



NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER
2014-2015 NUMBER 3

Editor: Shirley Baugher
Designer: Norman Baugher

FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS CHICAGO


www.fawchicago.org

President's Message

CHRISTINE BERN, *President*

Friends of American Writers recognize Patrick Iovanelli, an MFA student at National Louis University, with a \$1,000 scholarship. We also welcome to our November meeting Dr. Joanna Cook from National Louis University. Through this scholarship program, Friends of American Writers distinguishes itself from other book groups. Through our scholarships, we continue to encourage high standards and recognize gifted writers.

The scholarship money is taken from the Friends of American Writers Foundation Fund. The Foundation Fund is funded by gifts and donations from members. The interest on this money is used to support the scholarship program in accordance with the by-laws. Three FAW members who also serve as its Board of Trustees administer the Foundation Fund.

The Foundation Fund is different from the Patron's Fund, which supports our May Awards Program. FAW members may, at any time, donate to the Foundation Fund. A donation of \$1,000 or more entitles you to be listed in the yearbook as a Foundation Fund contributor. Please consider giving generously. 

NOVEMBER PROGRAM


Celebrity Chef Gale Gand to Visit FAW
ROBERTA GATES, *Program Chair*

With the holidays upon us, who better than Gale Gand, a celebrity chef based here in Chicago, to help us get ready for the festivities?

Gale began her culinary career as a pastry chef at Tru, the renowned Chicago restaurant

which she and her former husband, Rick Tramonto, founded. Additional projects have included hosting a television show called *Sweet Dreams* on the Food Network and serving as a celebrity judge on *Top Chef* and the *Food Network Challenge*. Her biggest honor came in 2001 when she received the James Beard Foundation Award for Outstanding Pastry Chef.

Gale is also well known for her cookbooks, the latest of which is *Gale Gand's Lunch!* Other titles include *Gale Gand's Brunch!* (2009), now in its fifth printing; *Chocolate & Vanilla* (2006); *Short + Sweet* (2004); *Just a Bite* (2001); and *Butter Sugar Flour Eggs* (1999). She also co-authored two books with Rick Tramonto: *Tru: A Cookbook from the Legendary Chicago Restaurant* (2004) and *American Brasserie* (1997), which features accessible recipes for classic dishes.

Gale received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology and attended culinary school at La Varenne in Paris. She lives in Riverwoods, IL, with her husband, Jimmy, son, and two daughters. 



▲ Gale Gand

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Luncheon Reservations

Luncheon reservations for the November 12, 2014 meeting of the Friends of American Writers are due no later than 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 9. Please note that this deadline is firm, and no reservations will be accepted following this date and time. To reserve, please call only Lorraine Campione (773-275-5118) or Vivian Mortensen (847-827-8339).

Luncheon will be served at 12:00 noon in the main floor dining room of the Fortnightly Club of Chicago, 120 E. Bellevue Place. The cost of the luncheon is \$40, payable by cash or check to FAW, in the front lobby on the day of the luncheon. Discount parking for FAW luncheon guests is available in the lot just west of the Fortnightly at 100 E. Bellevue Place. If you are reserving for a group, we ask that only one person make the group request to avoid confusion. Please note: if you make a reservation and find you cannot attend, you must cancel no later than 6:00 p.m. on the Sunday preceding the meeting. Reservations not cancelled must be paid for by the member.

Nominating Committee

Currently, three members have been named to the Nominating Committee. They are: Marion Sherlock, Shirley Baugher, and Tammie Bob. If you would like to serve on this committee, please contact Christine Bern, cjbern@aol.com

The following positions for the FAW Board are open for 2015-17: President, Vice-Presi-

dent, Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, Literary Awards Chair, Juvenile Awards Chair, Revisions, and Yearbook. If you would be interested in serving in one of these positions, please contact Shirley (shirleyba@rcn.com), Marion (marion.sherlock@sbcglobal.net) or Tammie (Bobtam410@gmail.com).

Juvenile Awards Committee

Tanya Klasser, Juvenile Awards Committee Chair, announced that 25 books have been received for review by the Committee to date. More are expected by the December deadline.

Literary Awards Committee

Tammie Bob, Literary Committee Chair, reported that 29 books are currently being considered by members of that group. Tammie also anticipated the arrival of more in November and December.

If FAW members have books they would like to recommend to the Juvenile Awards Committee or the Literary Awards Committee, please email your recommendations either to Tanya Klasser (Juvenile Awards Committee Chair, brujota1@aol.com) or Tammie Bob (Literary Awards Committee Chair, Bobtam410@gmail.com). Eligibility requirements are as follows:

The author must either live in the Midwest or have strong Midwestern ties.

The author may not have previously published more than three books (the third publication is eligible.)

The book must have been published in the current calendar year.


Welcome New Members

FAW welcomes the following new member to the organization:

June Gruner
5640 N. Kenmore Ave. #2N
Chicago, IL

If you know of people who might be interested in becoming members of FAW, please contact Sandie Weiss, redheadedsandie@sbcglobal.net

Congratulations to Gillian Flynn

Novelist Gillian Flynn is all over the news these days. Her latest work, *Gone Girl*, was at the top of the *New York Times* bestseller list for months. She wrote the screenplay for the book, and the movie, starring Ben Affleck, has opened to rave reviews. It topped the attendance chart for two weeks and still commands huge audiences. You may remember that Ms. Flynn won a literary award from FAW in 2007 for her excellent novel, *Sharp Objects*. 



Since Gale Gand, our November speaker, is one of the foremost bakers in America, I decided to look into the history of baking in this country. What I found was very interesting, indeed.





The Colonial Baker



Commercial bakeries were few and far between in colonial times. Housewives had to do all the baking themselves either directly on the hearth, or later in brick ovens, without the wide array of cookbooks, cooking utensils, and cooking appliances available today. Because baking was such a labor-intensive chore, the cook

baked only once a week--making all the bread and pastry a family would eat during that period.

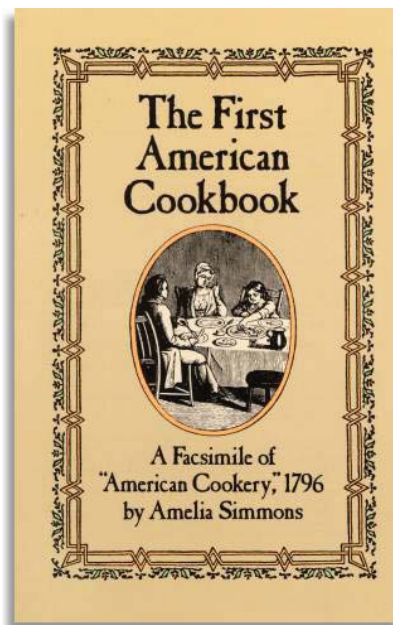
Colonial cooks called their recipes “receipts”. These receipts admonished the bakers to complete the following tasks before beginning to bake:

1. Make sure the fireplace was hot, raked, banked, and ready for baking
2. Dry the flour by the fire, sift and weigh it
3. Prepare raisins (if using) by rubbing them between towels to remove dirt and stems, then deseed one at a time
4. Cut, pound, and granulate the desired amount of sugar from blocks
5. Dry and grind spices to a powder
6. Wash the butter with plain or rose water to remove preserving salt
7. Clean and assemble baking equipment.

The First American Cookbook

Early American settlers relied on English books for cooking and baking guidance. One volume brought to this country by many colonists was *Five Hundreth Pointes of Good Husbandrie*, first printed in 1573. The book covered everything pertaining to life inside and outside the house. A section called *Huswiferie* advised when to sow certain plants, how to make blankets and sheets, and what to serve on special occasions such as: pancakes, wafers, seed cakes, pasties and frumenty. The author did not, however, include receipts for making these delicacies.

Most colonial homemakers put together their own personal books for culinary and medicinal preparations. Many of these early receipt books, some beautifully written, can still be found in library and museum collections today. A mistress in a well-to-do household likely had access to *The*



English Huswife: Containing the Inward and Outward Vertues which ought to be in a Complete Woman by the English author Gervase Markham, a companion to *The English Husbandman*. *Huswife* had a section devoted to cookery, as well as a calendar for when to plant herbs according to the phases of

the moon, and advice on dairying and brewing, how to achieve “virtue in physick”, detailed remedies for griefes in stomackes, ointments for breeding haire, and suggestions for curing consumption and the plague. Markham also advised women on how to be witty, chaste, religious, and wise in discourse.

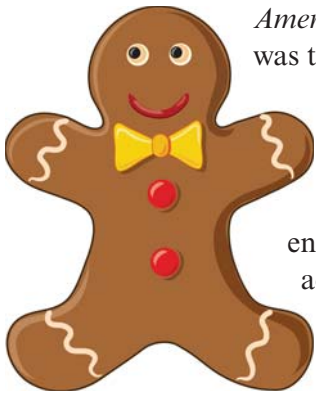
After *Huswife* appeared, other English writers came out with how-to books on running a household and the art of cookery. The problem with all of these books, however, was that they were directed to British homemakers and did not take into account changes that had been made by American settlers. Amelia Simmons’ *American Cookery*, published in 1796, was the first cookbook authored by an American, and it came like a second declaration of American independence. A paperback that contained only forty-seven pages, Simmons’ book covered changes in preparation and names that had taken place in American food. There were receipts for making familiar dishes: meat pies, trifles, and syllabubs; and instructions on how to dress a turtle. Simmons also included five preparations using corn meal (an ingredient unknown in England): Indian Puddings, Johnny Cakes (or Hoe cakes), and Indian Slapjacks (a cousin to our pancakes). Other typically American dishes found in her book were crookneck or winter squash pudding, roast turkey with cranberry sauce, bacon smoked with corn cobs, pickles made with watermelon rinds, and a local take on minced pies. Her receipt for “pompkin puddings”

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closely resembled our pumpkin pie. It was baked in a crust and contained ingredients familiar to every pie baker who has ever read the back of a can of Libby's pumpkin.

Decidedly American was her chapter on gingerbread. European gingerbread was more like a cookie than a cake—similar to the gingerbread men we see at holiday time. This hard gingerbread was very popular among troops because it could be easily transported. A seventeen-year old Benjamin Franklin brought a receipt for hard gingerbread to Philadelphia, where it was widely used. Simmons' book offered the receipt for hard gingerbread; but it also included, for the first time in any cookery book, a "soft gingerbread to be baked in pans," the kind comes to mind when we say gingerbread. Another American touch in her gingerbread was the use of molasses rather than the British treacle.

Gingerbread man



American Cookery detailed a process that was to revolutionize both American and European cookery, namely the use of a chemical leaven in doughs—an ingredient that evolved into the product we know as baking powder. Until the end of the eighteenth century, bakers had achieved lightness in their baked goods by beating air into the batter along with eggs. They also used yeast or spirits to produce a ferment in bread and cakes. It was newsworthy when someone wrote in 1796 that an "anonymous woman" (Simmons) had dared introduce a chemical leaven into her dough to produce carbon dioxide in a hurry. Though some cooks were already adding pearlash (potassium carbonate) to leaven quick breads, gingerbread, and cookie dough, Amelia Simmons was the first to write about it.

Sales of *American Cookery* were so good that Simmons had to come out with a second, revised edition in 1800. The updated version included new receipts, such as "Election Cake" a yeast-leavened cake made with raisins and dried currants; "Federal Pound Cake"; and another American dish called, "chouder".

Simmons' success paved the way for other books on American baking. One was *Seventy-Five Receipts*

for Pastry, Cakes, and Sweetmeats by Miss Eliza Leslie: *A Lady of Philadelphia*, published in Boston in 1828. Miss Leslie wrote in a plain, style that was easy to follow. For the first time, she listed all ingredients, along with their proper quantities, at the head of each receipt. The introduction stated that, if followed "precisely according to directions" receipts would produce excellent results. She took care to use ingredients available to families who lived in the country or in small towns.

Indian Pound Cake As Written by Miss Eliza Leslie, 1828

Eight eggs

The weight of eight eggs in powdered sugar

The weight of six eggs in Indian meal, sifted

Half a pound of butter

One nutmeg grated—or a tea-spoonful of cinnamon

Half a glass of mixed wine and brandy

Stir the butter and sugar to a cream. Beat the eggs very light. Stir the meal and eggs alternately into the butter and sugar. Add spice and liquor. Stir all well. Butter a tin pan, put in the mixture, and bake in a moderate oven.

The cake should be eaten while fresh.

Other popular publications were Susannah Carter's *Frugal Housewife*, Hannah Glasse's *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*, and Maria Rundell's *A New System of American Cookery*. All were geared toward the American cook, and all owed a debt of gratitude to Amelia Simmons. Along with *American Cookery*, they offer contemporary readers a window into the way people lived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

These cookery books encouraged cooks to try their hands at many different kinds of baked goods: rye bread, biscuits, corn bread, Johnnycakes, cup cakes, waffles, crullers, and more. In the late 1700s, small pastries (later called cookys) made their appearance. At first, they were hard, thin, dense and so difficult to make they



were reserved for special occasions or purchased from bakeries. Chemical leavenings changed that.

Moving On

Americans have always been great home bakers—and they loved to bake. So much so, that by 1900, 95 percent of all flour produced in the United States was used by home cooks. Baking equipment in early America was pretty primitive by our standards. All mixing was done by hand until 1870 when the first rotary egg beater was invented. Then came the Dutch oven, a boon because it offered radiant heat in a small space. A large iron pot was heated in the fireplace. Dough was put into the heated pot, covered with the lid, and returned to the fireplace to bake until done. Another great baking improvement was the roasting kitchen, a reflector placed in front of the hearth that reflected heat back into the fireplace. This was the beginning of dry heat baking as we know it today.

Early fireplace with Dutch oven

Stoves with ovens came along in the 1800s, a mixed blessing for early bakers. The stoves had to be cleaned and polished every day. Controlling the temperature of the first ovens was hit and miss. Cooks tested the temperature by putting their arms in the oven. If they could only hold them there to a count of five, the oven was too hot for baking; if they got to 15, it was too cool. Somewhere in between was fine. Next came the cast iron range invented by Benjamin Thompson. This range had one fire source that could heat several cooking pots, and the heating level for each pot could be regulated individually.

The early cast iron stoves were too large for home kitchens, but in 1834, Steward Oberlin patented a compact one that worked for the average housewife. Then came the technological leap to modern gas and electric ovens in the late 1920s. By the mid-1930s, these ranges had become standard kitchen appliances. Now when a cook wants to bake, s/he just turns a dial and sets it to the desired temperature. No more arms in the oven. The creative baking possibilities were endless.

A Pinch of This, a Hint of That: Embracing New Ingredients

Early bakers took advantage of the flavorings available to them. These included molasses, rose water, caraway seeds, lemon, almonds, coconuts, and a variety of spices. Willingness to test new ingredients intensified in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Vanilla, peanuts, and oats made their appearance in baking after the Civil War. One of the most innovative new ingredients was discovered in the 1930s when a creative innkeeper named Ruth Wakefield was making a batch of cookies for her guests. Mid-recipe, she found that she had run out of walnuts. Undeterred, she tossed in a handful of chopped chocolate—ergo, the chocolate chip cookie. The new cookie was such a hit that Wakefield kept the chocolate chips in, even after she had replenished the walnuts. The cookies came to be known as “Toll House Cookies” after the name of her inn. Later bakers tried to outdo Ms. Wakefield by adding white chocolate, candied ginger, macadamia nuts, and crushed candies. Whether or not these were improvements is anyone’s call.



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Fast forward to Gale Gand's take on ingredients in her 1999 book, *Butter, Flour, Sugar, Eggs*:

We began this book with a single goal... to capture the sense of sweet abundance you feel when you walk into your favorite bakery. The glossy tarts, the pale ivory cheesecakes, the chunky cookies, the brightly colored birthday cakes, the darkly frosted eclairs, the holiday pies, the chocolate truffles—we wanted them all. But as we tried to pin that experience down, something strange happened. What really intrigued us wasn't the perfectly risen cake, or the flawless pie crust, or the picture-perfect meringues...it was the stuff in the kitchen: the bricks of smooth creamy butter, the snowy mountains of sugar, the sacks of flour, the golden fresh glow of fresh egg yolks, and the magic of stiffly whipped egg whites. It was the blocks of dark chocolate and bowls of melted chocolate, piles of lemons ready for zesting, and pale pink grapefruits and juicy peaches and ruby cherries and fat blackberries. It was shiny pecans and hard almonds and soft cream cheese, heady ginger and candied citron and everything else



that makes baking so deeply satisfying. We're in love with our own ingredients.

In other words, not so different from her 1796 counterpart, Miss Amelia Simmons. As Jean-Baptists Alphonse Karr noted in 1849, “plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose”—the more things change, the more they stay the same.

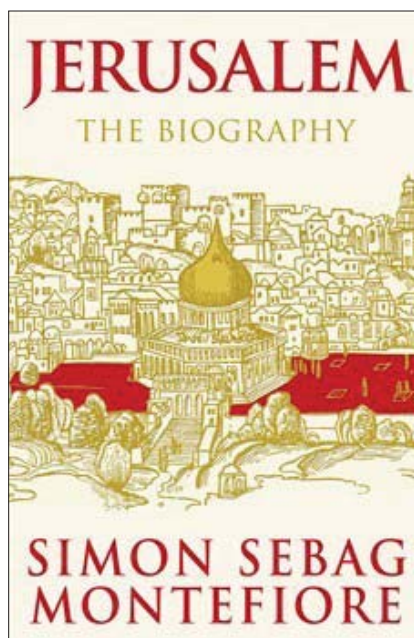
The Reading Corner

Jerusalem... The Biography,
Simon Sebag Montefiore

Reviewed by Norman Baugher

The 544 pages plus 170 pages of photos, family trees, maps, front matter, and back matter of *Jerusalem: The Biography* are a mere pittance for a book covering 5,000 years of history. With little knowledge about Jerusalem, but with a desire to learn about it without heroic effort, seeing the simply titled book lying in plain view on the book table at Costco I could not help but pick it up. The photo pages alone persuaded me to take

it home, notwithstanding its heft. I'm happy I made that decision. Pictures, graphs, and maps are often more useful than words to



convey ideas. This book is amply supplied with those visual aids. Not having a timeline is a minor shortcoming, but since the chapters are named by epoch and are in date order, the table of contents serves this function pretty well.

Although the subject is complex, the organization is straightforward and clear. Some themes are little more than a single chapter. Each chapter reads like a complete short story, allowing one to skip around and to read it in fits and starts as I chose to do. The structure and the data-filled writing style makes Jerusalem a great reference book. I will surely return to it from time to time to refresh my memory or make a point on Facebook. Much of what I originally sought from the

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book is in the preface, prologue, and epilogue, but I read on anyway because the author is a fine storyteller.

Jerusalem has been a center of conflict and headlined in the news during the entirety of my life. When I think of Jerusalem I cannot help but ask, “Who is the rightful caretaker of this ancient place?” I hoped the book would help me settle this question, but it turns out this is not the author’s objective. Probably there is no unbiased answer to that question. The land, now called Israel, was already occupied by an assortment of peoples thousands of years before King David united the people of Israel. Since then Jerusalem has been a Jewish enclave for 1,000 years; a Christian settlement for about 400 years; and an Islamic haven for 1,300 years. Not one of these religions gained Jerusalem without battle. If there is an answer to the question who owns the place it may be as simple as this: whoever has the greatest desire and the resources to physically occupy the land.

My prior reading of Jerusalem’s ancient history was limited to the New Testament, which reveals little about the place. I knew from ancient maps that it had been regarded as the center of the world, but those maps were no more than artful diagrams representing faith rather than physical reality. Montefiore, with his graceful prose, helped me sense the pull and aura of Jerusalem. He wrote: “Jerusalem is the Holy city, yet it has always been a den of superstition, charlatanism and bigotry; the desire and prize of empires, yet of no strategic value;

the cosmopolitan home of many sects, each of which believes the city belongs to them alone... so sectarian it excludes any other. Jerusalem is the house of the one God, the capital of two peoples, the temple of three religions . . . Jerusalem is both terrestrial and celestial.”

Montefiore brings to life the stories of Jerusalem through the lives of the people and families who created and destroyed it, beginning with David and ending with an epilogue taking us from 1967 to the present. Along the way we encounter an incredible number of historical figures, ancient and contemporary, who trod on the golden stones of Jerusalem or have had a hand in creating one of its epochs. An abbreviated list includes Abraham and David (Old Testament); Herod and Jesus (New Testament); and the third Abrahamic founder Muhammad. The roles of emperors Alexander, Marc Anthony, Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, Nero, Napoleon, and Catherine the Great are also described. Modern notables include Winston Churchill, Harry S. Truman and current world leaders.

I was stunned by the unimaginably large numbers of named and unnamed people killed within and between each epoch as kings, emperors and religious leaders battled for dominance. As an example, in 70 AD Titus, with 60,000 troops, besieged Jerusalem, then a city of 600,000. All of the Jerusalemites died of starvation, were killed, or were sold into slavery. Such massive killings happened over and over again with new opposing parties but with equally disastrous

results. I don’t know that any other place in the world has been overrun, totally destroyed, ravaged, and rebuilt as many times as Jerusalem. Even so, there were periods, long and short, when disparate populations lived together in peace. Even now, in a period of enormous distrust and disrespect, disparate groups of people are able to gather in this City. Near the end of the book, Montefiore notes: “It is now one hour before dawn on a day in Jerusalem. The Dome of the Rock is open, Muslims are praying. The Wall is always open, the Jews are praying. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher is open, the Christians are praying in several languages. The sun is rising over Jerusalem, its rays making the light Herodian stones of the Wall almost snowy—just as Josephus described it two thousand years ago.”

This book leaves me with the impression that, ultimately, one cannot ever fully grasp Jerusalem because there is no single Jerusalem. Jerusalem is an idea as much as a place. Ideas are ephemeral. Owing to the fact that Jerusalem has been destroyed and rebuilt many times the best one can do is dig through layers of rubble, chance upon bits and pieces of Jerusalem’s past epochs, mentally piece the wreckage together, and perhaps catch a faint sight of an epoch. The task is made more difficult since each reconstructed Jerusalem was often created from the stones of earlier versions and the comingling makes it hard to distinguish one period from another. Ancient texts from all around the known world help

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by providing additional information that supports physical evidence. In the end, the combined evidence produces only sketches rather than painted fully realized scenes. The mystery is probably a part of its attraction. It allows each of us to form our own image of Jerusalem.

“Jerusalem: house of the one God, the capital of two peoples, the temple of three religions—terrestrial and celestial.” 