

# Digest

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## **A Legendary Sandwich for an Infamous Earl** Representing the Sandwich in Legend and Cookery Literature

*The first sandwich consisted of two slices of bread with a layer of ham between. The legend runs that it was eaten by John Montagu, the fourth Earl of Sandwich (Woodman 1934: 9).*

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### Introduction

Sitting around a dimly lit, smoky, boisterous card table, John Montagu, the reputedly infamous Fourth Earl of Sandwich, is reported to have made an important culinary innovation. Unwilling to abandon his hand or the thrill of the competition, the Earl ordered a servant to bring him pieces of meat enclosed between two pieces of bread. Free to play his cards with one hand and eat with the other, he had created a dish worthy of his reputation; that is to say, the reputation that later writers and cookery book authors created and reported in their narrative accounts of the Earl's character, his status as an eccentric gambler, and his culinary invention.

Looking to establish the aristocratic pedigree and historical lineage of the sandwich, cook book authors in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Britain reported the legend of the Earl's invention of the sandwich, often as a historical anecdote to accompany their recipes. As legend, narrative accounts of the Earl ordering slices of meat to be brought to his gaming table served between two pieces of bread are presented as true or, at the very least, plausible. Often defined as narratives told as true (Bascom 1965), legends are exemplary prose narratives formulated from, and embedded within a group's system of belief (Dégh 2001; Dégh and Vázsonyi 1976; Georges 1971; Smith 1994; Tangerlini 1990). For the purpose of this paper I use the term legend to refer to both text and process: to refer to specific narratives that describe the Earl's culinary invention as well as the process of debate that in turn informs and shapes these narratives overtime. In this sense, the legend of the Earl and his game-time snack is emergent (Ellis



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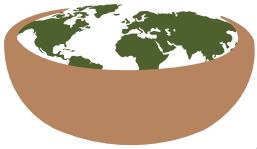
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2003); it is a narrative process that constructs the history and legacy of the Earl's invention of the sandwich from the socio-economic vantage point of the teller. I also explore how these narratives are presented as both legend and anecdote simultaneously: they are etiological legends that explain the origins of the sandwich and anecdotes that characterize and attest to the Earl's reputation and personality.

Using the theoretical lenses of legend studies and foodways scholarship, this paper examines two specific dimensions of the sandwich's history: reports of its legendary origins as a make-shift snack of the gentry and its transformation by cookery writers during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. I begin my analysis with the biography of the Fourth Earl of Sandwich and his reported invention of the dish that bears his name. After surveying one-hundred-and-six British cookbooks that span a period from 1860 to 1950, I noticed that three writers - Florence Jack, Mary Woodman, and Mrs. Stanley Wrench - included a brief history of the sandwich alongside their recipes and general advice for good sandwich-making, and that these brief historical notes exclusively focused on the legend of John Montagu's invention of the sandwich.<sup>(1)</sup> In the first section I will explore the multivalent discursive uses of this legend by cookery writers from the period and the contested history of the sandwich that it produced.

Secondly, I examine the recipes and preparation advice that these books present. Unlike the make-shift sandwich eaten by the Earl in the legend, the sandwiches of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century cookbooks required careful attention to preparation and presentation. Written to guide and instruct middle-class British women, these books identified the sandwich as a commonplace, everyday food in need of improvement. Their authors advocated a (re)presentational transformation of the sandwich from a utilitarian food of the working class into one of middle-class sociability and refinement. As such, the sandwich became a site for the performance of daintiness, culinary skill, good hospitality, and gentility. By arguing that cookery authors sought to restrict the socio-cultural use of the sandwich as a practice of household economy and a marker of identity, I am drawing attention to the class-based significance of food items such as sandwiches, as well as their larger relationship to broader historical trends such as the development of the domestic science movement and the commodification of food production. Drawing upon the legend of the Earl and his game-time snack, cookery authors sought to manage the sandwich's multivocality - its apparent disregard for the



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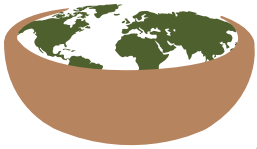
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boundaries of social-economic class or the conventions of haute cuisine, as well as its potential for both utilitarian simplicity and gastronomic extravagance.

## Sandwich Legends and Sandwich's Biography: Culinary History and Legend

The history and biography of John Montagu, Fourth Earl of Sandwich, is as contentious, opaque, and contested as his legend. Born into a moderately wealthy family on 13 November 1718, Montagu assumed his title and a meager inheritance after the death of his grandfather in 1729. Following his classical education at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, he embarked on a tour of the Mediterranean, including stops in Greece, Turkey, Constantinople, and Egypt. Beyond his early training and experience as a classist and orientalist, his main accomplishments were political and administrative: over the course of his career he served the posts of Secretary of State twice, and First Lord of the Admiralty three times (Rodger 2008). However, despite these accomplishments later writers tended to focus on the less flattering dimensions of his personality and legacy. He has been accused of excessive gambling, corruption, and promiscuity, and as a result, Sandwich's biography has often been the subject of intrigue and rumour. The legend of Sandwich's sandwich thus referentially links anecdotes about his character to the event reported in legend.

Characterizations of the Earl as a lecherous, indulgent gambler are plainly evident in many popular biographies and histories. An anonymous biography published during the Earl's lifetime in 1770 under the title *The Life, Adventures, Intrigues, and Amours of the Celebrated Jemmy Twitcher*, goes so far as to assert that the Earl's propensity for vice, imprudence and trickery was constant throughout his life. As a child, the author claims, "he appeared a froward [sic], ill-tempered Child; and though apparently possessed of superior talents, seemed prone to abuse them on every occasion" (1770: 29-30), and suggests that these characteristics continually overshadowed his accomplishments and marred his reputation. More significant, however, were the Earl's sexual indiscretions, which according to the author were numerous and unconcealed. Ending the sordid narrative around the time of the Earl's marriage and appointment to Parliament, the book closes by stating that "with all his faults; and which, perhaps, renders them greater, he is a Man of uncommon sense and penetration. Suffice it therefore to say, that he lives, a monument to superior abilities, prostituted to the worst of purposes!" (Anonymous 1770: 91-92).



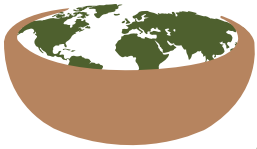
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Other characterizations of the Earl by his contemporaries were no-less flattering. Historians and biographers have noted that attacks on Sandwich by writers such as John Wilkes and Horace Walpole were politically motivated and based on rumours and gossip circulating at the time (Martelli 1962). In the case of Wilkes, Sandwich played a leading role in attacking his former friend for publishing two controversial pieces in his newspaper, the *North Briton*. Sandwich's role consisted of leading an attack in Parliament that stripped Wilkes of his parliamentary privilege and thus made it possible for the government to prosecute him for seditious libel in response to an inflammatory piece he wrote in opposition to King George III and his Parliament's decision to make peace with France and end the Seven Years War, as well as a second piece, a poem titled *Essay on Women*. This poem had been printed for private circulation, but at Sandwich's insistence, it was read aloud during a sitting of the House of Lords. As a result, most of Wilkes's friends in Parliament abandoned him and he was expelled from the House of Commons and convicted on charges of seditious and obscene libel (Martelli 1962). Outside of Parliament, Wilkes's fate was lamented as the product of trickery and corruption. For his role in Wilkes's downfall, Sandwich earned the nickname "Jemmy Twitcher," a reference to a character in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, and was the subject of ridicule and attack. Wilkes's response to Sandwich's role in his downfall was swift and hard-hitting; he attacked Sandwich's reputation and competence as a government official (Martelli 1962). As a result, characterizations of Sandwich as a corrupt politician, incompetent administrator, lustful philanderer, and indulgent gambler have had considerable resonance through time.

These characterizations, whether baseless or rooted in fact, have not gone unnoticed by academic historians who have been swift to defend the Earl's reputation as an important naval administrator and patron of the arts. The naval historian N.A.M. Rodger in his full length biography of the Earl has taken many of these accusations to task. He argues that naval records and the Earl's personal papers reveal an "energetic and conscientious minister" (Rodger 1994: xvi). Wrongfully accused of the vices commonly associated with his legacy, Rodger's biography carefully contextualizes the charges made against him, and argues that the less savory aspects of his private life were relatively common social practices of the British gentry at the time. For example, Rodger argues that gambling was an important part of public life and a "professional necessity" (1994: 76). When Montagu did gamble, he states, it was for relatively low stakes and part of some other activity, usually cricket. It is, therefore,



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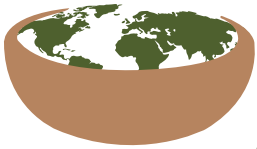
unlikely that Montagu would have ever have been so engrossed and committed to a hand of cards that he would have required a meat sandwich to be brought to his game table. Nonetheless, “familiar in our mouths as a household word, he has suffered the indignity of being forgotten as a man and remembered as a thing” (Rodger 1994: xiii).

Despite the strong association that exists between Montagu and the sandwich, Rodger devotes very little space to the sandwich legend, dismissing it as gossip. He argues that the legend can likely be traced to a passage from a piece of travel literature, Grosley’s *Tour of London*, written in the 1770s. As quoted in Rodger (1994: 79), Grosely reports,

A minister of state passed four and twenty hours at a public gaming-table, so absorbed in play, that, during the whole time, he has no substance but a bit of beef, between two slices of toasted bread, which he eat without ever quitting the game. This new dish grew highly in vogue, during my residence in London: it was called by the name of the minister who invented it (Grosley 1772, 1: 149).

According to Rodger, the episode reported by Grosely likely occurred in 1765 when Montagu was a cabinet minister. Quick to dispel the report as libelous and untrue, Rodger does, however, claim that it is possible that Montagu ordered sandwiches to be brought to his work desk: “The alternative explanation is that he invented it to sustain himself at his desk, which seems plausible since we have ample evidence of the long hours he worked from an early start, in an age when dinner was the only substantial meal of the day, and the fashionable hour to dine was four o’clock” (Rodger 1994: 79). By identifying the sandwich story as gossip, and by offering an alternative origin for the legend, Rodger is drawing attention to the negative characterizations of the Earl’s private life the legend entextualizes. In particular, he critiques the use of the sandwich as a referent to the Earl’s legacy, a legendary history of his allegedly notorious private life that supersedes his political and administrative accomplishments.

The power of the sandwich as a referent, to both the legend and the Earl’s character, demonstrates its multivocality. In its biographical context, the legend serves as a referent to popular notions about the Earl’s private life and his reputation as a gambler. In a brief introductory note to her section dedicated to sandwich recipes, British author Florence Jack provides a brief report of the sandwich’s origins: “the word ‘sandwich,’” she states “is supposed to have originated with



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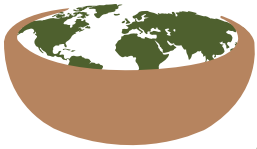
John Montague, 4th Earl of Sandwich, who, to avoid being interrupted by meals, used to have slices of bread and butter, with meat between, brought to him at his gaming table” (Jack 1914: 520). Two decades later, Mary Woodman, a popular British cooking author of the 1930s provides another example in her book *100 Varieties of Sandwiches: How to Prepare Them*, published in London in 1934:

The first sandwich consisted of two slices of bread with a layer of ham between. The legend runs that it was eaten by John Montagu, the fourth Earl of Sandwich. This worthy lord was an inveterate card-player and, on one occasion, he spent twenty-four hours without a break at the gaming table. In order to allay his hunger and so as to waste no time, he commanded his butler to bring him some meat between pieces of bread, the idea being that he should be able to eat without interrupting the play. The butler brought a slice of ham enveloped in two layers of bread. Thus was born the first sandwich (Woodman 1934: 9).

Interestingly, both Jack and Woodman’s accounts emphasize the sandwich’s convenience and time-saving ability. Inconvenienced by his hunger, yet engrossed in the game unfolding before him, the Earl in both accounts is determined to continue without interruption. He needed a quick, simple, and easy to eat culinary solution. His innovation, a food he could eat with one hand while he played his cards with the other as to waste no time... that he should be able to eat without interrupting the play. Innovative and pragmatic, this sandwich marked the competitive determination of a reportedly inveterate gambler.

A separation of the legendary event from the frequently explicit anecdotal references to the Earl’s personality is impossible as the two are fundamentally linked. The accounts of both Jack and Woodman demonstrate that the sandwich’s invention was not solely the result of the social environment and conditions of the gambling table. There is no reference to other participants following the Earl’s example, and as far as these authors are concerned, the Earl’s sandwich was unique. Unwilling to follow the Earl’s example, or forgotten and eclipsed by the boldness of his extraordinary request, the response of his fellow gamblers in interestingly absent.

There is, however, an additional use of the legend at play. Drawing attention to the Earl’s nobility, these writers used the legend to establish the sandwich’s nobility. Mrs. Stanley Wrench, a popular romance writer and cookery author during the early-twentieth century, provides an example of the kind of discourse management that is typical in cookery books from this period. In her



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introductory note to the sandwich's history and sandwich-making, she writes,

I have already written of sandwiches, which seem to be regarded by most people as a sort of makeshift meal, yet they need not be. Remember how they were invented by Jeremy Twitcher, the fourth Earl of Sandwich. This notorious nobleman, who lived in the eighteenth century, was devoted to the gaming table, and would never leave it even to go to his meals, but one day, hunger getting the better of him, he called for a slice of bread, had a slice of beef cut from the joint, clapped this on top, and laid another slice of bread over, and so continued his play. For a time this kind of portable meal was known as a "Jeremy Twitcher," and later on by the name of the noble lord himself. But even he would be astonished at the variation which have been rung on this experiment of his. Indeed, sandwiches may be made so substantial, they easily become a meal, especially with salads (Wrench 1934: 116-7).

In this account the status of the sandwich as both a makeshift and substantial meal draws attention to its use as a characterization of the Earl. Similar to the other accounts I have examined, Wrench's version makes explicit reference to popular perceptions of the Earl's private life by referring to him as "Jeremy Twitcher," a nickname given to him by his enemies. However, despite negative characterizations associated with the Earl's private life, his status as a member of the British nobility is also identified as being important to the status and identity of his culinary invention. As Wrench states, this portable meal would later be known "by the name of the noble lord himself," demonstrating for her readers the sandwich's noble origins. The legend of the Earl's invention of the sandwich thus simultaneously makes reference to popular perceptions of his notoriety and the sandwich's legendary origin as a food of the nobility.

By associating the Earl's nobility with the sandwich, this legend has the capacity to facilitate the transformation of the sandwich into a food marked by nobility and gentility. Interestingly, this alternative identity exists side-by-side with the identity of the sandwich presented in the passage above. By refusing to pause the card game to alleviate his hunger, the Earl made use of resources at hand, ordering a servant to bring him a meal that was easy to eat and filling at the same time. The status of the Earl's sandwich as makeshift and substantial is important. In the later part of the passage, Wrench comments that the Earl would no doubt be "astonished at the variation which have been rung on his experiment," indicating that the sandwich recipes in her book represented something new - the sandwich transformed.



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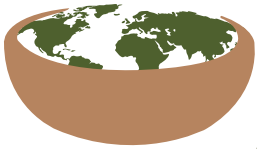
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Food writer and historian Bee Wilson (2010) explores the history of the sandwich as a global culinary tradition in her book *Sandwich: A Global History*. She argues that it is unlikely that the Earl invented the sandwich, and attributes its origins and popularity to the peasant foodways of early-modern Europe. Drawing upon evidence that suggests that French rural labourers were frequently served meat between slices of brown bread, she states that “the same was true in all the peasant countries of Europe. Workers did not need to give this snack a name. It was just what you ate” (Wilson 2010: 16-18).

Wilson also addresses the relationship of sandwiches to socio-economic class, and notes that by the nineteenth century there was a marked difference between the sandwiches of the middle and working classes. She states that aristocratic sandwiches, those eaten by the upper and middle classes, were made to be “dainty, consistent in texture, and varied in filling,” and comments that “even a sandwich with an apparently simple upper-class filling such as cucumber - a symbol of leisure, ease and privilege - took elaborate preparation to get right” (Wilson 2010: 42-44). These delicate and carefully prepared sandwiches were different from the large, crust-intact sandwiches of the working class. Popular for their mobility, tastiness, and economy, sandwiches were an important form of working-class sustenance: “many British working-class sandwiches had no meat at all but consisted of thick doorstops of bread sandwiched with a little fat (as in the Yorkshire ‘mucky fat’ sandwich made from meat drippings) or jam” (Wilson 2010:45-46). Sandwiches were thus a food of both the wealthy and the poor.

Made from simple ingredients that were common in British kitchens during the period, sandwiches were also an important strategy of household economy for the working class. Oddy (2003) argues that the nutritional quality of the British diet began to steadily decline in the 1890s, and continued to decline until the 1960s. This “poverty diet” was the result of intensified industrialization and its impact on the domestic consumption of food stuffs, particularly its reliance upon staples such as bread, potatoes, tea, treacle, sugar, and bacon (Drummond and Wilbraham (1939) 1991; Spencer 2002). It is possible to argue that strategies for the management of household resources were especially important for the working class. This may have included their reliance upon, or preference for, specific food stuffs that were readily available and economical. Walton’s (1989; 1992) study of the political, economic, and socio-cultural importance of fish and chips in Britain





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demonstrates that particular food stuffs became important parts of both working-class identity and diet. Targeted by middle-class reformers and domestic scientists as emblematic of working-class living conditions, fish and chips were “presented as part of a pathology of culinary ignorance and the failure to use cheap ingredients to their best advantage” (Walton 1992: 13). Spencer Colin (2002) in his historical survey of British food notes that chip shops were frequently associated with poverty and urban slums. However, despite the condemnation of fish and chips by reformers, street food remained an important culinary tradition throughout the Victorian era, and foods such as hot eels, kidney puddings, fried fish, and chips, as well as ham sandwiches, remained popular. Nonetheless, the discourse of reform was pervasive, and it permeates the sandwich recipes of cookery books from this period. Rather than recognizing sandwiches, or fish and chips, as vernacular strategies of household economy, cookery writers identified them as an often ill-prepared, nutritionally deficient, and unpalatable food in need of reform. These working-class foods thus resembled the Earl’s sandwich in a number of interesting ways - they could be makeshift, made from whatever ingredients that happened to be available; they could be substantial and eaten as a meal, rather than an appetizer or snack; and they could be unruly, fillings slathered between thick slices of bread in the easiest and most convenient way possible. They do differ, however, in other important ways. While the Earl’s sandwich was born of recreational rather than economic necessity, working class sandwiches could be an important strategy of household economy.

Largely absent from cookery literature before the nineteenth century, sandwiches were made and eaten at the margins of British food practices until its discovery by the Earl. Finnis (2012) uses the term marginal to refer to foods and food related practices that are often associated with peripheral or non-elite groups. Guided by literature in the anthropology of food, she draws attention to how marginality is constructed, performed, represented, and debated. Finnis argues that the movement of people and food related practices across time and spaces facilitates the process of incorporating marginalized foods into the culinary mainstream. Situated at the intersection of identity-making and political economy, these movements follow wider geopolitical processes. Drawing upon Finnis’ concept in response to the historical studies I have discussed above, I propose that the legend of the Earl’s invention of the sandwich facilitates the transformation and reimagining of the sandwich as a food and marker of socioeconomic identity. By requesting a sandwich, the Earl adopted a working-class food practice, facilitating the sandwich’s movement from the culinary margins



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to the centre of British cuisine. His status as a member of the nobility, as well as his reputation as an eccentric and philanderer, was thus important for cookery writers looking to differentiate their recipes from the culinary practices of the working class.

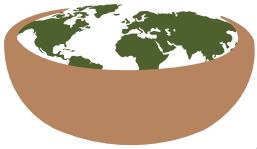
The movement of the sandwich from culinary marginality to the pages of popular cookery books was a process of transformation. Aware of this legend's capacity for multivocality, cookery authors needed a strategy for discourse management; they needed to carefully distance themselves and their recipes from the sandwich's supposed historical antecedents - the working class and the unruly Earl.

In the three examples that I have discussed thus far, the Earl is represented as a man who takes leisure seriously. Portrayed as an avid gambler and person of means, his socio-economic status as an upper-class British nobleman is an integral component in each of the accounts. The creative act of ordering meat to be brought to the table between two pieces of bread was not an act of economic necessity or resource management, but rather a display of sociability and wealth; the Earl did not make his own sandwich, instead, a servant carried out and delivered his culinary request. By emphasizing the context of the gaming table in their accounts, these cookery writers highlight the class-based dynamics of the Earl's interactions with the game, the other players, the servant, and food more generally. The unruly Earl, his unruly sandwich, and his unruly legend thus became a site of reform for cookery writers looking to transform the sandwich into a genteel, dainty delicacy.

## From Makeshift Meals to Dainty Morsels: Cookery Writing as Discourse Management

No matter for what occasions it is chosen, however, whether it is to be lunch, tea, supper, motoring or picnics, if the sandwich is to have real food value, two things are necessary - thoroughly good bread and pure fresh butter (Everybody's Home Recipe Book, n.d.: 204).

The freshest ingredients, attentiveness to proper preparation, and careful attention to detail are paramount to the success of any sandwich, or at least, in so far as cookery authors of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century were concerned. Advised to carefully select and prepare their ingredients, women were told to use thinly sliced bread that was sparingly buttered and filled with an even layer of vegetables, meats, or salad. This was the foundation of the daintily made triangular, or oblong, crustless



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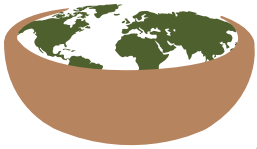
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sandwich often associated with the refinement and gentility of English high tea.

Seeking to advise and instruct the cooking women of Britain, cookery authors of the period described, in detail, the techniques and preparations that women would need to make and serve the finest sandwiches. Unlike their simple and makeshift predecessors, the sandwiches called for in these recipes were touted as the epitome of refinement. They were also praised for their nutritional quality and versatility. Tied to the domestic science movement (later known as home economics), cookery writers sought to transform the sandwich into a more nutritious and delicate food - they were to become morsels fit for social tea and the middle-class parlour.

The wider implications of the domestic science movement on the food practices of the trans-Atlantic, Anglo-American world has become an important area of focus within the social history of food and cooking. In particular, scholarship within feminist food studies highlights the important role of cooking and cookery literature within women's culture (Theophano 2002), as well as the ways that women reproduce and resist constructions of gender through food related practices (Avakian and Haber 2005; McFeely 2001). Sherrie Inness (2006) explains that cookbooks are of particular importance to feminist scholars and argues that they have simultaneously been both agents of conservatism and proponents of change. In an earlier study, *Dinner Roles: American Women and Culinary Culture* (2001), Inness shows how early twentieth-century cookbooks reinforced traditional gender roles and conveyed to women that cooking and the kitchen was their responsibility. However, she also proposes that cookbooks can be a site of women's resistance and agency. Cookbooks thus provide an important window into women's experiences and worldview.

As a focal point for analysis, cookbooks provide an important resource for historical studies that examine the impact of the domestic science movement on the everyday food practices and lived experiences of women. Developed during the later part of the nineteenth century, the domestic science movement was an important project of reform that sought to promote science and technology in the realm of housework. Laura Shapiro (1986) in her study *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century*, examines the ways that the domestic science movement used food as an important site of reform and argues that cookery books played an important role in creating a manageable, controllable, scientific household. Conceptualized as the counterbalance to the secular, industrialized world of business, the home was marked by sentimentality and moralism, and as cookbooks proliferated at the



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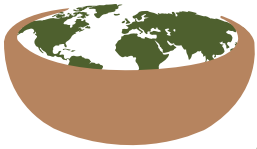
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turn of the twentieth century, they were accompanied by a sense of sociopolitical urgency. Domestic scientists concerned with issues of nutrition, sanitation, and household efficiency concentrated their efforts on the introduction of science into the domestic sphere. This required a transformation of Victorian sentimentality aimed at bringing the home into the scientific era (Shapiro 1986). To do so, domestic scientists reinforced the ideology of domesticity, promoting a separate sphere for women with “a parallel set of privileges and a female world that would mirror man’s” (Shapiro 1986: 44). Women were encouraged to maintain control and manage household duties pragmatically, while reinforcing the femininity of domesticity. In the kitchen, daintiness thus became an important tool for feminizing domestic science, emphasizing and enacting the movement’s rhetoric of control and refinement.

In the advice and recipes printed in cookery books from this period, the rhetoric and performance of daintiness is an important enactment of a cook’s control and skill in the kitchen. Sandwiches were no exception. Under the sandwich entry in Mrs. Rundell’s cookery book, *Modern Domestic Cookery Founded on Principles of Economy and Practical Knowledge*, women are advised that sandwiches “require more care that is usually bestowed upon them” and encouraged to pay special attention to the preparation and baking of the bread to be used, the thickness of the slices, the freshness of the butter, and the trimming of the crusts (Rundell 1880: 564). Published in 1880, this book aims to provide general advice for sandwich-making rather than specific recipes. Sliced beef, tongue, or chicken are the only suggested fillings, and as a general guide to preparation and presentation Mrs. Rundell advises women to “cut the bread moderately thin, butter it very slightly indeed, lay the meat cut thin, season with salt, pepper, and mustard, as may be required; cover with a second slice of bread, trim the edges, put them one on the other, and cover with a damp cloth until wanted” (1880: 564). Much like the meat-filled sandwiches common among the working class, these sandwiches require simple ingredients - bread, butter, meat, and a bit of mustard. However, Rundell advises her readers to use more care in their preparation. As she explains in her introduction to the book, her aim is to provide “plain and useful recipes, the result of experience and practice, adapted for those families of moderate fortune in which a degree of elegance is combined with attention to domestic economy” (1880: iv). As a cookery book informed by and entrenched within the domestic science movement, Mrs. Rundell’s advice for sandwich-making instrumentalizes elegance as a tool for culinary reform.

Despite the absence of more varied and elaborate sandwich recipes typical in



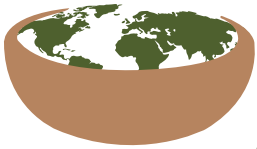
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later cookery books, Mrs. Rundell provides her readers with a clear and concise description of the techniques and procedures necessary for elegant sandwich-making. Her concern for linking elegance and economy is clearly demonstrated by the simple and limited sandwich fillings she suggests, as well as the savory toast recipes that she includes in her section devoted to savory breakfast dishes. In cookery books from the 1880s period savory toasts are commonly included and are often associated with sandwiches. In the recipes provided by Mrs. Rundell, slices of toasted, buttered bread are covered with a filling or sauce and heated. In one example, pieces of toast are covered with left-over ragout that has been thickened with egg yolks, topped with hardboiled egg, breaded, and baked. In another, cold ham is grated or pounded, mixed with egg yolk and cream, cooked, and then served over buttered toast (Rundell 1880: 561-2). Based on the ingredients required and the instructions provided, it is possible that these recipes were intended as a strategy for kitchen economy - left-over stews are thickened and cold meats are sliced or minced to create hearty breakfast dishes. However, much like the sandwich preparations she describes, savory toasts also require care and culinary skill. They also require access to an oven or range. Culinary historian Colin Spencer (2002) notes that many cookbooks written with the intent of improving the diets and culinary practices of the working class presumed that working-class women had access to cooking equipment such as ovens. In some instances a communal oven may have been available, but for many working-class cooks recipes for baked savory toasts were of little use as a practice of household economy. However, Mrs. Rundell's recipe may not have been solely intended as an economical dish; it may have also been intended as a performance of culinary creativity and elegance. In many of the recipes the fillings must be carefully seasoned and dressed, the bread properly buttered, and the entire dish thoroughly heated and garnished. Elegance in this instance is the proper execution of technique and careful attention to detail.

In many of the cookery books that I surveyed, the relationship of culinary technique and skill to the performance of daintiness is a relatively constant theme. In an anonymously written entry in Cassell's Dictionary of Cookery (1896), general rules for sandwich preparation are described. It advises that meat should be properly dressed, trimmed, and sliced into bite-sized portions and served between pieces of buttered, crustless bread. When properly executed, the entry states that "sandwiches, when properly prepared, constitute a convenient, elegant, and palatable dish for suppers or luncheons" and assures readers that careful preparation will avoid the "bad repute" that befalls most sandwiches "on account



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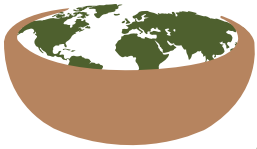
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of the careless manner in which they are often made” (Cassell’s Dictionary of Cookery 1896: 824). To be convenient, elegant, and palatable the sandwich had to cleanse itself of its unruly, makeshift quality. As a gendered practice and performance, daintiness is constructed and represented as a process capable of transforming the sandwich’s “bad repute.” Unlike the Earl and his sandwich, cookery authors had no intention of replicating what they saw as carelessness. Daintiness, or elegance, was thus employed as an important form of discourse management. In the above passages it is conceptualized and enacted as culinary skill, careful preparation, and attention to detail. The strategic linking of daintiness and preparatory technique created and maintained socio-economic distance that separated these author’s sandwiches from those of the Earl and the working class.

The sandwich’s identity as a cultural practice of the working class is frequently alluded to, but rarely stated outright. What is clear, however, is that it needed to be transformed. The sandwiches of the working class and the sandwich served to the Earl in legend are represented as careless and makeshift, a food of the past unfit for luncheons and dinner parties. By transforming the sandwich into a dainty, refined, and respectable food, it was in turn reconceptualised as a site of reform rather than a site of subsistence and vernacular home economy. By lending his upper-class status to the sandwich, the Earl and his legend rendered the sandwich available for transformation. Cookery authors extended this by reimagining the sandwich through discourses of daintiness that identified particular aspects of the sandwich as in need of reform. This included preparatory technique, but it also included the variety and quality of ingredients.

Florence Jack, following her account of the Earl’s legend, remarks that “the term [sandwich] has now a much wider meaning than formerly,” explaining that it now “includes not only the plain sandwich, consisting of slices of meat placed between two pieces of buttered bread, cut into varying degrees of thickness, but also many dainty trifles suitable for afternoon teas and other light refreshments” (Jack 1914: 520). Made using different types of bread, biscuits, toasts and pastries, savory and sweet fillings, and an array of commercially made spreads and condiments, Jack provides her readers with forty-seven recipes that range from anchovy and beef, to caviar, foie-gras, and lemon curd. As she states, “the variety of these little sandwiches is endless” and with practice “clever fingers and a little ingenuity will soon invent many others” (Jack 1914: 520). By emphasizing the many varieties of



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bread, fillings, and spreads that can be used, Jack represents daintiness as culinary creativity. Unlike the Earl's meat sandwich, Jack's recipes call for innovation - interesting ingredients, textures, and flavours. Daintiness imagined as variety and quality distinguishes the sandwiches made for teas and light refreshments from the monotonous, plain, uncreative sandwiches of the past, of the socio-economic other.

Daintiness and creativity are further linked in Jack's introduction to savory and sweet sandwiches through her advice for sandwich cutting and presentation. She instructs that "sandwiches may be cut in various shapes - square, triangle, oblong, or diamond, while different fancy shapes may be stamped out with a cutter," while "vary dainty little sandwiches can also be made by spreading a tasty mixture on thin bread and then rolling it up, instead of putting a second piece of bread on the top" (Jack 1914: 520). Her advice for sandwich cutting reinforces the domestic science movement's rhetoric of control and household management, enacting reform through the performance of daintiness.

The capacity of daintiness to differentiate the sandwich recipes in cookery books from the sandwiches eaten by the Earl and Britain's working class, is also enacted in the thickness of the bread slices called for by cookery writers. Jack writes that "neatness and exactitude in the cutting are very necessary to the appearance of the sandwiches," exalting the integral importance of careful attention to detail. Depending on when and to whom the sandwiches are to be served, Jack advises that sandwich bread can be cut into different shapes and sizes. "For afternoon tea they must be cut very thin, and nothing of a substantial nature must be offered, as it would take away the appetite for dinner which follows so shortly after," whereas "for evening refreshments they may be made more substantial, and still more so if they are to serve as a substitute for meat" (Jack 1914: 520). The appropriate pairing of a sandwich's thickness to the type of occasion where it is to be served also links it to discourses of sociability and gentility. Mary Woodman, the author of *100 Varieties of Sandwiches*, cautions that a sandwich's appropriateness to its intended occasion also requires careful consideration of the fillings to be used. As an example, she explains that "it is no use, for instance, to give someone, who intends to cycle all day, a packet of raspberry sandwiches, nor some cod's roe sandwiches to your friends who call for afternoon tea" (Woodman 1934: 13). Clearly aware of the sandwich's use as a marker of sociability, writers such as Jack and Woodman encouraged woman to approach their sandwiches



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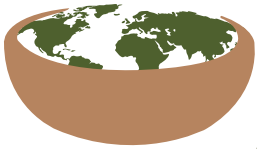
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with caution. By doing so, they wanted to draw their reader's attention to what their sandwiches were communicating - their potential for multivocality.

Thick versus thin, makeshift versus elegant, the role of daintiness in the (re) presentational transformation of the sandwich in these books is gendered, as well as classist. Thickly cut bread and thickly cut meat are problematized by these writers for all the reasons I have discussed thus far: they are unruly, unmanageable, inelegant, and undainty. The sandwich eaten by the Earl in legend, while undoubtedly delicious and filling, presented a problem for these writers beyond its connection to his reputation. As a man of title enjoying a hand of cards in an exclusively male social space, his sandwich is represented as a marker of male sociability. Its simplicity and lack of careful preparation further marks it as unwomanly and uncultivated - characterizations that these writers implicitly extend to the working class more generally. The women who prepare sandwiches that resemble the Earl's are defeminized and their sandwiches characterized as uneconomical and unpalatable. Alternatively, the feminization of the sandwich through the discursive use of daintiness as an enactment of reform marks the elegant, carefully prepared sandwich as a performance of womanhood. Much like the sandwiches that cookery authors encouraged them to make, women are represented as genteel, delicate, and manageable. The engendering of the sandwich through the legend of the Earl, as well as the recipes and preparation advice in their books, was an integral form of discourse management employed by these writers.

This engendering of the sandwich was also facilitated by the movement of the sandwich away from the culinary tradition of street food and the depraved masculine environment of the card table to the kitchen, the domestic sphere of women. Walton (1992) in his study of fish and chips as working class British food states that opponents of the fried fish trade often touted it as an example of the domestic ignorance of working-class women, arguing that fish and chips represented the abandonment of household responsibilities. Likewise, the Earl's lack of concern for respectable dining and the sandwich maker's disregard for careful preparation represent an abandonment of both culinary and domestic responsibility. The target of this attack against economic and culinary carelessness in these cookbooks is clearly and explicitly aimed at women. As a site for the performance of daintiness, and thus womanhood, the sandwich is represented as an important symbol of household management and control. To serve a perfectly cut sandwich filled with fresh and carefully arranged





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ingredients was to present oneself as a responsible, dignified, and modern woman.

As a marker of sociability, home economy, and socio-economic status, the sandwich's identity, as it was presented in cookery books from this period, was a site of transformation. These authors sought to distance their recipes from the Earl's reputation and the food practices of the working class while simultaneously drawing upon his nobility to elevate the status of a food they were appropriating from a socio-economic other. Daintiness provided an important strategy of discourse management that enabled these writers to control the sandwich's, and the legend's, multivocality. By doing so, they engendered the sandwich and attempted to redefine its socio-economic identity. The sandwiches in their recipes were as much markers of sociability, status, and womanhood as they were food.

## Conclusion

Aware of the sandwich's popular history as the invention of a notorious eighteenth-century nobleman, cookery writers of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century sought its (re)presentational transformation. Through the legend of the Earl and his sandwich they ennobled and elevated a food practice of the working class by drawing attention to its alleged elite and high-class origins. These authors thus used this legend to create a new socio-cultural identity for the sandwich, marking it as a high-class food and a performance of sociability. However, these writers were unable to fully disassociate the sandwich from the reputation of the Earl as a gambler and philanderer. They thus had to create and maintain temporal and social distance between the Earl's legendary sandwich and the recipes in their books. By doing so, they drew upon the domestic science movement's rhetoric of reform and discourse of daintiness, engendering the sandwich and pathologizing its use as a vernacular practice of home economy by the working class. Due to limited historical evidence for the sandwich beyond these cookery books, it is difficult to assess their success. However, the continued popularity of the bacon butty and the jam sandwich as British foods points to the continuity of the sandwich as a culinary tradition beyond the recipes of these cookbooks. This continuity adds to the legend's multivocality, highlighting its importance as both a popular food practice.



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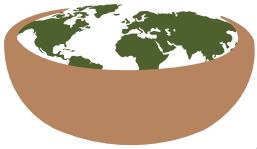
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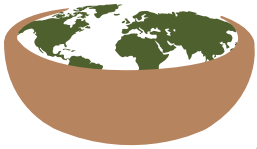
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## Notes

(1) All of the cookbooks surveyed for this study are part of the private collection of Paul Smith, Professor of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland. His extensive collection of cookbooks includes materials from Britain, Canada, the United States, and Newfoundland. Focusing primarily on books published in Britain before the Second World War, I found that sixteen of the cookbooks contained sandwich recipes, and that nine of these books contained instructions and general advice for sandwich preparation. Of those that contained preparation instructions, three credited, or made reference to, John Montagu as the inventor of the sandwich.