sup>322</sup> "Night School Courses in Home Economics Education," *Maryland Home Economics Association News Letter* 4, no. 2 (April 1931): 5, found in folder entitled "Maryland State Home Economics Association News Letter, April 1929-April 1938," box 1, series 6, MHEA, UM.

230 allowed boys to take cooking lessons, and girls to undertake a manual training class. Selecting forty of the best students in the class, these boys and girls spent eight weeks learning about the components of a hot and nutritious breakfast; at the end of this period, students put their newly acquired knowledge to the test by preparing and serving a breakfast based on their lessons. “For most boys of this age, it is the first opportunity they have had for working with food, and they show a great deal of enthusiasm.” Many male students reported that they had prepared some of the foods they learned about in class for themselves at home. The enthusiasm for this class spread well beyond those selected for the pilot project, and the teacher urged school administrators to include boys in home economics courses throughout the Baltimore schools.<sup>323</sup>

Over one hundred enthusiastic young men at Clifton Park Junior High School signed up for a home economics class which could only accommodate 24 students. Those admitted to the class absorbed lessons constructed around meals, nutritional information, and outdoor cookery. The boys also received instruction in etiquette and social values; “the duties of a host and table manners are stressed with the hope of making “gentlemen” of the cooks.”<sup>324</sup> At Curtis Bay School, a health campaign about breakfast sparked the interest of some boys, who asked a teacher “how they were to know how to prepare the proper foods for good health when these foods were not used in the home.” The teacher formed an ad-hoc class which met after school and focused on addressing the boys’ questions about nutritious and healthful foods. “Good manners at

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<sup>323</sup> Gladys M. Kanak, “Home Economics for Boys,” *Maryland Home Economics Association News Letter* 2, no. 2 (April 1929): 3, found in folder entitled “Maryland State Home Economics Association News Letter, April 1929-April 1938,” box 1, series 6, MHEA, UM.

<sup>324</sup> Esther Burns, “Home Economics for Boys,” *Maryland Home Economics Association News Letter* 2, no. 2 (April 1929): 3, found in folder entitled “Maryland State Home Economics Association News Letter, April 1929-April 1938,” box 1, series 6, MHEA, UM.

the table and in the home are to be a valuable part of the work.” The teacher noted that the boys were taking a more active interest in what goes on in the home and how girls and women accomplish their domestic tasks.<sup>325</sup> While gendered notions of home management still assigned the bulk of the domestic duties to girls and women, home economics teachers considered boys and men to be another important student group. They should know basic cooking skills and a foundation in the nutritional values of foods to ensure that their families were eating properly. If a mother, sister, or wife was not preparing the family’s meals according to the principles of scientific cookery, then the boys were well informed and could step in to correct their work, possibly even suggesting that they enroll in a cooking class. By providing boys with basic instruction of home economics, the health and well-being of the family could be further safeguarded. Additionally, the correlative instruction in manners and etiquette instilled in these young men the middle-class values favored in American society. Such lessons, taught to Baltimore’s girls and some of the city’s boys in public schools, aimed to influence the food habits and cultural values of these young Americans and the families they would one day form, thus expanding the authority of scientific cookery and middle-class mores throughout America’s cities.

Supporting the instructive work of home economics teachers and professionals in Baltimore and throughout Maryland, the Maryland Home Economics Association (MHEA) served as their professional organization. Founded in 1915 and affiliated as a state member of the American Home Economics Association in 1921, the MHEA

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<sup>325</sup> Frances Mitchell, “Home Economics for Boys: Curtis Bay School,” *Maryland Home Economics Association News Letter* 2, no. 2 (April 1929): 3, found in folder entitled “Maryland State Home Economics Association News Letter, April 1929-April 1938,” box 1, series 6, MHEA, UM.

supported the national organization's mission while also evaluating and meeting the needs specific to Maryland. In 1923, the MHEA undertook a survey the variety of home economics curriculum throughout Maryland, suggesting a standardized curriculum for grades 5 through 12 to be followed throughout the state.<sup>326</sup> The results of this work directly impacted home economics education in Baltimore's public schools, as discussed earlier in this chapter. These home economics professionals also worked to improve county extension services for Maryland's rural regions, to improve teacher training, and to support legislation at the state and national level which addressed food safety and production standards, consumers' rights, and state and national funding for home economics education at the secondary and college levels. Their activities also resembled the charitable and educational activities of Baltimore's philanthropic and social reform organizations, focusing on promoting healthy diets, offering edifying lectures, and engaging in service projects to help those less fortunate.

Like Baltimore's Protestant and Jewish charities, the MHEA members concerned themselves with the health of Marylanders, particularly children. At their annual meeting in 1919, the MHEA heard a report that 15-25% of Baltimore's children were malnourished; they encouraged teachers to learn more about this problem.<sup>327</sup> When the country was in the throes of the Great Depression, the MHEA, in collaboration with the Foods and Nutrition Department of the University of Maryland, developed a series of ten low cost menus with shopping lists. The menus offered affordable yet nutritious options for families who were struggling economically; the grocery orders which listed the

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<sup>326</sup> "Maryland State Home Economics Association Program of Work, 1923-1924," folder entitled "Committee Reports: Program of Work, 1923-1965," box 3, series 1, MHEA, UM.

<sup>327</sup> MHEA Annual Meeting Program, 1919, folder entitled "History of Maryland Home Economics Association: Annual Meeting Programs, 1917-1963," box 6, series 1, MHEA, UM.

necessary items for preparing these menus ranged from seventeen to twenty-two cents per day. Following these weekly menus, meals would cost little more than the menus prepared by the Poor Association almost thirty years earlier, feeding a family for approximately \$1.20 to \$1.55 per week.<sup>328</sup> The menus and shopping guides were published and distributed by relief agencies throughout the state in an attempt to mitigate the effects of a devastated economy.<sup>329</sup>

Focusing on future homemakers, the MHEA formed both college and high school clubs throughout the state. In 1932, Baltimore's high schools counted five clubs, a figure which had expanded to almost 30 clubs by 1938.<sup>330</sup> A few of the earliest clubs were founded at Forest Park High School, School #69, Clifton Park Junior High School, and Western High School.<sup>331</sup> Working with their school's teachers, who were in large part members of the MHEA, and a club advisor from the MHEA, these female students benefited from the additional support and interest of the home economics professionals. Meetings of the high school clubs might offer lectures or small social events which allowed the girls to practice their skills both as hostesses and as guests. Some clubs devoted their meetings to creating decorative touches for the home, while others took field trips to a local bakery or a fashion show at a major Baltimore department store. Clubs also extended their sociability by hosting a Halloween party or serving a meal to their teachers. Small fund raising activities allowed the high school clubs to complete

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<sup>328</sup> The menus themselves were not extant, so there is no way to compare the menus and ingredients that the MHEA menus recommended.

<sup>329</sup> "MHEA Program of Work, 1932-1933," folder entitled "Committee Reports: Program of Work, 1923-1965," box 3, series 1, MHEA, UM. MHEA Cabinet Meeting Minutes, September 17, 1932, folder entitled "Cabinet Meeting Minutes, April 1930-September 1939," box 1, series 3, MHEA, UM.

<sup>330</sup> Untitled reports, folder entitled "High School Clubs, 1932-1946," box 6, series 1, MHEA, UM.

<sup>331</sup> "Student Clubs Affiliated with Maryland State Home Economics Association," *Maryland Home Economics Association News Letter* 5, no. 2 (April 1932): 2, found in folder entitled "Maryland State Home Economics Association News Letter, April 1929-April 1938," box 1, series 6, MHEA, UM.



service projects like distributing baskets to needy families at the holidays.<sup>332</sup> The activities of the MHEA high school clubs echoed some of the work undertaken by Baltimore's social settlements, providing a locus for personal enrichment, socialization, recreation, and small charitable endeavors; these activities also reinforced the classroom learning about home economics and middle-class domesticity, offering further opportunities to apply their knowledge to real-world situations.

In attempting to reach Maryland women regardless of their geographic location, the MHEA took advantage of the new technology of radio, hoping to reach a broader audience with their messages about the important and vital work that homemakers did. Between November 7 and December 12, 1932, officers of the MHEA produced a weekly radio program concerning topics in home economics. The talks were broadcast on Station WCAO in Baltimore. In the first talk of the series, Marie Mount, Dean of the College of Home Economics at the University of Maryland spoke on the topic "Home-Making a Profession." She reminded women of their duties as caretakers of the family's health, well-being, and happiness, as well as the breadth of their important work in the home as cook, banker, tailor, nurse, decorator, consumer, teacher, and cultural and moral guide. Urging homemakers to ask themselves if they were raising strong and useful future citizens, Mount's talk reminded women that their work, their profession, was crucial to the progress of the nation.<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> High school club reports, *Maryland Home Economics Association News Letter* 2, no. 2 (April 1929): 4-5, found in folder entitled "Maryland State Home Economics Association News Letter, April 1929-April 1938," box 1, series 6, MHEA, UM.

<sup>333</sup> Marie Mount, "Home-Making a Profession," folder entitled "Radio Broadcast Scripts, 1932," box 11, series 1, MHEA, UM.

The second and third weeks covered topics of money and clothing. Venia M. Kellar, Home Demonstration Agent for the State of Maryland broadcast her talk “The Homemaker A Financier” the following week, empowering women as consumers who were careful with their family’s budget. Wise spending and economizing would have positive results for the family in the future, such as college education for the children. Lilah Gaut of the Department of Home Economics at Hood College, spoke on “The Homemaker Clothes Her Family,” discussing issues such as the price and quality of fabrics and the upkeep of clothing through laundering and mending. She reminded housewives of their responsibility to make sure that each family member was well attired and properly groomed. In the fifth week, Elisabeth Amery, Maryland State Supervisor for Home Economics Education addressed radio audiences with her talk “The Homemaker Studies Her Home.” With her presentation, Amery reminded listeners that each homemaker had a duty to foster a healthful, stable, and comfortable environment for her family. Eleanor Howe, a Home Economic Specialist at McCormick and Co. in Baltimore, presented the final talk in the series, entitled “Home Maker Looks at the Social Life of Her Family.” She discussed creating comfortable spaces within the home for specific activities, such as reading, and offered advice on enjoying family meals and entertaining guests.<sup>334</sup>

In the fourth week of the MHEA’s radio program, Mary Faulkner, Supervisor of Home Economics Education for Baltimore City Schools delivered her talk “The Home Maker Guards the Health of Her Family.” Faulkner began by reinforcing Mount’s talk,

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<sup>334</sup> Venia M. Kellar, “The Homemaker A Financier,” Lilah Gaut, “The Homemaker Clothes Her Family,” Elisabeth Amery, “The Homemaker Studies Her Home,” Eleanor Howe, “The Home Maker Looks at the Social Life of Her Family,” folder entitled “Radio Broadcast Scripts, 1932,” box 11, series 1, MHEA, UM.

reminding listeners that successful homemaking was a skilled occupation which required considerable organizational and administrative skills. As caretaker of her family's health, a wife and mother must be conscious of the role which food plays in maintaining the well-being of her husband and children. "If food is to serve its purpose, it must be supplied in proper quantities, it must be of standard quality, it must be properly stored and cared for, it must be well selected and prepared and its combinations in the meals actually eaten must be systemically [sic] selected to meet scientific dietary standards." Although expensive ingredients might be purchased for meals, or hunger sated through generous portions, the full nutritional needs of the individual may still not be met. Thus, a basic knowledge of nutrition was essential for all homemakers, who should keep up with current developments in this field by reading books, popular periodicals, and government bulletins.<sup>335</sup>

Faulkner next gave her audience a primer on nutrition, categorizing and explaining the food groupings from which a homemaker should feed her family. Milk was the first food discussed, prominently placed because of its nutritional value. "Milk does more for the body than any other food, and does it more cheaply. It safeguards the low cost diet, for children and adults." Faulkner recommended a pint daily for adults and a quart daily for children. Moving next to fruits and vegetables, Faulkner stated that two servings of vegetables and no less than two fruits should be eaten every day. She singled out green leafy vegetables, cabbage, tomatoes, and oranges as the best produce items to eat. In discussing cereals and breads, Faulkner recommended whole grain foods, noting their value especially in a low cost diet when every available nutrient would be necessary

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<sup>335</sup> Mary Faulkner, "The Home Maker Guards the Health of Her Family," folder entitled "Radio Broadcast Scripts, 1932," box 11, series 1, MHEA, UM.

to achieve a balanced healthful diet. For muscle-building foods, Faulkner suggested only one serving of meat, fish, poultry, cheese, or eggs daily, adding that dried beans and peas would also function in this category. Fats and sugar were necessary only in small quantities to add flavor, while noting that fats provided fuel for the body. Finally, Faulkner suggested at least 8 glasses of water daily to flush the bodily system and to avoid dehydration.<sup>336</sup>

Playing with the meaning of expensive, Faulkner reminded her audience that “food that does not do its part to keep you healthy is expensive food.” The expense of such foods came not from the cost to purchase them, but from the bodily cost of eating a poor diet and the problems which would result from it, such as poor health and perhaps an inability to work. Concluding her radio broadcast, Faulkner provided guidance on how to formulate a budget to shop for all of the best foods for one’s family. Divided into fifths, one part of the budget should be for vegetables and fruits, one part or more should be spent on bread and cereals and on milk and cheese, while one part or less would be adequate for meat, fish, and eggs, and fats, sugar, and other grocery items. Faulkner offered a series of questions to help the homemaker analyze her food budget to determine if she was overspending. Had she purchased expensive cuts of meat or a better grade of canned goods when a lesser grade would have sufficed? Were the greens she purchased of a higher grade than was required? Did the homemaker buy too many ready-cooked foods or had she been reckless about acquiring non-essential food items like “fancy crackers, pickles, soft drinks and mushrooms?” Finally, Faulkner asked the homemaker to consider whether she could shop at another store to find lower prices. Indicating that

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

the true cost of food relied on the financial planning and the nutritional knowledge of the homemaker, Faulkner's talk illustrated yet again the importance of the homemaker's role in supporting and sustaining her family.<sup>337</sup>

Other messages about food were broadcast over Baltimore's airwaves as well, with a focus on the homemaker as consumer, rather than guardian of the family's well-being. One of Baltimore's own department stores, Hochschild, Kohn & Co., sponsored cooking demonstrations to interest shoppers in certain ingredients and products. Miss Dorothy Carter prepared the recipes in front of an audience in the seventh floor auditorium of the store on Wednesday afternoons, and the lessons were broadcasted over WCAO, a local radio station. The Quality Group Cooking School lesson for March 8, 1933 was titled "Dinner – As You Like It". The entrée options were fish-based, with two appetizer options, three desserts, and other accompaniments to round out the lesson. The lesson's title encouraged the cook to assemble her dinner menu from these choices, recognizing that tastes were not uniform. To start the meal, the Monte Carlo Appetizer was a beverage comprised of ginger ale and grape juice, and the ingredients in the Sausage and Bananas dish were not hard to guess. The demure size of Rettberg's Little Pork Sausages used in this recipe indicated this too was a starter dish. For a main course, homemakers selected either Baked Stuffed Shad, with a separate recipe for the stuffing, or a Baked Salmon and Noodles casserole. The recipe for Tartar Sauce presumably could be used for either or both dishes. Recipes for Spiced Rusks, Sunshine Cake, and Banana-Lemon Cake occupied most of the second page of recipes in the demonstration's handout, showing the continued importance of dessert in American middle-class society.

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<sup>337</sup> Ibid.

This cooking demonstration was not a purely educational event; there was a clear advertising agenda at work as well, aimed at the women who watched the demonstration or listened to it on WCAO.<sup>338</sup> The back of the demonstration's handout showed an alphabetical list of the participants whose products were featured in the demonstration. In the recipes, the sponsored ingredients, listed with their brand names attached, were shown in all capital letters to make them stand out. The Fruit Dispatch Co. provided the bananas, while McCormick & Company, Inc. provided the Bee Brand Spices and Extracts used in the desserts; Rettberg's Pure Meat Products were used in two recipes. Rumford Baking Powder made an appearance, as did a distributor of canned vegetables, a soft drink company, Old Home Bread, Worthmore brand eggs and butter, and dairy products from Royal Farms Dairy. Only the tartar sauce did not use any of the sponsored ingredients. Dorothy Carter no doubt announced the full product names as she measured, stirred, and cooked them into the resulting dishes. Food products were not the only sponsored items in the demonstrations; Hochschild, Kohn & Co. provided the kitchen equipment used for this cooking class. Perhaps Dorothy Carter also discussed the kinds of kitchen utensils and bakeware she was using as she cooked, to further the sales of Hochschild, Kohn's goods. This kind of food lesson, while instructional, was not about proper cooking techniques and eating a nutritious diet. Purchasing the correct brands of

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<sup>338</sup> Advertising materials, along with magazines, books, and mass media, also filled an influential assimilative role, showing immigrants and the children how to live as Americans. See Neil M. Cowan and Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *Our Parents' Lives: The Americanization of Eastern European Jews* (New York: Harper Collins, 1989), xix and Andrew R. Heinze, *Adapting to Abundance: Jewish Immigrants, Mass Consumption, and the Search for American Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 161-177. Food advertising also targeted children as a group with purchasing power, through their influence on their parents' food purchases. For example, Kellogg's cereals used images of children on their packaging and offered prizes and contests to interest children in their product and to encourage them to ask their parents to buy these cereals for them. See Margaret Visser, *Much Depends on Dinner: The Extraordinary History and Mythology, Allure, and Obsessions, Perils and Taboos, of an Ordinary Meal* (New York: Grove Press, 1986), 43.

ingredients to incorporate into one's recipes continued to be of great importance in preparing good food.<sup>339</sup>

As home economics professionals, the members of the MHEA were far from immune in this new food world of product placement and advertising. While their meetings often featured talks by professional home economists from colleges and universities or the government, they also occasionally included a talk or demonstration from a representative of a local or national food company. During the 1930 Annual Meeting, attendees enjoyed a tour of the factory at McCormick and Company and a demonstration by the Kraft Cheese Company. The following year, Miss Heath of the Schluderberg-Kurdle Company, a Baltimore meatpacking plant, introduced MHEA members to her work in a talk entitled "Preserving the Quality of Meat in Preparation." At the same meeting, Miss Carter of McCormick and Company also addressed the assemblage on "Business of the Home Economist." After their formal presentations, "both speakers emphasized their practical work and extended to all teachers their services, either thru [sic] pamphlets and other publications or thru [sic] personal contact in form of field trips/demonstrations." In 1932, "Miss Mary Hale Martin from Libby, McNeill, Libby Co. gave an interesting demonstration on "Buying Canned Goods." After the demonstration the audience was invited to come to the table and examine and sample the food." In 1938, "Dr. Marietta Eichelberger, Director of Nutrition Service of the Irradiated Evaporated Milk Institute ... spoke on the economy and use of evaporated

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<sup>339</sup> Program, "Quality Group Cooking School," 1933, folder 27, box 2, Hochschild Kohn Company Collection, JMM.

milk in the diet.”<sup>340</sup> Such opportunities to learn about a home economist’s work in a food company or to sample a particular brand of canned goods extended the company’s reach and attempted to influence and shape the food habits, both purchase and consumption, through home economics teachers in Baltimore, who in turn shaped the opinions and perhaps the buying habits of their students and their families, now and in the future.<sup>341</sup>

Amid the national changes to food production and distribution, mandatory school attendance, the growth of home economics curriculum in the Baltimore public schools, and the rise of advertising and familiarity with brand-name products, the Eastern European Jewish immigrants and their American-born children experienced changes of their own. Some continued to live in the increasingly diverse neighborhood of East Baltimore while others moved to larger, newer homes in Northeast Baltimore, Forest Park, or Park Heights. They attended school in larger numbers, advancing through more grades and often graduating from high school. And they made choices about their foods, shaped by education and American life, but also by personal choice. Some adopted American foods while adhering to kosher or kosher-esque culinary rules. Others maintained their traditional foods for the Sabbath and holidays, exclusively eating their mothers’ cooking, refusing pork and ham, and eschewing *chametz*, or leavened, foods during Passover. Many discovered the delicious taste of Maryland crabs, as well as oysters and other *treyf* foods.

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<sup>340</sup> Maryland Home Economics Association, Baltimore Section Minutes, April 26, 1930, December 9, 1931, April 6, 1932, and March 23, 1938, folder entitled “Baltimore Section Minutes, 1924-1946,” box 1, series 3, MHEA, UM.

<sup>341</sup> In the late 1930s, several clothing and home décor demonstrations sponsored by Hutzler Brothers Department Store similarly attempted to influence the shopping habits of MHEA members with regard to clothing and dress, and interior design. See Maryland Home Economics Association, Baltimore Section Minutes, April 8, 1937, January 25, 1938, and February 11, 1938, folder entitled “Baltimore Section Minutes, 1924-1946,” box 1, series 3, MHEA, UM.



Retaining traditional Jewish habits while living in a multi-cultural urban neighborhood, Blanche Cohen and her family Americanized their lives in some ways without fully abandoning practices which derived from her parents' lives in Russia. As an adult, Blanche described her block of South Bond Street as long and a little unusual, terming it a "little League of Nations." Living among neighbors who were Russian, Italian, and Polish, she and many of her age-mate were the first generation of Americans. As an adult, Blanche spoke fondly of her childhood spent on South Bond Street. She appreciated her East Baltimore neighborhood for the heterogeneous life experience it afforded her; she learned to get along with different groups of people.<sup>342</sup>

In East Baltimore, Blanche's parents combined Russian Jewish and American aspects of their lives as they brought up their children. The adults spoke Yiddish at home, particularly when they did not want their children to know what they were saying; they also spoke English well. As Blanche and her brother got older and learned Yiddish themselves, her parents stopped using it as a private adult language. Blanche described her parents as very Americanized, which was a conscious decision for them. Her father loved the United States, particularly the free education and the ability to participate in politics by voting. Yet her mother maintained a kosher kitchen, retaining traditional Jewish food habits. Mrs. Cohen shopped locally at a small grocery store a few blocks away and sometimes made the trip to the Broadway market. She continued to purchase live fish to make gefilte fish. "She made gefilte fish, that was absolutely out of this world, wonderful gefilte fish. She made kreplach and she made blintzes ... I make it

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<sup>342</sup> OH 0681, JMM.

myself now, and she made strudel, and she made challey, she baked her own challey.”<sup>343</sup> Blanche continued making many of her mother’s dishes, perhaps learning from her the ingredients, the proportions, and the method of assembly and cookery. Although she attended public school in Baltimore and took the mandatory home economics courses, Blanche’s mother’s recipes remained an important part of her daughter’s eating patterns which formal instruction could not supplant.<sup>344</sup> Mrs. Cohen may also have borrowed a culinary idea or two from her other ethnic neighbors. Blanche remembers that her mother created an unusual snack out of a bit of challah dough. Forming the dough into a disk, she baked it, spread it with butter, and ate it hot. When Blanche ate pizza for the first time as an adult, she instantly thought of her mother’s challah snack.<sup>345</sup> Perhaps Mrs. Cohen emulated her Italian neighbors’ foods by making a pizza-like snack out of her challah dough, freely adopting parts of another ethnic-national cuisine as Jews had done in Europe in earlier centuries. Such culinary borrowing and adaptation demonstrates creativity and agency in trying other foods and combining traditions to yield new results.

While food served as a reminder of tradition in private settings, notably the home, it also functioned as a marker of cultural difference in public places. Lunchtime in American schools was often a moment of public consumption where immigrant children noticed the differences between themselves and their American-born classmates. From the food itself to the way it was packaged and carried from home to school, Eastern

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<sup>343</sup> Kreplach are small dumplings filled with ground meat, mashed potatoes, or another filling. They are usually boiled and served in soup. Blintzes are thin pancakes, similar to crêpes. Challey is my transliteration of Blanche’s pronunciation of the word; this pronunciation is a generational variation on challah.

<sup>344</sup> OH 0681, JMM.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

European Jewish children observed these differences and sometimes were ashamed of their disorderly lunches. American-born students typically carried carefully crafted sandwiches in designated containers, while Jewish children unwrapped their newspaper bundles to find a haphazard array of leftovers which constituted their lunch. One Jewish schoolgirl in New York remembered that although she liked the food her mother sent with her to school, she was embarrassed by it and her classmates' negative remarks about it, so she threw it away.<sup>346</sup> This type of incident doubtless occurred in schools throughout America, including Baltimore, marking difference and educating immigrants and the children of immigrants about American food beyond the scope of the home economics classroom.

In the early 1900s, public dinners which marked organizational anniversaries and other important social or political moments provided opportunities for attendees to eat within the dominant cultural trends, expressing their cultural belonging through a mutual participation in mainstream American food values.<sup>347</sup> When some Jewish clubs held similar celebratory events in the 1920s, they announced their adoption of American dining habits and revealed a somewhat troubled relationship with *kashrut*, indicating some degree of discord within the Jewish community in Baltimore regarding appropriate dietary habits at public functions. The Excelsior Club, one of the many social, educational, and recreational clubs sponsored by the Jewish Educational Alliance in East Baltimore, held dinners in 1920, 1923, and 1924 to celebrate their sixth, ninth, and tenth anniversaries. Held at The Emerson Hotel in 1920 and The Southern Hotel in 1923 and

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<sup>346</sup> Andrew R. Heinze, *Adapting to Abundance: Jewish Immigrants, Mass Consumption, and the Search for American Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 167-168.

<sup>347</sup> See Chapter 1 for a discussion of such dinners which were held in Baltimore.

1924, these events featured a meal, as well as speeches, presentations, awards, and music and dancing.

The menu for the sixth anniversary was a bit simpler than the meals enjoyed in the following years. Diners started with a grapefruit with cherries, with celery, salted almonds, and olives also available. They next moved on to the soup course, a tomato bouillon. The main course was chicken croquettes, served with Parisienne potatoes and green peas. A salad of hearts of lettuce with Russian dressing was served after the main course. For dessert, diners could choose from biscuit tortoni and assorted cakes, which were served with demi tasse.<sup>348</sup> This meal exhibits some remnants of the elegant middle-class and elite dinners from the late nineteenth century; the French style of serving the salad after the main course, naming the small cups of coffee served with dessert demi tasse, and the obviously named Parisienne potatoes would have marked diners as refined in the late nineteenth century and continued to do so in the 1920s. Yet this dinner also followed the rules of *kashrut*; this meal was a meat meal, with no dairy appearing, at least based on the menu card.

For the ninth anniversary, a slightly more mature Excelsior Club ate more courses at a new hotel. Starting in a simple manner with salted almonds, olives, and celery, diners' first hot course was cream of asparagus soup. This was followed by boiled Kennebec salmon, served with hollandaise sauce and accompanied by parsley potatoes. A course of sweetbread patties was presented for the third course, and Chicken a la Excelsior, served with red currant jelly and coupled with sweet potatoes glace comprised the main course. Creamed corn next made an appearance, or perhaps it too was served

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<sup>348</sup> Excelsior Club, 6th Annual Banquet, September 8, 1920, folder 1996.86.005, JMM.

with the chicken. Following the main course was the familiar hearts of lettuce salad with Russian dressing. Nesselrode pudding, cakes, and demi tasse completed the meal.<sup>349</sup> Another French influence was evident in this meal, with the inclusion of the sauce for the fish and the red currant jelly to smother the chicken. The high number of courses also demonstrated a more elegant meal than the earlier banquet. Yet with the cream of asparagus soup, a milk-based dish, and the chicken a la Excelsior, a meat course, the Jewish dietary laws were clearly violated with this meal.

For the tenth anniversary of the Excelsior Club, the menu again began with salted nuts, celery, olives, and a fruit course to whet the appetite. Next, diners were offered essence madrilene, a French nomenclature for a tomato-flavored consommé which was often served cold. Following the soup course was a fish course: Filet of Rockfish – Normande. The main course offered a prestigious game meat: roast duckling, served with apple sauce. Hominy cakes, string beans, and tomato surprise may have accompanied or followed the duckling. The meal concluded as it did in 1920, with biscuit tortoni (perhaps a favorite dessert of the dinner’s organizers), cakes, and demi tasse.<sup>350</sup> The tenth anniversary dinner presented an interesting mix of dishes with a French influence and other dishes which used American ingredients; the soup’s French name and the fish served in a Normande style recalled stylish French dinners, while the hominy cakes reminded diners of their new nation and its notions of equality among men. The menu was also ostensibly kosher, marked by the return to a broth-based soup and the absence of creamy sauces. These dinner menus clearly illustrate that the members of the Excelsior Club had adopted American middle-class food habits about what should be

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<sup>349</sup> Excelsior Club, 9th Anniversary Banquet, September 26, 1923, folder 1996.86.007, JMM.

<sup>350</sup> Excelsior Club, 10th Anniversary Banquet, September 13, 1924, folder 1996.86.010, JMM.

served at celebratory dinners to mark milestones in an organization's life, although with the deviation from the laws of *kashrut* in 1923, the question of whether to follow the Jewish food laws at these events resurfaced as a point to be negotiated.

Jewish children and young adults in the 1920s and 1930s experienced many opportunities and faced numerous temptations to sample non-kosher foods. Living in a mixed ethnic neighborhood, the opportunities to eat other foods could lead to an emotional crisis. In 1931, a Jewish teenager who described herself as “still innocent – innocent of eating non-kosher food” nearly broke down in tears when she had to again decline the invitation of an Italian friend's mother to stay to dinner. The girl was sure that her friend's mother understood the rules, or at least the basic outlines, of the Jewish dietary laws and could not fathom the woman's “inconsiderate persistence” in repeatedly inviting her to stay for dinner. The decision was not difficult for this Jewish teen, for the food did not interest her. Quite the opposite; “those strange albeit aromatic herb, meat and tomato odors permeating the house offended my olefactory [sic] senses.” Without a strong interest in trying the forbidden foods of her friend's family, this Jewish teenager went home and ate the kosher dinner which her mother had prepared.

A year later, however, the teen had graduated from high school and had entered the workforce in Baltimore, working in a general store in Fells Point. Late one Saturday night, she and “two older, more worldly co-workers” were walking home when they invited her to join them for a crab cake and a Coke. Ravenous at the end of her long work day, yet still cautious about *treyf* foods, she decided to accompany the co-workers and let her nose decide if she would eat the crab cake or not. Upon entering the

restaurant, “the strong spicy aroma” encouraged her culinary experiment, and her first taste of crab cake would not be her last.<sup>351</sup>

Giving up kosher eating habits may have been a matter of taste and experimentation, like the young woman who tried a crab cake for the first time. For others, practical and religious changes in their lives suggested the possibility of abandoning *kashrut*. Some felt that sanitation conditions in America were superior to their European homes, and “special hygienic efforts were unreasonably burdensome.” The availability of hot water for washing dishes convinced this Jewish woman that she could achieve a suitable level of cleanliness in non-kosher cookery. Other women continued to follow *kashrut* as a matter of religious observance, struggling to make their foods appealing when cooked properly. When one such woman discovered that a family member who served as something of a religious role model was eating on Yom Kippur, she decided that her role model’s religious hypocrisy entitled her to abandon kosher.<sup>352</sup>

While some Jewish immigrants experimented with new foods or abandoned *kashrut* for pragmatic reasons, others still held to tradition. In the late 1920s, the home economics department of Baltimore schools recognized that there was a continuing interest in kosher cooking. A home economics teacher at Junior High School No. 40 offered a kosher cooking demonstration to her class and some parents who were also interested in the topic. They first discussed the meaning of kosher and referred to the Biblical origin of the law. Next the teacher koshered the meat, which had been purchased from a kosher butcher. Students washed the meat three times, placed it in a dish which

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<sup>351</sup> “A Maryland Syndrome,” in *Baltimore Memoirs, by 14 Authors. A Collection of Essays and Some Poems*, p. 24, box 1, Memoir Collection, JMM.

<sup>352</sup> Neil M. Cowan and Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *Our Parents’ Lives: The Americanization of Eastern European Jews* (New York: Harper Collins, 1989), 275-276.

was reserved for only meats, and soaked it in cold water for thirty minutes. Afterwards they carefully rinsed the meat to ensure that all blood had been removed and took the further precaution of resting the meat on a slanted board which would allow any remaining blood to drain. Finally, the meat was rubbed with “powdered salt;” after resting for an hour, the salt was washed off. Now that the meat had been properly prepared, students could cook it in any way they wished; they decided to make meat loaf, which was served to students and the parents in attendance. After the class concluded, “the parents expressed their enjoyment and appreciation of this lesson.”<sup>353</sup> Identifying a particular interest among her students, this particular home economics teacher offered a kosher cooking lesson within the bounds of the home economics discipline, attempting to connect the two cookery methods and demonstrate that they could work in tandem. Such an effort may have won over hesitant Jewish students or their dubious parents about the validity of home economics instruction as it related to their sacred food rules.

Other Americans expressed different concerns about *kashrut* but used a different educational method to reintroduce its dictates to Jewish women across America. The *Jewish Examiner*, a weekly English-language Jewish newspaper with a significant circulation, lamented the increasing numbers of Jews who were abandoning *kashrut*. In response, they ran a national contest to solicit the most delicious kosher recipes from the *balabustas*, or Jewish housewives, in America. The resulting *Prize Kosher Recipe Book* offered the award-winning recipes which had been thoroughly tested, ensuring their quality for those who wished to make them. The cookbook was extremely popular,

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<sup>353</sup> Mildred Beaver, “Kosher Cookery,” *Maryland Home Economics Association News Letter* 2, no. 2 (April 1929): 3, found in folder entitled “Maryland State Home Economics Association News Letter, April 1929-April 1938,” box 1, series 6, MHEA, UM.



according to the newspaper's editor, indicating a new interest in *kashrut* and filling a void for "an authoritative kosher cookbook."<sup>354</sup>

The volume also provided a number of essays and guides to help readers follow the laws of *kashrut* correctly, walking them through the steps to purify dishes, defining what foods were and were not kosher, and discussing Jewish religious traditions of the Sabbath and the major holidays. In an introduction to this volume, Rabbi Louis D. Gross, editor of *The Jewish Examiner*, wrote that he hoped the cookbook would serve "as a practical culinary aid in the home and ... as a means of encouraging the observance of *kashrut*, the Jewish dietary laws."<sup>355</sup> Reminding his readers of the benefits of adhering to Jewish dietary law, Gross stated that *kashrut* was a hygienic diet, but it also was "a state of mind in the form of a traditional religious ritual or sacrament which has served as a powerful moral link binding the Jew to his heritage throughout the centuries."<sup>356</sup> Continuing, he wrote "to permit that link to be weakened by modern cynicism is to undermine the whole chain of Jewish tradition at its most strategic point, the home."<sup>357</sup> In order to preserve this link, Rabbi Gross and others chose to stress the adherence to *kashrut*. He offered a simple, understandable guide that would be invaluable to "the young American Jewish housewife."<sup>358</sup> This cookbook was created in large part to respond to the rapid and widespread secularization of Jewish immigrants, resulting in part from their Americanization.

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<sup>354</sup> *The Jewish Examiner Prize Kosher Recipe Book* (Brooklyn: The Judea Publishing Corporation, 1937), iii-v.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, iii.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, iv.

The *Prize Kosher Recipe Book* presented recipes gathered from Jewish women across the country; assembled into one volume, they reveal an Americanized kosher diet which honors traditional European dishes alongside newer American dishes. Recipes for Russian Borcht and Challah, and an entire chapter of Passover recipes, shared the pages of this cookbook with instructions for making American Beauty Salad and Topsy Squaw. Two entries from Baltimore appeared in this volume; Mrs. Nathan N Newman's recipe for Baked Stuffed Oranges, a dessert dish, combined oranges, dates, coconut, and walnuts into a warm ending to a meal.<sup>359</sup> Surrounded by meat dishes like Hungarian Goulash and recipes for Meat Loaf with Baked Beans and Mushroomed Pot Roast which might be considered American dishes, Mrs. S. Sogner's Maryland Meat Balls stood out as a dish with a regional affiliation. However, nothing but the origin of the recipe from a woman who lives in Maryland connected this dish to the state or the ingredients for which it is famous. Ground beef flavored with grated onion, parsley, and celery was shaped into balls with a mixture of post toastees (a commercial cereal) soaked in tomato puree acting as the binder.<sup>360</sup> Placed in a pan with whole potatoes, the entire dish was covered in tomato sauce and some water and baked in a moderate oven. The recipe does not specify how long the meat balls should bake.<sup>361</sup> The omission of a critical piece of cooking information like length of time would negate Rabbi Gross's claim that the *Prize Kosher Recipe Book* was a simple, practical guide which any Jewish housewife could easily follow.

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<sup>359</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>360</sup> Despite being a brand name, the cereal's name was not capitalized in the cookbook.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid., 64.

A decision about *kashrut* was but one of the countless choices members of Baltimore's Jewish community made on a daily basis about food, decisions which shaped their foodways in the 1920s, the 1930s, and the following decades. With the introduction of scientific cookery in the city schools' home economics classes, Jewish children learned not only how to cook certain American recipes, but also larger concepts which linked food with bodily health and taught mainstream forms of sociability and domesticity. Food education in Baltimore, once the domain of the city's charitable workers and social reformers in the late nineteenth century, was taken up by home economics professionals, primarily teachers in the public schools, at the start of the twentieth century. Home economics education did not have to contend with the geographic or religious barriers which limited the influence of the Protestant charitable workers and social reformers; facilitated by the public school system, home economics teachings now reached all female students, including Jewish girls, who attended the junior and senior high schools. The foodways taught in Baltimore's schools, combined with the broader food choices which new technologies made possible and the growing influence of food advertising, worked in concert to mold young Baltimoreans' food habits into a uniform American diet, coupled with cultural norms governing behavior and domesticity. Yet personal choices about food proved more persuasive than these teachings, as Baltimore's Jewish community navigated their traditional religious beliefs, home economics' educational messages about food values, and new food opportunities. They forged their own paths with regard to food, retaining familiar and traditional dishes, engaging in middle-class domesticity and hospitality, struggling to recreate certain dishes from their unique cultural-religious heritage, experimenting with new international tastes,

and expanding the flavors used in their cooking, even while honoring the laws of *kashrut*. The Epilogue discusses some of the recent food choices and trends in Baltimore's Jewish community and their larger implications for contemporary Jewish Americans.

## Epilogue

Entering into a new country and encountering a new culture, including a wide range of food habits, Eastern European Jewish immigrants started their lives as Americans by eating as they had always had. Their familiar foods and ways of cooking and eating, central to their religious observances, rooted them in tradition while they experienced a multitude of other social and cultural changes in their daily lives. The city's Protestant charitable workers and social reformers, and later the home economics teachers of Baltimore's public schools, created programs of work to influence and change the immigrants' Old World habits, adapting them to dominant American middle-class values. These actions were not solely aimed at immigrants, however; they targeted the larger population group of Baltimore's working class and urban poor, among whom the immigrants were grouped. Food education and lessons of domesticity introduced a number of related issues, such as economics, health, domesticity, nation, and identity, as these reformers offered material relief to the poor, disseminated nutritional information, ensured the healthful diets of children and adults, sold inexpensive meals to working women, and taught cooking classes and other vocational skills.

Working in the same period, Baltimore's Jewish charities concerned themselves with similar issues, such as providing material relief to the poor and nutritious meals to children and the sick, while also ensuring the continuity of their religious foodways through education in kosher cookery, celebrating the holidays with proper foods, and taking pleasure in food. Despite concerns about Americanizing their co-religionists, the German Jewish charities did not seriously attempt to reform the food habits of the Eastern European Jewish immigrants. Over time, changes to the foodways of Baltimore's Jewish

community, immigrant and American-born, German and Eastern European, was simply a process which could perhaps be influenced but could not be forced. By the 1920s and 1930s, it was clear that Baltimore's Jewish community would make their own decisions about what foods to purchase, how to prepare them, and how to consume them.

The story of Baltimore's Jewish community and their evolving foodways in no way concludes with the end date chosen for this study. Yet of the themes discussed in this study, such as food and economics; food, nutrition, and health; food education; foodways, domesticity, middle-class values, and national progress; and foodways and Jewish identity still resonate in this community and throughout American society. Many of these issues overlap and intertwine with each other, demonstrating the complex nature of the historical and contemporary discussions. Yet these discussions demonstrate their ongoing importance, not only to the Jewish Americans who reside in Baltimore, but to our larger American society. Using the oral histories and written memoirs of ordinary Jews who live or lived in Baltimore, and contemporary charitable cookbooks produced in the city, as my sources, I will explore these issues as they have developed through the twentieth century to the present day.

The connections between food and economics as discussed in this study referred largely to the work of Baltimore's charities, Protestant and Jewish, in supplying those in financial distress with the necessities of life, including food. These groups also developed low cost menus which would allow the urban poor to make intelligent food purchases using their limited means. Issues which connect food and economics in this manner were generally not discussed in the contemporary sources, although the national discussion reveals that hunger is an ongoing concern in this country, with one in five

children facing hungry on a daily basis.<sup>362</sup> Several of the charitable cookbooks note in their introductions that the profits from the sale of their cookbook will be used to fund their charitable works, programs which move well beyond material relief. *I Must Have That Recipe!*, published by the Baltimore Section of the National Council of Jewish Women in the late 1990s describes the use of these profits in the most detail, enumerating the charitable endeavors which they support which focus on women, children, and the elderly, as well as education, health, and nutrition.<sup>363</sup> Instead, matters of food and economics for Jewish Baltimoreans now refer more often to those men and women who earn their livings by working with food in various capacities. Louise Fisher teaches kosher cooking classes, while Seymour Attman ran his family's delicatessen on Lombard Street, a business which is still in operation today, and Regi Elion operated a popular restaurant in South Baltimore for several decades.<sup>364</sup> Despite the persistence of poverty in an urban setting like Baltimore and the charitable work of numerous organizations in the city, discussions about food and economics now focus on entrepreneurial ventures rather than poverty and charitable relief.

Similarly, discussions about food, nutrition, and health have developed since the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, when Baltimore's public health officials and medical professionals noted the links between a healthy diet and good health, and improper sanitation and diseases like tuberculosis. Cleanliness and sanitation in the home and the city are rarely remarked upon in relation to food and health in contemporary America, although there is occasional media uproar when food-borne

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<sup>362</sup> Feeding America, accessed April 9, 2013, <http://feedingamerica.org/>.

<sup>363</sup> National Council for Jewish Women, Baltimore Section, *I Must Have That Recipe!* (Collierville, TN: Fundcraft Publishing, 1998).

<sup>364</sup> Louise Fisher Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0721), JMM. OH 0162, JMM. Regina Klein Elion Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0749), JMM.

illnesses like E. coli threaten the health of citizens. Rather, today's society looks for ways of preventing disease through eating particular foods. Although the terminology is no longer used, mainstream discussions about protective foods now concentrate on foods which contain omega-3 fatty acids and superfruits like blueberries and the açai berry. These foods will not only promote good health; they are touted as actively preventing disease. The historical protective foods, milk and eggs, have been replaced by these new, trendier foods. Green leafy vegetables are still considered extremely healthful, as Americans are now encouraged to experiment with Swiss chard, kale, and other vegetables exhibiting a deep green hue. *The Cook's Book*, a charitable cookbook, originally published by the Miriam Lodge in the late 1970s, was reissued in the early 1990s in part because it now included a section with low calorie recipes; food and body weight, particularly obesity, have become a more prominent national health concern.<sup>365</sup> Food, nutrition, and health can be considered a minor theme at best in the contemporary reminiscences of Baltimore's Jews; stories about food and health, if indeed any are recalled, are not as evocative of the warm memories of childhood and loved ones as other stories and so may not be shared as readily.

Food education continues to be an important matter for Baltimore's Jews, who have learned to cook from several different types of teachers, including family members, practiced home cooks, and formally trained home economists and chefs. Susan Lilly's Nana, her paternal grandmother, taught both her daughter-in-law and her granddaughter to cook. She even spent some time with Susan's children, teaching them to make omelets or other simple dishes. Nana did not use written recipes; she knew them by heart or

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<sup>365</sup> Miriam Lodge KSB, *The Cook's Book* (Waseca, MN: Walter's Cookbooks, c. 1992-1993).



understood the correct proportions to use to make a delicious dish. In high school, Susan learned how to make challah by watching a friend's mother. Like Nana and her unwritten recipes, Susan now knows how to make challah without measuring ingredients or following a written recipe.<sup>366</sup> Despite the attempts of scientific cookery and home economics to eliminate this kind of informal culinary training, learning to cook by observing and interacting with more experienced home cooks persists as an important method of food education.

In contrast to Susan's learning experiences with two accomplished home cooks, Louise Fisher's mother studied food chemistry and home economics in college and graduate school and taught scientific cookery, first to women in Nevada through the county extension service and later in high school and college classrooms. Louise honed her own cooking skills through a variety of formal cooking classes; she apprenticed herself to a sushi chef and a baker, and she earned a cooking certificate in Thai and Vietnamese cuisine from Le Cordon Bleu. Louise herself now teaches kosher cookery classes in Maryland. She helps her students understand the differences in cuts of meat and teaches them how to prepare them properly. She also introduces them to a world of spices beyond salt and to the great quality and variety of fresh produce available at ethnic markets. "My goal in life is to ... quit making kosher food be the ugly stepchild. Kosher food can be incredible. You just got to get out of this [?] mindset that I'm from the *shtetl*, I've got to eat like I'm from the *shtetl*. No you're not. First of all you're not from the *shtetl*. You're from Potomac Maryland..." Her classes also help the more adventurous cooks learn how to make fancier fare and ethnic cuisine while still keeping the foods

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<sup>366</sup> Susan Lilly Oral History Interview (hereafter cited as OH 0722), JMM.

kosher. Her classes respond to the food trends which result in the age of the Food Network and the wide availability of recipes on the Internet.<sup>367</sup> Formal food lessons, taught by home economics professionals or other trained instructors, allow aspiring cooks to improve their technique and expand their repertoire in ways which a home cook perhaps could not. While home economics classes are still widely offered in public schools, this instruction method never replaced other informal modes of food education.

Baltimore's Protestant charitable workers and social reformers, working to improve the lives of the city's working class, urban poor, and immigrants, used food as one tool of moral uplift and Americanization. In cooking classes and other activities, they demonstrated the connections between food and eating, middle-class domesticity, and the bearing these factors had on the progress of the nation. These associations remained strong throughout World War II, but the oral histories and memoirs which recount more recent periods no longer draw such connections. World War II had an impact on all Americans' food habits, as meat and sugar were rationed, victory gardens were encouraged, and factories of all kinds were converted to war production. To help with the war effort, in 1941 the MHEA and its high school clubs compiled and tested over 300 recipes which utilized many of the surplus commodities. These recipes were tested in the home economics classrooms and in the school cafeterias. The approved recipes were to be copied and assembled into a cookbook for distribution, but this action was stalled by a shortage of paper. The MHEA also facilitated a city canning project in Baltimore in 1943, which proved quite successful.<sup>368</sup> These projects, centered upon the

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<sup>367</sup> OH 0721, JMM.

<sup>368</sup> Minutes, 1941-1943, folder entitled "Annual Meeting Minutes, 1921-1945," box 1, series 3, MHEA, UM.

limited food supply, supported American efforts to win the war, aiding the nation through domestic conservatism.

Individuals helped with the war effort as well, as Reba Silver did when she opened her home to soldiers for home-cooked Sunday dinners. Inspired by a newspaper article she read, Reba contacted the USO to share her hospitality with the young men who fought for America; she was careful to inform the coordinator that her family was Jewish, but indicated that she was not requesting only Jewish guests. “You send any boy who wants to come out, but let them know what they will be facing.” Reba’s Sunday dinners became quite popular, and she often hosted two to five soldiers. Her friends came to her aid in her personal wartime food charity. “My friends gave me their ration tickets for meat and for sugar, so that we would have enough to prepare a decent meal for the boys.”<sup>369</sup> A good meal and a sense of home provided familiar domestic comforts to these young men who were serving their country, and Reba Silver made her own food-based contribution to the nation’s progress.

The primary theme in this study, the negotiation of foodways and Jewish identity in an urban American environment, continues to be the most prevalent topic discussed in contemporary oral histories and memoirs. The acts of acquiring, preparing, and consuming foods identified as Jewish by these individuals, indicate the ongoing importance of food for American Jews. Some Baltimore families made special trips to Lombard Street to buy the special foods, like smoked fish and deli items; others who lived at a distance from an urban Jewish commercial center, experienced a more challenging task in procuring these comestibles. Mothers and grandmothers prepared

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<sup>369</sup> Reba Silver Oral History Interview, 1976, pp. 11-12, Oral History Collection, MdHS.

wonderful dishes which resonate with their sons and daughters today as being among their favorite foods. Enjoying the correct foods for various Jewish holidays continued to serve as an expression of their religious and cultural heritage. Decisions about adherence to *kashrut* are likewise significant in these stories, as some women who were raised in non-kosher homes return to the religious dietary laws. In the last decades of the twentieth century, Jewish foodways expanded to include the foods of other ethnic groups, mirroring larger American food patterns. As in the 1920s and 1930s, when personal choice largely determined the foods which Jewish immigrants and their American-born children ate, today's Jewish Baltimoreans employ their own set of principles and methodology to "eat Jewish."<sup>370</sup>

The East Baltimore neighborhood had changed demographically by the 1940s and 1950s, yet some familiar remnants of the largely Eastern European Jewish immigrant community remained. Born in 1941, Gail Goldman Davis once described herself as the "the last Jewish girl to leave East Baltimore." Living in a large house on Broadway near East Baltimore Street, she, her parents, grandparents, and some members of her extended family remained in former immigrant neighborhood until 1958 when they moved to Pimlico. Her parents had been among first generation of Eastern European Jews born in America to parents who had immigrated from Russia, the Ukraine, and Bessarabia. Gail had a close relationship with her Bubbie (her grandmother), who was the primary cook in

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<sup>370</sup> Seymour Attman's oral history interview suggested this phrase. He discusses "talking Jewish" with his customers, rather than using the correct terminology (Yiddish or perhaps Hebrew). With this phrase, I suggest that the multiple ways of identifying oneself as Jewish (religiously Jewish as Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or culturally Jewish without a religious component) can be extended to indicate the wide range of foods and culinary practices which one might consider to be Jewish.

the home.<sup>371</sup> Gail recalled Bubbie as a very talented cook, making homemade kreplach, challah, noodle kugel, and stuffed cabbage.<sup>372</sup>

Bubbie and the rest of the Goldman family kept kosher, which Gail noted was not difficult to do; Lombard Street had changed little since the first decades of the twentieth century and still offered a wide variety of specialty food stores for its predominantly Jewish clientele. Gail often accompanied Bubbie to Lombard Street to select her live chicken for her family's meal. "Lombard Street was alive with squawking poultry, flying feather, and unpleasant smells, and also epicurean delights. From my cousin at the fruit stand I could get figs, pomegranate, and buksor, aka carob. From Castle Farms cream cheese came in a block of three colors that looked like ice cream. ... A great delight was a pickled onion from a wooden barrel, that was peeled and eaten layer by layer. There was a marble gritty sweet called Halavah."<sup>373</sup>

The Goldmans observed the Sabbath and Jewish holidays, eating appropriately for each. In order to make gefilte fish, Bubbie would purchase live fish and keep them in the bathtub until she was ready to prepare the dish. Gail recalled the excitement of watching the fish come back to life in the bathtub, an experience similar to that of the Attman brothers and Paul Wartzman a decade or two before. "On Fridays the air was heavy with smells of gafilte [sic] fish simmering. Schmaltz melting, and of course a special dish of gribbanness [sic] for me. The lace table cloth hanging over the edges of the dining room table created a wonderful hiding place." The Goldman family observed Passover, and

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<sup>371</sup> Bubbie is a Yiddish term for grandmother.

<sup>372</sup> Memoir 11, box 1, Memoir Collection, JMM.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid. Halavah is a sweet made of sesame seeds; it is commonly found in the Middle East.

Gail took matzohs with her to school for her lunch.<sup>374</sup> Despite the passage of several decades, Gail Goldman Davis remembers a lifestyle and foodways which differed little from the experiences of the Eastern European Jewish immigrants who arrived in East Baltimore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her family's experience of continuing to live in an ethnic enclave, ignoring somewhat the passage of time and the demographic and cultural changes surrounding them, was atypical for most of Baltimore's Jewish populace.

A contemporary of Gail Goldman Davis's, Regina Klein Elion grew up in the Forest Park neighborhood of Baltimore in the 1940s and 1950s. She remembers her mother as an amazing and adventurous cook who introduced new foods like avocados and artichokes to her family after discovering them on her summer travels to places like California. She recreated restaurant dishes after tasting them once, invented her own recipes, and collected recipes from newspapers. "Every night when we came home it was like a different country." Regi did not grow up in a kosher household. "My grandmother kind of kept separate dishes when they were younger. But when she came to visit us, she would definitely eat crabs. Loved crabs." The traditional religious dietary rules could be suspended when Jews ate outside the home or when they were on vacation.<sup>375</sup>

Regi shopped with her father on Lombard Street on Saturdays, buying smoked fish and deli items from stores like Malin's Delicatessen. The *shochets* still operated on Lombard Street, ritually slaughtering the live chickens. "One thing I didn't like is I could see chickens being killed on Lombard Street." Because of Regi's mother's culinary gifts,

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<sup>374</sup> Ibid. Gribenes are pieces of fried chicken skin and onion which result from rendering chicken fat into schmaltz; they are similar to pork rinds in concept.

<sup>375</sup> OH 0749, JMM.

her family did not eat typical Russian Jewish foods very often. “Jewish food is not that tasty, I have to say. You know it’s a salt and pepper kind of spice. My mother felt that ... I guess it wasn’t exotic enough for my mother to experiment with. But we certainly had a lot of deli in the house.” Regi’s mother made her own gefilte fish once, and only once. She kept the fish in the bathtub, like so many other Jewish homemakers had in previous decades. Regi describes gefilte fish as “a very time consuming horrendous job.” Despite the limited number of cooked Jewish dishes, Regi’s mother always cooked traditional foods for the holidays like Chanukah and Passover with dishes like brisket, latkes, and matzoh ball soup. “She wanted us to grow up with our Judaism,” an identity which was intimately connected to the foods this family ate.<sup>376</sup>

Seymour Attman grew up working in his father’s delicatessen on Lombard Street, Baltimore’s Jewish shopping district; as an adult, he took over the family business and expanded it. Drawing on the nostalgia of the Jewish community, part of Seymour Attman’s catering business was throwing delicatessen parties. He decorated with old signs which listed menu items and their prices, and he offered items like pastrami or corned beef sandwiches, chocolate sodas, and coddies. Commenting on the loss of some delicatessen foodways, Attman remarked “you know, the American kids don’t know what a bulky is, they don’t know what a ‘nickel a stickle’ is.”<sup>377</sup> Attman viewed these deli parties as a way of introducing the younger generations, “the American kids,” to the familiar foods of their parents’ and grandparents’ Jewish immigrant past. These parties

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<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> A bulky is similar to a kaiser roll, and a stickle is a piece of salami.

served as a reminder of a bygone era, happily recalling the past for some and introducing an earlier generation's foods to a new generation.<sup>378</sup>

Despite the diversity of foods and the temptations of non-kosher foods, a number of Jewish women have returned to keeping a kosher kitchen. For some, the choice was made as adult after growing up in a non-kosher household. For others, it was simply a continuation of the foodways of their childhood. Living in rural Nevada, Louise Fisher and her family, including her mother and maternal grandparents, were isolated from a large community of Jews. If they wanted to eat traditional Jewish dishes, like bagels or rugelach, Louise's mother and grandmother had to make them from scratch or go without them. Today Louise keeps a kosher kitchen for her family. By cooking kosher foods and finding appropriate substitutes for forbidden ingredients, "it force[s] me to be a better cook." Louise does not discuss the connections between her choice of kosher foodways and Judaism, but her dedication to *kashrut* is an important lifestyle choice for her.<sup>379</sup>

Born in the early 1950s in Texas, Susan Lilly and her family ate an unusual combination of Russian Jewish foods, like stuffed cabbages, *gedompte* meat, different kinds of borscht, schav, and mandel bread, and the regional dishes of the Gulf Coast of Texas, like shellfish, catfish, hush puppies, and bacon.<sup>380</sup> Although they did not keep a kosher home, they practiced their own form of food separation, eating exclusively from one cuisine or the other at each meal. As a teenager and young adult, Susan gradually became more interested in keeping kosher for herself; as she explored Judaism with her

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<sup>378</sup> OH 0162, JMM.

<sup>379</sup> OH 0721, JMM.

<sup>380</sup> *Gedompte* meat is potted, well-cooked meat. Borscht is a Russian beet soup which can be served with meat or as a dairy dish. Schav is a cold sorrel soup. Mandel bread is a twice-baked almond cookie, similar to Italian *biscotti*.



friends and learned of the Holocaust, she felt that keeping a kosher home would be a way to reclaim her Jewish identity in a largely non-Jewish community. With the birth of her sons, she and her husband had fully committed to a kosher lifestyle.<sup>381</sup>

Baltimore's contemporary charitable cookbooks also engage in the ongoing negotiation of *kashrut*, revealing divergent Jewish foodways in the late twentieth century. The Miriam Lodge KSB published its updated *The Cook's Book* in the early 1990s. Full of traditional recipes for schav, gefilte fish, borscht, blintzes, challah, and matzo balls, as well as modified recipes for unleavened Passover dishes, this cookbook also included a large number of recipes for *treyf* dishes, almost exclusively devoted to shellfish. Crab soup and clam or seafood chowder recipes abounded, along with shrimp dips and other shellfish appetizers. Main dishes incorporated crab, oysters, lobster, shrimp, scallops, and oysters singly or in combinations like casseroles or pasta dishes. Despite the inclusion of this wide array of shellfish dishes, *The Cook's Book* had extremely few recipes which call for pork products; banana and bacon hors d'oeuvres and Chinese spareribs are among the few pork recipes in this collection. The women of the Miriam Lodge adapted their understanding of *kashrut* to include Maryland's regional culinary heritage and acknowledged the diversity of eating patterns within their religion. If one wanted to keep kosher, she could simply not make the recipes which included *treyf* ingredients, but if she enjoyed such ingredients and flavors, she should be free to make them, using the Sisterhood's favorite recipes as a guide.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> OH 0722, JMM.

<sup>382</sup> Miriam Lodge KSB, *The Cook's Book* (Waseca, MN: Walter's Cookbooks, c. 1992-1993).

In contrast, the recipes in the 1998 charitable cookbook *I Must Have That Recipe!*, published by the Baltimore Section of the National Council of Jewish Women, contained no *treyf* ingredients. Instead, they focused on the importance of holiday observances using specific dishes, including a large number of Passover dishes, primarily desserts, and recipes like potato latkes for Chanukah. A recipe for Almost Silber's Colonial Coffee Cake referenced the popular East Baltimore bakery, once located on Lombard Street, and leveraged nostalgia with the bakery's name in the recipe title.<sup>383</sup>

Contemporary sources about the foodways of Baltimore's Jewish community also reveal the incorporation of newer American culinary trends, trends which Regi Elion's mother hinted at with her adventurous and international cooking. Regi's mother's experimentation with diverse foods and cuisines reflected a larger change in food patterns in America in the second half of the twentieth century: the popularity of ethnic, international, and fusion cuisine. By the 1960s, consuming ethnic dishes reflected to members of the American middle-class one's adventurous culinary spirit, a positive trait, and one's cultured status.<sup>384</sup> The recipes in all three charitable cookbooks reflect this food trend in their recipes. The recipes in *Our Sisterhood Cookbook* revealed a widening culinary exposure, with recipes drawn from around the world. Whether these dishes would be considered authentic cuisine by expert chefs, or a loose interpretation of a dish based on available ingredients or a stereotype of what certain states or countries might eat, recipes like Cold Senegalese Soup, Mexican Chili Con Carne, Chicken Cacciatore, and Polynesian Chicken mingled on these pages with traditional recipes for Lebkuchen (a

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<sup>383</sup> National Council for Jewish Women, Baltimore Section, *I Must Have That Recipe!* (Collierville, TN: Fundcraft Publishing, 1998).

<sup>384</sup> Margaret Visser, *Much Depends on Dinner: The Extraordinary History and Mythology, Allure, and Obsessions, Perils and Taboos, of an Ordinary Meal* (New York: Grove Press, 1986), 256.

traditional German cookie, somewhat similar to gingerbread), Mother's Matzo Balls, Gefilte Fish, and Stuffed Cabbage Rolls.<sup>385</sup>

Similarly, the recipes of the Miriam Lodge KSB engaged in the burgeoning internationalism of American culinary habits in this period, offering dishes like Middle Eastern kebobs, Greek dolmades and moussaka, French beef bourguignon and seafood crêpes, Italian brasciole and saltimbocca, an eggplant dip from Israel, and Asian dishes like teriyaki and Oriental beef steak strips.<sup>386</sup> With a slightly less international flair, the dishes in *I Must Have That Recipe!* introduced many popular contemporary ingredients, such as goat cheese, sun dried tomatoes, phyllo dough, curry, pesto, roasted red peppers, Belgian endive, and artichokes.<sup>387</sup> Such ingredients and dishes never appeared in Mrs. Howard's cookbook, nor would they have entered a home economics lesson in Baltimore's public schools in the 1920s and 1930s.

Susan Lilly's culinary experiments indicate the wide acceptability of fusion cooking, which merges culinary traditions in unusual ways. Cooking within the dictates of *kashrut*, Susan prepares gefilte fish with a spicy pepper and tomato sauce or salsa verde. Her fusion cuisine is the result of her "sort of intentionally going beyond the food to try something different." Susan was not initially in favor of this melding of flavors and ethnic traditions, however. Upon hearing that a Jewish woman baked her challah with rosemary, Susan initially thought "You can't put rosemary on challah. That's not authentic at all." But her attitude softened, as she recalled her own experiments with

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<sup>385</sup> Baltimore Hebrew Congregation Sisterhood, *Our Sisterhood Cook Book* (Kansas City, MO: North American Press of Kansas City, Inc., n.d.).

<sup>386</sup> Miriam Lodge KSB, *The Cook's Book* (Waseca, MN: Walter's Cookbooks, c. 1992-1993).

<sup>387</sup> National Council for Jewish Women, Baltimore Section, *I Must Have That Recipe!* (Collierville, TN: Fundcraft Publishing, 1998).

non-traditional flavors. Despite her embrace of fusion cuisine, Susan still adheres strictly to the recipes she learned from Nana for certain dishes, like charoseth. This immovability with certain recipes speaks to a personal connection with a loved one through a recipe, while her wild combinations of unusual ingredients and flavors represent the increasingly global scope of American cuisine and its intersections with traditional Jewish foods.<sup>388</sup>

Although Baltimore's Jews increasingly participate in the larger American national foodways, following food trends in ingredients and international and fusion cuisine, they continue to retain some of the traditional elements of their Jewish foodways heritage. By attempting to make dishes as one's parents or grandparents did, by cooking and serving specific dishes to observe the Jewish holidays, and by following family recipes without deviation, Baltimore's Jews engage with their cultural heritage, honor their religion, and connect to their history. This hybrid diet, based on a mixture of traditional dishes and new recipes, is based on active choices made by members of the community throughout the generations. It unites Baltimore's Jewish community with the experiences of the city's other ethnic groups, as well as connecting them to the experiences of other historic Jewish immigrant communities in cities throughout the country. It is this adaptation by immigrants, this merging of past traditions with present tastes, which defines contemporary American foodways, and America as a nation of diverse ethnic heritage.

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<sup>388</sup> OH 0722, JMM.

## Glossary

Blintz	Thin pancakes, similar to crêpes.
Borscht	Russian beet soup which can be served with meat or as a dairy dish.
Bubbie	Yiddish term for grandmother.
Bulky (or Bulkie)	A sandwich roll similar to a kaiser roll.
Challah	An egg bread, often braided, eaten for the Sabbath. The term also represents the religious offering of a piece of dough taken from the unbaked bread.
Charoseth	A traditional dish for Passover made of fruit, nuts, and honey. represents the mortar which the Israelites used to make bricks during their enslavement in Ancient Egypt.
Cholent	A slow-cooked stew of beef, potatoes, and lima beans typically prepared on Fridays, allowed to cook overnight, and eaten for the noon meal on the Sabbath.
Chametz	Literally, leavened. Foods which are chametz are forbidden during Passover.
Coddie	A Baltimore snack made of a fried mashed potato ball flavored with codfish flakes, salt and pepper. It is then sandwiched between two crackers and served with mustard.
Gedompte Meat	Potted, well-cooked meat.
Gefilte Fish	An entrée popular for the Friday night Sabbath meal. The fish was deboned, the meat ground and mixed with a binder, and then stuffed into the fish for cooking.
Gribenes	Pieces of fried chicken skin and onion which result from rendering chicken fat into schmaltz. Gribenes are similar to pork rinds in concept.
Halavah	A sweet made of sesame seeds, commonly found in the Middle East.
Kashrut	The body of Jewish dietary laws which dictate what foods may and may not be consumed and how foods must be prepared and eaten.

Kreplach	Small dumplings filled with ground meat, mashed potatoes, or another filling, usually boiled and served in soup.
Mandel Bread	A twice-baked almond cookie, similar to Italian <i>biscotti</i> .
Matzoh	Unleavened bread traditionally eaten by Jews during the Passover holiday.
Mitzvah	Acts of charitable kindness, or good deeds. Mitzvahs are religiously required in Judaism.
Rugelach	A crescent-shaped pastry with a sweet filling.
Schav	A cold soup made of sorrel.
Schmaltz	Rendered chicken or goose fat, used in kosher cooking for frying meats and used like butter to spread on bread.
Shtetl	Small crowded Jewish village or community in Eastern Europe.
Stickle	A piece of salami, generally sold at delicatessens.
Treyf	Literally, not kosher. Unclean and unfit for consumption according to Jewish dietary laws.

## Bibliography

### Abbreviations

JMM	Jewish Museum of Maryland
MdHS	Maryland Historical Society
MHEA	Maryland Home Economics Association Archives
UM	Special Collections, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, College Park

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##### Maryland Home Economics Association Archives

Series 1: Administration

Series 3: Minutes

Series 6: Newsletters

##### Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD.

MS 251	Cohen Collection
MS 1497	Leakin-Sioussat Papers
MS 1737	Politico-Literary Club Papers
MS 2004	Brune-Randall Papers
MS 2269.1	Maryland Family History Research Papers
MS 3089	Paul Henderson Manuscript and Ephemera Collection
OH 8200	Reba Silver Oral History Interview

##### Jewish Museum of Maryland, Baltimore, MD.

##### JMM Archives and Manuscripts

MS 40	Hochschild Kohn Company Collection
MS 138	Jewish Family and Children's Services (Baltimore) Records
MS 170	The Associated Collection

## JMM Memoir Collection

- Memoir 1 Blanche Agnes Brave Abrams  
Memoir 4 Baltimore Memoirs, by 14 Authors. A Collection of Essays and Some Poems  
Memoir 11 Gail E. Goldman Davis, "The Last Jewish Girl to Leave East Baltimore"

## JMM Oral History Collection

- OH 0162 Seymour Attman Oral History Interview  
OH 0164 Kathryn Sollins Oral History Interview  
OH 0202 Anna Rabinowitz Oral History Interview  
OH 0260 Isidor Terrell Oral History Interview  
OH 0275 Ann Curasik Oral History Interview  
OH 0676 Milton Schwartz Oral History Interview  
OH 0678 Edward Attman Oral History Interview  
OH 0681 Blanche (Cohen) Green Oral History Interview  
OH 0684 Rena Kolman Oral History Interview  
OH 0686 Paul Wartzman Oral History Interview  
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