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THE HEARTH---HEART OF THE HOME

Mrs. Stillman Wright
The Potomac Chapter
The Questers
Washington, D. C.

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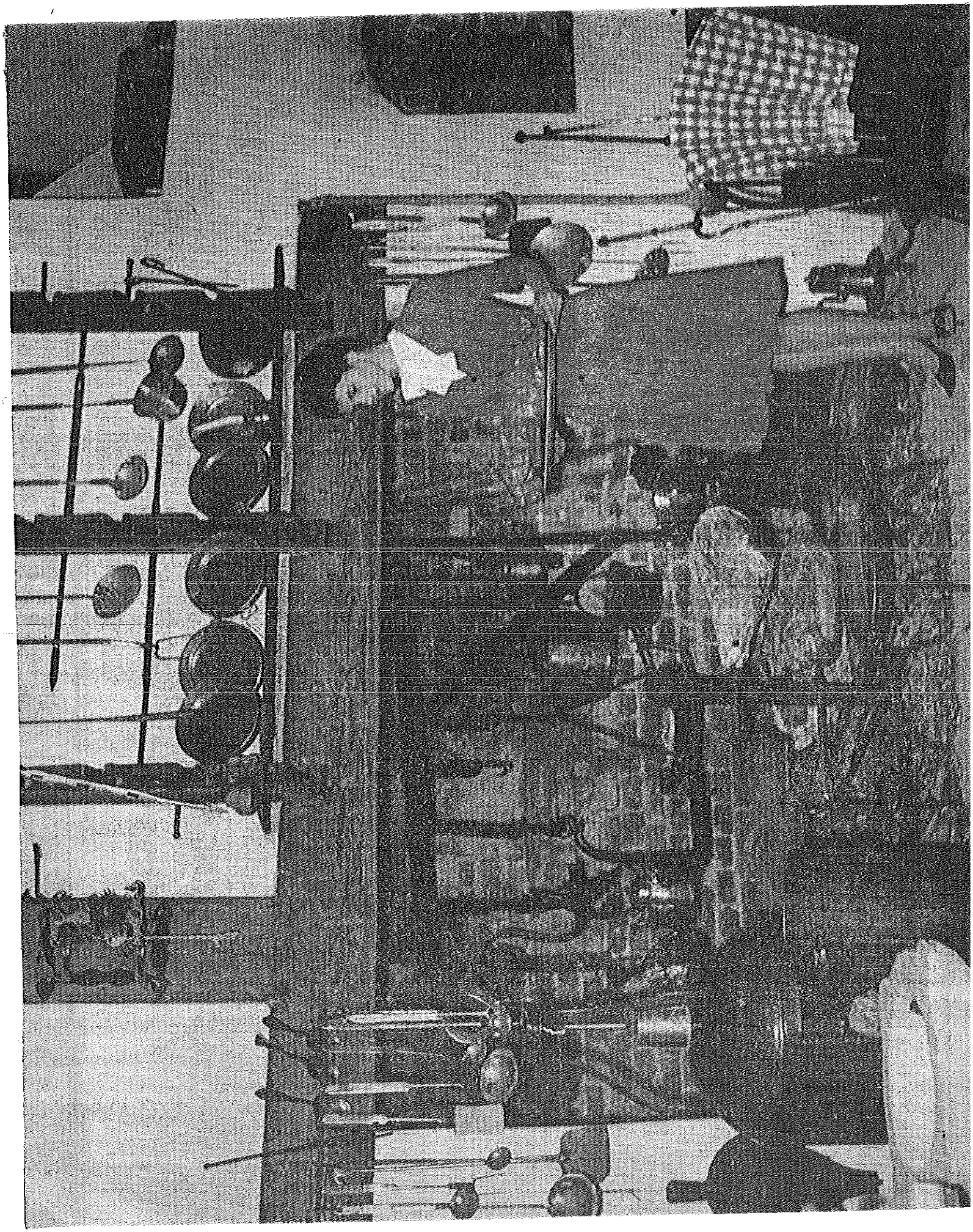

"FURNISHINGS OF THE COLONIAL ERA 1700-1781"

THE HEARTH---HEART OF THE HOME

Before attempting to write about furnishings of the Colonial era it would seem advisable to consider briefly a bit of history about the Colonists; who they were, why they were here, and how colonization was accomplished.

Commercial empires were the desire of Europeans long before they thought of colonization. Although England began empire building much later than Portugal, Spain and France she became the greatest of all European nations in planting and governing colonies. The English government did not participate directly in the colonial ventures, but they gave encouragement to the English adventurers who were willing to go to foreign ports. Two agencies were authorized to promote settlements overseas: THE CHARTERED TRADING COMPANIES--commercial joint-stock companies operated under royal charters composed of stockholders who shared pro rata the profits and losses of the colonial venture. At first political control of the colony was vested in the directors; they, however, were more interested in profits than in the settlers. All colonists were to have the rights and privileges of Englishmen and no laws were to be passed contrary to the laws of England. Colonies founded under English chartered companies were: Virginia under The London Company, 1607, and The Puritan Colony of Massachusetts under The Massachusetts Bay Company, 1630. New York was chartered under the Dutch West India Company, it was first called New Netherland, 1623. In 1664 it was taken from Governor Peter Stuyvesant by Charles II and given to his brother the Duke of York for whom it was named. In 1638 New Sweden was chartered under a Swedish Company. Under Penn's grant it was given a separate assembly as Delaware in 1704.

The second agency authorized for colonization was THE PROPRIETORSHIP--These charters granted huge tracts of land to a group or an individual, on terms reminiscent of feudal tenure. Political control theoretically was with the land

owner but usually was delegated to representatives chosen by the colonists. The owners spent their fortunes developing the lands and encouraged the settlers to take small holdings, expecting to regain their investments and become wealthy from quitrents paid by those who tilled the soil. Seven colonies were founded as proprietorships: Maryland, by Lord Baltimore in 1632; New Hampshire, by Captain John Mason in 1635; New Jersey, by sub-grant from the Duke of York to Sir William Berkley and Sir George Carteret in 1664; The Carolinas, by eight nobles, friends of Charles II in 1663; they were informally separated in 1691 and formally separated with different Governors in 1729; Pennsylvania, by William Penn in 1682; Georgia, by a board of trustees headed by James Oglethorpe in 1732. All except Pennsylvania and Maryland had become royal provinces before the outbreak of the Revolution.

Corporate colonies enjoyed a larger measure of self government which distinguished them from others in English America. The governor, governor's council and the legislative assembly were chosen by qualified voters of the colony.

Reasons for leaving their home countries were numerous. Economic changes had taken place in England and many were out of work. They were willing to risk everything in order to become landowners and establish a new life for themselves and their families. The ever present search for gold and other riches was uppermost in the minds of many of the earliest adventurers. Many of the settlers were looking to the New World as a release from their troubles in the Old World; particularly those in New England and Pennsylvania who came because of religious persecution. Here they hoped to establish their religious beliefs and worship as they chose.

The English beachhead was established May 22, 1607 at Jamestown, Va. This first permanent colony, started in an unhealthful climate, was saved only because of the forceful leadership of several of the founders. Captain John

Smith demanded that the colonists do what was necessary for survival. This group consisted of 105 men, no women. Among them were four carpenters, one mason, one blacksmith and one sailer (sailmaker). Success of the colony was assured when John Rolf, husband of an Indian Chief's daughter, Pocohantos, showed the possibility of profit from raising tobacco. This made available regular income from Europe and Virginia early became our wealthiest colony.

The "Pilgrim's fathers', a group of protestants who could not accept the Church of England, migrated to the Netherlands and then to America. They formed a commercial trading corporation and sailed on the Mayflower in 1620, landing on the bleak New England coast in early winter. Before going ashore they drafted and signed the Mayflower Compact, an agreement to be bound by their own rules. This was necessary because they were outside the limits of any Government. They managed to keep peace with the Indians, but drove out other white settlers.

The Massachusetts Bay Settlement, larger and more influential, was organized as a religious refuge for Puritans. Migration began in 1629 in five ships. This was a well organized group with adequate funds. In the next twelve years nearly 20,000 came to this settlement as the "High Church" movement in the Church of England had royal support, and the Puritan hopes of "purifying" the church dwindled. The company charter was commercial in form but was slowly adapted to the basic instrument of a self-governing commonwealth. The colonists settled compactly and carefully preserved their culture and religion. This was a "Christian commonwealth". Agriculturally they prospered. Much credit for their success goes to their several terms governor--a prudent English squire--John Winthrop.

With the exception of Plymouth, the remaining New England colonists used Massachusetts as a base. Many congregations followed their able pastor to a new site.

Connecticut, settled from Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1636, was strong

and thriving. They were attracted by the trade and soil of the Connecticut River valley. Their founders drafted a series of statutes called the Fundamental orders of Connecticut which served as a political basis for thirty years. In 1662 they sought, and were granted a legal charter from Charles II.

The foundation of Rhode Island was less orthodox. It was composed of exiles and irreconcilables from Massachusetts. Roger Williams, because of theological and political views, was banished from Massachusetts in 1635 and founded Providence in 1636. The colony was made up of four towns--Providence, Portsmouth, Newport and Warwick--all strongly individualistic. Roger Williams displayed real qualities of leadership in holding them together. Charters were obtained from England in 1644 and 163. The second charter guaranteed liberty of conscience, a legal freedom; unknown in England.

Maryland, the first proprietory colony, was founded by George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore; a Catholic peer who expected to establish a religious haven and a great family estate. The first settlement in 1634 was on the upper Chesapeake. Few Catholics came and Protestants soon outnumbered them. Government was under the feudal system and the Governor possessed powers in Maryland similar to those of the King in England. The toleration act in 1649 provided tolerance for all faiths.

Pennsylvania was an experiment in idealism and promotional skill. Its founder, William Penn, a Quaker, received his province in 1681 from James II in payment of a debt owed Penn's father. He was free to draft the laws on a moral plan providing liberty of conscience for all. His liberalism attracted people of many nationalities and many religions. "The response to the opportunity offered by Penn was remarkable, greater than the migration to any of the other colonies. They came in three streams. First, there were the Quakers, many of whom were from Wales and from across the Bristol Channel in Cornwall. Second, the Germans, from the Palatinate and from along the Rhine, most of whom belonged to the mystic

German sects. In religion they were all Protestants, most of them belonging to the Luthern and Reformed Churches, Seventh day Baptist (Ephrata) and the Moravians at Bethlehem. And third, there were the Scotch-Irish, aggressive Presbyterians, who came originally from the Border, from the Scottish Lowlands and the north of England, and who had sojourned a generation or two in Ulster on the way. As convenient dates, we might say the Quakers came in 1682; Germans in 1709 and the Scotch-Irish in 1720. The three were very different. Their settlements and equipments, their houses, tools and utensils were in the beginning very naturally quite different. But soon all three were living within range of one another, vigorously emphasizing those differences and rubbing their rough corners smoother within the present limits of the State of Pennsylvania". Here was the beginning of the 'melting pot' that has continued throughout American history.

Natural resources, land tenure, and labor supply determined, in part, the production in various areas. The colonies could be classed under three groupings:

1. <u>The Maritime Provinces</u>-- The New England Colonies.

   AGRICULTURE consisted primarily of diversified farming of small landowners. The growing season was short and mostly maintenance foods were grown.

   FISHERIES-- as a commercial enterprise was virtually confined to New England. They were an important part of trade with England, Europe and the W. Indes.

   WHALING-- was an important industry.

   COMMERCE & SHIPBUILDING played an important role in foreign trade.

   MANUFACTURING mostly small handcraft, woolens, textiles, leather, household utensils, iron implements used primarily for their own needs. In the 18th Century distillation of rum from W. Indes molasses was the chief manufacturing. A three-way trade was established--Molasses were purchased in the West Indes, made into rum in New England

and exahanged for slaves. This brought silver and gold into the Maritime provinces.

II. THE PROVISION PROVINCES--New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania supplied New England with raw materials.

AGRICULTURE--Diversified farming was rewarding. Some grains were grown; and with cattle, swine etc. provided export trade frmm this section. Flour mills dotted the area.

MANUFACTURING--The numbers of skilled laborers in the area made contributions to production of textiles, paper, glass and iron. Fur trade was important in the 17th century, but declined after 1715.

III. THE PLANTATION PROVINCES--The area from Maryland to Georgia produced

AGRICULTUREstaple crops. Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina grew tobacco. Maryland and Virginia exported 50,000,000 pounds annually.

South Carolina and Georgia grew rice and indigo. Export of rice from South Carolina amounted to 500,000 pounds annually.

EXPORTS----Lumber and naval stores (pitch, tar and turpentine) were important exports.

Fur trade was important in South Carolina and Georgia.

Little manufacturing.

From this review wer learn the length of time that passed from establishment of our first colony in 1607 until the last in 1732, one hundred twenty five years. We also have had a brief glimpse of the types of people who were our colonists, and the means of livelihood throughout the colonies. It has been conservatively estimated that non-English emigrants made up 40% of the colonial populations with proportions varying from place to place. The Yankees of New England were about 70% English with a liberal infusion of Scots, Scotch-Irish, Celtic Irish

and some French and Germans. The Germans were the largest non-English group in colonial America, and the most tenacious in clinging to their native cultural ties. In the South, the English settlers comprised even less of the total.

Let us not be misled into thinking that the restored areas we visit occassionally represent the way of life of all colonists. The poorer homes did not survive, nor have they been restored. Just as variable as the ethnic makeup of Colonial America, was the financial condition of the colonists. Not all belonged to the class of the aristocratic Virginians, the richest of the Colonies; the large plantation owners of the South; the wealthy ship builders; and the masters of fishing fleets of New England. Many were poor farmers who depended upon their soil for their existence and not only the farmer, but his wife and children were used as sources of labor. Others were indentured and bound to serve a number of years to pay for their passage. Many others depended upon landowners or tradesmen for their livelihood. They were all colonists, none the less. A little may be told of colonial living and furnishings, but it should not be forgotten that general statements are made at the risk of becoming untrue. Only in the particular instance is there entire safety of statement. Therein lies its interest, its fascination. However, regardless of origin, financial status, or condition of servitude all colonists had one thing in common---"satisfaction of the inner man". The means of obtaining that satisfaction were similar in all of the colonies, differing only in details. As to how this desire was accomplished we shall concern ourselves with the furnishings, functions, and by-products of

THE HEARTH--HEART OF THE COLONIAL HOME.

In the early days of colonization, the main room of the house was built around the huge fireplace which was used both for cooking and heating the house. However, as years wore on and times became more prosperous homes became larger. When it was necessary to add more room to the house the kitchen often was moved to a lean-to at the side of the house. In the homes of the poorer colonists the kitchen remained as a part of the main structure and many of them were only one

room in size. Southern colonists tended to have their kitchens in a house apart from the main dwelling. It may have been an original room used until the larger home was built. The kitchen was separated because of the warm climate, and frequently there was an abundance of servants to take care of transporting the food.

Since the fireplace was the most important part of all colonial kitchens perhaps we should give first attention to it. All fireplaces were large; in New England they were usually four or five feet high, some of those in the South were high enough for a man to walk into. Large fireplaces were not of New England origin but date to Plantagenet times (1154-1399), or earlier. Early colonial fireplaces had a huge hewn timber called the 'mantel tree' used as a lintel to support the stone work above the opening. This provided a good place to hang various utensils used in the preparation of food. On the inside of the chimney, two ledges were made above the mantel tree. A lug pole of green wood was suspended between them so that pots could be hung by pot hooks from the pole for the cooking of food. Sometimes the pole was not changed frequently enough, became dried out and weak and serious scaldings occurred when the dinner fell into the fire. After iron became more plentiful, early 18th century, the lug poles were made of iron. Later fireplaces had gudgeons, or pivot brackets, built into them for hanging a swinging crane. Pots could be hung on the crane without fear of incineration.

The oven was made as a secondary fireplace having a flue opening into the main chimney, the front opening to the side of the main fireplace. This contrasted to the earlier ovens that opened directly into the fire pit. Primitive ovens were closed with wood and clay, the later ones closed with iron doors--they also had a means of closing the chimney vent to retain heat. "Baking was done once or twice a week in most houses. On baking days a roaring fire of 'oven wood', which was maple sticks, was maintained in the oven until its walls were deeply hot. While the oven was heating, the dough was mixed and set to rise on the hearth. After supper the embers were scraped out of the oven, its flue was closed, and some leaves

were spread on its floor. The loaves were slid in on a flat wooden shovel, called a peel or slice, and twitched off onto the leaves. The peel had a little meal sprinkled on it so the dough wouldn's stick to it. Then the front openings were sealed as tightly as possible. Once the oven was closed, the good wife could get a good night's sleep and take out her bread in the morning, brown, fragrant, and crusty. People who have eaten bread baked that way will tell you that no other compares with it and certainly it bore little resemblance to the 'wet cotton' that passes for bread today." Brick oven bread crusts were hard and tough and the children often hid the crusts or gave them to the dogs to eat. It was also a custom to cut the crusts, stew them in milk to make 'brewis' which was eaten as porridge, or poured over meat as a thick gravey.

A 'bake kettle'--stewpot on legs with iron lid, when banked with embers in the fireplace and more embers piled on the lid was an excellent baker for biscuits, shortbread, and pone. This kettle mistakingly has been called a 'dutch oven'.

Friction matches were not invented until early in the 19th century so it was necessary to keep a fire well banked at night. If no sparks remained in the morning it might take as long as half an hour to get one started by means of a tinder box, flint and steel. Tinder could be anything that would ignite easily; charred threads of linen were the commonest. "To light the tinder, the chunk of flint was held in the left hand, over the open tinderbox, and was struck a glancing blow with the steel, so that sparks were thrown downward. The appearance of the slightest glow on the rags was a signal to commence a blowing operation that might succeed in nursing the spark into a small flame. Charles Dickens, who had made a fire that way, said that with luck it could be done in half an hour". A candle was set in the lid of the box to hold the flame after it was started. Once the flame had been kindled it was quickly transferred to the shavings in the fireplace.

Kitchen equipment was essentially the same throughout the colonies. The variations occured in quantity and quality depending on the status of the colonist involved. Most cooking utensils had long handles to protect the cook from the hot fires. Pots were suspended from the lug pole by means of S shaped pot hooks, the number used depending on the distance from the fire required for the particular type of cooking. Another suspension hook, the trammel, had teeth on the edge of the lower rod hung on swinging stirrups attached to the upper rod, giving a wide choice of lengths.

Meat was roasted on spits thrust through the center. The earliest ones were about three feet long, sharp at one end, two prongs near the other end to hold the meat, and a handle for turning. It was supported on hooks that sometimes were part of the andirons. A pan underneath caught the drippings with which the meat was basted. It was the painful duty of a child to turn the spit. It didn't take long for them to learn to be occupied elsewhere.

Some families used good natured short legged terriers to replace the recalcitrant child for turning the spits. The spit was held in brackets in the andirons with one end used as an axle for a wheel held in a U shaped stand connected to the treadmill by a pulley belt. As the dog walked the treadmill, usually enclosed by a rail, the spit was turned. Even the dogs learned to have business elsewhere when it was time to work. Dogs were also used for churning, but it was necessary to have a heavier breed than the turnspit terrier.

As it became increasingly difficult to find that small boy, or dog when needed, necessity became the mother of invention and spits were mechanized. Smoke jacks were somewhat complibated. They worked in the chimney--the rising column of hot air rotated their windmill like vanes, and this rotation was transmitted to the spit by a chain drive.

If the family could not afford a spit, it was the custom to suspend

the meat from double strings in front of the fire. It was given occassional turns to roast evenly. Clock jacks for roasting fowl, or other small meats, were turned by wound up springs rotating the meat vertically as the spring unwound.

For smaller pieces of meat the roasting kitchen was used. THis consited of a metal box on legs; one side open to the fire, a hinged door on the room side for convenience in basting the meat with drippings caught in a pan in the bottom of the oven. The spit ran through the center of the meat, end to end, and had a handle for turning. Because of heat reflection from the back of the oven it could be placed farther away from the fire and the meat did not need constant turning as in open roasting.

Practically all of the cooking pots and pans were made of iron. These consisted of pots of all shapes and sizes, covered and uncovered. Many of them had three legs for standing in the coals, or they could be suspended over the fire. A broiler, with a circ ular rotating top permitted meat to be turned so that all of it could be cooked without removing from the broiler. One type of wrought iron toaster had a holder that swung on a pin permitting the toast to be browned on both sides without removing from the rack.

Somewhere along the line of progress a pot grew a spout and we had a tea kettle. However, after the fiasco at Boston, 1773, tea was frowned upon for a time.

Did you know that a 'spider' was a long handled frying pan with three legs? Many of the trivets also had three legs. Early waffle irons were rectangular shaped and had long handles. Perhaps we should thank the Dutch for the waffle iron. Corn stick pans of iron, and molds of all kinds of copper and tin for making Sally Lunn, steamed puddings and cakes were available for colonial cooks.

There were all varieties of kitchen ladles, skimmers, spoons and forks with a combination of iron, brass and copper in their makeup. Some had contrasting

metal inlaid in the handles. It is among the highly personalized pieces that signed and dated pieces might be found.

Wood, because of its availability, was used in a large number of household articles. Wooden bowls used for salads, cake and bread making, dough trays, churns, buckets, tubs, piggins, tankards, noggins, spoons and even for table use. Plates and trenchers made of wood were called 'treenware' (from the tree). Long after pewter came into usage by the more prosperous colonists treenware was used in poorer homes and in the interior.

It is practically impossible to date cooking utensils. Fancier and more elaborate cooking created a demand for more utensils. One might assume that the later utensils are more finished and elaborate than the earlier. A beater, made of wood with paddles at the base, rotated between the hands and could be used for whipping cream or beating eggs. An elaboration of this was the bow beater which has to be seen to be appreciated.

Rolling pins, in use before the advent of pies as we know them, were of various styles and wood--cherry, maple and lignum vitae. All are individual in size and shape depending on the maker. Earlier ones were a simple cylinder tapered on the ends and higher in the middle. Later, knobs were added to the ends to facilitate handling. With the establishment of wood turning factories, the rolling pin became more elaborate--a rod ran through the center to hollow handles on either end permitting the pin to turn freely. "Double rolling pins" set in a single handle were also placed on the market.

There seems to be no end to the variety of pie crimpers and pastry jiggers available. (I was unable to find a date when these were in use so they may not have been available until after the 18th century). They were made of whale bone, iron and cast brass.

In addition to pie and biscuit rollers there were 'hard tack rollers'

with tiny squares on the surface for making small biscuits. Cookie molds and rollers also had a variety of surfaces and designs permitting the cookies to be baked in a single sheet, then broken or cut apart into individual cookies. Early wooden cookie batter boards are rare--these consisted of a long slab of wood with carved designs of animals, figures and geometric patterns. With heavy dough, the imprint of the pattern remained after baking.

Butter molds and printsx also were decorated with geometric patterns, acorns, flowers, cows, eagles, special family designs and initials. The print molds varied in shape from round, semi-circular, elliptical to rectangular. Eagle and cow prints are most rare.

Another rare and unusual article is the herb grinder made of both wood and iron, a roller in a trough to reduce the herbs to a coarse or fine powder as desired for cooking.

A must in every household was the potato grater--necessary for use in making starch and also to obtain juice from carrots for coloring butter. Nail holes were punched through an oblong sheet of tin placed over a board. It was then fastened to an oblong board with handle, the back of the grater, in such manner as to curve it leaving space between for the grated material to fall through.

Forerunner of the lemon squeezer was the borer-the head of which was sectional, in appearance much like the segments of the lemons. The head was made of wood or china and fastened to a wooden handle.

Coarse sugar, salt (imported from Spain and Cape Verde Islands), pepper and spices of all kinds were powdered in the mortar and pestle, the size of which depended on its use. Large ones were made of lignum vitae because of its hardness and durability; smaller ones of pine were used primarily for medicines. Birch, maple and cherry were also used and those turned out on the lathe often were quite artistic.

Can you visualize making your own broom? All that was needed was a green birch sapling, a good whittling knife and you were in business. Soak the sapling until it is pliable, splinter it for about a foot on one end and remove the core, tie the splinters. Repeat the process about a foot higher on the handle, turn the second group of splinters over the first and tie, smooth the handle and cut it to the length desired. These brooms, or brushes, as the case may be were used for whisking or beating eggs, sweeping out the oven, scrubbing kettles, and sweeping the floor.

Stirrers came in all sizes and shapes, short handled for bread dough, puddings and batters; long handled for soaps and greases; even little ones of fascinating shapes used for crushers and stirrers when 'toddy time' arrived. Scoops made by hand were as numerous as the above named stirrers. Two kinds were needed for apple butter, another kind for lifting the finished butter from the churn, still another for soap making--and so it goes. Early strainers were made of wood, tin and pewter. The first pewter ones looked as though some one had punched holes in a porringer and used it for that purpose. Chopping knives might be made from anything at hand, such as the head of an ax set in hickory, which was moisture resistant; or a discarded footscraper. Some even had multiple blades.

"It is not possible to describe all of the pantry tools that were used by our ancestors. Each family worked out their own needs and most of the tools created were both artistic and practical". Next time you are accused of being a gadget collector--blame it on your ancestors--They started it all.

One more essential kitchen item should be mentioned before passing on to the by-product of this fascinating place. Lack of screens made it necessary to provide means of keeping the flies away while working--so we have the 'shoo fly' chair, earliest form of 'electric' fan--foot powered. A horizontal pole with a series of perhaps twenty-five or thirty straps fastened to it was secured to an

adjustable upright pole foot operated by a tredle under the chair. A lower set of straps provided protection for the ankles and feet.

Now let us see what our ancestors were able to provide in the way of food for taking care of the aforementioned common desire of all the colonists--'satisfaction of the inner man'.

Corn remained the great staple, with wheat flour used mostly for special occassions. An illustration of this was found in the 'grace' with which a country swain embarrassed his girl when his town rival stayed for Sunday supper.

"The Lord be praised. I am amazed
To see how things are mended.
Shortcake and tea for supper I see,
When mush and milk was intended!"

As a general rule the Northerners ate the coarser ground yellow meal from which the famous Johnny cake and Indian pudding were made. In the South, corn pone and Southern spoon bread from white meal were made and served hot. Hominy and grits were common to all. Pumpkins and other varieties of English vegetables and fruits were available in practically all sections--depending, of course, on the plantings of the individual families.

The colonies along the coast had an abundance of all kinds of fish, oysters, clams, lobsters and water fowl. Maryland and Virginia also had terrapin which has long been associated with them, especially Maryland. Game was also quite plentiful, secured by the colonists own hunting or by barter with the Indians. In the Alleghenies, bear bacon was common, although it was rare in the East.

Preservation of foods was a problem. Meats were smoked, salted, dried and pickled, and the phrase 'the goose hangs high' was probably more fact than fiction. There was more than one reason for a heavy hand with the herbs. The South had no refrigeration--cool spring houses were used for keeping milk and butter fresh. Colonists of the North were more fortunate in this respect as they

cut large blocks of ice in the winter and stored it in sawdust pits for use in the summer.

Smoked hams were a favorite Southern food, they hung in smoke houses for years until they were hard and dry. Preparation required soaking them for two or three days, then simmering for six or more hours before they were edible. Virginians, especially, liked cold ham for breakfast. Early meat pies of stewed meat and vegetables, rectangular in shape, were called 'trap pies' if they were open face and 'coffin' pies with a double crust. As they gradually became dominated by additions of fruit and fewer vegetables they were called mince pies. The crusts were not flaky and tender as we like them today but were stiff and tough. Rye flour and hot water made a notably tough crust. A combination of wheat flour and mutton broth was also used. Doesn't that have an unappealing sound?

The rich were able to import luxuries such as coffee, tea, 'cocoa nuts' or chocolate, olives, almonds, raisins, lemons and a variety of fruits from the West Indes. Since the poor man had never tasted these he didn't miss them. Instead he had molasses, honey, maple sugar, apple butter, sweet pickles and pickled watermelon rind, depending on his location. Both had cube sugar which had been smuggled in. Spices, sugar and salt were necessities in all households. The rich drank Madeira and Canary wines while the poor had beer, cider and a little rum for the holidays.

Wealthy planters were hearty men and founded a tradition of good eating. In Maryland and Virginia they followed the English custom of loading the table with food, particularly on special occassions. "A family dinner at Mount Vernon, Fe. 4, 1799, as recorded in the journal of Joshua Brooks consisted of the following: leg boil(ed) pork, top; goose, roast beef, round cold boiled beef, mutton chops, fried tripe, hommony (hominy), cabbage, potatoes, pickles, onions etc. The table cloth was wiped (cleared of crumbs) and mince pies, tarts and cheese were

served. The cloth was removed from the table and wines were served--port and madeira with two kinds of nuts, apples and raisins. 'Three servants' is the final notation in Brooks' account of this February dinner. The three servants were Washington's butler, Frank and waiters Christopher and Marcus".

For the plantation owner meal times were much different than and more leisurely. The planter arose early, drank his morning beer, and went off with his overseer to inspect the crops. About ten o'clock he was back for breakfast, which might consist of a main dish of beef or turkey, cold ham, vegetables and hot bread and coffee. Following this meal he took care of family matters and business until dinnertime, about three thirty or four in the afternoon. This meal might last for two and a half or three hours, if there were guests, as was frequently the case. This might be followed by further business, social visiting, or whatever was the order of the day. Supper was served about nine at night--and so to bed--if there were guests, eating might continue well into the night.

Contrast this with the schedule of his poorer colonial cousins who did not have the supply of food, nor the leisure time to spend eating it. His was a life of 'early to rise, cider rather than beer, hard work throughout the day, and early to bed'.

We have had a glimpse of life in Colonial 18th century. Picture yourself, if you will, having a lazy morning at home peacefully seated in a straight back chair; working the dasher of the churn with the right hand, right foot working the tredle of the 'shoo fly' swinging slowly overhead, and the left foot equally engaged rocking the baby in the cradle. Oh, to be carefree like a young colonial mother--no worries about the ringing telephone, car-pooling the children hither and yon for school and other activities--and NO P. T. A.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

Respectfully submitted
Mrs. Stillman Wright,
The Potomac Chapter, The Questers,
March, 12, 1963.

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