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## Book Review: New Orleans Cuisine: Fourteen Signature Dishes and Their Histories

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*Socastee Library, Myrtle Beach SC*

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Davis, William C. and James I Robertson Jr., eds. *Virginia at War 1863*. Lexington, Ky: University of Kentucky Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-8131-2510-7. \$35.00.

Coeditors William Davis and James Robertson have reached the midway point of an ambitious five volume series designed to capture the essence of life in Virginia during each of the Civil War years. This volume like earlier, well received releases covering 1861 and 1862 provides collections of insightful, detailed essays authored by notable Civil War historians and experts. This newest addition to the series follows a previously established pattern of beginning with an essay highlighting the year's major in-state military campaigns to provide a framework for further essays exploring the social, economic, religious, and political effects of the war on civilian Virginians. Judith Brockenbrough McGuire's wartime saga is also continued from the preceding two volumes through edited and annotated entries from her *Diary of a Southern Refugee During the War*. Each volume concludes with a selected bibliography and an index.

A. Wilson Greene ably begins with an overview of military events in Virginia in 1863 highlighted by the Battle of Chancellorsville which led to the momentous wounding and subsequent loss of General Stonewall Jackson at the hands of his own men. James Marten follows with a poignant look at the effect of the war on Virginia's children of both races who were faced with dangers from nearby battles, severe economic hardship, erratic or no schooling, and the loss or absence of family members. Benjamin H. Trask explores the beginnings of formal education for eager former slaves aided by missionaries from the North in homes and churches in occupied areas of southeastern Virginia. James M. Prichard provides a chilling overview of William "Devil Anse" Hatfield's wartime activities both as a Confederate officer and as a guerilla leader in the home guard along the volatile, mountainous Kentucky-Virginia (West Virginia) border to reveal circumstances preceding the famous start of the Hatfield-McCoy family feud in 1882. David Rolfs examines the consequences of the choice made by Virginia churches to politically and spiritually back the Confederate cause both in victory and defeat. Coeditor William C. Davis' essay provides a brief history of scrapbooking and highlights the important role that scrapbooks filled with carefully selected newspaper and journal clippings played in preserving the civilian Confederate perspective as well as the only surviving articles from many defunct journals. Jared Peatman examines the failure of Richmond's top newspapers to accurately cover Lincoln's Gettysburg Address which was repeated by newspapers relying on reprints across the South leaving Southerners largely unaware of the famous speech. Coeditor James I. Robertson Jr. introduces and provides a selection of Judith Brockenbrough McGuire's diary entries ranging from September 1862-May 1863 to close the volume with a contemporary, civilian perspective.

*Virginia at War 1863* is highly recommended for academic and public libraries with Civil War collections, Virginia libraries, and serious Civil War devotees. Libraries already committed to the series will not be disappointed with the latest collection of expertly researched and thought provoking essays.

*Sharon C. Parente*

Walker Library, Middle Tennessee State University

Tucker, Susan, ed. *New Orleans Cuisine: Fourteen Signature Dishes and Their Histories*. Jackson, MS: The University Press of Mississippi, 2009. ISBN 978-1-60473-127-9. \$28.00

New Orleans has long been the American city most renowned for its cuisine, and since 2005 there has been renewed interest in the city's culture and history. *New Orleans Cuisine* charts the development of New Orleans cuisine through fourteen quintessentially New Orleanian dishes.

The dishes include well-known fare as well as local specialties: Sazerac cocktail, French Bread (and the Poor Boy), Shrimp Remoulade, Oysters Rockefeller, Daube Glacee, Turtle Soup, Gumbo, Trout Amandine,

Red Beans and Rice, Mirliton and Shrimp, Creole Tomato Salad, Creole Cream Cheese, Bread Pudding, and Cafe Brulot. Contributors include Sara Roahen, Michael Mizell-Nelson, Patricia Kennedy Livingston, Sharon Stallworth Nossiter, Cynthia LeJeune Nobles, Karen Trahan Leathem and Susan Tucker.

An introductory essay by Tucker, Nobles, Leathem, and Nossiter establishes themes that appear throughout the book, predominantly the idea that “many of the city’s most famous dishes evolved from a resourcefulness born of deprivation.” This easy adaptability helped New Orleans establish a unique local cuisine, beginning with Native American traditions that evolved as the city passed through French, Spanish, French again, and American hands. All the while the Africans and African-Americans who created much of the city’s culinary history reacted to these changes while incorporating contributions from New Orleans’ German, Sicilian, Mexican, and other populations.

Certain works, restaurants and figures reappear throughout the book’s fifteen articles. Lafcadio Hearn, in particular, looms large, as his 1885 *La Cuisine Creole* provides early recipes for some of these dishes as well as their histories. The 1901 *Picayune Creole Cook Book* and the Christian Woman’s Exchange’s 1885 *Creole Cookery Book* also serve as important sources, and will be valuable to anyone researching these topics in more depth.

As S. Frederick Starr mentions in his foreword, this “is assertively not a cookbook.” Not every chapter contains a recipe for its titular dish — even though “Oysters Rockefeller,” for example, contains four recipes for other historical oyster dishes. The chapters on Gumbo, Turtle Soup, and Sazerac, on the other hand, each contain several historical recipes as well as modern varieties.

Although the emphasis is on food, *New Orleans Cuisine* doubles as an alternative history of the city itself, one that focuses on the entrepreneurs, cooks and historians that have furthered the city’s culinary tradition rather than the nations and politicians who have governed it. This is an in-depth and original book that should provide the final word on, or at least clarify, some long-debated culinary issues. Its exacting detail and historical emphasis do not make for a quick or easy read, but a copious source list, bibliography, and well-developed index make it an invaluable reference source for anyone studying New Orleans or its cuisine.

*Alan Smith*

Socastee Library, Myrtle Beach SC

Allison-Lewis, Linda. *Kentucky’s Best: Fifty Years of Great Recipes*. Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8131-9215-4 \$19.95.

*Kentucky’s Best: Fifty Years of Great Recipes* is a superior cookbook generously detailing wonderfully unique to Kentucky recipes, Kentucky restaurants, legends, history, and tourist attractions. The recipes are excellently easy to understand and seem marvelously nutritious and delicious. The spectacular cookbook includes a contents page, acknowledgments, an introduction, ten chapters: “Appetizers,” “Breads and Rolls,” “Side Dishes,” “Main Dishes,” “Lunch and Teatime Favorites,” “Soups and Salads,” “Desserts,” “Derby Favorites,” “Holiday Favorites,” “Bluegrass Bounty,” and an accurate index.

Brilliant genius author Linda Allison-Lewis shares her grandparents ran a catering company. Her Uncle Vincent worked at The Grand in Mackinaw Island, Boca Raton’s five-star, five-diamond hotel, the French Lick Sheraton, and Orlando Walt Disney World. Linda Allison-Lewis was an appraiser of food in Texas. Kentucky is famous for unsurpassed thoroughbred horses, Bardstown and Loretto alcohol and beyond compare bourbon manufacturing, Daniel Boone, the Lincolns, Henry Clay, George Rogers, Clark, burgoo, Owensboro barbecue, and Kentucky fried chicken.