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Spring 2013

Traditional Recipes of Cache Valley

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# Traditional Recipes of Cache Valley

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## Autobiographical Sketch

My name is Kameron Going. I am here at Utah State University studying English Education. I was born and raised here in Cache Valley in the town of Richmond. I am the youngest of four children, having one brother and two sisters. My father works as an engineering technician in the valley and my mother works as a day care provider. I am married and living now in Logan. My wife and I are currently expecting our first child, due very soon. An activity that I remember very well from growing up is baking cookies with my mom. When I was young, my mother used to have as many as twelve day care kids over and we all had to take turns adding ingredients and stirring. Adding the chocolate chips was always the favorite job and was sought after by all. Although the batch of cookies always decreased significantly after the other kids and I each ate a spoonful of dough, baking and eating cookies was a common and enjoyable occurrence in our home. When it came time to choose a genre to collect for this class, traditional recipes and more specifically cookie recipes seemed an obvious choice. While not all of the recipes included in the collection are for cookies, the great majority of them are. I collected them from family members and friends. Some of the people I collected the recipes from, including my mother, no longer use a recipe and have special methods for making them. These consented to let me videotape them making the cookies. Transcriptions of the videos are included.



# Traditional Recipes of Cache Valley

Kameron Going

Food is an integral part of our society. Not only does it provide needed nutrition and physical sustenance, but it also provides us with opportunities for family and social interaction. No longer is food just a necessity of life. A large percentage of the activities that we participate in on a regular basis revolve around food. Family meal times are especially important for those whose schedules tend to keep the family apart. Every good party needs appropriate snacks. Courtship rituals tend to revolve around food as well. The stereotypical date is “dinner and a movie” or “dinner and bowling” or some similar combination of food and an activity. Growing up in Cache Valley, I learned about cooking and baking very early on. My mother is a daycare provider, tending up to twelve kids at a time. One of our favorite activities when these other kids were at our house was to make chocolate chip cookies. We would all sit around the table and the mixing bowl would get passed around the table with each child adding an ingredient or taking a turn stirring the dough. Of course, adding the chocolate chips was always the preferred task and was often hotly contested. As I grew up and spent time in friends’ homes, I realized something. Just about everyone I knew had a recipe for chocolate chip cookies or a variation on them. I quickly realized something else. Although most of the ingredients for the cookies were identical, everyone’s cookies came out slightly different. So, when I learned of this collection project, cookie recipes were an obvious choice. Though I eventually widened



my theme to include any traditional recipe, most of the texts that I collected for this project are either cookies or similar desserts and treats.

I began collecting from those I knew, family and friends. Soon, I realized that this pool would be more than lucrative enough for the purposes of this project. My grandmother was a prolific baker and home chef and passed many of her recipes on to her children, including my mother. For most of these recipes, we still have recipe cards written in her handwriting. I remember my grandma's house as a source of constant treats. Whenever she knew that family was coming, she would get busy baking. Several of the texts included in this project come from these traditional family recipes.

Another few texts came from my in-laws. My wife's family has a very different approach to the culinary arts than mine. For example, they are much more scientifically minded in their approach to recipes. They tinker and tweak recipes until they are just how they like them. The end result is often incredible. My wife is herself a fantastic baker and chef and the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

The rest of the recipes included as folklore texts in this project come from friends and neighbors. I have tasted the deliciousness of many of these recipes first-hand. The son of one of the informants has been my best friend for many years through middle school, high school and now college. His mother's chocolate chip cookie recipe was a common, ever welcome treat when we were at his house, as was my now father-in-law's recipe for Chocolate Scotcharoos or, as he called them, "Chocochoos." At the time, of course, his



daughter and I were just good friends. I'm not complaining, however, about the continued prevalence of this snack in my life.

However, as I mentioned before, not all cookies are created equal. Everybody's method is slightly different and the results can vary drastically. For this reason I chose to not only collect the recipes themselves, but in some cases I opted to videotape the entire process of producing the recipes. The recipes I chose to do this on were ones that I knew included specific techniques, procedures and tricks that simply do not come across from the recipes alone. The transcriptions of these videos are included as part of these texts. In one case, there is no written recipe and the entire recipe is contained within the video transcription.

In collecting these recipes I have learned that what I had noticed as a child was true: everyone's cookies are indeed significantly different. However, during this project I realized some of the reasons why. Although the ingredients in most chocolate chip cookie recipes are identical, the amounts in which they are combined make a huge difference. Also, the manner of mixing - whether or not one uses an electric mixer - makes a significant change in the cookies' texture.

Beyond technicalities, formulas and methods, and expanding the lesson to include the non-dessert recipes included in this project, I have learned the many things come attached to a traditional recipe. A traditional recipe carries memories with it. For a recipe to become traditional, repetition is required. Family and friends are usually the intended and desired audience for cooking



and baking. Many of the informants that contributed recipes to me had very special memories that were intrinsically tied to the recipes they gave.

For a couple informants, this connection was deeply emotional. One recipe had come from the informant's mother, who passed away from cancer when she was in college. Another recalled that the only way that her mother could entice her father, who was a renowned party animal, to come home was by making a batch of her special Cowboy Cookies. Though other informants' connections to their contributed recipes were less tragic, they were equally as important. Several of the recipes are staples at all family gatherings. Others hold particular significance because of childhood memories or special occasions. Whatever the connection, more often than not, it was very deeply rooted.

However, even in the case of tragic emotional connections, all of the informants who contributed to my project were happy to be sharing a bit of their personal lives and histories with the world. The thought that others might benefit from things that had played such a critical, joyful or otherwise important role in their lives seemed to make them happy. In sharing, memories are refreshed enjoyed anew.

The continuation of traditional knowledge is important. We pass on traditional family recipes for the same reasons that we name our children after ourselves or write books or compose music or paint. We pass on our knowledge and our skills that we may be remembered. Our mortal life is short, and whatever our beliefs about what happens afterwards may be, the thought of



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dying without leaving some kind of impression or mark on the world is extremely disheartening. We feel an inherent need to create, to explore and to make sure that it is known that we were here, that we lived, that we experienced.

All of the informants that contributed to this project were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons, and so have a strong belief in the eternal nature of self and family. However, this need to be remembered remains strong in them. The increased emphasis put on the family unit in Mormon or LDS culture contributes, perhaps, to an increase in the importance placed upon the passing on of traditional family objects, including recipes. Memories of family experiences take on special meaning when one's belief system includes the eternal nature of families. It quickly becomes one of the most important ideas and focal points in one's life and demands extra attention and care.

On the flip side of the coin, this transfer of knowledge and tradition allows those who are the recipients of these recipes to feel close to past generations. I have often seen my mother become pensive and wistful when using a recipe that her mother used to use. I have even experienced these pleasant feelings of nostalgia myself as I have begun to use these same recipes. As older generations pass on, we of the younger often feel left behind or abandoned. Family traditions allow us to maintain a connection to those we have lost.



This project has given me the opportunity to revisit many of my own cherished memories with family and friends as well as learn about the experiences of others. In collecting traditional family recipes, not only did I gather together a list of delicious snack and meals, but I have also gathered memories. These memories provide context, texture, color and flavor to the texts within. Those who have gone before are remembered in these recipes and those who are left behind have found joy in passing on this traditional treasure trove to the next generation of seekers, researchers and students.



## List of Informants

**Alleman** - Margo Alleman lives in North Logan, Utah. She is a stay-at-home mom and doTerra representative. Margo was born in Salt Lake City and moved to Cache Valley in elementary school. She is married and has one daughter. She is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

**M. Going** - Mignon Going was born and raised in Whitney, Idaho and now lives in Richmond, Utah with her husband. She has four children, two boys and two girls. Mignon works as a daycare provider. She is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and is interested in family and music.

**T. Going** - Taren Going lives in Logan, Utah, but was born in Concord, Massachusetts. She is married and is currently expecting her first daughter. Taren has bachelor's degrees in Physics and Mathematics and a master's degree in Science Education, being a licensed Physics teacher. She is interested science, music and literature. She is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

**Haslam** - Le Anne Haslam was born and raised in Richmond, Utah, where she still resides. She is married with four children, three boys and one girl and works in an assisted living center. She is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

**R. McKenna** - Reed McKenna was born in Blackfoot, Idaho, and after moving around while he was young, his family settled in Cache Valley. He currently lives in North Logan, Utah with his wife. They have three children, one boy and two girls. Reed works as a software engineer and is interested in technology and hiking. He is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.



**S. McKenna** - Sarah McKenna was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts and was raised in Centennial, Colorado. Her mother, Sally, died when Sarah was nineteen years old. She attended Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, becoming an elementary school teacher. She currently resides in Centennial, Colorado with her husband and two children, one boy and one girl. She is a stay-at-home mom and craft blogger. She is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

**Spendlove** - Ruth Spendlove lives in Smithfield, Utah with her husband. They have seven children, four girls and three boys. Ruth studied Home Economics in college and is currently a stay-at-home mom to her youngest son. Ruth is interested in food, crafts and her grandchildren.



1½ c. plus 2 T. flour

½ t. soda

¼ t. salt

Stir into sugar mixture. Unwrap approximately 2 dozen chocolate mint patties.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Shape cookies by enclosing each mint patty with about 1 rounded tablespoon dough.

Place 2 inches apart on cookie sheet sprayed with no-stick spray. Bake 8 to 10 minutes or until no imprint remains when cookie is touched lightly. To lower the fat

in this recipe, reduce shortening by 2 tablespoons and replace with ¼ cup pureed

Great Northern white beans or replace ¼ cup shortening with ½ cup pureed beans.

### Texture:

These cookies, as mentioned before, are made only in winter. This accounts for the specific direction to frost with white frosting.



Margo Alleman  
North Logan, UT  
4/18/13

## Hidden Mint Cookies

### Context:

My friend, Margo Alleman, from high school, contributed this recipe. This recipe comes from her mom. They only make this recipe during the winter because it is only then that thin mints can be purchased.

### Text:

Cream together in mixing bowl:

¼ c. butter

¼ c. shortening

½ c. sugar

½ c. brown sugar

Stir in:

1 egg

1 T. water

1 t. vanilla

Beat well.

Combine together in another mixing bowl:

Mignon Going  
Richmond, UT  
4/21/13

## Cookie Sheet Cake

### Context:

Shortly after my parents got married, my grandmother discovered this recipe, probably from a friend at Ladies' Club. She became slightly obsessed with it and began to make it all the time for a while. By the time I was born, she had stopped making it as often.

### Text:

1½ c. raisins

1½ c. water

Simmer 15 min. Drain, save water.

½ c. shortening

1 egg

1 tsp. soda

1 c. sugar

¾ c. raisin water

½ tsp. salt

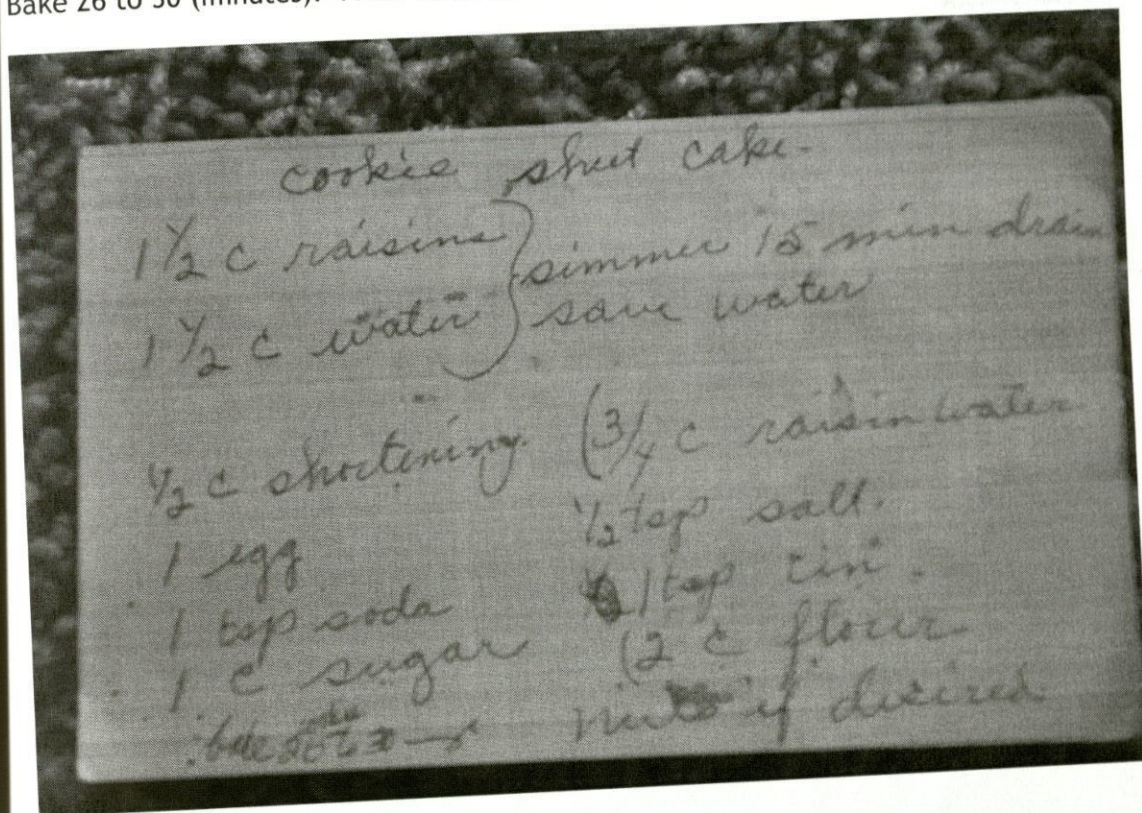
1 tsp. cin. (cinnamon)

2 c. flour

Nuts if desired



Bake 26 to 30 (minutes). Frost while hot.



### Texture:

The recipe did not include a baking temperature, but this fits with my grandmother's baking style. This recipe was probably written down at the request of one of her daughters. She hardly ever used a recipe. My mom said that the baking temperature is 350 degrees. The frosting used with this cake was more of a glaze made from butter, milk, and powdered sugar. The picture included is of a recipe card with this recipe written in my grandmother's handwriting.