

Handwritten collection of Chef Christian Hartmann's elegant dessert recipes from St. Paul's Winslow House, about 1862, and an elaborate, ten-course menu from an 1859 party at that "finest hotel in the Northwest."

BOATING UP THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IN JUNE 1854, Grand Excursion travelers dined on oysters and lobsters by the barrel, game and vegetables from the surrounding countryside, and the finest French pastries. On land, St. Paul citizens could enjoy similar cuisine. Summer's bounty from fields and forests, year round supplies of fresh fish, and a great variety of game—from turkey to bear—filled household and hotel tables.

At St. Paul's Winslow House, chef Christian Hartmann relied on ingredients brought upriver to create sophisticated desserts. Hotel guests from various states and countries as distant as Australia tasted confections rivaling those of the finest restaurants in New York and Chicago. Cream puffs, custard flavored with rare, costly vanilla, sponge cakes, molded jellies, and even several flavors of ice cream share the sepia pages of this nearly 150-year-old cookbook with desserts unfamiliar today: molasses lemon cake; cinnamon stars made from pounded almonds, egg whites, cinnamon, and cloves; and Countess de Vienna, or iced lady-finger cakes filled with jelly. All provide a taste of early St. Paul cuisine.

Other recipes hint at chef Hartmann's background. He specifies European hartshorn as a leavening agent instead of the more common American saleratus (baking soda). A "Brodt torte" including black-bread crumbs, wine, citron, and almonds suggests that he, like many of Minnesota's early citizens, was German.

Frank Erd, a young bookkeeper, must have enjoyed Hartmann's desserts, for he created this book, punctuating several of the recipes with exuberant exclamation



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points. However, the flyleaf tells yet another story of pioneer Minnesota. Erd left the state as a result of the Dakota War of 1862 and copied this book in Washington County, southeastern Iowa. The Winslow House itself was destroyed by fire in October 1862.

Erd's cookbook was passed down through family to Clarice Renfro of California, who donated it to MHS. To sample some of chef Hartmann's creations, try the recipes linked to *Minnesota History's* "Current Issue" web page: www.mnhs.org/market/mhspress/currentissue.html

—Rae Katherine Eighmey

To explore more of Minnesota's past, see TimePieces at <http://events.mnhs.org/TimePieces>



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