

The Rice Paper

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The Rice-Paper is the electronic newsletter of the CGRF. Published periodically, it collects the most recent findings in the botany, cultivation, material culture, culinary preparation, and history of Carolina Gold Rice and associated heritage grains. Contributions and editorial correspondence should be directed to Dr. David S. Shields at the University of South Carolina: dshields@gwm.sc.edu. The information published here appears as a public service. CGRF encourages republication of The Rice-Paper's contents provided there is no alteration of the substance of the material being reproduced, that the reproducer does not profit from the republication, and that a clear and full credit is given to author and source of the material.

Charleston Gold: A Direct Descendant of Carolina Gold

By David S. Shields

Charleston Gold, a short-stalked aromatic descendent of America's most historic rice, Carolina Gold, was approved for release by the Texas Department of Agriculture on February 11, 2011. Anna McClung of the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Rice Research Unit in Beaumont, Texas, field tested the variety over the last two years, and has recommended to the state seed certification board that the variety be recognized. Bred by Merle Shepard of the Clemson University, Coastal Research and Education Center in Charleston, SC and Gurdev S. Khush, the former Head, Plant Breeding, Genetics and Biochemistry Division of the International Rice Research Institute, in the Philippines, Charleston Gold retains the distinctive gold hull and wholesome mouth feel of its famous ancestor, adding to it the short stalk stature and longer grain of IR64. A further enhancement came from crossing with IR65610-24-3-6-3-2-3, a short stalked fragrant breeding line, giving Carolina Gold an aroma for the first time. Shepard and Khush developed Charleston Gold using the time-honored pedigree breeding method—the method employed by horticulturists in the era before gene-insertion—to make improvements on the classic grain.

Landrace Carolina Gold became the staple rice of the American South shortly after the American Revolution. Famously beautiful in the field and

on the plate, Carolina Gold emerged at a time when culinary taste favored rice in composite dishes—pilau, perloos, bogs, and stews—in which the ability to complement the flavors of other ingredients was paramount. Non-aromatic rices were deemed superior to aromatic varieties in the United States. During the 20th century an aesthetic shift occurred—the perfumed rices of South Asia and India—Jasmine and Basmati enjoyed rising favor in America and world wide, particularly when rice operated as a separate side dish. Dr. Shepard wondered why couldn't Carolina Gold have an aromatic version as well as the classic non-aromatic? The conviction to create a new variety had Shepard consulting with his friend and colleague Gurdev Khush, a world renowned rice breeder, about other beneficial features that might be introduced into a new version of Carolina Gold. The old staple rice grew rather tall and historically was vulnerable to wind damage during storms. One of the innovations of the green-revolution in rice breeding was the development of short stalk rices that were not subject to blow down. Certain of these short stalked rices possessed additional virtues—great productivity—disease resistance—and rapidity of growth, a particular benefit when crops must vie with weeds in extraction of nutrients from the soil.

Plant breeding has been an important on-going dimension of agriculture in America since the rise of the Agricultural Reform movement in the 1820s. The desire to improve the best cultivars in the field gave rise to many extraordinary creations. In the 1840s, for instance, Joshua John Ward, a rice planter, created a long-grain version of Carolina Gold, 5/12ths of an inch long, rather than the standard 3/8ths of an inch. This variety created a world sensation, during the sixteen

years it was on the world market. It was lost with the Civil War. Charleston Gold is a new variety of the fabled grain, carrying on the tradition of Ward's 'long grain' Gold Seed Rice.



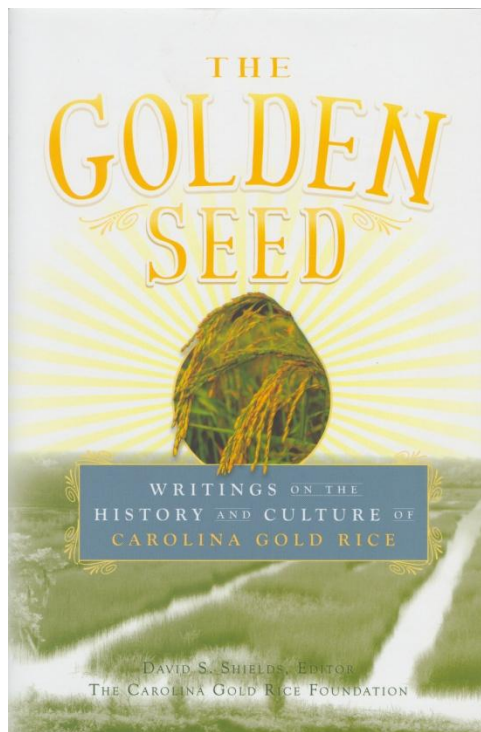
One of the most marked advantages of Charleston Gold is its productivity. Grown conventionally, it yields 6819 pounds per acre, compared to 3745 for Charleston Gold. (One reason that rice culture suspended in South Carolina in the 1910s was that other varieties were more productive and could be grown with less cost. Taste, not productivity, inspired the variety's revival at the end of the 20th century). What is even more striking is its productivity under organic growing regimens—6060 pounds per acre, from three to five hundred pounds more than major aromatic varieties currently grown. This promises extraordinary utility for planting in developing countries in which traditional agriculture is widely practiced.

Shepard and Khush began their effort in 1998. After extensive testing for grain quality and disease resistance traits, the most promising strain of Charleston Gold was dispatched to Beaumont, Texas, in 2008 where Anna McClung refined the variety to seed standard and evaluated it across a number of southern growing environments. The 2011 growing season will see its debut in commercial cultivation.

The Golden Seed

Carolina Gold Rice is the legendary food crop produced in the coastal south—the gold hulled grain that founded many a planter’s fortune, enabled the distinctive African-American inspired Lowcountry cuisine, inspired a global hunger, and fathered many of the modern long grain rices bred in America during the 20th century. Yet one problem with legends is that they collect a great deal of misinformation. Famous things inspire fantasy, supposition, and downright fabrication. Some of the myths surrounding Carolina Gold are quite extravagant: that it was the rice brought from Madagascar to Charleston in the 1690s, that slaves smuggled the grain to Carolina on the slave ships, that it was the rice that first created international demand for Carolina rice in London, that the Civil War’s liberation of the black labor force that worked the rice fields brought about the doom of planting in the Lowcountry. Several years ago, a broad range of scholars convened in Charleston to winnow fact from fiction—chefs, botanists, historians, anthropologists, geneticists, farmers, and art historians. The colloquy produced the first concrete body of knowledge about the grain, its agriculture, culinary employments, influence on plantation design, processing, associated designs, and commercial significance. Immediately the directors of the Carolina Gold Rice Foundation realized that the consolidation of these findings was necessary, and David S. Shields of the University of South Carolina was tasked with gathering and editing the presentations. He also composed an introduction summarizing the state of knowledge about Carolina Gold—the most salient facts of its character and history. Seen through the press by Doug Bostick, *The Golden Seed*, issued from the press in November 2010.

The Golden Seed supplies the first genetic description of the variety, establishes the date of its first introduction into American agriculture (1784), names its first planters, describes the development of the long grain version that would become the highest priced rice on the Parisian world market from 1846-1860, charts the African influence on cultivation schemes, maps the



geography of malaria and other diseases associated with its water world, and considers how much of the rice landscape survives into the 21st century. Only two subjects connected with rice aren’t handled: the milling processing innovations and the decline and death of rice culture . . . because both subjects are handled in separate monographs by Richard Porcher and James Tuten. There is no more thorough, more informed introduction to the south’s fabled rice available. It can be purchased through the Foundation website or through Amazon.com.

A Message from the President

Carolina Gold: Reloaded

By Glenn Roberts

Rice returned to one of Charleston’s oldest farms last fall... straight, verdant and proud Charleston Gold Rice spanning a thirty acre field with an abundance of ripening grain in late fall that emitted the famous gold halo above the field on crystal clear days at sunset. The field is just across the road from Middleburg House... one of the South’s oldest homes quietly keeping watch as it has since the late 1600’s on a gentle hill overlooking the Cooper River. It is fitting that the first large field of Charleston Gold Rice was tested in this historic setting... the rice field originally belonged to the famed Lucas family... their real estate interests in London at one point in the early 19th century surpassed that of the royal

family. All of us at the Carolina Gold Rice Foundation wish to thank Andrew Arnold and the Hill family for their support during this groundbreaking trial.

Our own Campbell Coxe, owner of Carolina Plantation Rice, was wildly successful with a second production field trial of Charleston Gold Rice on Plumfield Plantation on the Pee Dee River near Darlington, South Carolina as well. We wish to thank Campbell Coxe, Dr. Anna McClung and Dr. Chris Deren for their support of this trial.

As Charleston Gold becomes a sensation around the USA, Dr. David Shields, Chairman, The Carolina Gold Rice Foundation, and I would like to make certain that Dr. Merle Shepard, Dr. Gurdev Khush and Dr. Anna McClung are credited for their vision, diligence and continuing support of this rice in its development over the last decade and a half. It is truly rare that history and modern science intersect with such elegance in the today’s culinary world. Stay tuned for many, many stories from national and international media on the odyssey of Charleston Gold later in 2011.

Elsewhere, rice trials continued on Edisto Island, Cherokee Tract in Charleston, an Italian Bay system field fed by four springs in Grays, South Carolina, Cumberland Island off the coast of Southern Georgia, as far upland as Virginia and inland to Morganton, NC and many other places. Of special note: The Carolina Gold Rice Foundation would like to thank Landon Thorne, James Mixson and Pinckney Mikell for their support and generosity in their efforts to further rice research in South Carolina.

All of us at the CGRF realized this fact late in 2010: Dr. Shepard, Dr. Shields and yours truly are thrilled to confess that for the first time since the inception of the CGRF, we have heard about so many new fields of Carolina Gold Rice across the USA that we have not been able to track their progress first hand. Of note, Baker Hierloom Seeds and Southern Exposure Seed Exchange have begun Carolina Gold Rice seed production and distribution in earnest.

The 2010 Carolina Gold Rice and Charleston Gold Rice trials supported by the CGRF addressed questions about fertility, salting, water resources, watershed buffering, foreign variety suppression, flavor development, cooking characteristics and more. The agronomic portion of these studies were also replicated at Texas Rice Improvement Association in Beaumont, Texas, and The Dale Bumpers Institute in Stuttgart, Arkansas.

Dr. Shields and I are particularly grateful for the many artisan bakers experimenting with modern takes on Colonial and Antebellum era rice breads in 2010. Dr. Shields and I have been known to share a loaf standing in various parking lots after lectures while discussing the impending return of our staple rice breads... both of us are avid rice bread bakers. Artisan bakers ... we salute you and hope you speed to the market with your new rice breads.

We are excited to announce the release of *Golden Seed*, edited by Dr. Shields. It appears that the first printing will sell out quickly. Please visit carolinagoldricefoundation.org to reserve your copy.

Last and most important, the Board of Directors of the Carolina Gold Rice Foundation would like to express their gratitude for the many passionate contributors to our mission throughout 2010.

Here's to Dr. Merle Shepard and his colleagues ... may their new Charleston Gold Rice be as successful as its iconic golden parent.

A Passion for Life and Rice

By Merle Shepard

Tom Hargrove had a passion for rice and for life. He died of a heart attack at the age of 66 on January 23, 2011. I had a long chat with him by phone on the Friday previous evening. He spent a significant part of his life as an editor and writer while heading up the Communications and Publications Department at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI). Tom and I worked together on several projects but the one I remember most was a field guide that I authored entitled "Friends of the Rice Farmer: Helpful Insects, Spiders, and Pathogens" which was published in 26 languages with 100,000 copies distributed.

Tom was the first person to bring the high-yielding, "green revolution"-type rices to Vietnam. He described his experiences there in a book entitled: "A Dragon Lives Forever". He returned to Vietnam later and met some of the Viet Cong who told him that their rifles were aimed at him on several occasions but didn't fire because they realized that he was bringing high-yielding, disease resistant varieties of rice to their country.

One of Tom's passions was SCUBA diving. He and I dived a lot in the Philippines. In lake Taal, Tom found the walls and other parts of old cities that sunk after the mega-volcano occurred

hundreds of years earlier. His book "Mysteries of Taal" describes these sunken towns.

The movie "Proof of Live" starring Russell Crowe and Meg Ryan, was based on Tom's true story of being kidnapped by a rebel group in Colombia, South America and held for 11 months. The kidnapping occurred when Tom was working at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT). He was on his way to work when the rebels put up a roadblock and took him captive. His book "Long March to Freedom" was written using notes that he had scribbled on scraps of paper kept beneath his belt.

Also during Tom's time at CIAT, he found both Carolina White and Carolina Gold rices growing along the Amazon. These were likely brought by Confederados... people in the southern U.S. that immigrated to Brazil around the time of the Civil War.

Tom's presentation in the Carolina Gold Rice Symposium, held here in Charleston in 2005, is carried in a recent book entitled "Golden Seed: Writings on the History and Culture of Carolina Gold Rice" edited by Dr. David S. Shields, carries Tom's story of finding Carolina Gold and Carolina White rice along the Amazon.

Tom Hargrove will be missed but the memory of what he accomplished will live on.

The Rise of Chef Sean Brock

By David S. Shields

2010 will be noted as the year chef Sean Brock became a culinary celebrity. The Virginian-born champion of southern cuisine has had a reputation among food savants for some seasons. A regular attendee at the Southern Foodways Alliance gatherings each fall, he pleased the cognoscenti with his deft hand at fields peas, and his love of pork. It was whispered that he had a farm upbringing and maintained his own garden. Yet it was clear he was no southern vernacular road cook. He possessed classical training, having graduated at Johnson & Wales, Charleston. In his earliest jobs—in Richmond (Lemaire) and in Nashville (Hermitage Hotel)—he had experimented with molecular gastronomy and pursued a passion for exotic ingredients. In 2010 what first strikes any viewer is the intensity when preparing food. I recall someone on one of those SFA weekends in Oxford, MS, saying in a rather reverent tone—that guy's a visionary. At which point, one of the guest brewers chimed in, he's

too funky to be visionary. It turned out the first speaker was correct. In 2010 the judges of the James Beard Foundation, the body that monitors the vitality of cookery in the United States, anointed Brock the Best Chef of the Southeast. His work at McCrady's in Charleston was hailed for its concern with the integrity of the ingredients and the ingenuity of their preparations. As is often the case, the Beard people got it right.

Sean Brock has in a relatively short time become the point man for what has been dubbed the 'lardcore' movement—a farm to kitchen approach that highlights a region's available ingredients and builds great food from things in season in market. In November of 2010 he opened a new restaurant, "Husk," that restricts its offerings to things sourced within the south and fresh harvested. The national media hailed the eatery as the next great American restaurant.

Note the word "region." One of the excesses of the locavore movement has been to set an arbitrary mile limit around a locale from which ingredients may be source. This is entirely a 21st century fantasy of how traditional cuisine one's operated. Not since the early 18th century did farmers or even the poor practice such extreme parochialism in their growing and consuming. For grain growers the quest for good seed set farmers searching as much as 500 miles away for stock. {See Glenn Roberts's remarks in the last *Rice Paper*.} Loaf sugar, quality salt, prepared mustard, fish, and shell fish often traveled great distances from source to table. What did exist was a kind of imagined limit of a kind of cuisine—imposed to some extent by the growing zones—so ag writers throughout the nation could speak of items grown "at the south" or in "New England." It is the region that Brock explores.

Eating there one can understand the fuss. A skillet of caramelized golden globe turnips, a benne bedizened parker house roll, snowy Anson Mills grits, and . . . of course . . . the staple grain of the Lowcountry . . . Carolina Gold Rice. It is odd that at a time when vegetarian restaurants make use of exotic spicing to vest vegetables with more pronounced taste, Brock has grasped the simple truth of matter: a variety of vegetables chosen for their innate flavor, grown in well prepared local soil, without the chemical supplementations of industrial farming, can make you understand why a century and a half of Americans were avid gardeners and followers of horticulture. The best vegetables are treasures in themselves.

Since the Beard award, Brock has become an oracle of American cuisine, interviewed in a blizzard of blogs, tweeted by New York Times

stringers, given shout outs by other tier one chefs, and invited to perform on Iron Chef America. His thoughts on bourbon, bar snacks, pork, ice cubes, pickles, and grits circulate in foodie wwww chatter. Media echo effects have a way of making what one says a kind of white noise. Fortunately, Sean Brock's base message is so direct, so solid, and so resonant that it breaks through the static. His message is the importance of terroir.

Now sometimes people don't grasp the richness of the term terroir. They think it simply means the soil that nourishes and flavors the grapes in a particular region. Well the soil and the locale do play a part, but just as important is the suitability of the cultivar to the place of growing, and also crucial is the understanding that cultivators bring to bear in insuring that the harvest will be productive and flavorful. This last means that a set of stories, judgments, and practices peculiar to a region inform the production and consumption of something. Southern gardeners have been rather unusual historically in their maintenance of the ideal of terroir at a time when industrial agriculture insisted that anything could be grown anywhere provided you had the proper chemical supplementation. Commercial agriculture only began giving lip service to the ideal when the regional foods movement broke big with the 1980s Cajun boom, when the Vidalia Onion became so popular a brand that marketers saw terroir as a marketing tool, and when artisanal farmers began commanding premium prices for the product with high end purchasers.

What marks Sean Brock as someone with a particularly profound grasp of the meaning of terroir is the care with which he has sought out his ingredients and researched the history of the vegetables and grains he employs at his two restaurants. He has had a long standing relationship with the CGR Foundation's president and chairman, consulting them on ingredients, cultivation methods, and food history. He knows the importance of the landrace grains in the formation of the fundamental chords of western taste, and appreciates the creativity of the 19th-century vegetable breeders who created that wealth of varieties that cherished taste above all, time to market, hardiness, and productivity. These are the vaunted heirloom vegetables that excite so much comment in food circles.

In 2011 Brock will be taking time to articulate his culinary philosophy and his knowledge of the range of southern ingredients in a cookbook to be published by Artisan. One can bet that it will be a far cry from the "this is my food and this is how I cook it" self-celebrations of most celebrity chefs. At very least, because he has shouldered

the responsibility of being the representative of the southern tradition, it will begin with an enlightening starting point . . . "this is our food." This is how we grow it, preserve it, process it, cook it, eat it. Even we who passionately study the tradition of southern agriculture and the legacies of the great regional cooks will be edified.

Rice in the Morning

By David S. Shields

Before The Quaker Oat Company wheeled out its gun in 1904 and began puffing rice — before Snap, Crackle & Pop excited the ears of sleepy children in 1928, hot rice dishes graced the breakfast table. Now they have disappeared from the family table and vanished from the breakfast bill of fare. Here we will recall rice's place at the morning meal before the rise of cold cereal with milk as family fare in the early 20th century.

Edmund Ruffin, the volatile Virginia-born agronomist whom many viewed as the savior of the south's cotton-starved soil, published a landmark survey of South Carolina's agriculture in 1844. It paid acute attention to rice, the state's staple grain. In Appendix B, Ruffin provided four culinary and two household recipes for rice that were "common with us" yet "may not be found in all the manuals of house-keeping."¹ instructions how to boil plain rice, two recipes for breakfast rice bread, a related recipe for rice griddle cakes, and domestic directions for making glue and starch from rice. Ruffin's brief foray into the kitchen is most interesting in its indication that the Carolina breakfast table was where one encountered rice in its baked and fried forms.

Rice Breakfast Bread: Mix a spoonful of butter with some hot hominy, very thoroughly, and spread it to cool, then beat up an egg very light, add some milk, then mix in the hominy with rice flour until it is a thick batter, add salt, q.s., stir it well, then drop it from a spoon into an oven and bake quickly. (Vaux)

Another Rice Bread: Have a buck for this special purpose—mix over nigh some hominy, or the eyes of the rice, boiled soft, with milk and rice flour, (having added salt q.s.) into a stiff batter, so that it will just pour—set it where it will not get warm, which injures it; in the morning stir it, pour it into the pan and set it to bake. (Gallivant)

¹ Edmund Ruffin, Report on the Commencement and Progress of the Agricultural Survey of South Carolina (Charleston: SC, 1844), p. 29.

Griddles for Breakfast: Mix a thin batter with milk and rice-flour, adding salt, q.s. have your griddle-iron hot, grease it with lard, pour some batter on, spread it thin, turn it and brown it both sides.

Of the three recipes supplied, only the last retains some familiarity in the eyes of 21st century breakfast eaters, because it is recognizably a form of pancake. In the 19th-century griddle cakes had already become a breakfast fixture throughout the United States. Best selling cook books, such as *Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book* (1856), supplied guidance for a whole range of "griddles"—buckwheat, corn, rye, wheat, and rice. The cooking surface was prepared similarly for every sort of griddle. The cook heated the griddle, put a piece of salt pork on a fork, and rubbed it evenly over the surface. This method prevented excess fat from being absorbed into the cakes. Beecher did offer one exception. "Fried Rice for Breakfast" uses day old rice cut into slices and fried brown in sweet lard. When reading through Beecher's chapter of breakfast recipes, one learns that the Breakfast breads that Ruffin has procured from Carolina cooks belong to a category of breakfast preparations called "drop cakes," thick batters spooned into tin rounds in Dutch ovens and baked until firm. The Gallivant Rice Bread departs from the norm by eschewing eggs, a usual ingredient in this sort of preparation.

Miss Beecher expanded the repertoire by adding "Rice Waffles" to the breakfast table.

A quart of milk.

A tea-cup of solid boiled rice, soaked three hours in half the milk.

A pint and a half of what flour, or rice flour.

Three well-beaten eggs. Bake in waffle irons.

The rice must be salted enough when boiled. (pp. 96-97)

The rice waffle, particularly in its form employing rice flour, became a fixture in American breakfast in the 19th century. Light, crusty, and a touch sweet, it paired well with preserves, and, when hot, with a dusting of confectioner's sugar. The lightness of the waffle, paradoxically, made it a favored component of hearty breakfasts, preceding a substantial meat: "Breakfast—Rice waffles, mutton croquettes, fried raw potatoes."² 389

One notices in the preparations encountered so far the absence of an ingredient that became increasingly prominent at breakfast over the

² Estelle Woods Wilcox & Ellen Clow, *Practical Housekeeping* (Minneapolis: Buckeye Publishing Co., 1883), p. 389.

course of the 19th and 20th centuries—sugar. Because the natural starches in rice, when cooked, converted into sugars, there was, perhaps, a sense of redundancy in amplifying the sweetness. Nevertheless, the mid-19th century boom in cookie baking and sweet biscuit manufacture set cooks tinkering with formulae until a creditable sweet rice biscuit could be created. In 1854's *The Complete Biscuit and Gingerbread Baker's Assistant* we encounter an early example:

3 lbs of flour, 1 lb. of rice flour, 1 lb. 10 oz. of loaf sugar, 1 lb. of butter, ½ oz. of volatile salt, and ¾ pint of milk, or 4 eggs, and the remaining portion milk.

Mix the two flours together, rub in the butter with it, make a bay, add the sugar, and make them into a dough . . . roll it out in a sheet the six of an inch in thickness, cut them out with a plain round cutter of three inches in diameter, wash the tops with milk, and throw them on rice flour; place them on buttered tins so as not to touch, and bake them in a moderately brisk oven.³

While breakfast rice—whether boiled, griddled, or baked dominated regional eating in the Lowcountry, it was reckoned so iconic a morning dish that it became part of the national meal as well. In novels of the 1850s the descriptions of breakfasts may be found with some frequency. Here is a political breakfast in Washington, D.C. featuring dishes from all of the sections of the United States: “We sauntered together into one of the largest, and longest, and handsomest breakfast rooms this side of Texas. A table of great length stretched across its centre, upon which was arranged in great profusion, Georgia potatoes, New Hampshire bacon, Virginia oysters and fried eels, South Carolina rice cakes, and Cape Cod fish balls—all strong incentives to the stomach of a hungry politician.”⁴ The fame of Carolina Gold Rice and its market spanned the continent, the hemisphere, and the Atlantic by 1855.

Students of breakfast will noet that rice was frequently paired in recipes with hominy—meaning small hominy—or grits. Milled white corn existed in a mental zone of equivalency with rice in the minds of many 19th century cooks. Mrs. Lincoln, of the Boston Cooking School, in her *Boston Cook Book*, offers a version of griddles that announce complete substitutability:

³ George Read, *The Complete Biscuit and Gingerbread Baker's Assistant* (London: Dean & Son, 1854), p. 52.

⁴ Timothy Templeton, *Adventures of my Cousin Smooth* (Washington, D.C., 1855), p. 50.

“Rice or Hominy Griddle-Cakes.”⁵ During the Civil War the Union Commissary Department specified a daily allotment of “fifteen pounds of beans or peas, and ten pounds of rice or hominy” for every 100 men.⁶ There were, of course, regional inflections, to this idea of gustatory proximity. A southern correspondent to the *New England Kitchen Magazine* observed: “No southerner in good health and in his right mind ever eats ‘hominy with milk and sugar’ for breakfast . . . Hominy in this part of the country is dressed with butter or a little of meat gravy, and is eaten with a chop, or a steak or bacon and eggs, or boiled ham, etc. Hominy thus served is a standard breakfast dish in the South and is fit for a kin. It needs no sugar or cream or nutmeg, and to put either on it is to commit a crime against gastronomy. The same observations apply to rice, the standard dinner dish of the South, which the Northern menu-makers tell us to serve with cream and sugar.”⁷ While this 1895 opinion informs us that boiled hominy had supplanted boiled rice as a southern breakfast dish, and that steamed rice had migrated to the dinner menu, the greatest point of interest is the resistance to sweetening grain porridges in general.

The objection voiced here was not universal. Hominy and molasses had been a staple dish of the laboring classes from the 1830s on. Yet the preference for gravy and butter certainly dominated the middle class tables and those of gentry folk. The cookbook writers and arbiters of taste, too, frowned upon adding saccharine to boiled grits and boiled rice. This ban, however, did not extend to dishes prepared by other cooking techniques: frying or backing.

Many testimonies survive to the distinctive qualities of a traditional southern breakfast—the presence of both hominy and rice—the variety of cooking technique—boiling, baking, and frying—and the conjunction of grains and meats. William Gilmore Simms, the novelist and cultural critic, reflected on its character in *As Good as Comedy*: “A Georgia, indeed a Southern breakfast, differs in sundry respects from ours at the North, chiefly, however, in the matter of breadstuffs. . . . Hominy itself is a breadstuff; a dish that our must but poorly represents. It is seldom eatable out of a Southern household. Then there are waffles, and rice cakes and fritters, and other things of like description, making a variety at once persuasive

⁵ Mary Johnson Bailey Lincoln, *Mrs. Lincoln's Boston Cook Book* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1896), p. 100.

⁶ “An Army: Its Organization and Movements,” *The Continental Monthly* 4, 1 (July 1864), p. 5.

⁷ “The Southern Menu,” *The New England Kitchen Magazine* 3 (1895), p. x.

to the palate and not hurtful to health.”⁸ Simms noticed the familiar rice cakes. Yet adds a new dish to the southern breakfast table: the rice fritter, or rice beignet. In this light concoction, rice, sugar, spice, and eggs are transmuted into some fine by boiling lard.

Boil the rice in milk with some powder-sugar, orange-flower water, a pinch of cinnamon powder, and a little butter; when quite soft put to it a liaison of yolks of eggs, pour it into a pan to cool. Make your preparation into balls, about the size of an egg, dip them in egg, fry them, sprinkle them with sugar, and serve.⁹

Jules Harder, San Francisco's great celebrity chef of the 1880s, refined this basic croquette into its most splendid form.

Wash one pound of Rice in cold water and drain it. Then put it in a saucepan with two quarts of boiled milk, the peelings of one lemon and one stick of cinnamon. Cover the saucepan set it on a slow fire to cook gently, and when the Rice is nearly done add six ounces of powdered sugar and two ounces of butter and let it cook until thoroughly done. Should the Rice get too dry while cooking add a little more milk to it. Take it off of the fire, take out the lemon peelings and the stick of cinnamon, mix the Rice well together, and when it is somewhat cool, add to it the yolks of six raw eggs, a little essence of lemon or orange-flower water, (whichever may be desired). Mix it well together and put it into a buttered pan. Cover it with a buttered paper cover and let it get cold. Then roll the Rice in any croquette shapes desired, dip them in beaten eggs, then in fresh bread crumbs, arrange them in proper shape, fry them in hot lard, drain them, roll them in powdered sugar into which add a little ground cinnamon, and then dish them up on a napkin.¹⁰

His unsweetened version incorporated three ounces of grated parmesan cheese and six egg yolks, frying the fritters in butter rather than lard.

There is something inexplicably satisfying about the lightness, crispiness, sugariness, mellowness of a beignet de riz—or the browned splendor of a rice waffle—or the filling rice griddle. Some pleasures that became passé are novel enough to become pleasurable again. Do Snap Crackle and Pop have to maintain their monopoly over breakfast. Or may their reign be ending?

⁸ William Gilmore Simms, *As Good as Comedy; The Tennessean's Story* (New York 1852), p. 27.

⁹ A Boston Housekeep, *A Cook's Own Book* (Boston: Munroe & Francie, 1840), p. 175.

¹⁰ Jules Harder, *The Physiology of Taste; Harder's Book of Practical American Cookery* (San Francisco, 1885), p. 305.

Guinea Squash

By David S. Shields

Certain foodstuffs that crossed the Atlantic with enslaved Africans had their African genesis recognized by prefixing the common English name of the generic item with ‘Guinea,’ the west African territory in which the Mandingo and Fula peoples lived: Guinea corn—*Sorghum vulgare*—Guinea fowl—*Numida meleagris*—Guinea pea—*Abrus precatorius*—and Guinea Squash—the eggplant—*Solanum melongena*. While introduced into England as a horticultural novelty at the end of the sixteenth century, it did not gain a foothold in European cuisine until the middle of the 19th century. In the American colonies, however, it became a fixture in those regions that used African slave labor: the West Indies, the mainland south, Central America, Brazil. In the United States the regions divided about the merits of the vegetable. A northern commentator observed in a 1839 issue of *The Farmer & Gardener, and Live-Stock Breeder and Manager* magazine, “This is considered a delicious vegetable; but little attention has, however, been paid to its cultivation, and it is seldom seen in our markets; but in the southern States great quantities are cultivated, and sold in their markets.”¹¹

Antebellum southern markets were controlled by whites, so the eggplant joined okra, benne, and the cowpea as foods that spread from the black hearthside to general consumption. In the earliest printed descriptions from white southerners of how guinea squash should be prepared for the table, we encounter the African mode of preparation—the preference for frying. William N. White, the south’s most eloquent horticulturist on the eve of the Civil War, preserved a version of the traditional preparation in his 1857 handbook, *Gardening in the South*: “Cut the eggplant in slices a quarter of an inch thick. To remove the acrid taste, pile the slices on a plate with alternate layers of salt; raise one side of the plate, that the juice may run off. In half an hour wash them well in fresh water, and fry them quite brown in batter.”¹² White observed that eggplant was an acquired taste; “they are not commonly liked at first, but after a few trials become very agreeable to most tastes, and are esteemed a delicacy.”

In states where African-American cooking did not greatly influence public taste—the penchant in dressing guinea squash as it were a winter squash by transforming it into a form of baked pudding predominated. Like a pumpkin pie filling or a squash pudding, the guinea squash was boiled, mashed, mixed with egg yolks, bread, and spices before being baked. Despite prepping the vegetable in ways greatly similar to favorite familiar foodstuffs, New Englanders took their time embracing guinea squash’s qualities. When the vegetable gained treatment in cook books (mostly printed in Boston, New York or Philadelphia), it did not appear under the southern name, but as ‘eggplant’—that moniker affixed to the plant by Europeans in the late 18th century to describe the small, white colored ornamental eggplants grown as specimens and exhibition plants, not the purple-blue, gourd-fruited vegetables that dominated culinary use. The name’s eventual universal adoption testifies to the dominance of the agricultural press and the international cohort of horticultural savants who filled its pages.

Throughout the 1800s, instructions on how to grow the plant did not greatly vary from the first directions published by Bernard M’Mahon in 1806: “This delicious vegetable may be propagated, by sowing the seed, on a slight hot-bed, the beginning of this month [April], or in March; and towards the middle or latter part of May, they should be planted in a rich warm piece of ground, at the distance of two feet and a half asunder, for the purple, or two feet for the white kind; and if kept clean, and a little earth drawn up to their stems, when about a foot high they will produce plenty of fruit.”¹³ Eggplants are annuals, grown from seed that takes substantial time to germinate. While growing care had to be taken to limit the depredations of the potato bug, that particularly savored eggplant foliage and fruit. While the insect thrives on egg plant leaves, neither animals nor man can eat them without suffering narcotic poisoning. Gardener Robert Buist recommended regular watering of the plant.

In the north market gardeners grew the eggplant as a hot house plant. But a robust market for the crop did not develop until the late 1870s when French recipes for the Aubergine gave the vegetable cachet among persons maintaining a fashionable table. Because the guinea squash requires sustained heat (67-70 degrees Fahrenheit) for germination and early growth, it developed a reputation as a difficult plant in regions with variable spring weather. In the south

what became apparent to regular planters of the vegetable was its resilience once established. “No vegetable with which I am acquainted, can withstand drouth better than the eggplant, which bears and matures its fruit under a degree of heat and dryness that would be fatal to other crops.”¹⁴ One could plant the guinea squash in the sandiest portions of one’s land, provided compost or manure had been well intermixed, and produce a thriving crop. The standard garden rotation was the plant the guinea squash in succession to a heavily manured plant, such as cabbages or onions, followed by a root vegetable, excepting the potato.

While experimental gardeners played with the white eggplants, kitchen gardeners early in the 19th century cultivated the smooth-stemmed purple—which comes to maturation rather quickly—and the prickly stemmed purple—a later season variety. In the mid-century the “Long Purple” came into favor. After the Civil War the latter variety was tweaked by plant breeders into the “New York Improved Purple.” In the early 1880s the darker colored, more compact “Black Pekin” came into wide cultivation, while fancy gardeners amused themselves with the Scarlet-fruited and Guadeloupe Striped novelty varieties.

The recipes below illustrate the regional variations in treatment. The first six are from southern sources, the last five from northern and western books. It should be noted, however, that the southern recipes were contained in books printed in northern cities for the most part, and so substituted eggplant for the local usage of guinea squash. Guinea squash remained the favored designation in horticultural books and the southern agricultural journals. Many of the latter imprints were published in southern locales.

A Final World from the *New England Kitchen Magazine* 3 of 1895: “There are dozens and dozens of real Southern dishes that delight the souls of those who eat them when prepared properly—sugared sweet potatoes, guineas squashes, corn fritters, etc.—but the Northern built menus seldom or never mention them. They tell us to eat hominy with sugar for breakfast, and salmon with egg sauce for supper!” (p. x)

Fried Egg Plant (Virginia Housewife 1838)

Purple ones are best. Take young fresh ones, putt out the stem, parboil them to take out the bitter taste, cut them in slices an inch thick without peeling them, dip them in the yolk of an egg, and cover them with grated bread, and a little salt and

¹¹ “Egg Plant,” *The Farmer & Gardener, and Live-Stock Breeder and Manager* 6, 1 (May 1, 1839), p. 7.

¹² William N. White, *Gardening for the South; or the Kitchen and Fruit Garden* (New York: C. M. Saxton & Co., 1857), pp. 267-68.

¹³ Bernard M’Mahon, *The American Gardener’s Calendar* (Philadelphia: B. Graves, 1806), pp. 319-20.

¹⁴ A. Oemler, *Truck Farming at the South* (New York: Orange Judd Co., 1884), p. 177.

pepper; when one side has dried, cover the other in the same way, then fry them a nice brown. They are very delicious, tasting much like soft crabs. Mrs. Mary Randolph, *The Virginia Housewife: or, Methodical Cook* (Baltimore: Plaskitt, Fite & Co., 1838), p. 108.

Broiled Egg Plant (What to Eat 1863)

Split the egg plant in two, peel it, and take the see out, put it in a crockery ish, sprinkle on chopped parsley, salt, and pepper; cover the dish, and leave thus about forty minutes; then take it off, put it on a greased and warmed gridiron, and on a good fire; baste with a little sweet oil, and seasoning from the crockery dish, and serve with the drippings when properly broiled. It is a delicious dish. Pierre Blot, *What to Eat, and How to Cook It* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1863), p. 182.

To Bake Guinea Squash, or Egg-Plant (Carolina Housewife 1847)

Parboil the squashes until they are tender, changing the water two of three times, to extract the bitterness. Then cut them lengthwise in two, and scoop out the inside, being careful not to break the skin.—Season the pulp of the squashes with pepper, salt, crumbs of bread, butter, and a slice of onion, chopped fine (this last ingredient, if not liked, may be omitted). Mix all well together, and fill the skins of the squashes with the mixture lay them on a plate, and bake in a Dutch oven. They do not take long to boil, but require two or three hours to be baked brown. [Sarah Rutledge], *The Carolina Housewife, or House and Home: by a Lady of Charleston* (Charleston: W. R. Babcock & Co., 1847), pp. 100-101.

Breakfast Egg Plant (Skillful Housewife's Book 1852)

The purple egg plant is better than the white ones. Boil them whole in plenty of water until tender, then take them up, drain them after having taken off the skins, cut them up and wash them in a deep dish or pan; mix with them some grated bread, powdered sweet marjoram, and a large piece of butter, and a few pounded cloves. Grate a layer of bread over the top, and brown it in an oven. Send it to table in the same dish. Mrs. L. G. Abell, *The Skillful Housewife's Book: or Complete Guide to Domestic Cookery* (New York: Orange Judd & Co., 1852), p. 106.

Stuffed Egg-plants a la Creole (Unrivalled Cook-Book 1886)

Parboil the egg-plants; cut them in halves; scoop out the inside, being careful not to break the outside skin, which you refill later with the following stuffing: Mix up the insight of the egg-plant with a slice of boiled ham hopped very fine, bread crumbs, butter, salt, and pepper—shrimps if you have them, make a delicious addition; bind this stuffing with the yolk of an egg and fill your egg-plant skins; sprinkle with powdered bread crumbs, put a small lump of butter on each piece, and bake. Mrs. Washington, *The Unrivalled Cook-Book and Housekeeper's Guide* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1886), p. 192.

Egg-Plant Pudding (Housekeeping in Old Virginia 1879)

Quarter the egg-plant and lay it in salt and water the overnight, to extract the bitterness. The next day, parboil, peel and chop fine, and add bread crumbs (one teacup to a pint of egg-plant), eggs (two to a pint of egg-plant), salt, pepper, and butter to taste; enough milk to make a good batter. Bake in an earthen dish twenty minutes. Mrs. R. L. O. Marion Cabell Tyree, *Housekeeping in Old Virginia* (Louisville: John P. Morton, 1879), p. 249.

Egg Plant Dressed as Oysters (Widdifield's New Cook Book 1856)

Wash an egg plant, and boil it until it is perfectly soft, but not broken. Take out all the inside, mash it and season with a piece of butter, pepper and salt to your taste. Beat the yolks of three eggs very thick. Crumb a stale baker's loaf, and season it with salt and pepper. Have ready a pan of hot lard and butter mixed; take a spoonful of the plant, dip it into the egg, cover it with the crumbs, and drop it into the pan to fry. Take the back of the spoon and flatten the top of the plant, so as to form the shape of an oyster. When the under side is done, put some egg and bread over the top, turn it and fry a light brown. Serve hot for breakfast. Hannah Widdifield, *Widdifield's New Cook Book; or, Practical Receipts for the Housewife* (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson, 1856), pp. 105-06.

Mashed Eggplant-A very fine way to dress Egg-Plant (Mrs. Hale's New Book of Cookery 1852)

Take as many eggplants as the size of your family requires—pare, quarter and boil them till soft enough to mash like turnips. Mash them, add a little bread crumb soaked in milk, butter, chopped parsley, an onion boiled and mashed, some butter, pepper, and salt. Mix these well together, and pour it into a baking dish; cover the top with grated bread, and bake it for half an hour. Sarah

Josepha Hale, *Mrs. Hale's New Book of Cookery* (New York: H. Long & Brother, 1852), p. 234. \

Stewed Egg Plant (Good Housekeeping 1887)

Slice and cut into dice half of a peeled egg plant, and throw into cold, salted water half an hour. Cook till very soft in boiling, salted water, and drain in a colander; throw back into the saucepan, and pour over it a pint of rich milk thickened with an every tablespoonful of flour; add one of butter and teaspoonful of salt. Let it cook till it thickens. Meantime, have one or two beaten eggs in the ish in which the vegetable is to be served, into which pour the egg plant while stirring briskly, to prevent the curdling of the egg. This makes a rarely excellent dish. "Stewed Egg Plant," *Good Housekeeping a Family Journal 5* (May 14-Oct 29), p 237.

Vegetable Marrow Tart (Jennie June's American Cookery Book 1878)

Peel and core the marrow, cut into small pieces, boil until quite soft, drain the water well from it, and beat with a fork until all the lumps are out. Have ready three eggs, well beaten with a little milk, mix with the marrow until it is in the consistency of custard; sweeten it, and add a little grated nutmeg; pour into shallow dishes, lines with short paste, similar to baked custards. Mrs. J. C. Croly, *Jennie June's American Cookery Book* (New York: Excelsior Publishing House, 1878), p. 139.

Egg Plant Salad (Harder's Practical Cookery 1885)

Peel two middle-sized Egg Plants, cut them in slices a quarter of an inch thick, sprinkle each slice with a little salt, and put them together again. After half an hour press them gently, to extract the moisture. Then dry them on a napkin. Fry them lightly in clarified butter, then drain them on a napkin. When cold cut them in small pieces, put them in a salad bowl, with some scalloped pickled sturgeon, a spoonful of grated horse-radish mixed with mustard, a clove of fine chopped garlic, a little fine chopped parsley, and a handful of water cress. Season them with salt, pepper, olive oil, and vinegar. Mix the whole well together, then arrange them properly, and garnish them with stoned olives and hard boiled eggs cut into quarters. Jules Arthur Harder, *Physiology of Taste: Harder's book of Practical American Cookery*, 6 vols. (San Francisco, 1885), p. 155.