

Women's Impact on Cooking Culture during the Great Depression: Limited to Being a  
Homemaker, Unlimited in Their Authority on Nutrition in Their Communities

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines American cooking culture of the Great Depression, as the impact it had on everyday people's diet was much greater than one may initially think. By analyzing interviews, photographs, and newspaper advertisements, and conducting archival research, I illuminate the public history of the Great Depression's impact on diet and the roles women played during it. The existing scholarship on the Great Depression typically focuses on the relief efforts made to help people affected by this economic downturn, but this paper will focus more specifically on the cooking culture that involved women during this desperate time. Harsh conditions experienced during World War I, societal expectations of domestic roles, and technological advancements shaped the cooking culture to not only focus on the cost effectiveness of foods, but also the interconnected community and foodways surrounding women. The conditions that limited food availability, the spread of information, preparation of food, and variety of meals all show how the cooking culture was involved with far more than just saving money during hard economic times. The significance of my research on women's impact in authoritative roles as homemakers and home economists is that we see how the Great Depression acted as a catalyst to nutrition consciousness in the United States, causing people to consider more carefully what nutrients they received, and if what they ate was sufficient for survival.

## Introduction

When the basic necessities of life become suddenly inaccessible and unattainable, people will go through desperate measures to survive. This has been seen often throughout the world's expansive history, but most notably in recent times. The Great Depression in the United States shows the struggle people went through to feed their family sufficiently when there was rampant unemployment, environmental factors hindering food production, and limited government assistance. The food culture—the beliefs, attitudes, practices, networks, cultural heritage, and institutions surrounding the practices, production, distribution, and consumption of food in a society—is easily altered in times as adverse as the Great Depression. Women greatly influenced how the majority of the public coped with such difficult times, despite the societal expectations and gender roles during the Depression limiting women to being homemakers. The role of being a homemaker was utilized to have as much of an impact as possible, as women took on vital roles as magazine editors, recipe creators, home economists, and various other authoritative positions.<sup>1</sup>

The standard American diet has shifted and transformed over time due to fluctuations in food availability, conservation efforts during wartime, environmental capacity, popular demand, economic circumstances, nutritional guidelines, and scientific advancements. One of the most influential and impactful events in culinary history is the Great Depression, as it was one of the worst economic downturns in United States history, greatly altered what the average person could make and eat, and provided an abundance of creativity, innovation, resourcefulness, and new takes on traditional dietary beliefs.

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<sup>1</sup> Jane Ziegelman and Andrew Coe, *A Square Meal: A Culinary History of the Great Depression* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2016), 278.

Up until World War I, the American diet was based on traditional and locally grown foods.<sup>2</sup> It was not until the late nineteenth century that science influenced diet and knowledge about protein, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, and calories became more commonplace, which impacted diet in the 1920s.<sup>3</sup> Federal nutritionists emphasized this newfound knowledge and the concept of a balanced meal through government-issued pamphlets, while state extension agents promoted the use of milk, leafy greens, and tomatoes to American citizens.<sup>4</sup> What a balanced diet consisted of was greatly debated, though authoritative food scientists and home economists considered it to be proper quantities of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, and vitamins, as was discovered in the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Self-declared diet experts in newspapers, radio broadcasts, and advertisements, however, claimed it was a variety of interesting things, including specific food combinations, avoiding bread and meat combinations, eating 80 percent alkali foods and 20 percent acid foods, fasting, vegetarianism, eating only raw foods, drinking sour milk, eating no breakfast, having coffee with meals, and many other variations of diets.<sup>6</sup>

Due to new faith and hope in Herbert Hoover's claims of America's newfound wealth and supposed near triumph over poverty, stocks rose incredibly high, largely based on faith in continued prosperity.<sup>7</sup> The stock market crashed on October 29th, 1929 due to many factors,

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>4</sup> Megan Elias, "Summoning the Food Ghosts: Food History as Public History," *The Public Historian* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 18-19.

<sup>5</sup> Ziegelman and Cole, *A Square Meal*, 47.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 45-48.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 58.

such as plummeting trading stock prices, a lack of stock buyers, panic, the overextension of credit, failing banks, wiped out savings, and deflation, causing the Great Depression and impoverishing middle-class people overnight.<sup>8</sup>

Contrary to President Hoover's hopeful announcements, unemployment in New York rose to an all-time high since 1914, the year that recording began, and circumstances regarding food availability drastically changed.<sup>9</sup> The Great Depression affected land use, as soil overuse without rotation, environmental changes, and occurrences like the Dust Bowl led to a disastrous effect on the farm populations by reducing food production and availability.<sup>10</sup>

Those who were desperate for food abandoned the nutrition guidelines that had recently been established. Practically overnight, environmental and economic factors changed the food culture, and would continue to fluctuate for the duration of the Depression. Many nutritionists viewed the Great Depression with a silver lining, however, indicating the circumstances could be utilized to fix the inadequate diet that had infiltrated society by influencing the families that had no other option but to make food at home. In an attempt to counteract this sudden economic change, police departments in some places, like New York City, gave out forty-pound grocery rations to sustain a family of four for a week, and included items like potatoes, beans, rice, peas, and cereal.<sup>11</sup> Breadlines popped up in low-income communities to give free bread at night to men who were hungry, as women were generally

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<sup>8</sup> Elias, "Summoning the Food Ghosts," 17.

<sup>9</sup> Ziegelman and Coe, *A Square Meal*, 59.

<sup>10</sup> Cecilia Gowdy-Wygant, *Cultivating Victory: The Women's Land Army and the Victory Garden Movement* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), 102-103.

<sup>11</sup> Ziegelman and Coe, *A Square Meal*, 75-76.

not socially accepted in breadlines.<sup>12</sup> The popularity of breadlines is an example of the cooking limitations everyday people dealt with, as it forced the public to become familiarized with a narrow range of foods regardless of their background or what they desired.

The demand for breadlines, food distribution depots, and soup kitchens increased, and people had no other option but to use the same simple ingredients repeatedly. Radio stations covered topics like cooking with leftovers, meat substitutes, general cooking advice, and tips to save money on food.<sup>13</sup> Many women attended discussions on how to produce more food at home, and can and preserve it for the winter.<sup>14</sup> Cookbooks were commonly used for the home economics information and were distributed by corporations to advertise their products or made by individuals promoting low-cost meals. Newspapers printed budget menus for weekly meal preparation and contained interesting advertisements that showed what appealed to consumers. Soups, stews, loaves, and casseroles became essential dietary staples due to their inexpensive ingredients, low fuel costs, experimental capabilities, ability to hide unsavory foods, and easy clean-up.<sup>15</sup> American food culture shifted entirely to accommodate for new economic circumstances of the Depression.

## **Methodology**

Primary source materials from archival research, newspaper articles, photographs, and interviews show how everyday people influenced and were influenced by the drastic change in the food culture. Because the Great Depression affected all walks of life, these

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 54-55.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 128-130.

types of sources provide the majority of information for gaining insights into the daily lives of Americans during this period.

Archival research was important for the study of this topic due to the vast amount of photographs available showing day-to-day family life, the struggles farmers went through, inner-city struggles, and typical food preparation. A good collection for primary sources is the Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Color Photographs collection from the Library of Congress. This collection contains approximately 1,600 color photographs that cover a wide variety of topics including women's home life, migrant workers, children, occupations, factories, farm labor, and railroads.<sup>16</sup> The United States government had photography units within the Farm Security Administration (FSA), later named the Office of War Information (OWI), produced the color photographs in this collection, along with about 171,000 black-and-white photographs. The FSA/OWI documented rural and urban conditions and lifestyles in the U.S., U.S. territories, and Canada, though I used photographs from the U.S. alone, given the scope of this paper.

Interviews of people who lived through the Great Depression were vital in discovering what everyday people's domestic lives were like. Within these interviews, we can see a wide range of backgrounds varying by economic status, race, and culture, so similarities and differences between these individuals' experiences become more apparent. The Washington University series, The Great Depression Interviews, has a vast amount of relevant primary sources from people who were children during the Great Depression and experienced the struggles of the time. These interviews were conducted by Blackside, Inc., and initially debuted

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<sup>16</sup> Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Color Photographs, 1939-1944, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

on PBS stations in 1993 in a seven-part series. This collection also includes portions of interviews cut from the final program.<sup>17</sup> The series won an Emmy for writing and a duPont-Columbia Award. These interviews are part of the Henry Hampton Collection housed at the Film & Media Archive at Washington University Libraries. This collection provides perspectives from many people with first-hand experience in the difficulties of acquiring food during the Great Depression without a refined filter on what information is given, but rather a conversational and realistic public history.

Newspaper articles give a great amount of information for my topic, as they provide evidence of changing times and examples of how food culture changed drastically due to the Great Depression. The advertisements throughout the years prior to and during the Great Depression showing recipes, kitchen appliances, food, etc. are seen to target a new audience, one that could not afford the latest and greatest products, and thus focus more on cost efficiency. Newsbank provides great resources when looking for newspaper articles containing advertisements from *Seattle Daily Times*, *Tacoma News Tribune*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, and *The Oregonian*. This database presents advertisements from the time period I am examining, the 1920s to 1939, which allows me to compare what tactics marketers used to target consumers, what consumers created demand for, and what was advertised. A downside to newspaper advertisements is the inadequate data on how consumers responded to these ads, if what was advertised was actually sought after, or if marketers and costs were still out of touch with the average consumer.

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<sup>17</sup> The Great Depression Interviews, 1990-1993, Washington University Digital Gateway, St. Louis, MO.

## Literature Review

The consensus of the literature written on cooking in the Great Depression is that the domestic roles often placed upon women and the desperate conditions encountered in World War I affected how everyday people cooked and what food-related items they sought. There appears to be a lack of significant scholarship for the topic of Great Depression cooking, as the majority of sources focus primarily on the economic effects and the relief efforts made to alleviate the pressures on people, but not the public history of how everyday people's diet was impacted, which is a gap in the scholarship I am attempting to fill through my research.

The most informative, relevant, and all-encompassing secondary source I have come across is the book, *A Square Meal: A Culinary History of the Great Depression*. In this book, the authors, Jane Ziegelman and Andrew Coe, examine the impact of the shift between a cooking culture based on an abundance of food before 1929, to one of frugality and cost efficiency during the Great Depression. The authors argue that white women were pioneers and authority figures on food in the Great Depression through their contributions as magazine editors, recipe creators, home economists, and in various other vital roles during such a significant transition period of culinary history.<sup>18</sup> Though other sources focus on women due to their roles as homemakers during this time period, they do not fully acknowledge how vital women's roles were in shaping diet and the authority they held because of their experience. This source is important to my research by providing a well-rounded summary of the influence the Great Depression had, from nutrition, government, home economics, the pressure on women as cooks and homemakers, relief efforts, culinary research, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt's efforts as president of the United States during this period.

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<sup>18</sup> Ziegelman and Coe, *A Square Meal*, 278.

Another vital secondary source is Joanne Hayes' article, "Fare for Hard Times," which examines popular recipes from World War I, World War II, and the Great Depression, and how these recipes were relevant to everyday people's lives. Hayes argues that people already knew how to feed their families once the Great Depression hit due to the conservation efforts they had encountered and experienced in World War I, and that they showed remarkable ingenuity in making nourishing meals from limited ingredients. This article fuels my argument by introducing the idea that cooking habits originally associated with the Great Depression originated in World War I. Instead of believing the common assumption that people in the Great Depression had to create and cope with an entirely new way of living, cooking, and eating, we have to recognize that they instead relied on past experiences of food conservation efforts from World War I. This source is significant to my research topic by providing a perspective on the difficulties families went through in the Great Depression with a focus on the influence cooking during wartime had on cooking in the Great Depression and the similarities between them.

Mark Zanger's book, *The American History Cookbook*, and Roland Marchand's book, *Advertising the American Dream*, provide similar valuable arguments about the public's interest in what they generally could not afford, as the occasional luxurious and expensive goods they sought after disrupted the bland food and bland day-to-day life they regularly encountered. Zanger analyzes distinct eras of American diets and cooking fads, and discusses the importance of radio cooking programs and newspaper comic strips like "Blondie" for bringing humorous, relatable characters to the public.<sup>19</sup> Zanger argues that although economical, low-cost-oriented cookbooks and recipes were commonly produced during the Great Depression, there was more interest in the exciting and luxurious recipes for special occasions that broke the monotony of

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<sup>19</sup> Mark Zanger, *The American History Cookbook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 394.

their everyday meals.<sup>20</sup> He provides more information on recipes broadcasted on the radio than is typically covered, including examples of recipes and women who were regularly featured, and provides an innovative argument by bringing awareness to the expensive goods that were desired during the Depression but are often ignored in modern scholarship. Most other sources I found focus on everyday meals that used cheap ingredients, saved time and energy, and were an attempt to appeal to the average person who was financially suffering, but do not discuss whether there was a demand for those types of recipes. Marchand's book reveals that there was a demand for these low-cost recipes, but certain types of advertising did appeal to the public's desire to emulate the wealthy, indicating there was a demand for both types of marketing.

Megan Elias is a notable author for her contributions in many books and journal articles, primarily covering the history of home economics, what roles women had as home economists, the influence women had on their communities, how cookbooks shaped American food culture, the technological advancements that changed how people ate during the Depression, and the interaction between men and women surrounding domestic duties. Elias is influential in my research for providing a broader perspective on food culture, how it was shaped the Great Depression, as well as how the Depression trickled down to impact cooking culture today. This is a perspective that was difficult to find, as other sources focused on the Depression alone, but did not discuss how it fit into the larger picture as Elias has done. Elias' focus on women is particularly important for the direction of my paper, as she examined vital aspects of my arguments, such as the authority women had on nutrition.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 391.

## **Food Availability**

The strenuous circumstances Americans dealt with throughout the Great Depression spanned far and wide, as there were many factors that contributed to the difficulty of finding food. Natural disasters causing drought combined with the stock market collapse meant the availability of foods was disrupted, so the typical methods of acquiring food shifted to accommodate.

President Herbert Hoover initially insisted on local institutions aiding in relief efforts, as he believed it was not the federal government's responsibility and that the Great Depression was not as much of a problem as it was made out to be, even claiming the economy had recovered. Hoover claimed that individual dependence upon the federal government would sap the moral and spiritual fiber of the nation and would inevitably lead to decay and destruction.<sup>21</sup> Upon seeing starvation and malnutrition become more prevalent, President Hoover made efforts to relieve the people from the struggles caused by a lack of food. The Federal Farm Board was in control of millions of bushels of surplus wheat, though Hoover insisted that individuals should not rely on help from the central government. Eventually, he very reluctantly agreed to use the wheat for relief, which damaged his reputation and paved the path of doubt in Americans for Franklin Delano Roosevelt to take his place in office, provide federal food relief programs, and create the New Deal—the series of projects, reforms, regulations, and programs that responded to the country's need for relief, recovery, and reform from the Great Depression.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> C. R. Lambert, "Hoover, the Red Cross and Food for the Hungry," *The Annals of Iowa* 44, no. 7 (Winter 1979): 530.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 540.

Public relief in the United States before President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) had been the responsibility of local governments and varied by town, city, and county. Under FDR in 1933, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) was created, making the federal government take responsibility for the economic downturn's effect on everyday people. Food relief distributions used a card or voucher system, where instead of cash, clients would receive a pink form with categories of food that were available that week and how much clients were allowed to take, while grocers would keep the top portion of the paper to be reimbursed by the government.<sup>23</sup> Below is an example of what a relief receipt from Alabama looked like in 1934:

| Description               | Amount            |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| ½ lb. meal                | .50               |
| 2 boxes oatmeal           | .20               |
| 5 cans milk               | .20               |
| 10 lbs. sweet potatoes    | .30               |
| 4 lbs. dried beans        | .24               |
| 7 oz. 2 cans tomatoes     | .84               |
| 6 lbs. cabbage            | .24               |
| 3 lbs. dried fruit        | .58               |
| 3 lbs. onions             | .18               |
| 6 lbs. lard               | .60               |
| 1 gal. molasses           | .55               |
| 4 lbs. meat               | .44               |
| 1 box salt and 1 box soda | .10 <sup>24</sup> |

For many relief receivers, the food provided by FERA was inadequate for proper nutrition, was very repetitive and monotonous, and was noted to make children irritable, adults unhappy, and cause unhealthy weight loss.<sup>25</sup> Relief rations were unideal for most as they were intended to be temporary aid for a short period of emergency, but as the Depression dragged on, it became a

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<sup>23</sup> Ziegelman and Coe, *A Square Meal*, 174-75.

<sup>24</sup> Relief Order Grocery List, April 7, 1934, Alabama State Archives, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery.

<sup>25</sup> Ziegelman and Coe, *A Square Meal*, 176.

permanent diet for many. Federal relief was provided for two years and ended in 1935 due to FDR having a change of heart, comparing the reliance on federal relief to narcotics, and once again making relief the responsibility of counties and local politicians. With this change came the Works Progress Administration (WPA), one of the most lasting achievements of the New Deal, with its goal to replace food relief handouts with jobs that provided morale and benefitted the country by building, repairing, and improving parks, water lines, roads, schools, bridges, airports, and even works of art. The WPA provided jobs, though they were unstable because employment only lasted for the duration of the project, it only provided jobs to a third of unemployed people, and oftentimes did not pay as much as employees needed, so workers carried the sentiment that “You can’t eat morale.”<sup>26</sup>

The Dust Bowl of the 1930s was a disastrous event that greatly affected food availability due to soil overuse, lack of crop rotation, the influx of new farmers that came to accommodate the high demand for wheat, and environmental changes such as droughts and massive dust storms (Figure 1). There was an added difficulty of poverty in rural areas in the Great Depression, compared to poverty in cities, due to the Dust Bowl, and millions of people migrated out of the affected regions— Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Kansas— to places like California in hopes of finding work on farms and land to purchase. In affected regions, the Red Cross was able to provide food and clothing aid, even creating a seed distribution program where people could get eggplant, turnip, cucumber, carrot, and cabbage seeds to grow at home. Aside from the Dust Bowl and droughts, agriculture between 1929 and 1934 was thriving, so much so that there was an extreme excess of food and crop prices dropped 40 percent, but hardly anyone was able to buy it because consumer’s incomes had diminished

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 230.

significantly.<sup>27</sup> It was no longer profitable to transport goods to markets, as farmers would lose more than they would profit from sales, thus surplus crops were destroyed, cornfields were burned down, and milk was poured down ditches.<sup>28</sup> The U.S. government tried to solve this problem by establishing the Federal Surplus Redistribution Corporation, which would buy surplus crops from farmers to give to needy families for free.

Breadlines presented a small-scale solution to a very big problem, as they gave out free bread to men at night but did not provide a long-term solution to issues such as unemployment, the ruined economy, or lack of a steady source of food. They were initially ran by churches and other nonprofit organizations, but with the sudden mass necessity for food came a wide variety of individuals and groups opening breadlines, including “political clubs, business associations and fraternal orders, debutantes and socialites, newspaper publishers, veterans’ and religious groups, and even the occasional crime boss.”<sup>29</sup> As seen in Figure 2, the notorious gangster, Al Capone, opened a breadline in Chicago for hungry people, which was a surprise to many. They often operated late at night, such as midnight to 1 a.m., which would typically deter people from getting food if they were not desperate and hungry enough to risk humiliation by waiting in line and begging for food at inconvenient hours, making the needs of the poor concerningly public.<sup>30</sup> Single women were not socially accepted in breadlines, as they were not a large sector in society at the time and were much more likely to be fed as a family unit due to their expectations of

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<sup>27</sup> Megan J. Elias, *Food in the United States, 1890-1945*, Food in American History (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2009), 130.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>29</sup> Ziegelman and Coe, *A Square Meal*, 61.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

being a dependent or wife.<sup>31</sup> Soup kitchens gave fully-prepared one-time meals, most often soup, to those in need. Men would often get food through soup kitchens, which gave them far less control of their foodways than women, as women often received aid through groceries due to their close association with the family.<sup>32</sup> Relief groceries were only given to families, and single people were thought to be able to fend for themselves.<sup>33</sup> Women therefore had the flexibility of creating and making a variety of foods from grocery rations, compared to the prepared sandwiches and soups men would often receive.<sup>34</sup>

Foraging was a lesser known but very common way of attaining food outside of the aid, rations, and food distribution depots. Those who lived in cities were able to forage vacant lots and public parks for things like berries, mushrooms, wild onions, violet tops, wild lettuce, dandelion greens, chestnuts, wild thyme, and acorns.<sup>35</sup> If they lived by a body of water, they were sometimes able to catch wild fish to use in chowders and stews. Some people would get desperate enough to eat typically inedible things found while foraging. When interviewed for a PBS documentary, Art King recalled his memory foraging as a child during the Great Depression in Oklahoma City, saying, “I’ve even eaten bark off of tree [sic], and tried grass and leaves when I was a kid.”<sup>36</sup> Others turned to sifting through market and restaurant garbage cans and town dumps for “fresh” garbage containing potentially edible food.<sup>37</sup> Those who were slightly more

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<sup>31</sup> Elias, “Summoning the Food Ghosts,” 27.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Elias, *Food in the United States*, 132.

<sup>34</sup> Elias, “Summoning the Food Ghosts,” 27.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Art King, *The Great Depression Interviews*.

<sup>37</sup> Elias, *Food in the United States*, 133.

fortunate and worked in the food industry were able to smuggle food home to their hungry families, such as fried noodles from Chinese restaurants, leftovers from employer's tables when working in domestics, and students lucky enough to get free school lunches snuck leftovers home for younger siblings.<sup>38</sup>

School teachers, underpaid and at times unpaid, established lunch programs for their students (Figure 3).<sup>39</sup> In an interview, Lenoire County resident, Elsie Trimble, recalled a memory from the Great Depression when active members of the local school's Parent Teacher Association made a small voluntary soup kitchen to help students struggling with a lack of food, alternating each day which two parents would make a nourishing soup containing beef, tomatoes, potatoes, or rice.<sup>40</sup> This soup would be made at home and taken to the school for teachers to decide which children were in need of food. By doing this, many parents had less to worry about, as it was often difficult to have enough food to feed everyone in the family substantially. For many students, school lunch was their only meal of the day, so nutrition in schools was vital for the health of many children. The cafeteria was used for nourishment and education, as it provided an opportunity for children to learn about nutrition.

### **The Spread of Information**

The 1920s were considered the Golden Age of Radio, as it was cheap, accessible, and provided a plethora of entertainment, which became especially important during hard times like those experienced in the Great Depression. Government and commercial radio stations had special homemaking shows covering topics like cooking with leftovers, meat substitutes, general

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Lambert, "Hoover, the Red Cross and Food for the Hungry," 533.

<sup>40</sup> Elsie Trimble, The Great Depression Interviews.

cooking advice, and tips to save money on food. Radio prospered in the early Depression years while other media suffered due to consumers preferring the intimacy of radio, and for more than two years it maintained a ban against any mention of product prices, but that ban was eventually dropped by network executives and emphasis on economy and price became commonplace.<sup>41</sup> Companies created characters to host cooking shows, such as General Mill's Betty Crocker, whose show ran twice a week and was featured on over forty stations across the nation. Aunt Sammy, the fictional radio character and supposed wife of Uncle Sam, created by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, broadcasted simple economical recipes to millions using ingredients found in government rations. Aunt Sammy's broadcasts were very popular due to the entertainment factor and high demand for recipes that used readily available and inexpensive ingredients, as seen in the following recipe ingredient list from the book, *Aunt Sammy's Radio*

*Recipes:*

Vegetable Curry

½ cup rice.

1 cup diced onion.

1 cup diced carrots.

1 cup diced celery.

1 cup fresh or canned peas.<sup>42</sup>

4 tablespoons butter or other fat.

½ teaspoon salt.

¼ teaspoon curry powder.

2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce.

Processed-food companies like Proctor & Gamble sponsored radio cooking shows through advertisements, and sometimes had their own cooking shows to demonstrate how products like Crisco were used. Women were often the hosts of radio recipe broadcasts due to their experience as homemakers, so even mothers, like the cook Jessie Young, would broadcast from their home

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<sup>41</sup> Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 288.

<sup>42</sup> US Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics, *Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes*, 1927.

kitchen with children wandering in and out, making radio recipes a more intimate, relatable, and personal way of spreading cooking advice than cook books or pamphlets.

Cookbooks began introducing the concept of cost-efficiency during World War I, such as in Mary Green's bestselling 1917 cookbook, *Better Meals for Less Money*, and this shows how wartime circumstances paved the way for people to cope with the lack of food availability during the Great Depression. Cookbooks became a popular way for corporations to advertise their products by providing recipes as supposed cures for illnesses.<sup>43</sup> These corporate cookbooks often targeted middle-class cooks with disposable incomes to purchase manufactured and packaged goods.<sup>44</sup> Many cookbooks were published with the focus on budget-friendly, inexpensive meals for the family, and could be purchased on their own or could be distributed through government programs in the form of pamphlets.

Newspapers printed budget menus to show homemakers that it was possible to feed the family on twelve dollars a week, featuring new budgets published every few weeks with funds that got increasingly smaller. Advertisements in all media became focused on the appeal to economy, though newspapers used many tropes and stereotypes to appeal to the emotions of consumers, such as the desire to live the lavish life of the wealthy, the dread of seeing their child do bad in school or look frail because parents were not using a specific product, humor to make light of their bad situation, or appeals to success, courage, hope, passion, frustration, and inspiration.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Megan J. Elias, *Food on the Page: Cookbooks and American Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 44.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 292-325.

The Great Depression brought a sense of community to those who suffered, as it was much more efficient for a large group to pool together resources and help each other through such difficult times. Women gathered in discussion groups and clubs to share information with each other on how to produce more food at home, how to tend to gardens and farms, and how to can and preserve crops for the winter. Differences between neighbors did not matter as much as they did previously, as they were united in their similarities. “Despite different religions and nationalities, we all, we were all Detroiters, and we had the same problems,” said Shelton Tappes, who lived in Detroit, MI during the Depression.<sup>46</sup> Impoverished families banded together to make large pots of soup to share with each other, and even shared other resources that were difficult for poverty-stricken families to acquire, such as clothing. “I can remember a couple of years there when my, my family was unable to buy me a pair of shoes. But I had shoes, because the neighbors' sons had outgrown theirs,” recalled Tappes.<sup>47</sup> Oftentimes, if a family had leftover food from their meal, they would share with their neighbors or nearby workers, as they knew not everyone would be fortunate enough to have a full meal every day, and small acts of kindness went a long way in fulfilling basic needs of their community.

### **What Was Made and How**

“We really never, never threw anything away. You think you know about recycling? We invented it. We had to. We were desperate,” said Clara Cannucciari, a woman who lived during the Depression and reflected on her experience in her book, *Clara's Kitchen: Wisdom, Memories, and Recipes from the Great Depression*, and hosted a YouTube cooking show, *Great Depression*

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<sup>46</sup> Shelton Tappes, *The Great Depression Interviews*.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

Cooking, in which she recreated recipes she enjoyed as a child during the Great Depression.<sup>48</sup> She shared how to make a variety of dishes such as baked apples, dandelion salad, egg drop soup, Italian ice, fried mushrooms, pasta with peas, and lentils with rice. Her experience is important for educating people today on what meal preparation looked like, what foods were available, budget-friendly, and popular during the Depression. Other popular dishes at the time included prune pudding, chili, macaroni and cheese, hot dogs, Spanish rice, and mashed potatoes.

Although economic, low-cost-oriented cookbooks and recipes were commonly produced during the Great Depression, there was more interest in the exciting and luxurious recipes for special occasions that broke the monotony of their everyday meals.<sup>49</sup> “People had never been so eager to enjoy vicarious experiences of the life of the wealthy,” and they expressed strong interest in trying to emulate what they could not afford because it provided an escape from daily life.<sup>50</sup> The monotony of eating the same or similar meals for years caused frustration, as many could rarely afford different ingredients required to make more extravagant meals. This was a very common sentiment amongst the middle and lower classes, and even inspired Pete Seeger’s popular folk song, “Beans, Bacon & Gravy,” which expressed frustration about the dietary circumstances of the time, singing “Beans, bacon, and gravy/They almost drive me crazy.”<sup>51</sup>

The public was typically advised against eating significant amounts of meat due to its high cost, and home economists during the Depression said it was, "in fact, the most costly food

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<sup>48</sup> Clara Cannucciari and Christopher Cannucciari. *Clara's Kitchen: Wisdom, Memories, and Recipes from the Great Depression* (New York City: St. Martin's Press, 2009), cover.

<sup>49</sup> Zanger, *The American History Cookbook*, 391.

<sup>50</sup> Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 292.

<sup>51</sup> Zanger, *The American History Cookbook*, 391.

item in most homes, and so it is the one needing the greatest care in buying," and instead recommended buying less expensive cuts of meat or cutting it out altogether.<sup>52</sup> Some families resorted to hunting wild game, but cookbooks often did not include exotic meats as they assumed consumers would purchase meat from butchers or grocers since grocery stores were gaining popularity.<sup>53</sup> Vegetarianism gained popularity due to meat being in short supply, and increasingly more "meat-less" recipes appeared featuring substitutes for meat, such as a "Boston Roast" consisting of mashed kidney beans rolled up with cheese or curried bananas and rice.<sup>54</sup> Seafood gained popularity because of its high protein, mineral, and vitamin content in combination with its easy preparation and inexpensive price when bought smoked, packaged, canned, jarred, or frozen.<sup>55</sup> Due to better transportation methods and improved packaging processes, those who lived inland still had access to a variety of seafood products such as shrimp, oyster, salmon, mackerel, tuna, and halibut.<sup>56</sup> Tuna was initially seen as a questionable ingredient, but due to clever advertising marketing it as "mock chicken," the stigma deteriorated and it became a popular staple in salads, chowders, and casseroles.<sup>57</sup> Milk and dairy products were suggested in diets for all age ranges because of the nutritional value it provided, with nutritionists at the U.S. Bureau of Home Economics even recommending struggling families to make milk a priority because of the essential nutrients it contains. Vegetables were a big staple

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<sup>52</sup> Lita Bane, "Seesaw Budgets: How to Spend and to Save While We Recover from Depression," *Ladies' Home Journal* 49, no. 2 (Winter 1932): 84.

<sup>53</sup> Elias, *Food in the United States*, 16.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 115-16.

<sup>55</sup> Lettie Gay, "Fish for Better Nourishment," *Parents' Magazine* 11, no. 9 (Sep 1936): 46.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>57</sup> Michael D. Wise and Jennifer J. Wallach, eds., *The Routledge History of American Foodways*, Routledge Histories (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2016), 156.

during the Depression due to their accessibility and low-cost qualities. Potatoes specifically were featured in many recipes for containing a sufficient source of iron, vitamins, and calories for such an inexpensive vegetable that could be bought in bulk and stored for long periods of time.<sup>58</sup>

The popularity of certain dishes rose to account for the new dietary circumstances, the most common of which were soups, stews, loaves, and casseroles because they were affordable, could feed many people, were easy to experiment with, saved on fuel costs, and needed little clean-up. Many who lived during the Great Depression recount memories of eating soup every day, such as Frank Tracey Jr., who said, “Our basic food was a lot of soups, I recall, because that was the cheapest way to go.”<sup>59</sup> Soup was an easy way for home cooks to create filling meals to feed many people from scrap foods, leftovers, and less desirable ingredients, which ultimately helped to save on food costs. Soup was known for being an easily shareable food, as many people could contribute their own small supply of ingredients to compile into a large pot for a whole group or small community to share. “For tastiness at low cost we need ingenuity. To some extent, it will be a matter of making things taste like what they are not. And for the rest it means compromising,” advised a 1932 women’s home economics magazine.<sup>60</sup> Despite the limited ingredients, ingenuity was flourishing as the desperate conditions required people to be creative with their meals as to not become too repetitive and dull. This allowed more flexibility with what was available and caused many to concoct unique takes on foods they had enjoyed prior to the Depression.

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<sup>58</sup> Bane, "Seesaw Budgets," 84.

<sup>59</sup> Jerry Gawura, Frank Tracey, and Jr., Elsie Trimble, *The Great Depression Interviews*.

<sup>60</sup> Bane, "Seesaw Budgets," 84.

The desperate times of the Great Depression occasionally required unique, interesting, and unconventional inventions, such as the gruel-like substance Milkorno, which was made to alleviate the hunger problem by being an affordable and incredibly nutritious nonperishable dietary staple. Invented in 1933 by Cornell nutritionists, it consisted of powdered skim milk, corn meal, and salt, intending to “help needy families stretch budgets without sacrificing nourishment,” and was suggested to be used in recipes to stretch out ingredients like ground meat, mixed into meatloaf, or act as a soup base.<sup>61</sup> During Cornell’s annual “Farm and Home” week in 1933, Milkorno was served to Eleanor Roosevelt and later that year served at the White House to publicize it as a helpful ingredient for hungry families. Cornell then created a line of Milk-o products, including Milkwheato and Milkoato, and made the Milk-o products available for public use.<sup>62</sup> The Federal Surplus Products Corporation bought twenty-five million pounds of Milkwheato to be used in federal emergency relief supplies, as it was used as a flour substitute while providing a milk substitute for families that could not afford dairy products.<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately, these products became associated with hardship and shame as opposed to modernity and nutrition, making the people who needed it turn away out of humiliation.

The importance of having adequately diverse food for different cultures was becoming a problem amongst groups whose cuisine deviated from the typical American diet. Many did not know how to cook with certain foods they received in rations because they were uncommon in their culture.<sup>64</sup> For example, the nutritionists in control of relief programs were often working

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<sup>61</sup> Elias, *Food in the United States*, 135.

<sup>62</sup> Megan J. Elias, *Stir It Up: Home Economics in American Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 88.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-89.

<sup>64</sup> Elias, “Summoning the Food Ghosts,” 26.

against the traditional food cultures of most Americans by including items like canned tomatoes, as many Americans were unfamiliar with them and could not find a purpose or recipe for them.<sup>65</sup> Some cultural groups had an advantage by having prior experience and knowledge of how to stretch food from their culture and had recipes passed down through generations to help with their circumstances. Sicilians, being from a poorer region of Italy, managed far better during the Great Depression in comparison to other Italians who did not have the same experience of hardship, and knew how to cook with ingredients like canned tomatoes that other cultures struggled to use.<sup>66</sup>

African Americans were seen to have essentially no change in their diet, as they had been experiencing high unemployment and difficult times as early as 1926.<sup>67</sup> Those who had dietary restrictions were able to receive relief in a different form that consisted of city and state agencies providing food tickets that could be redeemed in markets, which made times of food insecurity more manageable for those with unique diets, such as those who had kosher requirements.<sup>68</sup> While some cultures suffered greatly because they had not experienced such adversity before, others used their previous hardships as leverage during such hard times.

Many people were used to living with minimal goods by the time of the Great Depression because of their experience with conservation and rationing in WWI. They had learned techniques, recipes, and cost-saving methods that would become important pieces of knowledge during the Great Depression. The victory gardens that were popular to conserve resources for

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>67</sup> Sarah Muirhead, "Dust Bowl Shaped Today's Food: Current Food Policies and Trends Trace Their Roots to the Great Depression," *Feedstuffs* 83, no. 23 (Summer 2011): 9.

<sup>68</sup> Elias, "Summoning the Food Ghosts," 25.

soldiers had a reappearance in importance, as gardening became more commonplace for providing a source of cheap and healthy food. Vegetables like potatoes, tomatoes, peas, kale, turnip, carrot, cabbage, cucumber, eggplant were versatile and could be preserved through wintertime by being canned or jarred. The restrictive dietary experience of WWI was one of patriotism, but during the Great Depression, it was one of survival.

After experiencing extreme restrictions on purchases during World War I's conservation efforts, consumerism was booming for those who could afford it, typically those in upper-middle and upper classes. The commercialization of food also became more popular during the Depression because the New Deal's improved infrastructure brought more accessible electricity, ovens, stovetops, and refrigerators to rural areas that had previously relied on canning, pickling, and seasonal harvests. The Rural Electrification Act (REA) of 1936 introduced rural farm areas into larger food systems by introducing them to the wonders of electricity, allowing them a wider variety of meal options and opening them up to more commercialized products and recipes that were not available before, like frozen vegetables, meat, seafood, desserts, and ready-made meals. Icebox cakes—comprised of layers of cake and whipped cream and left in the freezer for hours to set—was unheard of before, but with the introduction of freezers and refrigerators, cookbooks regularly featured icebox cakes and eventually they became mainstream in the middle-class.<sup>69</sup> Other foods, like those produced by the Birds Eye frozen food brand, became more popular with the growing use of freezers, but remained primarily for more affluent families due to the new expensive technology it required.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Elias, *Food on the Page*, 50.

<sup>70</sup> Ziegelman and Coe, *A Square Meal*, 266.

With commercialization came the popularization of packaged foods, preferred for their convenience, time-saving capabilities, novelty, appearance, flavor, and even health and vitamin appeals.<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile, meals made from scratch using big bags of flour, sugar, and other raw ingredients were unfavorable to those who could afford otherwise. At times, commercialization took a more sinister turn by taking advantage of vulnerable groups in favor of money and greed. Popular brands at the time, including Gerber, Sunshine Biscuits, and Cream of Wheat used scare tactics to try to get mothers to purchase their products. They claimed mothers at home would not be able to replicate the sterilized and scientific processes used in commercialization.<sup>72</sup> Brands appealed to the emotions of mothers, insisting babies would be liable to become ill if mothers did not use their product.

### **Impact of Women as Home Economists & Homemakers**

For a long time, women were an untapped market in terms of advertising and business, as they were typically not the head of household and assumed to not have an impact on the family's consumption habits, despite being able to influence their husbands to make big purchases for commodities like appliances.<sup>73</sup> Christine Frederick, a notable home economist, wrote the 1929 book, *Selling Mrs. Consumer*, which points out the valuable assets that utilizing the women's market could have, though it was often ignored by companies. Commercialization offered women employment opportunities in the canning industry, making women not only the consumers, but the producers, too.<sup>74</sup> Women were able to transition their knowledge and

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>72</sup> Amy B. Werbel, "The Foley Food Mill," in *American Artifacts: Essays in Material Culture*, edited by Jules D. Prown and Kenneth Haltman, 228-241 (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2000), 234.

<sup>73</sup> Ziegelman and Coe, *A Square Meal*, 50.

<sup>74</sup> Wise and Wallach, *Routledge History*, 346.

experience from the home into the workplace. Women who took on jobs as home economists often had degrees in food science or dietetics, equipment testing, or institutional management, and this credibility added value to products by being professionally tested.<sup>75</sup> Professionally testing foods involved using accurate measurements, cooking times, and temperatures to guarantee products came out as they were intended, making customers more likely to repurchase products, which gave home economists a vital role in companies.<sup>76</sup> Home economists had many roles, including making meal budgets, teaching classes to adults, distributing and creating pamphlets on conserving resources, making lunch for students, helping families plant gardens, and instructing groups on how to repurpose clothes and make new clothing from feed sacks.<sup>77</sup>

Home economists began working with New York State administrators of the government agency Temporary Emergency Administration (TERA) by educating the public about relief nutrition, emergency food budgets, and by sponsoring gardens and canning centers to promote a healthy diet.<sup>78</sup> Utility companies and corporations such as General Electric and Westinghouse also hired home economists to educate the public by making home visits to customers, demonstrating how to use new electric appliances, and running classes on electric cooking.<sup>79</sup> Columnists and nutritionists took on the challenge of mastering new skills and acquiring the talent of making a satisfying, nutritious meal out of hardly anything. Electricity and commercialized products were infiltrating the kitchen, and the public needed help incorporating

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<sup>75</sup> Carolyn Goldstein, *Creating Consumers: Home Economists in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 159.

<sup>76</sup> Ziegelman and Coe, *A Square Meal*, 265.

<sup>77</sup> Elias, *Stir It Up*, 90-91.

<sup>78</sup> Sarah Stage and Virginia B. Vincenti, eds., *Rethinking Home Economics: Women and the History of a Profession* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 325.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

these new inventions into their daily life. Manufacturers even sought out advice from home economists on the design and marketing of appliances, as they had valuable hands-on experience with the consumers, took a scientific and feminine approach, and provided expert advice.<sup>80</sup>

“Allied with the national media, the federal government, and food conglomerates, home economists were uniquely positioned to dictate where American food was heading.”<sup>81</sup>

Soon enough, these home economists were seen as authority figures to the public due to their vast knowledge and mediation between consumers and corporations, so much so that commercial products and packaged goods like Jello-O and canned soup casseroles were favored over regional dishes like southern fried catfish. Through radio broadcasts, home economists could easily spread their knowledge to the public, broadening their influence and authority. Home economists were also vital for causing the public to rethink how they viewed cooking: it was not simply about making meals for sustenance, but a way of exerting control over their own lives when the Depression took so much of that control away from them.<sup>82</sup>

Women had commonly been associated with cooking and the kitchen through preserving summer vegetables and fruit for the winter, but began to take more control in the kitchen due to commercialized products eliminating men’s previous food preparation roles, such as butchering livestock.<sup>83</sup> Instead, pre-packaged meat was bought from stores, distancing men from the kitchen. In many ways, women were like mothers of the household to both children and husbands, and the image of a helpless husband was often depicted in women’s popular literature

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ziegelman and Coe, *A Square Meal*, 267.

<sup>82</sup> Elias, *Stir It Up*, 87.

<sup>83</sup> Wise and Wallach, *Routledge History*, 346.

of the 1930s, such as the *Ladies' Home Journal*, in which men were seen to be incapable of cooking and cleaning. At the same time, men purposely distanced themselves from housework to avoid responsibility:

Even men wanted to believe themselves incapable of this type of work, as evidenced in a 1937 guide for bachelors entitled 'How to Live Without a Woman,' in which [the author's] ... ultimate suggestion is to invite a woman for dinner and ask her to do the food preparation, or else to rely on the good graces of married women feeling sorry for unmarried men. This image of a woman feeling sorry for a man who must do his own domestic work, along with the image of the helpless husband, shows that the nurturing required by a child was no less expected by adult males.<sup>84</sup>

This domestic dichotomy demonstrated the amount of responsibility placed on women during the Great Depression, as they not only had to do the housework, childcare, and cooking for their children, but also for their incompetent husbands. In many cases, women had to take on these roles with no husband in the picture and parent their children as a single mother. Stereotypical male "breadwinners" were no longer able to win bread, and many men dealt with this in unhealthy ways, such as abandoning their families because of the extreme shame and failure they felt.<sup>85</sup> Women took on authority in their home kitchens by maintaining the household duties with or without a husband, as many women who were bread makers were also forced to become breadwinners. Women were "almost always primary caregivers in their cultures; as nurses, as wives and, especially, as mothers," and they were not only prepared to nurture through "childbearing and nursing, but also in many cultures by the weighty forces of socialization and cultural expectations."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Werbel, "The Foley Food Mill," 239.

<sup>85</sup> Wise and Wallach, *Routledge History*, 347.

<sup>86</sup> Werbel, "The Foley Food Mill," 231.

In an attempt to bring men back into the kitchen, many of the REA's promotional material included farm men in aprons participating in meal preparation, with the message "that cooking with electricity was so easy that even a man could do it."<sup>87</sup> Some men were successful in authoritative homemaker roles, such as "The Mystery Chef," John Macpherson, who retained an anonymous persona broadcasting his recipes on the radio, as there was such a strong stigma against men cooking. Macpherson's mother was embarrassed that her son had made a hobby of cooking, even more so because he made a job out of it.<sup>88</sup> The gender roles were clearly defined and very difficult to bend, but many men and women were willing to suffer the consequences in favor of progression.

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<sup>87</sup> US Department of Agriculture, Rural Electrification Administration, *Rural Electrification News* 4, no. 12 (August 1939): cover.

<sup>88</sup> Zanger, *The American History Cookbook*, 388.

## Conclusion

The Great Depression has shown that diet is exceedingly complex and interconnected to outside factors, and the necessary cooking trends of the time show similarities to the voluntary cooking trends of today, such as aims to stretch the dollar, cheap pasta dishes, canning programs, “grow-your-own-food” movements, and food relief efforts.<sup>89</sup> The Great Depression sparked an awareness of nutrition in the United States that was unknown before, and caused people to care about what foods they were putting into their bodies. The female pioneers of the food culture in the Great Depression changed how people ate back then and influenced how we still eat today.

Today, home economists are still seen as authority figures, but they are thought of as nutritionists, interior designers, family psychologists, and textile chemists, encapsulating many more roles and proficiencies than they held in the Great Depression.<sup>90</sup> Even today, however, women are still involuntarily placed in the domestic sphere, and the “message remains that housework is women’s work and advertising continues to insist that a woman’s social status depends on her ability to keep her house smelling like apple pie or ocean breezes rather than dogs, cigar, and sweat—the male world.”<sup>91</sup> The helpless husband of the 1930s still consumes gender roles today. Male involvement in domestic work is looked down upon, as it is implied that men have far more important things to do with their time than distract themselves with domestic duties and it is their wife’s responsibility to figure it out for them. When men do appear publicly participating in domestic roles, they are often portrayed as being better than women. On cooking shows, men are typically professional chefs, while women are considered to “just” be

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<sup>89</sup> Muirhead, “Dust Bowl Shaped Today’s Food,” 9.

<sup>90</sup> Elias, *Stir It Up*, 173.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 176.

cooks. The gender-segregated spheres of domesticity and cooking culture still remain today, though in a much less socially engrained system. What was considered a liberating occupation in the Great Depression because of its nearly undisputed authority, a home economist, is now seen to be an example of the gender-based limitations women experience.

Despite the positive changes and influence women had on nutrition during the Great Depression as homemakers and home economists, diet has shifted drastically, and we have access to many things Americans back then could have never foreseen, like omnipresent fast food franchises and mass produced unhealthy foods despite our increased awareness of nutrition. Unhealthy fast-food and packaged goods have become mainstream and 42.4 percent of American adults are obese, yet diet fads have become a normal part of the discussion on food and nutrition specifics are constantly debated.<sup>92</sup> Food related issues are rampant even today and food availability is still a problem, with food insecurity still affecting 11.1 percent of Americans.<sup>93</sup>

Today, there are still government safety nets for those suffering with food insecurity, though the impoverished are still disadvantaged through circumstances like the federal government's decision to have tighter restrictions for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps. This decision by the Trump administration affects incredibly vulnerable people who need help the most, similar to the difficulties people went through to get federal aid during the Depression. We, as scholars, must analyze the trends of the past in regards to how women impacted the cooking culture of the Great Depression, see how

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<sup>92</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Prevalence of Obesity and Severe Obesity Among Adults: United States, 2017–2018," *National Center for Health Statistics Data Brief*, no. 360 (February, 2020): 1.

<sup>93</sup> US Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, US Census Bureau, *2018 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement*. 2018.

these trends impacted our present food conditions, use this knowledge to predict the food trends of the future, and learn from past experiences.

## Images



Figure 1. Chas. P. Williams, *Rolla Kansas*, 1935. Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library & Museum, The Great Depression Series, Hyde Park, NY, <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/archives/collections/franklin/index.php?p=digitalibrary/digitalcontent&id=3054>.



Figure 2. *Unemployed Men Queued Outside a Depression Soup Kitchen Opened in Chicago by Al Capone*, 1931. National Archives, College Park, MD, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/541927>.



Figure 3. Russell Lee, *Kindergarten Children Eating Lunch. Lake Dick Project, Arkansas, 1938.* Library of Congress, Farm Security Administration/Office of War Information Photograph Collection, Washington, DC, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8b20593/>.

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