



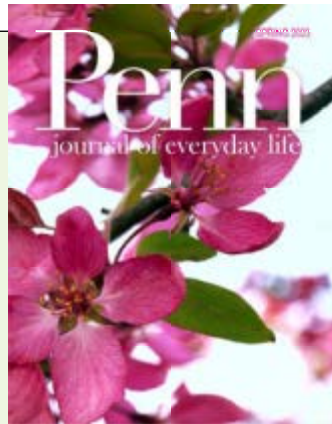
SPRING 2023

Penn

journal of everyday life

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Spring 2023



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Seasonal: *Sugar Eggs*



We have been making sugar eggs for more than thirty years. Our sugar eggs resemble real eggs with a thin sugar shell. You can carry them; shake them to hear the contents rattle. Best of all, you can break them to see the contents spill out and reveal the treats, toys or little gifts the egg maker crafted just for your surprise. Kids love them! If you are giving them to children, please advise the adults to supervise the cracking. You might want

to cover it with a dish cloth to prevent any pieces from flying.

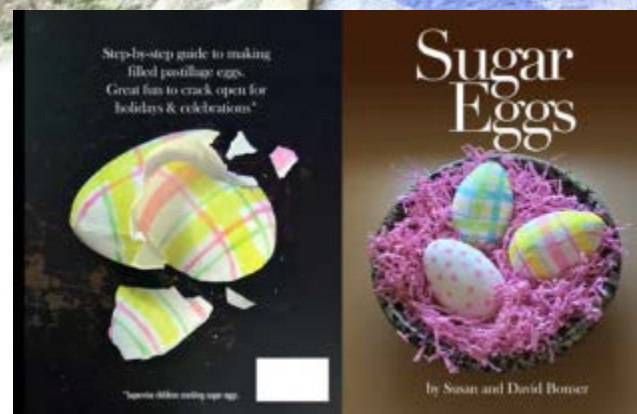
Because these eggs are meant to be handled and broken, we are not too precious about decorating them. You don't need to be a master artist or pastry chef to execute the design of a pastillage egg. In fact, there are some very simple ways to decorate them. You can simply tint the dough with food coloring before molding them or spatter the coloring to make them look like real eggs. Of course, if you like the idea of painting designs or patterns, pastillage makes a





beautiful blank canvas. We recommend using food coloring for paint so that the shell is edible. You can even flavor the dough. The texture is similar to Necco Wafer candy. You can fill them with chocolates, Kisses, Jordan Almonds, small toys or even cookies.

We have put our step-by-step and recipes into a book that is available on Amazon.





Day Trip: *Martin Guitar*



We've talked about visiting the Martin Guitar Factory in Nazareth, Pennsylvania for years. The factory is known for producing some of the world's finest acoustic guitars since 1833. We made a reservation online to take a guided tour of the factory and learn about the history of the company, the craftsmanship that goes into each guitar, and the unique Martin sound. The tour began with a brief introduction to the history of the company and an overview of manufacturing the guitars. Visitors then





get to see the different stages of guitar production, from the selection of the wood to the final assembly. We were able to watch as the wood was cut, shaped, and sanded into the iconic Martin shape. It was amazing to see the intricate details that go into the finishing process, such as the inlays on the face and the binding.

Visitors are also invited to walk through the Martin Museum, which houses a collection of vintage and modern Martin guitars. It's surprising to see how many well known names in professional music have owned Martin guitars. We loved the Pickin'





Parlor where the public is able to sit on the informal stage and play a Martin guitar.

I think our favorite job that we saw on the tour was the musician at the end of the manufacturing process who played each guitar to ensure it met Martin standards before it went out for sale.

Following the tour, visitors have the opportunity to purchase a guitar directly from the factory. Martin offers a wide selection of guitars, from beginner models to professional-grade instruments. Visitors can also purchase strings, picks, and other accessories or bring in their guitar for repair.



David calls the Martin factory “spit-spot.” It was modern, busy and neat as a pin. Even the Martin trucks were beautiful.





Art: *Pennsylvania Hex Signs*

Hex signs are a traditional form of Pennsylvania Dutch folk art that has been around for centuries. They are brightly colored, hand-painted designs often seen on barns, homes, and other buildings in the Pennsylvania Dutch Country. Hex signs are believed to bring good luck and ward off evil spirits, and they are a popular tourist

attraction in the region.

Hex signs are usually painted on a wooden board, and the designs are often geometric and symmetrical. They can feature stars, circles, and other shapes, as well as animals, birds, and flowers. The colors used in the designs are typically bright and cheerful, and may include shades of blue, red, yellow, and green. The origins of hex signs are unclear, but they are believed to have been brought to





Pennsylvania by German immigrants in the 18th century.

The designs were originally used as a form of protection against evil spirits, and they were also used to decorate the outside of barns and homes. Over time, the designs evolved and became more intricate and decorative. Today, hand-painted hex signs are still popular in Pennsylvania Dutch Country and are a popular souvenir for tourists. Many artisans in the region specialize in creating hex signs, and they often use traditional methods and materials to create the designs. You have to check though. Some artists use stencils or screen-print their hex signs.

We recently chose a sign to be hand-painted by Pennsylvania artist Chrissi Kent. Her grandfather, Bill Schuster and his wife, Charlotte Schuster, started the business around 1959. Chrissi began helping them in 1985, when she was only 14 years old and recently took over the business when her grandfather passed away.

W. Schuster Hex Signs by Chrissi are painted on tempered Masonite (a wood composite). She says they are very durable for interior or exterior use. Chrissi uses exterior quality paints (oil based) to ensure that her signs will last for many, many years. We saw her work at the summer Kutztown Folk Festival but ordered online.





Harvest: *Horseradish, Rhubarb*

Pennsylvania has been known for centuries for its production of this spicy root vegetable, and it has become a part of the food culture. Every spring, Pennsylvanians celebrate the arrival of the new crop of horseradish with a variety of festivities and traditions. One of the most popular is the annual horseradish festival. Held in Hershey, the festival celebrates the harvest with a variety of activities. There are horseradish-themed games, cooking

demonstrations, and even a horseradish-eating contest. Another popular tradition is the horseradish-making competition. Every spring, farmers from all over the state gather to compete in a horseradish-making contest for bragging rights.

We dug up a piece of our horseradish root this spring to make a creamy sauce for our mini Yorkshire puddings. Easy to prepare, they make a nice meal. We made it even easier by using John F. Martin deli roast beef, sliced thin.



The Pennsylvania Dutch are particularly fond of rhubarb, and it is a staple of their traditional cuisine. Every spring, the Pennsylvania Dutch celebrate the arrival of rhubarb season with special dishes and desserts. Rhubarb pies, jams, and other treats are a common sight at Pennsylvania Dutch markets and festivals. In addition to its culinary uses, rhubarb is also used in traditional Pennsylvania folk medicine. Rhubarb is believed to have healing

properties, and it is often touted as a treatment for a variety of ailments, from stomach aches to headaches.

We had a good growth of rhubarb this year in the garden, so we used a recipe from the Kutztown Folk Festival cookbook to try a Rhubarb Cream Pie for the first time. While we often make rhubarb pies and rhubarb strawberry pies, we had never tried a cream rhubarb pie with meringue before. It was very pretty and tasted good. I think we'd make it again.



RHUBARB CREAM PIE

2 tbsp. butter, melted	2 eggs
2 c. diced rhubarb	1/4 c. light cream
1 1/4 c. sugar	1/8 tsp. salt
2 tbsp. cornstarch	

Melt butter. Add diced rhubarb and 1 c. sugar. Cook slowly until rhubarb is tender. Combine 1/4 cup sugar, cornstarch, 2 egg yolks, light cream and salt. Add to rhubarb and cook until thick. Cool and pour into baked 8 inch pie shell.

Beat whites of 2 eggs until stiff. Add 1 tbsp. 4x confectioners sugar, beat until it stands in peaks. Top with this meringue. Bake at 350 degree moderate for 12 to 15 min.





Celebration: *Easter Dinner, Dessert*

For us, Easter dinner is the highlight of the holiday. Many Pennsylvania families enjoy a classic ham dinner. Ham is a popular choice for Easter dinner because it is easy to prepare and can feed a large group. We have chosen a spiral honey ham the last few holidays. With the ham, we often like to have mashed potatoes, green

beans, and salad on our table. A traditional Pennsylvania dessert favorite is shoofly pie. You will see we went a different route.

We are lucky to be able to pick from our abundance of daffodils to put flowers on the table. Our plates this year were hand-painted Hartstone vintage plates made originally in nearby Ohio.

While we always have deviled eggs on the





table (one of our son's favorites) this year we tried a Pinterest recipe for deviled eggs made as tulips. They were a little tricky to cut and stuff but pretty with scallion greens or celery stalks for stems.

We saved the flowers from our red basil plants to decorate each plate. Our green salad and garnish of thyme and kale on the ham came from our hydroponic garden on the porch. It's nice to have fresh greens year-round. The Yukon Gold potatoes came from our outdoor garden that we harvested and put in cold storage over the winter.

Glazed carrots have been one of my family favorites since the recipe was introduced by my brother's first wife. The whole meal really is classic comfort food and we are happy to have leftovers share and save.





For Easter dessert, we baked our favorite cheesecake recipe (found on every package of Philly Cream Cheese) then topped it with an easy compote of fresh black cherries. The hardest part is pitting the cherries.



Our cake desserts included almond cake petit fours sliced and filled with jam, then coated with melted Hershey's Kisses in their new Birthday Cake flavor. The little roses were molded from melted Hershey's Strawberries and Cream Kisses. The top cake was made with a pound cake recipe and chopped jellybeans were added to make

colorful candy confetti in each slice. It was iced with a vanilla buttercream frosting then Hershey's Strawberries and Cream Kisses were melted and dripped to glaze the top. While the large roses were also molded from the same pink chocolate, we made our own marzipan to create a rose in addition. Kisses decorated the top of the cake.





We wanted to try cake ice cream cones this year. They really were easy and fun to make. And they actually look like ice cream cones when they are done. We bought a special metal stand to bake the batter-filled cones. We also baked cupcakes to add a top to each ice cream cone. Then we iced each cake cone with buttercream frosting, dripped a melted chocolate glaze and added a few chocolate sprinkles to finish.



Celebration: *Easter Dinner, Dessert*

For coffee, we made our twisted sweet roll and decorated it with walnuts and jellybeans. Baking is a great way to use up an abundance of jellybeans at Easter. We also made tart shells from pie crust dough and filled them each with fresh lemon curd and a mandarin orange section.







Local Eats: *Chocolate Eggs & Bunnies*



Chocolate Easter bunnies are a popular tradition in Pennsylvania, and the state has a long history of celebrating the holiday with gifts of this special molded treat. The tradition dates back to the late 1800s, when German immigrants brought it to the United States. Today, chocolate Easter bunnies come in a variety of sizes and shapes, from small solid chocolate bunnies to large hollow bunnies filled with treats.

There are a lot of choices for chocolate in Pennsylvania. We were looking for a beautiful chocolate bunny for Easter and

found two we thought were really special from Philadelphia Candies in Hermitage. Both were 12-ounce solid bunnies. One was milk chocolate and one was dark semi-sweet chocolate. They arrived packaged in beautiful purple fabric drawstring bags.

Philadelphia Candies is a Macris family business, passed from generation to generation. It was started in 1919 by Greek immigrants and named Philadelphia Candies because in their native Greek, that means “candies made with brotherly love.”

We ordered our chocolate bunnies online, but found that they also have retail stores in Pennsylvania and Ohio.



Chocolate peanut butter eggs are another popular Easter treat in Pennsylvania, especially in the central and eastern parts of the state. Many families in Pennsylvania have a tradition of making their own chocolate peanut butter eggs at home. The process typically involves mixing peanut butter with powdered sugar and other ingredients to form the filling, shaping it into an egg shape, and then dipping it in melted chocolate. Some local candy shops specialize in making chocolate peanut butter eggs, including Wilbur Chocolate in Lititz, and Gardners Candies in Tyrone.

While the classic chocolate peanut butter egg is a popular tradition in Pennsylvania,





there are many variations of the treat, such as dark chocolate peanut butter eggs, coconut-filled chocolate eggs, and even gluten-free and vegan options.

They are primarily associated with the Easter season in Pennsylvania, and many candy shops and grocery stores start selling them in the weeks leading up to Easter. Schools and churches in Pennsylvania often use chocolate peanut butter eggs as a fundraising item around Easter.

This year we ordered eggs from Zitners, a candy company in business since 1920. *Philly Magazine* called Zitner's "an iconic Philly mom-and-pop". While the Zitner's

began by selling their candy out of their North Philadelphia house in 1920, they are now available online year-round. The Butter Krac eggs, (*previous page*) were invented by Annie Zitner in the 1930s, and have been called the "best of the bunch." Evan Prochniak bought the failing company in 2010 hoping to keep this special brand alive. We eat too many of these delicious eggs and buy lots to hand them out at Easter.

We also buy beautiful handmade chocolate peanut butter eggs from the Hollabaugh's farm market in Biglerville (*right*). They remind us of the eggs the church ladies used to make each Easter.



Garden: *Tending the Fairy Garden*

Fairy gardens are miniature gardens that feature small plants, miniature furniture, and other tiny items arranged to create a whimsical scene that is reminiscent of a fairy tale. The practice of creating fairy gardens has gained popularity in recent years as a fun and imaginative way to decorate outdoor and indoor spaces.

The history of fairy gardens is not well-documented, but it is believed that the concept of miniature gardens originated in Japan during the Edo period (1603-

1868), when bonsai trees were created and cultivated as miniature versions of their full-sized counterparts. The practice of creating miniature landscapes then spread to China, where it became known as penjing, and to Europe, where it evolved into the art of creating miniature gardens. Fairy gardens, in particular, are thought to have originated in Europe, where the concept of fairies and their magical realm has been a part of folklore and mythology for centuries.

In the Victorian era, fairy gardens were created as miniature worlds that represented the enchanted forests of fairy





tales. They were often made using natural materials, such as moss, rocks, and twigs, and decorated with tiny fairy figurines, miniature furniture, and other whimsical items. Creating a fairy garden is a fun and creative process that can be enjoyed by all ages. Children are especially fun to watch when they discover your fairy garden.

The basic idea is to create a miniature world that is inhabited by fairies and other magical creatures, and that incorporates natural elements, such as plants, rocks, and water features. To create a fairy garden, you will need a container or plot of land that can

be transformed into a miniature garden. This can be anything from a small flower pot to a large outdoor space. Once you have your container, you can begin designing your fairy garden.

We replenish our indoor fairy gardens in the spring. We select plants that are small and will fit well in the container. Succulents, mosses, and miniature flowers are all good options. We also incorporate rocks, pebbles, and other natural elements to create pathways and other features. While we don't have a lot of miniature furniture we have ponds, toadstools and fences in our garden.





Crafts: *Knitted Chickens Egg Cozies*



An egg cozy is a small, usually knitted or crocheted cover or cozy that is designed to keep a boiled egg warm while it is being served. Egg cozies are typically made in the shape of a small hat or a pouch with a drawstring closure, and they are placed over the egg to help retain the heat. Egg cozies

have been used in households for centuries, particularly in Europe and the United Kingdom, where they are a common sight at breakfast tables. They come in a variety of colors, styles, and designs, and can be made from a range of materials including wool, cotton, and silk.

Egg cozies are not only functional, but they can also be used as decorative items



on the breakfast table. Some egg cozies are designed to look like animals, characters, or objects, adding a touch of whimsy to the meal. Egg cozies are also a popular craft project, and many people enjoy making their own customized egg cozies using various techniques such as knitting, crochet, quilting or embroidery.

We have made our egg cozies in the shape of chickens. We developed a pattern to make the chicken cozy by knitting on four needles using 4-ply or worsted yarn. A colored hard-boiled chicken egg or a Cadbury Cream egg fits perfectly inside so we will use them for our Easter basket gifts this year. You can also use them to keep your breakfast boiled egg warm in an egg cup like the British.



Instructions

Using yarn size #4 knitting worsted and double pointed needles set of four size US #4.

Using needles US 4: CO 30.

Divide on 3 DP needles.

Ribbing: K1P1 5 rows.

Knit 1 row, inc. 1 stitch at the start of each needle (add 3 stitches) 33 stitches total.

Knit 15 rows in garter stitch.

Next row, K and BO 20 stitches to end the back of the chicken.

Head: Divide remaining 13 stitches on 3 needles.

Cast on 1 stitch, 14 stitches total.

P 2 rounds.

Work 4 rows P, decreasing one stitch at the start of each round.

BO 10 stitches.

Close seams and weave in ends.

Comb: pick up and crochet 5 stitches.

Create 3 ridges by treble crochet.

Tail: pick up and crochet starting at the tail.



Crafts: *Knitted Chickens*

We used excelsior in our Easter baskets this year and dyed the eggs using food colors, vinegar and hot water. We added small bags of candy corn to our baskets for the chickens. Candy corn, though now commonly associated with Halloween, was called chicken feed when it was first created. The invention of candy corn is attributed to George Renninger and the Wunderlee Candy Company in Philadelphia around 1800. The Goelitz Company, now known as Jelly Belly Candy Company, began producing candy corn in 1898.

This basket is made folding scrap paper like gum wrapper chains. We published the directions in our book *Baskets From Trash*.





Home Sweet Home: *St. Patrick's Day*



St. Patrick's Day is celebrated by many people throughout the United States, especially in Pennsylvania, which has a rich history of Irish immigration. One of the most popular traditions is to enjoy a St. Patrick's Day meal on March 17th.

This year we chose to take out our St. Patrick's Day dinners from the Snydersville Diner. It was just what you'd want and expect. A corned beef brisket brined and served with tender boiled

cabbage, whole potatoes, and sweet carrots.

On the side we found generous slices of Irish soda bread, traditionally made with flour, baking soda, buttermilk, and salt—a staple of any St. Patrick's Day dinner. Soda bread has a dense, hearty texture and a slightly sweet flavor. We served ours with fresh butter.

While corned beef and cabbage has become a traditional dish for St. Patrick's Day, particularly in the United States, its origins are not actually





Irish. Folklore suggests that during the mid-19th century, Irish immigrants in the United States found that corned beef was a cheaper alternative to bacon, which was the traditional meat in Ireland. Cabbage was also a cheap and readily available vegetable. So, Irish immigrants in America began to substitute corned beef for bacon, and the dish became associated with St. Patrick's Day as an affordable way to celebrate the holiday. Today, while the dish is not typically

eaten in Ireland on St. Patrick's Day, it has become a staple in Irish-American cuisine and is often enjoyed as a way to celebrate and honor Irish heritage in America.

For dessert we made something green to go with our Irish dinner. With an abundance of mint, we made mint extract then used it to flavor our vanilla ice cream recipe. We made our ice cream in a Cuisinart machine, putting it in the freezer to set hard while we ate dinner.

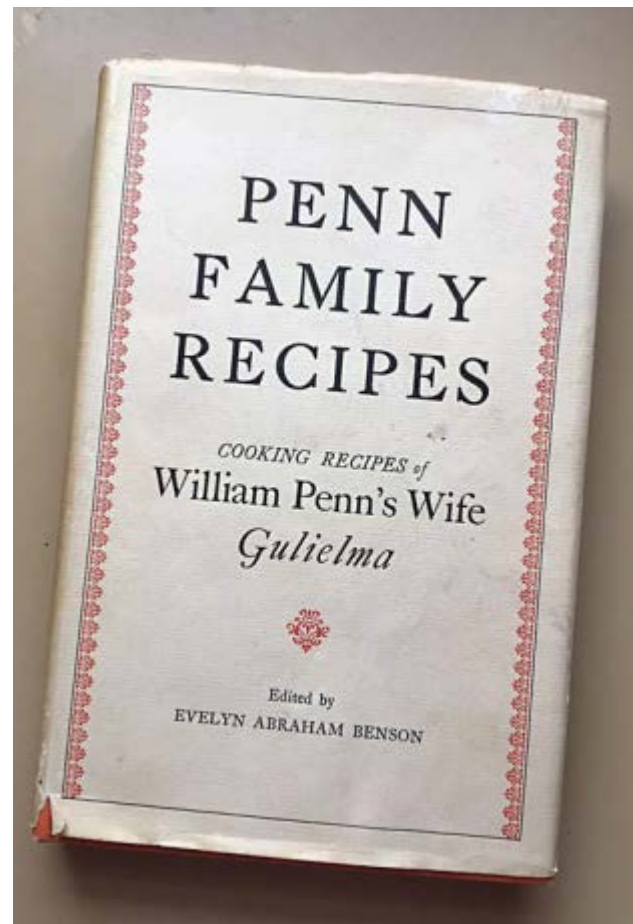


Favorite Things: *Penn Family Recipes*

We have a book in our library titled *Penn Family Recipes* by Evelyn Benson dated 1966. It is a collection of recipes translated from an original set of family recipe documents given to William Penn's wife Gulielma in 1702. We were particularly interested in the recipe for Gingerbread or Ginger Breed as it is translated. We set out to make it because it included the unusual steps of baking the cookies for a short time, dipping them one at a time in boiling water, then returning them to the oven to bake again. They also seemed to contain an inordinate amount of ginger and spices we had not tasted in gingerbread before—caraway, coriander and anis seeds.

We went to the researchers at the Pennsylvania Historical Society because they hold the original manuscripts and they kindly made digital copies so we could see the recipes that were translated in the book. It is a trick to read old handwriting—and time consuming to interpret it.

We converted the measures in the translation and made the cookies. There was no butter, no eggs, no leavening. They turn out thin and hard, like a ginger snap and the taste was surprising. I can only describe them as a little spice blowtorch. Unlike



the spiciness of a jalapeño, for instance, this heat stayed in your mouth. It did not travel down your throat to your stomach. We found it surprising but very pleasant. To offset the spiciness, we made a sugar icing with orange juice and orange zest. This little bit of sweet and fruitiness was a nice compliment to the extreme ginger spice.

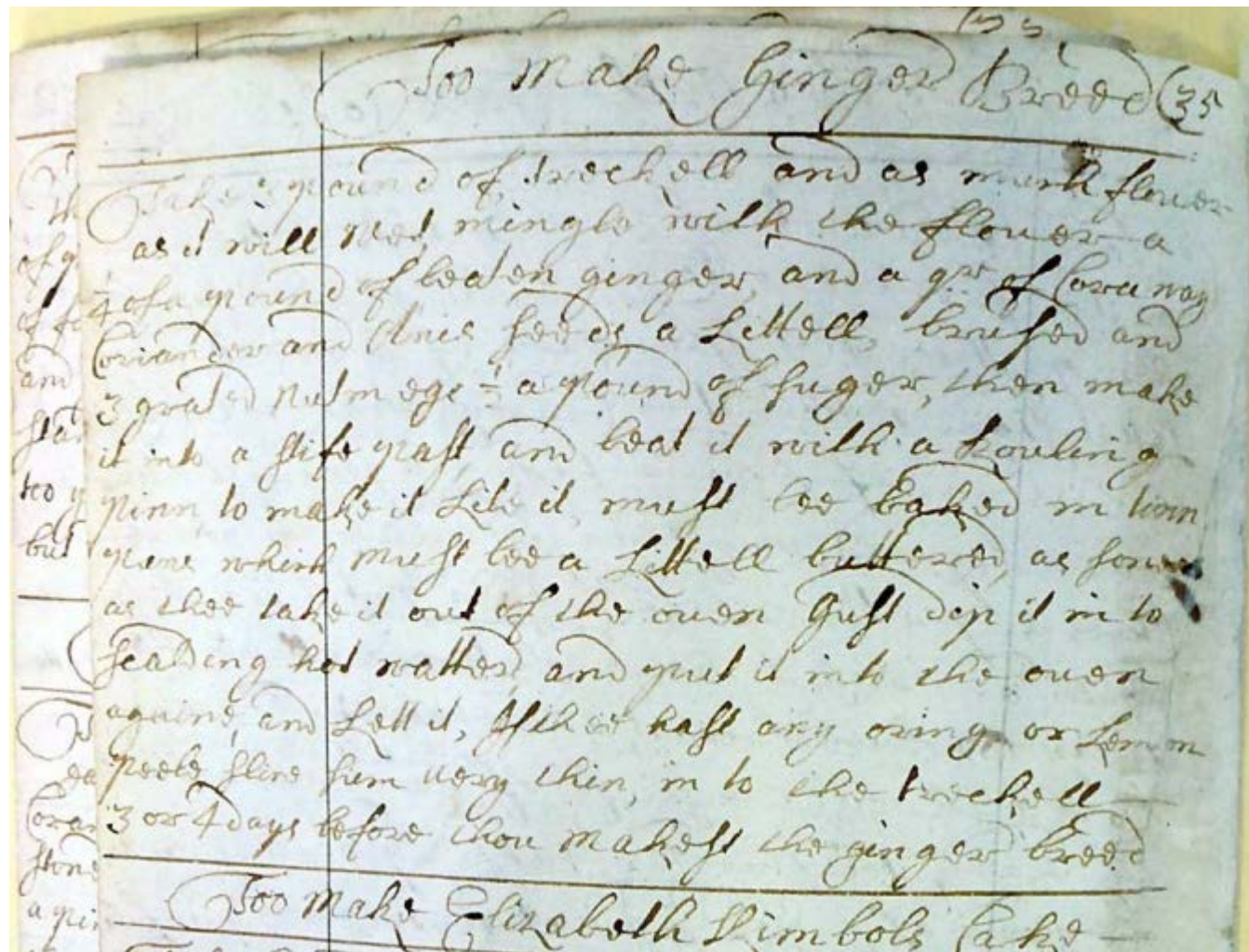
Too make Ginger Breed

[96]

Take 3 pound of treckell
and as much flouer as it will need,
mingle with the flouer a 1/4 of a pound of
beaten ginger,
and a qr of Coraway Coriander and Anis seeds,
a Littell brused
and 3 grated nutmegs,
1/2 a pound of suger,
then make it into a stife past,
and beat it with a Rouling pinn, to make it Lite,
it must bee baked in tinn pans which must bee
a Littell buttered,
as sone as thee take it out of the oven
just dip it in to scalding hot watter,
and put it into the oven againe, and Lett it,
If thee hast any oring or Lemon peelee
slice sum very thin in to the treckell
3 or 4 days before thou makest the ginger breed

4 c flour

1 lb sugar



The original recipe manuscript is above and the translated recipe from the book is on the previous page. Our markings are the conversion of measures for the ingredients. The recipe made a stiff dough which we rolled thin and baked. Following the recipe, we dipped each partially baked cookie in boiling water, drained and then returned the cookies to the oven.

Days later, when the cookies became too hard, we placed a slice of bread in our cookie jar and put the ginger cookies on top of it overnight. It made them easy to eat again.





We made a simple icing of confectioners sugar, freshly squeezed orange juice and a generous amount of orange zest to give it have a truly fruity flavor in order to contrast the spice of the cookies.





Best Views: *Spider's Webs*



Above, a spider's web catching the morning dew. *Previous* pages, we always enjoy finding bees.

Penn, journal of everyday life

A quarterly publication. All content in this issue is produced by Susan and David Bonser.

Please Note: For this issue, we used free AI software based on CHATGPT to generate text content. It was an interesting experiment. While we used much of the generated content, we edited it to reflect our voice and added text the machine could not have known.

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