

# 4-HER'S HAVE A TASTE OF THE PAST

By Gail McKinnell

Knowing the past, helps us to understand and appreciate the present. An oft spoken colloquialism that is seldom experienced.

However this spring Niagara 4-Her's are discovering their roots, as the spring lifeskill project focuses on Ontario's heritage.

After spending the morning cooking lunch over a hot woodstove, on a mild Saturday in February, the Caistorville Centurians unanimously declared, "We're glad we live nowadays!"

In order to experience the 'good old days', club leader Lynn Williams was up early stoking the woodstove. A job hard to imagine in these days of push buttons microwaves and computers.

Just to add to the authentic atmosphere in the kitchen the members and leaders wore old-fashioned costumes. The group enjoyed the foods prepared from traditional recipes, but found the hearty fare more filling than their normal lunch time diets.

Under the guidance of leaders Mary Moffat and Lynn Williams, the members made beef stew, scones, mulled apple cider, rice pudding and date squares.

Lynn Williams' 'country kitchen', complete with woodstove, made the cooking lesson very realistic. The girls soon understood why pioneers built a summer kitchen where the cooking could be done during hot weather with the arrival of the stoves.

In Ontario the first stoves were manufactured in Long Point in the 1830's by Joseph Van Nostral. The stove made cooking much simpler. The heat could be better controlled, the pot had more support and could be more easily moved. By the 1840's, stoves were common, and as a result cooking became more standardized.

Great Britain and the United States influenced the early cooking traditions of the settlers in Ontario. Many of these settlers had originally come from Europe or had arrived from the United States as United Empire Loyalists. The foods eaten were hearty and rich. Salt and pepper were the basic spices.

Early cookbooks were composed for women who were experienced cooks. Often the ingredients were listed with no preparation instructions. Take this recipe for ice cream for example. Mix the juices of the fruits

with as much sugar as will be wanted before you add cream which should be of a middling richness". And we think metric measures are confusing.

Other 'hand-on' activities club members explored during the project were the art of rug braiding and hand dipped candlemaking.

The only artificial light in the early settlers' homes were provided by fireplace, pine knots used as torches or grease lamps. Candles were rare and had to be purchased. Fats available to the settlers would not be used for candlemaking.

Pork lard was kept for use in the frypan. Beef fats were used in the soap making process and for wagon wheel grease. Mutton fat, although suitable for candlemaking, was prepared by settlers for greasing leather shoes and clothing.

Later candles were made by dipping, pouring, or molding. Candle dipping was the easiest way to make candles.

The first meeting of the Caistorville Centurians was a field trip to Caistorville United Church cemetery. Doris Dennis, president of the Lincoln District W.I., explained the local history in the Tweedsmuir Book compiled by members of the Women's Institute.

Later this month the club will participate in the Heritage Day (April 27) at the Erland Lee Home in Stoney Creek.

During this project members learned 'heritage' is what has been handed down to them from other generations. It's who we are, where our family came from, stories about family members, family treasures passed from one generation to the next, and costumes that are part of our celebrations.



COOKING THE OL' FASHIONED WAY - Caistorville Centurians gather around the woodstove in club leader Lynn Williams' kitchen, after they spent a hot morning cooking lunch. Club members in costume for the occasion, are from left to right, Wendy Beaty, Leanne Beaty (youth leader), Dawn Young, Mary Moffat (leader), Alyson Ecker, Lynn Williams (leader), and Anna Fischer. The ol' fashioned cooking lesson was part of this spring's 4-H club project 'Our Heritage'.

And they found out learning your roots can be fun too!

The following recipes were made and sampled by the Caistorville Centurians at their cooking meeting in March. All recipes received a stamp of approval following a taste testing by the members, leaders, and myself.

## SCONES

500 ml flour  
25 ml sugar  
25 ml baking powder  
1 ml salt  
50 ml butter  
125 ml milk

Bake in preheated oven 400 degrees F. for 15 minutes. Add 1/2 cup apple cider or 1.36 litre can

Mix flour, sugar, baking powder and salt together in mixing bowl using a fork. Cut butter into flour mixture using the pastry blender. Measure the milk into liquid measure. Break the egg into milk. Beat well with a fork. Stir milk and egg mixture into flour mixture, lightly mixing to make a soft dough. Turn dough into floured surface. Knead twice. Roll dough into a circle, about 2 cm thick. Cut dough into 8 triangles. Place scones on lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake in preheated oven 10-15 min. or until light brown.

apple juice  
5 ml whole allspice  
5 ml whole cloves  
2 sticks cinnamon  
Optional Garnish: unpeeled apple rings or unpeeled apple slices

Pour apple cider or apple juice into a large saucepan. Place spices in a piece of cheesecloth and tie with clean string. Add spice bag to saucepan. Simmer covered for 20 - 25 min. Remove spice bag. Ladle into heat proof mugs. Add apple rings or slices for garnish if desired. Serve hot. To keep apple rings or slices from turning brown, dip pieces in lemon juice immediately.

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