



Social life is centered around the kitchen table for the Grimes family who have compiled a cookbook of family favorites. Whenever they gather they eat, cook, and reminisce about the stories each family favorite entails. From left: Caroline Grimes, Mary Fittering, Alice Ann Dinger, Joyce Kinch, BLucille Melster, and Bonnie Grimes.

Family Publishes Cookbook

Everything Happens Around The Kitchen Table

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COCALICO (Lancaster Co.) —
"If you didn't know how to cook when you married into this family, you learned," said Caroline Grimes, Ephrata.

She and other family members refer to themselves as "the bloods" and "the non-bloods."

The "bloods" are those who were born into the Grimes family and the non-bloods are those who married into the Grimes family, who are the offspring from a clan of 10 children in the county's town of Denver. Only two of the original clan are still living and they are in their 80s. But the knack for creating great-tasting food has been passed down to the younger generations.

"Everything in our family happens around the kitchen table. Whenever we get together, we eat. Social life is centered about the kitchen table," Caroline said.

With that perspective, it is not surprising that the Grimes family has hundreds of recipes. What is unusual is that family has recently

published a cookbook.

They intended only to sell it to their own family, but as word spread, the cookbook sparked the interest of non-family members and 500 copies were ordered, most of which are now sold, and a reprinting is ordered.

The approximately 100-page cookbook includes recipes reflecting the hearty fare of German ancestry and also those of the younger generation who incorporate traditional ingredients with a lighter touch.

"The underlying feature of all the recipes is that good meals begin with the best ingredients, a generous measure of time, and a general enjoyment in cooking," said Lyn Grimes Schlegel.

Compiling the cookbook has been an exciting time as extending family members worked together with typing, proofing, illustrating, and many behind-the-scenes duties. The stories that accompany many of the recipes have brought much laughter and reminiscing.

At one time, four sisters and their families lived in Denver. They didn't prepare their meals individually, but cooked and ate together every night as families. Alice Ann Dinger, is the daughter of one of those sisters. She recalled that the kitchen table was not large enough to serve everyone at the same time. So the men and children were served first, and when they were finished, the women sat down to eat.

The sisters had such a reputation for good food that people often dropped by over mealtime, knowing that they would be well fed. Even the mailman planned his route so that he could stop by the Grimes home for lunch.

The kitchen, called the cookery, in the old homestead house was

extremely small and had only one tiny window. Those were the days before air conditioning. The sisters devised their own formula for cooling off. They hung their dresses on a hook by the kitchen door and cooked in their slips with aprons on top.

Every Sunday the family gathered for another homecooked meal. When the dishes were done, more camaraderie took place around the kitchen table as the afternoons were spent playing "Hoss 'n Pepper."

"What is surprising to many people is that every one of the sisters had full-time jobs."

The sisters had jobs such as school teaching, secretarial work and factory work, but they all hurried home during the lunch hour to prepare the evening meal.

They had survived the Depression Era. They had been taught, that you work for a living and you work hard.

One of their grandmother's favorite sayings was, "It isn't what you want to do, it's what you have to do."

Each Grimes family also had large gardens and canned jars of summer produce for winter enjoyment and — they cleaned.

"There is clean then there is Denver clean," said offspring Joyce Kinch, who now lives in California and was recently home for a visit.

"Denver clean," is said with obvious pride. For as extended family members scattered to other parts of the country, they discovered that not every one scrubbed their porches and windows the way they had been taught.

They were also taught that character is the most important thing in life. There was right and wrong — you did not lie, steal or cheat.

Through the years, the Grimes family has spread into 14 states but every August, they hold Reunion Sunday — it is actually a week-long celebration as out-of-state family members travel home and hold such events as the Grimes' Family Golf Outing. Of course, every occasion finds plenty of time for eating and sharing stories.

Reunion Day is held at Alice's nine-acre farm, a lovely place on the outskirts of Cocalico.

As tradition dictated, each person brought the dish that was her specialty. For the sisters had an unwritten rule that whatever one made best was hers and the others didn't make it.

The problem with that, Alice Ann recalled, was that as the older generation's health began to decline, the family realized that many of their favorite recipes would be lost.

What would life be like without Aunt Katie's Banana Cake?

The recipe had never been written down and exact measurements had not been developed.

Through trial and error, exact measurements were determined and instructions were written down for many of the family's favorite dishes.

"Some of the original desserts were loaded with sugar, and we have adapted them over the years to use less sugar," said Alice.

As family members scampered to compile recipes and as the youn-

ger generation developed their own favorites, the family decided to publish a cookbook.

The Grimes' family actually published their first cookbook in 1985. But there were unintentional deletions. Family members would ask, "Where is the stuffed cabbage recipe? So the recently published cookbook includes all the former recipes and many of new ones from family members who now live in 15 states.

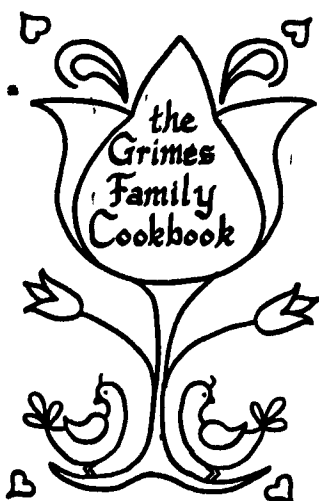
Proceeds from the sales are put into a scholarship fund given in memory of Aunt Helen (one of the original 10 children) who was a school teacher for 47 years and known throughout Denver as Auntie. This past year and in succeeding years, the scholarship goes to a Cocalico High School senior who is pursuing a degree in elementary education.

For a copy of the cookbook, send \$6.75 to A. Lucille Meissner, 2937 Kings Lane, Lancaster, PA 17601 or call (717) 898-2723.

While all the Grimes tribe is considered good cooks, they point with pride to one of the younger generation who is a professional chef in San Francisco. Another one is attending Johnson and Wales Culinary School on a full scholarship earned from a cooking contest.

But it is Alice Ann who is upheld as "The Cook" in the family. It is at her home that family

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