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The Historical Cookbook of the American Negro

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The Historical Cookbook of the American Negro

The Historical Cookbook of the American Negro
We have roasted, toasted, boiled, and fried on open fire and in electric ovens. We have cooked for presidents and brutes and poets. We have taken the discards of well-to-do kitchens and made mouth-watering dishes. We made bread on the blade of a garden tool: hoe cake. We know a lot about cooking to survive and even more about cooking to thrive. In this country we have been, for over three centuries, Historical Cooks.-Maya Angelou

Available again in its original format, this community treasure, first published in 1958 by the National Council of Negro Women, is a unique collection of historical facts, photos, personal anecdotes, and of course a rich selection of seasonally-arranged recipes for such dishes as Southern Hoppin' John, Corn Dumplings and Stew, West Indian Banana Jam, South Carolina Rice Waffles, Mandarin Pot Roast Chicken, and Peanut Cake with Molasses.

Arranged according to the calendar year, the cookbook opens with Emancipation Proclamation Breakfast Cake, to be made in celebration of New Year's Day and the Emancipation Proclamation. Scattered among the recipes, one finds documents like the Gettysburg Address, the Declaration of Independence, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Tributes to historical figures like Harriet Tubman, Phillis Wheatley, and Booker T. Washington appear alongside brief bios and recipes celebrating important but less well-known persons. Baked Fish for'Dr. Dan's' Birthday, for example, commemorates Dr. Daniel H. Williams, who in 1893 became the first surgeon to operate successfully on a human heart.

African-Americans are heir to a fantastic and important heritage, one that should be cherished and shared among generations. This beloved commemoration of African-American history before the civil rights movement offers a wealth of ways to celebrate the struggle and achievements of a people.

Lovingly recovered by the group that created it more than half a century ago, *The Historical Cookbook of the American Negro* is a cultural treasure. It continues to be a vital part of the African American community.

The National Council of Negro Women was founded in 1935 by Mary McLeod Bethune as a nonprofit "organization of organizations" to advance opportunities and the quality of life for African-American women, their families, and their communities through research, advocacy, and national and community-based services and programs. In 1986 NCNW organized the first Black Family Reunion Celebration, which spawned the series of Black Family Reunion cookbooks. Dorothy I. Height is chair and national president emerita of the NCNW. She worked on the original Historical Cookbook forty-two years ago. The original editor, Sue Bailey Thurman (1903-1996), was the wife of Howard Thurman, the spiritual adviser to Martin Luther King, Jr.

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