

LCM



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024

A TASTE OF THE HOLIDAYS

Inside

Historical Cookbooks
Reflect How We Celebrate

Origin Story: The Most
Famous Reindeer of All

Plus

Season's Drinkings

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Rudolph's Story

How the most famous reindeer of all went down in history.

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Taste of the Holidays

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Paris Expo Faces

Exhibit showcased African American life at the turn of the century.

■ Party guests arrive on a snowy Christmas Eve in this print by Joseph Hoover. *Prints and Photographs Division*



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2024

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Mission of the Library of Congress

The Library's mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

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■ **On the cover:** Colorful cookies with crushed peppermint capture the flavor of the holiday season. *Shawn Miller*

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■ **Left:** U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón at NASA's Kennedy Space Center facilities. *Shawn Miller*

■ **Right:** The Europa Clipper lifts off on Oct. 14, headed for Europa, one of Jupiter's moons. *Shawn Miller*



WRITTEN IN THE STARS

Poet Laureate Ada Limón sends a poem on a NASA mission to Europa.

In the moments before NASA's Europa Clipper launched from the legendary Kennedy Space Center on Oct. 14, everything got quiet.

All eyes fixed on the towering SpaceX Falcon Heavy rocket that would carry a NASA spacecraft on a 1.8 billion-mile journey to explore Europa, one of Jupiter's moons. The mission was in the making for decades and imagined for far longer.

Galileo first discovered Europa through a homemade telescope in 1610. Now, scientists believe Europa is another water world covered with an icy crust and may hold the ingredients for life.

As the countdown clock ticked, a crowd of scientists, mission planners, family, friends — and the poet laureate of the United States — gathered under clear blue skies to watch. Then they counted down together. 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1. Liftoff. As the rocket lifted higher and turned out over the ocean, Poet Laureate Ada Limón wiped a tear and watched it disappear into the sky.

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory had invited

Limón to write an original poem for the mission to serve as a message from Earth and to help convey the mission's quest for knowledge. She wrote of the mysteries of Earth and how "the offering of water" unites us: "O second moon, we, too, are made of water, of vast and beckoning seas."

The poem, "In Praise of Mystery: A Poem for Europa," was engraved on the spacecraft's metal vault plate. NASA collaborated with Limón and the Library on a public engagement campaign that invited people worldwide to sign on to the poem and send their names to space with it on a microchip. Over 2.6 million people signed. In December, a replica of the vault plate will be added to the Library's collections.

The launch marked only the start of a nearly six-year journey by Europa Clipper to reach Jupiter and Europa in 2030.

"I was overwhelmed by how much force, how much teamwork and energy, thought and imagination, went into that singular moment," Limón said. "Watching the spacecraft launch, I kept thinking my words were some small part of its journey, and it overwhelmed me. It almost didn't feel real, until I watched it disappear. Then, my first feeling was how much I hoped the whole journey would be safe, that my poem might keep the spacecraft and its scientific instruments safe."

—Brett Zongker is chief of media relations in the Office of Communications.

thing I want to recommend is that you
k "The Joy of Sex". It is available
kstores and it might help the two of
ent.

nd let me know what happens.

Dr. Ruth Westheimer

ON THE AIR AND IN THE ARCHIVE

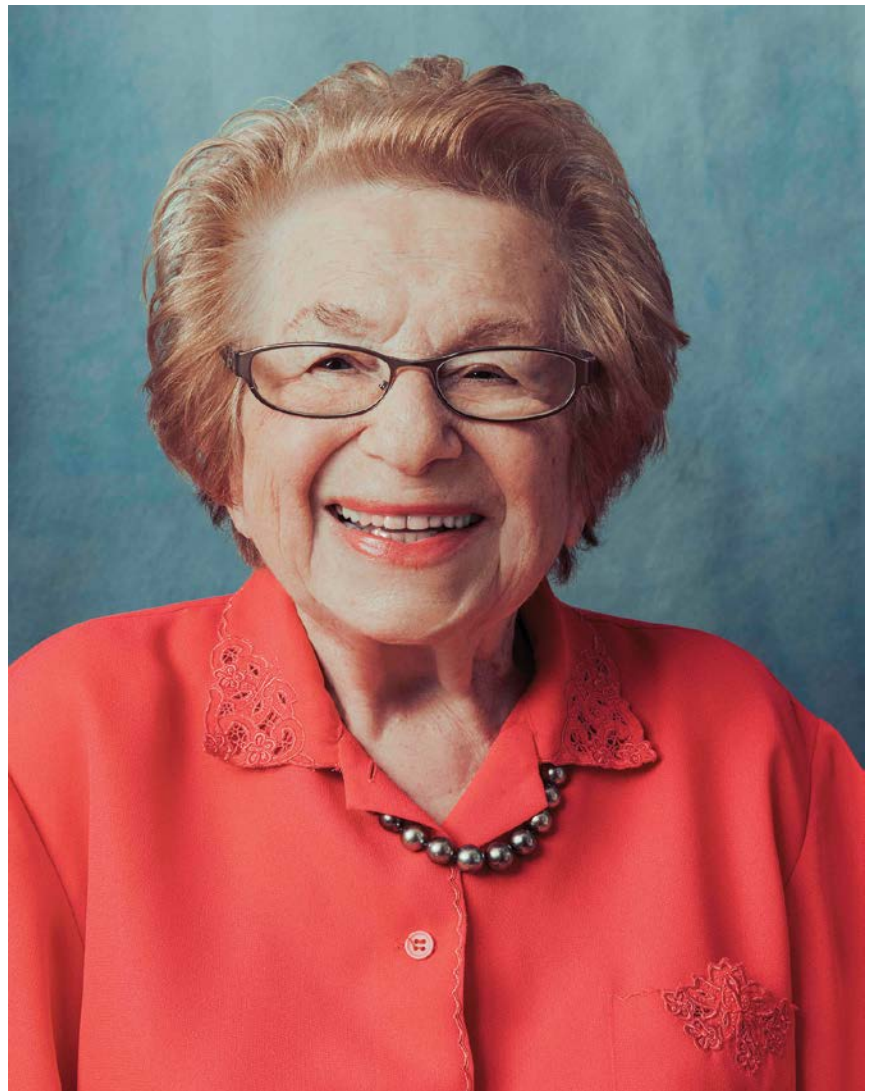
The Library opens Dr. Ruth's papers for research.

Ruth Westheimer became a household name as "Dr. Ruth" in the 1980s, filling radio waves, television screens and bookshelves with advice on sex and relationships. Dr. Ruth was a pioneering voice in sex education, speaking openly about contraception, orgasms and male and female anatomy at a time when such topics were publicly taboo.

Dr. Ruth first went on the air in 1980 in New York City. Only radio listeners with antennae strong enough to pick up New York's 97.1 FM station could hear her German-accented voice until 1984, when NBC Radio nationally syndicated her program, "Sexually Speaking." Her audience grew with the premiere of "Good Sex! With Dr. Ruth Westheimer" on Lifetime Television in 1984.

The Library's Manuscript Division recently opened the Dr. Ruth Westheimer Papers for research. The collection consists almost exclusively of audience letters sent to Dr. Ruth from 1980 to 1986. Writers sought guidance for their problems regarding sexual experience (How do I achieve orgasm?) or relationship issues (Should I leave him?).

Dr. Ruth answered these questions in writing and on the air with a directness that made her popular. She spoke to audience members of all ages and sexualities. She gave advice about specific sexual acts or positions to help individuals dealing with insecurities, inexperience or physical limitations. She frequently interrupted callers



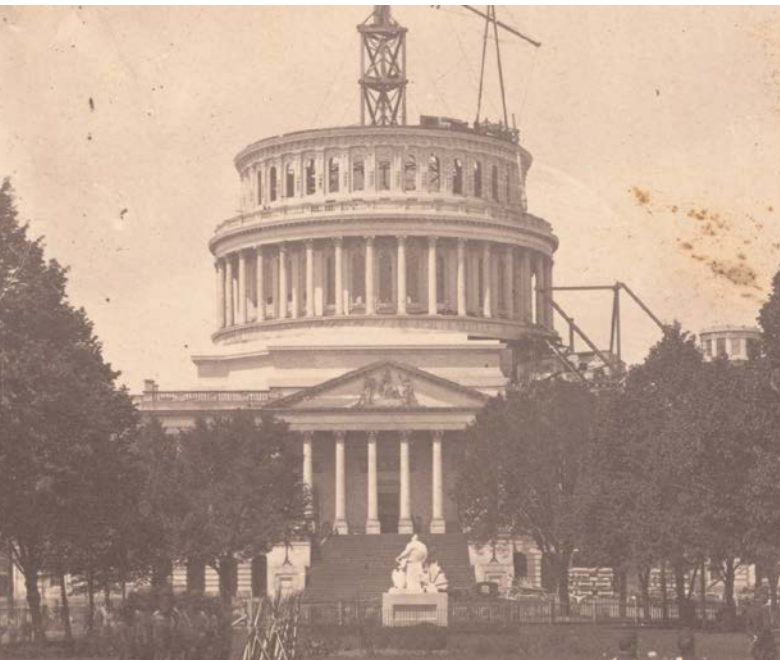
to ask, "Are you using contraception?" and advocated for safe sex practices to help her listeners achieve "terrific sex!"

Dr. Ruth passed away earlier this year after 40 years of listening to the nation's sexual and relationship problems and providing empathetic and straightforward advice through her books and shows.

Her papers in the Manuscript Division document the rise of her popularity in the early 1980s. They also provide a deep insight into the sexual frustrations and obsessions of the era and are a unique resource for anyone who wants to study the evolution of America's sexual mores.

—Katherine S. Madison is an archivist in the Manuscript Division.

■ Dr. Ruth Westheimer spent some 40 years listening to the nation's sexual and relationship problems and providing advice, as she did in this letter to a listener in 1982. Manuscript Division. Photo by Austin Hargrave, courtesy of Ruth Westheimer



■ John Wood photographed the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln (right) at the U.S. Capitol on March 4, 1861, and the ongoing construction of the Capitol dome that May. *Prints and Photographs Division*

‘MAGNIFICENT INTENTIONS’

New book highlights the work of the United States’ first federal photographer.

Nearly a half-century before the Library of Congress moved from the U.S. Capitol to a grand new building across First Street, an immense dome was planned for the Capitol rotunda, along with the placement of columns on its facade.

As the United States’ first federal photographer, John Wood bore witness to this epic construction project and chronicled the transformation of Washington, D.C., into an established metropolis and center of government.

In “Magnificent Intentions: John Wood, First Federal Photographer (1856–1863),” Library of Congress conservator Adrienne Lundgren highlights the significance of Wood’s photographic images – his documentation of the U.S. Capitol and the Washington Aqueduct; the first panoramic photos of D.C.; the first inauguration photo, from James Buchanan’s inauguration in 1857; and documentation of the Civil War. It also includes a magnificent large format

view of Abraham Lincoln’s 1861 inauguration from the Library’s collections. Lundgren’s research established that all of the extant photographs of Lincoln’s 1861 inauguration were taken by Wood.

Wood was born in England but introduced to photography in the U.S. He immigrated in 1832, settled in Iowa and worked as an itinerant portrait miniaturist. It is unclear how Wood first encountered photography, but he likely learned the art from Richard Plumbe, brother of photographic pioneer John Plumbe Jr. He changed professions multiple times, moving from Iowa to Washington, D.C., and back again, from the security of his Capitol studio to the front lines of the Civil War.

The bulk of the images that appear in “Magnificent Intentions” are from the collections of the Library’s Prints and Photographs and Manuscript divisions. Wood’s original collodion glass negatives are held by the Photographic Branch of the Architect of the Capitol, and other collections are held by the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History and the Athenaeum of Philadelphia.

“Magnificent Intentions” was published by Smithsonian Books in association with the Library. It is available in the Library of Congress Shop and via booksellers everywhere.



SHAWN MILLER

GREAT HALL AT CHRISTMAS

The holiday season is a festive time at the Library of Congress.

A roving band of employees dressed in medieval costumes puts on its annual mummers play, a holiday folk tradition in England, Ireland, Colonial America and the West Indies – and, now, at the Library.

The Library chorale performs seasonal favorites. Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden reads aloud to children gathered around her in the Great Hall.

You never know who might show up: Last year, singer Mariah Carey dropped by the Great Hall to pick up a certificate marking the induction of a signature hit into the Library's National Recording Registry. The song: her smash "All I Want for Christmas Is You," which played in the background as Carey, certificate in hand, posed for pictures by the massive Christmas tree.

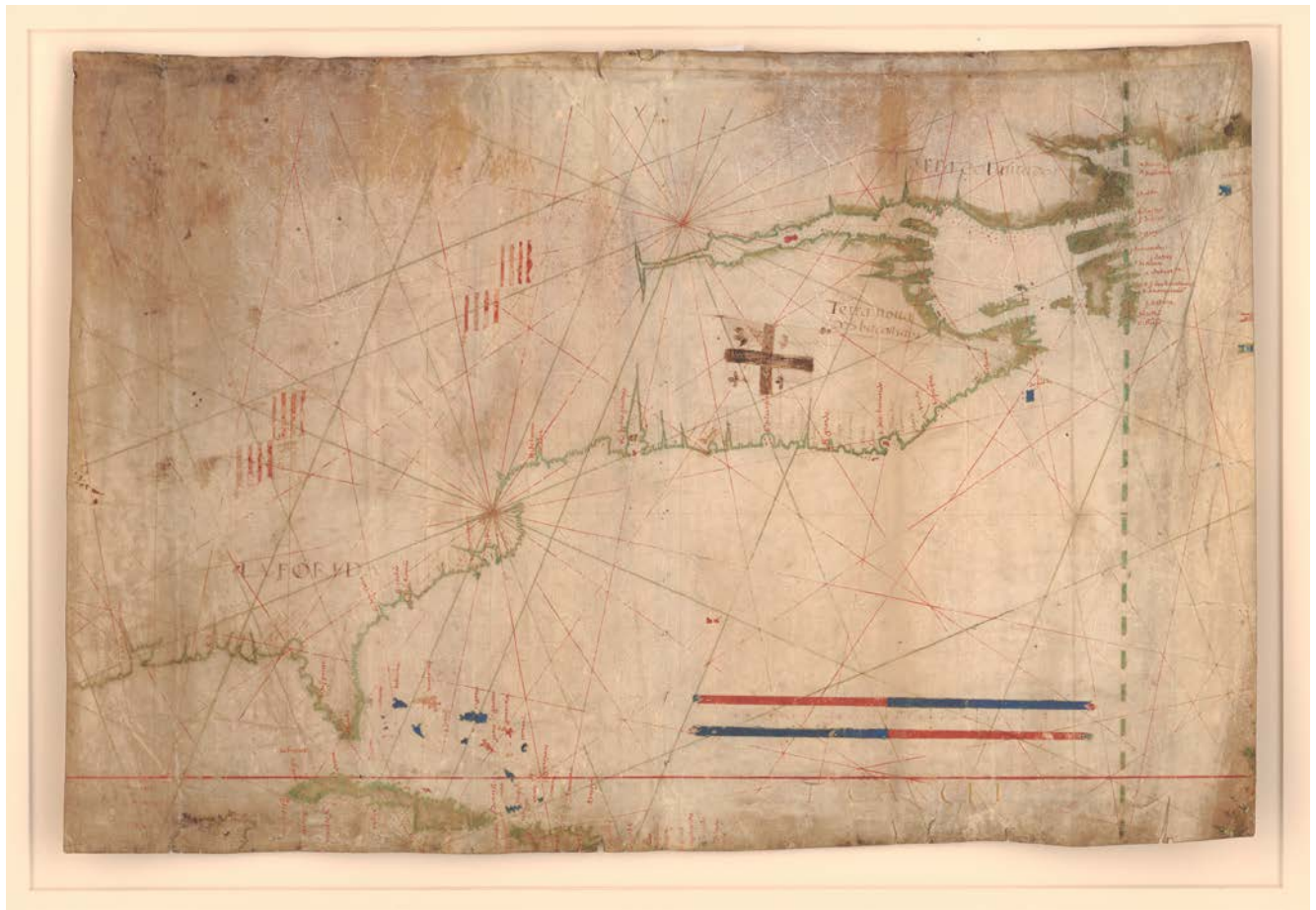
Ah, the tree.

Each year, the Library erects a towering tree in the Great Hall, brilliantly lit and decorated with red ribbons and shining ornaments of gold, silver, red, blue and green.

Befitting America's library, some ornaments come in book form, representing each of the 50 states. A volume titled "The Yellow Rose of Texas" hangs near "Idaho Mountain Bluebird," itself perched on a branch just below "Georgia: Peace on Earth."

The tree, of course, is spectacular at any hour. But it is perhaps best viewed in the evenings just before closing time, when the crowds thin out, the winter sky outside the windows darkens and the tree's lights and colors cast a warm glow on one of America's most magnificent spaces.

—Mark Hartsell is editor of LCM.



■ Bartolomeu Velho created this nautical chart around 1560 – one of only a few portolans depicting the East Coast of North America known to exist. *Geography and Map Division*

BRINGING NEW DETAILS TO LIGHT

Preservation team uncovers place names on an early, rare nautical chart.

The map, hand drawn on animal skin nearly five centuries ago, is a rare survivor. Its faded inks trace the Gulf of Mexico from what is now Texas to Florida, then up the entire East Coast.

Portuguese cartographer Bartolomeu Velho created the map – an early nautical chart, or portolan – around 1560, and the Library acquired it last year. It is one of a small group of portolans depicting the East Coast of North America known to exist.

The Velho portolan came to the Library

by a circuitous route, to say the least. It was found in 1961 at Rye Castle Museum in Sussex, England. By then, however, the portolan no longer was intact: It had been cut into quarters and repurposed for its vellum, or animal skin.

The segment purchased by the Library – the upper-left quadrant – was used to bind a 17th-century English manuscript before being identified as a portolan and separated from the book. The Rye Castle Museum holds another quadrant. The fate of the other two is unknown.

Easy accessibility to such a rare item is a boon for scholarship. The Library, however, went beyond simply making a digitized version available on its website.

Alongside the original, researchers also can access a high-resolution, enhanced version that reveals previously illegible place names – including some of the earliest known



They can do so thanks to a collaboration between the Library's Geography and Map Division and the Preservation Research and Testing Division (PRTD).

For more than 15 years, PRTD has used noninvasive techniques, chief among them multispectral imaging, on collection items to glean information invisible to the human eye. Multispectral imaging involves digitally photographing an object at multiple wavelengths.

To elicit more information, the team draws on techniques that complement multispectral imaging. Infrared analysis provides data about an item's substrate – parchment, for example. Reflectance

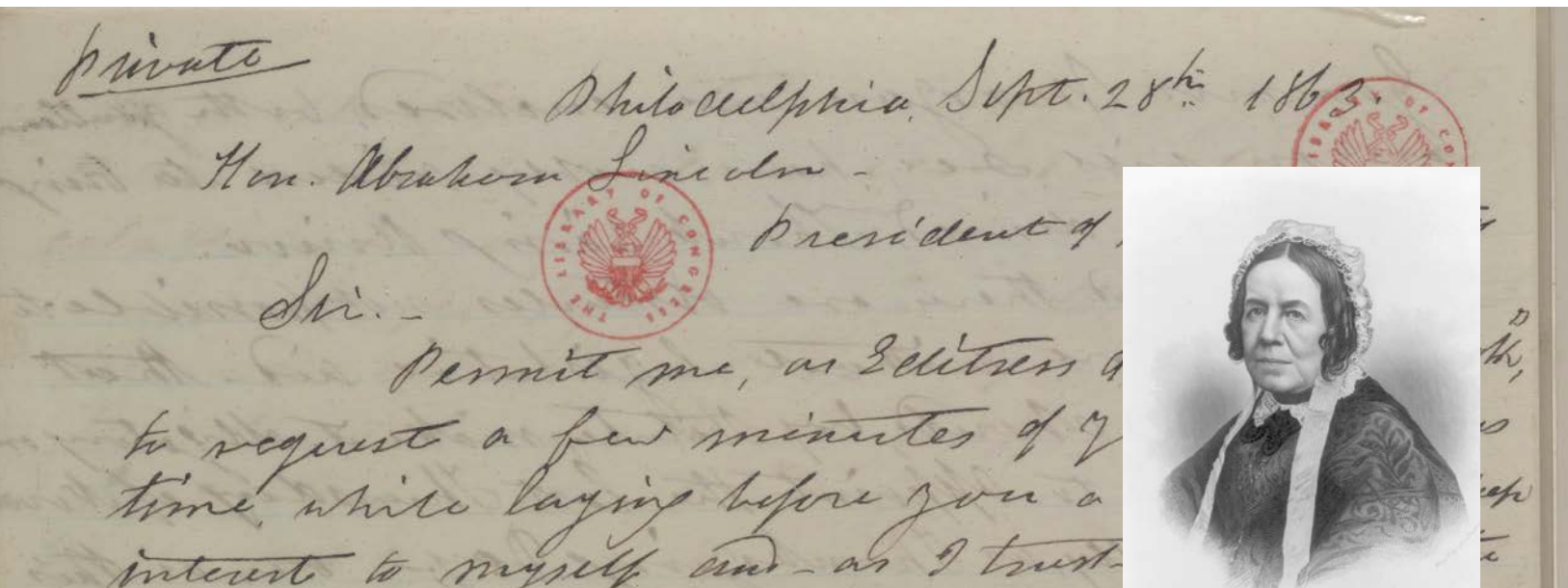
The processes are noninvasive, requiring no physical sampling or, for the most part, contact between instruments and objects.

Library scientists hope the portolan is just the first example of enhanced images to be shared online – using innovative means to make collections more accessible.

MORE INFORMATION

■ **Multispectral imaging** of the Velho nautical chart (top) reveals additional information, such as place names, not visible to the naked eye in an unenhanced image of the same section (bottom). *Preservation Research and Testing Division*

PAGE FROM THE PAST



■ Sarah Hale wrote this letter to Abraham Lincoln on Sept. 28, 1863, urging the president to proclaim a national day of thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday of November. *Manuscript Division. Prints and Photographs Division*

THE WOMAN WHO HELPED MAKE THANKSGIVING

Hale campaigned for the creation of a national holiday.

The fourth Thursday in November today means family, food and giving thanks. The national holiday of Thanksgiving, however, did not come quickly or easily. The precedent for the holiday can be attributed, in part, to the determination of one woman: Sarah J. Hale.

Born in 1788, Hale was an American activist, editor and writer, best known as creator of the nursery rhyme "Mary Had a Little Lamb." As editor of the popular Godey's Lady's Book magazine for women, she advocated for women's education and the right to own property. A talented writer, she used her skills to persuade President Abraham Lincoln to proclaim a national day of thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday in November.

After years of writing to other government officials, Hale finally took her case to the top.

"You may have observed that, for some years past, there has been an increasing interest felt in our land to have the Thanksgiving held on the same day, in all the

States," she wrote Lincoln in September 1863. With Lincoln's help, Hale hoped, "the permanency and unity of our Great American Festival of Thanksgiving would be forever secured."

On Oct. 3, Lincoln issued a proclamation urging his fellow citizens "to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens."

The country, then engaged in a bloody civil war, would not celebrate the day together: Confederate states didn't consider themselves subject to Lincoln's proclamation.

Still, Hale's persistent efforts helped set a precedent of celebrating Thanksgiving in late November. In 1870, congressional legislation officially made Thanksgiving a national holiday and, in 1941, set the day as the fourth Thursday of the month.

More than 160 years after Lincoln's proclamation, Thanksgiving Day still fills Americans with a sense of community, love and gratitude, thanks in no small part to the determination of Sarah Hale.

—Ryn Cole interned in the Office of Communications this summer.

Aimee Hess helps produce books that showcase the Library and its collections.

Describe your work at the Library.

I am the lead writer–editor in the Publishing Office, where we publish books about the Library and its collections. I oversee our editorial output, such as developing production schedules, ensuring we meet deadlines and reviewing all prepublication text. With just six staff members, we all contribute to get a project from the seed of an idea to something you can buy in the Library of Congress Shop, online and in bookstores. This includes developing ideas, writing proposals, conducting archival research, editing text, securing permissions, arranging scanning, working with designers and marketing.

How did you prepare for your position?

I grew up in Westchester County, New York, in the beautiful Hudson Valley. I had many interests: sports, dance, music, theater, nature – and I always had my head in a book. During high school, I studied classical voice in the precollege program at Juilliard and considered going to a conservatory. Instead, I went to Princeton University, where I majored in English with a certificate in African American studies. My education was well rounded – including a memorable engineering course with David Billington, brother of the former Librarian of Congress – and I really appreciate that I can continue to explore a variety of interests here at the Library.

After graduating, I wanted to work in publishing, so I took an internship at a literary agency and looked for a full-time job. When I accepted the role of editorial assistant in the Publishing Office, I thought I'd stay for a year or two and then move back to New York, but I've been here ever since! Since then, I've earned a master's degree in nonfiction writing from Johns Hopkins.

What are some of your standout projects at the Library?

So many come to mind. I've had the exciting opportunity to write two books for our Women Who Dare series. For "In Lincoln's Hand," the companion book to the 2009 exhibition, I spent time in the Manuscript Division checking transcriptions against



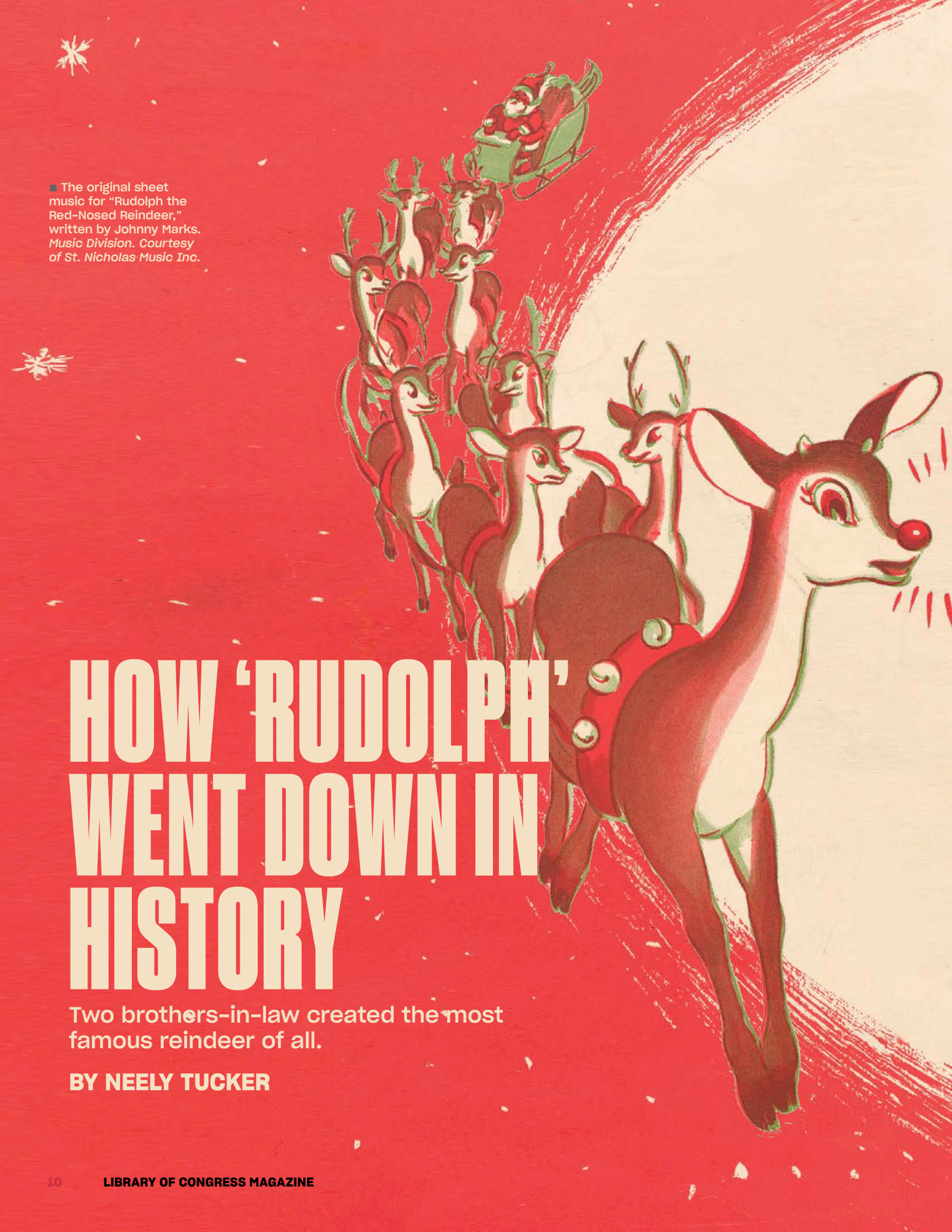
SHAWN MILLER

Lincoln's original papers; that was a thrill! I worked with staff in the American Folklife Center to design an interactive e-book, "Michigan-I-O," that incorporated text, images and audio and video clips.

More recently, my colleague Hannah Freece and I developed the companion book to the 2019 suffrage exhibition, "Shall Not Be Denied," and we co-wrote "The Joy of Looking," about the Library's photograph collections. A particularly fun ongoing project I oversee is our Crime Classics series, where we reprint obscure crime fiction titles with annotations and other explanatory material.

What have been your favorite experiences at the Library?

My favorite thing about working here is when something amazing happens on an otherwise normal day. For example, one day I attended a meeting where Columbus' Book of Privileges unexpectedly was sitting out on the table. Another time I tagged along to a display (for filmmaker Ava DuVernay) and got to see the original costume designs for "The Wiz" (and also saw Nancy Pelosi). But more than anything else, my favorite experiences have involved working with so many knowledgeable and gracious staff members.



■ The original sheet music for "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," written by Johnny Marks. Music Division. Courtesy of St. Nicholas Music Inc.

HOW 'RUDOLPH' WENT DOWN IN HISTORY

Two brothers-in-law created the most famous reindeer of all.

BY NEELY TUCKER

LYRIC AND MUSIC BY
JOHNNY MARKS

"Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" went without a song for years, from the tail end of the Depression through World War II and nearly until the midcentury before a musician named Johnny Marks began to consider it.

Marks studied music in college in the 1920s, penned a good song or two for Guy Lombardo's orchestra in the late 1930s and had a major hit with "Address Unknown" for the Ink Spots in 1939. He served with distinction during the war and wrote a few minor things, but now he was nearly 40 and looking for a hit.

It was about this time that his sister Margaret married Robert L. May, the guy who had come up with the "Rudolph" story back in 1939. May was an ad writer for Montgomery Ward department store, and the company gave away more than 2 million copies of his 31-page "Rudolph" story as a holiday treat for customers that year. After the war's paper restrictions ended, the store had given away another 3 million before letting May have the copyright in 1947.

Whether May suggested he take a crack at it or on his own whim, Marks looked over his new brother-in-law's story with a professional eye. It merged "The Ugly Duckling" storyline with the rhyming couplets style of "'Twas the Night Before Christmas."

'Twas the day before Christmas and all through the hills

The reindeer were playing ... enjoying the spills

Marks cut the story to just over 100 words and did not use any of May's lines as lyrics. He kept the chord progression simple. His first draft didn't quite work, so he kept tinkering with it. Finally, he was satisfied. He offered it to a couple of singers before Western star Gene Autry reluctantly recorded it in 1949 (his wife had to convince him to do so).

"I thought it would be a mild hit," Marks later told radio broadcaster Mike Whorf.

The rest, as all of the other reindeer might have said, went down in history. Tens of millions of records sold, hundreds of recordings in every conceivable genre, an endless procession of cartoon and TV specials (for which Marks wrote many a score and song).

It turned out Marks had a peculiar gift for the

Christmas hit. In the coming years, he wrote "A Holly Jolly Christmas," made famous by Burl Ives; "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," a perennial hit for pop singer Brenda Lee; and a traditional Christmas carol, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day," adapted from a poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

The Library preserves much of this history, including placing Autry's version of "Rudolph" on the National Recording Registry. There's also the first copyright submission for the "Rudolph" story, a copy of that first 1939 giveaway booklet, handwritten "Rudolph" sheet music and what is likely the only surviving Technicolor nitrate print of Rudolph's first animated cartoon.

Marks was wistful that nobody seemed to remember his other hits, he said in that 1975 interview with Whorf, preserved now on a disc in the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled. But he didn't forget what made him famous and knew that he'd added several standards to the nation's culture. The name of his music publishing company?

St. Nicholas Music Inc.

—Neely Tucker is a writer-editor in the Office of Communications.

2 **Rudolph The Red-Nosed Reindeer**
(Based on the Book of the Same Name)

Lyric and Music by
JOHNNY MARKS

Lightly

Verse (ad lib.)

You know Dash-er and Danc-er and Pranc-er and Vix-en, Com-et and Cu-pid and

mp con la voce

Don-ner and Blitz-en but do you re-call the most fa-mous rein-deer of all?

Chorus (a tempo)

RU-DOLPH, THE RED-NOSED REIN-DEER had a ver-y shin-y nose

mp-
a tempo

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CURATOR'S PICKS

WINTER SPIRITS

J.J. Harbster, head of the Science Section, chooses favorite holiday cocktails from the Library's mixology and culinary collections.



A toast to St. Nick!

137.—FLUTEMAGINLEY.

One small glass of cider ; half bottle of soda water ; one glass of sherry ; one pony glass of brandy ; one piece of lemon peel ; sugar and nutmeg. Use large bar glass. This is a somewhat singular name conferred upon a refreshing and pleasant beverage not generally known.

FLUTEMAGINELY

This drink not only is fun to say – “flutemaginely” – but also is a “refreshing and pleasant beverage not generally known,” according to Jesse Haney is his 1869 “Steward & Barkeeper’s Manual.” The recipe for this intriguing cider punch calls for the classic holiday spice nutmeg along with the warming properties of brandy. Punches are a popular beverage for holiday occasions and, according to Haney, are “... believe(d) to be the oldest of all made drinks.”

Here is the recipe for the famous Hot Pot as given by Mr. George Jeter, now of Philadelphia, who still carries out the tradition of Hot Pot on Christmas morning, but not at 4 A.M., and without the firing of a gun. Mr. Jeter has modernized the tradition but his friends are still treated to a real holiday starter.

The Little Brown Chef is proud of this recipe, for this is the first time that it has been given to anyone outside of the family.

1 doz. eggs (yolks only)	2 tsps. allspice
2½ cups sugar	2 tsps. nutmeg
2 qts. milk	½ tsp. salt
2 qts. cream (light)	1½ qt. Bourbon whiskey
2 tsps. ginger	1 pt. rum
2 tsps. cinnamon	1 cup brandy

Beat eggs until light. Add sugar gradually and continue beating until fluffy. Add remaining ingredients, stirring constantly until mixture thickens. Never bring to boiling point. Serve hot. Yield: 6 quarts.

JETER'S HOT POT

The tradition of a Christmas hot pot is “a real starter for a Merry Day and a Merry Christmas,” wrote Freda DeKnight in her 1948 cookbook, “Date with a Dish.” DeKnight traveled the U.S. collecting recipes from Black chefs, home cooks and caterers. This family recipe for a hot pot – a warm melding of spices, sugar, cream and spirits perfect for a cold winter morning or night – has been served on Christmas morning by three generations of Jeters in Caroline County, Virginia, and Philadelphia.

NORTH POLE COCKTAIL

75% French Vermouth

25% Fresh pineapple juice

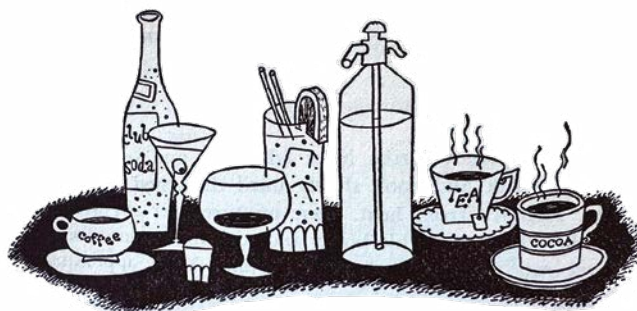
Fill glass with broken ice

Shake, strain and serve.

(Dampen edge of glass and dip in powdered sugar.)

NORTH POLE COCKTAIL

This “fancy drink” looks like a wintry wonderland but tastes like the tropics, and famed New York bartender Jacob Grohusko makes his North Pole cocktail easy to concoct. The simple recipe of French vermouth and pineapple in a glass rimmed with powdered sugar was published in Grohusko’s classic work of mixology from 1910, “Jack’s Manual.”



FROSTED COCKTAIL.

Use a mixing glass.

2 or 3 dashes of gum syrup.

2 or 3 dashes of orange bitters.

1 or 2 dashes of benedictine.

$\frac{1}{2}$ jigger of whiskey.

$\frac{1}{2}$ jigger of French vermuth.

Fill up the glass with fine ice; spoon well; then take a cocktail glass and rub a piece of lemon around the edge, dip the glass in pulverized sugar; strain the ingredients into the cocktail glass, put in olive, twist a piece of lemon peel on top, and serve.

FROSTED COCKTAIL

Dashes and jiggers are not names of Santa’s reindeers, they are measurements of ingredients used in this frosted cocktail published in Tim Daly’s 1903 “Daly’s Bartenders’ Encyclopedia.” The cocktail glass rim is “frosted” with pulverized (powdered) sugar and filled with perfect ratios of spirits, sugars and bitters. The recipe base calls for whiskey (bourbon is recommended), and the use of Benedictine, an herbal liqueur, provides additional holiday spice flavors reminiscent of the winter season.

84. Baltimore Egg Nogg.

(For a party of fifteen.)

Take the yellow of sixteen eggs and twelve table-spoonfuls of pulverized loaf-sugar, and beat them to the consistence of cream; to this add two-thirds of a nutmeg grated, and beat well together; then mix in half a pint of good brandy or Jamaica rum, and two wine-glasses of Madeira wine. Have ready the whites of the eggs, beaten to a stiff froth, and beat them into the above-described mixture. When this is all done, stir in six pints of good rich milk. There is no heat used.

Egg Nogg made in this manner is digestible, and will not cause headache. It makes an excellent drink for debilitated persons, and a nourishing diet for consumptives.

BALTIMORE EGG NOGG

Love it or loathe it. Eggnog originated in the U.S. and is a long-established winter holiday tradition. This recipe comes from the 1862 “How to Mix Drinks,” the first mixology book published in the U.S. by “father of American mixology” Jerry Thomas. What makes the Baltimore “egg nogg” distinct from other eggnogs? The use of Madeira wine, a favorite of the Founding Fathers.



A TASTE OF THE HOLIDAYS

Historical cookbooks
reflect how Americans
celebrate the season.

BY HANNAH S. OSTROFF

When you sit down for a traditional holiday meal, does your cranberry sauce resemble the fruit or retain the outlines of the can's ridges? Does the stuffing – or is it called dressing? – go inside the turkey? Who brings the black-eyed peas? Latkes with sour cream or applesauce? Do your family traditions include tamales?

The Library of Congress collections hold some 40,000 cookbooks, plus thousands of recipe booklets, archival recipes and dietary therapy books, that reflect America's holiday food traditions – a seasonal smorgasbord of ingredients, techniques, technology and culinary viewpoints.

Cookbooks devoted to the holidays didn't become popular until after World War II, though festive recipes nevertheless had their place.

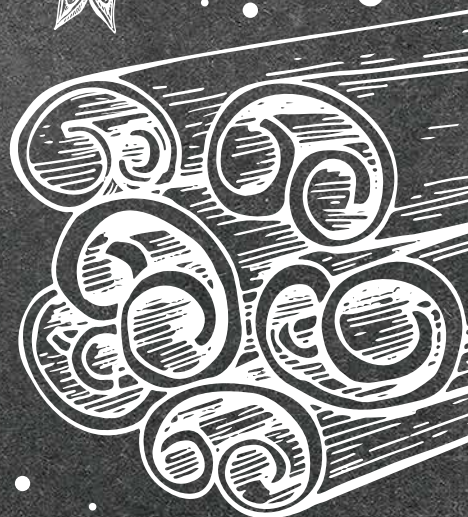
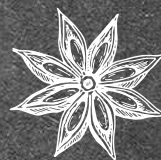
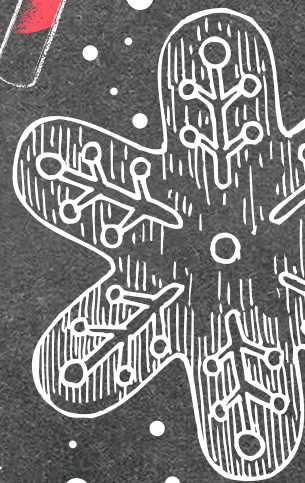
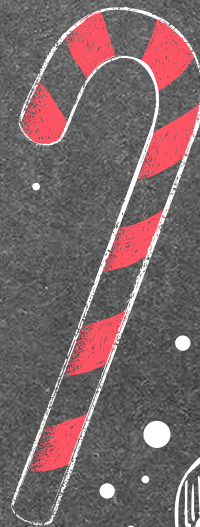
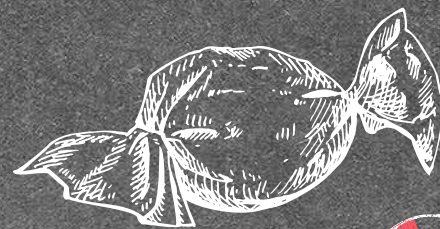
The first cookbook added to the Library's collections was at least holiday adjacent: Thomas Jefferson's copy of "The compleat confectioner, or, The art of candying and preserving in its utmost perfection," a 1742 volume written by Mary Eales.

Those early cookbooks were smaller and, obviously, lacked the lush photography we associate with modern publications.

They didn't contain specific measurements or instructions, assuming readers possessed a baseline level of culinary knowledge. Imagine a recipe, like one for stewed pears by Hannah Glasse in 1774, simply telling you "when they are enough take them off."

Cookbooks as we know them today started around the turn of the 20th century.

The books then began including elements expected by the modern home cook, at first explaining methods and measurements at the front – what constitutes a "slow cook," for example – and later integrating that information into recipes. Instructions were geared to an audience of wives who managed their households and turned to "tried and true" authoritative recipes – all without access to YouTube tutorials to master techniques in the kitchen.



■ **Season's feastings: A selection of historical holiday cookbooks from the Library's collections.**
Shawn Miller

The Library has multiple editions of classics, from *Bon Appetit* to *Betty Crocker*, that were mainstays in many homes. "There's one for every generation," said Clinton Drake, a reference librarian in the History and Genealogy Section. "People would receive one when they got married and set up a household."

Drake and J.J. Harbster, a culinary specialist and the head of the Science Section, have pored over stacks and stacks of holiday cookbooks.

Holiday cookbooks reflect the start of convenience foods like cake mix, which became popular in the 1940s and changed Americans' eating habits. The way cooks acquired ingredients was changing too, Harbster notes – one could just pop into the store for a can of pumpkin before preparing a pie.

"Back in the day, there were no canned pumpkins," Harbster said, "so bakers would simply cut up fresh pumpkins and stew them themselves."

The detailed cookbooks that started around the turn of the century really took off with the advent of refrigeration. The means of storing food made a big impact on how cooks planned and dined for the holidays. Virginia Pasley's 1949 *"The Christmas Cookie Book"* is organized into chapters based on "cookies that keep," "cookies that keep a little while" and "cookies that won't keep."

Enter the midcentury gelatin era. "The '50s and '60s were fabulous," Harbster said. "They were all about salad, but these salads were not the salads we know."

"*McCall's Book of Merry Eating*," published in 1965, offers multiple recipes for so-called salads, to be chilled in a mold and served over salad greens. One contains canned corn, a package of frozen peas and carrots and chicken bouillon.

The *McCall's* cookbook also includes six (!) fruitcake recipes – plus another for fruitcake ice cream. "[T]o be mellow in time for the

holidays," the inside cover advises, "most of them should be baked shortly after Thanksgiving." By 1982, *"Betty Crocker's Christmas Cookbook"* was offering an "old-fashioned fruitcake" recipe to "evoke Christmas past."

The rapid pace of technological development in the kitchen shaped innovations in holiday cookbooks. Cooks were eager to try out the promise of futuristic machines, like the microwave and slow cooker.

"I just love the optimism of the microwave cookbooks," Drake said.

Barbara Methven describes the holiday season as the busiest time of the year in her 1980s cookbook, *"Holiday Microwave Ideas."* Her book provides conventional and microwave directions that shortcut cooking times to maximize holiday enjoyment. She recommends the microwave for a boneless turkey breast, not the entire bird, and while a goose is a no-go in the microwave, she has a recipe for a whole Cornish game hen heated on high for 12 to 17 minutes.

"Most of us prepare dozens of meals during the 60 days between early November and early January," writes Phyllis Pellman Good in the *"Fix-It and Forget-It Christmas Cookbook"* in 2010. She gathered 600 recipes from across the country to demonstrate that the slow cooker can be used to make holiday-worthy dishes.

The Library's collections show how regional and global representation have increased in cookbooks by major publishers.

Older cookbooks might have "Chinese" recipes with Western ingredients. But in recent decades, the industry has featured authors with diverse backgrounds sharing their own cuisines and traditions, like *"Hawai'i's Holiday Cookbook"* by Muriel Miura and Betty Shimabukuro or Gwyneth Doland's *"Tantalizing Tamales"* – a Christmas tradition both Harbster and Drake enjoyed growing up in California and Texas.

Kwanzaa, a holiday established in 1966,



holiday microwave ideas

HERDE
encell

COFFEE CAKES

Fruited Christmas Wreath

- 2 packages active dry yeast
- 1 1/2 cups warm water (105 to 115°)
- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup margarine or butter, softened
- 2 eggs
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 5 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup cut-up mixed candied fruit
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon peel
- 1/2 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon milk

Dissolve yeast in warm water in large mixer bowl. Add buttermilk, granulated sugar, margarine, eggs, baking powder, salt and 2 1/2 cups of the flour. Beat on low speed, scraping bowl constantly, 30 seconds. Beat on medium speed, scraping bowl occasionally, 2 minutes. Stir in remaining flour, the candied fruit, pecans and lemon peel. (Dough will be soft and slightly sticky.)

Turn dough onto well-floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, about 5 minutes. Roll into strip, 24x6 inches. Cut into 3 strips, 24x2 inches. Place close together on greased cookie sheet. Braid strips, shape into circle and pinch ends to seal. Cover; let rise in warm place until double, about 1 hour. (Dough is ready when fermentation remains when touched.)

Preheat oven to 375°. Bake until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Mix powdered sugar and milk; drizzle over wreath. Decorate with green and red candied cherries.

For two small wreaths, divide dough after kneading into 4. Roll each half into rectangle, 12x3 inches. Cut into 3 strips, 12x2 inches. Continue as directed, except—bake 20 to 30 minutes. Decorate with powdered sugar and milk and desired decorations.

Free Bread: One loaf of bread and milk, about 15 minutes. For one loaf, use 1/2 cup of milk and 1/2 cup of sugar.

The Christmas Cookie Book

...ch, easy to make, quick to bake -- and quick to eat, too, if you aren't watching. The cookie is a fair weather, but because of its popularity with the juniors of our family it seldom lasted more than a few days.



every schoolgirl has tried her hand at cookies. The recipe that follows is the usual when Christmas Brownies because they are so easy to make and so good. Bake one or two if packed in an airtight container with wax paper between layers.

Cookies That Keep a Little Longer

- 1/2 cup butter
- 4 squares (ounces) chocolate
- 1 1/2 cups cake flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 eggs
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups cake flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups broken pecans or walnuts
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar

Melt butter with chocolate (butter is not very good if you don't melt it). Meanwhile, mix eggs, add sugar gradually, then vanilla and chocolate. Spread about one-half inch deep in a pan which has been greased and lined with wax paper. Bake about 30 minutes in a moderately slow oven (325°). Move from pan and cut in bars or squares. Decorate with confectioners' sugar.

A latecomer to our list of cookies, this one is delicious cookies. Bar cookies.

Cornmeal Dried Fruit Cookies

These are really unusual cookies, made with cornmeal and loaded with suet. I steeped in rum. I serve these at Thanksgiving, too.

- Yield: 3 dozen
- Active time: 15 minutes
- Start to finish: 40 minutes

- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1/2 cup dried cherries
- 1/2 cup rum
- 1 1/2 cups cornmeal
- 1 1/2 cups cornstarch
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon gluten-free baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon xanthan gum
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 pound (1 stick) unsalted butter, sliced
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons whole milk
- 1 tablespoon grated orange zest
- 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with silicon baking mats. Combine golden raisins, dried cranberries and dried cherries in a small mixing bowl, and toss to coat fruit with rum. In a food processor fitted with the steel blade, process the butter until it is in a work bowl, and process, using on-and-off pulses, until the mixture is coarse meal.
2. Combine eggs, milk, orange zest and vanilla in a small bowl. Drizzle liquid into the work bowl, and process until the mixture forms a dough. If the dough is dry and crumbly, add a few drops of water, until dough forms a ball.
3. Scrape dough into a mixing bowl, and add the raisins, cranberries and cherries. The bowl.
4. Drop dough by 1-tablespoon portions onto the prepared baking sheets. Bake cookies for 20 to 25 minutes, or until cookies are lightly browned. Transfer to a wire rack, and let cool for 2 minutes on the baking sheets, and then transfer to a wire rack.

Variations

- * Substitute 1/2 cup chopped walnuts, toasted in a 350°F oven for 5 to 7 minutes, for some of the dried fruits.
- * Substitute chopped candied citrus peels and candied cherries for the dried fruits.

One way to save time when you need to grate a lot of citrus zest is to use a vegetable peeler to separate the colored zest from the bitter white pith beneath it. Then place the strips in a mini food processor and it will be finely ground in seconds.



brought with it new food traditions. African American culinary historian Jessica B. Harris shares a mix of African diaspora recipes and African American cuisine in her 1995 book, “A Kwanzaa Keepsake.”

Home cooks today have greater access to ingredients than ever.

In the 1940s, Pasley wrote in her cookie book that “since the stuffs that cookies are made of come from the ends of the Seven Seas, you shouldn’t expect to be able to buy them all in one store.” Like many cookbooks of that era, she offered suggestions for where one could obtain more challenging items. (The most unexpected ingredient uncovered in the holiday cookbook collection? The salty star of Prannie Rhatigan’s “Irish Seaweed Christmas Kitchen.”)

More contemporary cookbooks also trace a history of dietary concerns and modifications.

The Moosewood Collective, whose New York restaurant dates to the 1970s, focuses on vegetarian cooking. Its 30th-anniversary cookbook, “Moosewood Restaurant Celebrates Festive Meals for Holidays and Special Occasions,” offers menus for Diwali, Ramadan, Chinese New Year and a vegan Thanksgiving. Now, Harbster notes, “plant-based” cookbooks are widespread.

Titles like “The Allergy Cookbook: Foods for Festive Occasions” and Ellen Brown’s “Gluten-Free Christmas Cookies” offer substitutions and guidance to include everyone in holiday food traditions.

In the collection of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), braille holiday cookbooks bring recipes to users. NLS has multiple volumes,

including the braille edition of Jeff Smith’s “The Frugal Gourmet Celebrates Christmas,” which the Library also has in print.

No matter the specific recipe or format, there’s often a personal tie to holiday cookbooks.

“Every holiday, it would be tradition to bring out your family’s collection of cookbooks and recipes,” Harbster said.

The holidays help keep food traditions alive, writes Joan Nathan in the 25th anniversary edition of “Joan Nathan’s Jewish Holiday Cookbook.” While Jewish families might stray from their ancestors’ recipes and rules during the year, holiday foods are the connections they keep coming back to.

Nathan names recipes for their authors: “Rose family potato kugel,” “Irene Yockelson’s sweet-and-sour cabbage soup” and “my mother’s brisket.” Harris’ Kwanzaa cookbook has blank pages for family members to record their own recipes and recollections.

Making food is an expression of love – especially if you’re not a year-round cook or baker.

“This is the time when you make all of your special recipes that take a lot of effort,” Drake said. “That’s a theme runs that throughout the collection.”

As for what’s next in holiday cooking? Given the cyclical nature of trends, Drake predicts those molded salads are due for a comeback.

There’s no accounting for taste.

—Hannah Ostroff is a public affairs specialist in the Library Collections and Services Group.

■ **At holiday season, family cooks bring out their most special and creative recipes – an expression of love and the holiday spirit. Shawn Miller**



FACES OF THE PARIS EXPO

**Exhibition showcased
African American life at
the turn of the century.**

BY LAURYN GILLIAM



The Paris Exposition of 1900 was an influential world's fair devoted to technological achievements of the age, with awe-inducing buildings such as the Palace of Electricity, the Water Castle and the Grand Palais. But one of its most lasting contributions to international culture was simply called "The Exhibit of American Negroes."

That display, composed of hundreds of photographs, charts, books, maps and diagrams, was organized by W.E.B. Du Bois, the writer, activist and sociologist; Thomas Calloway, a lawyer and activist; and Daniel A.P. Murray, an assistant librarian at the Library of Congress. They wanted to show the world – or at least the international visitors to the fair – that three decades and change after gaining their freedom, Black Americans were making vast intellectual and social gains. Their exhibit, within the Palace of Social Economy and Congresses, was to

■ **Opposite:** The grand entrance of the Paris Expo of 1900. *Prints and Photographs Division*

Left: W.E.B. Du Bois, photographed by C.M. Battey in 1919. *Prints and Photographs Division*

■ **Opposite:** A selection of portrait photographs chosen by W.E.B. Du Bois for display at the Paris Expo, now preserved in the Library's collections. *Prints and Photographs Division*

advocate for the positive representation of Black Americans and the preservation of their literature, culture and history.

There were some 550 photographs from which Du Bois curated a selection showing the diverse lives, patterns and personalities of African Americans, an important collection that is now preserved at the Library. There were formal portraits, snapshots, pictures of homes and streets and businesses. His intent with the photographs, as with the rest of the exhibit, was to combat the racist, stereotypical caricatures and scientific “evidence” that were being used to marginalize and discriminate against Black Americans.

In the center row at right are portraits he selected of three unidentified Black women at three different stages of life – adolescence, adulthood and old age. In each, you’ll notice that the subjects are carefully dressed to exemplify the best qualities of their respective ages. Du Bois carefully curated the compositions.

First, we have the promise of the future, a precocious girl reading a book or magazine. She’s in her Sunday best, seated at a desk covered in brocade and framed by small statues on her right and left. This is a child of privilege, comfort and leisure. The elements of her pose – the gaze into middle distance, the serious expression, the hand and pointed finger at the side of her face – are clearly meant to show her in deep thought. This intelligence and critical thinking were qualities that most whites believed did not apply to Black adults in the era, much less to Black children. For Du Bois, who helped found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1909, these were the necessities upon which a new generation of Black achievement would be built.

In her youth and potential, the girl also embodies a symbol of freedom and new possibilities in a difficult era. The U.S. Supreme Court had ruled just four years earlier that “separate but equal” public accommodations were legal, thus solidifying segregation for generations. Further, it was not until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that racial discrimination in voting would be prohibited and Black people would gain meaningful access to the ballot. This child would have been in her 70s by then.

The privilege she displays here did

know bounds. She was admired for her intelligence but given a very limited universe in which to pursue it.

Next, we have a beautiful young woman dressed in upscale fashion. In many of the portraits in this collection, women appear in fancy clothing, no doubt to exhibit the finer qualities in life, to show them as wealthy and sophisticated. Again, this was to cut against the stereotypes of the era, in which Black women were portrayed as maids, cooks or sex objects.

Here, the fancy headpiece, feathers and nice lace dress suggest Parisian fashions. She, too, is caught in a thoughtful pose, looking off camera. She leans into a style of idealized femininity, of the “New Woman” prototype that illustrator Charles Gibson used in his popular and influential drawings. The “Gibson Girl” was what smart society deemed a well-rounded woman – educated, socially polished and well-mannered. She strove to embody elegance and charm.

This is just what our unknown young lady portrays, but as a Black woman in 1900, this was a bold new ideal in itself.

Finally, we have a dignified woman in her later years. Like our other two subjects, she’s dressed fashionably. But here, there’s a matronly presence to the outfit – the buttoned-to-the-neck dress, the close-worn cap and the long sleeves – all meant to show practicality, poise and stability. Elders are notably represented in this collection, suggesting Du Bois’ respect for the older generation that had survived so much. If we assume this woman is 60, then she would have lived more than a third of her life during slavery, seeing (and perhaps enduring) many of its horrors.

It’s worth noting that the photographer draws attention to her countenance by pulling only her face into full focus. The girl had a book and props, the young woman had her dress and jewelry, but here we are being directed only to the subject’s face. I see a strength and a caring nature there. One has to wonder: What did it mean to her to have her photo taken? What did her life look like? Given that there are few surviving photographs of people who had been enslaved, this image, like so many in this collection, lingers in the mind.

—*Lauryn Gilliam worked as a junior fellow in the Office of Communications this summer.*



AROUND THE LIBRARY



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1. A wild cast of characters takes over the Great Hall at the film costume ball on Sept. 12.

2. Director Asaf Galay (second from left) accepts the Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film from Ken Burns (left) and Jonathan and Jeannie Lavine (right) on Sept. 17.

3. Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden confers the Kluge Prize upon philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah in the Great Hall on Sept. 20.

4. The Conservation Division hosts a workshop on handling and stabilizing large paper materials with water damage on Oct. 8.

5. João Candido Portinari, son of Brazilian painter Candido Portinari, on Oct. 10 discusses the murals his father created in the Hispanic Reading Room.

6. The Congressional Research Service hosts a town hall with interim director Robert Newlen (from left), new director Karen Donfried and Carla Hayden on Oct. 8.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHAWN MILLER

Foreign Policy Expert Donfried Selected as Director of CRS

Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden in September appointed Karen E. Donfried director of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) in the Library of Congress.

A noted foreign policy expert, Donfried has more than three decades of experience leading foreign policymaking, analysis and research with the U.S. Department of State, the German Marshall Fund and CRS.

Most recently, Donfried served as the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, acting as the secretary of state's lead adviser. Earlier in her career, Donfried served as an analyst and specialist in European affairs in CRS' Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade Division.

The mission of CRS is to serve Congress with the highest quality of research, analysis, information and confidential consultation to support the exercise of its legislative, representational and oversight duties.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-24-076

24 Organizations Receive Literacy Awards

The Library of Congress Literacy Awards program, sponsored by David M. Rubenstein since 2013 and also by the Kislak Family Foundation since 2023, honors initiatives that provide exemplary, innovative and replicable strategies that promote literacy.

Twenty-four organizations were awarded the 2024 Library of Congress Literacy Awards on Sept. 8, International Literacy Day.

The inaugural Kislak Family Foundation Prize recognizes Te Rūnanga Nui o Ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori Inc. in New Zealand for its outsized impact on literacy relative to its size. Top prizes also were awarded to LaundryCares Foundation, We Need Diverse Books and Alsama Project. Five new literacy initiatives that demonstrate creativity and promise received the inaugural Emerging Strategies Awards.

The expansion of the Literacy Awards is made possible through a generous gift by the Kislak Family Foundation.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-24-072

'Cartooning America' Earns Lavine/Burns Prize for Film

The Library of Congress, The Better Angels Society, Ken Burns and the Crimson Lion/Lavine Family Foundation recently announced "Cartooning America" as the winner of the sixth annual Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film.

The director, Asaf Galay, received a \$200,000 cash prize for the multipart film about the Fleischer Brothers, a family of animators who created innovative techniques that transformed the industry and still are in use today in an evolved form.

Norah Shapiro, the director of the runner-up, "Magic & Monsters," received a \$50,000 cash prize. The film recounts the dark history of the acclaimed Minnesota Children's Theatre Company and how a group of former child actors are seeking justice and healing after its founder was convicted of child sexual abuse.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-24-081

Holocaust Film by Lewis Now Available for Research

For the first time, the National Audio-Visual Conservation Center at the Library made material from Jerry Lewis' unfinished Holocaust film, "The Day the Clown Cried," available for research use.

The Library holds a portion of preprint material from the film; however, it does not hold the complete film. Lewis rewrote, directed and starred in the film as a German circus clown imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp who entertains Jewish children in the camp.

During a visit to the Library's Culpeper campus in 2015, Lewis spoke of his deep emotional connection to the subject matter and the regret he felt when he was unable to finish the film.

When Lewis' personal collection was acquired by the Library in 2014, a gift/purchase agreement placed a 10-year restriction on some materials until August 2024. The Library now is providing on-site access to the material for viewing and listening only.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-24-075

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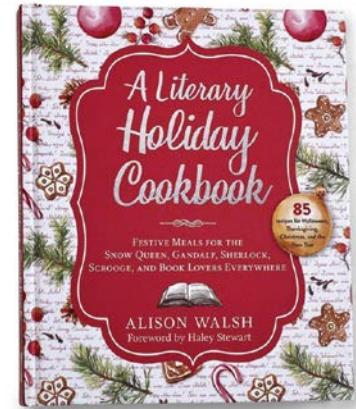
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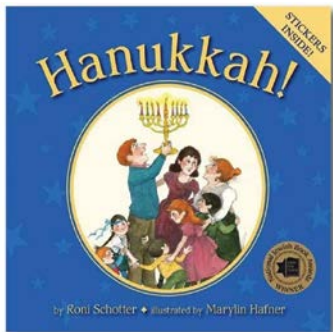
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SPECIAL FRIEND

A Library employee for five decades, Carter finds new ways to give back.

Constance “Connie” Carter is a beloved figure at the Library of Congress. Known for her quick wit, generosity and delicious wafer-thin chocolate chip cookies, Carter is a Library treasure. She spent more than 50 years working at the Library, including 47 years in the former Science, Business, and Technology Division – home to the acclaimed cookbook and recipe collection.

Despite being “a librarian with dyslexia,” Carter turned this challenge into a strength. She mastered the art of memorizing the reference collection and locating materials with exceptional precision. Her extraordinary skill earned her the title of a “great enabler” from noted scientist and historian Ian Bartky. She’s been acknowledged in over 70 publications, including two by Bartky.

All along, Carter has followed her father’s advice: “Do not try to be top dog in any organization; find a niche where you can make a difference, and you will be happy.” And, indeed, she is!

Her happiness is matched by her generosity. As a devoted Friend of the Library, she makes gifts to celebrate the achievements of others. Whether honoring a colleague’s presentation, supporting a collection display or remembering someone who impacted her career, Carter’s gifts reflect her deep appreciation of others. “I know how it feels to be appreciated and to know you have made a difference,” she said. “I want others to feel the same way.”

When asked why she supports the Library, she offered, “The Library has given me friends, inspiration and the ability to make a difference to readers, researchers and young people.

“Regardless of your language, ethnic background, preferred format, subject interest, historical period or age, you



can always find a subject guru, curator, technician, digital specialist, musician, photographer or scholar willing to share their knowledge and provide informed referrals just for you. The Library’s staff loves to connect people to its fabulous collections.”

■ Connie Carter worked at the Library for over 50 years and now supports it through the Friends of the Library group. Shawn Miller

MORE INFORMATION

Support the Library
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LAST WORD

CARLA HALL

When I think back to Christmases growing up in Nashville, one of my most cherished memories is the drive out to Lebanon, Tennessee. Every year, my mom, sister and I would make that 30-mile trip to my grandparents' house – Doc and Freddie Mai Glover's – for the holiday. It was a tradition that filled me with excitement, not only for the presents but for the incredible food my Granny would prepare.

That time in my life is the inspiration behind my children's book, "Carla and the Christmas Cornbread." Food, family and love were all wrapped together during those early days, and that's the story the book tells. In reality, though, our Christmas table wasn't just for my immediate family – cousins, aunts, uncles and other relatives would come from all over Tennessee, New York and Michigan, filling the house with energy and laughter.

One of my fondest memories is how Granny would wait until we arrived to start making her famous cornbread. She made it fresh, and her cinnamon butter really took it over the top – just butter, powdered sugar, cinnamon and a splash of vanilla extract. You had to eat it hot, right out of the oven.

And then there were her yeast rolls. She always placed the dough in the warmest spot in the house, usually near a radiator, to let it rise. The smell of those rolls filled the house throughout the day. That memory stuck with me so much that to this day I always add a little extra yeast to my bread recipes, trying to recapture that magic.

Dinner at Granny and Doc's always was a feast. My grandfather was a doctor, and in those days many people didn't have cash to pay him. Instead, they'd bring food – hams, turkeys and even fresh produce from their gardens. So, our Christmas table overflowed with abundance. Granny's pickled condiments, like cucumbers and onions with a touch of dill, were served alongside peeled, sliced tomatoes. There were always her mixed greens – collards and mustards – and candied sweet potatoes with marshmallows for the kids.

Of all the dishes, her five-flavor pound cake with boiled custard was my favorite. Years later, when I went to culinary school, I learned that what we called "boiled custard" was actually *crème anglaise*. But to me, it



CLAY WILLIAMS

will always be boiled custard, and that cake always will remind me of her.

The day wasn't just about food, though. My grandfather would collect coins throughout the year, and on Christmas Day my sister and I would pour them all out onto the floor to divide up. We'd start with the quarters – one for her, one for me – and work our way down to the pennies. Then, we'd put the coins into those little saver books you could get from the bank. I loved those books and wish I'd saved at least one.

By the afternoon, the house was packed with relatives – 20 or 30 people at its peak. People were always coming and going, making it feel so festive. Granny had a carousel of candy canes in different flavors. My favorite was lemon, but I'd always grab a peppermint, too.

At the end of the day, we'd get back into the car and head home. We never spent the night; it was just that one perfect day. Those Christmases were special and always will be. Even now, when I visit Nashville, I still feel like that kid waiting for Christmas. It's my favorite holiday, a time when old memories mix with new ones, just like a recipe that deepens in flavor with each passing year.

—Chef Carla Hall is the bestselling author of "Carla Hall's Soul Food: Everyday and Celebration." She co-hosted the Emmy-winning "The Chew" for seven seasons.



■ A menorah lights up the Great Hall of the Jefferson Building.
Shawn Miller

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