

The Pecan: A Culinary History  
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The first successful English colony in North America was Jamestown, Virginia, founded in 1607. John Smith, one of the leaders of the settlement, observed and later wrote about the Algonquin Indians, who were native to the area. The Indians ate a variety of nuts, Smith reported, including American chestnuts, acorns, and a type of walnut. The Indians dried and shelled the nuts from these trees and then pounded them in wooden mortars. Water was added, and the oily emulsion was employed to flavor broth, boiled corn, beans, and squashes. According to Smith, this food was called *pawcohiccora*. When English colonists picked up the word, its meaning shifted from the food to a specific nut tree; subsequently shortened, its spelling standardized, the word became “hickory.”<sup>1</sup> Hickory trees were common throughout eastern North America, and Indians and European colonists used the nuts in a variety of ways. Recipes for cakes, cookies, and breads made with hickory nuts were common in American cookbooks until the end of the nineteenth century; after that, such recipes appeared almost exclusively in rural and regional cookbooks. Because the nutmeats are exceedingly difficult to extract from their shells, hickory nuts never became a commercial crop.<sup>2</sup>

The hickory tree that early colonists found was just one of several species of the genus *Carya*. The genus emerged from the Juglandaceae (or walnut) family about 34 million years ago and its member species were common throughout Asia, Europe, and North America. About 2 million years ago, the genus died out in Europe, perhaps due to glaciation, but species survived in North America. Europeans would eventually find a dozen species in what would become Canada, the United States, and Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

During the French and Indian War (1754-1763), British and American militia campaigned in the what is today the Midwest; at the time it was French territory. Soldiers and explorers operating west of the Alleghenies reported finding a tree like the hickory, but with nuts that tasted sweeter. John Bartram, the Philadelphia botanist, was the first to acquire nuts from this tree in 1761, and he sent some to a botanist in England.<sup>4</sup> Other colonists also planted nuts from this tree. William Prince cultivated 30 pecan trees at his Linnaean Botanic Garden in Flushing, New York. By 1775 George Washington was familiar with the nut, which he called variously the “Mississippi nut,” “Illinois nut,” and later the “Poccon.”<sup>5</sup> Thomas Jefferson planted pecan trees at Monticello in 1780, and he later sent some pecans to George Washington, who planted them at Mount Vernon.<sup>6</sup> In 1782 Jefferson reported that the “Paccan or Illinois nut” grew on the Wabash, Mississippi, Ohio, and Illinois rivers.<sup>7</sup> Scientists would later determine that the tree was distributed along the Mississippi river from its tributaries in northern Illinois and southeastern Iowa to the Gulf coast, with isolated populations as far east as southwestern Ohio, northern Kentucky, central Alabama and south to Oaxaca, Mexico. It grew abundantly in central and eastern Oklahoma and Texas.<sup>8</sup>

André Penicaut, a carpenter, arrived in the French province of Louisiana in 1699. He kept a journal of his travels, and in 1704 he visited the village of Natchez. He noted that the local Indians ate a nut called *pacanes*. Precisely what this refers to is unclear from his account, but most subsequent writers have concluded that it was the pecan. The nomenclature is confusing because the Natchez Indians spoke an isolated language unrelated to those of neighboring tribes, and Natchez is very different from Algonquin-speaking Indians who lived hundreds of miles north in what is today southern Illinois. This is where the second pecan reference surfaces. A French observer there, Father Gabriel Marest, recorded on November 9, 1712, that in the village of Kaskaskia “*Les pacanes*,” a fruit of a nut tree, “have a better flavor than our nuts in France.” Nine years later, in the same location, Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix, also wrote of *Pacaniers* or *Le Picane*, “a nut of the size and shape of a large acorn. The shell of some of them is very thin, while others have it harder and thicker, but the fruit is so much the less on that account. All have a very fine and delicate taste.”<sup>9</sup> Charlevoix had read Penicaut’s journal, and perhaps Marest did as well. Whether the term *pecan* derives from Natchez, Algonquin, or some other language, or was a word commonly used among many Indian language groups, is unknown. Precisely what *pecan* meant was called into question by Frederick Webb Hodge, editor of the *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (1910). He claimed that the word in Algonquin meant “hard-shelled nut,” and that it did not specifically refer to any nut.<sup>10</sup> Hodge offered no evidence for his conclusion, but his verdict is what has been repeated ever since in pecan etymologies.

Spanish explorers had crisscrossed the area—including what is today Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas—where pecan trees grew in abundance. Many mentioned pecan-like nuts in their writings included Hernando de Soto, Antonio de Mendoza, Alfonso de León, Lope de Oviedo, Isidro de Espinosa, and Cabeza de Vaca. Although several commented on these nuts, they recorded no indigenous names. Espinosa did report that the Payaya Indians in Texas stored nuts, most likely pecans, underground in leather sacks.<sup>11</sup>

What is clear from evidence found at archaeological sites suggests that Native Americans had gathered, processed, stored, and eaten pecans (*Carya illinoensis*) for at least 8,750 years.<sup>12</sup> Pecans were an important food for American Indians, especially during their high season from December through April when other food sources were unavailable.<sup>13</sup> Pecans could also be saved for months for the spring and early summer. They most likely consumed them in the same way that other Indians consumed hickory nuts.

American Indians also used the bark and leaves of the pecan tree for medicinal purposes. The Kiowa who used a decoction from the bark to treat tuberculosis, and the Comanche who pulverized pecan leaves for ringworm. The Lumbee are reported to use bark tea to treat upset stomachs. Other tribes used it to treat “blood ailments, flu, fever, hepatitis, stomachache, and malaria.”<sup>14</sup>

## Early Culinary Uses

Precisely how Spanish and French colonists consumed the pecan is unclear. They did try to incorporate the nut into culinary forms from their mother cuisines. Antoine-Simon Le Page du Pratz, a French historian and naturalist, visited Louisiana and later wrote *Histoire de la Louisiane* (1758). He reported that the French in New Orleans confected *prâlines* —a “kind of baked cake” made from *Pacaniers*— which were as good as those made “with almonds in France.”<sup>15</sup>

Neither is there much evidence that indicates how pecans were consumed in Colonial or Federal periods of American history. Several cookbooks were published in the South before the Civil War, but none employ pecans in their recipes. The first located recipe using pecans as an ingredient appeared in *The Lady's Receipt-Book* (1847) by Eliza Leslie, a Philadelphian. Her recipe for “Cocoa-nut Cream” offers a variation based on blanched and pounded pecans; the nut paste was stirred into “rich cream” along with sugar, and spice, briefly boiled, and then cooled. Leslie suggested that any of the nut creams she described “may be frozen, and served up as ice cream.”<sup>16</sup>

### Commercialization

By the 1850s there was a brisk pecan trade from New Orleans to Boston and other Eastern seaboard cities, as well as to Europe.<sup>17</sup> During the Civil War, pecans were consumed extensively in the South, helping to compensate for staple foods that were in short supply.<sup>18</sup> Francis Peyre Porcher's *Resources of the Southern Fields and Forests, Medical, Economical and Agricultural* (1863), one of the few books published in the South during the war, notes that “The fruit of the plants of this order are favorite articles for table use in the Confederate States. The pecan-nut is rich and nutritious, and the tree might be planted as a source of profit, as it is a rapid bearer, attaining a large size.”<sup>19</sup> Many Union soldiers became familiar with the nuts while fighting in Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, and other areas where they grew. After the war, the pecan trade with the North picked up again. By 1867 the nuts were sold in New York markets from December through April.<sup>20</sup>

The nuts that were commercially available left much to be desired. They were of diverse sizes (many were small) and most had hard shells that were difficult to crack. Grafting solve these problems, and it had been tried before the Civil War, but little improvement occurred simply because the commercial trade was just too small. When the trade picked up after the war, these problems became more prominent. In 1876 Colonel William R. Stuart, a retiree living in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, began experimenting with pecans using grafting techniques. He succeeded in creating several improved varieties, including the soft shell pecan. His trees had several advantages: they “reach the bearing period at an earlier date, and in every way tree product is superior in size and uniformity.” He launched the Stuart Pecan Company, which managed a nursery with 1,500 of the improved pecan trees: the company sold nuts as well as seedlings. The Stuart Pecan Company also exhibited at many national and international fairs, including the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, and the popularity of pecan skyrocketed.<sup>21</sup> Other companies jumped in to grow pecan trees and sell the nuts.

Stuart was not the only one working on selling Americans on the pecan. Another was R. C. Koerber, who patented a process for “burnishing” the nutshells to make them more attractive for table use. Koerber began shipping pecans from Texas to New York City on a large scale in 1884.

Three years later he sold 20,000 pounds, and in 1890 more than 100,000 pounds. About 75 percent of the commercial pecans were sold as salted nut meats—whole kernels in one piece, halves, or pieces—and were supplied to restaurants and hotels and for home consumption. Small pecan pieces were mainly used by confectioners to top candies such as sugar drops and chocolate balls, and were very popular coated with sugar or dipped in chocolate, reported R. C. Koerber in 1905.<sup>22</sup> It was thought that pecan growers could make oil from the small pecans, and that this oil might be used in cooking or as lamp oil, but it appears to have had little success.<sup>23</sup>

### Culinary Take Off

By the 1880s pecan recipes begin to appear regularly in American cookbooks. Lafcadio Hearn included a recipe for “Pecan Cake” in his *La Cuisine Creole* (1885). He also mentions that pecans are used to make “Molasses Candy”<sup>24</sup> but, surprisingly, he does not mention pralines. Most visitors to New Orleans did remark on them. James S. Zacharie, who published a *New Orleans Guide* in 1885, wrote in his description of the French Market that “Negro women station themselves at this spot offering for sale ‘pralines,’ sugar cake made of pecan or pea-nuts.” Other books about New Orleans offer similar observations about city’s renowned sugary pecan patties.<sup>25</sup> The *Boston Cooking-School Magazine* reported in 1901 that pecan “pralines are sold all over New Orleans. These are made of the very dark brown sugar. This is boiled until it spins a thread; then the nuts are turned in, and, after a moment’s stirring, turned out on oiled paper in cakes like large cookies, which sell for five cents apiece. In Philadelphia one candy store keeps cocoanut and white sugar, or burnt almonds, also designated as pralines—a general term for nuts cooked in sugar.”<sup>26</sup>

Lafcadio Hearn also made no mention of pecan pie, perhaps because it originated in Texas, and has not yet made it to New Orleans. The first located recipe for pecan pie appeared simultaneously in *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Texas Siftings* on February 6, 1886. Recipes for pecan pie soon appeared in the *Dallas Morning News* and, *Ladies Home Journal*, and many other publications.<sup>27</sup>

Other pecan recipes began to appear in magazines and cookbooks in the late nineteenth century. A recipe for Turkey Stuffed with Pecans was published in *The Home-Maker* magazine in 1890.<sup>28</sup> Fannie Merritt Farmer included a recipe for Brownies made with pecans in her *Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* (1896), one of America’s best selling cookbooks.<sup>29</sup> As more cookbooks emerged from Louisiana and Texas, more pecan recipes made it into print, and as pecans became commonly available throughout the United States, recipes for them proliferated.<sup>30</sup> Another reason for the increase in all nut consumption during the late nineteenth century was the invention of the nutcracker and nut pick, which made it easier to shell nuts. Henry Marcus Quackenbush of Herkimer, New York, is usually credited with this invention, but he was one among many inventors.<sup>31</sup>

### The Vegetarian Conspiracy

Yet another factor in the increased importance of pecans was the vegetarian movement, which was led by John Harvey Kellogg. He had been born in 1852 in Tyrone, Michigan. When he was four years old, his family moved to Battle Creek, where his father was one of the founders of the

Western Reform Institute, a Seventh-Day Adventist health clinic specializing in hydrotherapy (“the water cure”) and vegetarianism. The Seventh-Day Adventists were the largest American religious denomination to endorse vegetarianism. As a teenager, John Harvey Kellogg read a book that claimed that the natural diet for humans was fruits, nuts, grains, tender shoots, and succulent roots. After acquiring a medical degree, Kellogg took charge of the Western Health Institute and subsequently changed its name to the Sanatarium.<sup>32</sup>

At the Sanatarium Kellogg served only vegetarian foods, relying heavily on nuts and seeds to provide protein. He was particularly impressed with the pecan, of which he wrote that it “is perhaps the most highly nutritious of all the natural products of the vegetable kingdom. In fact, with the exception of pure fat or oil, there is no food substance which offers nutritive material in so concentrated a form.”<sup>33</sup>

A steady diet of nuts, however, did not agree with every patient at the Sanatarium. Many of them had stomach problems, and some nuts were hard to digest. But pecans were “one of the most easily digested nuts,” reported Kellogg’s wife, Ella, in her book, *Science in the Kitchen* (1893).<sup>34</sup> Kellogg was a follower of Horace Fletcher, who was a believer in thorough mastication of food, a process called “Fletcherism.” But Sanatarium patients with painful or missing teeth—or no teeth at all—had trouble chewing hard seeds and nuts, so Kellogg began experimenting with ways to make them easier to chew and digest. Using steel rollers, he flattened kernels of wheat and corn between steel rollers and then baked them in the oven. The resulting flakes, served as a breakfast cereal, were well received at the Sanatarium, and Kellogg subsequently sold them through his health food operation.<sup>35</sup>

Encouraged by this success, Kellogg also processed nuts, including pecans, with the steel rollers. This resulted in two products: one, a “fine and comparatively dry and nearly white nutmeal,” and the other, “moist, pasty, adhesive, and brown, which for distinction is termed ‘butter’ or ‘paste.’” (Neither product had an identifiable relationship with peanut butter, which was made from ground peanuts.) Kellogg marketed the meal and “butter,” but neither product appealed to the American palate.

Joseph Lambert, a machinist at the Sanatarium, offered a solution: rather than roll the nuts, why not grind them? Lambert reportedly was the first to make ground nut butters, in 1894. He experimented with the design of the meat grinder to make it more suitable for grinding nuts, and turned out a product that was more palatable.

John Harvey Kellogg was an excellent promoter, and he lectured to hundreds of thousands of people throughout the country in more than five thousand public presentations. In many of his talks he extolled the virtues of nut butters. America’s elite visited the Battle Creek Sanatarium and spread Kellogg’s wisdom across the United States and around the world. As he had done with cold cereal, Kellogg energetically promoted and sold “Nut Butters.”<sup>36</sup> Other companies began making and selling pecan butter; by 1903 it sold for 12 to 20 cents per pound. Pecan butter never achieved the success of peanut butter, mainly because peanuts were so much cheaper, but also, as one observer wrote, because its taste “was never much liked.”<sup>37</sup>

Joseph Lambert left the Sanatorium and launched his own business selling nut products and equipment for blanching, roasting, and grinding nuts into butter.<sup>38</sup> Lambert mailed advertisements to households throughout the United States, and some people who bought these machines developed small businesses selling nut products. Lambert also published leaflets and booklets extolling the high food value of nuts. He advertised his company as the maker of “Nut Grinders.” His product line included “all kinds of nuts, shelled and unshelled” and “a fine variety of ‘Pure and Wholesome NUT FOODS.’”<sup>39</sup> These foods included pecan meats, pecan butter, and pecan milk.

Joseph Lambert’s wife, Alameda, published the most impressive nineteenth-century collection of pecan recipes in her *Guide for Nut Cookery* (1899). She included recipes for pecan butter, milk, rolls, sausages, gravy, pea-and-pecan puree, pie crust, and mince pie. Using Nutora or Nutmeato, homemade meat substitutes based on nut butters (pecan was one option) and cornstarch, Lambert gave elaborate instructions (accompanied by dim black-and-white photographs) for fashioning “mock” entrées including turkey legs, “roast turkey,” “lobster,” “goose,” “cutlets” and “trout.” Sticks of macaroni stood in for turkey leg-bones, and potato slices for the fins and tail of the trout.<sup>40</sup> In 1914, E. G. Fulton’s *Vegetarian Cook Book; Substitutes for Flesh Foods* featured two recipes with pecans: “Macaroni and Green Pea Salad” and “Vegetarian Salmon Salad.”<sup>41</sup> Recipes using pecans appeared in other vegetarian cookbooks.<sup>42</sup>

### The Pecan Goes Mainstream

By the early twentieth century, mainstream cookbooks included pecan recipes. A 1906 a charity cookbook from New Jersey included them in many salads, including Waldorf Potato Salad, California Cherry Salad, Summer Salad, and Alligator Pear Salad, as well as in a maple sauce for ice cream.<sup>43</sup> *Table Talk’s Illustrated Cook Book* (1906) published recipes for pecans in Charlotte Russe, a Pear Dessert, and Lettuce Salad with Cheese Balls.<sup>44</sup> Many recipes just substituted pecans for other nuts. The *Los Angeles Times Cook Book* (1905), for instance, suggested using pecans instead of chestnuts in a recipe for Chestnut Salad.<sup>45</sup>

Waldorf Salad, traditionally a combination of apple, celery and mayonnaise that dates from 1896, was revised first with the addition of walnuts and then pecans in 1918. The recipe was published in Florence Kreisler Greenbaum’s *International Jewish Cook Book*, which included many other recipes with pecans, including Stuffed Dates, Marshmallow Salad, Nut Salad, Pinoche, Rice and Nut Loaf, Strawberries a La “Bridge,” Stuffed Cucumbers, and Surprise Sandwiches.<sup>46</sup>

Pecan growers also promoted sales. Alba Capps Lucas from Brownwood, Texas, believed that pecans were among the most versatile foods. Her husband, H.G. Lucas, was the president of the Texas Pecan Growers Association, and in 1923 she was invited to address the group. She informed the receptive audience that:

Pecans can be used in every course of a luncheon or dinner. First, in the fruit cocktail, ground pecans or pecan halves for topping give a different and distinctive flavor and appearance. Soup, try cream of pecans for a change. For the main dish of dinner, pecans in the turkey, chicken or meat stuffing are a great addition; or for lunch or supper, the pecan

croquettes, loaves, mousse as mentioned before, pecans in creamed chicken, in chicken salad, in and on fruit salad; pecans in potato salad change this homely dish into one for the most fastidious; cheese balls of either cottage or American cheese, rolled in the ground nuts served with mayonnaise in a lettuce leaf; in fact there is no salad nor dessert that is not better and more attractive by the addition of these delicious nuts. For dessert in which they are the principle ingredient, there are many different pies, caramel, sour cream, molasses; cakes with pecans in the batter or the icing or in both, pecan caramel or chocolate sauce for ice cream and puddings; pecans in blanc manges, gelatine, and whipped cream desserts. Then for the accessories, there are the plain pecans, salted pecans, pecans in innumerable combinations in candy, made with white sugar, brown sugar, maple sugar, in pralines, divinity, fudge, Mexican candy; in or on fondants; glacéed (one of the prettiest and best ways.) For sandwiches, pecan bread for sandwich fillings, pecan butter which can be obtained in some markets or is easily made at home by grinding the nuts in a fine chopper; pecans ground or chopped and combined with cheese, dates, raisins . . . .

She also recommended “pecan butter for the lunch-box of the child from 8–12 years old.”<sup>47</sup> Mrs. Lucas followed up on her talk by publishing a with a 16-page cookbooklet with pecan recipes.<sup>48</sup>

#### Pecan Promotion Companies

Dr. John Craig, a professor of horticulture at Cornell University, believed that the pecan was “the King of Nut Fruits,” and that the improved varieties, such as Stuart’s “paper shell” or thin-shelled pecan, could revolutionize the pecan growing industry. These new varieties were larger and easier to process; they were also more productive than other varieties then under cultivation.<sup>49</sup> Craig established what was hailed as the first commercial pecan orchard and he encouraged others to do the same.<sup>50</sup> What emerged were “pecan promotion companies,” which acquired land, planted pecan trees, and then sold small parcels of the land to investors.<sup>51</sup>

At the time, the cotton crop in the South was devastated by the boll weevil, and property values had collapsed. Northern companies purchased vast acreage in the South, planted paper shell pecans, and sold sections of the plantings as investments.<sup>52</sup> One company that excelled at this was the Oak Ridge Pecan Company, based near Chicago. It purchased land in Florida and then sold it at a substantial profit. To encourage investors, Oak Ridge published *Facts about Paper Shell Pecans. Your Opportunity Growing Them in Sunny Florida* (1910).<sup>53</sup> Another Chicago-based land scheme was the Mobile Farm Land Company, which sold paper shell pecan acreage around Mobile, Alabama. It offered “an Assured Income for Life and a Home for Retirement Adjoining a City of 75,000 People on the Gulf Coast.”<sup>54</sup>

Yet another company that engaged in land speculation was headed by Elam G. Hess, the president of the Keystone Pecan Company in Manheim, Pennsylvania.<sup>55</sup> It was formed in 1912, when he acquired 10,500 acres of land near Albany, Georgia, and planted 20 trees to the acre, for a total of 210,000 trees.<sup>56</sup> In 1915 the Keystone Pecan Company published a 48 page book on *The Paper Shell Pecan*, and gave it away free to potential investors.<sup>57</sup> It was such a success that the company published four more versions in the next six years.

By 1919 the paper shell pecan was hailed as “the horticultural triumph of the ages the gift of a gracious God who no doubt could but never did produce a finer nut and who in his inscrutable wisdom gave a natural monopoly in its culture to the lower cotton belt for no where else on the habitable globe does it reach the perfection attained there.”<sup>58</sup> In Georgia alone, production increased from 354,046 pounds in 1908 to 2,544,377 pounds in 1919.<sup>59</sup>

World War I gave pecan sales a boost. When the United States entered the war in 1917, a number of staple foods, such as beef, pork and wheat, were rationed. Nuts were a good alternative.<sup>60</sup> When the war ended, however, sales declined and millions of pounds of pecans deluged the market. Elam Hess advertised his pecan orchards in magazines,<sup>61</sup> but he was also determined to increase consumption of the nuts, so he sponsored a national contest for pecan recipes. The company received 21,155 recipes from “5,083 housewives.” In October 1924 Hess established the Keystone Pecan Research Laboratory to test the recipes and select the best. These were included in *800 Proved Pecan Recipes: Their Place in the Menu*, which was published the following year. It includes recipes for pecan yeast breads, pecan quick breads, pecan cakes, pecan candies, pecan desserts, pecan entrees, pecan pies and pastries, pecan salads, pecan sandwiches and relishes, and many more, as well as more than eighty menus, all with pecans.<sup>62</sup> It is the largest compendium of pecan recipes ever assembled.

Hess began experimenting with pecans and came up with a pulverized product— 2/3 pecans and 1/3 almonds— which he named Pecano and marketed as a health food. In 1928 Hess created the Pecano Manufacturing Company (later renamed the Kano Manufacturing Company) to manufacture pecan and other nut products.<sup>63</sup> The company made a number of health claims for its products, such as these products supplied “more nourishing value than does beefsteak, eggs, whole milk or fish.” It was, according to the company’s advertisements, the best source of tissue building material” and that it “revitalizes or recleanses one’s body and . . . is effective in treating malnutrition in all cases or in cases which may be due to causes other than a deficiency of the food elements supplied by this product.” The and other claims were challenged in court. Hess had crossed a line by proclaiming that Kano was “Hess had to promise to cease making these and certain other misrepresentations for Kano. Eventually, the Federal Trade Commission forced him to stop advertising his product this way. During the Depression, both companies falter. The Keystone Pecan Company went bankrupt in 1933; the Kano Manufacturing Company in 1938.<sup>64</sup>

### Healthful Pecans

It wasn’t just vegetarians and land speculators who appreciated the nutritious pecan. The medical community also promoted pecans for health reasons. A 1902 article in *Good Health* magazine recommended a handful of pecans after each meal to end constipation.<sup>65</sup> Two years later an article on nuts in the *Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette* proclaimed that “At the head of all the varieties of edible nuts stands the pecan. A pound of pecan nut meats (broken) of fine quality costs 35 cents, and is equal in nutritive value to several pounds of fat beefsteak.”<sup>66</sup> Health-food and exercise guru



Bernarr Macfadden also encouraged the consumption of nuts, especially pecans, in his magazine *Physical Culture*, and companies marketing pecans advertised in it.<sup>67</sup>

Several studies were conducted on the nutritive value of nuts, including pecans, beginning in 1901.<sup>68</sup> As soon as vitamins and protein were mentioned in these investigations, pecans were promptly identified as a health food. Articles in the *American Nut Journal*, an industry publication, extolled the virtues of the pecan. One reported that:

Pecans are filled with vitamins, that element which is so essential to our health and which is lacking in so many food substances. They are also one of the most valuable sources of mineral salts, especially Phosphorus, which is the brain building requirement. Pecans are clean and sweet and free from putrefactive bacteria, from uric acid, urea, carmine etc. which cause so much disease. They are particularly indicated in such diseases as gout for they are practically purin free, and in diabetes, where a diet of low starch and sugar content is necessary.<sup>69</sup>

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported in 1918 “that nuts, which have long found a valued place in the dietary of the diabetic without detriment to his health, will grow in popularity as foods for the well.”<sup>70</sup> Pecan publications extolled the healthful qualities of the pecan. One proudly announced that the pecan contained 71.2 percent fat, which the publication believed, demonstrated that pound for pound, pecans were much better than cereals, milk, fruits and vegetables: It was “Nature’s finest, most concentrated food product,” and it contained protein, tryptophan, lysine, vitamins A and B and many other good nutritive qualities.<sup>71</sup> The pecan’s nutritive qualities have been promoted ever since. The healthful effects of eating pecans have continued to receive widespread visibility.

### Recent Developments

During World War II, beef and many other foods were rationed and the United States government once again extolled the virtues of nuts, including the pecan. Since World War II, more than forty pecan cookbooks and pamphlets have been published by pecan lovers, state agricultural agencies, and pecan organizations. Pecans continue to be eaten in a variety of ways. Several commercial pastries and candies are made with pecans. Interstate Brands Corporation introduced a breakfast pastry called “Pecan Rollers,” which are manufactured by Hostess Brands today. The Standard Candy Company of Nashville, Tennessee, which has made Goo Goo Clusters (peanuts, caramel, and marshmallow covered with chocolate) for one hundred years, introduced the Goo Goo Supreme, made with pecans instead of peanuts, in the early 1980s, and of course, most ice cream companies have butter pecan as a selection. A number of firms, many of them in Texas and Louisiana, offer mail-order pecans in various forms as well as pecan pralines, divinity, fruitcake, cheesecake, brittle, and other specialties. Pecan cookery is alive and well in the twenty-first century. Since 2000 ten pecan cookbooks, pamphlets or works with many pecan section have been published.<sup>72</sup>

Of hundreds of foods that originated in North America and were consumed in pre-Columbian times, few have any commercial use today. The pecan is the only nut that survived from this period and it remains an important commercial product. The United States produces the largest quantity (more than 80 percent) of the world's pecan nuts, followed by Mexico, and now South Africa and Australia. Historically, Canada was the United States's largest export market. China began to import pecans in 2004, and by 2009 that country was purchasing 25 percent of the entire U.S. pecan crop.<sup>73</sup>

### Postscript

As of 2007, the pecan trees planted by George Washington in the 1790s continued to thrive at Mt. Vernon, and at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello pecan trees survive that are thought to have been planted during Jefferson's lifetime.

Col. William R. Stuart, who developed the thin shelled pecan, is often heralded as the "father of the pecan industry."

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