

Wisconsin Women Library Workers 2007 Quilt: “Culinary Luminaries”

Fannie Merritt Farmer

By Marge Loch-Wouters

Farmer (1857-1915) in 1896 was one of the first authors to publish a cookbook, (*Boston School Cookbook*, later referred to as the *Fannie Farmer Cookbook*), “with exact instructions for measurements and cooking.” Many people consider her the inventor of the modern recipe. I first learned of the woman behind the name in a marvelous children's book: *Fannie in the Kitchen* by Deborah Hopkinson (Athenaeum, 1999) and was intrigued by the story of this mother's helper who could cook up a storm. It was during these years in a household that she “realized how much easier cooking could be if ingredients were measured precisely for every recipe.” According to Hopkinson's afterward, Fannie eventually became a teacher at the Boston Cooking School and later its principal. The square features that most ubiquitous and wonderful instrument of measurement - the cup - and a bowl full of delightful ingredients carefully calibrated for tasty delights. As a cook who likes following a recipe, I am forever indebted to Farmer's innovation that has helped me whip up some culinary wonders over the years. All quotes in the above paragraph are from Hopkinson's book.

Mollie Katzen

By Sue Searing

Mollie Katzen is one of the best-selling cookbook authors of our time. Her culinary career was launched in the kitchen of the Moosewood Restaurant in Ithaca, NY. In 1974, in response to customer requests, she compiled the restaurant's vegetarian recipes into a small, spiral-bound cookbook that featured hand-lettered text and whimsical line drawings. Ten Speed Press published an expanded version in 1977 that quickly became a classic as the baby boom generation pursued healthier meat-free diets. My square reproduces Katzen's cover design from the 1977 edition. This design was re-used on the *New Moosewood Cookbook* (2000) which presents new recipes alongside lighter versions of the original ones. Katzen's other popular books include *The Enchanted Broccoli Forest* (1982, revised 2000), *Still Life with Menu* (1994), *Mollie Katzen's Vegetable Heaven* (2000), and *Mollie Katzen's Sunlight Café* (2002). She has also written three cookbooks for children: *Pretend Soup* (1994), *Honest Pretzels* (1999), and *Salad People* (2005). Today Katzen is in demand as a consultant, menu designer, artist, and public speaker. For more information -- and mouth-watering recipes -- visit her website:
<http://www.molliekatzen.com>.

M. F. K. Fisher

By Kathy Rohde

Mary Frances Kennedy Fisher (July 3, 1908 - June 22, 1992) was a prolific and well-respected writer, writing more than 20 books during her lifetime and also publishing two volumes of journals and correspondence shortly before her death in 1992. Her first book, *Serve it Forth*, was published in 1937. Her books dealt primarily with food, considering it from many aspects: preparation, natural history, culture, and philosophy. She understood that eating well was just one of the arts of life, always her second theme, and she wrote with the pacing and precision of a first rate essayist or short story writer. Many credit her with creating a new genre in literature: the food essay. One of my favorite books is *How to Cook a Wolf*, written in 1942 to inspire courage in those daunted by wartime shortages, reminding them that providing sustenance requires more than putting food on the table. M. F. K. Fisher knew that the last thing hungry people needed were hints on cutting back and making do. Instead, she gives her readers license to dream, to experiment, to construct adventurous and delicious meals as a bulwark against a dreary, meager present. I was introduced to M. F. K. Fisher by way of a second-hand bookstore volume, *A Welcoming Life*, (\$1.98 at the Thrifty Reader) which is a beautiful compilation of photos and writings. It was in this book I found David Levine's caricature depicted in the quilt square. Fisher loved the drawing when it appeared in the December 7, 1989 *New York Review of Books*.

Preserve

By Kathleen Weibel

My square commemorates those unsung culinary luminaries who preserve food: the jelly and jam makers, the picklers, those who dry fruit, and those who can using water bath, pressure cooker, or some other method. For years these were mostly women, our grandmothers and great-grandmothers, who preserved food out of necessity. There are still some of these but preserving food is more likely a hobby these days. I learned to can, not from my grandmother, although one of my grandmothers made great watermelon pickles and I remember her doing it at the request of my mother, but from my UW officemate, Bob Williams, so this square is for him. I did it in Durban, South Africa, late as usual, and added the beads as a reminder of the fantastic Zulu beadwork I had just seen.

Peg Bracken

By Christine Jenkins

Peg Bracken (1918 -), grew up in St. Louis, graduated from Antioch College, and moved with her then-husband to Portland, OR to become an advertising copywriter and a housewife. She published her first book in 1960 at age 42 and has appeared in print-in books, magazines, and anthologies-ever since; her most recent book *On Getting Old for the First Time* was published in 1997. Bracken has been referred to as a "housewife writer," a term used to describe married women writing humorous, often autobiographical stories set in the midst of-white, middle-class American family life. This dismissive description does not do her justice. Peg Bracken has written books of etiquette, household tips, travel, and autobiography, but her best known books are her cookbooks. Her first, *The I Hate to Cook Book*, was published in 1960. The text, which includes 200 recipes, charming illustrations by Hillary Knight, and a wealth of ironic commentary, is a subversive look at the daily irritations and challenges that face women who disliked cooking but are nonetheless responsible for putting the family's dinner on the table on a daily basis. The books opening sentences tell the reader what to expect: "Some women, it is said, like to cook. This book is not for them." She explains the genesis of the book as the outcome of conversations with other women who hate to cook: "we decided to pool our ignorance, tell each other our shabby little secrets, and toss into the pot the recipes we swear by instead of at." The result was a best-seller full of reliable recipes that women-and men-continue to swear by. As Bracken put it: "These recipes have not been tested by experts." That is why they are valuable. Experts in their sunny spotless test kitchens can make anything taste good. But even we can make these taste good." My square was inspired by the cover of *The I Hate to Cook Book*. I used an old stained (but clean!) dish towel for the cook's hat. A quilt on culinary luminaries needs to include the dark side of cooking. Thank you, Peg Bracken!

Betty Crocker

by Nancy McClements

Betty Crocker was well known as the ideal homemaker to decades of American women in the twentieth century. She was not an actual person, but an image that Marjorie C. Husted commissioned graphic artist Neysa McMein to create in the 1920s. Husted, a businesswoman and home economist, hosted a radio show in Betty's name. Homemaking advice-seekers received personal correspondence from her office at General Mills, adding to the impression that Betty Crocker was real. Betty Crocker's "portrait," which changed with the times, adorned boxes of cake mixes and appeared in print and on television. One of my earliest memories was affixing hole reinforcements to my mother's 3-ring *Betty Crocker Cookbook* pages. My square is a combination of appliqué, embroidery, and trapunto techniques.

Settlement Cookbook

by Merle Margolis

My grandmother Margolis had a copy of this cookbook, and I found it interesting. Add to that its Milwaukee Wisconsin roots, and I believe it's a welcome addition to our quilt. Mrs. Simon Kander (nee' Elizabeth Black) was the cooking teacher at the Milwaukee Jewish Settlement. She decided it would be easier to print a cookbook than to have students copy recipes from the blackboard. In 1901, with the help of a "friendly printer" and funds from advertisements, *The Settlement Cook Book: the Way to a Man's Heart* was published. Approximately 34 editions later, *The New Settlement Cookbook* "completely revised and updated for the turn of the [21st] century," was published by Simon and Schuster.

Anna Thomas

by Katherine Leide

The Vegetarian Epicure (Random House, 1972) was the entertainment cookbook for our young family. Some of the recipes have become holiday traditions. We were never vegetarians, but we enjoyed experimenting with meals without meat. One year we had a vegetarian Thanksgiving. When my daughter was setting up her own kitchen she asked for a copy of the cookbook. I found one for her at a used book store. Her response after receiving it was, "Mom, have you read it lately?" It is truly a product of it's time. I decided to see what I could find online on Anna Thomas. To my surprise she was a film student while she was first writing her cookbooks. I learned that she wrote the screenplay and received an Oscar nomination for "*El Norte*." She also co-wrote *Mi Familia/My Family*, a saga of a Mexican-American Family. How ironic that my life has turned to importing Mexican artisan crafts (Chirip, 636 S Park St, Madison). Anna has updated *The Vegetarian Epicure* with more heart-healthy recipes, but I'll always love the original book with its delightful line illustrations. The three colored stripes in the corner represent the layers my very favorite recipe, "Pizza Rustica" and the dog-ears of my well-worn book. Embroidery based on book cover illustration by Julie Maas.

Julia Child

Kathy Rohde

When your entire kitchen - - I mean every single item in your kitchen from the pot hook on the wall to the linoleum floor - - is removed from your house and placed reverently in the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, then you will have achieved the cult status of Julia Child. If you haven't seen it, you must. I spent over an hour at this exhibit, my only stop in the museum that day, watching the compilation of videos of Julia's various cooking shows. What a delight! If you can't make it to Washington, D.C., you can view Julia's kitchen online at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/juliachild/>. Julia Child (August 15, 1912–August 13, 2004) was a famous American cook, author, and television personality who introduced French cuisine and cooking techniques to the American mainstream through her many cookbooks and television programs. Her most famous works are the 1961 cookbook *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, (the subject of my quilt square) and, the television series *The French Chef*, which premiered in 1963.

Isabella Beeton

By Jane Pearlmutter

Isabella Beeton, usually known as Mrs. Beeton, was the principal author of *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management* and is probably the most famous British cookery writer. At the age of 20 she married a publisher, Samuel Beeton, and began writing for his publications. In 1861 *Mrs. Beeton's Book of Household Management* was published. It is thought of primarily as a cookbook since over 900 of the 1,112 pages contained recipes. It was the first book to show recipes in a format that is still used today and was a major publishing success, selling over 60,000 copies in its first year of publication, and nearly two million copies by 1868. While working as a journalist and compiling her massive book, Mrs. Beeton gave birth to her first child, who died just before the birth of her second, who also died, and to two more children. After the birth of her fourth child, she died a week later at the age of 28. Isabella's publisher husband sold the rights to the book and name soon after her death. Her name has been used to market all sorts of food and household items, and she is listed as the author of new cookbooks that continued to appear for well over a century (including the unbelievable *Microwaving with Mrs. Beeton*). Even many of the editions that carried the original title bore little relation to the original text. Today the original book is available in facsimile editions (and online at <http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/b/beeton/isabella/household/index.html> - - minus the illustrations) and is considered a useful source for social historians, because it is the best example of Victorian advice literature aimed at the new middle-class 'housewife'.