FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Cooking

Smokehouse Ham Spoon Bread & Scuppernong Wine: The Folklore and Art of Appalachian Cooking

Joseph E. Dabney
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Displaying the masterful skills of a seasoned newspaperman, Dabney succeeds where so many books have failed. With *Smokehouse Ham, Spoon Bread & Scuppernong Wine*, he perfectly executes the cookbook—plus genre—the mostly feeble attempt by other writers to capture a region's spirituality, ethnicity, lifestyle, folklore, and food, in a logical, readable manner.

The memories recollected in this marvel come from hundreds of sources and interviews, encompassing nearly 300 years, and they are enviable memories; familiar enough for anyone of Anglo stock, though tall and awesome as if told 'round a campfire. "Stories you never heard the like, and a lot of 'em true," said Ernest Parker of Gilmer County, GA.

Every page introduces a Berbie, Iva, Patience, Tamer, Celestine, Ludlow, Moses, Simmie or Horace, offering vintages of their lives where seemingly every mountain home had an icy pure spring, smokehouse, still, and of course, the posse of barefoot children scampering about with the pigs and chickens. This is an Appalachia where Mother Gates canned 98 squirrels one day, and fresh eggs were stored in beehives to keep them from freezing.

Of special interest is the proper due and appreciation shown to the native Cherokees for sharing their farming, hunting and even cooking skills with the new Americans. A doomed kinship lasting only until the Indian Wars and subsequent land squeeze which led to the one way ticket to Oklahoma via the "Trail of Tears."

The book contains 61 chapters and more than 200 recipes; including fascinating detail on growing seasons, gardening and preservation, so much of which was dependent upon phases of the moon and powers of intuition. What are Scuppernongs? Amber, bronze muscadine grapes which grew in tangles throughout the mountains.

Surely the recipes for possum and sweet potatoes or whistle pig pie (groundhog) won't be attempted by everyone, although I was mesmerized by fruit butters, cornpones, berry pies and

such. Dabney's effort is a first rate history lesson mystically reworked to appeal to all the senses. While these may have been simpler times, the lives portrayed are steeped in richness and complexity. A prayer from the Hemlock Inn, Bryson City, NC may best showcase the peerless charm of these chosen people:

Our plates are full
Our friends are near
Our hearts are warm
Our thanks sincere. Amen.

Seth McEvoy