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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

Hygieia's Feast: The Making of America's Health Food Culture, 1870-1920

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for
the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in History

by

Aubrey Taylor Adams

Dissertation Committee:
Professor David Igler, Chair
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2014

DEDICATION

To

My parents, for their inspiration

My husband, for his unwavering support

My son, for priceless lessons in love and time management

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the chair of my dissertation committee, Dr. David Iglar, for sustaining me in my graduate career with enthusiasm, excellent criticism, several much needed funding opportunities, and unparalleled pie bake-offs. Dr. Iglar signed on as my advisor and dissertation chair at a stage in my own progress when I was working closely to his own area of expertise in environmental history, and gamely followed my work as new interests and research drew me into the fascinating world of food history. He never failed to ask challenging questions at the right times, and his careful feedback has given me the tools to be the best teacher, writer, student, and historian I can be, at every stage.

My committee members, Dr. Emily Rosenberg and Dr. Yong Chen, have my warmest thanks for their interest, support, and criticism. Dr. Laura Mitchell's open office door welcomed me with good conversation, and taught me everything I know about intellectual generosity.

I will be forever grateful for the companionship of friends and colleagues in the history department's graduate program at UC Irvine. Thanks go out in particular to David Fouser, Jennifer Graham Staver, Tina Shull, and Eric Steiger for brainstorming sessions, work parties, and more helpful feedback than they really had time to give. Thanks to Shanon Fitzpatrick for keeping me company in Austin while I worked in the Stark Center's Physical Culture archives, and to Eric Altenbernd for being my sounding board while we carted manuscript collections around the bowels of the Huntington Library.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Hygieia's Feast: The Making of America's Health Food Culture, 1870-1920

By

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Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Irvine, 2014

Professor David Iglar, Chair

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, health reformers took to lecterns and the pages of cookbooks, health treatises, and magazines to argue for a revised perspective on the relationship between food, bodies, and health in America. Based on scientific understandings of what was natural for human bodies to digest, health reformers developed expert knowledge regarding the medical and physiological properties of the plant and animal foods that they considered healthful. Whole wheat, nuts, and fruit were the staple foods upon which columnists, cookbook writers, and health experts built a new health food cuisine. The dishes that magazines, cookbooks, recipe pamphlets, and health treatises shared in common often utilized these ingredients as replacements for familiar foods that were seen as unhealthful: meat, caffeinated beverages, and alcohol. As a new health food cuisine coalesced, a new health food industry took shape against the backdrop of Progressive era pure food reform campaigns. Addressing the emerging American mass market, health food entrepreneurs marketed their goods with a winning combination of dietetic advice, scientific jargon, and emphasis on modern production methods. As the health foods industry grew, so too did the connection between health food and wild nature.

Health food experts argued that “going back to the land” would restore health through exercise and simple, quality food. Moreover, they idealized the diets of “primitive” peoples of the past and present as both uniquely health-giving and close to nature.

Introduction

“My health food came today,” diarist Roscoe Maxwell Rhoads recorded in the summer of 1898. “I dined alone.”¹ At the age of eighteen, Rhoads’ various ailments and weaknesses compelled him to leave his public high school. He continued to live at his parents’ home in Anderson, Indiana where he complained of toothaches and nerve pain, pulmonary trouble, joint problems, and nervousness. Though he was intermittently able to work selling newspaper subscriptions, Rhoads spent most of his early adult years convalescing and on the quest for improved health. From stints in well-known health resorts to vegetarianism to a permanent move to salubrious San Diego, California, Rhoads tried just about all of the era’s most popular health cures, with an emphasis on alternative therapies or “nature cures.” Rhoads’ diaries outline the gustatory experience of a man convinced he could both heal his body and develop it into a specimen of masculine strength by reforming his diet. They offer a glimpse into the breakfasts, lunches, and dinners of a turn-of-the-twentieth century health food eater and are a window into his world of Sanitariums, strength building, health treatises, healthy living magazines, alternative natural therapies, and health food. Dining alone on health foods, Rhoads represented America’s emerging health food culture at the turn of the twentieth century.

Rhoads’ first recorded attempts to secure better health began in the winter of 1898. Contrary to testimonials for Dr. Miles’ Restorative Nervine that promised “excellent health”

¹ Roscoe Maxwell Rhoads, *Diary, (1898-1899)*, Papers of Horace Emerson Rhoads, Huntington Library, San

in a jiffy, Rhoads tried the product and found insomnia to be its chief result.² After weeks of choosing and discarding various health tonics and in the face of lingering illness, (likely exacerbated by the nostrums, some of which were actually quite toxic), the Rhoads family planned a two-month, health-oriented retreat to the lakeside resort town of Petoskey, Michigan. While there, Rhoads was careful to spend plenty of time in outdoor recreation: fishing, picking berries, and bathing in the cold lake water. Rhoads also made the acquaintance of a Dr. and Mrs. Stewart, who likely introduced the young man to the idea of eating himself healthy. Shortly after meeting the Stewarts Rhoads recorded his first order of health foods, followed by a second order a few weeks later.

The idea of a health-oriented escape from town for a few days of fresh air, clean water, and relaxation in nature had been popularized in nineteenth-century America by the spread of water cure resorts, where patients immersed themselves in and ingested healing water in a tranquil setting. As the twentieth century neared, America's best-known hydropaths (those who specialized in the theory and practice of the water cure resorts) began to incorporate food into their health regimens, marrying their practice of the water cure with the idea of a natural diet. Though not a water cure, Dr. John H. Kellogg's Sanitarium in Battle Creek, Michigan, grew out of the success of nineteenth-century health resorts, combining carefully cultivated gardens, indoor greenhouses, and grounds with modern architecture and a commitment to alternative health therapies. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Sanitarium was attracting large crowds of middle- and upper-class

² Advertisement, *The Daily Argus News*, September 18 1892, p. 2. The Argus News as a local paper serving the city of Crawfordsville, Indiana, not far from Rhoads' hometown of Anderson.

American health seekers.³ In the fall of 1898, Rhoads spent two weeks at Kellogg's Sanitarium, where he was exposed to both new health foods and new health food philosophies. In November of that year, Rhoads left the resort armed with a copy of Ella E. Kellogg's new cookbook, "Science In The Kitchen," and a renewed commitment to Kellogg's ethos of hygienic eating. When, three weeks after his return from Battle Creek, the Rhoads family sat down at the table for a traditional Thanksgiving feast, Rhoads demurred. "I ate alone," he reported, "and dined on zwieback, granola, grape toast, peaches and almond cream."⁴ A few days after Christmas that year, Rhoads returned to Kellogg's Sanitarium for a much longer stay of over three months. While there he heard Kellogg's popular lecture on vegetarianism, "Shall We Slay to Eat?" and purchased a subscription to the Sanitarium's health foods department.

By 1900, hundreds of thousands of Americans shared Rhoads' interest in improving their health through diet, a fact supported by the era's burgeoning mass media. The most popular health food-oriented magazines of the era had circulations that reached 100,000; John H. Kellogg's health food companies sold products to health food stores and groceries across America and, indeed, throughout the Anglophone world, from Australia to South Africa. By the 1910s, Kellogg reported health food sales figures of almost half a million

³ By 1890, the Sanitarium was treating roughly 1,200 patients a year; by 1900 that number had more than doubled to roughly 3,000 patients, and by 1910 the Battle Creek Sanitarium treated 5,000 patients each year. Between the Sanitarium's inception in 1866 (when Kellogg was not yet in charge, and when the patient total was all of 53), and 1913, the health resort was visited by a total of 89, 320 health seekers. "Annual Report of the Battle Creek Sanitarium and Hospital, 1913: With Summaries of the Work of the Institution Since Its Establishment," (Battle Creek, MI: 1914), 10.

⁴ Zwieback was a dense, dry bread that originated in the water-cure health resorts of Germany and translated as "twice-toasted or baked" in German. It was argued by many health experts to be more digestible than soft, warm bread, and was popular at the water cures and health resorts in America in the nineteenth century. Granola was a cereal food created and marketed by Kellogg, described as "a blend of grains cooked and granulated." Advertisement, *Good Health*, December, 1909; Roscoe Rhoads, *Diary, (1898-1899)*, Papers of Horace Emerson Rhoads.

dollars annually.⁵ This burgeoning health food culture was made up of health seekers who were disillusioned by an increasingly opaque and adulterated industrial food chain and distrustful of the newly formed medical profession. They were united by the conviction that somewhere in the commotion and cosmopolitanism of modern American life, they had sacrificed their health by losing touch with nature. Their quest to recover health took the form of a commitment to eating natural foods, a cultural category that was constructed, contested, and defined in this era by health experts and health seekers, scientists, doctors, cookbook writers, and entrepreneurs.

Health food eaters in the late-nineteenth century embraced a vegetable-based diet that was at odds with the dominant culinary trends of the country. Americans of all classes were eating more meat, from prized beefsteaks to ubiquitous cuts of pork, to pickled meats, sausages, stew meats, and wild game. Middle and upper-middle-class Americans had more access to fresh meats and ate meat in greater quantities than the working classes, who perhaps ate meat several times a week, rather than several times a day as was common in middle-class homes. European immigrants, many of whom had eaten meat only several times a year in their home countries, considered their ability to eat meat on a regular basis proof of America's high standard of living. By the turn of the twentieth century, meat had become the anchor of an otherwise dynamic American food culture. Starting with the

⁵ Morton Audit Company, Kellogg Food Co. Audit 1917, "Exhibit B: Manufacturing, Trading, and Profit Loss Statement," John Harvey Kellogg Papers, Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections. John H. Kellogg's health food companies should not be confused with his brother William Keith Kellogg's breakfast cereal company. They both incorporated businesses named The Kellogg Company and ultimately went to court to decide who had rights to the Kellogg name. The courts decided in William K. Kellogg's favor, despite it being John H. Kellogg's success as a health reformer and sanitarium director that lent authority and consumer appeal to the Kellogg name. The Kellogg Company we know today was William K. Kellogg's own business project. John H. Kellogg's health food companies specialized in a variety of health foods, including vegetarian mock meat products, whole wheat grains and crackers, fruit and nut based confections, and coffee alternatives.

earliest Europeans to arrive on North America's shores, waves of immigrants contributed new foods, recipes, and traditions into America's "salad bowl" culinary tradition, interacting with one another and with North America's food producing environments to create a multiplicity of creole American foodways.⁶ And alongside this creolization and the migration of people was a "migration of meat from the edge to the center of the dinner plate" in America.⁷

The importance of meat in American meals began in the earliest British colonies on the North American seaboard. While German, Dutch, and Scandinavian cuisines were all represented on colonial American tables and in the early American republic, British influence reigned supreme. A reliance on meat, particularly beef, pork, poultry, and lamb, raised breads made with Western European grains (wheat, rye, and oats), and dishes like puddings, pies, and porridges were indicative of British influence. That influence was tempered by local environmental constraints and new tastes: Americans ate more pork, corn, molasses, whiskey, and cider than did Britons, and less ale and tea. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century, waves of cultural "re-anglicization" continued to refresh the culinary connections between America and Britain and produced a British-

⁶ In reference to American culture, the "salad bowl" metaphorically suggests that multiple distinct elements can coexist and still complete a whole (the parts or ingredients of a salad) while retaining their integrity, in contrast to the "melting pot" metaphor, which suggests that distinct parts come together to create one unified but completely new whole. For a consideration of this and some other major problems in the emerging field of food history, see: Warren Belasco, "Food Matters: Perspectives on an Emerging Field," and Sidney Mintz, "Food and Eating: Some Persisting Questions," in Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton eds., *Food Nations: Selling Taste In Consumer Societies* (New York, 2002) 2-33; Warren Belasco, *Food: The Key Concepts* (New York, 2008); Warren Belasco, "How Much Depends on Dinner," in Warren Belasco and Roger Horowitz, eds., *Food Chains: From Farmyard to Shopping Cart* (Philadelphia, 2008); Robert Chester and Nicolaas Mink, "Having our Cake and Eating it, Too: Food's Place in Environmental History, A Forum," *Environmental History* 14 (July 2009) 309-344; Sidney Mintz and Christine Du Bois, "The Anthropology of Food and Eating," *Annual Review of Anthropology* (2002) 99-119; Lynne Phillips, "Food and Globalization," *Annual Review of Anthropology* (2006) 37-57.

⁷ Abigail Carroll, *Three Squares: The Invention of the American Meal* (New York: Basic Books, 2013) 31.

American cuisine in the colonies and then the new nation.⁸ By the late-nineteenth century, British-American cuisine had become the basis for a normative culinary standard that emerged alongside – and often in conflict with – America’s dynamic immigrant food cultures. Masked by Progressive-era campaigns to reform the homes and diets of the immigrant working classes, this normative culinary standard was furthered by the booming American print media that produced cookbooks and home-related periodicals.⁹

Food historians will continue to debate the reality of a singular American food culture at any point in the country’s history. Though I am certain that “generalizations about national food habits can only go so far before they run aground on the rocks of class as well as regional difference,”¹⁰ I argue that a generalized British-American cuisine was very real in the minds of America’s nineteenth- and early-twentieth century health reformers. Often, the British eating habits that made up the heart of the British-American culinary standard – plenty of meat, yeasted European breads, tea, coffee, alcohol, and a relative lack of vegetables – were the very same eating habits with which health reformers took issue. Though this standard was certainly not representational of all American eaters, it loomed large in the era’s most influential cookbooks and in popular magazines. *Hygieia’s Feast* provides one answer to the question of whether, when, and in what form multiple American food cultures existed by charting the emergence of an alternative health food culture in the late nineteenth century. While we know that challenges to British-American

⁸ Katherine Leonard Turner, *How the Other Half Ate: A History of Working Class Meals at the Turn of the Century* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2014); Carrol, *Three Squares*, 31; Donna R. Gabaccia, *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

⁹ Lorine Swainston Goodwin, *Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Crusaders, 1879-1914* (Jefferson, NC: Mcfarland, 2006); Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies’ Home Journal, Gender, and the Promises of Consumer Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1995); Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

¹⁰ Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 9.

culinary “old ways” took place in the 1880s, *Hygieia’s Feast* locates the roots of those challenges in the 1830s and follows them to fruition forty years later with the emergence of a distinct American health food culture.

Beginning with the sex-reformer and brown-bread advocate Reverend Sylvester Graham in the 1830s, the nascent health food culture was sustained by the popularity of water cure health resorts that practiced alternative medical therapies and embraced the goal of natural health.¹¹ Health food culture continued to flourish alongside the successes of the breakfast cereal industry in the last years of the nineteenth century and with the Progressive Pure Food campaign at the turn of the twentieth century.¹² The nineteenth century vegetarian movement, with its concerns over the intersections of health, ethics, religion, and diet, contributed its own momentum to the development of a cohesive health food culture.¹³ We know, too, how specific foods factored into the calculations of health reformers and health food eaters. For instance, nineteenth century health reformers

¹¹ James C. Whorton is undoubtedly the expert in the history of nineteenth and early-twentieth century health reform in America; his work carefully traces the cultural and intellectual histories of American health movements. His contributions are especially rich in defining the different, though often overlapping, health movements, philosophies, and fads, from vegetarianism to water-cure philosophies to fears over and treatments for constipation, that have shaped the history of health in America. James Whorton, *Crusaders for Fitness: the History of American Health Reformers*, (Princeton University Press: 1982), -- *Inner Hygiene: Constipation and the Pursuit of Health in Modern Society*, (Oxford University Press: 2000), -- *Nature Cures: The History of Alternative Medicine in America* (Oxford University Press: 2002). On Graham specifically, see: James C. Whorton, *Nature Cures: A History of Alternative Medicine in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press: 2002); Stephen Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet, and Debility in Jacksonian America: Sylvester Graham and Health Reform*, (Praeger Publishers, 1980).

¹¹ Karen and Michael Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America: A History*, (Praeger Publishers: 2004); “Scientists, Pseudoscientists, and Faddists,” in Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*; Ronald M. Deutsch, *The Nuts Among the Berries: An Exposé of America’s Food Fads*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1967); Harvey Levenstein, *Fear of Food: A History of Why We Worry About What We Eat*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

¹² For the most targeted and comprehensive accounts of the late-nineteenth century rise of the breakfast cereal industry, see: Ronald Numbers, *Prophetess of Health: Ellen G. White and the Origins of Seventh-Day Adventist Health Reform*, (University of Tennessee Press, 1992); Gerald Carson, *Cornflake Crusade*, (New York: Reinhart, 1957).

¹³ Iacobbo and Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America*; Colin Spencer, *The Heretic’s Feast: A History of Vegetarianism*, (London, 1993); Tristram Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism from 1600 to Modern Times* (New York, 2007); “Scientists, Pseudoscientists, and Faddists,” in Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*; Ronald M. Deutsch, *The Nuts Among the Berries: An Exposé of America’s Food Fads*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1967); Levenstein, *Fear of Food*.

vilified white bread while health food eaters ate oranges marketed by the company Sunkist as a health food par excellence.¹⁴ Yet despite rich histories that detail the individuals, philosophies, praxis, foods, and business of nineteenth-century health reform, we lack a consideration of whether health foods and health reformers created a unified American food culture of their own. *Hygieia's Feast* finds overlap between the various elements of nineteenth-century health reform in America and traces within that overlap the emergence of a new health food cuisine featuring common foods, cooking tools, and preparation techniques.

Building on the new health food cuisine, entrepreneurs saw an opportunity to create a market for a new kind of mass produced consumer good: health food.¹⁵ Health food businesses targeted eager consumers and invested their products with profound meaning not only through advertisements but also through a food culture that valued certain definitions of bodily health and saw food as the best method of governing it. The success of the health food industry demonstrates that despite Progressive Reform campaigns organized around consumer issues, reformers saw the rise of mass production as an

¹⁴ On white bread, see Aaron Bobrow-Strain, *White Bread: A Social History of the Store Bought Loaf* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012). On oranges, see Douglas C. Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). On tomatoes see Andrew F. Smith, *The Tomato in America: Early History, Culture, and Cookery* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001). On peanuts see Andrew F. Smith, *Peanuts: The Illustrious History of the Goober Pea* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002). For more, see also: Cynthia Ott, *Squashed Myths: The Cultural History of the Pumpkin in North America*, 2002, Dissertation; Mark Kurlansky, *Salt: A World History* (New York: Walker and Co., 2002); -- *Cod: a Biography of the Fish that Changed the World* (London: Vintage, 1999).

¹⁵ Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989). Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998); Kristin Hoganson *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Jennifer Scanlon, *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies' Home Journal, Gender, and the Promises of Consumer Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Goodwin, *Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Crusaders*.

avenue for progress.¹⁶ Even within a health food culture built upon a critique of new methods of mass food production – and in particular the products of the slaughterhouses that fueled the Pure Food Movement and Reform Act – reform-oriented health food culture embraced and even defined the emerging mass market for food. From the huge successes of breakfast cereal companies to smaller natural food companies specializing in fruit and nut preparations, health food businesses helped redefine American meals. Moreover, they promised that their food was a path to natural health.

At its core, *Hygieia's Feast* explores the ways that health food eaters defined naturalness in diet and sought nature through food. It builds on the work of cultural environmental historians who have come to understand nature as not simply an objective material reality, but a dynamic and meaningful idea (and often ideal).¹⁷ Questions about past meanings and valuations of nature have long fueled the work of environmental historians, beginning with Roderick Nash's now canonical *Wilderness in the American Mind*, a book that launched a field of inquires into the importance of wild nature in American culture. More recent cultural environmental histories reflect on the consumption of nature in a variety of ways, from tourism to Sea World to pink, plastic lawn flamingos.¹⁸ *Hygieia's*

¹⁶ Susan Strasser, "Customer to Consumer: New Consumption in the Progressive Era," *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 13, No. 3, (Spring, 1999).

¹⁷ Richard White has outlined the current scholarship in cultural environmental history: Richard White, "From Wilderness to Hybrid Landscapes: The Cultural Turn in Environmental History," *The Historian*, 66, no. 3 (September 1, 2004) 557-564, and "Afterword Environmental History: Watching a Historical Field Mature," *Pacific Historical Review*, 70, no. 1 (February 1, 2001) 103-111; William Cronon, *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 1995); Carolyn Merchant, *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Douglas C. Sackman, *A Companion to American Environmental History* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

¹⁸ Jennifer Price, *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America* (New York NY: Basic Books, 1999); Adam Rome, *The Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Susan Davis, *Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Hal Rothman, *Devil's Bargains: Tourism in the Twentieth-Century American West* (Lawrence Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1998); Linda Nash, *Inescapable Ecologies: A History of Environment, Disease, and Knowledge* (Berkeley:

Feast delves deeper into the connections between nature and food culture with an explicit focus on the culture of food consumption and uncovers a new element in the nineteenth and early-twentieth-century cultural narrative of wilderness renewal. By the nineteenth century, what had begun as a health-driven commitment to eating certain curative foods intensified into a quest for foods that reflected wild environments and primitive foodways. Healthy living magazines of the era touted this primitive diet as a solution to a twentieth-century crisis of masculinity brought on by urbanization, mechanization, and immigration, creating a food oriented narrative of wilderness renewal to restore manly health and strength.

By 1900, health experts and health seekers participated in a periodical print culture that defined the new health food culture. This print culture included cookbooks, magazines, health treatises, and the promotional material used by health food companies to sell their products in America's emerging mass market for food. Some of this print material was new while some dated to the early decades of the nineteenth century, but all of it was increasingly relevant to an emerging middle class concerned with neurasthenia, dyspepsia, autointoxication, and other diet-related afflictions.¹⁹ I utilize each of these types of sources to explore health food culture as one of the multiple food cultures that defined American eating at the turn of the twentieth century. In particular, *Hygieia's Feast*

University of California Press, 2006); Alexandra Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Gary Okihiro, *Pineapple Culture: A History of the Tropical and Temperate Zones* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Sackman, *Orange Empire*; Richard Tucker, *Insatiable Appetite: the United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); John Soluri, *Banana Cultures: Agriculture, Consumption, and Environmental Change in Honduras and the United States* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

¹⁹ For more on nineteenth and early-twentieth century health concerns, see: Levenstein, *Fear of Food*; Whorton, *Inner Hygiene*; Whorton, *Nature Cures*.

draws on a periodical print culture: an exchange of ideas, values, products, recipes, fears, and cures that took place in the era's healthy living magazines.

This periodical print culture had roots in health reforms of the early nineteenth century, and continued to espouse the core tenets of that movement: distrust of the medical profession and praise for the Nature cure, the value of a moderate, vegetarian diet, and the importance of outdoor exercise and labor. Following the success of Sylvester Graham's call for health reform in the early 1830s his followers began publishing *The Graham Journal*, a magazine dedicated to "the practical illustration of the science of human life, as taught by Sylvester Graham and others."²⁰ Graham's dietary principles were based on outright proscriptions of tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, medical drugs, spices, meat, dairy, and other "stimulating" foods, principles that were embraced by the emerging discipline of hydropathy and enforced in dining rooms at the nation's increasingly popular water-cure resorts. Hydropaths produced their own share of publications, the most popular of which, the *Water Cure Journal*, reached a circulation of fifty thousand readers by 1850 just five years after its debut.²¹ Pioneering hydropath Joel Shew, who operated the country's first water-cure establishment, edited the *Water Cure Journal* from its inception until Russell T. Trall assumed control of it in 1849. Trall, a physician who operated the country's most well known water cure, changed the title of the journal to *Herald of Health* in 1862 so that it would better reflect the increasingly holistic – indeed increasingly food-conscious – content in its pages.²²

Trall's *Water Cure Journal/Herald of Health* and the diet-centric health philosophy he

²⁰ The first issue of the *Graham Journal* was published in 1837.

²¹ Whorton, *Nature Cures*, 82. According to Whorton, *The Water Cure Journal's* circulation peaked at one hundred thousand, though he does not indicate in what year.

²² *Ibid*, 90.

advocated as a renowned hygieopath (a term he coined to represent the combined importance of water and diet therapies) strongly influenced the development of health reform philosophy and literature in the last decades of the century. Horatio S. Lay, physician, Adventist, and inaugural editor of the *Health Reformer* magazine, considered himself a follower of Trall and the hydro/hygieopath philosophy. The first issue of Lay's *Health Reformer* was published in 1866, and by 1868 Trall himself was contributing weekly articles in his own "Special Department" of the magazine. Trall also agreed to fold the circulation of his journal *Gospel of Health* into the *Health Reformer*, bringing the young Adventist magazine into the big leagues of health reform. By the early 1870s, under the editorship of Adventist leader James White, the *Health Reformer* reached a circulation of eleven thousand, and by 1875 was counted among the largest of the health reform and alternative medicine magazines.²³ The *Water Cure Journal* was also an important print mouthpiece for the nascent vegetarian movement of the mid-nineteenth century. Henry S. Clubb, who would eventually become the president of the American Vegetarian Society and editor of its magazine *Food, Home and Garden*, arranged for a weekly section dedicated to vegetarianism to appear in its pages. Trall, the magazine's editor, served as president of the New York Vegetarian Society in the 1850s and shared Clubb's interest in dietary health reform. Clubb was a regular contributor to *The Water Cure Journal's* pages. The Adventist *Health Reformer* cemented its ties to hydropathy and (through Trall's influence) Grahamism when, in 1880, the magazine's editorship was taken over by John Harvey Kellogg, a recent graduate of Trall's Hygieo-Therapeutic College (as well as the University of Michigan's medical school and the Bellevue Hospital Medical School in New York). Kellogg,

²³ Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 190-119.

the physician-in-charge of the Adventist Battle Creek Sanitarium, renamed the publication *Good Health* and over the last two decades of the nineteenth century, established it as one of the most influential and long-lived of the era's healthy living magazines.²⁴

²⁴ Ibid, 128.

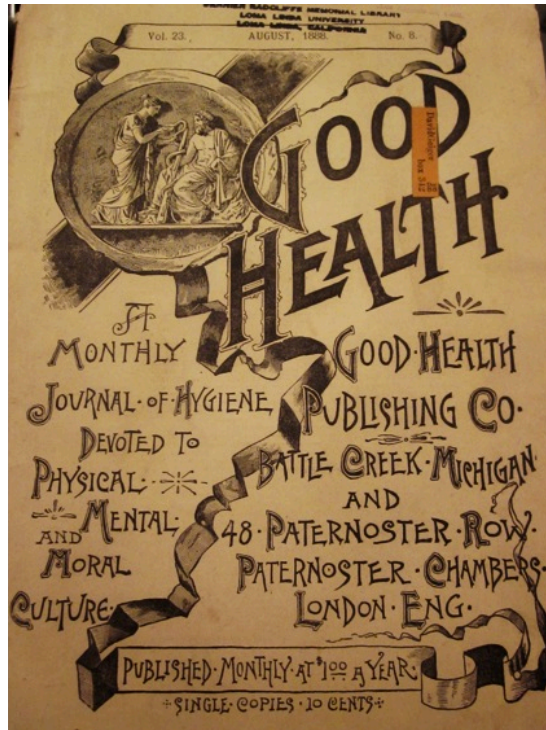


Figure 1: Cover of *Good Health*, October, 1874. Source: *Good Health*, October, 1874, Special Collections, Loma Linda University Library

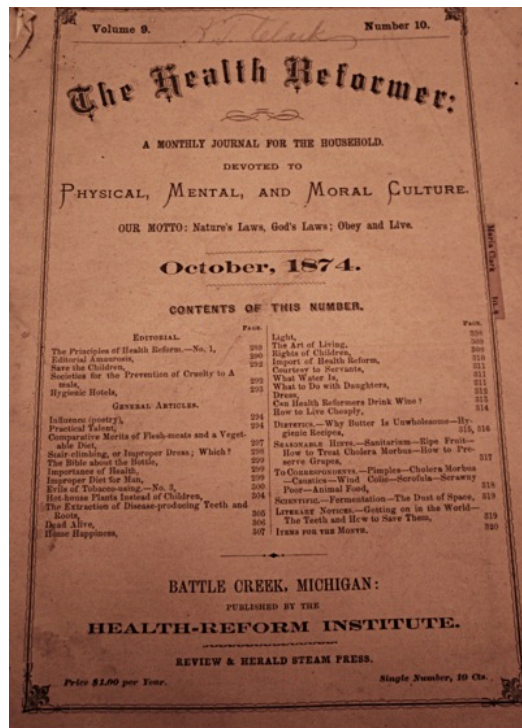


Figure 2: Cover of *The Health Reformer*. Source: *The Health Reformer*, August, 1888, Special Collections, Loma Linda University Library.

Indeed, the success of Kellogg's Battle Creek Sanitarium and the continued popularity of the water-cures spurred public interest at the turn of the century in a host of healthy living magazines centered on diet. In 1889, Henry S. Clubb launched the Vegetarian Society of America's *Food, Home and Garden* magazine, expanding it from a thin monthly pamphlet into a sleek, full-length magazine featuring recipes, testimonials, medical and nutrition research, and advice on kitchen gardening.²⁵ In 1894, Elmer Lee began publishing *Health Culture*, which endured for decades as a healthy living magazine dedicated to exercise, diet, and hygiene – the tenets of health nineteenth century health reform. In 1900, well-known German hydropath Benedict Lust began publishing *The Kniepp Water-Cure Monthly* for an American audience, which in 1902 became *The Naturopath and Herald of Health* and grew in readership throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In 1899, Dr. C. S. Carr established *Medical Talk for the Home*, which in 1906 likely merged with Charles A. Tyrell's *Health* magazine, itself begun in the mid-1890s. *Vegetarian Magazine*, begun in 1896 by the Chicago Vegetarian Society, shortly became the most widely read vegetarian magazine in the nation, by 1910 absorbing Clubb's *Food, Home and Garden* and replacing it as the official mouthpiece of the American Vegetarian Society.²⁶ In 1910 *Vegetarian Magazine* enjoyed a circulation of 16,000, due in part to its consolidation of Clubb's publication and four additional vegetarian monthlies and their readership.²⁷ In 1899, Bernarr Macfadden began publishing *Physical Culture*, a magazine "devoted to subjects appertaining to

²⁵ Iacobbo and Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America*.

²⁶ Between 1901 and 1902, *Vegetarian Magazine* changed its name to *The Vegetarian and our Fellow Creatures*, changing it back to the original moniker by 1903. During that time little else changed about the magazine; its content and look remained the consistent throughout the transitions

²⁷ Circulation information appears in the header of the frontispiece. E. J. Sharon, "Frontispiece," *Vegetarian Magazine*, October, 1910. Frontispiece.

HEALTH, STRENGTH, VITALITY, MUSCULAR DEVELOPMENT, and the GENERAL CARE of the BODY"²⁸ and which quickly became one of the nation's most widely circulated healthy living magazines.²⁹

²⁸ The quote is located in the header of the frontispiece and served as the magazine's motto for over a decade. *Physical Culture*, "Frontispiece," October, 1899. Stark Center. University of Texas, Austin.

²⁹ Dr. Jan Todd, "Bernarr Macfadden: Reformer of Feminine Form," *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Spring, 1987); Jan Todd, Joe Roark, and Terry Todd, "A Briefly Annotated Bibliography of English Language Serial Publications in the Field of Physical Culture," *Iron Game History*, Vol. 1 Nos. 4&5, Mar 1991.



Figure 3: Cover of *Vegetarian Magazine*, September, 1903. Source: Stark Center for Physical Culture, University of Texas Austin.

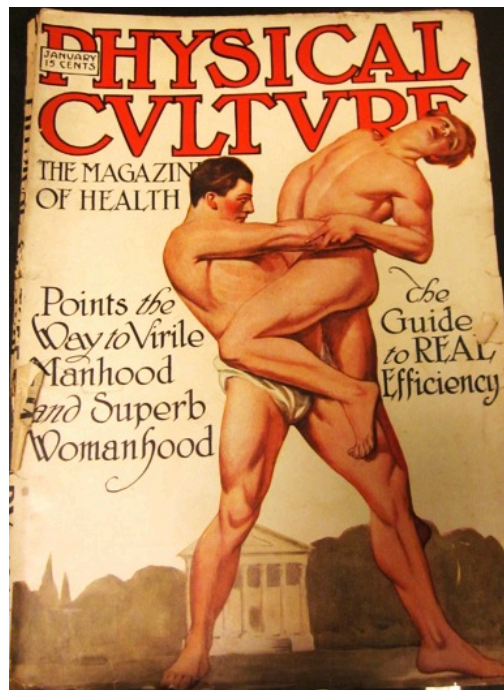


Figure 4: Cover, *Physical Culture*, January, 1915. Source: Stark Center for Physical Culture, University of Texas, Austin.

Circulation figures for healthy living magazines of this period are difficult to determine, partly due to archival gaps – as in the case of *Physical Culture*, for which no business or personal records of Macfadden, its editor, exist – and partly due to historians’ lack of attention to the magazines as a source base. One exception is Dr. Jan Todd’s work archiving the extensive collections on health and fitness culture at the University of Austin’s Stark Center. Todd’s annotated bibliography of serial health and fitness publications is the most accurate and comprehensive description of this body of literature, though it does not include information on circulation numbers. In some cases, the secondary literature supplies circulation estimates, though often this means a repetition of claims made by the magazines or editors themselves. In any case, circulation figures for the major healthy living magazines vary widely: certainly not more than 100,000 (the figure often cited for Trall’s *Herald of Health* in the late-nineteenth century and for Macfadden’s *Physical Culture* in the early twentieth) nor less than 15,000 (the figure cited by the most popular vegetarian monthly, *Vegetarian Magazine*). The magazines often shared writers, and editors frequently advertised their own publications, lectures, and health resorts on one another’s pages. Healthy living magazines likely shared a readership, though we cannot say to what extent; the diary testimony of health seeker Roscoe Rhoads, a consistent subscriber to both *Good Health* and *Physical Culture* and almost certainly a reader of the *Herald of Health*, suggests that the most popular healthy living magazines were particularly likely to share a readership.³⁰ Healthy living magazines certainly shared

³⁰ Rhoads notes specifically his subscriptions to *Good Health* and *Physical Culture*, and his remarks strongly suggest a familiarity with *Herald of Health*. Roscoe Rhoads, *Diary*, (1899-1900), Papers of Horace Emerson Rhoads.

a goal, summarized with typical drama by Bernarr Macfadden as a search for “the superb powers of intoxicating health.”³¹

In the years following his second stay at Kellogg’s Sanitarium, Roscoe Rhoads redoubled his commitment to a healthy lifestyle. He began subscribing to *Physical Culture* and pinned inspirational pictures of athletes and physical culturists on the walls of his new home gymnasium. He exercised daily and penned letters to Bernarr MacFadden requesting advice on strength building. Reflecting on “a lovely Thanksgiving day” in 1899, Rhoads wrote: “Today I partook of boiled wheat, nuttolene, whole wheat wafers, and zwieback, grapes and an apple while the rest of the family dined on roast turkey, dressing, gravy, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, bread, oysters, cranberries, celery, olives, grapes, fruit cake and mince-pie.”³² Rhoads celebrated his commitment to the food cure on a holiday dedicated to un-hygienic feasting, making sure to record the disparity between his own and his family’s meals. He made more frequent reports in his diary of his quest for health, writing with an optimism uncharacteristic of earlier entries: “Have sore throat and sore lungs and will have to work it off,” he noted in December; and later in January, “Gloomy, dreary, desolate to some, but not to me – I don’t have such days.”³³ Rhoads also began recording more frequent and expensive orders from health food suppliers, and started sampling new health food products. Despite nagging difficulties in obtaining health foods through mail-order suppliers, Rhoads became one of the Battle Creek Sanitarium Food Company’s consistent customers.

³¹ “On Eating: Digestion Dependent on Mastication,” *Physical Culture*, June, 1901, 123.

³² Nuttolene was one of John H. Kellogg’s Sanitas Nut Foods Company’s nut-based health foods. Roscoe Rhoads, *Diary*, (1898-1899), Papers of Horace Emerson Rhoads.

³³ Roscoe Rhoads, *Diary*, (1899-1900), Papers of Horace Emerson Rhoads.

Rhoads' enthusiasm for the food cure he had discovered was palpable. His quest for health influenced his friends and family and ultimately drove the family's relocation from Anderson to San Diego, California.³⁴ Once there, the then twenty-one year-old Rhoads and his parents established themselves as proprietors of a local health food business, selling nut butter. Nuts, nut foods, and nut butters were staples of an emerging health food cuisine, often recommended by vegetarian health food experts as a substitute for meat. Like many who witnessed the success of the large health food companies starting up in Battle Creek, Michigan in the late 1900s – particularly those selling breakfast cereal and coffee substitutes – the Rhoads family saw the potential for profit in a growing health foods industry. In the months following their move, Roscoe Rhoads was kept busy grinding nuts into butter for sale both locally and throughout Southern California.³⁵ Rhoads' mother Adeline advertised by sampling cups of peanut tea, a common health prescription of warmed, watered-down peanut butter, to friends and customers, while his father Abe produced and put up jars of unfermented grape juice, another well-known health tonic. When the Rhoads family decided to sell the nut-butter business a short time later, they had no trouble finding a buyer and capitalizing on their investment.

Much remains unknown about Roscoe Rhoads and his family. It is unclear exactly how much it cost to send Rhoads on multiple trips to Kellogg's Battle Creek Sanitarium, or how the family was able to pay for it. It is also unclear how Rhoads himself made ends meet when he was too ill to work, either as a young adult living in Indiana or during the latter years of his diaries kept in California, when he was well into his thirties and his

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Rhoads, for example, notes shipping a large supply of nut butter to Redlands, California, some hundred miles north of San Diego.

parents were approaching old age.³⁶ We do know that he continued living with his parents well into his adulthood and, at the time the diaries leave off, had not married. Rhoads' diaries indicate that he worked when he could, beginning with an early job at the local *Daily Bulletin* newspaper in Anderson, Indiana, where his father and younger brother Horace also worked. We can infer that the family's combined income was enough to afford them a middle-class lifestyle, both in Indiana and in California. Rhoads, while often frustrated that his health got in the way of his own business success, never shared any longstanding anxieties about money in his diaries. On the contrary, though he often recorded some business-related expenses and transactions, he seems to have been remarkably unconcerned with money, and certainly lived free from any true want. His brother Horace, with whom Rhoads maintained a good relationship for at least the span of years recorded in the diaries, was the business success of the family. Horace Rhoads worked his way through the ranks of the *San Diego Sun* newspaper to become its vice president and business manager, ultimately becoming the general manager for both the *San Diego Sun* and the *Los Angeles Herald* in 1908, and then general manager for the *San Francisco Call* in 1910. By the 1920s, Horace Rhoads was well off enough that he retired from the newspaper business and devoted himself to local pursuits (politics, business, and culture) in La Jolla, California, where presumably Roscoe Rhoads still lived with their mother Adaline.

Despite lingering question marks about his life, Rhoads diaries invite us along on his decades-long journey for natural health. We learn that health foods played a crucial

³⁶ Rhoads' father Abraham Rhoads died only a few years after the diaries cease in 1922 and his mother, Adeline Rhoads, died in 1935. Adeline was still living in La Jolla, California, at the time of her death. Obituary of Adaline B. Rhoads, *San Deigo Tribune*, 2/2/1935.

role in Rhoads' attempts to take control of his body; in fact, they were the central pillar of a health regimen that also included outdoor exercise, muscle building, water cures, and bathing. From his time in alternative health resorts to his dedication to natural food cures to his subscriptions to mass marketed health foods, Rhoads diaries reflect his participation in a new American health food culture at the turn of the twentieth century. This new food culture was built upon the tenets of nineteenth-century health reform and, as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, it coalesced around a health food cuisine and burgeoning health food industry.

Chapter 1

First Aid Foods: Eating and the Search for A Natural Cure

“Lo, the lowly little carrot
Has achieved a wondrous merit,
As an aid to health and beauty
The carrot can’t be beat.
You just take it up and pare it,
Eat it raw and soon, I swear it,
You’ll be beautiful and slender
If a pound a week you eat.”³⁷

On Thanksgiving Day, 1899, Roscoe Rhoads celebrated with an unusual feast. He recorded in his diary, “[t]oday I partook of boiled wheat, nuttolene, whole wheat wafers and zwieback, grapes and an apple.”³⁸ Rhoads, recently returned to his family home in Anderson, Indiana, from a health sojourn at the renowned Battle Creek Sanitarium, was committed to an emerging new food culture that had, by the turn of the century, coalesced around a quest for health. The health philosophies that anchored this new food culture and that would eventually engender new tastes, new traditions, and a new cuisine were rooted in the conviction that all foods acted as either poison or as medicine on the human body. Health reformers argued that the nineteenth-century British-American culinary tradition, which set the standard for middle- and upper-class American tables, was toxic to eaters’ bodies. They proscribed, in particular, the meats, rich sauces, pastries, and caffeinated and alcoholic beverages that graced American tables. So, “while the rest of the [Rhoads] family dined on roast turkey, dressing, gravy, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, bread, oysters,

³⁷ Vera M. Richter, *Mrs. Richter’s Cook-less Cookbook: With Scientific Food Chart* (Los Angeles, 1925).

³⁸ Roscoe Rhoads, *Diary, (1899-1900)*, Papers of Horace Emerson Rhoads.. Nuttolene was a nut butter food and one of John H. Kellogg’s patented health foods; zwieback was a dense, dry bread that originated in the water cure health resorts of Germany and translated as “twice-toasted or baked” in that language.

cranberries, celery, olives, grapes, fruit cake and mince-pie,” Roscoe Rhoads feasted on fruits, nut foods, and wheat crackers.³⁹

The Rhoads family’s Thanksgiving feast was far more restrained than many of their neighbors’ menus might have been at the time, even exempting Roscoe Rhoads’ reformist fare. By the 1880s, standards for middle-class cuisine, in particular, were rising; meals were becoming more elaborate and lengthy, largely due to changes in kitchen technology that allowed for more varied preparation and the cooking of multiple dishes on one large iron stove range rather than on the open hearth. While the complicated elements of French cuisine, including elaborate service presentations and wait staff, signified the conspicuous consumption of the upper class, middle and upper-middle-class eaters made their own claims to status and privilege while still serving dishes rooted in the British-American repertoire. Middle-class cooks and homemakers elevated soups, roasts, puddings, and scalloped or creamed vegetables by including expensive ingredients, preparing multiple courses, and planning elaborate dinner parties.⁴⁰ A typical party menu from one of the era’s most popular cookbooks began with Oyster Soup, followed by Smelts *á la Tartare*, Chicken *Vol-au-Vent*, and Rolled Rib Roast with Polish Sauce and Grape Jelly, accompanied by Cauliflower with Cream Sauce, Potato *Soufflé*, and Rice Croquettes. Following this, Larded Grouse with Bread Sauce was served, accompanied by Potatoes *á la Parisienne* and Dressed Celery. The last courses consisted of Royal Diplomatic Pudding, Raspberry Sherbet, Vanilla Ice Cream, Cake, Fruit, Coffee, Crackers, and Cheese.⁴¹ As historian Harvey Levenstein puts it: “A mere fifteen years earlier it would have been inconceivable to

³⁹ Roscoe Rhoads, *Diary*, (1899-1900), Papers of Horace Emerson Rhoads.. .

⁴⁰ For more on changes to middle- and upper-class American cuisine see: Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 10-22.

⁴¹ Maria Parloa, *The New Cookbook and Marketing Guide* (Boston, 1880) 406.

suggest that a dinner of this sophistication could or indeed *should* be cooked and served in a middle-class home."⁴²

Abundance marked the rising standards of middle-class American cuisine even at more quotidian meals, and provoked the ire of the era's dietary health reformers. An abundance of meat in particular lent status and respectability to American meals, including breakfast. For the middle class as well as for elite Americans - who were otherwise proud of their French-inspired cuisine - breakfast remained utterly British-American, anchored by a multitude of meats (poultry, game, fish, beef, pork), fresh bread, fruit, eggs, coffee, and tea.⁴³ Health reformers protested this preponderance of meat, fatty sauces and pastries, and stimulating (caffeinated or alcoholic) drinks at all meals and further shunned the use of white (refined) wheat flour in breads, crackers, and puddings. In contrast to Maria Parloa's dinner party menu, health reformer Ella E. Kellogg devised a contemporary multi-course meal that began with bean soup, followed by creamed potatoes, stewed celery, and stewed corn, accompanied by a new health food breakfast cereal made of flaked whole grains, whole wheat rolls and raisin bread, and capped with an apple tart. Kellogg's menu reflected a certain kind of self-conscious austerity, one which retained the status markers of multiple courses, incorporated faddish new flaked cereal products, and called for plenty of good-quality cream.

Reacting to increasingly sumptuous standards for American mealtimes, health food experts took to lecterns, treatises, and the pages of healthy living magazines to articulate an alternative health philosophy rooted in diet. Rejecting the mainstays of contemporary

⁴² Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 20.

⁴³ Abigail Carrol, *Three Squares: The Invention of the American Meal* (New York: Basic Books, 2013); Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*.

British-American cuisine, health experts recommended a canon of healthy foods and habits that they associated with curative, medicinal therapy. The conviction that certain foods held curative powers went hand-in-hand with the even more salient conviction that certain other foods were toxic: meat, refined sugar, white flour, caffeine, and alcohol denatured the human body as surely as nuts, fruits, and whole grains renatured it. Whole, unmediated, and plant-like, these “first-aid foods” foods recalled associations with natural environments and represented timeless connections to the natural needs of the human body.⁴⁴

Assumptions about natural human needs also led health food experts to outline healthy eating habits that incorporated the moment, manner, and method of eating.

Defining Health: Nature, Bodies, and Nineteenth-century Health Reform Philosophy

In an 1899 issue of *Vegetarian Magazine*, John Harvey Kellogg’s Sanitas Nut Foods Company ran an advertisement that described its “strength-giving, flesh-building” health products as “Nature’s Foods.” The advertisement featured two well-dressed, towheaded children, reclining on the grass in the shade of a nut tree, waiting for a nearby squirrel to drop a nut into their outstretched hands.⁴⁵ The illustration was designed to capitalize on decades of health reform philosophy that associated health with naturalness in diet.

Moreover, the advertisement tapped into the belief that while social pressures and cultural traditions had corrupted adult Americans’ digestive systems, children represented true human nature in their uneducated tastes. The advertisement’s verdant, wooded outdoor

⁴⁴ Health writer Mary Porter used the phrase “first-aid food” in a 1916 article touting “The Food Value of Olive Oil” for *Good Health* magazine; however, it captures perfectly health food experts’ decades-old assumption that certain foods could act as health cures on the human body. Mary E. Porter, “The Food Value of Olive Oil,” *Good Health*, March, 1916, 166.

⁴⁵ Advertisement, “Nature’s Foods,” *Vegetarian Magazine*, October, 1899, back cover.

setting recalled the belief that natural elements – sunlight, fresh air, food, and water – had the power to heal bodies, and expressed food’s centrality to the concept of a natural cure.



Figure 5: Advertisement, Sanitas Nut Foods, *Vegetarian Magazine*, October, 1899.

By using natural associations to market his health food, Kellogg was capitalizing on an element of health and diet reform that marked the movement from its inception in America. Beginning with the teachings of temperance advocate Sylvester Graham in the 1830’s, nineteenth-century health reformers relied on the concept of the natural to define their aspirations and their anxieties about food and health. Though remembered largely for his radical endorsement of sexual repression and chastity even within marriage, Graham’s legacy as a diet reformer lives on in the form of the humble Graham cracker, a reminder that his brief career had an indelible effect on American health food culture.⁴⁶ James Wharton summarizes the “Grahamite gospel” as a belief that “any activity appearing to be stimulating, to emotions as well as physical organs, was potentially pathological,” and

⁴⁶ For more on the life and career of Sylvester Graham, see: James C. Whorton, in *Nature Cures: A History of Alternative Medicine in America* (Oxford University Press, 2002); Stephen Nissenbaum, *Sex, Diet, and Debility in Jacksonian America: Sylvester Graham and Health Reform* (Westport, Connecticut, 1980); Ronald Numbers, *Prophetess of Health: Ellen G. White and the Origins of Seventh-Day Adventist Health Reform* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

that pathology was a sign of one's neglect of their duty to the Christian God.⁴⁷ Graham's principles were based on outright proscriptions of tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, medical drugs, spices, meat, dairy, and other stimulating foods, as well as prescriptions for plenty of exercise and open-air labor. These principles were put into practice throughout the country at boarding houses and colleges (including Oberlin, Wesleyan, and Williams). The word "graham" came to mean "whole wheat" in the culinary language of America, and by the mid-nineteenth century American cookbooks contained recipes for everything from graham breads to graham puddings.

Graham interpreted some of the foremost physiological research of his day to make a scientific case for his system of spiritual and physical health, and combed the western historical and anthropological record for evidence of his physiological principles in action. The resulting health philosophy was also a natural narrative of health food, a collection of morality tales about food and eaters that reflected Graham's earnest desire to create healthy bodies and souls. He lauded the "perfectly natural and simple" diet that he argued supported great men, great minds, and great civilizations as tirelessly as he condemned the artificial dietary traditions that had alienated contemporary Americans from their own natural habits and instincts, a separation he believed led to debility and disease. British-American food customs, Graham argued, included toxic stimulants, improper food combinations, gorging, and gluttony.

Graham defined healthy food as any food that allowed the human body to function according to its natural prerogatives. He argued that the human body would only achieve and maintain strength by exercising its digestive muscles breaking down raw or minimally

⁴⁷Whorton, *Nature Cures*, 86-87.

processed foods. The teeth and salivary glands, he contended, would be strengthened if “man were to subsist wholly on alimentary substances in their natural state,” grinding plant matter without the aid of an external grindstone.⁴⁸ For Graham, the human body was the proper site of conversion from plant to food; cultural interventions like kitchen tools and mealtime customs only got in the way. Allowing one’s organs to perform according to their natural prerogative was more than a matter of maintaining good physical condition: it was a Christian duty. Nature and God were both agents in the very human drama surrounding food, and in particular the American dietary staple: wheat. Nature produced no food substance that matched the refined qualities of milled white flour, Graham contended. God, who “constructed man in strict accordance with this economy of nature” intended humans to eat only the unrefined food of nature.⁴⁹ Graham lamented the prevalence of British-American culinary tools and traditions that separated the hard, brown husk of the wheat kernel from its soft, white insides, and condemned grain millers who profaned a holy union when they “put asunder what God [had] joined together, by separating the flour from...the bran.”⁵⁰

Moreover, Graham contended that millers, farmers, and bakers who produced flour and bread for the market corrupted the process that brought food to the table. He wrote that “while the people of our country are entirely given up...to the untiring pursuits of wealth,” it was unsurprising that farmers should be more concerned with their acreage, yield, and profit than the physiologic needs of the human digestive organs. He was nonetheless dismayed at the quality of the agricultural land on which wheat and vegetables

⁴⁸ Whorton, *Nature Cures*, 17.

⁴⁹ Sylvester Graham, *A Treatise on Bread and Breadmaking* (Boston: Light and Stearns, 1837) 19.

⁵⁰ Sylvester Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life* (London, 1849) 231.

were farmed. Wheat in particular, Graham felt, was best grown in “virgin soil,” un-cultured land that had not been “exhausted” and “debauched” by farmers’ tools and tonics. Only in the most wild and primitive of American landscapes could such wheat be grown, and could the most perfect bread be made: “They who have never eaten bread made of wheat, recently produced by a pure virgin soil, have but a very imperfect notion of the deliciousness of good bread; such as is often to be met with in the comfortable log houses in our western country.”⁵¹ Graham’s emphasis on the virtues of the frontier reflects his fundamental distrust of civilization and of market-driven agriculture. However, while ‘cultured’ land could never produce the most perfectly natural food, Graham felt that an educated and attentive farmer could guarantee at least a very good product.

Graham did not have the same sympathy for the “public bakers,” whom he believed would never produce a loaf of bread truly compatible with man’s natural physiological imperatives. Graham mistrusted bakers who “serve[d] the public more for the sake of securing their own emolument than for the public good,” and whose profit-driven adulterations and shortcuts were relatively well-known at the time.⁵² Graham cited studies of European bakers’ techniques and found an array of chemicals and additives, some toxic, used to make brightly white, porous, and palatable loaves out of diseased or spoiled wheat. Presuming that American bakers followed similar practices, Graham warned that bakery bread contained “alum, sulfate of zinc, sub-carbonate of magnesia, sub-carbonate of ammonia, sulphate of copper...the flour of beans, peas, and potatoes – and even chalk, pipe clay, and Plaster of Paris.”⁵³ Graham supposed that there was no other profession in which

⁵¹ Graham, *A Treatise on Bread*, 34.

⁵² *Ibid*, 43.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 44-45.

the economic interests of the producer were so at odds with the health and welfare of the consumer.

Graham distrusted the opacity of the process that transformed a wheat harvest into bakery bread, and his fears about adulteration and wheat quality were confirmed by some of the few men who had insight into the wheat and flour trade. According to Graham, several of the foremost merchants and bakers in America's largest cities admitted that bakery flour was usually the cheapest available, and was sometimes used despite spoilage. To illustrate this point, Graham related the testimony of "an aged and very respectable" New York flour merchant who insisted on having his bread made at home, knowing too well what bakery bread was made of.⁵⁴ But for Graham, the problems with bakery bread were not simply about shoddy ingredients or baking methods. Bakery-made loaves would always be inferior "in sweetness and wholesomeness" to a homemade loaf, their "virtue" destroyed by the market.⁵⁵ A public baker could not be expected to invest himself in the "physical, intellectual, and moral wellbeing" of his patrons, nor to dote on his loaves with "that untiring vigilance and solicitude...necessary in order to secure us the best of bread[.]"⁵⁶

Graham's recipe for a healthy bread depended on the participation of women. In the hands of a woman, the spoils of the market would be made wholesome; the unnatural bread that sickened so many would be made nourishing again. This ideal wife and mother, argued Graham, was bound by laws of constitution and custom to devote herself to the welfare of her family; her culinary finesse allowed her to prepare nature's bounty in such a

⁵⁴ Graham, *A Treatise on Bread*, 47.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 47-48.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 104-105.

way that it retained its rustic wholesomeness. Graham's ideal baker was a wife, mother, and an enlightened woman, educated to understand "the relations between the dietetic habits and physical and moral condition of her loved ones."⁵⁷ She was not, however, a domestic servant who, after all, was little more invested in the family she fed than the baker would be.

But while Graham lauded the educated, dedicated housewife-baker, he frequently blamed women for the sins and sicknesses of their families. Graham, viewed dietetic failings as moral failings and pathology as evidence of sin. He held women responsible for procuring, making, and serving only healthy foods, and warned women that dietetic neglect in their households would cause suffering "both for time and eternity."⁵⁸ "Many a child," wrote Graham, "has had its health seriously impaired, and its constitution injured, and perhaps its moral character ruined – by being driven in early life, into pernicious dietetic habits."⁵⁹ The cumulative effect of women neglecting their duties in the kitchen was the degradation of the "domestic and social and civil welfare of mankind."⁶⁰ A husband or child taught to disregard the natural prerogatives of his digestive system inevitably brought "evil on himself and his posterity."⁶¹ This evil, in the form of inherited debility, poisoned the national as well as the individual body. "There will soon reach us, as a nation," Graham thundered, "a voice of calamity which we shall not be able to shut our ears against...till the deep chastisements of out-raged nature shall...fill our land with such a living rotteness..."⁶² For Graham, the problems of the era were the cumulative problems of

⁵⁷ Graham, *A Treatise on Bread*, 105.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 106.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 123.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 106.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 20.

⁶² Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 231.

debilitated American bodies, malformed into sickness and sin by negligent wives and mothers.

Graham's contemporaries in health and diet reform shared in his insistence that modern American diets were distinctly unnatural. They also continued to frame their search for health as a search for, or return to, a state of nature. In her 1835 cookbook and health manual "Nature's Own Book," reformer and vegetarian boarding house-proprietor Asenath Hatch Nicholson prefaced her work with an invocation of fixed truths and "Nature's own unerring laws."⁶³ Reflecting on the "dancing nerves, palpitating heart [sic], and aching heads" of her acquaintances, Nicholson mused: "Nature has no vocabulary to define this hodge podge production – it is all the unnatural monster of man's own cultivation."⁶⁴ If, as Graham and Nicholson both agreed, tea, coffee, alcohol, meat, spices, pickles, and sumptuous meals caused the denaturing of human bodies, food could also be the cornerstone of a cure. Nicholson testified to her own success in regaining lost health, inspired by one of Graham's popular lectures on health. "Good bread, pure water, ripe fruit and vegetables, are my meat and drink *exclusively*," Nicholson wrote, "nor do I desire a single 'leek, garlic, or flesh-pot of Egypt.' Nature needs no more, appetite craves no more."⁶⁵ Nicholson declared that her dedication to a food cure had bolstered her shattered nerves and ailing kidneys, restoring her body and appetite to their natural, healthy state.

The Grahamite diet – though never attracting more than a few thousand adherents during his lifetime – endured after his death in 1851. Russell Trall applied Graham's dietary principles in what became one of the era's most visited health retreats and water

⁶³ Asenath Hatch Nicholson, *Nature's Own Book*, (New York, 1835) preface.

⁶⁴ Nicholson, *Nature's Own Book*, 6.

⁶⁵ Nicholson, *Nature's Own Book*, 55.

cures, first in New York and later New Jersey. Indeed, the water cure institutions that rose to popularity in America in the mid-1800s played an important role in preserving and interpreting Graham's health philosophy throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.⁶⁶ Trall, perhaps the nation's best-known hydropath, built his healing practice around the importance of a Grahamite diet. In 1854, Trall prefaced his *Hydropathic Cook-book* with the reminder that "[f]ood is one of the elements of the *material medica* in our hydropathic system, and in importance is second to no other – not even water."⁶⁷ Trall echoed reformer's criticisms of cookbook writers who filled the heads of American women with "ridiculous fashions" and "unnatural tastes," and hoped that his contribution would turn America's culinary tide toward "purity of material and simplicity of preparation."⁶⁸ By the latter half of the nineteenth century, alternative health reformers of all stripes agreed that a natural diet was the cornerstone of good health.

Prescribing Health: The Therapeutic Uses of Natural Foods

By 1900, concern over digestive diseases, particularly dyspepsia (acid reflux and indigestion) and constipation, reached new heights among Americans, fueled by the admonishment of their doctors.⁶⁹ The American medical profession was increasingly concerned about the role of digestive fluids and byproducts – particularly feces – in human health, a fixation strongly influenced by contemporary theories of miasmatic disease transmission. The eliminations of the sick were considered not only unpleasant but

⁶⁶ Hydrotherapy originated in Austria in 1829 at Vincent Priessnitz's Grafenberg water cure. Hydrotherapeutic treatment was based on the application of water via wet sheet wraps, plunges, showers, and sitz baths. For more on hydrotherapy and hygieotherapy, see: Whorton, *Nature Cures*.

⁶⁷ R. T. Trall, *Hydropathic Cook-Book with Recipes for Cooking on Hygienic Principles* (New York, 1854) preface.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. x.

⁶⁹ James C. Whorton, *Inner Hygiene: Constipation and the Pursuit of Health in Modern Society* (Oxford University Press: 2000).

literally toxic, the vapors themselves targeted as a vector of disease communication. Public sanitation campaigns of the mid-nineteenth century aimed to flush out and sanitize the public spaces – particularly waterways – deemed susceptible, and concurrent campaigns were waged to do the same to patients’ internal plumbing systems. By the late nineteenth century, constipation and its related disease of autointoxication – whereby the uncleared contents of the bowel were supposed to be poisoning the body from the inside out – had become a watchword of contemporary medicine. Though there existed a thriving market for laxatives and purgatives, alternative health practitioners and seekers sought drugless, diet-based remedies for this common contemporary complaint.

Treatments for constipation and other related diseases of digestion were a strong draw to alternative health centers like John H. Kellogg’s Battle Creek Sanitarium.⁷⁰ In 1913, well into the Sanitarium’s heyday as a health resort, Kellogg reported that out of 5,693 patients treated: 1,103 reported colitis (inflammation of the colon, often presumed the result of a constipated bowel) as their primary complaint; 1,734 reported constipation; 449 reported autointoxication; and 173 reported hemorrhoids.⁷¹ Almost fifty percent of the patients Kellogg treated that year sought treatment specifically for constipation-related diseases of the bowel, a trend that held true in other years as well. Digestion and the ways

⁷⁰ Kellogg earned degrees from both a traditional allopathic medical school and hospital and from Trall’s Hydropathic institute. His dual credentials maximized his sphere of influence as a physician and lent him credibility within the rapidly professionalizing western medical profession. Kellogg purposefully cultivated that credibility and influence as he worked to turn the obscure Western Health Reform Institute into a respected hospital and health resort. He rechristened the Institute the “Battle Creek Sanitarium” and by the turn of the twentieth century had made it into one of the nation’s most well known health resorts. Treatments at the Sanitarium revolved around purifying and reviving patients’ digestive tracts. Electric light baths, oxygen and yogurt enemas, vibration and massage therapy combined with strict, custom-tailored curative dietaries (that included the Sanitarium’s own patented food products) were thought to heal patients from the inside out. For more on Kellogg, see Ronald Numbers, *Prophetess of Health: Ellen G. White and the Origins of Seventh-Day Adventist Health Reform* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992).

⁷¹ “Annual Report of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, 1913, With Summaries of the Work of the Institution Since Its Establishment,” (Battle Creek, MI, 1914) 18-22.

that patients' food affected digestion, were of tantamount concern among the thousands of Americans seeking alternative health treatment at Kellogg's facility. But the list of complaints that drove patients to seek drugless, dietary cures didn't stop at there. Kellogg treated patients for hundreds of problems, ranging from "neurasthenia" (701 patients presented with this condition of nervousness and anxiety), the skin disease psoriasis, and sciatica.⁷²

This distribution of health complaints held true not just among Kellogg's patient population, but also among the vocal readership for the era's healthy living magazines. In many of the periodicals' "Question and Answer" sections, readers got a chance to present health experts and the magazines' editors with their own health problems and receive advice for a natural, drugless cure. While readers submitted questions over everything from warts to weight loss, the majority of their concerns revolved around digestion: constipation, dyspepsia, sour stomach, and vague troubles after eating. In healthy living magazines, the health experts and editors prescribed first-aid foods as cures for these common complaints. Kellogg's own *Good Health* magazine was joined by vegetarian magazines, alternative health and medical journals, and magazines dedicated to athleticism and physical culture in a public forum where curative diets and first-aid foods were discussed and defined.

Kellogg regularly prescribed nut food products like those advertised as "Nature's Foods" in *Vegetarian Magazine* as home cures for the health problems. In *Good Health's* "Question and Answer" section, Kellogg advised the concerned mother of a nine-year-old girl with swollen glands and phlegm formation to use "maltol, malted nuts, and other nut

⁷² Annual Report of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, 19.

preparations” as a cure.⁷³ By this time, Kellogg was producing a line of nut products aimed at replacing dairy and meat in the diet, including Nuttose, a meat substitute; Maltol, described by Kellogg as “freshly prepared nut oil with predigested cereals in perfect emulsion”; and Malted Nuts, a milk substitute based on almonds, peanuts, and malt syrup.⁷⁴ He recommended nut foods as particularly curative to nervous disorders, reassuring one inquiring reader that they would palliate facial neuralgia and another that they would produce “a set of new nerves.”⁷⁵ He prescribed the company’s whole wheat foods, Granose, Granola, and Granut to readers who wrote in complaining of hypopepsia (too little stomach acid), aepsia (lacking stomach acid), and general stomach trouble.⁷⁶

Though never one to miss a chance to advertise his own singularly healthy (he felt) food products, Kellogg as frequently prescribed food cures that did not depend on the Sanitarium’s patented health foods. He cited scientific research supporting the “germicidal properties of fruits,” for example, and recommended them for the home treatment of “biliousness, nervous headache, sick-headache, fevers, and the stomach and intestinal disorders of both children and adults.”⁷⁷ For fevers, he particularly recommended a 5:1, water-based decoction of oranges, grapes, raspberries, blackberries, huckleberries, tamarinds, currants, or cranberries. Obesity, rheumatism, and constipation, he vowed, could all be cured by varying kinds of fruit diets. To that end, Kellogg frequently

⁷³ John H. Kellogg in Answers to Correspondents, “Swelling of the Glands of the Neck,” *Good Health*, August, 1898, 514.

⁷⁴ “One Hundred and Thirty-six Recipes for Preparing Nut Foods,” Papers of the Sanitas Nut Food Co, Ltd (1809 – 1906), Loma Linda University Special Collections, Loma Linda, CA.

⁷⁵ John H. Kellogg in Answers to Correspondents, “Facial Neuralgia,” *Good Health*, January, 1898, 53; John H. Kellogg in Answers to Correspondents, “New Nerves,” *Good Health*, April, 1898, 250.

⁷⁶ John H. Kellogg in Answers to Correspondents, “Aepsia,” “Hyperpepsia,” and “Stomach Trouble,” *Good Health*, November, 1900, 641-643.

⁷⁷ John H. Kellogg, “Editorial: The Dietetic Value of Fruits,” *Good Health*, February, 1898, 113.

recommended specific fruits and fruit-cure preparations in a manner not unlike a chemist or pharmacist would offer a prescription.

As Kellogg advised afflicted readers on food remedies that could cure everything from a prolapsed stomach to swollen glands, he was participating in a growing wave of interest among health seekers in familiar, drugless, home cures. Besides the already flourishing hydropathic institutes of the mid-nineteenth century, new systems of alternative healing were emerging. By 1895, Andrew Taylor Still had grown his drugless medical philosophy of Osteopathy into a nation-wide cadre of osteopaths and a dozen medical colleges.⁷⁸ In 1901, Benedict Lust opened the American School of Naturopathy in New York and founded the American Naturopathic Association a year later.⁷⁹ As editor of the *Naturopath and Herald of Health*, Lust lauded the “Medical Use of Fruits,” taking the position that “Nature has provided in the fruit, vegetable, herb, and root kingdom a recipe for every ache of the body.”⁸⁰ By the time Kellogg’s Battle Creek Sanitarium reached national prominence in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, health seekers were already familiar with the premise of a natural cure. Some had been disillusioned by food and drug adulteration scandals and others motivated by temperance reform to abandon quack health tonics that were often alcoholic and occasionally toxic. In this context, food cures took on a new importance as an accessible, familiar alternative. As Otto Carqué, a recognized authority on the fruitarian diet and frequent contributor to the pages

⁷⁸ James C. Whorton, *Nature Cures*, 141-164.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 191-218.

⁸⁰ “Medical Use of Fruits,” *The Naturopath and Herald of Health*, February, 1902, 138.

of healthy living magazines, put it in a 1904 issue of *Physical Culture*: “Every apple, every orange, every bunch of grapes is a phial of medicine.”⁸¹

Health reformers of many stripes agreed with Kellogg’s assertion that “[f]ruit is a natural food,” and found it thus perfectly poised to act as a natural cure on the diseased bodies of health seekers.⁸² Carqué argued that fruit could cleanse the body of “earthy salts, uric acid and other poisons,” and prevent senility, skin diseases, liver disease, alcoholism, and a “heavy and dull” brain.⁸³ Even the water contained in fruit, Carqué argued, had been “distilled in Nature’s laboratory” and achieved such purity that it could dissolve and remove bodily toxins.⁸⁴ Carqué’s dedication to fruitarianism sprung from the belief that fruits’ health-giving qualities were linked to their unmediated natural state. They were received in perfect form “direct from the bounty of nature,” and were “superior to artificially prepared foods” that overburdened the nervous system and weakened the organs.⁸⁵ *Physical Culture*’s writers joined the chorus of praise, advising readers to eat “as many apples as possible” for the fruit’s manifold benefits to brain, digestive, liver, kidney, and oro-pharyngeal health.⁸⁶ They reported that elderberry juice “promotes vigorous action of the skin, it is also laxative and diuretic,” and “is very soothing...for sores, bruises, or scalds.”⁸⁷ “One who is afraid of germs,” the magazine advised, “should eat a lemon or two daily. No germ can live in citric acid.” Fruit acids were particularly good at “destroying

⁸¹ Otto Carqué, “The Nutritive and Therapeutic Value of Fruits and Fruit Juices,” *Physical Culture*, May 1904, 404.

⁸² John H. Kellogg, “Editorial: The Dietetic Value of Fruits,” *Good Health*, February, 1898, 114.

⁸³ To be a fruitarian at this time meant a commitment to consuming only fruits and nuts or their derivatives (juice, butter, etc), often raw. Otto Carqué, “The Nutritive and Therapeutic Value of Fruits and Fruit Juices,” *Physical Culture*, May 1904, 404.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 403.

⁸⁵ Carqué, “The Nutritive and Therapeutic Value of Fruits and Fruit Juices,” 403.

⁸⁶ “A Plea for the Apple” in Current Topics, *Physical Culture*, November, 1904, 419.

⁸⁷ “The Neglected Elderberry,” *Physical Culture*, September, 1907, 355.

fever germs,” and oranges, grapefruits, and lemons were recommended to fever patients. Fruits juices, straight from Nature’s laboratory and untainted by the “disorganizing effects of fire [or cooking],” could rebuild not only body but soul: “...they have some higher spiritual significance and efficacy...due to their wonderful influence in purifying the system and tissues, with consequent reaction on the mind.”⁸⁸

The first-aid foods touted by experts on the pages of healthy living magazines were not limited to fruits. Whole grains and nuts were popular home remedies, and vegetables, herbs, and oils were some of the earliest and most enduring recommended food cures for general and specific health problems. Kellogg, for example, recommended oatmeal to women wishing to improve their complexions and roasted rice for hyperpepsia (too much stomach acid).⁸⁹ *Physical Culture* advised spinach and dandelion for those with kidney troubles and cucumbers to “cool the system.”⁹⁰ Celery, turnips and radishes could cure rheumatism, neuralgia, and nervous diseases, while carrots treated asthma. Epileptics should eat watermelon, as should those with yellow fever.⁹¹ Watercress cured scurvy, cleansed the alimentary canal, and was a “blood purifier.”⁹² Legumes like beans and peanuts were building blocks of good health that nourished the whole body system, treated indigestion broadly, and were especially recommended for diabetics.⁹³ The tomato was an “intestinal antiseptic,” blood purifier, and “soverign remedy for dyspepsia and

⁸⁸ Dortch Campbell, “Fruit and Vegetable Juices as Blood Purifiers,” *Physical Culture*, August, 1915, 85.

⁸⁹ John H. Kellogg, Sanitarium Question Box, *Good Health*, September 1898, 561; John H. Kellogg in Answers to Correspondents, “Hypoepsia,” *Good Health* November, 1900, 642.

⁹⁰ J. R. Blake, “The Food We Eat,” *Physical Culture*, November, 1900, 74.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 74, 75.

⁹² *Ibid*, 75; “Blood Purifiers” in Timely Health Hints, *Physical Culture*, April, 1907, 299.

⁹³ Blake, “The Food We Eat,” 74-75.

indigestion.”⁹⁴ Lettuce, “by its bland action on the digestive tract and the gentle movements of the bowels that it excites,” cooled the blood and was a proven cure for “insomnia and ‘night-nervousness.’”⁹⁵ With so many claims regarding the health properties of foods circulating in health reformist literature, there was bound to be some disagreement. The onion, which some writers described as a digestive aid, brain enhancer, cough and cold medication, blood-purifier and “almost the best nervine known,” could not be recommended as “good food” at all by the eminent Dr. Kellogg.⁹⁶

Healthy living magazines also roundly praised olive oil, a vegetarian fat alternative to British-American standbys lard and butter, for its first-aid properties and medicinal uses. *Physical Culture* published an article citing olive oil’s “therapeutic properties...well known to medical men,” including its ability to lubricate the intestines, revitalize diseased tissue, and to destroy “certain forms of micro-organic life.” These and other properties, continued the magazine, made it a tonic capable of dissolving gallstones, resolving fevers, and expelling tapeworms. Beyond its ability in acute healing, olive oil was essential to cultivating health through diet. Two tablespoons of olive oil, the magazine crowed, contained more “nourishment” than a pound of meat or a cup of butter, was more proteinaceous than beefsteak, and was a germ-free fat.⁹⁷ *Good Health* concurred on the value of olive oil, citing scientific experimentation that had proven the oil to be “clean,” “poison-free,” “assimilable,” and “nourishing,” an essential for convalescence from “severe

⁹⁴ Bernard Somers, “Vegetables and their Curative Properties,” *Physical Culture*, March, 1911, 295; Charles Merilles, “The Tomato as Food: Does It Cause Cancer?”, *Physical Culture*, September 1909, 215.

⁹⁵ Bernard Somers, “Vegetables and their Curative Properties,” *Physical Culture*, March, 1911, 294-295; J. R. Blake, “The Food We Eat,” *Physical Culture*, November, 1900, 74.

⁹⁶ Blake, “The Food We Eat,” 74-75; Somers, “Vegetables and their Curative Properties,” 295; “Blood Purifiers,” 300; Minta Asha Beach, “How Raw Foods Build Health and Beauty,” *Physical Culture*, May 1914, 494; John H. Kellogg in Answers to Correspondents, “Onion,” *Good Health*, August, 1898, 516.

⁹⁷ John F. Morgan, “Food Value and Medicinal Properties of Pure Olive Oil and Olives,” *Physical Culture*, January, 1905, 45.

acute diseases and chronic wasting diseases” and a boon to poorly nourished children and the aged. It was a “first-aid food” to cure everything from tuberculosis to constipation to “brain-fag” and nervous diseases.⁹⁸ Bernarr Macfadden editorialized in *Physical Culture* on the virtues of olive oil in “keeping up a vigorous condition of the muscles, nerves, and even the brain.” He urged readers’ to overcome their unpleasant taste associations between the traditional medicinal cod liver oil and olive oil. He suggested, “the most pleasant way to take olive oil is with salads of all kinds,” and shared a salad dressing recipe of lemon and olive oil that would help readers become accustomed to its taste. Once accustomed, he advised, “you will find that olive oil adds to the ‘tastiness’ of most articles of food,” particularly to fruit salads, on bread, and mixed into peanut butter.⁹⁹

Consuming Health: The Moment, Manner, and Method of Eating

Health food experts did not limit their advice to the types of foods that should be consumed for optimal health outcomes but also included rules governing the manner and context for consumption. The editors of healthy living magazines outlined the social etiquette and table manners associated with the new health food culture. Their advice maintained the commitment to austerity preached by an earlier generation of diet reformers, which manifested itself in recommendations of simpler, more infrequent meals and a disdain for gourmandizing of any sort. This fear of finding too much pleasure in one’s food or of succumbing to one’s irrational sense of taste was present in healthy living magazines from the early days of the *Health Reformer*. Edith Griffin, writing in an early issue of *Physical Culture*, imagined the consequences to the professional man who “seeing

⁹⁸ Mary E. Porter, “The Food Value of Olive Oil,” *Good Health*, March, 1916, 166.

⁹⁹ Bernarr Macfadden in The Editors Viewpoint, “The Value of Olive Oil,” *Physical Culture*, March, 1908, 145.

the pies and the gingerbread, just could not resist.” Driven by the desire of his palate and free for the day from the moderating influence of his wife, this professional man gorged on cheese and donuts, coffee, pie, and lamb stew until he was so “befogged,” “stupid,” and “disinclined to exertion of any kind” that he failed to prepare an important oration, his one work task for the day.¹⁰⁰ In the same magazine three years later, Dr. Harvey Wiley, Chief of the Bureau of Chemistry at the U. S. Department of Agriculture and a leader in nutrition science, warned that over-eating led to sickness, somnolence, and “mental hebetude.”¹⁰¹ *Vegetarian Magazine* exhorted its fellows to partake of “Simple Menus,” where no more than two or three varieties of food, at most, were allowed on the table.¹⁰² *Physical Culture* shared a menu of “plain, wholesome fare” meant to recall the “rugged lives” of America’s pioneer forefathers and echoed the sentiment of *Vegetarian Magazine*, calling for no more than three food items at any meal.¹⁰³

Physical Culture elevated the seriousness of the concern, asserting that the gourmand had “been reduced to the level of the beasts,” governed by “perverted instincts” and incapable of making or understanding his own actions. The eater who gave in to the temptations of beef, lamb chops, “a roast and a cold bottle,” would be “pursued by eternal dissatisfaction, by a continuous seething, scorching discontent.”¹⁰⁴ *Medical Talk for the Home* lambasted “The Elaborate Menu” where, “beginning with oysters and ending with black coffee, forty or fifty different kinds of food were served.” The magazine protested the aesthetics of the plates that disguised real food as “little wads of things, strips of strange

¹⁰⁰ Edith Griffin, “Effect of Overeating,” *Physical Culture*, March, 1901, 270.

¹⁰¹ Harvey W. Wiley, “The Diet of Normal Man,” *Physical Culture*, February, 1904, 174.

¹⁰² “Simple Menus,” *Vegetarian Magazine*, February, 1910, 37.

¹⁰³ Grace Andrews, “Plain Truths about Plain Fare,” *Physical Culture*, May, 1911, 549.

¹⁰⁴ Charles H. Westfield, “Diet and Morals,” *Physical Culture*, May, 1909, 379-380.

looking fixtures which might have been fish, meat, or vegetables.” It scoffed at the idea that a long meal spent “twaddling around with twenty or thirty knives and forks” in an overheated room packed with diners and servants could be a pleasant experience.¹⁰⁵ Any meal that pandered so obviously to the sensuousness of eating was not healthy for the mind or body, nor was it enjoyable to the man of rational tastes. Instead, writers for healthy living magazines hoped that “plain facts” would educate readers to the virtues of “plain fare.”¹⁰⁶ Health food experts’ rules for the manner and context of healthy food consumption were rooted in simple menus that reflected rational principles, rather than the indulgence of taste.

Though the new health food cuisine disparaged devotion to the gustatory sense, it did not reject it outright. While Horace Fletcher’s teachings on mastication remained *en vogue*, taste and its relation to good digestion would continue to play a role in expert advice on cultivating health through diet. Fletcher, famous in America for his teachings on thorough chewing (or Fletcherizing, as it came to be called), was a frequent presence in healthy living magazines.¹⁰⁷ In 1901, *Physical Culture* reprinted part of Fletcher’s treatise on health, “Glutton or Epicure.” “Taste,” he wrote, “...craves the kind of nourishment the body needs, invites to eating, gives enjoyment during the whole time needed for the fluids of the mouth to do their part of the assimilating process.”¹⁰⁸ But more than that, taste served as the body’s sentinel and guarantor of the “superb powers of intoxicating health” that *Physical Culture* sought to cultivate. Fletcher counseled chewing each bite until the

¹⁰⁵ “The Elaborate Menu,” *Medical Talk for the Home*, December, 1904, 226-227.

¹⁰⁶ Grace Andrews, “Plain Truths about Plain Fare,” *Physical Culture*, May, 1911, 549.

¹⁰⁷ Horace Fletcher, “Open Letter to Physical Directors,” *Good Health*, December, 1909, 945; Horace Fletcher, Department of Vital Economics, *Good Health*, February, 1910, 121; Horace Fletcher, “How Much Should We Eat?,” *Physical Culture*, February, 1916, 21.

¹⁰⁸ Horace Fletcher, quoted in “On Eating: Digestion Dependent on Mastication,” *Physical Culture*, June, 1901, 124.

food lost all perceptible taste, a break from the prevailing advice that designated a set number of chews regardless of taste. The “fibrous, insoluble, and tasteless remainder” would serve as the body’s signal that the food was fit for “complete and easy digestion” and could be swallowed. The human mouth, for Fletcher, became a physiological extension of the kitchen, and chewing was an integral part of the cooking process. Any food eaten hastily or in gluttony had not had been thoroughly cooked in the mouth’s digestive juices, and was thus “underdone” and “under-prepared.”¹⁰⁹ Thus the deliberate, thoughtful tasting of food became associated with thorough mastication, a longtime tenet of health food cuisine.

Expert commentary also agreed that the average American eater ate too much, too fast, and too often. Slow, studious chewing should accompany a restrained appetite. As early as 1866, *Health Reformer* stressed the importance of thorough chewing at mealtimes, admonishing readers to eat slowly and somewhat silently out of deference for their digestion if not for good breeding. The magazine cautioned that, “without chewing, the food is too coarse and gross for the stomach, and is unprepared for the action of the gastric juice.” It lamented the “miserable economy” sought by those who rushed through their meals only to pay later in the form of dyspepsia and “a broken constitution.” “If we cannot spare time to eat,” the article concluded, “we had better not eat at all.”¹¹⁰ Decades later, *Physical Culture* reaffirmed the importance of “chewing every mouthful to a liquid” as a healthy food habit and concluded that this duty was anathema to a hurried meal. “If you are in a hurry at meal-time, it would be far better for you to wait until your hurry is over,” the editors advised, since a bolted meal was not only non-nourishing but also a likely cause

¹⁰⁹ “On Eating: Digestion Dependent on Mastication,” 124, 123-124.

¹¹⁰ “Mastication of Food,” *Health Reformer*, August, 1866, 15.

of serious ill health.¹¹¹ A year previous, the same magazine quoted Frank Coombs, chief of the municipal Department of Health in Cleveland, as an expert on American eating habits in relation to digestive disease. Coombs pinpointed hurried eating, and in particular the “Quick Lunch,” as a key problem in urban-American food culture.¹¹² “The ‘dope’ that a man gets at a quick-lunch restaurant is directly responsible for a vast number of family rows,” Coombs claimed, a fact he put down to all of the gulping and black coffee that characterized lunch establishments. These hurried meals left men sick, irritable, ill-natured, and, warned Coombs, were ultimately responsible for more divorces and “wrecked homes” than any other source of marital strife.¹¹³ The *Vegetarian Times* concurred, claiming, “all food should be properly masticated, and no meal, however simple, can be properly eaten under an hour.”¹¹⁴

Rules for a healthy diet and warnings about the risks of transgression took on exaggerated meanings regarding the role of food in child-rearing practices. Children, often described by health experts as having naturally healthy appetites, were seen as especially susceptible to developing unhealthy dietary habits. *Health Reformer* warned that a child granted sweet indulgences or bribes of food for good behavior would learn to regard food as “the chief end and object in life” and would grow up having its “nobler senses...generosity, disinterestedness, pity, and filial love – all overcome or postponed in

¹¹¹ Bernarr Macfadden, Timely Health Hints, *Physical Culture*, April, 1907, 298-299.

¹¹² Urbanization and industrialization had, over the course of the nineteenth century, begun to change even the mealtimes of the middle- and upper-middle-classes as places of work were increasingly distanced from homes, workday schedules became more rigid and rigorous, and time for the mid-day meal was minimized. Increasingly, Americans of all classes took lunch away from home and at “Quick Lunch” restaurants. For more on the rise of lunch counters and luncheonettes, see: Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 183-193.

¹¹³ “The Quick Lunch Evil,” *Physical Culture*, November, 1906, 402.

¹¹⁴ “To Maintain Health,” *Vegetarian Magazine*, January, 1910, 31.

favor of the one sensual, selfish, and absorbing act of gourmandizing.”¹¹⁵ Ella E. Kellogg writing in *Good Health* some years later renewed the caution that mealtime customs could shape the tastes, health, and morals of children. Kellogg advised that “bright, sparkling, and appropriate conversation” be the centerpiece of a meal, so that children could be taught “the purpose of eating is not merely the appeasement of hunger or the gratification of the palate, but the acquirement of strength for labor or study.” Conversation, he warned, should not turn to the subject of the food on the table, lest it emphasize “the pleasures of the palate in the child’s mind.”¹¹⁶

Accompanying the conviction that food should be eaten as fuel rather than fun were admonitions to eat less food, less often. Experts writing for healthy living magazines had long questioned the wisdom and necessity of eating three or more meals a day, as was customary in the British-American culinary tradition. In 1866, as the nascent turn-of-the-century food culture was just gathering steam, the Adventist magazine *Health Reformer* advised eating only two meals a day, arguing the importance of allowing the stomach enough time to rest between exertions. By learning to skip his own supper, magazine contributor J. H. Waggoner claimed he had eliminated gnawing hunger pangs and prevented in himself the dyspepsia and prostrations that plagued people who overworked their stomachs.¹¹⁷ Thirty years later, the magazine’s successor *Good Health* was continuing to advocate the utility of the two-meal-a-day system, which was reportedly also the mealtime praxis of patients at Kellogg’s Battle Creek Sanitarium.¹¹⁸ Other magazines at the turn of the century sang the praises of this austere habit: *Vegetarian Magazine* published J.

¹¹⁵ “Indulgence of the Appetite,” *Health Reformer*, August, 1866, 15.

¹¹⁶ Ella E. Kellogg, “The Educating Influence of the Mealtime,” *Good Health*, January, 1895, 45.

¹¹⁷ J. H. Waggoner, “Two Meals A Day,” *Health Reformer*, August, 1866, 13.

¹¹⁸ “A Health Resort,” *Good Health*, January, 1905, 37.

E. Mizze's testimony on how to "Prevent All Life's Ills," the key tenet being light eating at all times and only one or two meals a day.¹¹⁹ *Physical Culture* shared Joseph A. Zeltchius' secrets to eating his way to "abundant health," which included eating no breakfast, a dish of fruit for lunch, and a moderate dinner at the end of the day.¹²⁰ The muscular athlete and publisher Bernarr Macfadden, sharing "Timely Health Hints" in *Physical Culture*, added his own endorsement to the "two-meal-per-day-habit" that he claimed had kept him fit for over twenty years. Skipping breakfast, Macfadden found, was a good way for many eaters who would not otherwise "thoroughly enjoy every morsel" to reinvigorate their flagging appetites.¹²¹ Grace Andrews, writing for *Physical Culture*, advised a two-meal-a-day plan for optimum health while Nannette MacGruder Pratt, writing for *Medical Talk for the Home*, found that three meals, one moderate, one heavy, and one composed of "fruit – just fruit – nothing else," best served her needs.¹²²

Conclusion

Health philosophies based on the notion of curative, natural foods gained traction as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth. The concerns of health food experts dovetailed with popular Progressive concerns over Pure Food, a movement rooted in consumer dissatisfaction with an unregulated and corrupt American food industry and marked by sensational muckraking journalism and federal attempts to legislate a nationwide reform. Diet-centered medical therapies also reflected new claims to social

¹¹⁹ J. E. Mizze, "Prevent All Life's Ills," *Vegetarian Magazine*, September, 1903, 310.

¹²⁰ Joseph A. Zeltchius, "How A Raw Food Enthusiast Lives On Less Than Ten Cents A Day," *Physical Culture*, December, 1903, 524.

¹²¹ Bernarr Macfadden in Timely Health Hints, "Two Meals A Day," *Physical Culture*, April, 1907, 298.

¹²² Grace Andrews, "Plain Truths about Plain Fare," *Physical Culture*, May, 1911, 550; Nannette MacGruder Pratt, "Three Meals a Day," *Medical Talk for the Home*, December, 1904, 210.

status made by the emerging American middle class. Health concerns like dyspepsia reflected the more elaborate, frequent meals that marked middle and upper-middle-class tables, where food was so rich and plentiful it was quite literally making eaters sick. Likewise, access to specialized dietary treatment in water cures and sanitariums and to patented health food products demonstrated the affluence of middle-class health seekers. By 1900, this growing cadre of health experts and health seekers together were creating a health food cuisine of shared tools, techniques, and tastes on the pages of the era's most influential healthy living magazines.

Chapter 2

Healthy Living Magazines and the Making of a Health Food Cuisine

In articles, recipe columns, and readers' submissions, healthy living magazines outlined a new health food cuisine: one anchored in certain ingredients, foods, and dishes, created by specific kitchen tools and cooking techniques, and ordered by shared food traditions and mealtime etiquette. These magazines were dedicated to a revised perspective on fitness and food, and they fostered a public exchange of cooking ideas and techniques. Although healthy living magazines were not strictly dedicated to health foods – their pages covered topics ranging from exercise to eugenics to electric medical therapies – almost every issue contained articles, editorials, recipes, and advertisements related to health food. In print, health experts and readers created new tastes, vilified some and verified others, all the while decrying the subversive influences of indulging the palate and eating for pleasure. They profiled foods like coconuts, bananas, olive oil, agar-agar, and soybeans, foods little used in the British American culinary tradition that set the standard for middle- and upper-class American tables. Occasionally, as in the case of tropical fruits like banana and coconut, these less-familiar foods became central to the new health food cuisine. More often, the food writing on the pages of healthy living magazines repurposed familiar foods for health-conscious dishes. Healthy living magazines were a venue in which health seekers validated and learned from a canon of health food recipes, adopted new kitchen tools and cooking techniques (often by adapting older ones), and learned about health food products.

Menu and Recipe Columns: Health Food Cuisine According to the Experts

The health food experts who published dietary and culinary advice in healthy living magazines presented themselves as evidenced, experienced, and knowledgeable regarding the role of food in the search for superb health. In some cases they were well-known physicians, lecturers, or cooks whose names appeared frequently on book spines and article headings, while in other cases they remained anonymous. In any case, their expertise was either established or confirmed when it was sold to readers as worthy advice on the subject of food and health. Perhaps the most salient means by which health food experts defined the new tastes and cuisine of health food culture was through the hundreds of menus and thousands of recipes they published. Virtually every issue of every healthy living magazine contained at least one recipe, and the larger magazines usually published weekly recipe and menu departments. A close look at these recipes reveals the culinary trends at the core of the cuisine as the experts envisioned it: staple foods, common dishes, and typical preparation techniques.

Anchoring the cuisine were staple European grains such as rye, oats, and especially wheat, usually in the form of hard breads or crackers, patent breakfast cereals, or, quite often, ground, soaked, and eaten raw with milk or fruit. Recipe writers substituted whole wheat flour (often called graham flour in a nod toward brown-bread advocate Sylvester Graham) in virtually all recipes that traditionally incorporated refined white flour, developing a whole wheat culinary norm that covered everything from piecrusts to soup to dinner rolls. Graham gems, made with whole wheat flour and water, sometimes with the addition of milk, eggs, or salt, and baked in a cast-iron gem pan, were one whole wheat recipe that health food experts consistently revisited. A lighter wheat puff or richer wheat

roll, such as the cream rolls made with “cold graham porridge,” cream, and graham flour that reformer Ella E. Kellogg shared in *Good Health*, were often suggested as an alternative to the gems.¹²³ Graham crisps, wafers, or crackers “rolled as thin as brown paper” were meal standards, as were grain based puddings, as in *The Naturopath’s* recipe for Whole Wheaten Meal Pudding which called for a pound of whole grain flour and three eggs.¹²⁴ Even recipes for “Natural Wheat,” the whole grain simply broken down in a grain mill until reaching the texture of “coarse coffee” and served dry or with milk, appeared in healthy living magazines.¹²⁵ When, in 1902, *The Naturopath* cautioned readers, “Don’t forget the whole wheat bread at each meal,” it echoed the recipe columns and weekly menu suggestions of its fellow health publications.¹²⁶ Certainly, by the turn of the century, whole wheat had become a core element of health food cuisine.

The turn of the century also saw the introduction of nuts into health food cuisine as they were repurposed from dessert-course origins in the British-American culinary tradition into staples of every course and every meal. Until the late-1890s, nuts were hardly common in the menus and recipes published by magazines like *Good Health* and *The Vegetarian Times*; when they appeared, they did so as the dessert course, or occasionally as a hors d’oeuvre crisp or cracker. It was not until 1898 that Ella E. Kellogg, writing the recipe columns for *Good Health*, began to include nuts in entree, soup, and salad recipes. Not coincidentally, this appearance coincided with the very early years of Kellogg’s Sanitas

¹²³ Ella E. Kellogg, Science in the Household, *Good Health*, February, 1889, 60.

¹²⁴ “Palatable Dishes Without Milk,” *Good Health*, January, 1893, 37; “Naturopathic Kitchen,” *The Naturopath and Herald of Health*, October, 1904, 264.

¹²⁵ Amelia M. Calkins, “Weekly Menus of Uncooked Foods,” *Physical Culture*, April, 1904, 326.

¹²⁶ “Vegetarian Cookery Recipes,” *The Naturopath and Herald of Health*, February, 1902, 34.

Nut Foods Company, which sold a variety of nut-based food products, including nut butters, nut butter-based spreads, and nut-based mock meat products.

Healthy living magazines' increased attention to nuts in health recipes and editorials may have been spurred by a concurrent increase in reader interest in the subject. In 1898, the same year that Ella E. Kellogg began sharing her nut-based recipes, *Good Health* readers wrote in from across the nation with questions for the magazine's editor regarding everything from the healthfulness of specific nut preparations, to the proper use of nuts in baking crackers, to the role of nuts in curing constipation.¹²⁷ In February of 1900 *Good Health's* editor fielded multiple questions about walnuts, almonds, chestnuts and peanuts, wondering if they were healthful, how they should be stored, whether they were better eaten raw or cooked, and how they might be made into nut butters.¹²⁸ At the same time, *Physical Culture* also began receiving queries about nut foods, particularly regarding the wisdom of substituting nuts for meat in the health food diet.¹²⁹ In 1902, a reader asked *The Vegetarian And Our Fellow Creatures* whether peanut butter could "be eaten every day without injury," and in 1904 a reader applied to the editors of *Medical Talk for the Home* regarding the best kinds of nuts for a healthy diet.¹³⁰ Questions like these were regularly published in the "Question and Answer" sections of healthy living magazines throughout the early years of the 1900s, and undoubtedly fueled the continued publication of lengthy articles dedicated to the uses, preparations, and value of nuts to the era's health food diet.

¹²⁷ L. B. O, "Hickory Nuts - Walnuts" in Answers to Correspondents, *Good Health*, January, 1898, 53; D. J. O., "Nuts for Constipation" in Answers to Correspondents, *Good Health*, August, 1898, 516.

¹²⁸ Answers to Correspondents, *Good Health*, February, 1900, 122-124.

¹²⁹ In Questions and Answers, *Physical Culture*, November, 1899, 74.

¹³⁰ "The Dining Room," *The Vegetarian and Our Fellow Creatures*, March, 1902, 136; "Nuts as Food," *Medical Talk for the Home*, July, 1904, 932. Between 1901 and 1902, *Vegetarian Magazine* changed its name to *The Vegetarian and our Fellow Creatures*, changing it back to the original moniker by 1903. During that time little else changed about the magazine; its content and look remained the consistent throughout the transitions.

That nuts had become central to health food cuisine by 1900 is confirmed by their appearance in *Physical Culture's* earliest recipes, menus, and food articles. Though the magazine only began publishing articles on food in 1902 (four years after beginning publication), its first food article touting "The Value of Raw Foods" lingered on the place of nuts and nut oils in a raw diet.¹³¹ The next three food-related articles, published in April and May of 1903, encouraged health-seeking readers to embrace a diet of "Uncooked Food," and advised them to "begin the change by substituting nuts for meat."¹³² So strong was reader interest in the subject of health food that in September of 1903, reader J. W. Lilly encouraged the magazine to host an "exchange of 'menus'" where those following the raw food diet could share ideas, recipes, and preparation techniques.¹³³ While the "exchange" never materialized as such, in January of 1904 *Physical Culture* began running a new menu and recipe column. Amelia Calkins' first recipes in her "Weekly Menus of Uncooked Foods" featured nuts in soups, salads, entrées, breakfast dishes, and desserts. In the coming months and years, nuts appeared in virtually all of the menus the magazine published, from a croquette recipe made of ground nuts, whole wheat flour, and an egg to nut-based "roasts" or meats.¹³⁴ Nut sauces or gravies, such as the Chestnut Sauce, Almond Nut Hollandaise, and Brazil Nut Sauce created by Marguerite Macfadden for *Physical Culture*, often topped these nut-based entrees.¹³⁵ For meals like lunch or dinner, nuts became the mainstay: a Brazil nut salad and nut croquettes anchored a Friday night meal,

¹³¹ Geo. W. Patterson, "The Value of Raw Foods," *Physical Culture*, October, 1902, 41.

¹³² Emile La Criox, "The Value of Uncooked Foods," *Physical Culture*, May, 1903, 393.

¹³³ J. W. Lilly, "Suggestion for Raw Food Enthusiasts," *Physical Culture*, September, 1903, 279.

¹³⁴ Amelia M. Calkins, Weekly Menus of Uncooked Foods, *Physical Culture*, January, 1904, 87.

¹³⁵ Marguerite Macfadden, "Menu for New Year's Dinner," *Physical Culture*, December, 1906, 525; Marguerite Macfadden, "Menu for Novel Thanksgiving Dinner, with Red Color Scheme," *Physical Culture*, November, 1906, 444; "Dainty Menus for Three Days," *Physical Culture*, February, 1907, 153.

for example, while Saturday night centered on nut soup and a walnut salad.¹³⁶ Nuts were incorporated into desserts like Nut Pudding, a lightly sugared egg- and cream-based pudding featuring walnuts and pecans, and nut butters were regularly suggested as toast spreads and dressing ingredients, and even occasionally recommended as the basis for a caffeine-free morning beverage.¹³⁷ In the space of a few short years, nuts had become far more than a dessert-course dainty for health-seeking eaters; they had become a staple food.

While health food experts repurposed whole wheat and nuts in new ways, they also drew on a growing variety of pre-processed and prepared health food products. In particular, expert menus and recipes incorporated whole grain breakfast cereals and nut or grain-based coffee substitutes. Health experts' attachment to thin, dry, whole grain breads and crackers extended to their use of the newer patent breakfast cereals like Grape Nuts, Granose, Granola, Shredded Wheat, and Force. Recipe writers frequently used breakfast cereals in sweet dishes such as pies and puddings, like the Thanksgiving Pudding that called for dried fruits, nuts, whole wheat flour, and grape juice along with Grape Nuts.¹³⁸ They were also a regular ingredient in recipes for savory dishes and mock-meat dishes, like *Vegetarian Magazine's* Lentil Roast that called for two Shredded Wheat Biscuits, four tomatoes, one onion and two cups of lentils.¹³⁹ Most often, menus would incorporate the breakfast cereals as such, pairing them with milk, cream, honey, or fruit for the first meal of the day. Commercial nut- or grain-based coffee substitutes like Postum, Malted Nuts, and Caramel-Cereal were suggested frequently as both morning and evening beverages.

¹³⁶ Amelia M. Calkins, Weekly Menus of Uncooked Foods, *Physical Culture*, March, 1904, 244.

¹³⁷ "Menus and Recipes for Three Days," *Physical Culture*, November, 1910, 524.

¹³⁸ Calkins, Weekly Menus of Uncooked Foods, 453.

¹³⁹ "The Dining Room," *Vegetarian Magazine*, October, 1900, 23.

As the health food cuisine coalesced around whole wheat and nut dishes on the pages of healthy living magazines, it reflected the most rigid dietary tenets of health food reform: proscriptions of meat, coffee, tea, alcohol, and white (or refined) wheat flour. Health food cuisine reimagined familiar and favorite dishes, deemed unhygienic by health experts, by using whole wheat and nuts as substitute ingredients. They reshaped mealtimes around these new health foods, particularly transforming breakfast from a meal anchored by fatty cuts of meat, white flour, and coffee or tea into a meal anchored by nuts and whole grains. In fact, health experts created multi-course breakfast menus made almost entirely of those two health food standards. One of Ella E. Kellogg's typical breakfast recipes, for example, called for: "Fresh Fruit, Fruit Granose, Zwieback with Nuttolene Sticks, Macaroni baked with Granola, and Caramel-Cereal."¹⁴⁰ Granose and Granola, both Kellogg health cereals, and Zwieback, a German translation of "twice-baked" that referred to a very dry whole wheat toast popularized through that country's famous water cures, formed the core of the breakfast and were all whole wheat products. Nuttolene, a Kellogg peanut-based meat substitute, took the place of the strips of meat – either pork or beef, depending on one's region – that defined breakfast in British-American food culture. Hygienic breakfasts like this one – built on whole grains and including nuts and fruit - were uniformly endorsed by health food experts on the pages of healthy living magazines, and were perhaps the most defining meal of the new cuisine.

¹⁴⁰ Ella E. Kellogg, Seasonable Bills of Fare, *Good Health*, August, 1898, 500.

Reader Recipe Submissions: Negotiating the Boundaries of A New Health Food Cuisine

Healthy living magazines further described the boundaries of health food cuisine with the aid of readers' own recipes and menus. When magazines published reader recipes and menus they created a public space where readers could negotiate the practicalities of experts' food prohibitions and recommendations. Often, readers used this forum for pushing the boundaries of health food cuisine to include foods proscribed by expert dogma and assumptions about health. In 1905, *Physical Culture* solicited menus and recipes from readers to be published in conjunction with a "Prize Menu Competition." The magazine offered a twenty-five dollar reward to the readers who designed the best menus in three categories: weekly menu of cooked and uncooked foods, least expensive weekly menu, and menu suitable for a single person living alone. In an effort to ensure wide participation and the submission of "novel and original" menus, the editors made a concession to the "great many readers" who, they feared, had not accepted "the broader theories on the food question that we advocate": they permitted the inclusion of "meat, oysters, fish, white flour, coffee, and tea" in contest regulations.¹⁴¹ The editors' hunch that unhygienic items would continue to find a way into reader-created menus was confirmed by the submissions they published.

The first finalist menu they chose to print set the tone for what would follow. Miss A. M. Woodley's "Weekly Menu" featured many foods already familiar to health seekers: whole wheat and Graham breads, cereal coffees, cocoa, breakfast cereals, and nuts all appeared as daily provisions, sometimes in multiple meals a day. Yet, in something of a

¹⁴¹ Bernarr Macfadden, "Prize Menu Competition," *Physical Culture*, March, 1905, 165.

compromise between traditional British-American tastes and the maxims of health food experts, fish and poultry appeared on the menu on five of the seven days, and tea for three.¹⁴² Woodley's hybrid health food menu was mirrored in "A Menu of Cooked and Uncooked Food" entered into the contest by Mrs. M. A. Fuller and published a few months later. Fuller's Sunday breakfast called for a plate of "chipped beef and eggs" alongside a dish of "uncooked bread and peanut butter," with no apparent hypocrisy. She called for the health food taste-alikes of fig-prune coffee and banana coffee as often as traditional ("Moca or Java") coffee, and included foods traditionally made with refined white flour, like popovers and dumplings, alongside whole wheat staples like Graham gems.¹⁴³ Prefacing her contest entry, Martha V. Galley explained the necessity of these compromises to her family mealtime routine: "no one understands the difficulty of trying to live hygienically while having to live and eat at the same table with those who haven't the least sympathy with one who is seeking health for the body." Ultimately, her compromises at the family table manifested in a meal plan which called for stewed mutton, broiled steak, oyster stew, and baked fish alongside nut loaf, peanut butter sandwiches, and macerated wheat.¹⁴⁴ Like the shredded codfish on toasted gluten bread of Mrs. Fuller's Saturday breakfast, these women readers and cooks layered cherished elements of British-American cuisine (meats, fish, and stimulant beverages) onto their health food menus, redefining the limits of acceptable health food fare.

Physical culture's editors and readers were not unique in testing and ultimately disregarding some of the tenets of the health food diet, particularly those regarding the

¹⁴² A. M. Woodley, "Weekly Menu," *Physical Culture*, January, 1905, 39.

¹⁴³ M. A. Fuller, "Weekly Menu of Cooked and Uncooked Food," *Physical Culture*, April, 1905, 234.

¹⁴⁴ Martha V. Galley, "Weekly Menu, Including Cooked and Uncooked Food," *Physical Culture*, April, 1905, 327.

consumption of meat and of caffeinated beverages. Indeed, the writers and editors of healthy living magazines frequently represented a dietary flexibility that scholarship on the subject has failed to recognize. In large part, histories of the individuals, magazines, and institutions involved in health food culture have overlapped with the history of the Vegetarian movement, or were considered solely as representatives of a dogmatic, reform-driven movement led by health experts like Graham, Trall, or Kellogg.¹⁴⁵ This limited perspective has generally suggested that the “movement” espoused a non-negotiable proscription of meat, pastry, and caffeinated beverages. A different perspective that includes the weekly recipe columns, reader-submitted menus and recipes, advertised products, and cookbooks that were likely to accompany health-conscious cooks into their home kitchens makes it instead clear that the boundaries of health food cuisine were negotiable.

Meats were perhaps the most frequent source of compromise in health food menus and recipes. Recipe writer Marguerite Macfadden included “Roast Turkey” in a Thanksgiving menu published in *Physical Culture* alongside an aperitif of salmon mousse.¹⁴⁶ Fish also appeared on “A New Year’s Dinner Menu” the following month.¹⁴⁷ Macfadden occasionally used his wife’s weekly recipe column to suggest menus including salads, soups, roasts, and plates of chicken and fish.¹⁴⁸ In providing readers and home cooks with recipes for meat dishes, Macfadden was in company with health reformer Ella E. Kellogg who, in her popular 1893 cookbook, *Science in the Kitchen*, devoted an entire chapter to

¹⁴⁵ On this health food culture, its leaders, and connections to Vegetarian and Health Reform movements, see: Iacobbo and Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America*; Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*; Whorton, *Crusaders for Fitness*; -- *Nature Cures*.

¹⁴⁶ Marguerite Macfadden, “Menu for Novel Thanksgiving Dinner, with Red Color Scheme,” *Physical Culture*, November, 1906, 443.

¹⁴⁷ Marguerite Macfadden, “Menu for New Year’s Dinner,” *Physical Culture*, December, 1906, 525

¹⁴⁸ Marguerite Macfadden, “Detailed Menus for Four Days,” *Physical Culture*, August, 1906, 177.

meat recipes. Though Kellogg prefaced the section with dire warnings of “putrefactive processes,” disease, and parasites, she ultimately concluded: “If, however, [flesh foods] are to be used at all, let them be used sparingly and prepared in the simplest and least harmful manner.”¹⁴⁹ The section elaborates with recipes that catered to those readers and home cooks who refused to simply forgo meat altogether, but who still considered themselves followers of the hygienic diet and lifestyle. And while it was not uncommon for the predominantly vegetarian recipes and menus published by leading health food experts to suggest or allow for the occasional use of meat, it was not unheard of for a healthy living magazine to frankly espouse animal products as health-giving. *The Naturopath and Herald of Health* ran advertisements for the tonic “Bovinine,” a product unselfconsciously linked through its moniker, its emblem of a black bull, and its description as “the greatest and most concentrated Beef Juice ever produced” to its animal origins.¹⁵⁰ While health food experts strongly advocated vegetarian meals and recipes, many of them forged accommodation with meat-centric British-American cuisine.

Not all readers’ submitted recipes challenged the boundaries of health food dogma. The reader-submitted recipes for breads and cereal dishes that were published in healthy living magazines, for example, almost always reiterated health experts’ devotion to European grains (wheat and oats, and to a lesser extent barley and rye) and honored their proscriptions against soft, wet, or doughy cereal products. *Good Health* encouraged its readers to try a recipe for “Delicious Bread” submitted by reader “B. F. K.,” which called for nothing but Graham (whole wheat) flour and water, mixed and rolled to a quarter-inch

¹⁴⁹ Ella E. Kellogg, *Science in the Kitchen*, (Chicago: 1893) 392.

¹⁵⁰ Advertisement, “Bovinine,” *The Naturopath and Herald of Health*, February, 1902; Advertisement, “Bovinine,” *The Naturopath and Herald of Health*, January 1904.

thickness before baking. The resulting bread was thin, unleavened, and unsalted, and more of a “cake” than a loaf, but could be made still more hygienic by a second “drying” before a fire after baking.¹⁵¹ *Vegetarian Magazine* published Mrs. Isabel A. Lemoine’s recipe for a “nice pudding” in which the crispy whole wheat breakfast cereal Shredded Wheat transformed an otherwise heavy dish of milk, eggs, and sugar into a light, healthful alternative.¹⁵² J. Wetherbee wrote to *Medical Talk for the Home* with a recipe for “White Wheat Graham” bread which he noted “should be dried, or cut very thin, or the inside will be clammy, like new bread.”¹⁵³ Thirty years after *Good Health* published “B. F. K.’s” recipe for a hygienic loaf of bread, *Physical Culture* published “A Recipe for Bread” by reader J. E. Battram that was very similar. Battram’s recipe required no more than whole wheat flour, water, and salt mixed into a dough that could be baked “as thin as desired.” Battram recommended baking individual loaves (in a muffin or bread tin) no more than one inch in thickness, so that – when split horizontally into slices – “it will be all crust and you will derive greater benefit from it than when baked in thicker loaves.”¹⁵⁴ Dry whole-grain cereal preparations, particularly thin, crusty breads, remained central to health food cuisine as it emerged at the turn of the century, no less so in the kitchens of creative readers as in the recommendations of magazines’ expert recipe writers.

There was one significant difference, however, between Battram’s 1909 bread recipe and the recipe that B. F. K. submitted to *Good Health* in 1878: Battram’s called explicitly for whole wheat ground by hand in a home grinder. Battram, who used the Quaker City Mill for this purpose, sang the praises of the kitchen tool that had “paid big

¹⁵¹ B. F. K., “Delicious Bread,” *Health Reformer*, April, 1878, 121.

¹⁵² Isabel A. Lemoine, “Shredded Wheat Pudding,” *Vegetarian Magazine*, October, 1899, 12.

¹⁵³ J. Wetherbee, “White Wheat Graham,” *Medical Talk for the Home*, April, 1903, 509.

¹⁵⁴ J. E. Battram, “A Recipe for Bread,” *Physical Culture*, July, 1909, 92.

dividends, not only in the splendid flour it turns out, but the dandy bit of exercise it gives me mornings.”¹⁵⁵ In his enthusiasm for the hand-operated grain mill Battram represented one element of the emerging health food cuisine that embraced new culinary tools and techniques, or repurposed familiar tools and techniques to new ends. In the case of hand-powered grain mills, the tool became the means for circumventing an opaque, industrial flour production process. By the early-twentieth century, the Vegetarian Society of America was routinely advertising home grain mills on the pages of *Vegetarian Magazine*.¹⁵⁶ By the second decade of the twentieth century, *Physical Culture* ran regular advertisements for the Quaker City Mill that touted it as a path to “better whole wheat flour.”¹⁵⁷ In 1913, regular food columnist Alfred McCann assured *Physical Culture’s* housewife-readers that the lack of a reputable “whole wheat meal” supplier in their locality did not prevent them from acquiring the product, so long as they had the use of a home grain mill. McCann described the various mills available for purchase and explained their functions; he advised on the fineness of the resulting flour and the on method for purchasing and storing whole wheat grain to be ground.¹⁵⁸ In 1917, Milo Hastings encouraged *Physical Culture’s* readers to grind their own whole wheat flour as a means of both saving money and securing a wholesome and palatable product.¹⁵⁹

Hand-powered mills were an increasingly standard feature of the health food culture that coalesced on the pages of healthy living magazines at the turn of the twentieth century, and not simply for their ability to grind grain. The Vegetarian Society of America

¹⁵⁵ Battram, “A Recipe for Bread,” 92.

¹⁵⁶ For an example of this kind of advertisement, see: Advertisement, “Vegetarian Specialties and Novelties, *The Vegetarian and Our Fellow Creatures*, January, 1902.

¹⁵⁷ For an example of this kind of advertisement, see: Advertisement, “Grind your own flour at home,” *Physical Culture*, July, 1918, 96.

¹⁵⁸ Alfred W. McCann, “The Housewife and the Food Problem,” *Physical Culture*, October, 1913, 379.

¹⁵⁹ Milo Hastings, “Science and Common Sense on the Milling Question,” *Physical Culture*, October, 1917, 47.

advertised their hand mills as “especially adapted for making...Nut Butters...whole wheat Graham flour and other Health Foods.”¹⁶⁰ *Health Culture* agreed, concluding “the same mill that grinds our graham flour will grind nuts perfectly [sic] fine.”¹⁶¹ Indeed, tools for grinding nut butter and other “Health Foods” were as ubiquitous in the culinary arsenal of health food cuisine as were home grain mills, and were often one and the same product. The Vegetarian Society Mill, the Quaker City Mill, the Family Grist Mill, the Sargent’s Gem Food Chopper, the Good Health Publishing Company’s Mill, the Hercules Hygienic Company Mill, and Christian’s Nut Grating Mill were all advertised to health seekers between 1900 and 1920 as nut and grain grinders.¹⁶² The advertisements claimed their mills to be indispensable to the health-conscious cook, capable of producing health foods not otherwise easily available, particularly in a fresh condition. Advertisements for the Sargent’s Gem Food Chopper in *The Naturopath* in 1902 emphasized its usefulness to the healthy living readership with the phrase, in bold, “It Makes Nut Butter, Too!”¹⁶³ But these hand grinders geared toward the healthy-living audience were not strictly necessary to produce nut- and grain-based health food products when one could repurpose cooking tools like meat or coffee grinders. Bernarr Macfadden recommended as much to a reader inquiring after a way to purchase an “ordinary nut grinder,” giving credit to his readers for the idea to use a coffee grinder.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ “Vegetarian Specialties and Novelties, *The Vegetarian and Our Fellow Creatures*, January, 1902.

¹⁶¹ T. B. Terry, “Butter, Milk, Nuts, Chewing,” *Health Culture*, April, 1913, 195.

¹⁶² “Vegetarian Specialties and Novelties, *The Vegetarian and Our Fellow Creatures*, January, 1902; 1902; Advertisement, “Grind your own flour at home,” *Physical Culture*, July, 1918, 96; Advertisement, “Make your own nut butter at home,” *Good Health*, October, 1900; Advertisement, “Make your own flour at home,” Coulter Ephemera, Stark Center, University of Texas, Austin; “Christian’s Natural Food Co. Price List,” Coulter Ephemera, Stark Center, University of Texas, Austin.

¹⁶³ “Sargent’s Gem Food Chopper,” *The Naturopath and Herald of Health*, August, 1902, 359.

¹⁶⁴ Bernarr Macfadden, “General Question Department,” *Physical Culture*, September, 1907, 247.

New Foods, New Tastes: Incorporating Less-Than-Familiar Foods Into A New Health Food Cuisine

While some readers were pushing to include familiar, though proscribed, foods in their health food diets, others were pushing the boundaries of the cuisine in the opposite direction, toward foods that were less familiar to middle- and upper-class British-American tastes. In 1909, W. J. Brand, a *Physical Culture* reader and physician in Detroit, Michigan, penned a detailed letter to the editor on the subject of bananas.¹⁶⁵ Although by 1909 bananas were no longer foreign to American eaters (the United Fruit Company had begun importing them in the late 1870s), they were being continuously rediscovered as an ideal food by healthy living magazines at the turn of the century. Profiles of the banana published in these magazines included not only recipes and nutritional information but also botanical characteristics, methods of agriculture, and traditional uses in “tropical” food cultures. Indeed, this tropical fruit found a place on health seekers’ tables thanks in part to its being defined and devoured in print.

When W. J. Brand submitted his letter to *Physical Culture* he engaged in a debate about the methods and manner of eating bananas that appeared in multiple healthy living magazines. Compelling his response were the claims made by Charles Merilles in an article for *Physical Culture* titled “The Banana As Food.”¹⁶⁶ Merilles’ three-page article was ostensibly about the “superior character” of the fruit that he likened to bread (the true staple of health food cuisine) in terms of its affordability and nourishing qualities. In actuality, the article doted on the problem of “the manner in which the banana should be eaten and ripened,” lamenting the fact that it was eaten “entirely too green” by

¹⁶⁵ J. W. Brand, “Some Information about Bananas as Food,” *Physical Culture*, June, 1909, 486.

¹⁶⁶ Charles Merilles, “The Banana as Food,” *Physical Culture*, December, 1908, 555-557.

unenlightened American eaters.¹⁶⁷ Accompanied by three large, color photographs of bananas with variously yellow and black-hued skins, Merilles aimed to “supply suggestions that will enable our readers to select bananas that have been properly ripened, or else to ripen them themselves.” He advised readers on the importance of freckled skin as a sign of ripeness and on the presence of a “dark, solid substance at the center” of an improperly ripened banana. He admonished readers not to eat yellow-skinned bananas – which he considered a form of green or under-ripe fruit - under any circumstances, and promised that a banana ripened to blackness would be a gustatory revelation.¹⁶⁸ “You will be amazed at the palatability and flavor of the fruit,” Merilles gushed, “...It will taste like nothing you’ve ever eaten before, under ordinary circumstances.”¹⁶⁹ To preserve its intense flavor, Merilles advised eating it raw, with a little cream, lemon juice, or olive oil as a compliment.

Merilles was not alone among health food writers engaged in defining the moment that the banana ripened from plant into healthy, human food, nor in trying to pinpoint the healthiest and most tasty forms of the fruit. *Medical Talk for the Home* informed readers that a discolored banana skin was a sign that the fruit was fit for eating and quoted the *British Medical Journal’s* advice to test the consistency of the banana pulp until it was soft enough to be scooped with a spoon to determine ripeness. Both Merilles in *Physical Culture* and the writers for *Medical Talk for the Home* lamented growers’ tendencies to pick and ship bananas that were “entirely too green,” all for the sake of surviving overseas transport.¹⁷⁰ But Brand, claiming familiarity with “the banana plant in its native, tropical state” argued the rationale behind picking green bananas and encouraged health food

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 555.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 556.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 557.

¹⁷⁰ “Bananas,” *Medical Talk for the Home*, December, 1904, 202.

eaters to actually try eating them green as well. When cooked, Brand found a green banana wholesome and nutritious, and claimed that it was one of the “principle foods of the natives of the tropics.” “Native” eaters, Brand informed readers, made more use of the green banana than the ripe, typically by brining, peeling, and frying it in hot lard (in a manner he compared to the making of “French fried potatoes”).¹⁷¹

Brand’s reference to “native” or traditional uses of an unfamiliar food resonated, to a certain extent, within the healthy living print discourse that was making sense of unfamiliar new foods. Often, magazine stories that introduced new or unusual foods to readers began with a survey of the foods’ origins in other cultures, economies, and environments. Merilles’ own article, for example, began with a review of the banana’s botanical varieties and relatives, growing conditions, and countries of production. A similar article touting “Interesting Facts About the Coconut” in the same magazine two years later covered not only “savage” uses for the coconut tree as food, shelter, and transportation, it went so far as to claim that “the office of Dietetic Science is to a very great extent that of confirming the usually good judgment shown by...our uncivilized brethren of today in the matter of things eatable.”¹⁷² Yet, by and large, writers for healthy living magazines viewed “primitive” and foreign foods as subjects of a civilizing project.

Less familiar foods like bananas and coconuts found their way into the canon of health food cuisine only once they had been interpreted by western nutrition science and rendered familiar in British-American cuisine. *Physical Culture* writer H. M. Lome, in “Interesting Facts About the Coconut,” praised the food knowledge of his “uncivilized brethren” yet went on to argue for the superiority of the modern, scientific food culture he

¹⁷¹ J. W. Brand, “Some Information about Bananas as Food,” *Physical Culture*, June, 1909, 486.

¹⁷² H. M. Lome, *Interesting Facts About the Cooconut*, *Physical Culture*, January, 1911, 31.

presumed to share with his readers: “But on the whole, a large majority of our most popular and healthful nutrients, born of the desert, the forest or the seashore, have been adopted by us of later times, and, with the aid of [dietetic] science, become refined and developed.”¹⁷³ Lome described at length the ways Western “expert ingenuity” had condensed, evaporated, powdered, pressed, preserved, baked, and otherwise transformed “protean” foods into modern marvels. *Vegetarian Magazine* echoed the sentiment with a sigh of relief that bananas, “known for ages as an article of diet, capable of being prepared in various ways with certain barbaric skill,” had been transformed into a food fit for civilized dinner party. The magazine boasted that since science had been “brought to bear” there were “no less than twenty dishes, all different, capable of being prepared from bananas – in fact, a ten course dinner may be served, from soup to coffee, made up wholly of variations of banana fruit.”¹⁷⁴

Health experts used the tropical banana as a blank canvas for creating healthy versions of British-American culinary staples. Merilles’ article urged readers to use banana flour in place of refined wheat flour in their kitchens and to seek out banana coffee as a non-stimulating replacement for “ordinary coffee.”¹⁷⁵ By 1914 the Panama Banana Food Co. was advertising their “Banan-Nutro” coffee alongside banana flour, banana biscuits, and banana figs in healthy living magazines.¹⁷⁶ *Good Health* shared a recipe for “Banana Blanc Mange” that featured bananas, sugar, cornstarch, whipped cream, and a coconut sauce.¹⁷⁷ *Physical Culture* created an “Ambrosia” containing an entire shredded coconut moistened

¹⁷³ Ibid, 32.

¹⁷⁴ “The Dining Room,” *The Vegetarian and Our Fellow Creatures*, October, 1901, 16.

¹⁷⁵ Merilles, “The Banana as Food,” 557.

¹⁷⁶ Advertisement, “Banan Nutro,” *Physical Culture*, December, 1914, 44a.

¹⁷⁷ Ella E. Kellogg, Science in the Household, *Good Health*, August, 1888, 318.

with cream, layered into a dish with sliced oranges, topped with beaten egg whites and powdered sugar, and served with “a wholesome cake.”¹⁷⁸ The same magazine published a recipe for “Banana Soup” made of the mashed fruit boiled with milk, salt, cornstarch, and one egg, and served with croutons.¹⁷⁹ *Vegetarian Magazine* shared recipes for banana fritters, banana pudding, banana mush, and banana shortcake. Under the civilizing influence of British-American recipes based on milk, eggs, sugar, and bread, the formerly novel tastes and traditions of tropical fruits were cemented into health food cuisine.

Over time, the types of “new” foods profiled in healthy living magazines changed, expanding from the less-than-familiar but still known tropical fruits like banana and coconut to foods that were entirely unfamiliar in middle- and upper-class British-American cuisine. While the banana was a popular subject of health food writers in the first decade of the twentieth century, by the late-nineteen-teens and early-nineteen twenties *Good Health* was introducing its readers to health foods from Pacific cuisines: soy foods from China and agar-agar from Japan. In 1920, Fern Fergus shared a “New Recipe” with *Good Health* readers: a “Soy Bean Biscuit” made with a combination of soy and wheat flours.¹⁸⁰ In a 1921 article titled “Sprouted Seeds Prevent Scurvy,” a writer for *Good Health* described the Chinese custom of eating sprouted soybeans, highlighting their “valuable vitamins” and “anti-scorbutic power.” These exotic sprouts, the magazine pointed out, were best known in British American food culture as “one of the constituents of the famous chop suey,” not likely a dish that readers knew how to compose and not one that earned a recipe feature. But the work of two London scientists studying the “comparative value of dry and sprouted

¹⁷⁸ Amelia M. Calkins, Weekly Menus of Uncooked Foods, *Physical Culture*, April, 1904, 326.

¹⁷⁹ “Dainty Menus for Three Days,” *Physical Culture*, February, 1907, 153-154.

¹⁸⁰ Fern Fergus, “New Recipes,” *Good Health*, December, 1920, 732.

peas” evaluated the sprouted beans somewhere between familiar turnips and carrots in terms of their anti-scorbutic properties and nutritive value. *Good Health*, desirous that Americans should take advantage of such scientifically proven benefits, described the method of producing sprouted beans and repurposed the chop suey-standard as an ingredient in familiar salads and vegetable soups.¹⁸¹

In the same issue, *Good Health* shared with readers “The Description of the Preparation of Agar-Agar,” the jelling agent derived from seaweed that the article dubbed “vegetable isinglass.” The magazine’s interest in the product reflected writers’ and readers’ longstanding interest in non-animal derived jelling agents. The Sanitarium’s successful first cookbook “Science in the Kitchen,” published in 1893 by Sanitarium matron Ella E. Kellogg, prefaced its section “Desserts Made with Gelatine” with the warning that “it has in itself little or no food value, and there is great liability of its being unwholesome,” not to mention putrid and diseased.¹⁸² The 1921 article on agar-agar was not concerned with its dietary uses; rather, it intended to introduce the “many *Good Health* readers [who] are already users of agar-agar” to its previously unknown nature and origins. And, indeed, readers familiar with John H. Kellogg’s Sanitarium-sponsored publications may have been introducing agar-agar into their diets. In 1910, Head Dietician and Director of Home Economics for the Battle Creek Sanitarium Lenna Frances Cooper shared recipes for lemon, pineapple, and other fruit gelées (an iced dessert deemed more healthful than ice cream) in *Good Health*. The recipes called for “one ounce Japanese jelly or agar-agar...which is a seaweed and may be obtained at a drugstore,” as a jelling agent for the dish. She advised readers to “not accept moss” in place of the agar-agar, referring to the only other commonly

¹⁸¹ “Sprouted Seeds Prevent Scurvy,” *Good Health*, January, 1921, 24.

¹⁸² Kellogg, *Science in the Kitchen*, 315.

used vegetarian jelling agent at the time, Irish moss.¹⁸³ Three years later, Cooper published “The New Cookery,” a cookbook reflecting the healing principles of Kellogg’s well-known health resort. In it, she included a section of “Vegetable Gelatine Desserts” that included jellies, molds, and creams, and wrote recipes for Lemon and Strawberry iced gelées.¹⁸⁴ These all called for the use of Vegetable Gelatine, a jelling product sold dried by the box, and were prefaced with general instructions on its rehydration and use that mimicked her 1910 recipe. This product was in all likelihood a new, branded version agar-agar, which had come to replace the animal-derived gelatins that had been tolerated, if not endorsed, by the Sanitarium twenty years earlier. By 1920, the boundaries of health food cuisine had expanded to include formerly “foreign” foods such as agar-agar, foods that could replace familiar yet unhygienic products like gelatin.

The substitution of healthy ingredients for foods considered dangerous by health food experts became a core tenet of the new cuisine. From coffee to meat, recipe writers and magazine readers celebrated “mock” tastes that offered health food eaters a chance participate in cherished mealtime dishes and rituals otherwise proscribed by their commitment to a hygienic diet. That coffee, for example, was both a flavor and an experience that health food eaters valued and wanted to recreate within the confines of their restricted diets is evidenced by the multiple recipes for mock coffees. In just one recipe column, *Physical Culture* recommended three different mock coffees: “oatmeal coffee,” which included soaked oats, milk, and an egg, separated and the beaten whites folded in last; a coffee made from “wheat (the natural grain) ground as coarse as coffee,”

¹⁸³ Lenna F. Cooper, “Fruit Gelées,” *Good Health*, May, 1910, 561.

¹⁸⁴ Lenna F. Cooper, “The New Cookery,” (Battle Creek, 1913), 195-214.

boiled with chopped apples and prunes; and “corn meal coffee.”¹⁸⁵ In *Physical Culture’s* Prize Menu Competition, at least six of the published menus included one or more mock coffees, from the “cereal coffee” recommended by Ella M. Vernon and Mrs. C. Williams, to the “fig-prune coffee” and “banana coffee” included in M. A. Fuller’s and Alice M. Moore’s menus, to the “wheat coffee” submitted by Mrs. L. E. Fiske.¹⁸⁶ Although recipes accompanied the menu submissions in general, none of the menus’ authors included a recipe for these mock coffees, suggesting that either the writers or the magazine’s editors thought the recipe well known enough to readers that it did not warrant explanation.

Alternately, mock coffees were some of the first mass-marketed health foods to take hold in the new health food cuisine, and the menus published in *Physical Culture* may have reflected the fact that health food eaters were – by the early twentieth century – becoming comfortable health food consumers. Companies like the Panama Banana Food Co. advertised mock coffees on the pages of healthy living magazines: their “Banan-Nutro” was “The New Hot Fruit Drink in Place of Coffee” guaranteed to solve readers’ “coffee problem.”¹⁸⁷ *Vegetarian Magazine* advertised “Kaughphy, a hygienic substitute for coffee,” and “Nutreto, the drink that breaks the coffee link.”¹⁸⁸ Postum, which boasted that it contained “no coffee or other harmful substance,” was regularly included in breakfast menus suggested by healthy living magazines, as was the Kellogg Food Company’s Caramel

¹⁸⁵ Ameila M. Caulkins, “Weekly Menus of Uncooked Foods,” *Physical Culture*, March, 1904.

¹⁸⁶ “Weekly Menu,” A. M. Woodley, *Physical Culture*, January, 1905; “Best Weekly Menu Including Cooked and Uncooked Foods,” Ella M. Vernon, *Physical Culture*, March, 1905; “A Bachelor’s Menu,” C. Williams, *Physical Culture*, March, 1905; “Weekly Menu of Cooked and Uncooked Food,” M. A. Fuller, *Physical Culture*, April, 1905; “Weekly Menu That Can Be Followed With Advantage By A Man Or Woman Living Alone,” Alice M. Moore, *Physical Culture*, May, 1905; “Weekly Menu of Cooked and Uncooked Foods,” L. E. Fiske, *Physical Culture*, May, 1905.

¹⁸⁷ Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, September, 1914.

¹⁸⁸ Advertisement, *Vegetarian Magazine*, July, 1900; Advertisement, *Vegetarian Magazine*, July, 1907.

Cereal, which claimed to be “the original coffee substitute.”¹⁸⁹ All of these mock coffees and the mock coffee recipes shared in healthy living magazines aimed not only to help eaters break a dangerous habit but to retain something powerful about the experience of drinking coffee. As the mock coffee maker Monco Company put it, “you must deny yourself coffee, but you don’t have to deny yourself the pleasure of a delicious beverage with fully as exquisite a flavor.”¹⁹⁰ Advertisements for Postum hint at the pleasures surrounding the coffee experience: a family gathered around a well-laid breakfast table, sharing the morning’s newspaper and a the contents of a percolator; a delicate, painted china cup and saucer holding a gently steaming dark liquid, flanked by sugar cubes, a teaspoon, and a small milk carafe.¹⁹¹ These images reminded readers of the sensations and social experiences wrapped up in coffee: the sharing of a drink, the physical warmth, the ritual of adding sugar or cream, and the pleasure of using a beautiful mug.

Like mock coffees, mock meats sought to replicate an important element of American cuisine. Recipes for mock meats that readers could make at home tended to emphasize not the taste-resemblance to the meat in question, but the resemblance in form and function in a dish or menu. For instance, in *Good Health’s* recipe for a “Brazil Nut and Lentil Roast,” the editors were careful to emphasize the importance of the firm, dry texture generally expected of a meat roast: “for if too moist, it will not be firm and solid like meat, and will not slice nicely. (A dish that requires a spoon for serving is not a roast).”¹⁹² *Physical Culture’s* recipe for “Mock Pheasant” made with nuts, almond flour, egg yolks, and potatoes instructed readers to shape the combined ingredients into the form of a pheasant,

¹⁸⁹ Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, April, 1911; Advertisement, *Good Health*, April, 1910.

¹⁹⁰ Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, February, 1916.

¹⁹¹ Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, April, 1911; Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, October, 1914.

¹⁹² Evora Bucknam, “True Meat Dishes,” *Good Health*, October, 1900.

including “browned pieces of macaroni to imitate leg and wing bones.”¹⁹³ Mock meat recipes were drawn up to resemble myriad forms of meat dishes: cutlets made of lentils or barley, sausages made of barley and nut butter, chunks of seafood made of chestnuts, and “Hamburg Nut Steaks.”¹⁹⁴ In these forms and as part of favorite dishes, mock meats aimed to serve the same social and culinary functions that meat. The “Mock Pheasant” would be the visual and gustatory centerpiece of a meal, a dish meant to be served on a platter, carved up and shared with a large gathering, as its meatier ancestor – a roasted duck, goose, pheasant, turkey, or chicken – would have been. Garnish the dish with parsley, the recipe writer advised, and it “should serve ten persons, as it is very rich and satisfying.”¹⁹⁵

Where recipes for homemade mock meats centered on replicating the form and function of meat in a menu, health food companies marketed mock meats that they thought could compete with real meat in taste and texture. Foremost among these companies was John H. Kellogg’s Sanitas Nut Foods Company, which marketed canned, nut-based mock meats Protose and Nuttolene. So closely did Kellogg believe his products resembled meat, he often recommended very little extra preparation of it by the home cook. Kellogg’s healthy living magazine *Good Health* recommended simply removing Protose from its can, slicing, warming, and covering it with a gravy or tomato sauce in its recipe for “Protose Steak.”¹⁹⁶ Their Nuttolene could be turned into a croquette with a simple breading and a few minutes in the oven.¹⁹⁷ The Sanitas Nut Foods Company’s recipe booklet advertised Protose as “resembling flesh-foods in appearance, fiber, flavor, and composition,” and

¹⁹³ Marguerite Macfadden, “A Holiday Menu,” *Physical Culture*, January 1907.

¹⁹⁴ “The Dining Room,” *Vegetarian Magazine*, October, 1900; Blanch Mayes Elfrink, “The Vegetarian Table,” *Vegetarian Magazine*, January, 1907; “Oriental Dinner,” *The Naturopath and Herald of Health*, February, 1902; “With the Aid of the Food Chopper,” *Physical Culture*, January, 1917.

¹⁹⁵ Macfadden, “A Holiday Menu,” 1907.

¹⁹⁶ Evora Bucknam, “True Meat Dishes,” *Good Health*, October, 1900

¹⁹⁷ Evora Bucknam, “Meats to Be Received with Thanksgiving,” *Good Health*, November, 1900.

bragged that the taste so closely mirrored meat that one eater mistook it for “the best chicken he had ever eaten.”¹⁹⁸

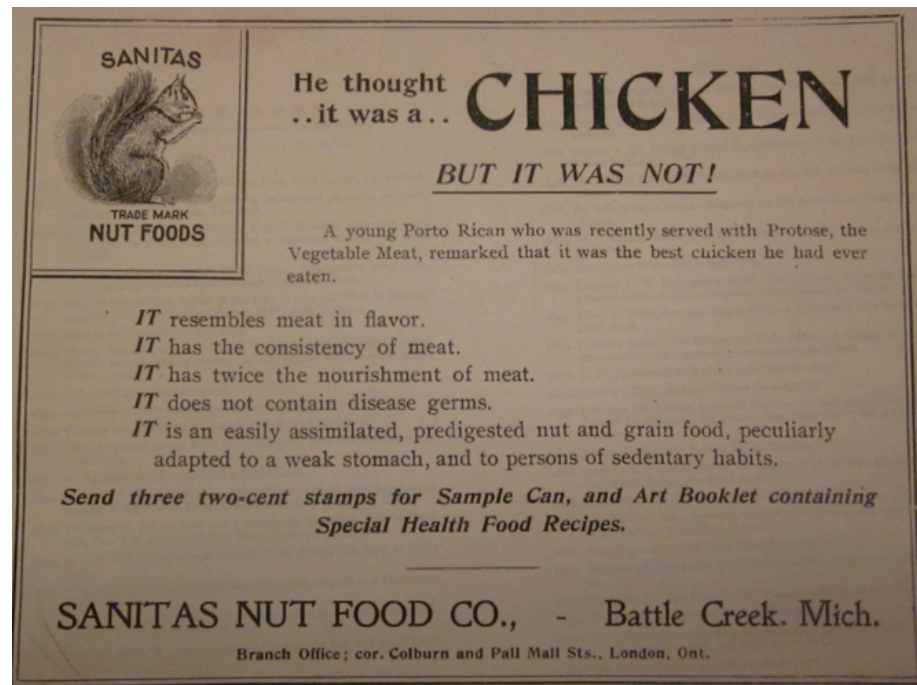


Figure 6: Advertisement, Sanitas Nut Foods, (1899-1906), Special Collections, Loma Linda University

Conclusion

With the contributions of “real” eaters and health experts, healthy living magazines described a new type of American cuisine. In recipes and menus, articles, editorials, and advertisements, experts offered dietary advice to health-seeking readers who, in turn, entered into a dialogue with the experts through published recipe submissions and editorials of their own. Together, health experts and health seekers established the tenets of a health food cuisine: signature dishes and ingredients, new kitchen tools, and unique

¹⁹⁸ Advertisement, Sanitas Nut Foods Company, Ltd., (1899-1906), Special Collections, Loma Linda University.

preparation techniques. This new health food cuisine enabled the growth of diet-based health reform philosophy at the turn of the twentieth century and, equally important, created a new consumer base for a nascent health foods industry. Armed with specialized knowledge, recipes, and a bevy of “first-aid foods,” a group of health food entrepreneurs began selling a way toward fitness and success.

Chapter 3

Selling Nature's Foods: The Emergence of a Health Food Industry

The twentieth century brought dramatic change to the way American companies produced food. Urbanization and the consolidation of farm work created unparalleled opportunities for new classes of urbanites, setting the stage for the discontent that ushered in the largest food reform in the nation's history. By the turn of the century, muckraking journalists and the nation's leading periodicals had joined reformers from the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the National Consumer's League, and the United States Department of Agriculture in calls for an intervention in America's standards of food processing. These pure food reformers demanded regulatory bans on the use of chemical colorings, preservatives, additives, and adulterations in foods that they believed were toxic. They also pressed for mandatory ingredient labels to make food's content legible to the consumer.¹⁹⁹ In 1906, after decades of shelving similar legislation, the United States Congress responded to public pressure and passed the Pure Food and Drug Act, which tasked the United States Department of Agriculture with regulating the food industry against adulteration and misbranding. Hoping to capitalize on eaters' purity concerns, the processed foods industry lured consumers with boasts of sanitary production methods, new forms of protective packaging, and assurances of compliance with the Pure Food law.

¹⁹⁹ For more on Progressive-era food fears and the pure food reforms see: Aaron Bobrow-Strain, *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf* (Boston: 2012); Goodwin, *The Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Crusaders*; Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*; --- *Fear of Food: A History of Why We Worry About What We Eat*, (Chicago: 2012); Andrew F. Smith, *Eating History: 30 Turning Points in the Making of American Cuisine*, (New York: 2009).

The era's healthy living magazines were especially sensitive to the pure food concerns that had ignited the nation. Writers urged health seekers to avoid foods produced by standard industrial methods and agreed with pure food agitators that "Business Interests" had adulterated the American diet, a conviction associated with Sylvester Graham's earliest teachings.²⁰⁰ Yet despite the deep mistrust of the food industry evident in healthy living literature, health food eaters propelled the emergence of a booming market for industrially produced and mass-marketed health foods. The era's new health foods were carefully marketed as both scientific and natural. Entrepreneurs like Dr. John H. Kellogg, Otto Carqué, and Eugene Christian built health food companies on their personal success as health experts and food scientists, and they marketed health foods that they expertly engineered with modern, industrial technology. Reflecting the Progressive attitude toward rationality, efficiency, and expertise, they advertised the experience, modern machinery, and scientific process that went into making their foods. What made health foods unique among other mass-marketed foods with the same claims to modernity were the ways in which health foods blended those claims with the notion of naturalness. Health food entrepreneurs relied on images of idyllic natural environments and tales of perfect foods plucked straight from nature to assure potential customers that their products were part of a natural praxis of health and well being.

Machines, Science, Expertise, and the Making of Natural Foods

John Harvey Kellogg's successful Sanitarium Health Foods Company grew out his health resort in Battle Creek, Michigan, where by 1900 the garden, kitchen, and dining

room were feeding 800-1,000 people each day. The Sanitarium's hothouses, greenhouses, and three farms supplied the kitchens with "a large part" of the fresh vegetables and fruits that residents and workers consumed.²⁰¹ At the creamery, workers churned butter and produced "the Bulgarian ferment" yogurt, while the cannery was responsible for putting up apple juice, grape juice, and fresh fruits at the end of the harvest season. The extensive greenhouses were dedicated to growing lettuces, celery, and fresh tomatoes that Kellogg assures his clients were absolutely free from contamination. Kellogg insisted that produce purchased on the open market carried "risk of parasitic infection because of the careless use of night soil and other fertilizers by market gardeners," so any vegetables purchased to supplement the Sanitarium's own yield were first sterilized by boiling.²⁰² Any milk, too, was sterilized in the Sanitarium's creamery before being separated "by means of centrifugal apparatus" and churned into butter. Kellogg was careful to introduce the first of his dairymen as "a carefully trained man who [knew] the dangers of microbes" and the second as an "expert bacteriologist of the institution," particularly because he used their products as treatments for "many forms of chronic disease."²⁰³ By carefully managing the Sanitarium's production process, Kellogg was able to assure his patients that he served only "germless" milk, butter, cream, buttermilk, kumiss, cottage cheese, and yogurt to the Sanitarium's health-conscious eaters.²⁰⁴

Kellogg's employees helped him to manage the production of food for Sanitarium patients from the ground up, guaranteeing that its natural qualities would remain intact.

²⁰¹John H. Kellogg, "The Battle Creek Sanitarium System: History, Organization, Methods," (Battle Creek, MI) 137.

²⁰²Ibid, 137-138.

²⁰³Ibid, 129.

²⁰⁴Ibid, 129.

However, though Kellogg was proud of his gardens and greenhouses, his scientific, industrial kitchens were the centerpiece of the Sanitarium's food production. Thanks to Kellogg's innovations, by 1900 health seekers could purchase Kellogg's health foods for consumption in their own homes. In the fall of 1898, to mark the 32nd anniversary of his Sanitarium, Kellogg led *Good Health* readers on a literary tour of the health resort's extensive grounds and cutting-edge facilities. The last "stops" in the article were the Sanitarium Health Food Company buildings, where workers produced Kellogg's ready-to-eat health foods. Kellogg emphasized the purity of his manufacturing process and the use of "elaborate machinery," which included pearling machines, revolving ovens, conveyer belts, and custom grain mills.²⁰⁵ Kellogg's celebratory article culminated in a description of the Sanitarium's "jubilee procession," in which thousands of Sanitarium workers, "strong and hearty, rosy cheeked and robust," marched and sang,

"O, we are vegetarians, and glad indeed to be;
We dine on Eden's diet pure, no taint of cruelty.
We find in fruits and grains and nuts a sustenance complete,
And nevermore desire to kill and fellow creatures eat...
It just suits me,
It just suits me,
The fare that God gave Adam,
It just suits me."²⁰⁶

The Sanitarium creed claimed sympathy with biblical "first eaters" and Eden's fare of fruits, grains, and nuts. However, the Sanitarium's leadership judged that these widely marketed garden fruits had been corrupted by modern production methods: the milk was diseased and the bread dirty and denatured. Lost to the vice of the market, Kellogg believed that the garden's naturalness could yet be remade. The "sustenance complete" consumed by the

²⁰⁵ "The Sanitarium Idea Illustrated," *Good Health*, November, 1898.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

Sanitarium's thousands of patients and mail-order customers earned its natural healthfulness by being boiled, malted, pressed, baked, dextrinized, and sanitized in the scientific, industrial kitchens of the Sanitarium Food Company. In Kellogg's judgment, "Eden's diet pure" was factory produced.²⁰⁷

Kellogg's factory-produced natural food reflected a lifelong career of blending the alternative and the conventional and perfecting natural healing with the use of modern science and technology. Kellogg began his medical training in 1872 at Russell K. Trall's Hygieo-Therapeutic College, a school associated with Trall's well-known water cure Hygiean Home. He had the financial support of Adventist leaders Ellen and James White, who saw him as an investment in the future success of their newly founded Western Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek, Michigan. After graduating from Trall's degree program, Kellogg announced his intention to attend the University of Michigan's (allopathic) medical college for additional training. The Whites were disappointed. James White, advocated the principles of hydrotherapy and believed that a physician's intervention was a waste of time "so long as nature had to do the healing work anyway." Kellogg, however, was a believer in both the dietetic and hygienic principles of the Adventists (modeled closely on those of hydro- and hygieo-therapies), as well as in the modern medical scientific research coming out of Europe at the time.²⁰⁸ The germ theory – derived from the work of Louis Pasteur, Joseph Lister, and later Robert Koch – appeared at the same time that Kellogg was under medical tutelage, and became one of Kellogg's favorite tools for blending the tenets of

²⁰⁷ "The Sanitarium Idea Illustrated," 1898.

²⁰⁸ Although Kellogg was raised in the Adventist community and advocated the temperate Adventist diet, his relationship to the church was complicated. Ultimately, in 1907, after complicated personal and political infighting between Kellogg and the church leadership, the doctor was actually "disfellowshipped" from the Adventist church, though he retained control over the Battle Creek Sanitarium. For more on Kellogg and the Adventists, see: Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*.

allopathic and alternative medical practices. He frequently defended his lifelong practice of vegetarianism with microscopic analyses of the bacteria found in raw meat, and explained his fundamental belief in autointoxication (self-poisoning from constipation) by pointing to putrefactive germs found in human fecal matter. He believed in the healing power of nature over nostrum, and argued that most illnesses could be cured through diet, muscular stimulation, sunlight, sitz baths, and fresh air. Yet, unlike his patron White, Kellogg firmly believed in the importance of the scientifically trained, hygienically-minded physician as an intermediary in these natural cures. His belief was evident from his work as both a surgeon and inventor of patented medical machines and devices, but never more so than in the realm of his dietetic research and treatments.²⁰⁹

Kellogg's career in medical dietetics was founded upon a goal that melded the nature cure with modern nutritional research to "improve the palatability and digestibility of man's natural foodstuffs."²¹⁰ Kellogg started from the supposition that Graham, the hydropaths, and the Adventists had been right to advocate an unrefined, unstimulating vegetarian diet. The cornerstone of this diet was the absolute avoidance of meat consumption. Alcohol, caffeine, tobacco, spices, and pickles were also forbidden, though Kellogg argued that avoiding the butcher's fare naturally quelled any appetite for such stimulants. As Kellogg saw it, the current state of Americans' overloaded dinner tables and putrefying dishes reflected perfectly the state of their digestive systems. The modern eater had, "in a maze of ignorance, falling into bottomless abysses of mishap and misadventure... become a veritable Cyclops, the devourer of all devourers, the most misguided and

²⁰⁹ Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*, 124.

²¹⁰ John H. Kellogg, "The Battle Creek Sanitarium System: History, Organization, Methods," (Battle Creek, MI) 137.

denatured of all living creatures.”²¹¹ People would only avoid this fate if they were willing to listen to “Nature’s infinitely wise guiding admonitions” regarding diet, and consume a hygienic, vegetarian diet. Yet the scientific and the natural were not incompatible, Kellogg believed; indeed, the “facts and principles” of cutting edge laboratory research and medicine were Kellogg’s key to producing natural foods and naturally healthy bodies. “[T]he modern searcher for truth turns to Nature for wisdom,” Kellogg opined, “and seeks knowledge through research, experiment, and investigation...to the question, What is the natural diet of man?”

Yet, as often as Kellogg praised foods provided by “wise Nature,” he condemned human ignorance that transformed them into health hazards. Even presumably healthy foods could cause bodily harm through cooking, contamination, or improper eating. For this reason he believed that both the production and the prescription of natural foods required expert knowledge and specialized kitchens. Wheat, one of Kellogg’s health food favorites, could be either the foundation or the undoing of one’s health, depending on its production and preparation. In an advertising pamphlet for the Sanitarium Health Food Company, Kellogg explained the multiple ways that traditional wheat food production fell short in healthfulness. Next to a watercolor depicting a bucolic “old time mill,” Kellogg pronounced the passing of the “dusty miller” whose fanning and winnowing process left grain clean to the eye, but not to the enhanced power of the modern microscope. Where the unenlightened gaze saw sheaves of wheat and a “picturesque” wooden water wheel, the trained eyes of Kellogg’s readers saw only contamination: a length of thread, a dead fly, various bits of extraneous plant matter and something that looked like a wood chip.

²¹¹ John H. Kellogg, *The Natural Diet of Man*, (Battle Creek, MI: 1923) 21.

Indeed, Kellogg cataloged “straw, chaff, cockle...chips, pebbles, [and] dead bodies of insects” among the impurities that tainted common wheat flour.²¹² The Sanitarium Food Company employed the “most elaborate” and “ingenious” machinery to weed out this foreign matter, “sorting, scouring, burnishing, polishing, and sifting” wheat grains until each was clean, unblemished, and uniformly sized. Yet Kellogg acknowledged that even his specially designed cleaning machinery could not “destroy the germs, from which no grain in its natural state is free.”²¹³ Sanitarium Laboratory tests proved that these bacteria would ruin bread, disturb eaters’ stomachs, and embarrass housewives. All of Kellogg’s health food products, therefore, were subjected to “germicidal processes” for a fully sanitized result.²¹⁴

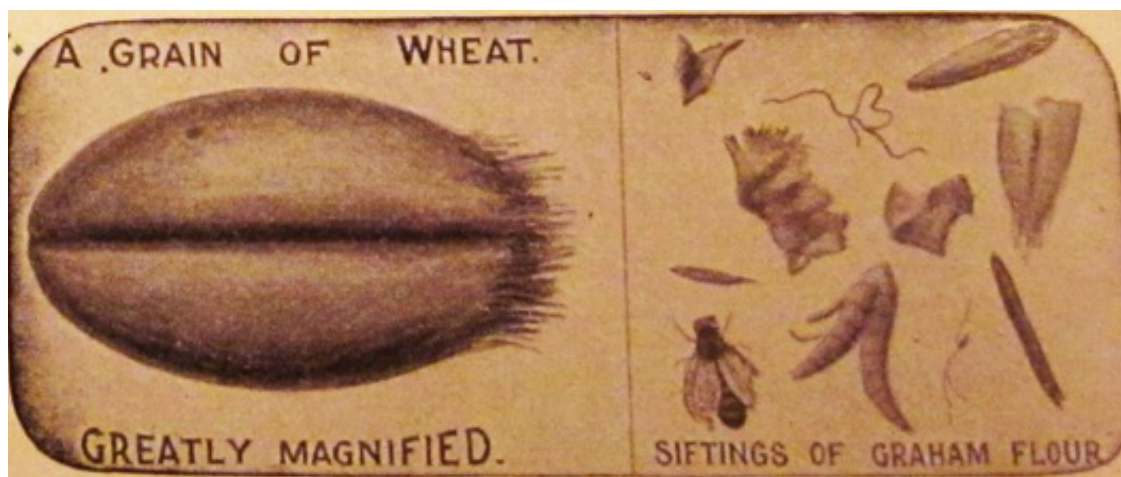


Figure 7: “A Grain of Wheat,” Battle Creek Sanitarium – Sanitarium Health Food Co., [est. 1877], Special Collections, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, CA.

Scoured and sterilized, wheat could still be rendered indigestible by home cooks.

When boiled and served as a mush, as it often was on Americans’ breakfast tables, wheat

²¹² “Battle Creek Sanitarium Health Foods,” Battle Creek Sanitarium – Sanitarium Health Food Co., [est. 1877], Special Collections, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, CA.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

was “half-cooked, pasty, and dyspepsia producing,” a product of subpar home equipment and expertise.²¹⁵ As a substitute, Kellogg developed Granose, “a toasted flaked cereal, in which each grain was spread out into a thin film and toasted slightly brown.” In this state, the wheat was “dextrinized,” “thoroughly cooked and easily digestible.”²¹⁶ The flaked shape of the cereal made it accessible to the digestive fluids, and it was so thoroughly cooked that Kellogg considered it “partly digested.” The process of making Granose was “difficult and delicate,” requiring specialized labor and machinery. The cooked wheat berries had to be fed through large rollers under enormous pressure in order to be flaked, a step that required fine-tuning by trained and vigilant workers. Likewise, “the delicate brown shade” that signaled perfect dextrinization could only be attained in the Sanitarium Food Company’s ovens, which were specially designed “upon thoroughly scientific principles” and required “a practiced touch.”²¹⁷ The delicate, mechanized making of Kellogg’s health foods was a direct contrast to the tools and skills available to the home cook. Responding to a question submitted by “E. E. H., Cuba” regarding the length of cooking time for oats, Kellogg replied: “Cooking is not sufficient to prepare this or any other cereal food for the human stomach.”²¹⁸ By “cooking,” Kellogg meant stovetop boiling, the standard way that American eaters prepared rolled oats in home kitchens. The result was heavy, wet, undercooked, liable to burn, or otherwise rendered unhygienic by human error in the home kitchen. In his own factory kitchens, cereal transformed through industrial

²¹⁵ Kellogg, *The Battle Creek Sanitarium System: History, Organization, Methods*, 137

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, 137

²¹⁷ “Battle Creek Sanitarium Health Foods,” Battle Creek Sanitarium – Sanitarium Health Food Co., [est. 1877], Special Collections, Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, CA.

²¹⁸ “Answers to Correspondents,” *Good Health*, February, 1900.

technology, guided by scientific knowledge. Kellogg's Granose flake represented wheat made into a modern, natural food.



Figure 8: Granose Flakes, "The Question of Food," *Good Health*, March, 1898.

Foods like Granose played a key role in all of Kellogg's natural medical therapies, but not until they had been proved and improved upon by Sanitarium scientists and cooks. Kellogg had a fast-growing body of nutritional research upon which to draw in creating the Sanitarium's diet system, propelled by the dietetic reforms of US Department of Agriculture, Pure Food reformers, and the new discipline of Home Economics. He utilized the work of leading food scientists in determining food values and dietary requirements (using the newly established caloric measure) and in creating his own treatments for

dietary disorders. In the Sanitarium dining room, waiters carried out proper “apportioning” of dishes on hanging balances, and the bills of fare were calculated so that each patient might select “the total number of calories required by his prescription, and the number of protieds, carbohydrates, and fats designated by the physician.”²¹⁹ He also carried out his own research in the Sanitarium’s kitchens, laboratories, and treatment rooms. He employed “eminent bacteriologists” to sample and analyze the stomach fluid of patients following a meal of Granose, or to count the number of germs inhabiting a single ounce of a dyspeptic’s stomach fluid (250 million, according to one of his studies).²²⁰

Kellogg was particularly careful to publicize the scientific method by which he improved upon nature’s foods once he began marketing his food products to ex-Sanitarium patients and other health seekers in the 1880s. Illustrating the credentials of Sanitarium Health Food Company products in *Good Health*, he cited “a series of experiments which have been continued for nearly seventeen years,” in “an **Experimental Kitchen**, under able management; a **Laboratory of Hygiene**, with full outfit of chemical bacteriological, and physiological appliances; and a **Large Hospital and Sanitarium** *feeding daily from 600-700 persons*, including every possible phase of digestive and nutritive disease.”²²¹ By 1898 he could boast 800 – 1,000 persons sampling and subsisting daily on Sanitarium Health Food products.²²² Mealtimes, readers were to understand, doubled as opportunities to serve and evaluate the health foods that Kellogg devised with the help of his laboratory scientists. Cooks in the Sanitarium kitchens were compared to chemists by virtue of their specialized

²¹⁹ Kellogg, *The Battle Creek Sanitarium System: History, Organization, Methods*, 121.

²²⁰ “The Question of Food,” *Good Health*, March, 1898, 194.

²²¹ *Ibid*, 193.

²²² *Ibid*, 193.

training, and the kitchens themselves, Kellogg emphasized, were “conducted under laboratory rules and in harmony with laboratory principles.”²²³

“Nature alone can cure,” quoted Kellogg in the epigraph to his book *The Battle Creek Sanitarium System*, which described the medical praxis and rationale behind the successful health retreat.²²⁴ In his quest to create perfect human foods, Kellogg began with the assumption that certain foods – grains, fruits, nuts, and dairy – were organic to humanity’s physiological needs. Kellogg spent his career as a scientist and physician both defending and improving upon what he saw as humanity’s natural diet. For Kellogg and those who ate according to his principles, natural food was emphatically not the wheat berry that still bore traces of soil “entangled among [it’s] minute hairs” as a reminder of its environmental origins.²²⁵ Despite his commitment to a primitive diet of Eden’s first foods, plants and animal products in their own organic, earthy states did not characterize Kellogg’s idea of natural food. Instead, it was the Granose flake: a product of human industry, “completely sterilized, partly digested, thoroughly cooked, highly nutritious,” and capable of restoring health naturally (see figure 3).²²⁶

²²³ Kellogg, *The Battle Creek Sanitarium System: History, Organization, Methods*, 119.

²²⁴ *Ibid*, epigraph.

²²⁵ *Ibid*, 194.

²²⁶ *Ibid*, 9.



Figure 9: Granose Flakes. *The Question of Food,* *Good Health*, March, 1898.

Health Food Companies, Big and Small

Of course, Kellogg was not alone in creating the burgeoning health foods industry in America. Among his peers and competitors were businesses that ranged from the widely successful breakfast cereal companies producing (among others) Shredded Wheat and GrapeNuts, to many other ventures that catered to niche elements of the new health food culture. The success of the breakfast cereal giants reflects, too, the connection between the natural and the industrial in the making of health foods. The Shredded Wheat Company, as a prime example, previously bore both the names “The Cereal Machine Company” and “The Natural Food Company” and unsurprisingly emphasized both their factory’s modern machinery and the natural qualities of their breakfast cereal. To make the “fine, porous shreds” of the Shredded Wheat biscuit required a cleaning machine, a steaming machine, an air-drying machine – “an ingenious piece of mechanism,” a shredding machine, and two

ovens shaped like the modern engineering marvel the Ferris wheel.²²⁷ The side of the Shredded Wheat box listed 43 separate patents that went into producing the cereal it contained.²²⁸ The company's advertising pamphlet "The Vital Question Cook Book" detailed this production process and shared crisp black-and-white pictures of the factory's industrial technology. It highlighted the engineering that housed, supported, and moved their industrial food production: the 300 miles of electric wire, 3,000 tons of steel, and 30,000 glass lights.²²⁹ And all of this modern machinery was necessary to make "Nature's Food," the perfect sustenance for children, invalids, and those seeking health through diet.²³⁰ Their marketing appeal recalled the mantra of nineteenth-century alternative health reform: "Naturally organized foods make possible natural conditions; there is no other way."²³¹ This appeal echoed the dietetic regimens and health philosophies that anchored the companies founded by Kellogg and other health experts. "The Vital Question Cook Book" contained "pithy pointers...for those who are too busy to read books on dietetics," which assured readers that the cereal "[was] quickly permeated by digestive fluid," "induced thorough mastication," and "contain[ed] all the elements for the complete nourishment of the perfect human body." It warned that most Americans were "Digging Graves with their Teeth," and "Making Work for the Doctors," and it educated readers about the scientific structure and properties of wheat, complete with an illustrated cross-section of a wheat berry.

²²⁷ *The Vital Question Cook Book*, Natural Food Company, 1908, 11-12.

²²⁸ Carson, *Cornflake Crusade*, 121.

²²⁹ *The Vital Question Cook Book*, 3.

²³⁰ Advertisement, *Good Housekeeping*, September 1911.

²³¹ Advertisement, *Good Housekeeping*, December 1900.

Alongside the health food giants who sold breakfast cereal to the masses, some catered to smaller, sometimes local, segments of health food culture whose patrons practiced more strict diets. These diets included raw foodism, or the commitment to eating only uncooked vegetables, nuts, fruits, and grains, and fruitarianism, the commitment to eating a fruit-and-nuts-based diet. The California-based Natural Foods Company, owned by the health consultant and writer Otto Carqué, organized its inventory primarily around a fruitarian diet. Like Kellogg, Carqué had made a name for himself as a food and health writer for some of the leading healthy living magazines. In these he penned articles on “The Nutritive and Therapeutic Value of Fruits and Fruit Juices,” “The Food Value of Dried Fruits,” the evils of alcohol, and the benefits of vegetarianism.²³² Carqué worked as a health consultant in the Los Angeles area. In 1916, he met health diarist Roscoe Rhoads at Rhoads’ home in La Jolla, California, to discuss “the food question” and Rhoads’ personal journey to health. Carqué’s advice was just one of the various “dietetic scheme[s]” Rhoads had been employing in his decades-long quest to improve his health.²³³ Beyond consultation, Carqué shared his health philosophy by lecturing locally, as he did for the American Women’s League of Los Angeles. He was also the founding president of the Globe Hygienic Circle in Los Angeles, whose motto pledged “To radiate health to all parts of the globe.”²³⁴ He was a local presence on the health food scene, and was certainly well known among those interested in healthy lifestyles and the new health food culture in southern California.

²³² Otto Carqué, “Has Alcohol Any Food Value?” *The Naturopath and Herald of Health*, May, 1904; ---, “The Nation’s Drink Bill,” *Physical Culture*, April, 1903; ---, “The Nutritive and Therapeutic Value of Fruits and Fruit Juices,” *Physical Culture*, May, 1904; ---, “The Food Value of Dried Fruits,” *Physical Culture*, May, 1914; ---, “Meat Eater vs. Vegetarian,” *Physical Culture*, May, 1902.

²³³ Roscoe Rhoads, *Diary*, 1916, Horace Emerson Rhoads Papers.

²³⁴ “American Women’s League,” *Los Angeles Herald*, August 14, 1910; “Globe Hygienic Circle Holds First Meeting,” *Los Angeles Herald*, April 23, 1910.

Unlike Kellogg and Christian, Carqué's food company reflected a culinary geography local to southern California. Fruits and nuts, which grew abundantly in the region's Mediterranean climate, formed a large part of his health cure and his company's inventory. Carqué believed that fruit juices and dried fruits, in particular, were a striking business opportunity for enterprising Californians. In 1914, Carqué offered unsolicited advice on the prospects of fruit-based health foods business to writer Jack London. "I noticed in one of the Los Angeles Papers that you are about to engage in the grape juice business," Carqué wrote to London. "Having been in this business myself for the past fifteen years...I thought my large experience in that line would perhaps be of some benefit to you. You remember that I sent you a box of unfermented Grape Juice from Gyesersville...?" Carqué included price lists for his unfermented juices along with a pamphlet detailing "the nutritive and therapeutic value of fruit juices," hoping to drum up London's interest, business, and perhaps backing. Before signing off, Carqué advised London that the production of dried fruits was "another California industry which seems...very profitable." Carqué enclosed with the letter with another pamphlet on his products, a recommendation for the "Luther Vacu Dehydrator," and assurances of a European demand for California's dried fruits.²³⁵ And Carqué was careful to emphasize that his health foods were indeed California grown. In 1919, he titled an advertisement for "Carque's Unsulphered Delicious Dried Fruits" in *Physical Culture*: "Pure California Food Products."²³⁶ In 1922, he advertised his health food "Prunola" as "an ideal combination of two of California's most wholesome fruits," and described his business in a booklet titled "Natural Fruits of California."²³⁷

²³⁵ Otto Carqué to Jack London, Jack London Collection, Manuscripts, Huntington Library.

²³⁶ "Pure California Food Products," Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, May, 1919.

²³⁷ Advertisement for "Prunola," *Physical Culture*, May, 1922.



PRUNOLA
AN IDEAL FOOD
SUNDRIED CALIFORNIA OLIVES AND PRUNES

"PRUNOLA" is an ideal combination of two of California's most wholesome fruits, retaining their full nutritive values. It is an excellent blood and tissue builder, rich in natural fruit sugar, olive oil, basic mineral elements and vitamins. It is a natural laxative food.

\$1.00 SPECIAL OFFER

We want you to know how good and healthful Carqué's unsulphured fruits are and as a special trial offer we will send you post paid the following assortment, all for \$1.00.

½ lb. pkg.	Prunola
6 oz.	Black Mission Figs
7 "	Smyrna Type
2 "	Fruit Laxative
2 "	Nut Fruto

Send Your Order Today

We are pioneers in the production of Unsulphured Dehydrated California Fruits, nuts, nut-butters, olives, olive oil, natural whole rice, genuine whole grain flours, etc. Ask for price-list and descriptive booklet "*Natural Food of California.*"

CARQUÉ PURE FOOD CO.
2619 W. 7th St., Los Angeles, Cal.

Figure 10: Advertisement for Prunola, *Physical Culture*, May, 1919.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the country, enthusiastic entrepreneur and self-styled "food scientist" Eugene Christian started his own Natural Food Company. In 1906, he began making and selling health foods with a minimum of resources: a small drying kiln and 200-square-foot room. By 1908, Christian could lure new investors with a new 64,000-square-foot factory where Christian's Natural Food Company made foods to sell in stores and by mail across the country. In the space of only a few years, the company grew to include Christian's Healthorium – a sanitarium health resort in Lakewood, New Jersey –

and Christian's School of Applied Food Chemistry.²³⁸ His company was built upon a model reminiscent of Kellogg's own. Christian's success as a purveyor of health foods was built upon his credentials as a health expert, and he not only marketed health foods but offered treatments at his Healthorium for disorders ostensibly caused by diet. Christian equated his foods with a "great moral reform movement," and pitched both his products and his company's stock as a virtuous investment in personal health and social betterment. Christian rested his philosophy of health on a belief that was central to American health food culture writ large: "that every chemical element needed by the human body can be found in foods AND FOODS ONLY...therefore they can be made remedial and curative if taken in right or natural selections."²³⁹

Several unique elements of Christian's business model reflect the relationship between health expertise, dietetic advice, and the new market for health foods. His approach toward advertising his food products was unusual: instead of featuring the foods themselves, Christian marketed health fears and his philosophy of curative eating. Christian's advertisements were published in some of the leading healthy living magazines, and were designed to provoke worry amongst health-anxious readers. Christian boasted that his system of "scientific feeding" could cure "stomach and intestinal disorders, nervousness, etc., etc.", and argued that over ninety percent of all diseases come from "ERRORS IN EATING."²⁴⁰ His advertisements spoke to readers with the common complaints of dyspepsia and stomach, but they also aimed to include the "etc., etc." aches

²³⁸ "New Plant of Christian's Natural Food Company," Lawrence B. Romaine Trade Catalog Collection, Special Collections, University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA.; C. E. Harris to O. R. Coulter, Ottley R. Coulter Collection, H. J. Lutcher Stark Center, University of Austin, Austin, TX.

²³⁹ "New Plant of Christian's Natural Food Company," Christian's Natural Food Company, Lawrence B. Romaine Trade Catalog Collection.

²⁴⁰ Advertisement, *Vegetarian Magazine*, July, 1907; Advertisement, *Vegetarian Magazine*, September, 1907.

and pains that made up the vast majority of readers' complaints. His advertisements painted the invalid's life as a gloomy dead-end street, then offered an enticing escape. "Don't be a grumbling, repellant invalid," Christian chided readers, "Learn to eat for success, happiness, and a full and healthful life."²⁴¹ He shared the testimony of clients whom "scientific feeding" had cured of everything from rheumatism to "nervous prostration."²⁴² Miss Carrie Schwartz reported that Christian's treatment rid her of longstanding gassiness and left her feeling "vivacious" and "energetic."²⁴³ The same life-altering, vivifying treatment could be available to any reader willing to call or write to Christian at his New York office.

In order to further encourage readers to use his health consultation service, Christian advertised free diagnoses: "No charge for my expert opinion...Free Symptom Blank sent on request...All this costs you nothing."²⁴⁴ He offered copies of his books on nutrition and obesity free of charge. And on occasion, he offered a more valuable promotion: "Free for 30 Days to every student beginning my course of diet during the month of July, all of my food preparations that are necessary."²⁴⁵ In this bait-and-hook form of advertisement, Christian used food fears, health warnings, and his free expertise as ways of drawing readers into dialogue with him about their health problems and, ultimately, into his consumer base for Christian's Natural Food Company. The fact that Christian's prepared line of foods was crucial to his food cure was not emphasized in his advertisements, though it was there for the discerning reader to find. "Let me feed you for

²⁴¹ Advertisement, *Vegetarian Magazine*, September, 1907.

²⁴² Advertisement, *Vegetarian Magazine*, July, 1907.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, March, 1908.

²⁴⁵ Advertisement, *Vegetarian Magazine*, July, 1907.

three months,” bargains one advertisement, “In three months I can positively cure you.”²⁴⁶ Christian built the public image of his company on his expert credentials as a healer: he claimed to have cured thousands of sufferers and authored numerous books on health and eating. In the language of his advertisements, he was a “food scientist” while his clientele were his “students.” Although his bottom line depended on the sales of real food products, Christian’s key commodity was, in many ways, his expertise.

Christian never included descriptions of his foods in any of his advertisements. To find them, we have to look to the promotional material he distributed to potential investors, some of which was collected by a Mr. T. E. Hunt of Oakland, California in the early twentieth century. Christian’s Natural Food Company’s “Price List” for April of 1908 included three different kinds of grain-based breakfast cereal, two kinds of bread, nuts, nut butter, and fruit wafers, a sampling not wholly different from what Kellogg’s Sanitarium Health Foods Company produced.²⁴⁷ What was different about much of Christian’s food, however, was that it was raw. Christian belonged to a segment of American health food culture that believed cooking destroyed the healthful properties of foods, particularly fruits and nuts but also many vegetables and grains. These foods were thought to “have been finished by nature,” such that the term “raw” was almost a misnomer. Fruits, vegetables, nuts, and grains were ripe, reddened, and “nurtured to maturity by soft beams of the life-giving sun.”²⁴⁸ Furthermore, Christian echoed earlier commentary by Horace Fletcher (the Great Masticator), Kellogg, and others by arguing that without rigorous exercise in digesting whole, raw foods, the body’s digestive organs suffered from disuse. “Making the

²⁴⁶ Advertisement, *Vegetarian Magazine*, September, 1907.

²⁴⁷ “Price List, April 1, 1908,” Christian’s Natural Food Company, Lawrence B. Romaine Trade Catalog Collection, Special Collections, University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA.

²⁴⁸ Advertisement, *Vegetarian Magazine*, January, 1910.

stove do what the stomach ought to do is...depriving it of what nature intended it to do, and the penalty is weakness.”²⁴⁹ With his “Unfired Bread” and “Unfired Fruit Wafers,” Christian catered to a more radical consumer element than many of the era’s most successful health food companies could (or cared to) reach.²⁵⁰

Christian also went to great lengths to paint his business as the picture of modern industry: scientific, efficient, and clean. To attract investors, Christian shared photos of his New Jersey factory under production, detailing the function of each room and of various machines. In an era when public interest in food production had been mobilized by the Pure Food movement, inviting consumers and investors “into” factories – whether through photographs or in reality – was not unusual. Kellogg did it, and Henry Perky was famous for inviting the public into the factory where his Shredded Wheat cereal was made. Christian was no exception, and he went out of his way to point out that grain at his company was “automatically handled so that it is not touched by hand from the time it leaves the car until it is ready for shipment.”²⁵¹ Christian also used scientific jargon and posturing to emphasize the rigorousness of his expertise. In an advertisement for weight loss he claimed to have “discovered that ... certain chemical effects...will consume fat. This method of reducing fat is absolutely scientific,” he assured readers, “**it can no more fail than the law of gravitation can fail**.”²⁵² Christian ran advertisements in *Physical Culture* that were at least full-page, often multiple-pages, and that were designed to look like another of the food-related health articles that the magazine published. They featured

²⁴⁹ Advertisement, *Vegetarian Magazine*, January, 1910.

²⁵⁰ “Price List, April 1, 1908,” Christian’s Natural Food Company, Lawrence B. Romaine Trade Catalog Collection.

²⁵¹ “New Plant of Christian’s Natural Food Company,” Christian’s Natural Food Company, Lawrence B. Romaine Trade Catalog Collection.

²⁵² Emphasis original. Advertisement, *Vegetarian Magazine*, December, 1906.

provocative “headlines” guaranteed to grab readers’ attention: “Stop Eating Foods That Poison!,” “The Shameful Abuse of Our Stomachs,” and “Why Some Foods Explode in the Stomach.”²⁵³ They contained explanations of disease that supported Christian’s particular brand of food science, including assurances that most “cases of so-called heart disease are merely the result of pressure against the diaphragm by gasses generated in the stomach through fermentation,” and that these gases also caused everything from arterial hardening to sleeplessness to lumbago.²⁵⁴ In these advertisements, Christian described the stomach as if it were the site of a juvenile chemical experiment gone wrong: “Good, simple food, will in many cases produce a chemical reaction in the stomach and literally explode.”²⁵⁵ Christian guaranteed readers that his expertise in the chemical reactions of foods could help them avoid stuffing their stomach-furnace with the equivalent of “dynamite, soggy wood and a little coal.”²⁵⁶

Christian’s marketing strategy of combining anxiety-inducing health warnings with a little expert advice and, ultimately, the promise of a healthy food solution was a common strategy for many health food companies. An advertisement for Brodt’s Cereal Meat Soup shouted, “No Consumption! No Typhoid! No Ptomaine! No lead poisoning!” Perhaps Brodt’s customers were left wondering whether typhoid fever was a standard additive in every other brand of canned soup.²⁵⁷ The Koerber Nut Meat Company challenged readers to only ignore their advertisement for “the natural diet, nuts and fruits” if they were

²⁵³ Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, January, 1917; Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, August, 1917; Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, April, 1919.

²⁵⁴ Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, June, 1919.

²⁵⁵ Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, August, 1917.

²⁵⁶ Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, April, 1919.

²⁵⁷ Advertisement, A. W. Brodt and Co., Lawrence B. Romaine Trade Catalog Collection, Special Collections, University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA.

content being “dull, brutish, apathetic, and finally sick.”²⁵⁸ Byron Tyler aimed to shock wives and mothers with his advertisement for Tyler’s Macerated Wheat featuring the faces of middle-aged men and young children next to the bold text, “**All Starving!**” “Entire families are undernourished because of improper methods of refining and cooking food,” Tyler scolded. Fortunately, Tyler’s Macerated Wheat contained a “ready to eat preparation,” protection against even the most incompetent home cook.²⁵⁹ Other advertisements functioned as abbreviated treatises on health and nutrition. WheatNuts relied on a lesson about the importance of dietary fiber to market their product, which they didn’t even bother to describe beyond the fact it was made out of whole wheat, unspecified nuts, and raisins.²⁶⁰ The makers of Laxacura, unsurprisingly, added another lesson on constipation to the advertising sections of healthy living magazines.²⁶¹ Finally, reassurances of scientific expertise and modern production methods pervade the advertising for not just Kellogg’s and Christian’s health foods, but all health foods. MaltaVita assured readers that their cereal was “scientifically cooked...under a high temperature and heavy steam pressure – a process very essential but impossible with the ordinary cooking facilities in private homes.” The company summarized their production process as “all that nature and science demand in the process of preparing a perfect food.”²⁶² And Quaker Oats described the “scientific food delights” of their Puffed Wheat, which contained “over 125,000,000 food cells.”²⁶³

²⁵⁸ Advertisement, *The Naturopath and Herald of Health*, January, 1904.

²⁵⁹ Advertisement, Tyler’s Macerated Wheat Co., Ottley R. Coulter Collection, H. J. Lutcher Stark Center, University of Austin, Austin, TX.

²⁶⁰ Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, November, 1917.

²⁶¹ Advertisement, *Vegetarian Magazine*, January, 1910.

²⁶² Advertisement, Malta-Vita Pure Food Co., Lawrence B. Romaine Trade Catalog Collection, Special Collections, University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA.

²⁶³ Advertisement, *Good Health*, December, 1920.

Conclusion

Successful health food companies were, without exception, in the business of selling not just food products but solutions to what they painted as a personal, social, and national health crisis. That the crisis was discovered and drummed up by businessmen who were in a position to profit by it did not diminish the fact that some American eaters identified with this crisis and responded favorably to health food products designed to cure their ills.

Health advice manuals, healthy living magazines, and cookbooks helped generate awareness and interest in “First Aid Foods” and the idea of eating oneself to health.

Advertisements for mass-marketed, patented health foods aimed to transform that awareness into a desperate need that only their goods could satisfy. In healthy living magazines, cookbooks, and promotional literature, health food companies played on consumers’ food fears in order to open up a market for their cereals, coffee substitutes, crackers, teas, and tonics. They aimed to convince readers that their sapped strength, hairless heads, sour stomachs, backed-up bowels, and tender teeth were not only due to the wrong foods but were reversible with the use of their foods.

Ultimately, the emergence of this health foods industry sheds new light on the roles of expertise, specialization, and science in the Progressive Era. On the one hand, businessmen like Kellogg and Christian relied on their expert credentials to sell their health food products. In many ways Kellogg was the epitome of a Progressive Era scientific leader: educated in one of the nation’s top medical schools and capable of performing delicate surgical operations, Kellogg held multiple academic degrees and participated in

several professional organizations.²⁶⁴ Yet he and health food entrepreneurs like him mistrusted the medical establishment who they felt had overlooked – and undermined – a much more natural path to health. Fundamentally, these health experts argued that the body was best served when nature was allowed to have its way, but only once nature had been improved on and interpreted for consumers. Fresh water, bright sunlight, and – of course – natural, healthy foods were the best medicine available; the pills and powders pedaled by professional doctors were considered frankly poisonous. At once, these experts celebrated their own special knowledge of food, bodies, and nature and encouraged consumers to – as cereal icon C. W. Post put it in his pamphlet “The Road to Wellville” – find the “power within you that can work miracles.”²⁶⁵ Their expert advice boiled down a health regimen that was largely free of scientific interventions, modern gadgets, or other explicit signs of modern progress: exercise, fresh air, sleep, and the right food. They urged consumers to ignore the medical men, “Give Nature A Chance,” and – of course – purchase scientifically designed, industrially produced health foods.²⁶⁶ “Drop coffee and adopt the food and drink known beyond doubt or question to be the best adapted to human health,” advised Post, and “...you’ll discover that these directions have put you safely on the ‘Road to Wellville.’”²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Richard W. Schwarz, “John Harvey Kellogg, M.D.,” (Nashville, TN: 1970); Numbers, *Prophetess of Health*.

²⁶⁵ “The Road To Wellville,” Postum Cereal Co. Ltd, Lawrence B. Romaine Trade Catalog Collection, Special Collections, University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA.

²⁶⁶ Advertisement, *Physical Culture*, March, 1908.

²⁶⁷ “The Road To Wellville,” Postum Cereal Co. Ltd, Lawrence B. Romaine Trade Catalog Collection, Special Collections, University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA

Chapter 4

Primitive Tastes: Getting Back to Nature at the Table

In dining rooms, restaurants, and kitchens across America, healthy eaters were getting back to nature at the table. While the National Park System grew and the Sierra Club flourished, healthy living magazines and health food companies were busy underlining the connections between health food and wild nature. From wilderness-communing, rough-living Nature Men to the socialist writer Upton Sinclair, nature enthusiasts agreed that food connected them to renewing experiences in the wild. On the pages of cookbooks, advice manuals, and healthy living magazines health experts and health seekers imagined and idealized a kind of primitive diet rooted in a connection to rural and wild nature that was at once backward looking and distinctly modern. While health experts mined the historical and anthropological records for examples of model eaters of the past, they argued that a primitive diet could restore the particular problem American manhood in the Machine Age. Their recipes, articles, and prescriptions for dietary health reveal a preoccupation with the idea that middle- and upper-class American lifestyles and eating habits had over-civilized and weakened white, male bodies. In the midst of a crisis of white, middle-class manhood, health food culture embraced the need to bring nature back into the body at mealtimes.²⁶⁸ Healthy living periodicals embraced the

²⁶⁸ Douglas C. Sackman, Mark Spence, and Karl Jacoby all describe the ways in which nature – and in particular the seemingly untouched, primitive kind of nature that was called wilderness – was socially significant to turn-of-the-century Americans. Sackman put it nicely when he described the drive to commune with and contest wild nature as a “cultural script,” something that manifested not only in the likes of the Nature Men but in Boy Scouts, the Sierra Club, tent camping, and the popularity of books like Jack London’s *Call of the Wild* or Edgar Rice Burroughs’ *Tarzan of the Apes*. Douglas C. Sackman, *Wild Men: Ishi and Kroeber in the Wilderness of Modern America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 213; Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford

neo-primitive diets of self-consciously uncivilized, wilderness-communing Nature Men as a way of reclaiming primitive manhood without rejecting civil society as Nature Men did. They perpetrated racist stereotypes that lauded Native Americans' barbarian virtues and "natural" diets as both less civilized and more masculine than those of white American men. The same magazines lauded a backward-looking "back to the land" ethic of food production and consumption as a test of masculine strength and self-sufficiency pitted against Nature's raw elements: soil, water, air, and sunlight.

The Natural Native: Health Food Literature and the Creation of An Indigenous Ideal

Healthy living magazines relied on assumptions about the diets of indigenous societies to expose what they saw as the degeneration of American men and American food. Riding the same cultural wave that drove the emergence of *National Geographic's* voyeuristic anthropological surveys of "others," health food writers extolled the physical prowess, longevity, and good health of "uncivilized" peoples around the world.²⁶⁹ Their editorials paid particular attention to the Native American societies of North America, whom they considered superior: "The American Indian as a rule is altogether...more manly" than peoples of Africa and Asia, declared *Physical Culture*.²⁷⁰ The gendered adjective "manly" was no outlier; health food writers expressed an equal amount of concern for the emasculating influences of popular American foods as they did respect for the masculine diets of indigenous peoples. Their articles imagined a primitive diet

University Press, 1999); Karl Jacoby, *Crimes against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

²⁶⁹ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples At Home and Abroad, 1876-1917*, (New York, 2000).

²⁷⁰ J. R. Stevenson, "A Long-Lived Race," *Physical Culture*, January, 1902.

composed of whole grains, fruits, nuts, and some animal foods, all seasoned heavily with restraint. Moreover, they promised a renewal of masculine characteristics – muscular strength, physical prowess, health, and hair - to those willing to follow it.²⁷¹

This turn-of-the-twentieth-century preoccupation with primitivism had been a part of America's health food culture since its origins in the 1830s with the diet-centered philosophy of health reformer Sylvester Graham. Graham embedded categories of race and gender at the heart of health food culture, envisioning a primitive health food diet based on information about indigenous foodways. Graham's vision revolved around bread, which he considered the cornerstone of good health. In his book *A Treatise on Bread and Breadmaking*, Graham claimed the most nourishing bread was that which was least removed from the kernel of wheat in its vegetable state, and only the most primitive forms of culinary preparations could preserve that connection.²⁷² If the wheat flour was too refined, the loaf too airy or served too hot, it would encourage gluttony and idleness of the digestive organs. Thus, the bread Graham recommended was made of whole wheat flour, was coarse and dark, dense, and cold. Graham likened it to humans' first experiments with bread, which he imagined were made of only water and unleavened grain, baked on hot stones or in the embers of a fire or in rude earthen ovens filled with stones and leaves and

²⁷¹ Gail Bederman has argued that as white, middle-class men faced challenges to their political and social authority from women, men of color, and working class men, they discovered new insecurities about their bodies. In particular, they feared they had become decadent – that city living and working had left them physically weak and mentally fragile. "Working class and immigrant men, with their 'primitive' customs," writes Bederman, "seemed to possess a virility and vitality which decadent white middle-class men had lost." Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 14. For more on the gendered valuation of male muscular strength and physical prowess, see: Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001); Mark Adams, *Mr. America: How Muscular Millionaire Bernarr Macfadden Transformed the Nation Through Sex, Salad, and the Ultimate Starvation Diet* (New York: Harper, 2009); John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang), 2001.

²⁷² Graham, *A Treatise on Bread*, 26.

covered with earth. This last method, Graham elaborated, was the manner in which “the Sandwich Islanders cooked all their food, when they were first discovered.”²⁷³ Just as indigenous peoples represented the most natural and primitive state of human to Graham, bread produced by primitive hands represented the most natural state of food.

Graham’s paean to the primitive extended beyond food to include the primitive eaters themselves whose wholesome diets gave them superior strength, health, and longevity. Based on his selective reading of classical era philosophers and poets, Graham described primitive eaters wandering through fields in search of mild herbs, collecting only “such fruits as the trees spontaneously produced.”²⁷⁴ They lived off of the land with very little intention or agency, he argued, subsisting on “the spontaneous products of the earth...in the same simple and natural condition as the lower animals did.”²⁷⁵ Graham scoured the western written record for examples of these model eaters. He selected the account of William Bryant, a Philadelphia merchant who recorded his experiences traveling west across the North America in the 1840s, for its descriptions of “Indian Chiefs” who ate only the merest food yet had hardy constitutions and felt no pain from bodily injury.²⁷⁶ The Maori of New Zealand, made famous in the Western world through the writings of Captain James Cook, were so obviously primitive to Graham that he felt no need to detail their diets as he otherwise might have. But he did detail their bodies, whose nakedness gave him proof of their flawless skin and perfect physical condition, even in extreme old age. The “Pampa Indians of Buenos Ayres [sic]” who lived entirely off of “mares’ flesh and water,” and the “tribes of the Arabs of the desert” who subsisted “entirely on the milk of their

²⁷³ Graham, *A Treatise on Bread*, 12.

²⁷⁴ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 138.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 138.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 140.

camels,” knew neither sickness nor limits to their physical endurance, Graham argued.²⁷⁷

In Graham’s depiction, unvarying, meager diets and constant exposure to the elements resulted in strength and health. Graham’s primitive men (and they were all male) were to be envied, not pitied.

Graham reserved his pity for the civilized men whose health and vitality had been damaged by full bellies and sumptuous dishes. Recalling the Biblical account of humanity’s fall from Eden, Graham wove his own narrative of temptation and tragedy around humans’ transitions from primitive to civilized diets. The foods of the “first family,” Graham ventured, were probably “fruits, nuts, farinaceous seeds, and roots, and perhaps some milk, and it may be honey,” gleaned from the garden that God had provided for the sustenance of his creation. This was the ideal diet, lost in expulsion from Eden and in the subsequent recourse to agriculture and animal husbandry.²⁷⁸ Graham saw this moral and physical fall repeated many times throughout history as human diets transitioned further and further from the primitive ideal. For example, the “exceedingly simple and natural” diet of the Roman armies, Graham would have readers believe, was the cornerstone of Roman imperial strength.²⁷⁹ Once her soldiers and citizens succumbed to the “artificial refinements and the excesses of luxury,” they suffered a physical and moral degeneracy that rendered them “effeminate, sensual, and selfish” and thoroughly incapable of defending their empire against “barbarian” armies. Then it was the Celtic warrior Queen Boadicea, whose impoverished followers could bear hunger, thirst, and exposure, who held

²⁷⁷ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 140.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 139.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 139.

the moral and military edge against the Romans.²⁸⁰ But Graham was confident that men debilitated by a luxurious diet could regain their health through a reversion to primitive foodways. He reported that among William Bryant's company traveling through North America were many men "more or less disordered in their health and afflicted with chronic ailments."²⁸¹ After subsisting on a Native American diet for two years, they became healthy and robust, quick to heal from wounds and as indifferent to pain as their Native companions.²⁸²

Moralizing tales of indigenous peoples, exceptional physical abilities, and primitive, natural diets continued to circulate in healthy living literature long after Graham. In 1901, *The Vegetarian and Our Fellow Creatures* described Native Americans' "exquisitely delicate" sense of smell that could discern differences in something as odorless as water.²⁸³ In 1902, *Physical Culture* claimed to have identified the most long-lived race on earth: an indigenous society in South America. The magazine praised the health and physical prowess of the "Chaco tribes" thus: "In short, they are credited with having every sense developed to the greatest degree, as well as being possessed of a stock of vitality that carries them through a life twice as long as that of the man of civilized life and environment."²⁸⁴ The next year, *Physical Culture* told their modern, over-coiffed, effeminate, dyspeptic modern audience that they should envy the long, healthy hair, strong, white teeth, and excellent physical condition of the "Typical Indian."²⁸⁵ In 1904, H. Newell Wardle, affiliate of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, profiled "The Foods That Make Strong Men" for *Physical*

²⁸⁰ Graham, *Lectures on the Science of Human Life*, 139.

²⁸¹ *Ibid*, 140.

²⁸² *Ibid*, 140.

²⁸³ "The Sense of Smelling," *The Vegetarian and Our Fellow Creatures*, June, 1901, 252;

²⁸⁴ J. R. Stevenson, "A Long Lived Race," *Physical Culture*, January, 1902, 177.

²⁸⁵ Gerald Keating, "Our Indians in the West," *Physical Culture*, April 1903, 264.

Culture readers. His article showcased the “North American Indian of yesteryear” as a prime example of well-developed physical manhood: “Lithe, straight, supple, with great powers of endurance...the magnificent physique of the men of many of the tribes excited the admiration of the white settlers.”²⁸⁶ *Physical Culture*’s readers gazed on the magazine’s pictures of partially dressed Native American men and imagined a graceful, animalistic physical prowess that came from a natural diet. “The Indian,” they were told, “like the animals about him, instinctively knows every natural law under which he exists and conforms to them.”²⁸⁷ While health food experts and fitness gurus advised health seekers and dieters on how to interpret and follow the rules of nature, healthy living magazines held up an ideal of primitive health, bodies, and eating.

The masculine physicality of indigenous peoples, the articles all argued, was the result of uncivilized foodways. These foodways were broadly caricatured as reliant on wild and cultivated vegetable foods with some wild game or fish, depending on the season and the hunt. Though Native South Americans “engage in the chase” to furnish themselves with meat, Stevenson wrote in 1902 “their main reliance must be placed on the natural foods” of wild honey, nuts, and fruits, gleaned from a willing landscape.²⁸⁸ The diet of *Physical Culture*’s “Typical Indian” with long hair and strong teeth was described as much the same: wild roots, berries, and fruits.²⁸⁹ *The Vegetarian and Our Fellow Creatures* attributed Native Americans’ startling olfactory powers to their vegetarian habits, and Wardle’s “Foods That Make Strong Men” were staples in the diets of Native American societies across the American continent: “corn, potatoes, squashes, and beans,” nuts, berries, seeds, roots,

²⁸⁶ H. Newell Wardle, “The Foods That Make Strong Men,” *Physical Culture*, March, 1904, 217-218.

²⁸⁷ “Chief One Eye of the Apaches,” “Indian Body-Building,” *Physical Culture*, June, 1901, 100.

²⁸⁸ Stevenson, “A Long Lived Race,” 177.

²⁸⁹ Gerald Keating, “Our Indians in the West,” *Physical Culture*, April 1903, 264.

acorns, and fish.²⁹⁰ Conversely, the article also drew a correlation between “primitive” societies where the men were of smaller stature and their meat-centered diets, underlining the general agreement among turn-of-the-century health food experts that meat was unhealthy and that small stature signaled physical inferiority.²⁹¹ In these stories about indigenous bodies and indigenous diets, health writers moralized not just about the bodies themselves, but also about the diets that built them. They implicitly constructed a primitive-esque health food diet around the staple foods associated with Native American masculinity: fruits, nuts, and vegetable foods.

Importantly, healthy living literature most often described indigenous food as hunted, gathered, and minimally processed, making an implicit connection to nature and the foodbearing environment in indigenous meals. Native labor in securing these foods from nature was portrayed as, in part, the guarantee of their masculine virtues: “The life of the Indian in quest of food was one of outdoor exercise which always kept him in excellent condition, physically,” *Physical Culture* asserted.²⁹² And where the physical exertion of the hunt could not be woven into moralizing tales of indigenous diets and natural health, as was the case for agricultural indigenous societies, other claims about food-producing labor were made. In “The Foods That Make Strong Men,” Wardle claimed that agriculture heightened Native American’s spiritual connection to and material conflict with nature: “So essential to the very existence of the Pueblo peoples is vegetable life that their whole region is a nature cult...all focused into a heartrending prayer for rain, that maize may grow

²⁹⁰ “The Sense of Smelling,” *The Vegetarian and Our Fellow Creatures*, June, 1901, 252;

²⁹¹ H. Newell Wardle, “The Foods That Make Strong Men,” *Physical Culture*, March, 1904, 217.

²⁹² Gerald Keating, “Our Indians in the West,” *Physical Culture*, April 1903, 264.

and man may live.”²⁹³ Wardle naturalized indigenous farming, in this case emphasizing a different kind of natural prowess – a spiritual connection to the environment – at the heart of indigenous diets. The spiritual and physical prowess presumed necessary to glean foods from primitive nature played heavily into health experts’ assumptions about Native American masculinity.

Occasionally, health food companies used and reaffirmed that connection to market their products. The breakfast cereal company Cerealine used excerpts from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *The Song of Hiawatha* in a promotional pamphlet to introduce consumers to their health food.²⁹⁴



Figure 11: “Cereal Foods,” Cerealine Mfg. Co., Lawrence B. Romaine Trade Catalog Collection, Special Collections, University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA.

²⁹³ Wardle, “The Foods That Make Strong Men,” 218.

²⁹⁴ “Cereal Foods,” Cerealine Mfg. Co., Lawrence B. Romaine Trade Catalog Collection, Special Collections, University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA.

The pamphlet emphasized the association between their corn-based flakes and the natural and spiritual origins of the maize plant. Its authors regretted the fact that the British-American culinary establishment had taken so little notice of maize, but blamed that conveniently on the “crude” manner in which indigenous peoples cooked and ate the wholesome grain. “Not until the present time,” they boasted, “has there been produced from Maize a food which exceeds in true food value all other Cereals, and justifies the esteem in which the grain was held by its original cultivators.”²⁹⁵ Significantly, the selected excerpts and illustrations highlight the physical triumph of Hiawatha in combat against Mondamin, who, once defeated, was buried and became the first maize plant. Hiawatha’s strength and abilities in combat – both central elements of the emerging notion of masculinity – took center stage in this advertisement for a healthy breakfast, reinforcing the developing connection between masculinity, modern health foods, and an imagined primitive diet.

Health Food, Nature Men, and A Narrative of Primitive Renewal

In December of 1907, fiction writer Jack London and his wife arrived in Tahiti on their yacht and were hailed by a lean, tanned man in a red loincloth paddling an outrigger canoe in their direction. The oddly clothed newcomer waved the red flag “indicative of the brotherhood of man” to London, identifying himself as a fellow socialist and, ultimately, as a former acquaintance.²⁹⁶ He was Earnest Darling, the “Nature Man” whom the press (particularly in his adopted home-state of California) loved to hate. When London met

²⁹⁵ “Cereal Foods,” Cerealine Mfg. Co., Lawrence B. Romaine Trade Catalog Collection.

²⁹⁶ Jack London, “The Nature Man” *Woman’s Home Companion*, September, 1908. The account was republished as a chapter in London’s book “The Cruise of the Snark,” New York: Macmillan Company, 1913.

Darling in San Francisco some years before, he had thought him a harmless “fool in the forest,” a prophet preaching nudism, outdoor living, and the utility of the phonetic alphabet.²⁹⁷ He was one of the many Nature Men who, according to the editors of *Physical Culture*, were products of the same cultural wave that was swelling the magazine’s readership: people interested in vital strength and natural diets. Once men with broken and debilitated bodies, Nature Men communed with the vital forces of the environment: they labored outdoors, sunbathed, shunned clothing and other social trappings in favor of their “animal” instincts.

Darling and other Nature Men became media sensations during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Their determination to “go into the wilderness and live on what nature intended” and the renewed health, strength, and happiness they boasted, engaged with a growing public interest in wilderness renewal tales: Jack London’s own *Call of the Wild* and Edgar Rice Burroughs’ *Tarzan of the Apes*, to name two popular examples. This narrative of natural renewal also resonated deeply within turn-of-the-century health reform culture, which had roots in nineteenth-century nature cures and a belief in the curative powers of water, food, and sunshine. And among the writers and readers of nineteenth-century healthy living magazines – as within the broader reading public that so readily received wilderness renewal tales – the renewal narrative spoke to the anxieties of men who struggled to define their own sense of masculinity in the modern machine age. Health-seeking men who helped create a health food culture at the turn of the twentieth century were, in particular, concerned with what they saw as broken, debilitated and over-civilized male bodies. For them, Nature Men like Darling represented one solution to the

²⁹⁷ London, “The Nature Man.”

softness and vulnerability of a modern urban lifestyle. In the healthy living magazines that were so central to health food culture, the diets of the Nature Men were portrayed as both a symbolic and practical way for health seekers to enact their own natural – and typically masculine – renewal narrative.

Ernest Darling, like many prophets of natural health, built his public identity as a Nature Man upon a personal narrative of sickness, health, and renewal. Darling reported that his early career as a university student and school teacher had been cut short when, nerves shot from “overstudy” and body racked by pneumonia, ninety-pound Darling had been given up for dead by multiple physicians, including his father. When Darling, “a perambulating corpse,” escaped his sickroom and crawled into an outdoor bed in the brush, perhaps he only hoped to die in peace and isolation, like a sick animal. Instead, the warmth of the sun and the relief from human company revived him. He noted with envy the “carefree” existence of the squirrels and birds that shared his wild spot. Darling had a moment of epiphany: the animals “lived naturally, while he lived most unnaturally; therefore, if he intended to live, he must return to Nature.”²⁹⁸ He re-learned how and what to eat by modeling animal behavior. He began eating only fruit and nuts after noting the diet of squirrels, and later acquired a loud, slurpy method of drinking which he claimed to have modeled after a cow.²⁹⁹

Darling’s health returned. He lived in a brush nest in the woods outside Portland, Oregon, where he flapped his arms like wings and gamboled in the grass. He slept on a wooded hill in San Francisco, California, where he handed out pamphlets bearing his teachings along Market St., and he amused American author Jack London with his utopian

²⁹⁸ London, “The Nature Man.”

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

visions. The authorities of San Francisco, however, were less amused than annoyed by Darling's alternative lifestyle. He was arrested for vagrancy and charged with insanity in 1903, but apparently remained free long enough to escape to Honolulu and face a vagrancy arrest there as well.³⁰⁰ The Honolulu courts gave him a choice to serve one year in prison in Hawaii, or return immediately to San Francisco.³⁰¹ Darling took the one-way ticket, but the San Francisco police were on the lookout for him and he faced a third vagrancy arrest upon his return to the city. The *San Francisco Call* commented on this latest arrest, quipping that, while imprisoned, "the 'nachur-man' did not feed on nuts and fruits, the prison-keepers thrusting toward him black coffee and a pan of mush for his supper."³⁰² The imprisoned fruitarian was forced to eat the food of a civilization that he rejected, or starve.

Darling was ultimately harassed out of California and onto a ship sailing for Tahiti. There, the French government granted the penniless Darling a 70-acre plot of hillside jungle three miles outside of Papeete, in exchange for his pledge to clear and improve it. There, again, he met Jack London, and when the two parted some weeks later, they did so as friends, a relationship that lent publicity to Darling and his cause. On January 26, 1908 the *Los Angeles Herald* ran a second-page article that began, "Jack London Safe At Home!" The article assured anxious Californians that London, whose boat *Snark* suffered engine trouble in Papeete and was feared lost, had never been in danger, and reported that "see[ing]" the Nature Man Darling had been London's greatest adventure.³⁰³ The *San Francisco Call* of the same date also included Darling in an article about London's safe

³⁰⁰ "Efforts To Be a Roman Bring Insanity Charge," *San Francisco Call*, June 29, 1903.

³⁰¹ "Prefers San Francisco to Jail," *San Francisco Call*, June 21, 1904.

³⁰² "'Nachur-Man' Spends Night in City Prison," *San Francisco Call*, August 24, 1904. The *Call's* unusual spelling in this article was intended to mock the phonetic alphabet that Darling had adopted.

³⁰³ "Jack London Safe At Home," *Los Angeles Herald*, January 26, 1908.

return, informing readers that the Nature Man was “making his headquarters aboard the *Snark*” while it awaited repair in the port of Papeete.³⁰⁴ Darling lingered like a question mark at the end of these articles about London’s South Sea adventures.

London, for his part, memorialized the meeting in an article for *Women’s Home Companion* which appeared later that year, and introduced Darling’s back-to-nature lifestyle to hundreds of thousands of readers across America. The magazine billed London’s article, “The Nature Man,” as “An Adventure in Far Off Tahiti,” and “another of Mr. London’s first hand accounts of strange people in strange lands,” promising excitement and exoticism.³⁰⁵ An advertisement for the upcoming issue guaranteed *Los Angeles Herald* readers a close look at the lean, loincloth clad man pictured dangling his legs over the bow of the sleek-looking *Snark*: “[London] tells all about this tawny-haired, bronze-skinned individual, who lives on nuts and fruit.”³⁰⁶ Indeed, Darling’s devotion to fruitarianism was one of the few things the public knew about his back-to-nature philosophy, other than his semi-nakedness, which was evident in photos and illustrations. London’s article in the *Woman’s Home Companion* filled out the narrative of the Nature Man, fulfilling the magazine’s promise for a “tell all” scoop. Aware that the popular press thought him at best a harmless eccentric and at worst a criminal degenerate, London lauded Darling as an optimist and judged him a man rich in health and happiness. He captured this poignantly at the outset of the piece, remembering how he met Darling:

“He came over the side [of the yacht], a sun god clad in the scarlet loin cloth, with presents of Arcady and greeting in both hands – a bottle of golden honey and a leaf basket filled with great golden mangoes, golden bananas specked with freckles of

³⁰⁴ “Jack London Back But Is Undaunted,” *San Francisco Call*, January 26, 1908.

³⁰⁵ London, “The Nature Man.”

³⁰⁶ “Jack London and the Nature Man,” Advertisement, *Los Angeles Herald*, August 31, 1908.

deeper gold, golden pineapples and golden limes, and juicy oranges minted from the same precious ore of sun and soil.”³⁰⁷

In London’s reminiscences, Darling’s golden treasure represented a life overflowing with riches of a rare variety: ripe fruits of contentment and strength, “refreshing and wholesome” to match the man’s aura and represent the feast and bounty of his simple, unconventional existence.³⁰⁸ London’s metaphor reinforced the connection between food and the Nature Man experience for the magazine’s hundreds of thousands of readers. In 1907, the year before it ran London’s article, the *Companion* reported a circulation of 600,000 – the largest readership of any of the era’s 10-cent magazines.³⁰⁹

Darling vanished from the popular press for a time following London’s article, though his brief notoriety had drawn converts to his cause. By 1913 when Darling again made waves on the pages of the *San Francisco Call*, he had had at least two visitors to his Tahitian fruit plantation seeking the Nature Man lifestyle. Both of the men, L. A. Sans of “a well to do Los Angeles family” and Eugene Dufour, remained on the plantation in the spring of 1913 when Darling left Tahiti and returned to San Francisco.³¹⁰ Speculation regarding the Nature Man’s homecoming revolved around Darling’s fruitarian eating habits. An article dedicated to the supposition that Darling was on the prowl for a “Topless [sic] Wife” reminded readers that the prospective bride would have to eat only raw, vegetarian food as he did, and detailed Darling’s breakfast of the prior morning: “shredded cocoanut, bananas, and raisins.”³¹¹ The *Call* speculated that Darling’s appetite for the South Pacific had been satiated once he had eaten “the ‘beautiful’ fruits of the south seas” and the “‘creamy’ nuts of

³⁰⁷ London, “The Nature Man.”

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Endres, Kathleen L., and Therese L. Lueck. *Women’s Periodicals in the United States: Consumer Magazines*. (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1995).

³¹⁰ *San Francisco Call*, May 16, 1913; *San Francisco Call*, October 30, 1913.

³¹¹ *San Francisco Call*, May 16, 1913.

Hawaii,” and that wanderlust would lead him to “the island of Madeira, where the grapes grow as large as plums and bananas are not picked until they are ready to melt in one’s mouth.”³¹² Another article imagined that an “association” of Nature Men was planning a meeting, a sort of group intervention into the dietary habits of one of their small number. “Darling,” the article reminded readers, “lives on fruits and nuts,” and he feared that this companion Nature Man was “getting fleshy” and eating meat.³¹³ Articles like these were a constant reminder that diet was at the center of the public discussion about the Nature Men’s back-to-nature lifestyles. In this context, the pillars of health food dietaries – vegetarianism, fruitarianism, and raw foodism – became synonymous with the Nature Men’s wilderness renewal narrative.

The association between food and the Nature Men’s brand of self-renewal resonated with the healthy living proponents of the day, particularly with Bernarr Macfadden. In May 1904, Macfadden ran an article in *Physical Culture* written by Darling (in the phonetic alphabet) titled “15 Nu Komandments ov the Natur Man.” Darling’s emphasis on fresh air, exercise, alternative cures for illness, and a raw, vegetarian diet broadly echoed the magazine’s own philosophy. He admonished readers to eat only according to physical need and to disregard pleasure, social pressure, or the desire to prevent wasted food as arbitrary social impulses. Fasting and dieting were the only medicine he could recommend as natural. Darling’s fourth “Komandmnet,” to eat plenty of “bananaz, plaintains, papiloz, papawoiz, sweet, sound aplz, pearz, persimunz, &s.” was reinforced by the central illustration of Darling, naked but for his dark loincloth, holding a freshly peeled banana. Visually, Darling’s yellow and black banana signified his wilderness renewal philosophy as

³¹² *San Francisco Call*, September 10, 1913.

³¹³ *San Francisco Call*, September 15, 1913.

strongly as his loincloth, and represented the most potent, practical way that readers could access the Nature Man's philosophy and reclaim some of their lost primitivism.³¹⁴



Figure 12: E. W. Darling, "15 Nu Komandments ov the Natur Man," *Physical Culture*, May 1904.

It was not, however, Darling's command to eat bananas that stood out in this article. It was how he ate the banana: in the raw, on his feet and minimally clothed. Darling represented a pared-down existence, one free from material and social confines even – perhaps especially – in his eating habits. In this he represented the radical element of health food culture; at once both a contrast to the more conservative praxis of fellow health food eaters and an ideal that they could admire. Bananas were not, by 1904, an unfamiliar food to American eaters, particularly those interested in health reform diets. American steamships began importing the fruit from Central American plantations in the 1880s. In

³¹⁴ E. W. Darling, "15 Nu Komandments ov the Natur Man," *Physical Culture*, May 1904, 396.

1893 Ella E. Kellogg, influential vegetarian health reformer and wife of John Harvey Kellogg, featured them as an excellent health food in her cookbook “Science in the Kitchen”. She considered bananas highly nutritious, almost equal in “nutritive value” to the best quality beefsteak, and an adequate substitute for bread in the diet. In an 1888 issue of *Good Health*, Ella E. Kellogg recommended “Banana Blanc Mange:” a custard of milk, sugar, cornstarch, bananas, vanilla, and whipped cream, as a seasonable dessert recipe.³¹⁵ The October 1901 issue of *Vegetarian Magazine* showcased “A Banana Dinner” as a triumph of food science, outlining a ten-course meal plan “made up wholly of variations of banana fruit.” The bill-of-fare was taken from a similar dinner served to Henry S. Clubb, the president of the American Vegetarian Society, and officers of the New York Vegetarian Society, and featured suitably dainty preparations of the fruit. An accompanying recipe for banana fritters instructed readers to peel, slice, and macerate the bananas in sugar and orange juice for an hour, roll the pieces in beaten eggs and “cracker dust,” and fry them in “ko-nut”,³¹⁶ before serving topped with “sauce.” Another recipe suggested mixing sliced banana into a whipped-cream filling for a short cake, or serving it as a trifle, layered with cake, boiled custard, and whipped cream.³¹⁷

Neither the featured recipes nor any of the courses in the “Banana Dinner” bill-of-fare, however, described a raw banana, to be eaten while standing with peel attached. Darling’s manner of eating recalled something unmediated and unsocialized, particularly when compared to readers of healthy living magazines who had not abandoned their

³¹⁵ Ella E. Kellogg, “Seasonable Bills of Fare,” *Good Health*, August, 1888, 318.

³¹⁶ A popular brand of refined coconut oil, solid at room temperature and used as a substitute for lard (rendered animal fat) in cooking.

³¹⁷ “A Banana Dinner,” *Vegetarian Magazine*, October, 1901, 16.

dainty dishes and dining tables (or their clothes) for the unfettered life of a Nature Man.³¹⁸ In health reform circles, Darling represented a radical dedication to living a simple life and eating “‘natural’ foods in a veritable ‘Garden of Eden.’”³¹⁹ And although the leading health reform journals advised eating bananas in custards and cakes as often as raw, they simultaneously lauded the “raw” life that Darling and others like him led. To that end, *Physical Culture* published a handful of articles regarding the Nature Man movement, profiling not just Darling but Gustav Nagel and Georg Drutschel of Germany, and Josef Salomonson of Holland.³²⁰ Drutschel published the story of his triumph over consumption in a 1904 issue, emphasizing the curative effects of a life lived outdoors. He urged readers to eat only the most “natural meals...vegetables, peas, beans, [and] lentils, simply cooked.”³²¹ *The Naturopath* also introduced its readers to the Nature Men in 1904, when it profiled Salmonson, sharing his tale of natural renewal and his proscriptions for readers who wanted to live more like him, the first being a vegetarian diet “if possible most in the raw state.”³²² In November of the same year, *The Naturopath* published a reader’s account of an ill acquaintance who “was too weak to help himself. He lay on the earth of a field...and inhaled and inhaled the smell of Mother Earth.” He ate nothing but dandelions and salt for a time, later adding buttermilk and whole grains, and his health was restored by “Nature’s cure.” This story mirrored of the Nature Men’s narrative of natural renewal, and speaks to

³¹⁸ It is common for the literature to note how unsociable health and fad dieters were as a whole in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many approached mealtimes as duties or health treatments, rather than opportunities for conversation and communion; adherents of Fletcherism – in particular – would spend so long chewing their food that they could not sustain any sort of mealtime conversation. This closer look health and fad dieters reveals even greater distinctions among them regarding the method and frequency with which they observed Anglo-American mealtime customs like courses, service and presentation, and eating at table.

³¹⁹ Photo Caption, *Physical Culture*, January, 1907, 102.

³²⁰ “Natur Men,” *Physical Culture*, November, 1904, 418.

³²¹ Georg Drutschel, “My Triumph in the Struggle with Consumption,” *Physical Culture*, November, 1904, 445.

³²² “The Apostel of Natural Life,” *The Naturopath*, May, 1904, 115.

both the influence that the Nature Men had on the health food culture expressed on the pages of healthy living magazines, but also to the growing interest in back-to-nature philosophies and praxis among *Physical Culture's* editors and readers.³²³

In the years following Darling's first appearance on *Physical Culture's* pages, the magazine began featuring articles on other back-to-nature enthusiasts, wedding back-to-nature philosophy to the health food culture the magazine represented. In many ways, these articles echoed John Muir's impassioned arguments about the importance of wild nature in spiritual and moral renewal. They fell into line with a cultural wave begun by Muir and propelled by the success of the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, and the creation of new National Parks that valued wilderness as a tonic for the ills and excesses of the modern era. But beyond spiritual renewal, health food devotees saw wilderness experiences as an opportunity to revisit the civilized diets that made them sick. Perhaps inspired by closeness to uncivilized nature or perhaps constrained by the pared-down state of camp kitchens, health food eaters marked their back-to-nature experiences with raw foods, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts. Like Muir, who would often run out of what little bread he had brought to fuel his wilderness ramblings and felt none the worse for the fast, health food eaters recharged their bodies by eating simplified, health-conscious meals in the bosom of nature.³²⁴

Physical Culture had long been interested in the movement that made the great outdoor vacation into a hallmark of American culture, proclaiming the health benefits of "retreating" to nature. In 1906 the magazine profiled Teddy Roosevelt's vacations to his Pine Knob, Virginia, cabin, and attributed the president's energy and success to his time

³²³ Mary A. Sexton, "A Return to Nature," *The Naturopath*, November, 1904, 285.

³²⁴ Donald Worster, *A Passion for Nature: The Life of John Muir*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

spent living “the simple life” in the bosom of nature. His staff of over a dozen live-in servants certainly took the sharp edges off of roughing it, and left his time free for daily horseback rides and shooting trips.³²⁵ Unsurprisingly, Roosevelt’s manner of communing with nature was too soft for a crowd who lauded the radicalism of Ernest Darling. Upton Sinclair, a sometime vegetarian who had himself been labeled a Nature Man by the *San Francisco Call*, addressed the issue of nature as the playground of the rich in a summer, 1911, issue of *Physical Culture*.³²⁶ Sinclair dismissed their comfortable, often luxurious, manner of vacationing: “I have sat down to a dinner in [the Adirondacks], served by footmen in uniform, and with hand-painted menus on the table. The only sign of ‘Nature’ that I could discover was the fact that paintings on the menus represented squirrels and pinecones.”³²⁷ In Sinclair’s estimation, luxury was anathema to the back-to-nature lifestyle. The poor, “being driven to the city in ever denser throngs by the lash of poverty,” were far better poised to retreat to the country, Sinclair advised, where their poverty would be tamed by simple living and a little outdoor labor.³²⁸

If nature was a cure for poverty, it was even more so for worn out bodies and constitutions broken by the demands of a civilized life. Based on personal experience, Sinclair recommended tent camping a remedy for ill health and flagging productivity. Cold and hunger, insects, spoiling food: all could be borne with the right attitude, he claimed, one that realized “the joys which may be found in a contest with hardships.”³²⁹ Sinclair’s method of “Returning to Nature” was remarkably like that of the Nature Men: peripatetic,

³²⁵ John A. Staples, “President Roosevelt’s New Vacation Retreat,” *Physical Culture* August, 1906, 130.

³²⁶ “Clubwomen Worship at a New Shrine,” *San Francisco Call*, November 7, 1908.

³²⁷ Upton Sinclair, “Returning to Nature,” *Physical Culture* June, 1911, 623.

³²⁸ *Ibid*, 623.

³²⁹ *Ibid*, 624.

proudly partial to physical discomfort, and self-consciously devoid of the markings of civilization.³³⁰ He claimed that he lived “a hermit’s existence” while camping, the freedoms of which meant not bothering with domestic niceties. “When I ‘return to Nature,’” Sinclair wrote, “I have always other things to think about and to attend to than building fires and peeling potatoes and washing dishes.” Raw food, for convenience’s sake, was the hallmark of his diet, a resolution he made before he “knew anything at all about physical culture or the raw-food regimen.” He ate “nothing wet and nothing hot,” and ate all of his meals on disposable plates made from paper bags, wood, or pasteboard.³³¹ Sinclair’s eloquent testimony on the pages of the most popular healthy living magazine was just one of many natural narratives into which vegetarian and fruitarian diets were embedded, yet it was one that (due to his own notoriety and Macfadden’s personal endorsement of the article) would guarantee readers’ attention. And for readers already attuned to the importance of diet in their quest for physical and moral transformation, the association between Sinclair’s naturally healthful experiences and a diet of raw fruits, vegetables, milk, and eggs would not be missed.

Sinclair’s was not the only article on getting back to nature to appear in the 1911 issue of *Physical Culture*. Another article told of “how a resort to nature proved an inexpensive and efficient means of regaining health and strength.” He described failed attempts to cure his crippling case of inflammatory rheumatism, and the discovery of “*Physical Culture* and other health magazines” that encouraged him to disobey his physician and seek the “Tonic of the Woods.”³³² He joined a party of five other health seekers in a

³³⁰ Sinclair, “Returning to Nature,” 623.

³³¹ Ibid, 626.

³³² Mark Wilcox, “The Tonic of the Woods,” *Physical Culture*, June, 1911, 651.

camp by a lake, and spent a month in strenuous (but not grueling) outdoor labor and immersing himself in sun and water. He fished to support the daily fare of his fellow campers but made a point of the fact that he ate none of what he caught, nor any other meat. His diet, he related, consisted of potatoes, green corn, tomatoes, rice, beans, and fruit. He credited this “exceedingly plain” diet for conquering his cravings for unhealthy foods.³³³ Similarly, an article had appeared the year before that sung the praises of a “Real ‘Back-to-Nature’ Colony” in Switzerland, settled by “nature-lovers” and “hermits” whose lack of worldly wealth made them rich in virtue. This “unique colony of nature-men” radiated good health.³³⁴ The residents tended gardens and traded their produce in local markets (as did Darling on Tahiti), sunbathed, and shunned unnecessary clothing. They were all vegetarians who ate “simple and nourishing foods.” A striking photo at the end of the article captured the colony’s mealtime spread: “cherries, figs, plums, bananas, hazel nuts, pudding and bread,” the fruits and nuts served raw and the whole meal simply presented in mismatched bowls on a rustic wooden tray.³³⁵ Later, the magazine profiled a “Family of Nature Lovers” practicing “Dress reform...vegetarianism, [and] ‘Fletcherism’”³³⁶ in open-air bungalows in the Berkeley Hills of California, who breakfasted (outdoors) on “fruit, mush, hoecake and milk,” lunched on “beans, potatoes, vegetables and fruit,” and supped on “rice, whole wheat bread and milk.”³³⁷ These health seekers’ back-to-nature projects were clearly defined by their food choices as much as any other element of their lifestyle. Fruits, nuts,

³³³ Wilcox, “The Tonic of the Woods,” 652.

³³⁴ Norman Short, “A Real ‘Back to Nature’ Colony,” *Physical Culture*, November, 1910, 448.

³³⁵ *Ibid*, 449.

³³⁶ Horace Fletcher – the “Great Masticator” – was a contemporary of health reformers like Kellogg and Macfadden. He was best known for his belief that food must be chewed extensively (ideally until reduced to a liquid or pap) before swallowing in order to ensure proper digestion and good health.

³³⁷ Pauline Hess, “A Family of Nature Lovers,” *Physical Culture*, June, 1916, 97.

beans, wheat, and milk became as important to getting in touch with the nature without as they were to rejuvenating the nature within.

Primitive Labor, Healthy Bodies: A “Back to the Land” Ethic for Natural Strength

While turn-of-the-century health food culture championed the notion of getting back to a wild kind of nature at the table, they also embraced the practice of communing with cultivated landscapes: going back to the land. While lauding the food-producing labor that kept Native American men physically fit and naturally healthy, some writers for healthy living magazines prescribed a similar kind of outdoor work for middle-class American men who felt that the demands of civilized life had left them weak and unhealthy. This agrarian vision promised that clearing, tilling, planting, and tending fields would revive flagging, over-stimulated, and nervous constitutions. Moreover, hard physical labor outdoors would encourage muscular development and hone primitive skills of surviving and thriving in close commune with nature. Ultimately, the backward-looking sentiment at the heart of this vision embraced rustic, and even primitive, food-producing labor as the key to living “as nearly as possible as Nature intended man to live.”

In the summer of 1904, Bernarr Macfadden went back to the land. He rented a “shanty” and a small plot of land about an hour outside of New York City, where he “determined to become a farmer.”³³⁸ Macfadden’s back-to-the-land experiment was in sympathy with a budding agrarian nostalgia among city dwellers concerned about the influences of urban living on their health and quality of life. With the expansion of urban railroad networks and the concurrent rise of America’s commuter suburbs, the back-to-

³³⁸ Bernarr Macfadden, “My Experience Going Back To Nature,” *Physical Culture*, August, 1904, 101.

the-land movement's clarion call for a return to open spaces and natural places enjoyed a large audience that increased as the new century wore on. By the early 1920s, Bolton Hall's *Three Acres and Liberty* (1907), a popular handbook on going back to the land, had gone through eight reprints and one revision. In it, Hall condemned America's great urban migration that taught children to forget the "traditions of the soil," and urged a reversal that would "repeople the silent places" that suffering city-dwellers had left behind. *Three Acres and Liberty* corroborated Macfadden's oft-repeated observation that "city influences destroy ultimately all the best there is in human character."³³⁹

Healthy living magazines advocated going back to the land for multiple reasons. First, food-producing labor in garden or farm provided physical exercise for the male body that was both primitive-esque – that is, it reflected some of the assumptions that white, male writers and readers made about indigenous foodways – and productive. Based on his own experience of farming and gardening, Macfadden described hoeing his vegetables as one of his "favorite summer exercises."³⁴⁰ He found that the swing of these tools squared his shoulders and enhanced the musculature of his spine and back, and that gardening strengthened his lungs and chest through deep, rapid breathing of the "uncontaminated oxygen of God's clean out-of-doors."³⁴¹ He touted wood chopping (a related occupation of those who cleared land for gardens or small farms), as "A Great Health Builder," unsurpassed as a means of developing upper body strength.³⁴² This exceptionally healthy outdoor labor had the power to transform underdeveloped and unhealthy male bodies from the inside out through contact with the natural environment. The farmer was a

³³⁹ Macfadden, "My Experience Going Back To Nature," 99.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 101.

³⁴¹ Bernarr Macfadden, "War Gardening A Health Builder," July, 1918, 38.

³⁴² *Ibid*, 23.

healthy man, argued Macfadden, because he had “every opportunity to breathe in fresh air and to absorb the sunshine, to get next to Nature in a very direct way.”³⁴³ *Good Health* magazine informed its readers that gardeners cultivated strength and wellness by perspiring and breathing heavily in the fresh air and sunlight. Gardening was “hoe handle medicine,” *Good Health* reported, which “led the way from the grouchiness of chronic invalidism to the joy of vigorous, abounding health.”³⁴⁴

Outdoor labor in gardens and farms also promised a renewed spiritual connection to nature, echoing the masculine primitive ideal created by healthy living magazines. Health food writers marveled over the instincts of agrarian stewardship that brought the farmer or gardener closer to “the dear, old nurse,” Nature.³⁴⁵ On his summer farm, Macfadden reveled in the power of his own hands to bring forth food and life from carefully tended soil, and marveled at the “mysterious workings of Nature” unfolding under his nose. “There is something fascinating in seeing things grow when you plant them with your own hands,” he recalled in the August 1904 issue of *Physical Culture*.³⁴⁶ For Macfadden, a large harvest represented the personal success of the gardener as the patriarchal protector of his own “progeny” and “children of the vegetable world.”³⁴⁷ *Good Health* suggested that the gardener “even becomes himself almost a creator...for nowhere may [one] come so close to the real beginnings of life as in dealing with the sprouting seed.”³⁴⁸ This idyllic rendering of agrarian stewardship promised male readers an intimate connection with nature.

³⁴³ Macfadden, “War Gardening A Health Builder,” 38.

³⁴⁴ R. Vernon Ashley, “Finding Health in the Garden,” *Good Health*, March, 1916, 127.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 127.

³⁴⁶ Macfadden, “My Experience Going Back To Nature,” 101.

³⁴⁷ Macfadden, “War Gardening A Health Builder,” 39.

³⁴⁸ Ashley, “Finding Health in the Garden,” 127.

When Macfadden published his own account of his back to the land experience in 1904 it was “not only because it [would] be of interest to my readers to know of this experiment, but because it may be of actual aid to them in conducting similar experiments.”³⁴⁹ Toward this end, *Physical Culture* published multiple articles on the various ways his readers could get back to the land in their own lives. Beyond that, Macfadden developed a plan for a Physical Culture City, “a city *in* the country and *of* the country,” where residents could train their bodies to hard physical labor while producing healthy, natural food.³⁵⁰ Macfadden started the project in early 1905 when he purchased an eighteen-hundred-acre plot of land in northern New Jersey as a site for the city; by June of the same year, he had begun leasing plots to fellow health seekers. Residents were expected to live a strict physical culture lifestyle while they bettered themselves through home and garden industries: the use of meat, white flour, or high heels was grounds for expulsion. The residents of the Physical Culture City ranged from wealthy health-seekers looking for a summer retreat to poor students hoping to earn a degree in physical culture to radical fruitarians, raw foodists, and nudists. Despite Macfadden’s investment of over \$100,000 in his City, it lasted only two short years. Internal fractures, financial problems, and Macfadden’s own difficulties with the law (he was arrested early in 1907 for the distribution of obscene materials after publishing a book about “prudery,” sex, and health), meant that by June of 1907 the City was deserted.³⁵¹

³⁴⁹ Macfadden, “My Experience Going Back To Nature,” 102.

³⁵⁰ J. W. Smithson, “Home Industries for Physical Culture City Residents, *Physical Culture*, April, 1905, 223.

³⁵¹ Adams, *Mr. America*. On the many utopian communities begun in the United States in this era, see: Robert V. Hine, *California’s Utopian Colonies*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); ---, *Community on the American Frontier: Separate But Not Alone*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980).

Although Macfadden's *Physical Culture City* was, ultimately, a flash in the pan for most health seekers, it did help to generate an enduring conversation in healthy living literature about practical ways for readers to actuate an idyllic agrarian lifestyle. For those interested in literally going back to the land, Macfadden's magazine published several articles on small-scale agrarian enterprises in connection with his *Physical Culture City*. In a two-part series of articles titled "Home Industries for *Physical Culture City* Residents," J. W. Smithson advised readers on the "material advantages of a little home in the country...presumed to include a plot of cultivable land ranging from a few feet to a half-acre." As a how-to guide for disenchanted city-dwellers considering a retreat to "country or suburban life," the substantial article was wide-ranging, covering the essentials of poultry farming to government support for silk-raising.³⁵² In 1911, frequent contributor Milo Hastings challenged *Physical Culture* readers, "Shall the Health Seeker Go Back to the Land?" The article advised the inexperienced enthusiast in the fundamentals of making a successful living off of the land as a small-scale farmer or gardener. It touched on everything from prices and location of good farming land to hen breeds, and above all tried to be pragmatic in "sizing up [one's] chance of success at a back-to-the-land venture."³⁵³ This included discouraging anyone without a sizable savings to sink into the project: according to his estimates, a would-be back-to-the-lander needed two thousand dollars to set up a successful medium-size operation on healthy, well-situated farmland in the Northeast. The able and willing investor, however, was repaid fully with both wholesome food and wholesome body. Vacant lot gardens put natural foods on the tables of city-dwellers and brought "Mother Earth's" gifts of strength and vitality to the eaters and

³⁵² Smithson, "Home Industries for *Physical Culture City* Residents," 1905.

³⁵³ Milo Hastings, "Shall the Health Seeker Go Back to the Land?" *Physical Culture*, May, 1911, 594.

gardeners.³⁵⁴ The larger country truck garden provided “those most delicious of all edibles – vegetables grown by oneself” among the many other “excellent things that accrue from going back to Nature.”³⁵⁵ Finally, the magazine encouraged its urban readership that were not prepared to relocate to the country to “[get] back to the soil” through “Vacant Lot Gardening” in cities.³⁵⁶

Conclusion

In healthy living magazines and health food literature, health experts, journalists, and marketers highlighted men’s fears about their own manhood. They celebrated and defined masculinity as a new manly virtue dependent on physical strength, virility, vitality, and good health. Their articles and health literature described a racialized ideal of primitive masculinity based on tales of indigenous physical prowess, the health renewal narratives of the self-consciously uncivilized Nature Men, and the supposed healthfulness of outdated, labor-intensive methods of food production. And at the core of this primitive ideal emerged a primitive health food diet that mirrored most of the “curative” foods that were becoming staples in the emerging health food cuisine: nuts, fruits, whole grains, and vegetables. This diet was touted as a way for men to renew their own primitive masculinity despite their whiteness and despite their commitment to civilization and city living.

³⁵⁴ Henry W. Koehler, “Vacant Lot Gardening in Chicago,” August, 1910, 173.

³⁵⁵ Smithson, “Home Industries for Physical Culture City Residents,” 223.

³⁵⁶ Koehler, “Vacant Lot Gardening in Chicago,” 173.

Conclusion

When Roscoe Rhoads recorded that he “dined alone” on health foods, he described both his commitment to the food cure and its limits.³⁵⁷ Perhaps, as the Rhoads family feasted on Thanksgiving turkey with dressing and gravy, two kinds of potatoes, and mince pie, Roscoe Rhoads regretted his solitary spread of hard sliced bread, boxed breakfast cereal, and raw fruits. Perhaps he relished his own determination to get healthy more than he relished the food he ate, or maybe he was fully enjoying a meal made of foods that promised to lead him down the path to wellness. In any case, Rhoads’ decision to dine alone on health foods separated him from his family group at the same time as it wove him into a new health food culture. For Rhoads, and for health food eaters across America, that new food culture may have felt like an amorphous presence compared to the communality of a shared meal at a family table.

The separateness of the new health food culture was just one of the challenges that health food eaters faced, but it was a potent one. Rhoads repeatedly made note of his solitary meals, particularly on days like Thanksgiving and Christmas when his family feasted and celebrated, despite the fact that it was rare for him to describe the manner of his mealtimes. Over time, Rhoads’ self-imposed exclusion may have worn away at his resolve as a strict adherent to a health food diet. By the time Rhoads had reached his thirties, his diaries had begun to reflect the grey area of health food culture, a space in which eaters forged compromises between the dictates of health food experts and the realities of eating in their own daily lives. For Rhoads, this meant a relaxation of the

³⁵⁷, Rhoads, Diary, (1898-1899), Papers of Horace Emerson Rhoads.

dietary proscriptions that had defined his mealtimes a decade and a half earlier. In his diary started in 1916, Rhoads recorded regularly eating beef, coffee, and confections like Hershey's chocolate alongside many bowls of patent breakfast cereals, nuts, fruit, and whole wheat baked goods. Eating in that grey area also meant drawing up his chair to the communal table more often: "[Brother] Jesse here for lunch," Rhoads wrote on October 19th, 1916. "I joined family."³⁵⁸

Negotiating the grey area between eating for health and eating for company, community, and pleasure was a frustrating journey for Rhoads. While he enjoyed the experience of eating in restaurants and coffee shops in San Diego and sharing coffee and cookies with his sister-in-law, he often regretted those indulgences to the point of forswearing them in the future. After a day trip to San Diego that included a slice of cherry pie at one diner, a second of apricot pie *alamode* at another, and a "cake of Hershey's chocolate," Rhoads resolved to "cut out the pie and all confection and pastry for a few months."³⁵⁹ Written in another pencil beneath that entry was the confession, "Failed to keep that resolution."³⁶⁰ In fact, Rhoads' resolutions to "cut out" various indulgences became more frequent even as his daily diet became more relaxed. On February 28th, 1916, Rhoads resolved to eat "no more milk, meat, sugar, cream, candy or pastry of any kind for 60 days."³⁶¹ Within two weeks, however, Rhoads had recorded eating milk, cream, beef, chicken, and candy, indiscretions that obviously frustrated him as he continued to re-

³⁵⁸ Roscoe Rhoads, *Diary*, (1916), Papers of Horace Emerson Rhoads.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

resolve and re-commit himself to a strict health food regimen. “Failed to keep my agreement with myself, but will try again,” Rhoads admitted on March 19th.³⁶²

As he described frustrating failures, guilty pleasures, and more meals eaten in communal circumstances, Rhoads was describing his own way of maintaining balance as a health food eater. While he might eat cake that he considered generally unwholesome at dinner, he might also eat several slices of zwieback or a dish of cereal, health food staples in his diet. If he drank “fig-prune coffee” in place of the standard, caffeinated brew at breakfast, he doctored it with cream and sugar and often regretted it.³⁶³ And central to Rhoads’ balance as a health food eater were the staple foods that had worked their way into Rhoads’ everyday meals: whole wheat bread, crackers, and breakfast cereals. Above all, breakfast cereals came to anchor Rhoads’ diet as he negotiated the ways he could and would eat for health. Despite being successfully marketed as a new breakfast food, Rhoads ate the patented, branded cereals at any time of day, often at every meal. He ate the Shredded Wheat Company’s Shredded Wheat Biscuits, Post Cereals’ GrapeNuts, and by far most frequently, The Toasted Corn Flake Company’s Krumbles.³⁶⁴ In this way, Rhoads participated in health food culture alongside millions of other American eaters who were eagerly swiping boxes of these and other cereals off of grocers’ shelves.

Krumbles were just one of The Toasted Corn Flake Company’s cereal offerings, and certainly not their most lucrative. That honor went to their Corn Flakes, the cereal often credited with beginning the breakfast cereal boom in Battle Creek, Michigan and launching health food into the American mainstream. William Keith Kellogg, who started and owned

³⁶² Roscoe Rhoads, *Diary*, (1916), Papers of Horace Emerson Rhoads.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

The Toasted Corn Flake Company, was made a multi-millionaire by the success of his mildly sweet, crunchy, flaked corn cereal, the product of years of experimentation in the kitchens and food laboratories at his brother John H. Kellogg's Battle Creek Sanitarium. Charles Post and Henry Perky, founding owners of Post Cereals and The Shredded Wheat Company, respectively, also made fortunes off of the success of their health foods. Like W. K. Kellogg, both men had connections to John H. Kellogg or his Sanitarium. Perky, it was rumored, got the idea and possibly the recipe for his popular coffee replacement, Postum, from tasting Kellogg's Caramel Cereal Coffee and his recipe for GrapeNuts by duplicating Kellogg's crunchy grain cereal called granola.³⁶⁵ John H. Kellogg's own health food companies, however, were never so popular or successful as the big breakfast cereal giants became. While Kellogg produced and sold a diverse array of foods – from mock meats to chocolates to crackers – the breakfast cereal companies specialized in very specific products and focused on redefining one American meal. Theirs became the most visible legacy of turn-of-the-twentieth century health food in American food culture, not just because the cereal companies packaged health in their boxes of flakes, shreds, and sticks, but also because they packaged convenience, confidence, and thrift.

Despite not making it into the big leagues of mainstream American consumer culture, though, health food companies like John H. Kellogg's Sanitas Nut Foods Company or Eugene Christian's Natural Food Company are keys to understanding the shape of health food culture in turn-of-the-twentieth-century America. Once we begin asking questions about the products they sold and the recipes written for those products, the places they

³⁶⁵ For more on the history of the cereal companies and Battle Creek, Michigan's, cereal boom, see: Carson, *Cornflake Crusade*; Smith, *Eating History*.

advertised and the messages they marketed, we begin to see the outlines of a health food history that is much larger than the history of the breakfast cereal giants.

In the late-nineteenth century, health reformers took to lecterns and the pages of cookbooks, health treatises, and magazines to argue for a revised perspective on the relationship between food, bodies, and health. They recalled a decades-old reformist belief that certain foods were healthful because they were natural, and used science, history, and anthropology to debate and define the meaning of naturalness in diet. Based on scientific understandings of what was natural for human bodies to digest, health reformers developed expert knowledge regarding the medical and physiological properties of health foods – plants and some animal products that they considered “first-aid foods.”³⁶⁶ These foods, and indeed the very notion that some foods contained curative properties, became the basis the new health food culture.

Whole wheat, nuts, and fruit were the healthful, first aid foods upon which columnists, cookbook writers, and health experts built a health food cuisine. Staple recipes often used these ingredients as replacements for familiar foods that were seen as unhealthy: meat, caffeinated, beverages, and alcohol. From mock meat dishes made of nuts to non-caffeinated coffees made from roasted grains, mock tastes became a core element of the new health food cuisine. Yet meat, coffee, refined flour, and other supposedly unhealthy foods were also a part of the new cuisine, as evidenced by reader recipe and menu submissions to healthy living magazines. Some of the era’s most

³⁶⁶ Health writer Mary Porter used the phrase “first-aid food” in a 1916 article touting “The Food Value of Olive Oil” for *Good Health* magazine; however, it captures perfectly health food experts’ decades-old assumption that certain foods could act as health cures on the human body. Mary E. Porter, “The Food Value of Olive Oil,” *Good Health*, March, 1916, 166.

influential health food experts embraced a similar flexibility in their cookbooks, menus, and recipes.

As this new health food cuisine coalesced on the pages of cookbooks and healthy living magazines, a new health food industry took shape against the backdrop of early-twentieth century Progressive era reform. From chemical additives in bread to pathological germs in meat and milk, food fears were fast becoming a national phenomenon. While support for the Pure Food campaign ran strong in the new health food culture, many health food experts believed that its goals and accomplishments fell short. Food producers had succeeded in avoiding the kind of government scrutiny that could guarantee wholesome food, they argued, and the stamp of federal inspection had never been more than a meaningless tool.³⁶⁷ Convinced that Americans lacked the opportunity to purchase healthful food, health experts began producing their own. Addressing the emerging American mass market, health food entrepreneurs marketed their goods with a winning combination of dietetic advice, scientific jargon, and emphasis on modern production methods. It was the perfect recipe for a booming natural health foods industry at the turn of the century, and it left a lasting impression on America's eating habits.

As the health foods industry grew, so too did the connection between health food and wild nature. Health food writers and experts touted the benefits of connecting to the natural environment through food, from the radical Nature Man movement to the victory gardens of World War I. Their outlook was at once backward looking and distinctly modern, shaped by nineteenth-century urbanization and industrialization that deepened the divide between city and country and left many cultural commentators pining for a

³⁶⁷ "Deceptions in Pure Food Advertising," *Vegetarian Magazine*, April, 1907.

simple, agrarian past that had never actually been. Health food experts argued that “going back to the land” would restore health through exercise and simple, quality food. Moreover, they idealized the diets of “primitive” peoples of the past and present as both uniquely health-giving and uniquely close to nature. Health experts advised white, middle-class men to embrace these idealized primitive diets as one way repair their health, strength, and physique, all things that had been compromised by civilization and city living in the Machine Age. Health experts promised that by eating natural foods as primitive men did, white, middle-class American men could restore their lost masculinity.

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