

Newsletter

OF THE ATHENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 7745 • Athens, Georgia 30604-7745

MAY/JUNE 2007

Lost (but Not Forgotten) Flavors of Athens:

An Edible Education of the Classic City

Sunday, June 10, 2007 – 2:30 p.m.

M. Smith Griffith Auditorium, Georgia Museum of Art



Accents and attitudes and life-styles may change, but fondness for Southern food persists; for many people it lingers in the mind and on the tongue as vividly as the tantalizing aroma of barbecue on the pit hangs in the air and penetrates to the core of thought and remembrance. — John Egerton, *Southern Food, At Home, on the Road, in History* (1993, Chapel Hill Books)

Athens, Georgia, is a city internationally known for its arts and music scene, but mention the Classic City to an expatriate and the floodgates of culinary memory open: “Do you remember Costas? Tony’s? Poss’ Bar-B-Q? Charlie Williams’ Pinecrest Lodge? The Varsity (downtown)? Sparky’s? The Station? T.K. Hardy’s? Alice’s? The Eldorado? Helen’s? The Lighthouse? Chow Goldstein’s? Rocky’s? Chase Street Café? Is it true Allen’s is reopening?” Although no longer a part of the physical landscape of the city, these legendary restaurants are landmarks that are of equal import in the hearts and minds of Athenians as the Tree that Owns Itself and the Double-Barreled Cannon.

As much a part of the culinary landscape of the city as our “lost flavors” restaurants are the time-honored recipes reminiscent of something else Athens is known for: **entertaining**. With the University, a large medical community, and a thriving arts and music base, Athens has always had a bustling and eclectic social scene. Parties thrown by local residents are well-known to Athenians who grew up here. The women who orchestrated these parties were well versed in flower arranging, table décor, and fine foods. Although by the standards of 2007, some of the menu items may seem less than sophisticated, all are what most of us truly want — food that is well-seasoned, tastes good, and is visually appealing. This is before the day of sun-dried tomatoes, imported olives, or fresh mozzarella. But you’ll forget all of that when you taste your first cheese straw!

Please share your culinary memories, too!

We invite you to write down a favorite recipe and a remembrance to share and bring to the meeting. We will collect these at the end of the presentation to print and share among AHS members. And please help us begin the **Athens Menu Project**: Bring any restaurant menu or other memorabilia for a collection to be housed in the Athens-Clarke County Heritage Room. Be sure to stay for the “Lost Flavors” tasting after the meeting. Our meetings are always free and open to the public.

Last chance to renew your 2007 membership - if your mail label has 2007 on it, your dues are current.

Name _____

Please give name(s) as you want it/them to appear in the directory

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Choose membership level: (Dues cover the current calendar year)

_____ Individual - \$10.00

_____ Family - \$15.00

_____ Supporting - \$35.00

_____ Patron - \$50.00

_____ Business - \$100.00

_____ Please accept my tax-deductible contribution to help fund AHS special projects.

Mail this form with your check payable to the Athens Historical Society to AHS, P.O. Box 7745, Athens GA 30604-7745! Thank you!

About our speakers –

Anne Segrest Freeze

When I was asked to write something about myself (a bio), the Cher song “Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves” kept running through my head “I was born in the wagon of a travellin’ show”. I wanted to put my life to song. But, I wasn’t born in a wagon, nor was I ever in a travellin’ show.

Born and raised through high school in Athens (when Athens High was Athens High), educated higher at St. Mary’s in Raleigh, NC, and graduated from UGA, I then headed for Boston, MA where I was first introduced to more worldly foods. Boston led to Washington DC, then on to New York. My last few years in the Big Apple were spent attending some culinary classes at the New York School of Cooking (led by Peter Kump, James Beard’s assistant for many years), and restaurant management classes at The New York Restaurant School, while booking and managing special events at the famous (infamous?) Lone Star Café, basically a honky tonk nightclub. And, yes, my parents knew this.

I headed down to Atlanta to spend eight years with the Peasant Restaurant Group. It soon closed after I left (coincidence? I think not). I was a jack of all positions with them, training as kitchen manager and floor manager. I worked as general manager of three of their restaurants.

I moved back to Athens in 1999 and, as so many people are, was quickly drawn into the hospitality of the city. In 2002 I opened *Foodworks*, the first prepared foods store in town, with Jane Brannen. It was a fun, sometimes heady, experience. We particularly enjoyed introducing Athenians to the idea of shopping for freshly made, good and great tasting foods ready to take home and heat. Something to make life just a little easier.

I met my husband in 2004 in a corn field at a blues festival in Aliceville, Alabama. It was pretty much love at first conversation. I now live in Columbus, Mississippi, where I cook some for St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, some for customers, and a lot for my husband and friends. My current project is *The Heirloom Tomato Search Committee*, a group of four who banded together to revitalize and rejuvenate the dwindling local farmers market. (www.hitchinglotfarmersmarket.com) Thus far, it has been labeled a success by the city of Columbus, by the citizens, and by the vendors.

Don’t forget to bring YOUR favorite family recipe or memories of “good eats” in Athens to share after the meeting!

Judy Long

I was born and raised in Asheville, NC, by parents who were from small towns in the piedmont of SC. I inherited my love for pimento cheese (homemade, not store bought) and iced tea (sweet as molasses, not unsweetened) from my SC roots. I learned to love barbecue (vinegar-based sauce, not tomato) and hushpuppies (served with ‘cue, not with fish) from my NC roots.

When the time came to leave my mother’s kitchen and her banana pudding, I journeyed to Athens to attend UGA. I majored in English and minored in French and Varsity-speak (at the downtown location). “What’ll ya have?” “One all-the-way dog walking and a P.C.” After graduating from college, I lived for a brief time in San Francisco. I loved the sourdough bread and the cuisine of Chinatown, but try finding a jar of Duke’s Mayonnaise west of the Mississippi. A girl cannot live on Hellmann’s alone, so I came back South to the land I love (Athens).

Thanks to a fortuitous twist of fate, I came to work at (and later manage) the Old Black Dog Bookstore. I met the generous people of Athens and came to call the town home. I began studies in the M.L. (Milton Leathers) program for a degree in Athens History and absorbed stories about the Cobbs, the Lumpkins, the Phinizys, and . . . I learned about Paul’s Barbecue from Bucky Redwine, syllabub from Milton, and mull from Phinazy Spalding. I gained twenty pounds. I furthered my education by getting my Ph.D. in Weaver D and graduated in Weaver-speak “Communication.” “I’ll have the three vegetable plate — squash casserole, squash casserole, and squash casserole.” “Automatic.”

Before the Old Black Dog closed in 2006, I began working with three others to found Hill Street Press (<http://hillstreetpress.com>), which opened its doors in 1998. Editing books about Southern food is my passion and I am fortunate to have worked on several, including *Southern Belly: The Ultimate Food Lover’s Companion to the South* by John T. Edge, *Cooking with Jack: The New Jack Daniel’s Cookbook* by Lynne Tolley and Mindy Merrell, and *Galatoire’s: Biography of a Bistro* by Marda Burton and Kenneth Holditch.

I am a member of the Southern Foodways Alliance (www.southernfoodways.com), and in 2006, along with chef Hugh Acheson and a multitude of Athenians, hosted SFA’s *Camp Athens: An Edible Education in Oilcloth and White Linen*. Currently, I am at work on a book about the double-life of mayonnaise (a condiment in the South, a sauce in France).

Entertaining in Athens

Laura Ann Segrest, Anne's mother, was known for her adeptness at entertaining. She was renowned in the South for her skill at arranging flowers and her garden was a highlight of any tour. In the tradition of a true Southern lady, she entertained with apparent ease and no one was ever aware of the work that lay behind the elaborate tables for her guests.

Laura Ann was born and reared in Athens where her mother Martha Glover Phinizy was famous for her chicken salad. Laura Ann also took great care and love when preparing this humble dish. You'll note that there are few amounts with the ingredients in the recipe below. Well, it's just hard to pinpoint the amount until you've tasted the final product.

She grew up making her own mayonnaise and then went to store-bought under time pressures. But she made store-bought taste homemade when she added a drop of olive oil, a dash of cayenne, and a squeeze of lemon juice – a big squeeze of lemon juice. You'll also notice that she always pulled the strings from the celery. Just a detail to be sure that her guests had the best every time they ate her chicken salad!



Laura Ann Segrest (1916-2000) was as well known for her garden as for her entertaining.

Laura Ann Segrest's Chicken Salad

1 small chicken plus 2 breasts
 1 stalk celery
 2 tablespoons grated onion
 Juice of 1/2 lemon
 Lots of salt and pepper
 Mayonnaise
 Dash cayenne
 Dash olive oil

Cook chicken in flavored water (carrot, celery (leaves), parsley, peppercorns, salt, onion) until done.

Pick chicken from bone and finely chop.

Pull strings from celery and mince.

Mix everything together, chill and serve.

The President's Corner

Mary Hoit Abbe

We are making progress in reprinting *AHS Papers, Vol. 1* which was originally published in 1964. Come prepared to purchase a copy at our October meeting.

And I am considering proposing two publications. One will be an expansion of a doctoral thesis. The other will be *1850 Athens: A Snapshot in Time*. It will contain all the schedules collected by the census taker, i.e., population, slave, mortality, agricultural, social statistics, and manufacturing.

We also need to begin to prepare for our 50th anniversary coming up in October 2009. Do you have any ideas of activities that we could do or contributions that we could make? It is not too early to begin working on this.

Our VP is continuing to find exciting speakers for our programs. We hope that you will stay after our June 10th program and enjoy samples of food served in Athens.

Mary Hoit Abbe

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AHS Officers – 2007

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Upcoming AHS Meeting Dates

June 10, 2007 – Lost Flavors of Athens
Georgia Museum of Art at 2:30 pm
Note new date, time & place

October 21, 2007 – Salute to R. E. M.
More details later

December 2, 2007 – AHS Christmas Party
at the T.R.R. Cobb House

AHS Website & Information

www.rootsweb/~gaahs
email: ebmayes@windstream.net

A Little Bit Extra – An generous gift came our way recently. Mr. & Mrs. L.L. Scruggs made a tax-deductible donation to the Society in honor of Lee Epting. They commented that this makes a nice gift for someone who's got everything! Thank you!

Athens Menus Project & Heirloom Recipes Collection – Share your favorite heirloom recipes with us. Write a brief description of each to include in our “Lost Flavors” recipe collection. Also bring any memorabilia from local restaurants and other social events of the past, for Show & Tell after our June 10th meeting.

If you wish to donate any memorabilia for inclusion in the Athens Menus Project that Judy mentioned, please write down provenance information about each piece, including your name, address, phone number and email address. The collection will be housed in the Heritage Room at the Athens-Clarke County Library.

Last Chance to Renew for 2007 – The 2007 membership directory will be compiled in the next week or two and mailed to paid members. AHS dues cover the calendar year and are due January 1st. If your mailing label does not have 2007 above your name, we have not received your membership renewal for this year. If you have paid your dues for 2007 but your mailing label does not reflect this, please contact Eve at (706) 789-3452 at home (evenings) or email her at ebmayes@windstream.net to get this corrected. Be sure we have your current email address so you won't miss AHS email announcements.