

## Anderson House, Wabasha (Wabasha County)

 MANY REMEMBER the Anderson House as the historic hotel where guests could borrow a cat to keep them company. But the food was its major attraction. Ahead of its time, the Anderson House had become a destination restaurant by the 1940s, drawing diners from across the country to enjoy simple, well-made meals prepared from scratch in “Grandma Anderson’s famous Dutch kitchens.” The “Dutch” referred to Pennsylvania Dutch cooking, an American cuisine developed by Pennsylvania Germans that spread to the Midwest.

B. S. Hurd built the hotel in 1856 and ran it as the Hurd House until he sold it to William Anderson in 1909. An able hosteller, Anderson had the good fortune to marry Ida Hoffman, a Pennsylvania Dutch woman who made the restaurant famous. Two of their daughters, Verna and Belle, took charge when their parents retired. Assisted by Verna’s talented daughters, Jeanne Hall and Anne McCaffrey, the sisters continued operating the hotel until 1964 and published two best-selling cookbooks.

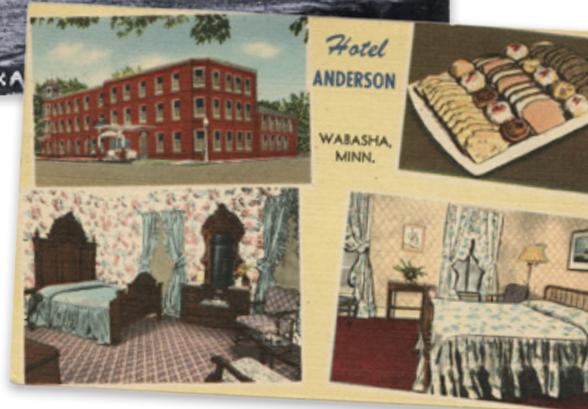
Twelve years later, Jeanne Hall and her son John bought the hotel and this third- and fourth-generation family team revived its style and cuisine. Jeanne, who had supervised kitchens for the rich and famous, managed the restaurant; John re-



Exterior, about 1912, and 1950s postcard, advertising the hotel’s assets (MNHS COLLECTIONS)

habbed the building inside and out. By 1978 the Anderson House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and winning national attention and awards. Waitresses in red-and-white-checked dresses with white ruffled aprons served hearty meals in cozy dining rooms. A signature touch was the bread tray, including lemon, cranberry, walnut, squash, stuffed pear, and many more varieties. The cinnamon rolls, chicken noodle soup, chicken and dumplings, and double-dutch fudge pie also became legendary. In the 1980s the Halls produced two more cookbooks.

After Jeanne’s death, John Hall continued running the hotel until 2001, when he sold it outside of the family. The new owners maintained many Anderson House traditions until closing it in 2009, ending its 153-year run (the longest of any Minnesota hotel). Since 2011 Brian



and Rachel Yenter have operated the Anderson House as a bed-and-breakfast without a restaurant. We hope that someday the “famous Dutch kitchens” will make a comeback.

—Greg Gaut and Marsha Neff

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### **The Anderson House cookbooks**

- Jeanne M. Hall and Belle Anderson Ebner, *500 Recipes by Request from Mother Anderson’s Famous Dutch Kitchens* (1948)
- Jeanne M. Hall, *500 More Recipes by Request* (1960)
- Jeanne M. Hall and John Hall, *Bread and Breakfasts* (1984); *The Anderson House Cookbook* (1986)

**GREG GAUT** and **MARSHA NEFF** recently moved upstream on the Mississippi from Winona to Minneapolis and continue to enjoy visiting historic sites throughout Minnesota.



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