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From your editor, Kit Zinser.

Sue Freeberg was kind enough to send a note about the Illinois Humanities Council's traveling exhibition program. Through a partnership with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., the Council is bringing: "Key Ingredients: America By Food" and "Between Fences" through June 30, 2006. Key Ingredients looks at the rich regional food traditions found across the United States and investigates the way cultures, ethnicities and classes have helped shape American food traditions and examines the effect technology has had on America's kitchens.

Dates and locations for Key Ingredients:

September 30 - November 11: Marshall Public Library, Marshall, IL.

January 6th - February 17: Chillicothe Historical Society, Chillicothe IL.

Between Fences is a cultural history of fences and land use and examines how neighbors and nations divide, protect and define themselves through the boundaries they build. This display allows audiences to investigate early settlement patterns, town architecture, contemporary and historical immigration.

Those dates and locations are:

September 17- October 28: Oakland Historical Foundation, Oakland, IL.

November 4 - December 16: Macktown Living History Ed Center, Rockton, IL.

Either or both of those might be a great little fall trip.

It seems as if many friends and family have early fall birthdays. One warm Sunday evening while out on my front porch, I mused about birthday parties in my childhood. Nothing special actually – the big deal was a square chocolate cake liberally frosted in white with pink roses from Leonard’s Bakery. Always a simple gift– one year a tiny gold ring, a baby doll (had I known, I could have bartered with little Tommy Hexamer for his larger, life size doll), another year a bicycle that lasted for nine years, another year a string of seed pearls. By the time I was eleven, the celebration turned into a dinner of my choice AND the cake. That made the day singular...gifts notwithstanding. Typically, I wish that I had listened to my grandmother talk about her childhood parties and I wondered how birthdays were celebrated 100 years ago...and those celebratory thoughts segued into other special events. Can kids today remember one special gift amidst the many they receive for holidays and birthdays? Will they be enamored with past thoughts about parties at Chucky Cheese, Six Flags, and Splashdown? Probably, because it’s all about camaraderie.

I walked into the cool, dim interior of the Historical House and lost myself for about 3 hours going through the 1906 editions of the Tazewell County Reporter. (I have included some addresses so while you are on a stroll of our lovely tree lined streets, you can gaze wistfully into the hearts and souls of citizens long gone.)

Headline: “Attempted Manslaughter”. It had me worried for a moment as E.L. Meyers’ name was in the first sentence, but the article spun a tale about how Mr. Meyers had a birthday and tried to put the Birthday Club out of business. It seems E.L. served so many delicious courses that the guests “thought they were dining at Del Monaco’s” and the guests “came out of their trance in the wee hours of the morning” and found their better halves waiting with loving arms - fire arms! Mr. Meyers, as toastmaster, had every member down for a compelled toast, and it was difficult to get them to cease their salutations. John Andrews, Dr. Anthony, Peter Strubhar, Milton Berry, Frank Hops, and Fred Aubertine were in attendance. Miss Katherine Harms (of 127 S. Main St.), Miss L. Goin and Mrs. Strathman helped serve the tasty repast.

A fun day for Henry Esser (207 N. Main), Jacob Huguet and Chas. Koker who boarded the special Oakford and Fahnestack train to Eureka. They were royally entertained by the canning factory to pumpkin pie and their new product: pumpkin ice cream.

Frank Geason entertained on October 4th the Birthday Club. There were two long tables with snow white linen and silverware. An asparagus drapery and carnations completed the centerpiece. Each guest found a pictorial place card containing a characteristic of the attendee. (No names – just a characteristic and I am sure that was good for a few laughs as the evening went on). Misses Katherine Harms, Maude and Gert Heiple, Dorothy Rickman and Bessie Ropp served blue point oysters on the half shell, turkey, shrimp salad, and ice cream with peaches.

About eight days later, Theo Roehm (503 W. Jefferson) entertained the birthday club in his elegant home with charming lady servers tempting the guests with a delectable spread of edibles in the form of a “Dutch Lunch”. Wrenn’s orchestra and Mrs. Oliver Payne provided entertainment.

E. F. Zinser hosted a Dutch Lunch in the Danforth Hotel for the Birthday Club. Tables were set and arranged in a star shape with ferns and bouquets on each table. Candles in crystal candlesticks in red globes provided a warm glow...not to mention the smoker and toasts and anecdotes after dinner.

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*Ed. Note:* I was curious about the “Dutch Lunch”. The first information I found was that beer fit in the grand scheme of things. Years ago, a Dutch Lunch catered to tycoons, railroad men and “rogues”. My guess is that the Birthday Club guys happily fit into the “rogue” category—a self pronouncement. The menu usually consisted of bean soup, pork ribs, German potato salad, bratwurst, cole slaw, buttered rolls and cheeses.  
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Mr. John VanCamp, age 21, was surprised on his birthday by friends in the St. Mark’s Baraca Sunday School Class. Friends met at Roy Millers and marched to John’s house. The celebrants had a very pleasant evening with the graphophone playing in the background. Reverend Thomas offered a few comments on John reaching majority. The gift? A box of fine cigars!!

Themes were evident throughout these celebrations and John Halderman of 204 S. Pine was no exception. Unfortunately, his wife was taken ill and she refused to have the game postponed because of “poor weather”. His parents stepped in and “stole a base on him” as the surprise party unfolded.

Mr. Denhart, John’s employer, kept him busy at the bank until 6:00 p.m. This enabled the guests to “run in”. Mrs. Denhart and Catherine Kelly helped serve.

The centerpiece was a field of diamond shaped greenery banked with sweetpeas. Each place setting had a score card containing the pictures of some noted ball players. Manager was Henry Denhart seated at the foot of the table. (The Denhart residence, next to the Lutheran Church, is now home to the Ruppman’s and their captivating and inspired renovation. He would be proud!) Captain John Halderman was seated at the head of the table. There was Umpire Keating, pitcher Frank Brady, 1st baseman John Andres, shortstop Paul Goddard, Catcher Reverend Thomas, 2nd baseman E. Zinser, right field Theo Roehm, Center H.A. Kingsbury, 3rd baseman H.D. Harms, left field H.A. Zinser and reporter F.W. Hops. The menu was listed: 1. Strike—grape juice; 2. Good Catch—Fish; 3. Foul—fowl; 4. Passed Balls—new potatoes in sweet cream; 5. Line Field—string beans; 6. Slide—jellied cherries; 7. Base Hit—Whole tomatoes stuff with salad; 8. Double Play—ice cream and chocolate cake; 9. Home run—Coffee. I ask you—who wouldn’t want to duplicate that party??? I’ll let you all know the date!!

The following would be an evening not to be missed. Step back with me:

A.G. Danforth informed his wife early in October that he would be hosting approximately forty gentlemen friends for an evening of dining, billiards, brandy and smoking. She enjoyed the planning as much as he enjoyed the event. Household help was deployed and silver was polished, crystal washed, floors polished, woodwork waxed and rooms readied.

The evening was crisp and clear as burning leaves lightly perfumed the air. Guests were ushered into the grand hallway at 8:00 p.m. Gleaming wood floors with plush wool rugs welcomed the men. The maids accepted hats and canes and some guests wandered into the parlor where card tables were set up for games of chance. The billiard table with its fine green felt provided skilled entertainment. “The intellectuals could bask in the glow of the grated fire in the library.”

At 10:00 p.m., the doors to the dining room were flung open to a feast – a Dutch lunch complete with a smoker afterwards. The men enjoyed fine dining and then adjourned to the parlor for a good cigar. The festivities ended early in the morning. The crisp new moon provided half light for the horses to clop softly home.

I couldn't stop reading

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The front page held information about employment, events in Washington which included visits by relatives and friends, births, and marriages. The descriptions of the weddings were flowery, and very informative even if the writer wasn't quite focused on the occasion itself. To wit:

Ora Kyes, daughter of prominent farmer John Kyes, and Benjamin Wittmer of Morton were married in the Apostolic Church in Morton. Her mother was granddaughter of Pierpont Edwards who came to the U.S. in 1806 from Wales with two brothers Robert and Simon. Robert was a seafaring man and never married. He purchased 90 acres of land in the heart of New York City. Robert died on a voyage and the property reverted to his brothers – Simon and Pierpont. For twenty five years the property has been in litigation. The 94 heirs have been offered millions but have refused. The property today is covered with valuable buildings having cost \$10 million each. The couple left for a wedding trip on the train.

More to the social point:

An informal wedding was held last week at the home of J. S. Voorhees. His daughter Emelyne and J.H. Heinzelman visited with friends until the 9:30 a.m. ceremony. Reverend I.A. Cornielison presided. The home was beautifully decorated with greenery and pink and white asters in the parlor. After that, a bountiful breakfast was served. The dining room was draped in clematis and vines and large bouquets of pink roses. The

couple executed a coup d' estate while their friends were waiting at the train depot to say goodbye. The new Mr. and Mrs. Heinzelman drove to Peoria and took the 6:00 p.m. Rock Island train to Chicago.

Another informal wedding was held at 115 S. Pine in the parlor of the Handsakers. Minnie Handsaker and Jacob Miller were married at 10:00 a.m. under a canopy of vines and ferns. A sumptuous wedding breakfast was served in the dining room where the tables were decorated with ferns, fall roses and golden rod. The couple departed on the C and A for Chicago and New York on the number 2 train departing at 3:22p.m.



The very elegant A.G. Danforth home awaiting guests. This is an early picture of the Danforth residence.



The Danforth Hotel where many parties were held.



Jacob Miller home—after his wedding to Minnie Handsaker—115 S. Pine.