

## **“Ponderings From the Past” June 2007**

*During our Jubilee Celebration year, Joan VanPatten, a member of the Communications Ministry team will dig into the archives to feature some piece of history every month in Focus.*

The famous Clam Chowder saga continues as Norma Morris remembers Grandma DeVoe's clam chowder.

“As a child I remember Grandma Maggie DeVoe making her famous clam chowder. What better than a bowl of steaming clam chowder on a cold winter night! It was always served with oyster crackers.

Wednesday evenings were prayer meetings at her home so sometimes she served clam chowder to her church friends. It became such a favorite that the Ladies Aid Society of West Crescent Church decided to have clam chowder suppers to make money for the church. In those days the Ladies Aid Society raised money to help pay the minister's salary. The supper became an annual affair.

The Celia McIntyre Circle brought the recipe to our Shenendehowa Church and for many years it was served at our Country Fair luncheon. Grandma passed her recipes on to her daughters-in-law, Rachel and Margaret DeVoe. Pat Dahoda often tells people that Margaret DeVoe, my mother, gave her the secret recipe, and she has been making it ever since.

Just to give you a little background on Maggie DeVoe. She was a city girl who came to West Crescent as a bride when she married my grandfather John W. DeVoe. She raised two sons, Merritt and Harold. She was an expert seamstress by trade, and she made many outfits for the local women.

She was very active in the West Crescent Methodist Church from 1896, the year she came to West Crescent, until her death in 1951. She served about every office in the church as well as being an organist, Sunday School teacher, and President of the Ladies Aid Society. She left a wonderful legacy of Christian values to her family for which we are all very proud.

Now for the things that can and did go wrong making the chowder. Pat Dahoda checked with a number of members of the Circle for their very own disaster stories and this is what she came up with.

Beverly Chase Emerick remembers making chowder with her grandmother, Nettie Morris.

She recalls the time they decided to use “fresh” tomatoes from the garden for their chowder. Needless to say, the whole batch was ruined because only “CANNED” tomatoes are to be used in making this chowder.

Ida Shafer once made her chowder with whole Ipswich clams. After cooking them she had to cut each clam into piece with scissors. This took hours to do.

One member of the circle decided to use a food processor to chop the fresh vegetables. She thought it would save time, but the “chunks” that resulted proved to cost more time. She was unable to use the chunks in the chowder and had to chop them all by hand. Only “hand chopped” vegetables go into this chowder. It’s time consuming but worth it.

There was a member who stored her chowder in an aluminum kettle. The whole batch was ruined. The chowder is to be stored only in glass bottles. We used gallon glass jugs. Every member of the Celia McIntyre Circle had the same recipe. But when it was not followed to the letter, disaster struck in the batch.

Norma Morris, Helen Montgomery and Ida Shafter once made the chowder together. When they ground the clams (by hand grinder), Helen thought she would be sick. It was a messy job. Dessert for the clam chowder luncheon at the Country Fair was cake. Each member made and donated one so there was a variety. We also had cakes donated by members of the congregation. Any cake left over from the luncheon was given to the baked goods booth. There was never any chowder left to donate to anywhere.

Every member of the Celia McIntyre Circle joined together to make the luncheon a success. We enjoyed the fellowship and of course the praise for our chowder. We thank Maggie DeVoe for this wonderful heritage.” And we all thank Norma for these memories and all the help she has been with other Focus articles.

*Joan VanPatten*

## **The famous Clam Chowder Recipe**

50 clams or 4 lbs. chopped clams  
¼ lb. salt pork, diced up fine  
4 quarts of water  
2 quarts carrots, diced fine  
1 pint onions, diced fine  
2 quarts potatoes, diced fine  
3 quarts canned tomatoes (must use  
canned)  
1 ½ pints celery, diced fine

Pickling spices, tied in a cheese cloth bag  
Salt  
Clam juice (canned)

Add clams and water together. Sauté salt pork until crisp. Add onions and sauté until soft, not brown. Add all other ingredients to clams and water. Simmer until carrots are soft. Spices should be tied into cheesecloth bag and removed when chowder is ready.