



Interior at Warren Historic Site.

INTRODUCTION

Maryland heritage foodways – the intersection of food in culture, traditions, and history – provide a unique culinary experience. The blending of imported African ingredients and cooking techniques with Maryland’s Native American and European cultures, as well as local produce, fish, and game, all give rise to a novel foodways tradition in the mid-Atlantic region.

But as communities disband, or are absorbed by suburban development, the risk of losing these recipes and their historic connection to our culture is imminent. These food traditions are the jumping-off point for what we think of as traditional American foodways – Creole, New Orleans, Southern, Low Country, and Soul Food. The current interest in food and heritage foodways makes this an excellent time to gather recipes and develop programs that broaden awareness of these endangered communities, provide them with a revenue stream for stewardship and preservation, and encourage heritage tourism.

Across all cultures, sharing a meal is a hallmark of human interaction. In the days of slavery, preparing and serving a meal took on profound meaning for those who may not have been able to share daily community with family. During segregation, community celebrations such as Homecoming and Juneteenth were

an opportunity to join with family and friends away from the rigors of harsh rules. In the 1960s, these gatherings provided a platform for the exchange of ideas about Civil Rights.

In 2012, Heritage Montgomery undertook a project designed to capture and preserve the disappearing history, music, and stories of several African American communities in Montgomery County. In 2014, the documentary video and accompanying gospel music CD, *Community Cornerstones: African American Communities in Montgomery County, Maryland*, premiered to much acclaim.

During the production of *Community Cornerstones*, several issues surfaced: the need to conserve historical records, to restore and preserve buildings and cemeteries, and to prevent the general loss of community, including historic foodways.

In order to address these concerns, Heritage Montgomery is undertaking several projects that will stabilize collections; guide preservation efforts; and gather stories, photos, and traditions that are in danger of being lost. We are pleased to be among the county organizations, churches, and individuals working to safeguard this history.

These projects will preserve and make available a record of the county's rich African American history as well as provide broader, accessible resources for residents, visitors, and educators. As food is central to cultural identity, preserving these recipes adds to the fabric and content of African American history in Montgomery County. Furthermore, all proceeds from this cookbook will go directly to the protection of county African American heritage resources.

This book, patterned after traditional church cookbooks, presents a collection of authentic historic Maryland recipes and ingredients dating from the 1700-1800s gathered from a number of sources. In each chapter they are followed by a collection of Montgomery County recipes gathered from local churches and representing foods that would be served at family gatherings and community events.

Each community and church had different recipes for the same dish and no two were alike. With this in mind, please use this book as a guide for you to recreate recipes you remember or to create new memories.

Some recipes call for ingredients we now know are not particularly healthy, please make substitutions as you see fit.

Most chapters of the book contain an introduction that is derived from firsthand accounts and interviews of local residents, many in their 70s and 80s, sharing memories from the turn of the 19th century. These close-up views of daily life were gathered by researcher Dr. George McDaniel who worked in Montgomery County surveying and documenting historic African American communities in the 1970s. The language and style of the narratives have not been altered from the original manuscript.

The recipes were researched, tested, and edited by Larkin Rogers, Executive Chef for Extraordinary Spaces at The Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

At the end of this book you will find *Places to Visit*, which we hope will inspire you to explore African American heritage sites throughout Montgomery County.

If you have a favorite family or church recipe you would like to share, please send it along to us and we will consider it for the next edition of this book.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah L. Rogers", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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