Early Nebraska Cooking - Nebraska Folklore

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Early
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Early Nebraska cooking, because of its lack of variety, often became unappetizing for even the least fastidious settlers. Sowbelly (salt pork), corn meal and coffee were nearly always on the table for the main meals.

**Corn**

Corn, because it was cheaper and easier to grow than other foods, was the staple diet. Attempts were made to break the monotony by serving it in many different ways, but it still remained, as one old settler said, "corn!" Corn muffins, griddle cakes, corn cake, hominy, dry corn and milk (parched corn, ground and eaten with milk), corn on the cob, corn gruel (for invalids), were some of the ways in which attempts were made to disguise it on the table.

A more successful variation of the use of corn was new corn meal. This was considered a great delicacy in the 70's and 80's, probably because it could be served only a few weeks of the year when immature corn ears were available. These immature ears were first dried thoroughly in the sun, then ground off on a home-made gritter, which often consisted of a tin pan with bottom perforated by nail holes.

**Coffee and Substitutes**

Coffee was sold green. The pioneers had to roast and grind it themselves. If they didn't own a small coffee mill, the beans were mashed in a bag. When the pioneers couldn't get to town or were short of money, a substitute coffee was used. Mrs. Nicholas Sharp, who lived in Gage County as early as 1867, tells of mixing corn meal and sorghum together until it made a gummy dough, then baking it in the oven until it became browned. It was pulverized before being placed in a coffee pot with water. The only resemblance this mixture had to boiled coffee was the color. When the amount of real coffee in the house was limited, a common practice was to reinforce it with a substitute. Some frontier connoisseurs even went so far as to consider two parts of dried peas to one part of coffee as being better than "straight" coffee. One settler tells how the Indians taught her to make "corn coffee." This was done by baking a whole ear of corn until it was
burnt black, then putting it into the coffee pot. Other makeshift coffee substitutes consisted of parched barley, rye, wheat and dried carrots.

Sorghum and Sugar

Very little canning was done in the 1870's because white sugar was both scarce and expensive. Later, as time went on, it came into more common use until virtually everything that required sweetening contained sugar in place of sorghum or honey. But sorghum, prepared at local sorghum mills, was the prevalent substitute for sugar for many years. It was used in pies, jellies, custards, bread and coffee, although honey and maple sugar, with their more delicate flavors, often took its place when they could be obtained.

On some occasions, when not even sorghum could be obtained, a substitute of sugar substitute was used in the form of boiled-down watermelon juice. Mr. Swanson, who lived in Boone County during the 80's, mentions another sugar substitute in the form of clean corn cobs boiled down for their corn syrup. He adds, "It was good corn syrup, too. I remember how we boys liked it."

That was known as "G" or "Orleans" sugar cane used during the late 70's and early 80's. This sugar, shipped from Louisiana, was made by evaporating most of the moisture from cane syrup. This sugar was difficult to handle because when it became dry it formed into lumps that were quite hard. Frontier storekeepers constantly added water to it in order to keep it from lumping and to maintain its "selling weight."

Much of the early white sugar was sold in the form of cubic, commonly called leaves. (One leaf was usually equal to one teaspoon of granulated sugar.) This sugar was at first used only for such pioneer luxuries as pies, cakes, jellies and for table use.

Dainty tongs, with which to pick up the sugar leaves, invariably hung on the side of the sugar bowl in well-appointed homes. But most settlers were not so well off. They picked up a cube with their fingers, and often put it in the mouth to keep it between their teeth as they sipped coffee or tea through it. This rustic custom was supposed to improve the flavor of both the sugar and the coffee.

Dried Meat

It was natural for the settlers to look forward with keen anticipation to butchering season, since it meant fresh meat for the entire family and the neighbors, who, when they butchered, returned like portions of meat. A portion of pork, after being fried, was kept in large clay crocks, which were filled with lard. Some of the meat was smoked.

Nicholas Sharp, who came to the State in the 70's, says that a makeshift smokehouse was sometimes made out of an inverted barrel placed over a small trench. Holes were bored in the sides of the barrel for the insertion of sticks. The meat was hung in these holes, and a smoky fire was kept burning in the trench. After the smoking process, hams were wrapped in gauzy sacks and covered with flour paste. This paste made an air-tight covering that helped to mellow the meat.

Preserving Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables of many kinds were dried for off-season use. Pumpkins were sliced into thin rings and strung on cords in the sun as were squash, apples and even rhubarb. Pumpkins, according to Miss Estella Allen, who lived near Fillmore during the 70's, was also kept for winter use by cooking until most of the moisture had evaporated, then it was made into jellies and thoroughly dried in the sun. String beans were strung and dried on cords. When cooked, both pods and beans were used.

Charles Miller, who lived in Thayer County, during the 70's, says he always thinks of dried apples when he sees them in a store. A meal of water and dried apples made him feel as if he was moving through the air in a toy balloon. But the dried apples, for many, were an unsavory food. They were tough, leathery, "dirty-brown in color and nearly always fly-specked. One settler in Gage County described them in this citty:

"Eat it in my ears
And tell me lies,
But give me no
Dried apple pies."

Most of the frontier fruit, which grew wild, was found along the creek banks. It was the custom for the entire family to go fruit hunting in season. Plums, blackberries, gooseberries, grapes, currants, and wild strawberries were some of the most common of these fruits.

Attempts were always made in the summer and fall to preserve wild fruits for winter use, though without sugar, which was scarce. Nicholas Sharp, says that wild plums, always plentiful, were put in barrels after they had been secluded, and weighted down with a lid. Their own liquid, which turned into a form of vinegar, kept the fruit, although they were always sour and often unpalatable. Then it was possible to obtain sorghum from the local mills, usually in the fall, the plums were sweetened with this sweet molasses, and stored in jars. Tomatoes were kept in the same way except that a strong salt brine was added. The brine had to be soaked out with cold water before the tomatoes could be eaten. Mr. Sharp, in his reminiscences, adds that prune chickens and fish were salted down and kept in the same manner.

Mrs. Nellie Macee, who lived in Saunders County during the 1870's, has the following story to tell about corn and apple drying:

"A young farm girl, named Luella, 'hired out' to a neighboring housewife during the fall season of 1872. Luella, who was a newsom in Nebraska, did not understand all of the frontier customs, so, every once in a while, she made some strange mistakes. The most humorous of these occurred one afternoon when the lady of the house made preparations for drying corn and apples.

"The apple drying was simple, as all it required was a sharp knife with which to peel the fruit, after which the apples were sliced in rings, then dried. This stickiness was called 'fly-speak', and the sick neighbor before Luella came to the corn. Luella, left alone, started in with the corn in the very way she had the apples. She cut the kernels off the cobs, then began stringing them. The apple drying was simple, as all it required was a sharp knife with which to peel the fruit, after which the apples were sliced in rings, then dried. This stickiness was called "fly-specked", and the sick neighbor before Luella came to the corn. Luella, left alone, started in with the corn in the very way she had the apples. She cut the kernels off the cobs, then began stringing them.
In the round o' the nineties, flour rated to allow the hay for haying. She sewed thread by using a lean-to roof and some mosquito netting.

Cook Stoves

One of the early cook stoves (which was also used for heating the house) was the hay burner, used because of the scarcity of wood in a plains country. This resembled the ordinary cook stove except for the method of fuel feeding. Fuel was supplied by the iron rives, or cylinders, about three feet long, packed full of hay and fastened to the rear of the stove. A spring forced the hay into the fire box as it was needed. A supply of a dozen pipes were kept filled on hand for relamping the stove.

Buffalo chips, before the years of settlement, had been a common fuel; later, when corn was raised on a large scale, corn cobs were substituted for hay. The hay burner was then replaced by the common iron cook stove still used by most of the Nebraska farm homes today. This stove was in wide use in the 70's in the eastern portion of the State, where wood could be found along the creek banks. Much of the wood, however, was green cottonwood that wouldn't burn readily. Much of the wood had to be placed in the oven to be dried out before being used for fire.

In the summer, cooking was sometimes done out-of-doors in a "fire trench," a small pit dug in the ground about a foot deep, two feet long, and wide enough to allow the pans to be placed over it. Mrs. Annie Duiker, who came to Guster County in 1878, tells of her father's first dugout, for which furnishings were so scanty that they had to use a blanket for a door. They had no cook stove at first; so, in order to bake bread, her brother dug a hole in the side of an earth bank and built a fire in it. This rude fireplace was used for several months. The practice was also common among ranchers on the round-up and freighters camping along the trail.

Another kind of cooking apparatus, used by the German-Russian settlers, was the brick oven built into a wall of the home. This oven was heated by lighting in it a fire of straw, hay or other material and allowing it to burn out. The brick walls of the oven retained enough heat for cooking or baking.

Recipes

All of the following recipes are over fifty years old. Some have been in use for over a hundred years. They were brought to Nebraska by settlers who migrated from Eastern states, and by early immigrants from Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Poland. Other recipes, like the one for preparing wild rabbits, originated in the State.

The recipes were obtained largely through interviews with pioneers, with a few from the files of the Nebraska Farmer for 1877, issues of the 1878 Fremont Herald, and numbers of the Seward Reporter for 1878.

Many of these recipes are still widely used in Nebraska cooking.

Bread, Cereals and Stuffings

Bread starter, in place of dry yeast, was in common use between the 60's and 90's, since it could be kept and used for a number of bakers. The starter was originally born from dry yeast or by "borrowing" a portion of a neighbor's starter. It was kept alive by sprinkling sugar over the starter after the portion needed for bread baking had been taken out. The starter, with some of the fresh sponge added, was then kept until the next bread-baking time came around (within a week).

One cup of bread starter is equal to one ounce of dry yeast or two cakes of compressed yeast. Starter is still used by some Nebraska farm wives, although it has, to a large extent, been supplanted by commercial yeasts.

Corn Bread

(Louise Fickel, a pioneer woman, won first prize with this recipe at the 1906 National Corn Exposition at Omaha and at the 1898 Nebraska State Fair.)

One cup sponge, one cup cornmeal, two cups flour, one cup water, two teaspoons salt, five teaspoons sugar, two tablespoons lard (melted or creamed).

For making sponge: Soak one-half cake dry yeast in one-half cup warm water; stir in one-half cup flour (enough to make thin batter). Let stand over night.

For mixing and baking: The next morning scald the meal with one cup boiling water; let stand until lukewarm; stir in the sponge; add salt, sugar, lard, and the two cups flour (or enough to knead well); let stand until it gets light (about twice the original size); mix down (until no air bubbles appear); let rise again; make into loaves (small loaves preferred); let stand until light. Bake one hour to one and one-half hours in a moderate oven.

Corn Bread

One quart of good buttermilk, sold enough to neutralize the acid, salt to taste, three eggs, butter the size of a walnut and corn meal to make a very thin batter; beat well, turn in a buttered pan and bake in a moderate oven. Do not mix batter too stiff.

Johnny Cake

One quart of corn meal, one teaspoon of cream. Put cream in a quart cup, then fill it with sour milk; two eggs, two tablespoons of white flour, one
Dyspepsia Bread
(This recipe appeared in one of the 1877 issues of the Nebraska Farmer.)

One pint bowl of graham flour; dissolve one-half teaspoon of soda in two-thirds of a cup of yeast, add to the mixture one teaspoon of molasses; pour in sufficient warm water to make it somewhat thinner than flour bread.

Graham Bread
(This bread recipe was often used in the 70's and 80's for variety from the commonly used corn bread.)

Prepare a sponge as for white bread; put in baking pan the next morning a proportionate quantity of flour, two-thirds graham and one-third white, to every quart of which you will allow a large handful of Indian meal and a teaspoon of salt. Make a hole in the center of this and pour in your sponge, with two tablespoons of molasses for each medium-sized loaf. The dough must be very soft. It will take a longer time to raise than white bread; when light, knead again, make into loaves and set in a warm place for a second raising. Bake steadily in a moderate oven for a much longer time than you would allow for white bread.

German-Russian Bread

Mix regular bread dough. Add six egg yolks, one quart warm milk, one-half pound melted butter. Beat six egg whites; add one cup sugar and mix all ingredients together. Let raise same as plain bread and bake in loaves.

Muffins without Yeast
(Settlers sometimes ran out of yeast so they had to be prepared to make a bread which didn't require it.)

Three pints of flour, one quart of milk, two eggs, three teaspoons baking powder with the flour; beat the eggs very light and mix. Bake in muffin pans in a quick oven.

Soda Biscuits
(These quickly prepared biscuits were often made when unexpected company arrived.)

Take four large cups of sifted flour, in which one large teaspoon soda and two teaspoons cream of tartar have been well mixed, with one teaspoon salt; add one-half cup butter and mix thoroughly; to this add a pint of sweet milk, a little at a time, and mix with as little kneading as possible. Bake in a quick oven, eight to ten minutes.

Swedish Coffee Bread
(Swedish settlers brought this interesting recipe with them from Sweden.)

One and one-half quarts of milk, one cup bread starter, three cups sugar, one-half pound of butter, one teaspoon ground cardamom seed, flour to make a soft dough, one teaspoon salt. Mix flour, warm milk, one cup sugar and starter. Set to raise. When light, add rest of sugar, cardamom seed, butter and flour. Work well. Let raise again before rolling out.

Rye Bread
(This recipe was often used by the settlers.)

Take one quart of warm water, one teacup of yeast, and thicken with rye flour. Put in a warm place to raise over night. In the morning add well one pint of Indian meal. When cool, add to the sponge, with salt, a little molasses, one pint of warm water and rye flour to knead very soft. Let raise, then put into pans. Again let raise, then bake. The dough should never be molded stiff for rye bread, and, if prepared, the flour may be wholly worked in with an iron spoon instead of hands.

Brown Bread
(This recipe was used in the 70's.)

Three cups corn meal, two cups rye flour, two-thirds cup molasses, three and one-half cups warm water, and one teaspoon soda. Steam four hours.

Boston Brown Bread
(The Nebraska Department of Public Instruction recorded this recipe in 1911.)

One cup rye meal, one cup granulated corn meal, one cup graham flour, two cups sour milk, three-fourth teaspoon soda, one teaspoon salt, three-fourths cup molasses. Mix and sift the dry ingredients; add molasses and milk; stir until well mixed; turn into well buttered mold and steam three and one-half hours. The cover should be buttered before placing on mold, and then tied down with string, otherwise bread in rising will force cover. Mold should never be filled more than two-thirds full.

Breakfast Muffins
(Popular in the 70's and 80's.)

Two eggs, well beaten with a cupful of sugar, and a lump of butter the size of an egg; to this add one pint of milk, with a teaspoon of soda; one quart of flour and two tablespoons of cream of tartar. Bake in muffin rings, or in pans in a quick oven.

Buckwheat Cakes
(The Nebraska Farmer published this recipe in 1877.)

Mix one-half cup of wheat flour with one quart of buckwheat flour, add one large tablespoon of salt, then add gradually a scant quart of warm water mixed with one-fourth cup of yeast. Let it raise all night. In the morning add a quarter of a teaspoonful of soda, and bake immediately. Bake on a smooth well-greased iron griddle, taking care to scrape it well after each baking and use as little grime as possible. The cakes should not be larger than a small saucer, and should be served at once.
**Mush Rolls**

One quart boiling water well salted; stir in corn meal as for mush. One cup lard and butter, one cup sugar; mix into mush. When cool enough, put in one pint bread sponge, let raise, stiffen with flour and let raise again. Roll out, spread with butter, cut round, fold over, put in pan, let raise, then bake.

(Oatmeal Mush with Apples)

(Report of Department of Public Instruction, Jan. 6, 1911.)

Oatmeal mush with apples, leaving large cavities; pare, and cook until soft in syrup made by boiling sugar and water together. Fill cavities with oatmeal mush; serve with sugar and cream.

**Pumpkin Mush**

(Edward Reeder, Aug. 12, 1876.)

White and yellow corn meal are made into the well known mush called hasty pudding. It should be stirred very gradually into boiling water, to prevent lumping. It should cook from one to two hours.

**Indian Meal Mush**

(The Nebraska Farmer, 1877.)

Two quarts of bread crumbs, one pint of stewed apples, three stewed onions, one cup of raisins, pepper, salt, and butter.

**Swedish Stuffing**

(This recipe, which was brought to Nebraska by Swedish pioneers, is probably well over a hundred years old.)

Put one-half cup raisins in two and one-half quarts of dry bread (half rye and half white bread) broken into small cubes. Pour enough boiling water over bread to moisten slightly. Then add one small onion (grated fine), two eggs (beaten slightly), salt, pepper, three teaspoons ground sage, one teaspoon cinnamon, one-half teaspoon cloves, one-half teaspoon allspice.

Add enough milk to moisten all the ingredients thoroughly. Mix well. Then stuff in fowl and bake as long as required for the fowl to become well done.

(More of one spice than of another may be added if a certain flavoring is desired. These are also approximate measures; more or less of the various ingredients may be added.)

**MEATS**

**Wild Rabbit**

(Most of the early settlers agree that this is one of the best recipes for preparing wild rabbit. It was used before Nebraska became a State.)

After cleaning, wash the rabbit in cold water and hang up to freeze in order to loosen the meat fibers. Then soak for a short time in salt water before cooking. This will draw out the blood. Cut into pieces, washing each piece in cold water. Then put pieces in a stew pan filled with water in which a pinch of soda has been added. Bring to a simmer. Remove from stove and pour off the water. Put rabbit back in the pan and stew the meat for about three hours. When the meat is loosened from the bone, but not shredded, add with a little bacon and fry brown. (The meat, at this stage, can also be baked instead of being fried. If this is done, it should be baked for about half an hour.)

Wild rabbit meat is best in the fall and winter months.

**Swedish Meat Balls**

One and one-half pound lean pork (ground). One-half pound beef (ground). One egg. One-half cup bread crumbs soaked in milk. One cup of fresh cooked mashed potatoes. Salt and pepper to taste, also add a little allspice.

Mix, roll into balls, and fry. After frying put on a little water and cover. Place on a very slow fire for ten or fifteen minutes to simmer.

Meat Balls

(Rev. S. S. Nielsen says this is an old Danish recipe.)

One pound hamburger, one pound pork sausages, one cup rich milk, five tablespoons flour, salt and pepper to taste, one large onion, minced. Mix meat, flour, salt, pepper and onion together. Work in milk a little at a time. Work until it slips off the spoon, then fry in hot lard over a slow fire. When brown on one side, turn to brown on the other side. They are put in the frying pan with a spoon. After the meat is done, make a milk sauce and serve with potatoes or any kind of vegetables.

**Spiced Meat Ball**

(This is an old Danish recipe.)

Clean off a beef flank. Cut away all bones and spread out on board. If too big, cut it into desired sizes. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and a layer of sliced onions. Then roll together tight and sew it up with a strong thread. Leave in strong salt brine for three days. Before cooking, wind with string; tie securely, and put in pan with enough water to cover and cook until tender. When done put away in a heavy press for a day. Then take off string and slice in thin slices. It is fine for sandwiches.

**Pressed Chicken**

(The Nebraska Farmer published this recipe in 1877.)

Cut the chicken into about four parts, and boil them in as little water as possible; when tender, take out the meat but keep the broth boiling; take off the skin, pick the meat from the bones, chop it, put in some butter, pepper and salt, and, as chicken meat is very dry, use the broth to moisten it. Dip all the oil before adding the broth to the meat. Press.

**Swedish Head Cheese**

Three pounds of pork shank, one pound veal shank, two pounds of beef shank, two pig's feet. Boil all this together. When cool slice in cubes,
put in a cloth and season with pepper and salt.

Pour the hot juice over it and let stand in a pan, with a heavy weight over it for pressure. After it is pressed take it out of the cloth and put in a crock, with brine (salt water).

Koldsaim

(Mrs. John A. Anderson, Lincoln, brought this recipe with her from Sweden.)

Take one medium head of solid cabbage; boil until half done, take out and let drain off until cold. Take beef or veal and fry fine. Season with salt and pepper, a little butter, cream and a pinch of sugar. Work all together until well mixed, then take the cabbage, cut off large leaves and in each leaf put a spoonful of the mixture, shape into oblong rolls, and on the cabbage leaves and fasten with tooth picks. Boil in barley that has just enough hot water to cover and boil slowly about one and one-half hours. Serve with or without brown gravy.

Blood Sausage

(This recipe was brought to the State by Polish settlers.)

When killing pork, catch the blood and beat it so it will not clot. Take a piece of pork from the neck and a piece of leaf lard, boil until partly done, then cut both up fine. Divide this into two parts. To one part add stale white bread soaked in milk and squeezed dry, half the blood, salt, grated lemon rind, pepper, ground allspice, ginger, cloves, minced onion fried in lard and encrusted melted lard to make it rather moist. Mix well. Fill thoroughly cleaned casing, fasten the ends and boil. To the other half, add barley that has been boiled, the rest of the blood, salt, pepper and the spices as above. Put in casings and boil.

Pressed Blood Sausage

(Russian pioneers used this recipe.)

Boil head, snout, ears, tongue and a piece of meat from the neck. Then done, cool and cut into dice. Add rendered lard and cracklings, fresh blood, salt, pepper, ginger and allspice fried in lard. Fill a clean sausage stock with this and boil an hour. When you place it with a toothpick and no blood runs out, it is done. Place in a press in a warm place and put a weight on it. It is served with vinegar and pepper or vinegar and onion.

Chicken Pie

(Published in an 1877 issue of the Nebraska Farmer.)

Since and draw the fowl, and cut up joints. Cover with cold water, and let simmer, closely covered, for an hour or more, according to its age. Add three medium-sized onions, a little salt, pepper, and green bay leaves. When the pie is tender and the onions done, make a batter with one egg, cup of milk and a teaspoon of sea foam (dry yeast) sifted through enough flour to make it of cup cake consistency. Drop this into the boiling broth in small spoonfuls. While the dumplings are cooking, which will take about eight minutes, heat to boiling one-half pint of milk; pour this into the gravy after the meat and the dumplings have been removed, and stir in butter and a large tablespoon of flour wet with a little cold milk; boil for a minute and pour over the chicken. The dumplings should be served on a separate dish. Bake a piece of rich pie crust the size of a dinner plate; break into as many pieces as there are people and place as a border around the dish containing the meat.

Varoukas

(Rabbi Harry Jolt, of Lincoln, says that this recipe was often used by Jewish settlers.)

One cup left-over mashed potatoes; two eggs, four tablespoons matzo (kosher) flour; left-over veal, chopped; salt and pepper. Add beaten eggs, flour and seasoning to potatoes and mix thoroughly. Shape into balls. Scoop a hole in the center of each ball and fill with chopped meat. Cover the opening with the potato mixture, roll again, dip in matzo meal and egg, and fry in chicken fat until golden brown.

VEGETABLES

Hominy

(Nearly all the pioneers made hominy. For many years it was a staple diet.)

Take white corn if you can get it; none but plump corn; shell and boil in weak lye until the hull is broken; then clean off the lye, fill the kettle, or turn the corn out into a dish pan; wash well through several waters (the old way is nine times, but six will do); then clean kettle and return to the stove; put in plenty of water and boil until very tender which usually takes almost the entire day. As the water boils away add more. It is better to add hot water than cold.

Baked Cabbage

(Cabbage, for home use, was often grown by the settlers. It, like corn meal, was prepared for the table in a variety of ways.)

Boil a firm, white cabbage for fifteen minutes in salted water, then change the water for more that is boiling, and boil until tender. Drain and set aside until cool, then chop the cabbage fine. Butter a baking dish and lay in the chopped cabbage. To make a sauce: Put a tablespoon of butter in a pan; when it bubbles up well stir in one tablespoon of flour, and one-half pint of stock, and one-half pint of water, both boiling; stir until smooth, season with pepper and salt, and mix well with it four tablespoons of grated cheese. Pour this over the cabbage, sprinkle rolled cracker over it, dot it with lumps of butter and place in a quick oven for ten minutes.

Pickling Cabbage

(This recipe was published in one of the 1877 issues of the Nebraska Farmer.)

First pick all the large leaves off, then grate then nicely, then put them on to boil until tender, then take them out and drain until all the water...
Soak two cups of freshly popped corn in three pints of sweet milk over night. When ready to bake, add three well beaten eggs; a little salt, and sugar to taste. Bake like a custard pudding.

Sweet Potato Pudding

Best to a cream one pound of butter and one pound of sugar; boil and mash fine two pounds of sweet potatoes; beat the potatoes by degrees into the butter and sugar; add five well beaten eggs, a wineglass each of wine and brandy, and one of rose water, two teaspoons of mixed spices, and a half-pint of cream. Bake in a crust.

SCOVES

Corn Soup

(This recipe was another attempt to add variety to the monotonous corn meal diet.)

One pint of corn, one pint boiling water, one pint milk, one slice of onion, two tablespoons butter, two tablespoons flour, one teaspoon salt, a few grains of pepper. Chop the corn, add the water, and simmer 20 minutes; run through a sieve. Scald milk with onion, remove onion, and add milk to corn. Bind with butter and flour cooked together. Add salt and pepper.

Soup with Baked Dumplings

(Rev. Nielsen, of Lincoln, says that this recipe was brought over by Danish settlers.)

Put four pounds of boiling meat in kettle with enough water to cover. When boiling, skim off until the soup has a clear appearance. Clean carrots and potatoes. When soup is clear, add carrots cut in small pieces. Also minced onions, minced celery and salt to taste. When meat is about done, add potatoes cut in small pieces. Before serving, add dumplings.

PUDRIGES

Green Corn Pudding

(This recipe, which was often used in late summer and early fall, was printed in an 1877 issue of the Nebraska Farmer.)

Twelve ears of green corn, grated, one quart of sweet milk, three tablespoons of sugar and three eggs; bake in a buttered dish until this mixture begins to thicken. Put the butter in last, on top, and bake brown.

Popcorn Pudding

(The Seward Reporter, in August, 1875, carried this recipe.)

To two quarts of boiling water add one-half cup tapioca, one pound prunes, one pound raisins, one stick cinnamon, one lemon, sliced. Cook until tapioca is clear and fruit tender. Stir in one quart of cherry sauce and sweeten to taste.

German-Russian Fruit Soup

(It was the custom among the Nebraska German-Russians to serve this soup on Good Friday.)

Two pounds mixed fruit, one pound raisins, one tablespoon flour, one-half cup milk, one-half cup sugar, one egg. Cook mixed fruits until tender. Mix flour, milk; add to fruits while boiling. Mix sugar and egg; add last but do not boil.

Prince William Soup

(Originated in Sweden.)

Take dried fruits, such as apricots, prunes, peaches, pears, raisins, currants, cook slowly all together in enough water to cover well, then put in a little soaked tapioca to thicken, and cook slowly until done. Be careful not to scorch.

SAUCES AND PICKLES

Preserved Green Tomatoes

(Green tomatoes, when properly prepared, are good in themselves. The pioneers also saved them because they could not afford to allow them to rot or freeze. Food was too scarce and too difficult to obtain. This recipe dates back to the early '70's.)

Take green (stemmed) tomatoes of any size; boil them in plenty of water till tender, but not let them break. Strain the water from them. Make a syrup, allowing one pound of sugar to a pint of boiled fruit; add bruised ginger, lemon peel ( pared very thin) and lemon juice to taste. Boil the tomatoes until they are clear. Just before taking off the fire add a small quantity of brandy, about two tablespoons to six pounds of fruit.

Chow-Chow

Chop fine two quarts of green tomatoes, one quart of white onions, one dozen each of green peppers and cucumbers, and one large head of cabbage; season with mustard and celery seed to taste, and cover with the best cider vinegar; boil two hours slowly, stirring very often; soon as taken from the stove, add two tablespoons of salad oil; cover tightly and keep cool.

Green Tomato Pickles

Take a bushel of green tomatoes, chop fine, put in colander and drain dry; add one quarter of a pound of white mustard seed, one quarter of a pound of
whole allspice, six green peppers chopped fine, three tablespoons of ground cloves, one teaspoon of salt; six well and put in a stone jar; add one gallon of hot scalded vinegar; set away to cool. When cold, cover tightly.

**Cucumber Catup**

Take one peck of full grown cucumbers; remove the rind and cut them down lengthwise, then into thin pieces; stew one-half pint of salt on them; let them stand five or six hours; then put them in a sieve to drain quite dry. Peel and slice twelve large silver-skinned onions; put them with strong vinegar. Add for seasoning one teaspoon of cayenne, one-fourth cup of sweet oil, one-fourth cup of Madeira wine, and a few blades of mace. Fill wide-mouthed glass bottles with this catup and if you have a few pds of miniature variety of red peppers, often obtainable, to use instead of the pulverized cayenne, they give the sauce an ornamental appearance.

**CAKE and COOKIES**

**Poverty Cake**

(The Seward Reporter, on Aug., 18, 1876, carried this recipe.)

Two cups of thin cream, two cups of chopped raisins, two cups of sugar, four cups of flour, one teaspoon of soda, salt and spice.

**Soft Gingerbread**

Half cup of sugar, half cup of molasses, one cup of shortening, two eggs, one heaping teaspoon of soda, and flour; do not make too stiff. Stir the soda in the molasses till it foams, and beat eggs and sugar together.

**Gingerbread**

One cup of sugar, one cup of molasses, one cup of buttermilk; one cup of sour cream, butter the size of an egg, one tablespoon of ginger, one teaspoon of soda, one teaspoon of any kind of spice, flour enough to roll out. This recipe will make three leaves, to be baked in long time.

**Railroad Cake**

Beat two eggs in a teacup, beat well, then fill the cup with sweet cream, one cup of sugar, and one-half cups of flour, one teaspoon soda.

**Farmer's Cake**

One egg and the yolk of another, one cup of sugar, a lump of butter as large as a hen's egg, half a nutmeg. One cup of sour cream, two-thirds of a teaspoon of soda, one heaping cup of flour. Beat the eggs, sugar and butter together, then add cream, soda, nutmeg and flour last. If you wish it extra nice, put in the whites of two eggs and use white pulverized sugar and one teaspoon of essence of lemon; leave out the nutmeg.

**Sweet Corn Cake.**

(The Nebraska Farmer published this recipe in 1877.)

Take three eggs, beat light, add one cup of sour milk or cream, one cup of flour, one and one-half cups of sugar, and one-half cup of butter or lard, then cream to make a middling stiff batter, nutmeg or any kind of spice, one teaspoon of soda. One cup of raisins added is nice; baking powder can be used if preferred.

**Sponge Cake.**

(This was a popular recipe in the 1870's.)

Take four eggs, two coffee cups of sugar (beat the eggs and sugar well together), two coffee cups of flour, two teaspoons of cream of tarter, one teaspoon of soda, and two-thirds of a cup of boiling water; add the water, one cup of sour milk or cream, and two-thirds of a cup of boiling water; add the water, one cup of sour milk or cream, and two-thirds of a cup of boiling water; add the water, one-half cup of soda, and lemon to flavor; place in a well-heated oven. This, though apparently very thin, will be a delightful cake.

**Coffee Cake**

One cup of brown sugar, one cup of butter, one cup of strained coffee, one cup of molasses, three eggs well beaten, one pound of raisins, two cups of flour, two teaspoons of baking powder.

**Pork Fruit Cake**

Three-fourths of a pound of pork, chopped fine, one cup of raisins, one pound of currants, one cup of sugar, three-fourth of a pound citrus, one cup of molasses, four cups flour, one teaspoon soda, two eggs, one teacup water.

**Fruit Cake**

One pound of pork, one cup molasses, two cups sugar, one pint boiling water, two eggs, one tablespoon each of cinnamon, cloves and allspice, two teaspoons of flour; put in the boiling water; let stand until no longer hot. Bake very slowly. The longer the cake is kept, the better it becomes.

**Royal Fruit Cake**

Five cups of flour, five eggs, one and one-half cups of sugar, one cup of molasses, one and one-half cups of butter, one teaspoon of saleratus, one-half cup of milk, two pounds of chopped raisins, three pounds of currants, two teaspoons of allspice, two teaspoons of cinnamon, two teaspoons of cloves.

**Apple Bread**

Weigh out one pound of fresh, juicy apples; peel, core and stew them into a pulp, being careful to use a porcelain kettle or stone pot, placed in a kettle of boiling water; mix the pulp with two pounds of the best flour; put in the same quantity of yeast you would use for common bread, and as much water as will make it a fine smooth dough, put it into a pan, and place it in a warm place to rise, and let it remain for twelve hours at least. Form it into rather long-shaped loaves, and bake in a quick oven.
Sponge Cake

Take four eggs to one teaspoon of sugar, two tablespoons of sweet milk, two teaspoons of baking powder, one teaspoon of flour, one teaspoon of lemon extract. Bake in a quick oven.

Apple Shortcake

Make a soft dough as for biscuits; roll this cut and put a layer in a jelly pan; over this spread a layer of stewed apples; sprinkle over sugar and spices; dot with small lumps of butter; then put on a layer of dough, another of apple sauce, a very thin layer of dough, and bake in a very quick oven. May be served with or without sauce.

Swedish Ginger Cookies

(Mrs. John Anderson brought this recipe with her from Sweden.)

One cup of butter, one cup of brown sugar, one-half cup of molasses, two eggs beaten, one teaspoon baking powder, one-half teaspoon soda in the molasses one-half teaspoon cloves, one teaspoon cinnamon, one-half teaspoon ginger.

Genuine Ginger Snaps

A pioneer housekeeper says that all so-called "ginger snaps" in which soda or anything of that nature is found, are "simply cookies," which, like all other preparations, soon dry and become stale. The following recipe will make crisp, rich snaps, which can be kept in an air tight cake box for a long time.

One cup of shortening (equal parts of butter and lard), one pint of molasses, one-half pint of brown sugar, one teaspoon ginger, one teaspoon cloves or cinnamon, flour; mix well until it becomes a pliant dough. To be rolled thin, and baked in a quick oven.

Honey Cookies

One pint honey, one-half cup butter, one cup sweet milk, two eggs, one-half grated nutmeg; beat the eggs and honey together until they froth, then add butter and milk. Use yeast powder with the flour.

Klegner Cookies

(Rev. S. S. Nielsen says this is an old Danish recipe.)

One pint sweet cream, one tablespoon sugar, two eggs, flour. Mix cream, eggs and sugar. Work in as much flour as it will take to roll off the hands. Roll cut until the thickness of the back of a knife. Cut in strips five inches long and two inches wide. With a knife, make a slit in the middle and stick one end through the slit, so that the cake is twisted in the middle. Cook in hot grease until light brown (as for doughnuts.)

Rhubarb Tarts

Cut the stalks from the leaves and peel off the skin, and cut into small pieces; wash and put into a sauce pan to stew with no more water than that which adheres to them; add sufficient sugar to make the sauce sweet enough; let it simmer slowly till thick. When done cool, line patty pans with ready stiff paste, put in the filling, and bake in a quick oven. Add any flavoring that suits the taste.

Doughnuts

(This recipe was often used in the 70's and 80's.)

Three eggs, two cups of sugar, one and one-half cups of milk, butter size of a small egg, two teaspoons cream of tartar rubbed into a quart of flour, one teaspoon of soda dissolved in milk, a little salt, one-half nutmeg, use enough flour to roll out soft; cut in fancy shapes and drop into boiling lard. A slice of raw potato put in the fat will prevent it from burning.

German Doughnuts

(Brought over by the German-Russians.)

Four cups flour, three eggs, one-half cup sugar, two cups milk, two teaspoons baking powder, two teaspoons salt. Mix same as other doughnuts; roll flat, cut in five-inch squares and slash in the center. Fry in hot lard. Take one-half cup sugar and cut in large cubes; drop the soaked doughnuts in sack and shake so the sugar will coat the doughnuts.

Kolaches

(This recipe, brought to the State by Bohemian settlers, has been revised for ordinary conditions.)

Scald one pint of milk, let cool until lukewarm. Dissolve one and one-half cakes compressed yeast in one-fourth cup lukewarm water to which has been added one teaspoon of sugar. Let rise while milk cools. Add dissolved yeast to cooled milk and make a sponge. Let raise until light. Cream together one cup sugar and one cup butter. Add three egg yolks and two whole eggs well beaten, two teaspoons salt. Put in the sponge and mix well. Add flour encased to handle well. Let dough rise until light and roll out to one-half inch thickness. Cut out with biscuit cutter. Make a depression in the center and fill. Let raise and bake in a quick oven. Any of the following fillings may be used: 1. Fruit filling: Smash stewed prunes. Add sugar and cinnamon. Sprinkle with coconut or chopped nuts. Apples, peaches, pears, bananas, or canned fruit may be used. 2. Poppy seed filling: Grind poppy seed and beat in just enough water to keep moist. Then add sugar, cinnamon, maple syrup, raisins and three or four ringer snaps.

Cottage Cheese filling: Combine grated rind of lemon, one-half cup sugar, one tablespoon cream, two egg yolks and one pint of dry cottage cheese.

JAMS and JELLIES

Currant Jelly

Strain the currants off the stems, and bruise them thoroughly; put on the fire to heat, and when at boiling point strain them. To a pint of juice allow a pound of loaf sugar. Then the mixture begins to boil again, let boil just fifteen minutes.
Rhubarb Jam

To six pounds of rhubarb add six pounds of lump sugar and six large lemons; cut the rhubarb into small pieces. The lemons should be sliced and the peeling cut very fine. Put the fruit (taking the pips from the lemons) all into a large bowl, then cover with sugar broken small; let it stand twenty-four hours after which boil slowly for about three-quarters of an hour, taking care it does not stick to the pan, also do not stir so much as to break the pieces of rhubarb. If the fruit is gathered in dry weather, it will keep any length of time.

Orange Jelly

Make a syrup with one pint of water and one pound of loaf sugar, boil with the thin rind of four oranges and two lemons, skim carefully and add the juice of eight oranges. Let boil about twenty minutes; skim and add the juice of lemon and either one pint of calf's-foot jelly or sixteen sheets of the best French gelatine, dissolved in one-half pint of water and clarified with white of egg. Peel a couple of sweet oranges, removing every particle of skin. Core them to get rid of the pips, and cut in thin slices in such a way as to get rid of the pellicle around each quarter. Fill the mould, disposing pieces of oranges in a symmetrical fashion; when set, turn it out by dipping the mould in warm water.