



STORIES FROM THE STACKS

The Ohioana Library Association collects and preserves the work of Ohio authors, illustrators, musicians and ordinary citizens. Started in 1929 by Martha Kinney Cooper, our stacks now hold thousands of stories. This blog will tell some of these stories and we invite you to come visit us to see them for yourself. Find us at www.ohioana.org

WHAT'S COOKING IN THE STACKS?

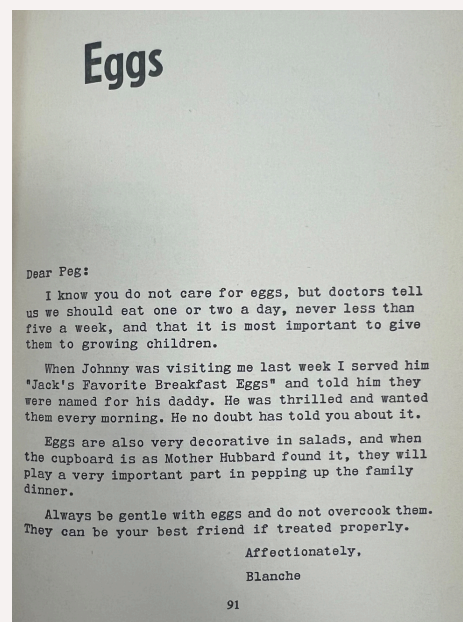
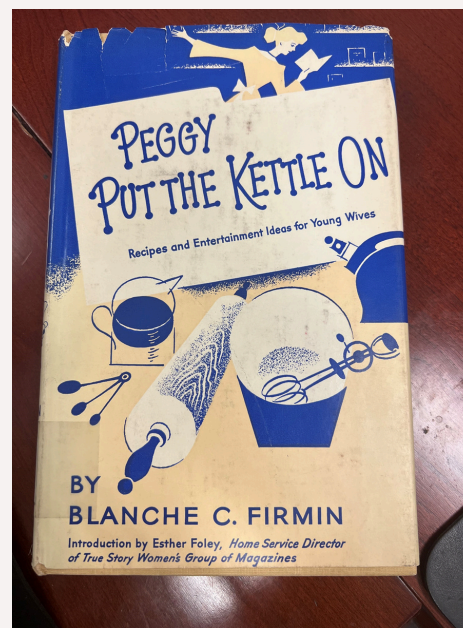
July 10, 2024

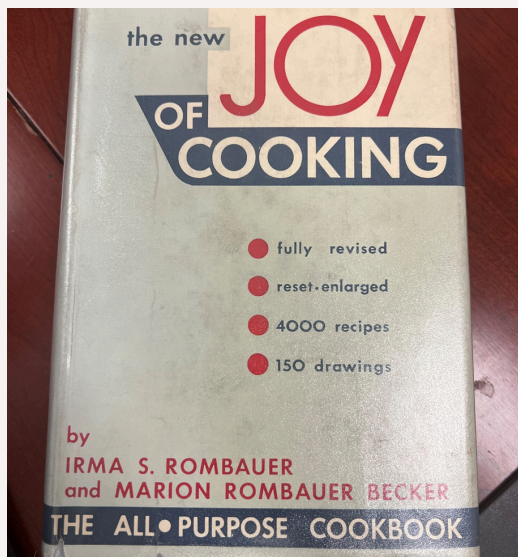
When I saw that Saturday, July 13 is National French Fry Day and Sunday, July 14 is National Macaroni and Cheese Day, I decided to cruise our stacks for cookbooks thinking I might find some new recipes to celebrate these two very important holidays. I was not disappointed. We have multiple shelves of cookbooks and books about restaurants from around the state, but three of them caught my eye and I am excited to share them this week!

"Peggy Put the Kettle On: Recipes and Entertainment Ideas for Young Wives" by Blanche C. Firman (Findlay, Ohio) and published in 1951 was the first to catch my eye, mainly because of the title! I knew this book would be a reflection of the times, but I had no idea how it would take me down a rabbit hole of reading recipes. The book starts with a letter from a new wife, Peg, to her new mother-in-law, Blanche, asking for cooking help:

"Jack said he would like a meat pie for dinner, so I found a recipe and followed it exactly. It was steaming hot and the crust was a beautiful golden brown when I put it down before him. He broke the crust, peered inside, laid down the spoon and said, 'My mother's meat pie was never like this!' I don't want it to happen to me again so please send all of your favorite recipes."

Each of the following section of recipes starts with a letter being written by the mother-in-law to the young wife giving advice on each area of the menu. Such a reflection of the 1950s...the advice Blanche offers and the recipes will take you on a trip back to those years and may make you nostalgic for some of the recipes of old (for me it was the Porcupine Balls like my mom used to make!). Originally sold for \$2.95, you can purchase a signed first edition online for \$44 online or a leather bound copy on Amazon for \$59.99! Blanche was born in 1884 and died in 1961 at 77 years of age and is buried in Maple Grove Cemetery in Findlay. You can find her Mac and Cheese recipe on page 86 (it uses "diced snappy cheese") but alas, there is no recipe for French Fries.



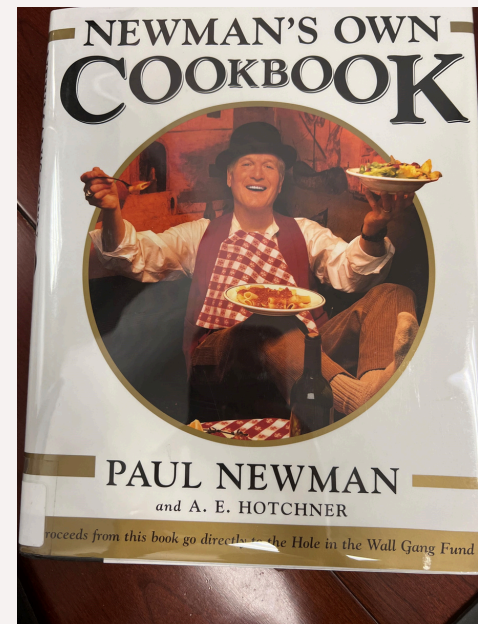


The next book that caught my eye is probably the most famous cookbook ever, "*The Joy of Cooking*," having sold over 20 million copies since its' first printing in 1931. We not only have this copy from 1951 but we have several others, including the 75th anniversary edition. Why is this in our library? Because Marion Rombauer Becker, the daughter of Irma, spent most of her adult life in Cincinnati.

Irma self published the book in 1931 (we don't have a copy of this but would love one!) and the first commercial publishing was in 1936. Marion was an illustrator and helped her mother revise and illustrate later editions, taking over the work on it after Irma passed away. Marion married architect John Becker and they moved to Cincinnati. She was devoted to wildlife and also co-authored the book "*Wild Wealth*" about wild plants and flowers (also in our collection!). Marion became the first professional director of the Modern Art Society in Cincinnati in 1942, which is currently still operating as the Contemporary Art Center, and was the first woman to be named as a "great living Cincinnati." Their recipe for Mac and Cheese can be found on page 94 of our 1951 edition and two recipes for French Fries are on page 307 (there is also a recipe for Frog Legs in Mushroom Sauce on page 245 if that is something you might want to try--my grandma loved frog legs!)



Finally, the last one I couldn't resist was "*Newman's Own Cookbook*" written by Paul Newman and A.E. Hotchner. You may already know that Paul was born in 1925 in Shaker Heights, Ohio and graduated from Shaker Heights High School (you may not know that his middle name is Leonard!). A more modern cookbook published in 1998, it contains over 100 of his favorite recipes. But that's not why it caught my eye.



When I was in high school in the 70's I spent many weekends at the Watkins Glen Race Track with my dad, who was the volunteer Chief Grid Marshall there. I loved racing (I still do and actually thought I might be a race car driver during those years) and I would sit in the stands above the pits while my dad worked the races. One Saturday, as I was sitting there alone, a lovely woman invited me to sit with her. I accepted and we chatted and ate our lunch together. Her husband was racing that day in the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) race and as we were finishing our lunch she said, "Oh, here he comes now." I looked up and there was Paul Newman. I had been sitting with Joanne Woodward the whole morning and had no idea! Newman started his racing career at the Watkins Glen Racing School in 1969 when he was prepping for the movie "*Winning*" and here he was back and driving in a race! But back to the cookbook.....each recipe has a brief intro and photos are scattered throughout. The variety of recipes gives a peek into Newman's tastes and his culinary life. There is no recipe for Fries or Mac and Cheese, but there is Baked Macaroni with Lamb and Cheese on page 135. If you want to celebrate this weekend or any other time, come visit us and get some new recipes from our Stacks!



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