

SENSES OF TASTE:  
DUNCAN HINES AND AMERICAN GASTRONOMY, 1931-1962

BY

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## ABSTRACT

Duncan Hines was the first national restaurant critic in American history and a significant tastemaker in popular culture. This dissertation is an accounting of how senses of taste were formed in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States and how Duncan Hines aided this process. Conceiving of taste as a conjoining of physical sensations and cultural sense by mediators, I argue that Hines guided consumers and producers through the practice of making sense of momentous changes in society that influenced Americans' eating habits as well as their awareness of American foodways. Hines gained and maintained cultural authority because his criticism networked developing mid-century trends including automobility, consumerism, middlebrow criticism, regionalism, suburbanization, the popularity of "eating out," the professionalization of restaurants, the nationalization of media, the discourse of authenticity, and the continued evolution of technologies for the growing, processing, shipping, selling, and cooking of food. From the farm to the fork, American gastronomy is thus predicated on technology, commerce, and media intersecting to offer mediators, like Hines, resources with which to make sense of the tastes occurring within a context. Since these relationships change, I contend that taste is neither an object to be acquired nor a state of being to be achieved, but instead an on-going and contingent activity, a temporary association of things formed in reaction to the context in which it is configured.

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## INTRODUCTION:

### Duncan Hines, Then and Now

Before his name became synonymous with packaged cake mixes and frosting, Duncan Hines was the premier restaurant critic in the United States. He attempted to expertly speak about the nation's network of roads and restaurants by organizing these in a guidebook of recommendations for motorists that also cultivated a gastronomy of American food. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s he drove 40,000 miles or more each year as a traveling salesman, and then drove additional countless miles through his weekend hobby of discovering foods far from home. Decades before mass transportation and consumption created the transnational, multi-billion dollar industry of fast food, Hines became a critic that aided the developing popular culture of eating out and furthered the discourses of American foodways. He sold millions of copies of his guidebooks and was thought of in his era as *the* authority on American food.

While Hines' best-selling restaurant guidebook for motorists of the 1930s to 1950s, *Adventures in Good Eating*, was not adventurous by contemporary culinary standards, it nevertheless highlighted the consequences of a reshaping of society. The early to middle twentieth century brought significant changes in the American diet such as industrialization and urbanization, first, and automobility and suburbanization, second. Broadly speaking, the geography of American social patterns, and the infrastructure supporting it, underwent epochal shifts.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, the trends of having wider access to both processed foods and regional

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<sup>1</sup> On the effects of industrialization and urbanization on food consumption, see Harvey A. Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Hans J. Teuteberg, "The Birth of the Modern Consumer Age: Food Innovations from 1800," in *Food: The History of Taste*, ed. Paul Freedman, 234-261 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). On the effects of automobility and suburbanization, see Joseph Interrante, "The Road to Autopia: The Automobile and the Spatial Transformation of American Culture," in *The Automobile and American Culture*, ed. David L. Lewis and Laurence Goldstein, 89-104

specialties, eating outside of the home and at chain restaurants, eating quickly, and using automobiles to bring food to market and consumers to restaurants began taking root in the United States in the late nineteenth century, with some of these trends achieving ordinary status before World War II.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, this era saw the first sustained attempts at forming an American “cuisine” based on American tastes, with Duncan Hines joined in this effort by other significant tastemakers, including journalists, critics, and authors such as Clementine Paddleford, Angelo Pellegrini, Sheila Hibben, and Richard O. Cummings.

Despite these important influences on Americans’ food consumption and culinary concepts, this period has so far has been judged largely through a presentist and elitist lens. This distorted perspective began with the scholarship of Harvey Levenstein, who argued that in the early twentieth-century “the sorry state of American gastronomy was best typified by Duncan Hines” because he “struck just the right chord for middle-class America.”<sup>3</sup> It appears that Levenstein and his followers narrate the past to culminate at a recent peak of what they consider to be elite refinement, a cosmopolitan and gourmet sense of taste supposedly made possible only when Julia Child and her peers erased America’s history of forgettable food.<sup>4</sup> For example, David Kamp’s book on Child, James Beard, and Craig Claiborne, *The United States of Arugula*, focuses on “how food in America got better” once these critics helped Americans reform their

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(Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983); Warren Belasco, “Toward a Culinary Common Denominator: The Rise of Howard Johnson’s, 1925-1940,” *Journal of American Culture* 2 (1979).

<sup>2</sup> Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (New York: Pantheon, 1989); John Mariani, *America Eats Out: An Illustrated History of Restaurants, Taverns, Coffee Shops, Speakeasies, and Other Establishments That Have Fed Us for 350 Years* (New York: William and Morrow, 1991); John A. Jakle, and Keith A. Sculle, *Fast Food: Roadside Restaurant in the Automobile Age* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Shane Hamilton, *Trucking Country: The Road to America’s Wal-Mart Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> Harvey A. Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America*, Revised ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 46.

<sup>4</sup> For examples, see Betty Fussell, *Masters of American Cookery: M.F.K. Fisher, James Beard, Craig Claiborne, Julia Child* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); Laura Shapiro, *Julia Child: A Life* (New York: Viking, 2007); Mitchell Davis, “A Taste for New York: Restaurant Reviews, Food Discourse, and the Field of Gastronomy in America,” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2009).

tastes from the iceberg lettuce of the dreary early twentieth-century to the arugula of the enlightened late twentieth-century.<sup>5</sup> As the title of David Strauss' recent monograph makes plain, this group of scholars sees the early twentieth century history of food in the United States as merely a prelude to the 1960s, a "setting of the table" for one particular gastronomic outlook that, although only one amongst many, is considered more sophisticated by current standards and thence, in their opinion, more historically significant to some current ways of life.<sup>6</sup> Simply, Levenstein and others appear to judge others' tastes based on a singular norm even though no such standard exists, and ignore the tastes of those not part of the bi-coastal, Europhilic, upper-class elite. Rather than call a relationship to food "sorry," I propose suspending normative critique in favor of a more contextualized and anthropological approach to food history, a perspective that seeks how and why a sense of taste was developed, and through what habitual means was it supported. Instead of judging taste through a value-laden lens of excellence, like Western aesthetics, I critically study taste as the formation of sense and value within historical contingency, as in sensory studies.<sup>7</sup>

David Kamp has argued that in the earlier twentieth century "it wasn't as if there was a coherent food world" like the one that allegedly exists nowadays in the "United States of Arugula," a state founded by gourmands in the 1960s.<sup>8</sup> I argue that any apparent lack of coherence signals a failure to comprehend the entirely different mindset and materials available to and actively used from 1920 to 1960. For instance, Kamp ignores the fact that this era is replete with clusters of concern that, although not buzz-worthy now, were important then:

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<sup>5</sup> David Kamp, *The United States of Arugula* (New York: Broadway Books, 2006), xv.

<sup>6</sup> David Strauss, *Setting the Table for Julia Child: Dining in America, 1934-1961* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Alain Corbin, *Time, Desire and Horror: Towards a History of the Senses*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); Michael Bull, Paul Gilroy, David Howes, and Douglas Kahn, "Introducing Sensory Studies," *The Senses and Society* 1.1 (2006): 5-7; David Howes, "Can These Dry Bones Live? An Anthropological Approach to the History of the Senses," *Journal of American History* 95.2 (2008): 442-451.

<sup>8</sup> Kamp, *The United States of Arugula*, 7.



sanitation and consumer protection; regionalism in cultural, political, and economic guises; mass market advertising in new formats of media; the effects of immigration and, to a surprising lesser extent, the Great Depression; wartime conservation efforts; large transformations in the mobility of products and consumers, with consequences for agriculture, commerce, and culture; changes in the creation and power of cultural authority; and the production of consumerist ideals.<sup>9</sup> As of yet, no work has considered these processes in relation to each other since “arugula” historiography only focuses on the activities of elite tastemakers in New York and California because the authors personally approve of such tastes. Instead, my research seeks alternative sources of taste like the lower and middle classes outside of coastal metropolitan areas; lesser-known critics, authors, and tastemakers; and the development of roads, roadside restaurants, and guides to both. Moreover, I do not judge tastes according to attributions of superiority or inferiority; I analyze the activities involved in tastes’ creation, perpetuation, and dissolution. In some ways my research follows that of Andrew Haley, who has narrated changes in Americans’ taste as enacted in restaurants from 1880 to 1920. Like Haley, “while I owe a great debt to Harvey A. Levenstein’s foundational work on American dining, I have come to believe that Levenstein did not pay enough attention to the” many other influences on American dining

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<sup>9</sup> Nancy Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Lawrence B. Glickman, *Buying Power: A History of Consumer Activism in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Robert Dorman, *Revolt of the Provinces: The Regionalist Movement in America, 1920-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Michael C. Steiner, “Regionalism in the Great Depression,” *Geographical Review* 73.4 (1983): 430-446; Richard Ohmann, “Where Did Mass Culture Come From? The Case of Magazines,” *Berkshire Review* 16 (1981): 85-101; Christopher P. Wilson, “The Rhetoric of Consumption: Mass-Market Magazines and the Demise of the Gentle Reader, 1880-1920,” in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears, 40-64 (New York: Pantheon, 1983); Donna R. Gabaccia, *We are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Susan Kalcik, “Ethnic Foodways in America: Symbol and the Performance of Identity,” in *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States: The Performance of Group Identity*, ed. Linda Keller Brown and Kay Mussell, 37-65 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984); Hamilton, *Trucking Country: The Road to America’s Wal-Mart Economy*; Gabriella M. Petrick, “‘Like Ribbons of Green and Gold’: Industrializing Lettuce and the Quest for Quality in the Salinas Valley, 1920–1965,” *Agricultural History* 80.3 (2006): 269-295; Michael Kammen, *American Culture, American Tastes: Social Change and the 20th Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999); Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Vintage, 2003).

habits besides industrialized food production and home economics.<sup>10</sup> My work not only covers the decades following Haley's narrative, it also expands the focus of what is analyzed when accounting for tastes, arguing that taste is created by much more than the friction between social classes.

While often thought of as the outcome of the distinctions between socioeconomic strata, with higher classes possessing superior tastes, a sense of taste is not merely an attitude toward or knowledge of aesthetic excellence that one holds based on intelligence or "well-breeding."<sup>11</sup> As Paul Freedman states, "Taste is not simply the preserve of a tiny aristocracy, of the court culture of the European, Abbasid or Chinese past or the 'foodie' cutting-edge of the present."<sup>12</sup> Since "the way we collect, process, sell, buy, and prepare food is both a necessary industry and a daily art," taste is an experience common to all and, moreover, is diverse in content and contingent in value due to "how food preferences and culinary principles var[y] in different societies."<sup>13</sup> Taste is a continuous activity made possible by an arrangement of influences that provide the food to be tasted and the terms through which that taste is articulated. The conjunction of these two senses of taste—as physical sensation and cultural preference—occurs when tastemakers associate the experiences that are available in a context with expressions that are attractive to existing audiences. When coordinated, a long chain of things that taste and are tasted all work together to make physical taste sensations commercially available and aesthetic taste distinctions culturally valued. Media may make a food attractive but you cannot develop a taste for a food that agriculture does not make available by growing it *and* commerce does not make accessible

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<sup>10</sup> Andrew P. Haley, *Turning the Tables: Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2011), 16.

<sup>11</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

<sup>12</sup> Paul Freedman, "A New History of Cuisine," in *Food: The History of Taste*, ed. Paul Freedman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 7.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

by distributing it across the country and placing it in front of consumers. Making sense of taste in modern societies thus involves media, commerce, and technology interacting to create the material objects that arouse physical senses, the social phenomena that form cultural sense, and the process of connecting these two senses together to make taste.

In this dissertation I argue that Duncan Hines made sense of American taste through a process of synthesizing influences through using the resources they afforded him. His criticism worked at the intersection of growing mass-market consumerism, the popular advent of the automobile and highway system, revolutions in the technology and commerce of growing, shipping, advertising, and cooking food, the creation of “middlebrow” culture, as well as the interplay between regionalism and nationalism, tradition and progression. Each of these contributed to the content of Hines’ opinions, the relevance and utility of these opinions, and the extent to which his opinions were circulated to the rest of the country. Furthermore, just as the assemblage of these factors supported Hines’ work as a tastemaker during his lifetime, their change and dissolution after his death explains Hines’ fall from renown and transformation into a faceless brand. Altogether, the significance of Hines highlights the function of critics and other mediators in culture, the creation of senses in history, and the conventions through which we outline the shape of society and culture.<sup>14</sup> This argument revises not just the historiography of

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<sup>14</sup> On critics and mediators, see Arjun Appadurai, “Commodities and the Politics of Value,” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, ed. Arjun Appadurai, 3-63 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Wesley Monroe Shrum, Jr., *Fringe and Fortune: The Role of Critics in High and Popular Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Shyon Bauman, “Marketing, Cultural Hierarchy, and the Relevance of Critics: Film in the United States, 1935–1980,” *Poetics* 30.4 (2002): 243-262; John Gennari, *Blowin’ Hot and Cool: Jazz and Its Critics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Grant Blank, *Critics, Ratings, and Society: The Sociology of Reviews* (Lanham, M.D.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007). On the senses in history, see George H. Roeder, Jr., “Coming to Our Senses,” *Journal of American History* 81.3 (1994): 1112-1122; Mark M. Smith, “Making Sense of Social History,” *Journal of Social History* 37.1 (2003): 165-186; Gerard J. Fitzgerald and Gabriella Petrick, “In Good Taste: Rethinking American History with Our Palates,” *Journal of American History* 95.2 (2008): 392-404. On what is society, see Bruno Latour, “Gabriel Tarde and the End of the Social,” in *The Social in Question: New Bearings in History and the Social Sciences*, ed. Patrick Joyce, 117-132 (London: Routledge, 2002); Tony Bennett, “The Work of Culture,” *Cultural Sociology* 1.1 (2007): 31-47.

American food but the concepts of cuisine, taste, and society that support established narratives as well.

### **From Cuisine to Foodways**

The historiographic problem of judging tastes of the past against a singular standard stems from a conceptual problem found in the scholarship of Sidney Mintz and the legacy of Europhilia in American culture. For example, David Strauss concludes that, “the overlapping traditions of individualism, Puritanism, the work ethic, and mobility, as well as ethnic diversity, served to fragment the society and block the creation of a national cuisine in the United States.”<sup>15</sup> While these influences surely did shape American foodways, the problem resides in comparing their outcomes with “cuisine,” a term that imposes unnecessary strict requirements in either of the two guises it typically performs.

The first guise of cuisine is offered by the history that gives rise to the term and does much to imbue it with a range of connotations that obscure the context that was crucial to creating these meanings. The term cuisine and its original practice comes from the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century in France, specifically the French Revolution. The highly codified and regimented approach to cooking and thinking about food found in Marie-Antoine Carême’s formation of French cuisine emerged from a history of cooking for French aristocracy and served to stabilize taste during the social upheavals of France from the Revolution through the Third Republic.<sup>16</sup> With the loss of the aristocracy, sophisticated cooking lost its financial and material support and migrated to commercial support through the venue of

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<sup>15</sup> Strauss, *Setting the Table for Julia Child*, 253.

<sup>16</sup> Rebecca Spang, *The Invention of the Restaurant: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste: The Triumph of French Cuisine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

public dining and within a new form, the restaurant, despite Carême's attempt at avoiding commerce altogether.<sup>17</sup> While an interesting case study in how an approach to food is articulated and made hegemonic, other countries' foodways have not followed the same pattern of making a national culinary tradition. Using French cuisine as a conceptual lens for other places needlessly refracts non-French experiences through the cultural perspectives of French court life, the social histories of French class struggles, and the flavors of European foodstuffs. Cuisine explains France and its history of culinary practice but the concept is not as useful in explaining the United States and its foodways, which developed in different ways because of different influences.

The other guise of cuisine is that offered by Sidney Mintz, who strips the term of some of its French specificity but nevertheless retains cuisine's imposition of trans-historical and trans-cultural requirements. Though he rejects French cuisine by saying that "national cuisines are not cuisines," he still posits the existence of " 'real' cuisines" as those "closely tied to seasonal availability" from "a relatively narrow geographical region" that provides "one or several staple foods eaten every day" to people who "cook in more and eat out less," and are thus insulated from "commercialization, a major debilitating influence."<sup>18</sup> Sustaining each of these requirements, let alone all of them in concert, proves impossible in the modern world, especially the need for insulation from commerce. The irony of Mintz's use of the term is that cuisine was developed in France when cooking migrated from private patronage to public exchange. Instead of Mintz's perspective, I follow Krishnendu Ray to "assume that restaurants are important to the

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<sup>17</sup> Alain Drouard, "Chefs, Gourmets and Gourmands: French Cuisine in the 19th and 20th Centuries," in *Food: The History of Taste*, ed. Paul Freedman, 262-299 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 263-286; Elliott Shore, "Dining Out: The Development of the Restaurant," in *Food: The History of Taste*, ed. Paul Freedman, 301-331 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 302-309.

<sup>18</sup> Sidney W. Mintz, "Eating America," in *Food in the U.S.A.: A Reader*, ed. Carole M. Counihan, 23-34 (New York: Routledge, 2002), 26, 27, 28.

constitution of a modern, national cuisine as performed in the public sphere” because in the modern world cuisine needs public, mobile processes like commerce, commentary and, crucially, the infrastructure of the nation-state, to exist at all.<sup>19</sup> Food is a product of the many activities surrounding it, regardless of whether the final outcome does not fit the traditional, pre-modern pattern of a foodway being the product of a people bound to a confined space, a singular cultural tradition, finite agricultural resources, and an absence of commerce.

Further, Mintz argues that a cuisine “requires a population that eats that cuisine with sufficient frequency to consider themselves experts on it” since “they all believe, and *care* that they believe, that they know what it consists of, how it is made, and how it should taste,” all because the food “has common social roots; it is the food of a community.”<sup>20</sup> His sense of community is again a view of pre-modern sociability, with face-to-face interactions as the prime mode of social relations and the upholding of long-standing traditions as the primary purpose of society. While these ways of communication and community still exist, food has been discussed through more lengthy and mediated means for at least a century, first in print media and then television and now the Internet. Rather than judge all situations by the narrow standards of French cuisine or pre-modern foodways, Krishnendu Ray contends that there are “more productive directions of inquiry than the quarrel over whether an American national cuisine exists *per se*,” because our perspective needs to include how people, products, and principles

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<sup>19</sup> Krishnendu Ray, “Nation and Cuisine: The Evidence from American Newspapers Ca. 1830-2003,” *Food and Foodways* 16.4 (2008): 265. On cuisine, commerce, and nation, see Arjun Appadurai, “How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30.1 (1988): 3-24; Richard Wilk, “‘Real Belizean Food’: Building Local Identity in the Transnational Caribbean,” *American Anthropologist* 101.2 (1999): 244-255; Igor Cusack, “African Cuisines: Recipes for Nation-Building?,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 13.2 (2000): 207-225; Warren Belasco and Philip Scanton, ed. *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Katarzyna J. Cwiertka, *Modern Japanese Cuisine: Food, Power and National Identity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Sidney W. Mintz, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions Into Eating, Culture, and the Past* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 96.

combine to make food and its meaning in a modern, industrial era.<sup>21</sup> American foodways were made in a different geography, history, and social structure than other foodways (or “cuisines”), under a different configuration of influences that of course would create a different conception of what is food and which of it is considered good.

Different places create different tastes through different processes in different contexts, though the study of food has wrestled to come to terms with the implications of this fact and, consequently, the investigation of its many forms. The explanation of taste has seen competing models: on one side is Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of taste as a symbol of social distinction employed in the conflicts of class hierarchies.<sup>22</sup> Opposite is Marvin Harris’ theory of taste as biologically determined through evolving to fit the environmental constraints within a territory.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, the forefathers to food studies—Sidney Mintz, Warren Belasco, and Harvey Levenstein—at times brought to the table Marxist-materialist approaches that emphasize economic and technological explanation.<sup>24</sup> Recently, scholars have taken a more integrated approach, claiming that, “Foodways can only be understood holistically, with just about every aspect of human life taken in to account.”<sup>25</sup> The term “foodways” signals this turn away from reductionism and toward synthesis because it is defined as “a whole interrelated system of food conceptualization and evaluation, procurement, distribution, preservation, preparation,

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<sup>21</sup> Ray, “Nation and Cuisine,” 290. In Ray’s opinion, a more productive inquiry should take the form of “empirical work that can tell us about (a) the kind of food some Americans... come to imagine as American cuisine; (b) who these Americans are; and (c) the institutional and discursive lineaments of the imagined national cuisine.” (ibid.)

<sup>22</sup> Bourdieu, *Distinction*.

<sup>23</sup> Marvin Harris, *The Sacred Cow and the Abominable Pig: Riddles of Food and Culture* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).

<sup>24</sup> Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin, 1986); Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*; Warren Belasco, *Appetite for Change: How the Counterculture Took on the Food Industry, 1966-1988* (New York: Pantheon, 1989)

<sup>25</sup> E.N. Anderson, *Everyone Eats: Understanding Food and Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 7.

consumption, and nutrition shared by all members of a particular society.”<sup>26</sup> Less culturally and historically restricted than cuisine and more open to the different “ways” that food is created, circulated, and signified, the investigation of foodways is further bolstered by the interdisciplinary character of contemporary food studies. Studying foodways leads to a deep grasp of how interconnected are the aspects of life normally divvied up into separate categories by academic disciplines as well as common discourse. As the publicly renowned work of Marion Nestle, Eric Schlosser, and Michael Pollan has repeatedly shown, focusing on the biology of eating food leads back to the ecology of agriculture, but this cannot be understood without seeing the influence of political economy, the creation of biotechnology, and the industrialization of farms. At the same time, examining the cultural aspects of eating leads to the social psychology of consumer decision-making informed by past trends, the cultural fads of the current but passing moment, and the interaction of a particular food with a particular human body.<sup>27</sup> Given all that we know about foodways’ many parts, it is time to rethink how we engage with food, physically and intellectually, and how society shapes those experiences and expressions while intertwining them.

### **Senses of Taste and Society**

The interdisciplinary character of food studies has offered a broad empirical exposure that has beckoned alternatives to monologic conceptions of food and reductive explanations of tastes for it. Though connoisseurs will always disagree, scholarly consensus posits that “The differences between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ food are not based on enduring and objective truths about

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<sup>26</sup> Jay A. Anderson, “Scholarship on Contemporary American Folk Foodways,” *Ethnologia Europaea* 5 (1971): 57.

<sup>27</sup> Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* (New York: Harper, 2005); Marion Nestle, *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition, and Health*, Revised ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (New York: Penguin, 2007).



what is ‘truly’ good and bad, but instead, these perceptions of worth are based on criteria that are socially agreed upon for a given place and time.”<sup>28</sup> Instead, why certain people prefer certain foods, while complex, is neither a shrouded mystery nor a sudden miracle, for “Dreams of good food arise out of particular constellations of power and interests that can be analyzed and understood.”<sup>29</sup> That Aaron Bobrow-Stain uses the term ‘constellation’ to make this point is fitting, for what is food and what of it is considered good does indeed require a grouping of many things functioning together. John Prescott recognizes that “if we want to understand any individual’s foods likes and dislikes, then knowing their culture would be the one piece of information that would tell us the most,” though “what constitutes a food and which options are selected for consumption are, of course, overwhelmingly determined by availability.”<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, availability requires many other things, as access to foodstuffs are made possible or impossible due to agriculture’s capabilities to produce within its local constraints and commerce’s capacity to provide existing means of distribution and markets for transaction. Altogether, our understanding of the constellation that fosters a foodway escapes reductive theory and returns to Brillat-Savarin’s classic definition of gastronomy—his term for the study of food and its taste—as “the reasoned comprehension of everything connected with the nourishment of man.”<sup>31</sup>

Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson’s accounting of how French taste was formed is a model for analyzing taste as a process within a context. She begins by noting that, “We are shaped by the

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<sup>28</sup> Josée Johnston and Shyon Baumann, *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 207-208. See also Michael Shaffer, “Taste, Gastronomic Expertise, and Objectivity,” in *Food and Philosophy: Eat, Drink, and Be Merry*, ed. Fritz Allhoff and Dave Monroe, 73-87 (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007).

<sup>29</sup> Aaron Bobrow-Stain, *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), 13. See also E. Melanie DuPuis, “Angels and Vegetables: A Brief History of Food Advice in America,” *Gastronomica* 7.4 (2007).

<sup>30</sup> John Prescott, *Taste Matters: Why We Like the Foods We Do* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 142.

<sup>31</sup> Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste*, trans. Anne Drayton (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 52.

arrangements that society” provides and thus “we taste what experience has taught us to accept.”<sup>32</sup> Both the experiences and the teaching emerge from specific contexts that offer certain foods as available, certain cooking techniques as probable, and specific conceptions of both as relevant. Ferguson provides an even deeper insight, remarking that regardless of context foodways are characterized by “the many transformations and metamorphoses of food” from first on the farm to finally on the fork, a long line of relationships wherein “translation and conversion govern the connections” between parts of the foodways.<sup>33</sup> For instance, photosynthesis converts soil and sunlight into plants, while discourse translates the ephemeral individual experience of physically sensing the *taste of* a food into a communicable expression of a culturally shared sense of what that food *tastes like*.<sup>34</sup> But if “texts translate the material into the cultural”, and “there are probably as many ways to talk about food and cuisine as there are to cook and eat”, then how do ways of talking about food emerge and why do certain ways predominate for awhile for some people?<sup>35</sup> This is the outcome of translators, transformers, and transporters working together—media, technology, and commerce—a network of those things configuring what we taste and our tastes for them.

Talk and texts cannot gain relevance and affect their context without their dissemination to wider, diverse audiences. Concomitantly, the actual foods about which the texts are speaking must also be made physically available to the larger world. A text explaining the flavor and extolling the virtues of avocados will gain an impact only as far as the production and

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<sup>32</sup> Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste*, 12.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Ferguson elaborates: “Language allows sharing what is at once the most assertively individual and yet, arguably, the most dramatically social of our acts: eating.... The ephemeral, private nature of the material culinary product severely limits the cultural currency of the culinary arts. To consume food, we have to destroy it, and, in purely alimentary terms, that consumption is strictly individual. The original material product itself cannot be diffused. As both cooks and diners know full well, they cannot duplicate a meal, they can only replicate it. This inherent instability requires an intellectual form for food to enter into more general cultural circulation.” (92)

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 92, 20.

distribution of avocados can extend, and as widely and prominently as the text can be circulated. Discourse about a food requires practices that make that food accessible and attractive, a process that calls upon farmers, truckers, advertisers, and point-of-purchase sellers, whether restaurateurs or grocers. Discourse does not have power independent of a world of practices that offer substances to describe and processes to promote such descriptions.

Working separately from food studies, the sociology of culture has developed similar insights in their attempt to forge a post-Bourdieu paradigm for explaining how humans develop distinctions through shaping cognition and reinforcing them with institutions. While working with the thesis of ideas, dispositions, and even institutions as “socially constructed,” cultural sociology has come to realize that much of the construction is not possible without things traditionally considered by mainstream sociology to be not social: non-human entities, from animals and microbes to technology and infrastructure. Inspired by a return to the etymological root of “social” and “society” in the Latin term *socius*—an adjective meaning sharing or joining, often used to denote a partner or associate—Bruno Latour seeks “to define the social not as a special domain, a specific realm, or a particular sort of thing,” but as the processes and “principles of connections” between things.<sup>36</sup> As such, *society is the joining together of things that associate with each other*. Those things common to *socius* living include people groups, natural resources, technologies, specialized industries, commerce, buildings and other infrastructure, and the infinite number of things that fall under the category of culture. To live humans must employ these things to fulfill basic biological needs, organize themselves cooperatively, and create the wide range of stuff that fills our lives. Society is so reliant on plants and animals for food, resources for building materials and energy stores, and technologies and

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<sup>36</sup> Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 7, 13.

infrastructure to perform a litany of tasks for humans, that excluding these things from accounts of society merely because they are not human is to overlook much of what makes society possible, capable, sustainable, and adaptable.

A key aspect of Latour's theory is that the social is "a type of momentary association which is characterized by the way it gathers together" human and nonhuman entities to make "some state of affairs solid and durable."<sup>37</sup> Humans and their groupings change and eventually dissolve, so instead of merely ideas and institutions sustaining society it "is always things... which, in practice, lend their 'steely' quality to the hapless 'society'" because it is "the power exerted through entities that don't sleep and associations that don't break down that allow power to last longer and expand further."<sup>38</sup> Thanks to Pierre Bourdieu it was already known that taste is social, but with a redefinition of the social as including many things so too must conceptions of taste involve much more than humans jockeying for distinction within hierarchies. If a taste is made hegemonic, "this cannot be done without looking for vehicles, tools, instruments, and materials able to provide such a stability" that is necessary to forging hegemony.<sup>39</sup> Antoine Hennion thus argues that, "taste effectively depends on everything" because it "is not an attribute, it is not a property (of a thing or of a person), it is an activity" involving a wide variety of mediators that create the taste experience, from bodies to images, texts to technologies, objects to memories, by associating all of these together.<sup>40</sup> The strength, longevity, and effectiveness of a social arrangement—like a sense of taste—is thus predicated on the continued existence and further extension of a network of things that in concert perform the taste. Yet entropy is a tendency of all; if left unattended, things fall apart. The measurement of power is

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 65, 93.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 68, 70.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>40</sup> Antoine Hennion, "Those Things that Hold Us Together: Taste and Sociology," *Cultural Sociology* 1.1 (2007): 111, 101.

thus whether a network can be not just controlled and maintained but further replicated and enlarged.<sup>41</sup>

Though the social is an assemblage of humans and things working together, not all things are the same. Bruno Latour notes a key difference between things that act as intermediaries, which do not change what they carry and who they connect, and mediators who “transmit, translate, transport, transplant, and otherwise modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry.”<sup>42</sup> A mediator is not one certain position or class or disposition, it is any thing—human or not—that must work amongst things to move them or move objects to and from them.<sup>43</sup> As etymology and usage shows, mediators and media/medium are things that are in the middle, that intervene between other things to perform a function of movement and/or influence. Typically thought of as the representational media, especially the visual kind ubiquitous to contemporary life, mediators also include technologies that in performing a job for humans modify the meaning or substance of that relationship because they are the conduits of its process. Therefore, because they are central to the performance of relationships, monitoring the changing “process of mediation... reveals the changing relations among social structures and agents.”<sup>44</sup> In fact, Bruno Latour’s theory of the social as a gathering of associated things is in

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<sup>41</sup> Power, and its byproduct knowledge, are therefore not an abstraction in waiting but an activity performed, maintained, extended, and transformed. Thus, “power, like society, is the final result of a process and not a reservoir, a stock, or a capital that will automatically provide an explanation.” Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 70, 68.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>43</sup> As Keith Negus asserts, a mediator does not imply a certain set of workers or materials and, as Alec Shuldiner and Randal Doane argue, a mediator may imply but does *not necessarily* reify a distance between producers and consumers because that distance is at times real and mediators do indeed bridge such gaps. Keith Negus, “The Work of Cultural Intermediaries and the Enduring Distance Between Production and Consumption,” *Cultural Studies* 16.4 (2002): 501-515; Alec Tristin Shuldiner, “Trapped Behind the Automat: Technological Systems and the American Restaurant, 1902-1991” (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 2001); Randal Doane, “Bourdieu, Cultural Intermediaries and *Good Housekeeping*’s George Marek: A Case Study of Middlebrow Musical Taste,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 9.2 (2009): 155-186.

<sup>44</sup> Sonia Livingstone, “On the Mediation of Everything,” *Journal of Communication* 59.1 (2009): 5. See also Johan Fornas, “The Crucial In Between: The Centrality of Mediation in Cultural Studies,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 3.1 (2000): 45-65.

many ways a theory of mediators linking to form networks, a view in parallel to Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson's notion of foodways as a string of transformations.

In light of Latour and Hennion's conception of society and taste, as well as Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson's model of studying them, Duncan Hines appears as a mediator in a network that formed taste in the twentieth century. This network included the emerging influences shaping American foodways: the popular advent of the automobile, an upsurge in regionalist fervor, the expansion of national print media, the growing commercial and cultural significance of consumerism, the development of middlebrow culture, the non-stop evolution of cooking technology, and lesser known developments like the sea-change in product distribution due to trucking. As new relationships were being forged between these things that create, transport, sell, consume, and conceptualize food, Hines became a focal point through which these many relationships could intersect. He mediated their influence by transforming their confluence; in other words, by associating cars with consuming through a guidebook Hines helped shape a society—a gathering of associations, an assemblage of entities—in which automobility, restaurants, commercial branding, the role of critics, new print media, and the reappearance of regionalism work together to make senses of taste. As a mediator, Hines transforms their meaning by making their material outcomes (what taste sensations were offered) into a cultural outlook (what sense of taste was preferred).

The growth of Hines' influence was thus the extension of the network around him, as the increase of each trend, like automobility and consumerism, served to further the things he depended upon as resources for making sense of taste. Moreover, the advancement of Hines' particular mediation, his gastronomic opinion, has much to do with Hines creating things—non-human entities—that could circulate easily and influence more readily precisely because of their

forms: guidebooks, cookbooks, and brand name foods that others could access, understand, and use on their own. Conversely, this understanding of tastemakers as depending on networks to make taste explains how Hines' fame quickly receded in the 1960s. The connections that made the sense of taste associated with Hines were altered if not altogether abandoned then, and thus new senses of taste were made by a new social arrangement. Taste as associations between things is just as ephemeral as taste as sensations on tongues.

### **Chapter Summaries**

In chapter one I will trace the beginning of Duncan Hines' tastemaking in the 1930s by establishing the network that was forming around it. This complex of associations between persons, principles, products, and places made Hines' tastemaking possible by forming foodways in which foodstuffs were grown as agriculture, processed and distributed as commodities, advertised as attractive, consumed in a variety of settings, and intellectually conceived to serve diverse functions for individuals and institutions alike. In this chapter I survey the evolution of "eating out," the public consumption of food that became significantly more popular in the early twentieth century due to the relationship between urbanization and food technology, both in restaurants and agriculture. Moreover, this form of consumption will be set within the larger context of what I call the consumers' republic of drivers, a joining of Lizabeth Cohen's research on the building of America as a consumerist nation, Cotton Seiler's scholarship on automobility's influence on conceptions of nation and selfhood, and Donald Meinig's study of the immense demographic and geographic reshaping of America by the infrastructure of roads

and modern communications.<sup>45</sup> These changes took place during one of the highest tides of regionalist fervor in American history, the 1920s and 1930s, and so I examine documents that emerged from it, especially food and car-focused texts like those of the well-known Federal Writers Project of the New Deal and lesser-known publications. Other perspectives on food besides regionalism will be considered as well, specifically that of home economists and elite gourmards, the two most dominant movements conceiving American food at the time. In contrast with these texts and contexts, I will analyze Duncan Hines' overnight rise to the position of tastemaker in 1936 as a mediation of these many aforementioned influences and an instance of the emerging trend of "middlebrow" cultural criticism.<sup>46</sup>

Chapter two recounts the extension of Hines' network thanks to the wider circulation of his guidebook, his name and mythos, and, eventually, his system of roadside signs for restaurants worthy of his recommendation. I will situate Hines' growing influence within the history of guidebooks, examining Hines' publications in contrast with his peers and predecessors in the business of recommendation for food and driving: Karl Baedeker, the *Automobile Green Book*, the *Automobile Blue Book*, the *Negro Motorist Green Book*, George S. Chappell, Jack and Hazel Dodd, John Drury, and local guides for American cities and regions. Altogether, this chapter traces the initial paths that Hines' cultural production took through the networks assembling around him, arguing that his fame came less from comfortably "fitting in" to his context than innovatively reshaping it through taking advantage of its commercial and cultural resources.

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<sup>45</sup> Cohen, *Consumers' Republic*; Cotten Seiler, *Republic of Drivers: A Cultural History of Automobility in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Donald W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History: Vol. 4, Global America 1915-2000* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

<sup>46</sup> Janice Radway, "The Scandal of the Middlebrow: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Class Fracture, and Cultural Authority," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 89.4 (1990): 703-736; Joan Shelley Rubin, *The Making of Middlebrow Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).



The third chapter narrates Hines' attempts to keep his authority intact and criticism relevant as the networks around him shifted due to the Second World War, the continual evolution of food technology and recipe fashions, and postwar movements of American citizens. Under examination are the representations and relationships that he contended with and were often out of his control, like satirical newspaper cartoons. The chapter thus involves the analysis of articles about him, noting in particular the differences between pieces on Hines in national publications like *The Saturday Evening Post* and those found in local newspapers around the country. As well, there is a behind-the-scenes look at Hines' attempt to write a cookbook organized around the consequences of wartime food rationing, an endeavor that failed but displays Hines' work as a mediator actively maintaining his position in a shifting society by transforming its resources. Simultaneously, others were adjusting to Hines' presence, and thus I will show how competing tastemakers such as *Gourmet* magazine copied aspects of Hines' publications and competitive restaurateurs lied to the public about being included on his list of recommended establishments in order to attract business. I will also examine Hines' connections to the users of his guidebooks, a crucial dynamic since after the first edition of his guidebook the vast majority of the recommendations in subsequent editions were actually found, vetted, and communicated back to Hines' personal secretaries by other citizens, with Hines serving only as an editor and publisher.

Chapter four follows the making of "Duncan Hines," the brand, well beyond the guidebooks that were the origin of his fame, a process that extended Hines' network and its formation of taste. This chapter shows how associations made between Hines and American popular culture, the focus of chapter three, were transformed into commercial iconography and advertising rhetoric for a brand of processed foods. This process of coalescing and promoting his

status as an icon is also explained through exposing the overlooked operations necessary to it: the food production scheme for Hines' ice cream and other products, and the hordes of promotional items with his name on it. In sum, I argue that the network of mediators that aided Hines' tastemaking as a critic was mirrored by, and sometimes overlapped with, a network that made possible Hines' tastemaking as a brand name.

Chapter five considers Duncan Hines' overarching perspective on what is America, what of it tastes good, and where such tastes exist. I will present Hines' gastronomy by interpreting his magnum opus, the memoir *Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey*. Moreover, Hines' philosophy of food will be related to a sudden surge of publications on American food and its regional sources that occurred during the waning days of Hines' career, the middle of the 1950s to the early 1960s. Altogether, I will argue that Hines' perspective, in conjunction with the panoply of his peers, presents the making of taste on a new set of terms and means other than the hegemonic standards of taste for most of the twentieth century, European cuisines. This chapter serves as an intervention in the on-going narration of American food, specifically to disrupt the notion that taste did not exist before the 1960s and the rise of Julia Child and Craig Claiborne, as well as to show how current gastronomic preferences for regional, seasonal, traditional, and authentic foodways have significant precedents in the work of Hines and his mid-century peer tastemakers.

In a conclusion section I will reflect on the dissolution of Hines' influence and his relationship to the "foodies" that came after him. Comparing formations of sense by Hines and subsequent others reveal possible patterns amongst the development of taste in western modern societies. Last, I will suggest new avenues for analyzing the contingencies of senses of taste in history, reflecting on how a network analysis of the figure of Hines poses ways to make sense of how senses of taste are made.

## CHAPTER ONE

**“Good taste is an unruly human faculty not easily confined to a single channel”<sup>47</sup>**

### **Making Sense of Taste in the Twentieth Century**

Duncan Hines was the first restaurant critic to judge dining places across the entire United States and, in turn, the first critic to achieve widespread fame. In the first sentence of the first article presenting him to the American public in 1938, Milton MacKaye notes that, “Within the last two years, Duncan Hines, a Chicago businessman with silver-gray hair, has become known as the chief guide to good food on America’s highways—the head scout and advance man for the nation’s appetite.” As to how someone in just two years could rise from private citizen to “professional taster,” MacKaye cites “fortuitous circumstances” wherein his guidebook came to be considered as “a sort of Bible.”<sup>48</sup> The comments suggest not just that Americans prized his work and quickly granted it authority but that they worshipped food in the first place and wanted guidance in improving this practice. In other words, Hines operated in a context that was receptive to his work because it made sense of its changing landscape.

This chapter explores, as Bruno Latour suggests, “the background necessary for every activity to emerge,” the reasons why and resources with which a mediator such as Hines would make sense of taste.<sup>49</sup> Hines emerged as an influential cultural authority—a tastemaker—in the midst of a succession of changes that would shape the ways Americans experience and express their relationship with food as the chemistry, commerce, and communications of food became

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<sup>47</sup> Forrest Crissey, “Foreword,” n.p., in *Adventures in Good Eating*, (Chicago: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1937).

<sup>48</sup> Milton MacKaye, “Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, December 3, 1938, 16.

<sup>49</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 243, 240.

what many have called “modern.”<sup>50</sup> Hines’ tastemaking “innovated by linking together” things that had not yet worked together, as his gastronomic guidance was at the intersection of trends in American society, many of them still in development: cars, consumerism, criticism, restaurants, and regional foodways.<sup>51</sup> Starting in the 1930s, Hines’ career as a critic was an extensive project of mediating between consumers, producers, and other mediators, making adjustments and additions to maintain, if not extend, networks between them. The reasons that inspired and the resources that were synthesized to form this network included technologies to empower agents, media and cultural conventions to bolster reputation, commerce to make goods available, cultural trends through which to gain relevance, and discourse to aid the transformation of experience into expression.

### 1936

But why 1936? How, in the midst of the Great Depression, could a mass of consumers be ready and willing to spend beyond their needs to follow a restaurant critic? Why were Americans driving about to eat out? How did restaurants become an item worthy of criticism in the arena of popular culture and how could someone address this on a national scale, both for the first time in American history?

Common notions of the 1930s provoke images of bread lines and the Dust Bowl, two visions antithetical to ruminating on gastronomy, but perhaps in representations of the mobile Okie we can begin to see a curious fact: that the car became more affordable and, practically speaking, even more central to Americans’ lives during the Depression than they were already.

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<sup>50</sup> Megan J. Elias, *Food in the United States, 1890-1945* (Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, 2009); Teuteberg, “The Birth of the Modern Consumer Age: Food Innovations from 1800.”

<sup>51</sup> Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, trans. Alan Sheridan and John Law (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 69.

Before harder times hit, automobiles had become central to rural lifestyles, a situation encapsulated in an oft-quoted anecdote from the period where a government inspector in the 1920s asked a farmer why her family bought a car instead of investing in indoor plumbing, and she replied it was because “you can’t go to town in a bathtub!”<sup>52</sup> Whether for practical use as the joke symbolizes or as cultural representations like the joke itself, automobiles had significantly impacted patterns of American life by the early twentieth century. Yet Okies and rural farmers were not the initial audience for a guidebook to restaurants for motorists, though Hines would surely speak well of their foodways.

Hines’ first setting for tastemaking is a community less discussed but still extant in the 1930s, the traveling salesmen, or “drummers,” associated perhaps best with the nineteenth century.<sup>53</sup> But it was Hines’ second audience, one that overlapped with the first, which championed Hines to the extent that he could become famous beyond word-of-mouth reputation amongst fellow traveling salesmen. This audience was the growing number of Americans interested in dining in general and in feeding this desire through the use of automobiles. By the 1930s a car culture had developed for middle to upper middle class Americans who used this technology to engage and enhance their leisure activities.<sup>54</sup> For this same group, dining out had become more of a regular habit than it had been for previous generations. Both practices had existed before the 1930s but it was not until around then, perhaps just before in the 1920s, that practices of motoring and dining had converged. Hines admits to addressing prosperous audiences in the first national article on him:

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<sup>52</sup> Interrante, “The Road to Autopia,” 89.

<sup>53</sup> Timothy B. Spears, *100 Years on the Road: The Traveling Salesman in American Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

<sup>54</sup> Warren J. Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1979).

Hines, in the red book, indicates the scale of prices of the restaurants he recommends, but he is in no sense a guide to bargain dining. That one can eat cheaply and eat well is, in the long run, nonsense, he believes. A frequent criticism of his book is that he offers no assistance to travelers who have restricted themselves to a very limited daily food budget. One correspondent wrote that Hines erred in listing any place charging more than seventy-five cents for a meal. But Hines believes that good eating is more or less a luxury matter, and he has directed his book at people who are willing, and can afford, to pay for it.<sup>55</sup>

This price-based criticism speaks to the community he catered to, at least at first, as well as the general economic climate of the 1930s. Of note, though, is that this criticism fades away as the guidebook's listings became populated with recommendations sent to Hines from a more diverse range of Americans and, as a consequence, Hines projected a more inclusive and accommodating rhetoric—Hines was *always adjusting* his network to stay relevant. And so his initial audiences were affluent white Americans whose consumer habits were undeterred in the era of Jim Crow and the Great Depression and who thus made links to a wide set of restaurateurs in diverse social and geographic locations. Moreover, Hines' fans were consumers of a unique and new item who engaged in consuming it in a very specific way. Eating outside of the home had been an option for decades but was now gaining in popularity at the same time that interest in regional American foodways had picked up. Hines attempted to guide both of these pursuits.

The key to answering how and why Hines could begin his tastemaking in the 1930s is to see its key details: American foodways, consumerism, cars, restaurants, media, and criticism. In his career-capping memoir, Hines reflects on the genesis of his innovative guidebook by framing it in such terms:

I realized then that we'd done something that to my knowledge has never before been tried in this country. There were book reviewers to tell us what we should read, art and drama critics to advise on what to see—but there was no

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<sup>55</sup> MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?," 80. The average meal at the places recommended by Hines in his 1937 edition is reported as \$1.25, with 75 cents being the cheapest. These are moderately expensive meals, especially given the financial situation of the decade. Depending on how it is calculated, this cost is the equivalent of \$25-40 in 2012 U.S. dollars.

authoritative and unbiased guide to good eating. Compared to the total population, the habitual readers in this country were relatively few, while the number of art and drama devotees was almost infinitesimal. But everyone had to eat!<sup>56</sup>

Everyone eats but table settings change, and so the fact of Hines' existence as a restaurant critic for motorists and enthusiasts of American foodways speaks to new patterns of how Americans engaged in eating and made sense of what they were tasting. Narrating a tastemaker in this way contributes to a debate over how tastes were made in the twentieth century, as Hines' innovative tastemaking picks up on aspects of early twentieth century often not considered by scholars.

### **Accounting for American Tastes**

Histories of twentieth century tastemakers like Duncan Hines are few, but the work of David Strauss and David Kamp stand out due to their conceptions of taste before 1960, the era of Duncan Hines. They narrate a progressive improvement of taste from 1900 toward its current zenith and do so by characterizing American food as shaped by two forces before 1960: home economics and dietetics in the service of industrialized food, and elite gourmands attempting to raise culinary standards. Strauss positions the “two different approaches to dining” as polar opposites that “differed substantially in their backgrounds, training, values, and the kind of audiences they wrote for”: the home economists were women who worked, often with industrial food companies, to help “millions of readers... simplify the task of feeding their families” while the gourmands were men “well versed in the humanities and arts” speaking “to a relatively small and affluent audience interested in experiencing the joys of fine dining.”<sup>57</sup> For Strauss, the former were a damaging influence because “They urged American home cooks to make health virtually the sole consideration in planning meals” which encouraged America's longstanding

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<sup>56</sup> Duncan Hines, *Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1955), 28.

<sup>57</sup> Strauss, *Setting the Table for Julia Child*, 13.

“utilitarian approach to dining” and “reluctance...to embrace sensual experience.”<sup>58</sup> The gourmands are pitted as underdog reformers trying their best to “convert their fellow Americans to the appreciation of leisure and sensuality” in the face of how “difficult it was for Americans to overcome inhibitions to the momentary enjoyment of subtle flavors.”<sup>59</sup>

David Kamp takes up Strauss’ dichotomy of gender, power, and value but argues for a happier ending to the competition between scientism and gourmandism. Kamp’s view of progress is that “food in America got better [when] it hopped the fence from the ghettos of home economics and snobby gourmandism to the expansive of popular culture,” though by popular culture he means the white upper middle class tastes of *Chez Panisse* and the *New York Times* Wednesday edition.<sup>60</sup> Though Kamp is less approving of gourmands than Strauss, the twentieth century is again divided into the “World Without Celebrity Chefs” before the 1960s and the culinary landscape afterwards when coastal elites made Europhilia popular.<sup>61</sup> Even though Kamp feels that “America would always have a dysfunctional relationship with the idea of culinary sophistication,” what drew Americans toward the light was when James Beard presented “a new perception of American food” based in the pure, the regional, and the homemade.<sup>62</sup> Kamp notes that there “were plenty of other” tastemakers before Beard “but none who had his knack for engaging so large and varied in audience.”<sup>63</sup> This statement seems odd given the fact that he discusses a number of other significant mid-century food writers like, for example, Clementine Paddleford, who was by estimation both the highest paid woman in the United States and the

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 6.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 69, 135.

<sup>60</sup> Kamp, *The United States of Arugula*, xv.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, 22, 19.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.



most widely read journalist throughout the 1950 and 1960s.<sup>64</sup> Though Kamp is right to argue that Beard was a significant influence in acknowledging regional foodways after 1960, before then there were more regions to American food history than the coasts and a great many more people and processes involved in them.

Perhaps Strauss and Kamp take their cues from Harvey Levenstein, whose two-volume history of American food is often considered the standard narrative in scholarship. Throughout both books the dominant forces are often, but not always, characterized as that of the “new nutrition” of vitamins and nutrients advanced by home economics and the industrial food companies eager to leverage the authority of science to attract consumers to their products.<sup>65</sup> While this argument is present in Kamp’s and Strauss’ narratives, Levenstein differs from them by considering more of the diversity and complexity of foodways in the United States as possible. To account for “new ways of eating and new attitudes toward food” in the twentieth century, he cites changes in the “material environment” such as “its changing geography, expanding transportation networks, burgeoning financial and manufacturing institutions, and growing cities,” alongside “Social changes connected with” these material changes, “such as the rise of the urban working and middle classes, the servant shortage, the growth of bureaucracy, professionalism, and the changing female labor force.”<sup>66</sup> Alice Julier argues that avoiding aesthetic judgments of past tastes, likes those made by Strauss and Kamp, enhances historical analysis by enlarging its perspective:

Normative assumptions about ‘American cuisine’ erase ample historical evidence of generations of ethnic Americans at the center of defining foodways, using both native and imported foodstuffs to create new patterns of consumption even in

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<sup>64</sup> Kelly Alexander and Cynthia Harris, *Hometown Appetites: The Story of Clementine Paddleford, the Forgotten Food Writer Who Chronicled How America Ate* (New York: Gotham Books, 2008).

<sup>65</sup> See chapters 3 to 9, 12, 13, and 15 in Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*. and chapters 1, 2, 3 and 7 in *Ibid.*, *Paradox of Plenty*.

<sup>66</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 210.

colonial times. While dominant white European groups may have had the power to more strongly influence what gets defined as national culture, they did so in complex and contested ways, particularly around food.<sup>67</sup>

A number of historians have followed Julier's approach to present a fuller and more dynamic picture of the history of American foodways than what is offered by Kamp and Strauss.

The foodways that ethnic Americans experienced in the first half of the twentieth century are a major aspect of culinary change in the history of the United States not considered by Kamp and Strauss. Donna Gabaccia argues that the decades "between 1900 and 1940 represented a particularly intensive phase of cross-cultural borrowing" between the practices of the waves of newly arrived immigrants and the foodways of established American communities.<sup>68</sup> This exchange was not smooth, though, as "a veritable 'food fight' erupted over what it meant not only to be, but to eat, American," a fight that "gradually waned as America's reformers and intellectuals, far more than America's eaters, changed their view on ethnic eaters and their foods [and] came to terms with America's diversity—a diversity no longer contained in enclave economies but reaching out into urban and regional marketplaces."<sup>69</sup> For example, by 1923 the powerful voice of conservative Anglo-American tradition and home economics, the Boston Cooking-School, admitted that, "American cooking has become cosmopolitan in its character. The New England cookery of colonial times has been superseded by cookery that has culled the best from every land and clime. Our markets glean from the whole wide world, to meet the

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<sup>67</sup> Alice P. Julier, "Hiding Gender and Race in the Discourse of Commercial Food Consumption," in *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies: Critical Perspectives on Women and Food*, ed. Arlene Voski Avakian and Barbara Haber, 163-184 (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 175.

<sup>68</sup> Gabaccia, *Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans*, 94. See also Hasia Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>69</sup> Gabaccia, *Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans*, 121, 136. See also Kristin L. Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

demands of a people assembled therefrom, and cookery depends largely on what is available.”<sup>70</sup>

Gabaccia thereby extends Levenstein’s argument about industrialization and geographic distribution, suggesting that, “our tastes for standardized mass-produced processed dishes” is paired with a countervailing taste “for a diverse variety of multi-ethnic specialties.”<sup>71</sup> Yet, the impact of these exchanges between social groups as well as between modern corporate processes and ethnic communities’ foodways had a number of consequences that go beyond just two senses of taste.

Focusing on industrialization and the immigrants who were both its producers and its consumers, Lizabeth Cohen and Katherine Leonard Turner show that early twentieth century immigrants were adaptive and selective in their engagement with the technologies and foodstuffs available to them, fashioning foodways out of local, independent businesses as much if not more often than national brands.<sup>72</sup> Conversely, Andrew Haley and Audrey Russek argue that middle class whites made sense of newly introduced ethnic tastes through a conscious practice of experimentation that eventually inspired a full-blown gastronomic ideology, cosmopolitanism, which understood itself as uniquely American. Russek claims that Americans’ culinary cosmopolitanism was an “affirmation of their *own* American identity through gastronomic contrast” so that “eating cosmopolitan fare” at the many newly opened ethnic restaurants “was in

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<sup>70</sup> Janet McKenzie Hill, *The American Cook Book: Recipes for Everyday Use* (Boston: The Boston Cooking-School Magazine Co., 1923), n.p.

<sup>71</sup> Gabaccia, *Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans*, 226.

<sup>72</sup> Lizabeth Cohen, “The New Deal State and Citizen Consumers,” in *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Susan Strasser, Charles McGovern, and Matthias Judt, 111-125 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Katherine Leonard Turner, “Buying Not Cooking: Ready-to-eat Food in American Urban Working-Class Neighborhoods, 1880-1930,” *Food, Culture & Society* 9.1 (2006): 13-39; Ibid., “Tools and Spaces: Food and Cooking in Working-Class Neighborhoods, 1880-1930,” in *Food Chains: From Farmyard to Shopping Cart*, ed. Warren Belasco and Roger Horowitz, 217-232 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

essence a nationalistic act—it distinguished this population of consumers as *American*.<sup>73</sup> Haley agrees and adds that this search for novel experiences was also a reaction of middle class diners against elites' gourmandism, in that cosmopolitans "equated excellence with a diverse knowledge of cultural experiences rather than mastery of a single highbrow tradition," namely French cuisine.<sup>74</sup> The exchange fostered by cosmopolitans required negotiating between tastes, though, with the popular dish of chop suey a strong example of how imported foodways transitioned to working with the ingredients and audiences found in the United States.<sup>75</sup> Altogether, this "sense of taste" for immigrant and minority foodways "reflects the evolving definition and geography of race, region, and nation" in the early twentieth century, a rethinking that ignited a search for authenticity in which knowledge was gained and "good" taste achieved through consuming the newly rediscovered foodways of regions and minority social groups.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Audrey Russek, "Appetites Without Prejudice: U.S. Foreign Restaurants and the Globalization of American Food Between the Wars," *Food & Foodways* 19.1 (2011): 35.

<sup>74</sup> Haley, *Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class*, 117.

<sup>75</sup> Samantha Barbas, "'I'll Take Chop Suey': Restaurants as Agents of Culinary and Cultural Change," *Journal of Popular Culture* 36.4 (2003): 42-52; Andrew Coe, *Chop Suey: A Cultural History of Chinese Food in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Haiming Liu, "Chop Suey as Imagined Authentic Chinese Food: The Culinary Identity of Chinese Restaurants in the United States," *Journal of Transnational Studies* 1.1 (2009): 1-24.

<sup>76</sup> Camille Bégin, "'Partaking of choice poultry cooked a la southern style': Taste and Race in the New Deal Sensory Economy," *Radical History Review* 110 (2010): 128. On the American comprehension of ethnic foodways, see Kalcik, "Ethnic Foodways in America: Symbol and the Performance of Identity.,"; Harvey A. Levenstein, "The American Response to Italian Food, 1880-1930," *Food & Foodways* 1.1-2 (1985): 1-23; Amy Bentley, "From Culinary Other to Mainstream America: Meanings and Uses of Southwestern Cuisine," in *Culinary Tourism*, ed. Lucy M. Long, 209-225 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004); Lucy M. Long, "Culinary Tourism: A Folkloristic Perspective on Eating and Otherness," in *Culinary Tourism*, ed. Lucy M. Long, 20-50 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004); Psyche Williams-Forsen, "Chickens and Chains: Using African American Foodways to Understand Black Identities," in *African American Foodways: Explorations of History and Culture*, ed. Anne L. Bower, 126-138 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008).

### Food Talk<sup>77</sup>

Scholars have thus shown that in the early twentieth century there were many more foodways to experience than just those related to the tastes made by home economists and gourmards on the coasts. There was also a more discursive scene than previously narrated. From the 1920s through the 1960s, many Americans were involved in a discourse of American foodways and an accompanying search for facts, recipes, and taste experiences. The contention was that America did indeed have good food, perhaps not the unified cuisine of the French whose culinary concepts and practices were hegemonic to some, but instead the homegrown ingredients and homemade recipes resulting from the mixture of history, geography, and demography unique to the United States. In addition, gradually more media outlets existed through which to express commentary on these diverse foodways. As Haley notes, food-focused periodicals did exist before *Gourmet* magazine's launch in 1941, like *What to Eat* that championed American foodways and rebuffed elite claims of a culinary hierarchy.<sup>78</sup> These publications' circulation was small and regional, but national periodicals discussed American foodways as well. Even Kamp and Strauss note that by the 1930s *The New Yorker*, *House Beautiful*, *Town and Country*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair* and New York's *Herald Tribune* ran articles inspired by new senses of taste like culinary cosmopolitanism, commented on the expanding array of foodstuffs distributed to and from American regions and those imported from Europe as well, and introduced new cultural authorities such as Clementine

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<sup>77</sup> This phrase is from Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste*, 92. Conceptually, Ferguson says that food needs talk so that relationships can develop from individual contact with foodstuffs into society-wide consciousness of foodways: "To the extent that cuisine depends on oral transmission, its general cultural status remains precarious. . . . The original material product itself cannot be diffused. As both cooks and diners know full well, they cannot duplicate a meal, they can only replicate it. This inherent stability requires an intellectual form for food to enter into more general circulation." (ibid.)

<sup>78</sup> Haley, *Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class*, 130-139.

Paddleford, Julian Street, Lucius Beebe, and Sheila Hibben.<sup>79</sup> These tastemakers and their texts appeared at the tail end of the “food fight” over the existence and constitution of American food, and they served to continue the conversation in a new direction. Now that it was accepted that American food consisted of multiple foodways from many ethnic populations and geographic regions, documents from the era show that a bevy of writers explored the country to collect evidence and recipes in an effort to chronicle the rich extent of culinary life in the United States.

That Duncan Hines professed a very *American* gastronomy, deeply nationalistic in both discourse and practice, makes sense because he was a member of an entire generation of writers pushing past the dominant themes of previous decades. While Hines innovated with his guidebook, in order to catalogue the disparate foodways of the United States peer journalists, historians, cookbook authors, and other writers searched America for signs of “good” food and the traditions that made them. Perhaps a first step away from the fight over whether America had a single cuisine toward the recognition and comprehension of its many foodways was a spate of commentary that occurred in *The Nation* during the 1920s. First, this weekly ran an unsigned op-ed piece criticizing a *New York Times* article on “a typical American meal” that was full of European dishes, a mistake that probably occurred because the meal was served at the epicenter of pro-European gourmandism for the era, the Waldorf-Astoria hotel in Manhattan. In response, the editors of *The Nation* took a “moment to laugh discreetly at this ‘American dinner’, the only indisputably native dish in which was lima beans.”<sup>80</sup> Apparently Americans had much to say about this misapprehension of their foodways, for in response “the rain of correspondence which poured into the office suggested that the subject had aroused more interest and passion among our readers than the occupation of the Ruhr” and other serious matters. Within two months the

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<sup>79</sup> Kamp, *The United States of Arugula*, 3-10; Strauss, *Setting the Table for Julia Child*, 44-49.

<sup>80</sup> “What is an ‘American Dinner’,” *The Nation*, October 17, 1923.

journal published a symposium of opinions on exactly what is American food, with famed critics like William Allen White and H.L. Mencken providing selections of their region's best dishes, like Midwest beef and Maryland chicken, or more general foodways like Pennsylvania Dutch tradition and New Mexican *mestizo* inventions.<sup>81</sup>

That Americans answered the question of “What is American food?” with a reply of “regional foodways!” conforms to the tenor of the times. The interwar period was a high tide in the continuous ebb and flow of regionalisms throughout American history.<sup>82</sup> Early twentieth century regionalism stretched from rural writers to urban city-planners reacting against, and yet using the resources of, the modernization of society, the nationalization of politics, and the cultural shocks of World War I, the Roaring Twenties, and then the Great Depression.<sup>83</sup> Interwar regionalism “believed that the materials for cultural reconstruction must be found at home, where time and nature had taught an appropriate wisdom” on how to integrate regions into a nation.<sup>84</sup> Whether by conservative Southern Agrarians or the liberal Cultural Front, Americans were attempting “the discovery of significant myths, symbols, and images from the culture itself that might also serve as a basis of reinforcement or indeed the re-creation or remaking of culture itself” into a more integrated whole.<sup>85</sup> Whether moving toward even less regulation of the economy or toward increasingly centralized government planning and social coordination, many

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<sup>81</sup> “When We Americans Dine: A Symposium on the Great American Dinner,” *The Nation*, December 26, 1923.

<sup>82</sup> D.W. Meinig, “The Continuous Shaping of America: A Prospectus for Geographers and Historians,” *American Historical Review* 83.5 (1978): 1186-1205; Meinig, *The Shaping of America, Vol. 4*, 133-148; Edward L. Ayers and Peter S. Onuf, “Introduction,” in *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions*, ed. Edward L. Ayers and Peter S. Onuf, 1-10 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Peter S. Onuf, “Federalism, Republicanism, and the Origins of American Sectionalism,” in *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions*, ed. Edward L. Ayers and Peter S. Onuf, 11-37 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

<sup>83</sup> Lewis Mumford, “Regionalism and Irregionalism,” *Sociological Review* 19.4 (1927): 277-288; Donald Davidson, *The Attack on Leviathan: Regionalism and Nationalism in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1938); Steiner, “Regionalism in the Great Depression”; Dorman, *Revolt of the Provinces*.

<sup>84</sup> Dorman, *Revolt of the Provinces*, 23.

<sup>85</sup> Warren I. Susman, “The Culture of the Thirties,” in *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 178; Paul V. Murphy, *The Rebuke of History: The Southern Agrarians and American Conservative Thought* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1998).

were eager to find a more usable past of American roots with which to make a vibrant present replete with all-American things.

Vivid and voluminous examples of searches to rediscover regional America are seen in the Great Depression's Federal Writers' Project (FWP) within the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a project that sent writers of different types to explore the local traditions of each state's unique communities. Though beset by budget problems, political controversy, and recalcitrant writers and editors working independently of its central administration, this project nevertheless produced nearly a thousand regionalist texts, including guidebooks for states, sub-regions of states, and cities; three volumes created by following roads to craft narratives of America; and a narrative of regional foodways left unpublished for over 50 years.<sup>86</sup> One of the WPA's lead administrators, Katherine Kellock, argued then that "the guides reveal an America that neither the historians nor the imaginative writers of the past had discovered" because "Only the WPA guides have the mile-by-mile treatment that... forced the close scrutiny of town, hill and dale, the search for what makes each community differ from the others."<sup>87</sup> The problem, noted by another administrator, was that "each region tends to interpret regionalism in terms of its own historical shibboleths and local gods" because regionalists tend to "conceive of regionalism as taking things for granted and accepting as final a certain social order" that is, in fact, changing.<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, Henry Alsberg distinguished these projects in 1936 by saying they were "gathering material which had never been coordinated before," nearly the same

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<sup>86</sup> Nelson Algren, *America Eats* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992). On the WPA and the FWP, see Jerre Mangione, *The Dream and the Deal: The Federal Writers' Project, 1935-1943* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996); Christine Bold, *The WPA Guides: Mapping America* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1999); Jerrold Hirsch, *Portrait of America: A Cultural History of the Federal Writers' Project* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

<sup>87</sup> Katherine Kellock, "The WPA Writers: Portraitists of the United States," *The American Scholar* 9.4 (1940): 474.

<sup>88</sup> B.A. Botkin, "Regionalism: Cult or Culture?," *The English Journal* 25.3 (1936): 181, 183.



phrasing used by Duncan Hines in the same year that he emerged in American popular culture.<sup>89</sup>

In fact, this search to collect nostalgic ends through progressive means was a common practice of the era, a search enacted by a cohort of writers active in the mid-century, many of which focused on American foodways.<sup>90</sup>

Collecting culinary Americana, Sheila Hibben would publish by 1932 a cookbook avowedly regionalist in style and substance. Though cookbooks calling themselves “American” or “national” had been common for decades, Hibben marks the beginning of a regular discourse of discovering the richness of American soil, in both the literal terms of its agricultural productivity and the metaphorical sense of its cultural diversity and historical traditions. Thus, Hibben said “this book is aimed to call people home, not only to take stock of the vast variety of our native materials, but to learn from the experience of our fathers the best and simplest way of eating,” which for an American means she should “study the materials of her own district” and “become a virago even about fresh materials.”<sup>91</sup> She laments that under the sway of gourmands’ Europhilia, “We were on the way to becoming a lost people—lost to all sense of good food, fancying it was expensive food with expensive-sounding names that we wanted,” when in her opinion “there is no earthly reason why eating in Akron, Ohio, or Dallas, Texas, or Newark, New Jersey, should not be as wholly satisfactory as eating anywhere in Europe.”<sup>92</sup> In a 1934 issue of the intellectual journal *Arts and Decoration*, Hibben argued to an audience of fine artists that not only is cooking an art but American cooking is artful enough to reach if not surpass the quality of Europe, usually symbolized by French cuisine. She recognized that “In the stream of

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<sup>89</sup> Henry Alsberg, “New Guide to America: Local History and Scenic Spots to Be Described in Federal Project,” *The New York Times*, February 9, 1936.

<sup>90</sup> See “In Quest of an American Aesthetic: Collecting Americana and Seeing America First (Circa 1915 to 1945)” in Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 310-341.

<sup>91</sup> Sheila Hibben, *The National Cookbook: A Kitchen Americana* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1932), x, xi.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, xv-xvi.

gastronomic history, the culinary annals of this country have made scarcely a ripple,” and “yet New Orleans bouillabaisse, which has very little in common with the more publicized fish stew of Marseilles, has a fine succulence not to be surpassed by any fish dish of Europe or America.”<sup>93</sup> Hibben’s work proved so popular that she revised, renamed, and republished her cookbook in 1946 with the same concentration on “whatever grows in our back yards, or is caught along our shores, or presents itself honest and aboveboard at the chain store,” a focus on sourcing seasonal, local, and traditional ingredients that she had made famous in her regular column for *The New Yorker*.<sup>94</sup> Commentary on understanding American foodways in this manner was quickly gaining in popularity, as Della Lutes’ memoir of eating regional food from local, seasonal ingredients was reprinted thirteen times within two years of its initial publication in 1936.<sup>95</sup>

Hibben and Lutes were not alone as the interwar period saw the publication of a bevy of cookbooks on regional foodways, a new development within an already popular genre of books. *Publishers’ Weekly* noted that by 1934, “Of the many classifications of cookery books, it is probably the regional book which is most in demand and a type more easily sold by the average bookshop.”<sup>96</sup> For instance, after a year’s worth of traveling to kitchens across the country, Grace and Beverly Smith summarize the outlook of the emerging culinary regionalism in their 1938 cookbook by arguing that, “If there is an American culture (which we believe there is) it comes in largely by way of the kitchen door. ‘Culture’ has come to be a term of ridiculous abstraction. It is hard to offer a specific course for any abstraction so profoundly entangled,” but the Smiths

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., “Look Homeward Cooks: An Appreciation of Culinary Art in America,” *Arts and Decoration* 40.5 (1934): 16.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., *American Regional Cookery* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1946), x.

<sup>95</sup> Della T. Lutes, *The Country Kitchen* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1936).

<sup>96</sup> Helmut L. Ripperger, “Cookery Books for Gourmets: Regional and Specialty Cook Books Have Their Place in the Well-Stocked Book Shop,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, October 13, 1934, 1371.

suggest that American kitchens show “culture” at work.<sup>97</sup> The famous avant-garde literary siblings of Cora, Rose, and Bob Brown engaged in a similar process and product for their cookbook, “collecting regional American cooking lore, gathering characteristic recipes.... from several hundred local authorities” based in the “vast, indigenous pantry of gobblers and goobers in which our hungry pioneers dipped and brought up kitchen miracles.”<sup>98</sup> As was common to this discourse of rediscovering American foodways, the Browns admit to having “put in twenty years of culinary adventuring in as many countries and wrote a dozen books about it before finding out that we might as well have stayed at home and specialized in the regional dishes of our forty-eight states. For America cooks and devours a great variety of viands than any other country, we’re the world’s richest stewpot.”<sup>99</sup> Crosby Gaige’s cookbook of America in honor of the 1939 World’s Fair in New York was yet another anthology of dozens of recipes from all forty-eight states. Gaige remarks that his cookbook represents a “distinctive wholly American creation—a polyglot, varied, now (in recent years) increasingly good cookery” made possible by the fact that “More people than ever before in the history of the country are talking about food.”<sup>100</sup> A famous example of this trend was the 1936 publication of what would become a foundation of modern American foodways, *The Joy of Cooking*, published as a conscious attempt to get past home economics and gourmandism to instead revel in the traditions and inventions of America’s past and present.<sup>101</sup> Many cookbooks on specific regions of the country were popular in this era, a

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<sup>97</sup> Grace Smith, Beverly Smith, and Charles Morrow Wilson, *Through the Kitchen Door: A Cook’s Tour to the Best Kitchens of America* (New York: Stackpole Sons, 1938), 9.

<sup>98</sup> Cora Brown, Rose Brown, and Bob Brown, *America Cooks: Practical Recipes from 48 States* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1940), 12, 11.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>100</sup> Crosby Gaige, *New York World’s Fair Cook Book: The American Kitchen* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1939), 104.

<sup>101</sup> This cookbook was first self-published through a small firm before Rombauer contracted with a major publisher. Irma Rombauer, *The Joy of Cooking: A Compilation of Reliable Recipes with a Casual Culinary Chat* (St. Louis: A.C. Clayton, 1931); *Ibid.*, *The Joy of Cooking: A Compilation of Reliable Recipes with a Casual Culinary Chat* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1936). On Rombauer’s cookbook’s reception, as well as the Browns’, within a

niche within the genre of cookbooks that would continue through the mid-century when, in the late 1950s, there was a sudden spike in the frequency of their publication.<sup>102</sup>

The discourse of American foodways continued in the ever-expanding field of magazines and journals, too. In *Parents* magazine Lettie Gay extolled the virtues of “Regional American Cookery” as deep traditions capable of being updated for contemporary tastes and to overcome “the deficiencies of the Early American diet.” Like many of this generation of American gastronomers re-narrating American food history, Gay begins by heaping praise on the Indians who, as “the real Americans”, provided the foundation that “has been combined with and modified by the customs and traditions of each separate group” that has immigrated to North America.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, American eating built its foodways through multiple regions in which “localities became famous for their use of those foods which were indigenous to the section.”<sup>104</sup> This focus on regionalization often required explanations of the particular properties of each area to understand which groups, products, and principles informed the creation of the niches of American food. For example, from 1933 to 1934 Barbara Lee Johnson wrote a series of articles in *American Home* called “Americana in the Kitchen.” With around a dozen recipes per region, Johnson narrated the ethnic groups, climate, agriculture, local industry and resources, as well as salient cultural practices, seeking to make sense of each region’s taste. For the Southwest, that

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highly competitive field of dozens of cookbooks, see Helmut L. Ripperger, “More Cookery Books,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, September 21, 1935. and *Ibid.*, “And Still More Cookery Books,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, August 22, 1936.

<sup>102</sup> Lettie Gay, ed. *200 Years of Charleston Cooking* (New York: Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith Inc., 1930); Marjorie Mosser, *Good Maine Food* (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1939); Florence Brobeck, ed. *Fifty Years in a Maryland Kitchen* (New York: M. Barrows and Company, Inc., 1944); Ada B. Lothe, Breta L. Greim, and Ethel M. Keating, *The Best from Midwest Kitchens* (New York: M.S. Mill Co., Inc., 1946); Isabel B. Marvin, *Bon Appetit: The St. Louis Cook Book* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1947); Ella Shannon Bowles and Dorothy S. Towle, *Secrets of New England Cooking* (New York: M. Barrows and Company, Inc., 1947). Furthermore, an untold number of community cookbooks were published in the first half of the twentieth century, publications often spurred by churches and other local groups looking to raise money for their causes through collecting local, traditional, and “family secret” recipes that, in turn, were creating the ideals and practices of regional foodways. See, Anne L. Bower, ed. *Recipes for Reading: Community Cookbooks, Stories, Histories* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997).

<sup>103</sup> Lettie Gay, “Regional American Cookery,” *Parents*, October 1934, 42.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

meant familiarizing Americans with foreign and perhaps shocking sensations, since “Your first taste of chili pepper may tempt you to call out the fire department, but you will soon discover that you are eating neither dynamite nor live coals but a condiment whose tangy zest is relished.”<sup>105</sup> For New England, that meant sifting through competing notions of the place, the Cape Cod of “those who only know it through their geography books” and history lessons, “the Cape Cod of the casual visitor” versus the more seasoned “perennial summer colonists.”<sup>106</sup> Considerations of American foodways extended beyond “lifestyle” magazines, though, thanks to the revisionism spurred by the social disruptions of the 1930s.

*Fortune* magazine, launched just before the Great Depression began, presents a surprisingly strong record of writing about aspects of American foodways. Perhaps surprising given their opinions in the decades since, in the 1930s *Fortune* ran fairly detailed portrayals of current affairs in the United States, many of which turned a sharp eye toward the commodity chains and culture trends that work together to create American foodways. Articles like “Cooperation at a Profit” examined changes in the technology, labor, marketing, and distribution of fresh citrus fruits to the entire country, a revolution then in the making.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, articles on how trucking, travel infrastructure, and the invention of diesel engines were overturning the business of distribution showed a keen interest in the new material processes of American foodways, like how quickly canning changed the manufacturing and consumption of beer.<sup>108</sup>

*Fortune* even ran pictorial essays on how salt is made by modern techniques, the complexities of

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<sup>105</sup> Barbara Lee Johnson, “Americana in the Kitchen I - the Southwest,” *American Home*, October 1933, 238.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., “Americana in the Kitchen V - Cape Cod Cookery,” *American Home*, April 1934, 278. See also Ibid., “Americana in the Kitchen II - Celebrated Dishes of the South,” *American Home*, November 1933; Ibid., “Americana in the Kitchen III - Pennsylvania Dutch Cuisine,” *American Home*, January 1934; Ibid., “Americana in the Kitchen IV - Scandinavian Cookery,” *American Home*, February 1934. *American Home* continued their interest in American foodways with article such as Mariel Earley Sheppard, “Cooking in the Carolina Blue Ridge,” *American Home*, July 1934.

<sup>107</sup> “Cooperation at a Profit,” *Fortune*, July 1936.

<sup>108</sup> “Diesels on Wheels,” *Fortune*, December 1934; “Beer into Cans,” *Fortune*, January 1936; “Freight by Highway,” *Fortune*, February 1936; “Unfit for Modern Motor Traffic,” *Fortune*, August 1936.

agriculture in a globalizing era, and the problems of dietetics in a world of ‘pop science’ and rampant advertising.<sup>109</sup>

Histories of food were also being published in the United States, arguably for the first time.<sup>110</sup> While relatively well-known gastronomic texts had discussed the history of food before, such as those by George Ellwanger and Henry Finck, their accounts were anecdotal rumination and not empirical analysis.<sup>111</sup> In 1940, though, Louis Lamprey published a full-blown anthropological history of food that set American practices within a long, epochal frame that concluded with impressive foresights into the interconnected, globalized agro-industrial world of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.<sup>112</sup> Richard Cummings followed up the next year with a historical “consideration of the way in which food habits have been changed by social developments such as the growth of cities and by technological developments such as refrigeration, fast transportation, and processing of foods.”<sup>113</sup> Cummings believed that “food habits certainly should be as worthy of record as many other social, economic, or political aspects of our history,” habits understood only by “dealing with the production, distribution, preparation, and physiological aspects of food” through analyzing “Widely scattered sources including travel accounts, health literature, cookbooks, periodicals, newspapers, and government documents.”<sup>114</sup> Frank Pearson and Don Paarlberg then applied this analysis-by-synthesis approach to contemporary matters of the 1930s and 1940s, publishing an intensely detailed study

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<sup>109</sup> “Jitney into Giant,” *Fortune*, August 1934; “The Department of Agriculture,” *Fortune*, April 1936; “The Wonders of Diet,” *Fortune*, May 1936.

<sup>110</sup> Helmut L. Ripperger, “Cookery Books for Gourmet: A Specialized Market,” *Publishers’ Weekly*, September 29, 1934.

<sup>111</sup> George H. Ellwanger, *The Pleasures of the Table: An Account of Gastronomy from Ancient Days to Present Times, With a History of its Literature, Schools, and Most Distinguished Artists; Together with Some Special Recipes and Views Concerning the Aesthetics of Dinners and Dinner-Giving* (1902); Henry T. Finck, *Food and Flavor: A Gastronomic Guide to Health and Good Living* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1924).

<sup>112</sup> Louis Lamprey, *The Story of Cookery* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1940).

<sup>113</sup> Richard O. Cummings, *The American and His Food* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), 9.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, iii, iv.

of American food in its agricultural, economic, and social guises: from the soil and climate to crop rotation and animal feed stores, from labor conditions and price policing to consumer trends and geopolitical contexts.<sup>115</sup> In yet another sense of Americans' relationship with food, by this time period the science of flavor and its industrial manufacture had become so common that it had its first widely available textbook. Like Pearson and Paarlberg, E.C. Crocker's volume on flavor puts food within a wide network of influences, arguing that "every operation" related to food "has some influence on flavor": the meeting of plant chemistry and human physiology to create flavors, the "associations" between food and the world formed by personal experience, the "training" received from one's culture, the ongoing mixing of traditions after 1492, and the unceasing "flux" of culinary concepts and language thanks to fashions in thought and practice.<sup>116</sup> Beyond home economics and gourmandism, and before the middle of the century, Americans were engaged in making senses of taste through many new means and toward ever more ends.

While Americans' interest in the conception and contents of American food was generating a significant discourse on American traditions as well as prescient innovations, they were mostly confined to finding recipes, narrating their history, and publishing both in cookbooks or articles focused on cooking. Considerations of food in other formats, for other functions, and in within other frames of context were just beginning, as seen in the publications of Lamprey and Pearson & Paarlberg. Aided by the additional resources of consumerism and automobility, Duncan Hines' innovation involved taking this search for culinary Americana to dishes eaten in restaurants rather than just those prepared in homes and at community events. He

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<sup>115</sup> Frank A. Pearson and Don Paarlberg, *Food* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1944). For an example of their perspective: "food is a highly complex problem of supplies, kinds, choice, free prices, ceiling prices, food distribution, food habits, food as a weapon of war, rationing, nutrition, subsidies, black markets, inflation, and administrative action further befogged by charge and counter-charge by spokes men for the many interested groups." 24-25.

<sup>116</sup> E.C. Crocker, *Flavor* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1945), 73, 33-43.

would speak in the same discourse of rediscovering American foodways that his peers did, and then, like all those so by inspired it, search the country for authentically all-American eating. As he stated in the introduction to his tastemaking text, *Adventures in Good Eating*, his project aimed “to see as much of America as possible, to test its outstanding food, to meet interesting people along the way” and to provide “information necessary to an intelligent decision” in choosing “‘good places at which to eat’” since “‘eating out’ amid country surroundings is the modern vogue—the prevailing recreational fashion.”<sup>117</sup> Understanding the emergence of Hines thus requires seeing how the search for culinary Americana was refracted through consumers’ decision making in their fashion of motoring and eating out.

### **Consumerism, Automobility, and Eating Out**

Historians of the United States have regularly characterized American society as consumerist since the Reconstruction era thanks to large-scale creation of infrastructure to encourage consumption, including changes in management and finance, revolutions in distribution chains and retail shops, and the expansion of print media and advertising deep into the hinterlands of the country.<sup>118</sup> At the same time, the pace of consumption increased as

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<sup>117</sup> Duncan Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (Chicago: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1937), n.p.

<sup>118</sup> Gary Cross, *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Cohen, *Consumers’ Republic*; Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed*; William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993); Michael P. Conzen, “The Maturing Urban System in the United States, 1840-1910,” *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 67.1 (1977): 88-108; Richard Ohmann, *Selling Culture: Magazines, Markets, and Class at the Turn of the Century* (London: Verso, 1996); Matthew Schneirov, *The Dream of a New Social Order: Popular Magazines in America, 1893-1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); David Abrahamson, *Magazine-Made America: The Cultural Transformation of the Postwar Periodical* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1996); Ellen Gruber Garvey, *The Adman in the Parlor: Magazines and the Gendering of Consumer Culture, 1880s to 1910s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); T.J. Jackson Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930,” in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears, 1-38 (New York: Pantheon, 1983); *Ibid.*, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Stuart Ewen, *Captains*



industrialization sped up the tempo of the daily life rhythm of Americans, therein encouraging more consumption more often, and the extension of consumer credit encouraged consumption as well.<sup>119</sup> Altogether, by the beginning of Hines' career in 1930s American consumption was a national phenomenon supported by an extensive infrastructure.

The early twentieth century was also when the automobile revolutionized Americans' way of life. "Between 1895 and 1961," Cotton Seiler argues, "automobility emerged as a shaper of public policy and the landscape, a prescriptive metaphor for social and economic relations, and a forge of citizens" who enacted their "expressive individualism" and "free" subjectivities through driving and consuming.<sup>120</sup> Specifically, the 1920s to the 1940s—the era during which Hines emerged—were when the cost of cars dropped and the expansion of the number of roads, cars, and drivers increased significantly.<sup>121</sup> As a consequence of their popular advent, in the interwar era automobiles were a leader in "metropolitanism," what Joseph Interrante calls "the

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*of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977); Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); David Blanke, *Sowing the American Dream: How Consumer Culture Took Root in the Rural Midwest* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000); Ronald Kline, *Consumers in the Country: Technology and Social Change in Rural America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

<sup>119</sup> Gary Cross, *Time and Money: The Making of Consumer Culture* (London: Routledge, 1993); Martha L. Olney, *Buy Now Pay Later: Advertising, Credit, and Consumer Durables in the 1920s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Lendol Calder, *Financing the American Dream: A Cultural History of Consumer Credit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

<sup>120</sup> Seiler, *Republic of Drivers*, 3. Seiler's term, automobility, and its extensive reach comes from its definitions, all of which agree that automobiles have engendered an entire network of activity—from physical habits to cultural symbols to spatial relationships—that work together to form society. See Sudhir Chella Rajan, *The Enigma of Automobility: Democratic Politics and Pollution Control* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996); Jorg Beckmann, "Automobility: A Social Problem and Theoretical Concept," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 19.5 (2001): 593-607; Daniel Miller, "Driven Societies," in *Car Cultures*, ed. Daniel Miller, 1-33 (New York: Berg, 2001); Mike Featherstone, "Automobilities: An Introduction," *Theory, Culture & Society* 21.4/5 (2004): 1-24; John Urry, "The 'System' of Automobility," *Theory, Culture & Society* 21.4/5 (2004): 25-39.

<sup>121</sup> The ratio of cars to people jumped from 1:201 in 1910 to 1:13 in 1920, and then to 1:5 by 1930. Despite a much cheaper price, traffic on the rails decreased by nearly twenty-five percent from 1921 to 1941 while traffic in private automobiles increased six times over. In support of these patterns, roads for automobiles was the second biggest item of government spending through out the 1920s, efforts that doubled the number of paved highway miles in the 1920s, and doubled them again in the 1930s. John B. Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life* (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1971), 50; John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985), 126, 139.

geographic configuration of a consumer society based upon car travel.”<sup>122</sup> Americans spent an ever-increasing amount of time in automobiles, including shopping at places built around motorists’ needs.<sup>123</sup> Roadsides were also developing at an astonishing speed as places for leisure and business, and soon they were littered with signs, restaurants, gas stations, and attractions and activities of many types, all of which appeared to be rebuilt and reinvented each decade.<sup>124</sup>

Automobiles enabled not just the movement of consumers but products as well. Alongside crucial food technologies such as the invention of canning and other modern packaging, refrigeration, and warehousing techniques, automobiles drastically altered the distribution of goods in the United States by reducing the cost of shopping and extending its range.<sup>125</sup> Cars thus made commodities cheaper, more standardized, and more widely available, uniting more people with more of the same products through more similar processes. Yet automobility also allowed for the converse of standardization and nationalization, in that thanks to wider and deeper commodity distribution Americans could experience more regional foods

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<sup>122</sup> Interrante, “The Road to Autopia,” 91.

<sup>123</sup> Howard Gillette, “The Evolution of the Planned Shopping Center in Suburb and City,” *Journal of the American Planning Association* 51.4 (1985): 449-460; Richard Longstreth, “Diffusion of the Community Shopping Center Concept during the Interwar Decades,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 56.3 (1997): 268-293; Stephanie Dyer, “Holding the Line Against Philadelphia: Business, Suburban Change, and the Main Line’s Suburban Square, 1926-1950,” *Business and Economic History* 27.2 (1998): 279-291.

<sup>124</sup> Warren J. Belasco, “Commercialized Nostalgia: The Origins of the Roadside Strip,” in *The Automobile and American Culture*, ed. David L. Lewis and Laurence Goldstein, 105-122 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1983); Karl Raitz, “American Roads, Roadside America,” *The Geographical Review* 88.3 (1998): 363-387; Jakle, *Roadside Restaurant in the Automobile Age*; John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *Signs in America’s Auto Age: Signatures of Landscape and Place* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004); Catherine Gudis, *Buyways: Billboards, Automobiles, and the American Landscape* (London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>125</sup> On technology see Teuteberg, “The Birth of the Modern Consumer Age: Food Innovations from 1800.”; Roger Horowitz, *Putting Meat on the American Table: Taste, Technology, Transformation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006). On transportation and distribution, see Hamilton, *The Road to America’s Wal-Mart Economy*; Petrick, “‘Like Ribbons of Green and Gold’: Industrializing Lettuce and the Quest for Quality in the Salinas Valley, 1920–1965.”; Christopher W. Wells, “The Changing Nature of Country Roads: Farmers, Reformers, and the Shifting Uses of Rural Space, 1880-1905,” *Agricultural History* 80.2 (2006): 143-166; Susanne Freidberg, *Fresh: A Perishable History* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2009).

and seasonal specialties, including access to out-of-season produce, thereby expanding consumers' consciousness of the regional ingredients of American foodways.<sup>126</sup>

Americans also used cars to bring consumption of food out of the home in the trend of "eating out."<sup>127</sup> The causes of this shift are multiple, and the following is but a partial list: metropolitanism encouraged workers to consume meals far from home; time allotted for meals shrank; more workers had shifts beyond 9-to-5 which meant more meals at "odd hours"; more women worked and thus expanded restaurant customer bases; processed foods and advancing cooking technologies made some restaurant operations cheaper, quicker, and faster; discretionary spending increased; and immigrants expanded the amount and types of restaurants.<sup>128</sup> Moreover, in the 1920s Prohibition decimated what had been the mostly all-male, alcohol-fueled options that dominated both elite fine dining and common saloons, and in response restaurants were "domesticated" to become more family- and female-friendly.<sup>129</sup> Also, Americans used automobiles for leisure, traveling to unfamiliar places where they knew not where restaurants could be found.<sup>130</sup> In general, there was explosive growth in the volume and diversity of types of restaurants in the early twentieth century, the vast majority of which were independently owned

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<sup>126</sup> Thanks to these changes in distribution, "Milk, cheese, and green vegetables poured into the South from the Mid-Atlantic states and Midwest. Practically the entire nation was blanketed with immature citrus fruits and indestructible iceberg lettuce from southern California, canned fish and vegetables from central and northern California, canned tomatoes and peas from New Jersey, Wisconsin cheese, western beef, Midwestern ham and sausage, Florida oranges, Hawaiian pineapple, Central American bananas, and Cuban sugar. The shelves of an A&P in Louisville, Kentucky were hardly distinguishable from the shelves of one in Utica, New York, or Sacramento, California." Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, 27.

<sup>127</sup> At the turn of the century, Roger Horowitz notes that "expenditures for eating out were so low they hardly registered on family spending records," yet by mid-century "20 percent of food expenses involved eating away from home," a trend that "grew steadily to reach almost 50 percent by 2002." Horowitz, *Taste, Technology, Transformation*, 13.

<sup>128</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 183-193.

<sup>129</sup> Samantha Barbas, "Just Like Home: 'Home Cooking' and the Domestication of the American Restaurant," *Gastronomica* 2.4 (2002); Jan Whitaker, "Domesticating the Restaurant: Marketing the Anglo-American Home," in *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies: Critical Perspectives on Women and Food*, ed. Arlene Voski Avakian and Barbara Haber, 89-142 (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2006).

<sup>130</sup> Belasco, *Americans on the Road*.

and operated.<sup>131</sup> From 1880 to 1930 the number of restaurateurs jumped from 13,000 to 165,000, a per capita increase of more than 400%, activity that led to the founding of the National Restaurant Association in 1919 and restaurants' very first attempts at advertising.<sup>132</sup> In this new environment of burgeoning roadsides and restaurants, Americans were also being told how to consume them—with the help of critics and community.

### Consumerist Critics

Though consumption “might well be the defining thread of American life,” consumers are made and made differently in different situations.<sup>133</sup> As Frank Trentmann argues, “consumer” is a categorization that “did not arise effortlessly as an automatic response to the spread of markets but had to be made” because like all social categories “‘consumers’ develop as an identity and ascriptive category of interest.”<sup>134</sup> The types of consumers Hines catered to in the 1930s were in fact shaped by key developments in consumerism that occurred during that decade. Alan Brinkley’s account of the New Deal cites that era as the origin of a federal “commitment to consumption” while Charles McGovern argues that a parallel social and cultural commitment to conjoin consumption and citizenship occurred before World War II.<sup>135</sup> In the 1930s economists debated the extent to which consumers had become “sovereigns” over the market, a self-conscious and politically empowered group influencing commodity design and

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<sup>131</sup> Mariani, *America Eats Out*.

<sup>132</sup> Haley, *Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class*, 72, 13.

<sup>133</sup> David Steigerwald, “All Hail the Republic of Choice: Consumer History as Contemporary Thought,” *The Journal of American History* 93.2 (2006): 385.

<sup>134</sup> Frank Trentmann, “Knowing Consumers – Histories, Identities, Practices,” in *The Making of the Consumer: Knowledge, Power, and Identity in the Modern World*, ed. Frank Trentmann, 1-27. *Knowing Consumers* (New York: Berg, 2006), 5, 3. See also Richard Wightman and T.J. Jackson Lears Fox, ed. *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980* (New York: Pantheon, 1983); Richard Butsch, ed. *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure into Consumption* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

<sup>135</sup> Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 71; Charles McGovern, *Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

exchange more than those producing it.<sup>136</sup> Overall, consumers were empowered, and common practices to wield such influence were picketing, boycotts, policy advocacy, voting campaigns, write-ins, and independent labeling and product testing, tactics that were often longstanding, from the Boston Tea Party onwards.<sup>137</sup> Newer tactics came from groups like the National Consumers' League and publications like *Consumers Report*, an outgrowth from the earlier Progressive and Pure Food movements that aimed at improving the prices and quality of things consumed.<sup>138</sup> By 1940, white American consumers thus came to think that to consume is to make decisions in consultation with the expertise of a wide range of critics and authorities.<sup>139</sup>

As Duncan Hines said about his origin as a food critic, by the 1930s “There were book reviewers to tell us what we should read, art and drama critics to advise on what to see—but there was no authoritative and unbiased guide to good eating.”<sup>140</sup> This realization, and ensuing activity, were part of a broad movement within American consumer culture known as the rise of the middlebrow, a reaction to nineteenth century conceptions of culture as divided between elite highbrow art and popular lowbrow entertainment.<sup>141</sup> Between the Civil War and World War II,

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<sup>136</sup> F.W. Hutt, “The Concept of Consumers’ Sovereignty,” *The Economic Journal* 50.197 (1940).

<sup>137</sup> Dana Frank, *Purchasing Power: Consumer Organizing, Gender, and the Seattle Labor Movement, 1919-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Meg Jacobs, *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Glickman, *Buying Power: A History of Consumer Activism in America*.

<sup>138</sup> Kathryn Kish Sklar, “The Consumers’ White Label Campaign of the National Consumers’ League, 1898-1918,” in *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Susan Strasser, Charles McGovern, and Matthias Judd, 17-35 (German Historical Institute, Washington, D.C.: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Landon R. Y. Storrs, *Civilizing Capitalism: The National Consumers’ League, Women’s Activism, and Labor Standards in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Lucy Black Creighton, *Pretenders to the Throne: The Consumer Movement in the United States* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Co., 1976); Robert N. Mayer, *The Consumer Movement: Guardians of the Marketplace* (Boston: Twayne, 1989); Lorine Swainston Goodwin, *The Pure Food, Drink, and Drug Crusaders, 1879-1914* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 1999).

<sup>139</sup> Carolyn M. Goldstein, “Educating Consumers, Representing Consumers: Reforming the Marketplace Through Scientific Expertise at the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, 1923-1940,” in *The Expert Consumer: Associations and Professionals in Consumer Society*, ed. Alain Chatriot, Marie-Emmanuelle Chessel, and Matthew Hilton, 73-88 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

<sup>140</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 28.

<sup>141</sup> Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

cultural authority became “no longer the exclusive preserve of any single stratum of society or type of professional group” as “traditional forms of cultural expertise” like the work of professors, highbrow periodicals, and elite institutions of artistic performance lost a large part of their cultural influence.<sup>142</sup> For example, Andrew Haley shows that as more middle class Americans engaged in “eating out”, and the aristocratic influence over dining waned, “middlebrow” critics became the new arbiter of restaurants. Like other forms of consumer activism in early twentieth century, “the emergence of restaurant reviewing” used “the tools of the Progressive middle class—expertise and investigative journalism” to “search for order and distinctiveness” yet “not undermine the democratization of restaurant dining.”<sup>143</sup> Indeed, democratization served itself in that middle class consumers themselves became critics of things that they had interests in, thereby erasing any difference between, and thus hierarchy of, critic and consumer. Communities coalesced around consumer activities and these communities felt they knew best how to critique things according to their own senses as engaged, knowledgeable consumers.<sup>144</sup>

**“A Directory to Good Eating Places Along the Highways of America”<sup>145</sup>**

Though by the 1930s American consumers were eager to explore American foodways through visiting roadside restaurants, the situation had complications a gatekeeper, like a critic, could negotiate. Bernard DeVoto, a peer of Hines also interested in American foodways,

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<sup>142</sup> Kammen, *American Culture, American Tastes*, 133, 134. A signal event of the emergence of the middlebrow is the founding of the Book-of-the-Month club in 1926, a new form of cultural engagement that created a new and different type of cultural authority: what was previously considered culture (literature) was no longer obtained through elite institutions but common to all thanks to commerce (a subscription service). See Radway, “The Scandal of the Middlebrow.”; Rubin, *The Making of Middlebrow Culture*.

<sup>143</sup> Haley, *Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class*, 224.

<sup>144</sup> Daniel Boorstin, “Welcome to the Consumption Community,” in *The Decline of Radicalism: Reflections on America Today*, 20-39 (New York: Random House, 1969).

<sup>145</sup> This phrase is the rarely quoted sub-title to Hines’ restaurant guidebook.

complained that, “These roadside lunch counters” were “a menace to the national health; botulism and dysentery lurk in them.”<sup>146</sup> These worries gave rise to Hines’ line, varied in phrasing in many publications but found throughout his career, that “I’ve run more risk eating my way across the country than in driving the highways, dangerous as the latter have become. More people will die this year from hit-or-miss eating than from hit-and-miss driving, and more will be incapacitated.”<sup>147</sup> Both comments point toward what Andrew Haley and others have noted about dining in the 1930s and before, that it was simply a “hit-or-miss adventure.”<sup>148</sup> The Pure Food and Drug Act may have been passed in 1906, and the Food and Drug Administration authorized to issue standards in 1938, but local inspections of restaurant sanitation were lax at best if they existed at all. While these comments provide a reason for why American consumers would perhaps welcome a guidebook to restaurants across the country, especially those along the roadside, the genesis of Hines’ traveling, collecting recommendations, and making a list of restaurants is found in the career he had *before* retiring to become a critic.

Hines’ professional background was in sales for the J. T. H. Mitchell advertising firm and subsequently a number of Chicago-based printing businesses. He traveled by car to see clients, primarily in the Midwest but often extending well beyond there, and while doing so he kept a list of the better places to eat far from his home.<sup>149</sup> This background of sales, travel, and printing provided three crucial elements for the creation of his guidebook: experience looking for out-of-town restaurants, extensive social contacts, a knack for product promotion, and skill in coordinating and printing an array of texts. In addition, Duncan Hines was a gregarious extrovert

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<sup>146</sup> Bernard DeVoto, “Notes From a Wayside Inn,” *Harper’s*, September 1940, 448.

<sup>147</sup> Duncan Hines and Frank J. Taylor, “How to Find a Decent Meal,” *The Saturday Evening Post*, April 26, 1947, 18.

<sup>148</sup> Haley, *Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class*, 229; Richard H. Collin, “Gastronomy in American Society: American Writing on Restaurants,” in *Commemorating the past: Celebrations and Retrospection*, ed. Don Harkness, 52-59 (Tampa: American Studies Press, Inc., 1987); Raitz, “American Roads, Roadside America,” 382.

<sup>149</sup> Louis Hatchett, *Duncan Hines: The Man Behind the Cake Mix* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2001), 34-46.

whose social contacts were legion, an ever growing and far-flung network. From accounts of his friends and family, it was not surprising that word of his restaurant list spread so quickly and appreciatively amongst his fellow salesmen and peers in Chicago. Because of this neighborhood renown, in 1934 a local Chicago newspaper ran a story about his hobby of collecting restaurant recommendations and happily passing this information on to others. Thanks to his publicly listed phone number and address, the following year brought a deluge of phone calls and letters asking for his list. To help satisfy these demands, in 1935 Hines and his wife printed 1,000 copies of a list consisting of his favorite 167 restaurants in 30 states and sent these out as part of their annual Christmas card to friends and family.<sup>150</sup> Through this old form of social media was the beginning of Duncan Hines' tastemaking.

In response to the Christmas card's popularity, the following year Hines made it his project to publish his restaurant list in a format for commercial sale. First, he sent questionnaires to the nearly 1,000 restaurants on his entire list of establishments, good and bad. He then compared the responses he received to his opinions of these places, his peers' opinions, and other available information from menus and newspaper articles. In the summer of 1936 he self-published 5,000 copies of a 96-page text called *Adventures in Good Eating for the Discriminating Motorist*, a guidebook of nearly 500 restaurant listings designed to fit in a men's jacket pocket, women's purse, or automobile glove compartment.<sup>151</sup> The initial 1937 printing sold 16,000 copies and expanded to nearly 200 pages in length, doubling the number of listings to include over 1,000 restaurants, and shortened in title to *Adventures in Good Eating*.<sup>152</sup> The

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 46-47. Both the Christmas card and the Chicago newspaper article are noted in documents of the era but extant copies have not been found.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 49-51, 60. Like many Hines' documents from his early years as a critic, an extant copy of the 1936 guidebook is unavailable. Duncan Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (Chicago: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1936).

<sup>152</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1937), 15; MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?," 16.



1938 edition had approximately 1,800 listings spread over 250 pages, of which Hines admitted to visiting 70% of them while the rest were visited and vouched for by his band of trusted peer tasters.<sup>153</sup> The first printing of the 1939 edition was a run of 25,000 copies expanding to over 2,000 listings and nearly 300 pages of text. The previous editions, from 1936 to April 1939, combined to sell approximately 75,000 copies while from April 1939 to June 1939 alone did Hines sell an additional 75,000 copies, a sure sign of his fast-growing fame.<sup>154</sup>

### A Co-Operation

Information about Hines' first edition in 1936, and a subsequent local newspaper article about it, is not available, but what does exist is the first widely circulated article about Hines in the influential national magazine *The Saturday Evening Post*. In this article, its author Milton Mackaye speaks of how after his initial Christmas card list, and the local article about it, Hines was hounded for recommendation to the point of "nuisance," though subsequently "Hines realized that there might be commercial possibilities in his knowledge" and published an expanded list in the form of a guidebook. Mackaye remarks that Hines' guidebooks achieved success despite a "disastrous setup" of self-publishing and no access to "regular channels of distribution."<sup>155</sup> Instead, Hines distributed through other networks for cultural creation and communication, the more "social" paths of word-of-mouth contacts and selling his books at the restaurants that he recommends, which both cut out the mediator of bookstores and forged a more intimate and, eventually, symbiotic relationship with restaurateurs. This makes sense given the fact that Hines' text occurred within the trend toward the democratization of taste wherein

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<sup>153</sup>MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?," 82.

<sup>154</sup>Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 101. Duncan Hines to Marjorie Mills, June 23, 1939, in Box 1, Duncan Hines papers, #3981, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

<sup>155</sup>MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?," 16.

individuals outside of traditional positions and institutions of power and prestige created “expert” knowledge. Hines was not a solitary genius as he was the first to admit how much of his enterprise relied on a widespread network of others. As McKaye puts it, since “Dyspeptic salesman are always hunting for a good place to eat,” Hines and his “commercial associates” were involved passing on their knowledge anonymously and without payment.<sup>156</sup> Due to the fact that “no letter or card goes unanswered” by the workaholic Hines, McKaye says that Hines’ associates felt they had so much input in *Adventures in Good Eating* that they called it “our book.”<sup>157</sup>

Both McKaye’s article and Hines’ guidebook are clear in acknowledging that tastemaking was a group activity. In the introduction to the guidebook, Hines’ explains that he and his wife’s goal was “to see as much of America as possible, to test its outstanding food, to meet interesting people along the way,” and their “first discovery was that the highways were crowded with gasoline pilgrims whose main interest seemed to be the relative merits of inns. They fairly oozed information about the places we out not to miss.... nearly all of them remarked that there ought to be a reliable directory of the most desirable inns available to motorists.”<sup>158</sup>

Similarly, MacKaye speaks at length on the collective forming criticism:

Perhaps the most interesting commentary on the red book is that Hines has approximately 300 unpaid voluntary correspondents who keep him in touch with the status of the places he has recommended and who are constantly on tours of new discovery. There is, and no doubt of it, a freemasonry of motorists. They recognize in the book that started as a personal hobby a serviceable enterprise. All of them have eaten and slept badly; many of them have done almost as much touring as Hines himself and are glad to contribute their information toward the correlating of decent places to eat.... They regard *Adventures in Good Eating* not as Hines’ book, but as their communal own, and they have formed themselves into a devout band which maintains a system of espionage over the mashed potatoes and eggplant of the nation. They drive hundreds of miles to check the

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 16, 17, 81.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>158</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1937), n.p.

cuisine of a new cafe; they bombard Hines with criticisms, news bulletins and recommendations.<sup>159</sup>

From before the guidebook even existed there appears to be a network of persons mobilized to consume, communicate, and conceive of themselves as a community. Once in touch with Hines, and after they aligned their senses of taste through comparing experiences, they searched on his behalf and returned with information for Hines to correlate. In doing so they enacted “the practical extension of network through standards”, furthering the community’s taste by not just judging restaurants but also making that judgment public through concretizing and circulating it.<sup>160</sup> This occurred by collecting and then textualizing experiences and the community’s senses of them, thereby putting ephemeral notions into a concrete form that, because of its quasi-objective status as a guidebook, was taken seriously as valuable knowledge. When in physical form, what was once word of mouth could now circulate more widely and communicate more clearly a concise and coherent sense of taste without the need of chance roadside encounters and human predilections to extend the community’s sense of taste. Altogether in this manner, Hines “maintain[ed] a system of espionage” and texts working on his behalf to make businesses conform to the network’s standards of good food.

In an August 1938 piece just months before MacKaye’s article, the industry periodical *Publishers’ Weekly* exclaimed to interested booksellers the uniqueness and growing popularity of Hines’ guidebook, justifying such claims by citing how quickly and eagerly radio personalities, newspaper editors, and passionate diners were to publicize his work.<sup>161</sup> Similarly, MacKaye’s article moved past mere mention of Hines’ community to spending almost an entire page of the article on the “many famous names on the roll call,” listing some of their names, social status,

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<sup>159</sup> MacKaye, “Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?,” 17.

<sup>160</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 228, footnote #316.

<sup>161</sup> “From Hobby to Publishing,” *The Publishers’ Weekly*, August 6, 1938, 355.

and relevant experience with the arts to bolster the value of their judgments as tasters.<sup>162</sup> Hines did the same thing in the guidebook itself, setting aside two pages of its introduction for “An Appreciation” that offered his “sincere gratitude” to “all the thousands of people who have written to me” with compliments, corrections, and recommendations, even going so far as listing the names, hometown, and, occasionally, the professional title of twenty-seven key contributors.<sup>163</sup>

Hines was not content with stasis in his system, though, and proceeded to fill his guidebook with frequent requests for help. Its introduction ended with three paragraphs and a separate note at the bottom of the page that each asked for help in finding the best places to eat, new and old, and correcting any mistakes in its details. The 1937 listings for Alabama open with an honest admission that, “Since I began keeping notes on inns, I have not been in Alabama, hence I am accepting the nominations (listed here) which have been made by the courtesy of Mr. Wm. O. Baldwin of the First National bank of Montgomery, Alabama.”<sup>164</sup> The listings for the state of Arkansas consist of just three places, after which Hines asks in large bold lettering amongst a large empty white space, “Won’t you write me details about any outstanding eating places you know of in Arkansas?”<sup>165</sup> Such calls for help were continuous through the guidebook, as he asks for follow-up on listings that were recommended to him but that he did not feel comfortable listing outside of confirmation from a trustworthy person or a large enough quantity

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<sup>162</sup> MacKaye, “Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?,” 17.

<sup>163</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1937), n.p.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 18. Quite a few states received little attention in the 1937 edition. For example, Missouri, Montana, and Nebraska are collapsed onto one page without any separation of each states under a sub-heading, a treatment no other states receive. (115) Kansas has but two listings and so Hines asks in bold in a large empty space where listings would go, “Certainly there are a number of good places in Kansas but I do not know of them – perhaps you who will write me.” (77) Though North Dakota and South Dakota each have only one listing, no such requests for more recommendations was made. (148, 170)

of recommendations for the same place.<sup>166</sup> To contribute and become part of his network, between pages 16 and 17 was a perforated tear-out split into two postcards pre-addressed to Duncan Hines, one to put your name on his promotional mailing list and another with three slots in which to provide information on a restaurant that a consumer would wish to recommend to him.<sup>167</sup>

The guidebook ends with a full-page request, again, to “have your co-operation” in making a taste for good food in America. After asking for new recommendations and verifications of old ones, he calls for additional help in furthering his book, his network, and, thus, his authority on restaurants and its influence on them:

I need the friendly co-operation of the eating places in SELLING copies of ‘Adventures in Good Eating’. Also, my book, the only one of its kind in America, is rapidly becoming recognized as an authority. Will you be kind enough, after you have ENJOYED a dinner in one of the places listed, to mention the fact that you read about it in my book? This will help me. Also, it will encourage inns and restaurants to maintain and better their high standards that they may retain their listing in future editions. Thank you, DUNCAN HINES.<sup>168</sup>

Offering a text to connect them and thus mediate their relationship, here Hines clearly wishes to coordinate his audiences—consumers and producer—into a mutually sustaining system of “co-operation.” The very next page presents yet another network-extending text. In a section called “ABOUT SIGNS”, Hines declares that “Very few, even of the finest country inns, serving outstanding food have adequate signs for the attention of passing motorists,” and suggests instead, “Here are the dimensions of the type of a sign that has been very effective when a little distance from the stopping place and one near the entrance.” After the name of the restaurant is

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<sup>166</sup> This occurs for listings for California, Quebec, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington. *Ibid.*, 34, 36, 48, 57, 60, 74, 104, 119, 123, 145, 157, 187.

<sup>167</sup> In later editions this tear-out postcard is placed in the last few pages of the guidebook, after all of the listings. This feedback form is phased out entirely by the end of the guide’s twenty-five year run as the number of listings swelled significantly and the guidebook’s coordination and publication is passed onto to Hines’ brand management, Hines-Park Foods and its Duncan Hines Institute.

<sup>168</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1937), 195.

given underneath is a quasi-sentence on a rectangle of precise measurements and suggested color scheming:

Good Ham & Eggs, Chicken, Duck. Lunch – Dinner.  
 We think it was a mighty nice place if you will try it, you will agree.  
 11 A.M. to 8 P.M. Open Daily No Liquor<sup>169</sup>

Hines does not mention what real life example his model was based on: the sign is *identical* to the way listings are written up in his guidebooks after the first few editions of it and during the majority of its fame. Hines' never stopped trying to find reasons for and resources through which to extend his tastemaking enterprise.

### **Americanism and Honesty**

Hines' attempts at forwarding his authority and the network it relied upon included more than requests for information and pleas for recommending his recommendations to others. As the first critic to extend his purview from a city and its fine dining crowd to the entire nation of restaurants and their many consumers, Hines' emergence was crucially an innovation of collection and coordination deeply enmeshed in the developing contexts of automobility, consumerism, and eating out. Yet his relevance was gained not just from a practical system of mediating the culture and commerce of driving and eating but also from engaging in emerging discourse and practice of American foodways that occurred in parallel, perhaps symbiotic, ways to his own tastemaking. As outlined earlier in this chapter, the early twentieth century saw a distinct rise in the discourse of discovering American foodways and practices of consumerism such as organized consumer advocacy and middlebrow criticism. Hines' tastemaking took part in these activities and therein displayed his claims of relevance and value.

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 196.

In his emergence into popular culture, Hines stepped directly into the growing discourse of discovering American foodways by arguing, in MacKaye's article, that it is capable of the best and the worst, and that quality, while often an issue of paying more, is just as often an issue of paying little—if you are in the right place, which of course requires the right guidance to get there. Thus, in the article's section called "The Geography of a Gourmet," Hines declares that, "The truth is that there no specific place where the best food can be had." That said, he did say "The best American cooking is regional cooking, and that is dependent upon the season when local specialties are available." Hines characterizes such foodways as directly opposed to the trend whereby "highway inns have become increasingly citified" because they "abandoned regional dishes in order to serve the patron with finger bowls and pretty candles."<sup>170</sup>

Furthermore, the places displayed as examples of Hines' standard of good food were run by rural entrepreneurs who served 'home cooked' style food to motorists and local workers, a characterization that fits intersecting trends in restaurants in the 1930s, which then were mostly independently owned, increasingly geared toward the masses, and had been recently "domesticated" by middle class patrons. Hence why Hines' argues for tearooms, like the beloved one run by Virginia McDonald in Gallatin, Missouri, a recommendation that elevated a relatively new and supposedly "feminine" format of dining to the level of critical recommendation.<sup>171</sup> Such championing of the small, independent, and locally focused restaurant was his common refrain. Hines marked his "enemy" as "the efficiency man" who was revolutionizing cooking through Fordist and Taylorist practices that would eventually contribute to the creation of "fast food." Similarly, he chastised "the big hotel and the ordinary commercial restaurant" because "they

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<sup>170</sup> MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?," 81.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. On tearooms, see Jan Whitaker, "Catering to Romantic Hunger: Roadside Tearooms, 1900-1930," *Journal of American Culture* 15.4 (1992): 17-25; Ibid., *Tea at the Blue Lantern Inn: A Social History of the Tea Room Craze in America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002).

cook without imagination and without proper seasoning.”<sup>172</sup> Like his fellow regionalist Sheila Hibben, his search for local and traditional American foodways was a constant search, and so on he ended his guidebook with yet another request: “I would be interested in obtaining your ideas on what constitutes a satisfying AMERICAN dinner. Not a swanky or ‘a la’ affair. Why not send me your dream menu?”<sup>173</sup> Hines’ criticism and the discovery of American foodways were instantly connected, as even the short 1938 *Publishers’ Weekly* article on Hines included a photo of an in-store display of books under a tourist map of the United States which says “Read and See America First” at the top and “Adventures in Good Eating” at the bottom, a metaphorical placing of Hines’ guidebook in the landscape of Americans gaining experience through modes of mobility and eating.<sup>174</sup>

Hines not only recommended restaurants within a discourse of American foodways, he also couched his criticism in a rhetoric of ethics and honesty that spoke to consumerist issues of the era. By the 1930s, consumers were skeptical of unwarranted claims of products’ value and instead trusted consumer critics whose authority rested on honest procedures of testing and judgment, like that of *Consumer Reports* magazine. Against this background, Hines staked a significant portion of his claim to authority on his sincerity, a purity of process that could complement and amplify the veracity of his guidebook’s information. *Publishers’ Weekly* spent an entire paragraph retelling the many ways “Mr. Hines has refused all such offers” to compromise his listings by including advertising on opposite pages, “preferring to keep his [guidebook] uninfluenced by any kind of commercial considerations.”<sup>175</sup> Milton MacKaye’s article puts this practice in contrast to other “directories” whose value was “lousy” due to

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<sup>172</sup> MacKaye, “Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?,” 84.

<sup>173</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1937), 104.

<sup>174</sup> “From Hobby to Publishing,” 354.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.



payment-for-placement schemes that compromised the clarity and integrity of the relationships between critic and restaurant. Instead, “Hines accepts no advertising, accepts no fees for listing, and when he goes into an inn he does not identify himself.”<sup>176</sup> Hines himself was an even louder and more incessant exclaimer of his dedication to impartial standards. He began the guidebook with such an emphasis, declaiming with italics that, “*In gathering the information for this book, I have never accepted a free meal or any other consideration from any inn,*” and repeating twice on the page as the first sentence in consecutive paragraphs, “*No advertising Accepted from places listed.*” Hines invoked meritocracy and consumer-oriented testing as the intent and practice of his criticism: restaurants were “entitled to be listed on the merits of their food” and the list “compiled solely from the viewpoint and in the interest of the patrons” because “My interest lies wholly with the eating public.” Hines called this work an “experiment in service” in which “he is doing something for [consumers’] convenience.”<sup>177</sup> Yet, conversely, Hines considered a listing in his compilation “a distinguished service decoration of substantial value which has not cost the beneficiary a cent”, of which the restaurateur “can’t do anything about it, either,” perhaps “except to maintain or improve the quality of your food and your service.”<sup>178</sup> Here appears what seems like a contradiction, in that Hines is both taking agency away from producers and then giving it right back to them. In fact, what he was doing was erecting a divide between the consumer and the producer, putatively to keep judgment based strictly on the food and to avoid other considerations that could influence taste, from frivolous things like fancy décor or unethical acts like bribery. Inside this divide was Hines, the mediator of influences between the parts of the network.

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<sup>176</sup> MacKaye, “Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?,” 17.

<sup>177</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1937), n.p.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

To prove his point the guidebook had a postscript entitled “A Delightful Surprise”, in which Hines outed the many places that tried to buy his influence by sending him offers of free lodging and food which he declined, followed by even more elaborate attempts to find good favor by sending him gift packages of food from preserved fruits to actual live lobsters. Of these things, Hines said nothing about ascribing their intent to compromise his criticism’s independence from undue influence. He only remarked that, “Naturally these articles were sent to me out of pride in their excellence.”<sup>179</sup> It was a sly way to show the value of his authority as based in high ethical standards while both highlighting the number of places interested in Hines’ interest and showing how duplicitous were such suitors. As if this was not enough, in 1937 Hines composed and published 1,000 copies of a booklet, called “A Frank Statement”, that he handed out directly to parties of interest. This promotional text professed his unassailable integrity of independent critical judgment and reiterated his establishment as an authority based in experience and discernment.<sup>180</sup> In concert, what these various moves achieved was the shoring up of Hines’ position as a mediator and an argument for the value of how he mediates better than others. In creating his network of influences Hines wished to have control over how much and between whom such influence flowed. This is clear from the outset of Hines’ tastemaking, and the very first sentence of the guidebook states that, “Good taste is an unruly human faculty not easily confined to a single channel.”<sup>181</sup> While his critical practice attempted to manage the unruly tendencies of humans’ sense and sensing, Hines could not confine himself and so developed other channels through which his influence on American foodways could occur.

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>180</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 59.

<sup>181</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1937), n.p.

### More Ventures in Good Sense

Ever mobile, always circulating and adding, Hines' publishing did not end with *Adventures in Good Eating*. While this publication served as the core path through which his renown and influence was created and furthered, the purview of Hines' tastemaking activities was extended even more by authoring yet another set of texts before 1940, a cookbook with a title parallel to the guidebook, *Adventures in Good Cooking*, as well as a companion to the guidebook, *Lodging for a Night*, that listed roadside accommodations.

The links between Hines' first and his next publications were many. In the back matter of the 1938 edition of *Adventures in Good Eating* was a full-page announcement, "A New Book Planned, Companion Volume to 'Adventures,'" *Lodging for a Night*. Hines says the publication was due to "insistent demand" by "hundreds of friends," and, as was his custom, he asked the public for suggested hotels and inns "based upon your personal experience." "Your cooperation will contribute greatly in making the material in the new book valuable and authoritative," said Hines, so that both he and his volunteers can "share in achieving this result."<sup>182</sup> A taste for lodging accommodations was thus created through sharing information and experience, just as he did with restaurant listings and would again with recipes. With lodging Hines again swore to maintain "the same scrupulous policy" of "unprejudiced, reliable information" upon which his authority rested. And, again, he followed this declaration with the plea to continue tastemaking as a group process under his assembly, for, as Hines said of his lodging guide, "It is my hope that your support and co-operation will make this companion volume eventually self-supporting."<sup>183</sup> Of note is that, unlike the restaurant guidebook, the lodging guide instructed consumers on how to critically evaluate a 'tasteful' sleep arrangement.

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<sup>182</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (Chicago: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1938), 249.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., *Lodging for a Night* (Bowling Green, KY: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1940), vi.

The subtitle to Hines' guide to lodging is revealing, in that it describes itself as "A Directory of Hotels Possessing Modern Comforts, Inviting Cottages and Modern Auto Courts, also Guest Houses Whose Accommodations Permit the Reception of Discriminating Guests." The implied argument in this eighteenth-century style of a rambling subtitle is that lodging services need to update themselves to "modern" amenities for the "modern" traveler, indicated here as someone driving an automobile and possessing a critical consumer eye. To complete the circle, the final text in the guidebook, a page-long "THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION" repeats the suggestion, with Hines adding italics for emphasis, that, "*Modern* Guest Houses, located in the country or at the edge of a town, or hotels and up-do-date Auto Courts away from noises, are the types of places most desired by discriminating motorists."<sup>184</sup> Becoming modern in taste requires everyone's "co-operation" in following his bullet point criteria for modern lodging, including "cleanliness," "quietness," "comfortable beds," "courteous, adequate, and unobtrusive service," and "hospitality" based in a "quality of homelikeness" fostered by a "cordial personality" and an "atmosphere of friendliness."<sup>185</sup> If anything is "modern" about such demands, it is that in the 1930s such accommodations would be a transmission of the amenities and services of high-end hotels to establishments catering to the burgeoning crowds of middle-class motorists, a clear example of Hines' involvement in the democratizing trend of middlebrow criticism begun in the previous decade.

As if this was not enough, Hines continued his harangue by griping over how even the best hotels have "shown a definite lack of ability to co-ordinate its facilities with the requirements of modern motor car travel" and modern sensibilities toward the sensual aspects of accommodation. He proceeds to make another bullet point list of standards, even longer in detail

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 340.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., vi-vii.

and sharper in tone than the previous, to which establishments must hew in order to “modernize” themselves to the needs of contemporary consumers’ automobility and sensorial preferences. Here Hines was attempting to form a new configuration of the network by coordinating its materials. He did this through outlining the best spatial organization of entrances and garages, better care for the cars in garages, more amenable interior design of hotel lobbies, a more pleasing industrial design of hotel room furniture, and a list of material culture that he thinks should be provided to lodgers, from newspapers to flowers and fruit to local guides and pretty pictures. He then proceeds to provide another full page of bullet points outlining physical demands placed on “auto courts”, the 1930s term for what is now called motels. Those who run “guest houses” receive “something different” in the way of instruction since, as Hines explains it, this form of lodging was a new development in the United States created by ordinary Americans’ need for income sources during the Great Depression.<sup>186</sup>

After multiple pages of instructing consumers and producers alike about how he wants lodging to be assembled, he reminds all involved that tastemaking is a group effort requiring a concerted effort to coordinate activity under the shared standard of his guidebook:

If this directory is the means of pointing out places where you may spend the night and the accommodations and services are satisfactory, it will be appreciated by the management of such places, as well as by myself, if you will say to the host or hostess that you came by reason of their being included in this book. This will greatly aid in gaining a wider distribution of the book through its sale by a majority of the places listed. Not only does this insure a profit to them but also it will provide a sufficient sale to the public so that the cost of publication will be met.<sup>187</sup>

In addition to this overt attempt to assemble and then influence a network, Hines’ coordination of the things necessary to lodging well involved enlisting the actual co-ordinate system used in

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<sup>186</sup> Ibid., vii-v.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., xiii. This assemblage had its problems, though, as Hines notes in a section called “Warning to Places Listed” that people have impersonated him to get free goods and service from businesses.

public maps that were, for this era, provided to American drivers for free by oil companies such as Conoco. This system was used as part of the concise format for the listings of recommended lodging that, for example, typically look like the following:

**LINDSAY, CALIF.** Pop. 3,300. (Shell D-8) 10 Mi. N. of Porterville.  
**65–Hotel: Mt. Whitney.** Mirage Ave. and Honolulu St. A good place to stop  
 between Los Angeles and Sequoia Park. 50 rms., all WB. E. 2WB \$3.00-  
 4.00. FPark. Pets P.<sup>188</sup>

If a reader could not comprehend the informational shorthand due to skipping the introduction's instructions and advice, Hines' places a bolded reminder between the state-by-state sections of this guidebook: "IMPORTANT—To fully understand the reason for and the purposes of this book please read the complete introduction."<sup>189</sup> While the extreme specificity of advice in the introduction to *Lodging for a Night* is not found in the initial few editions of his guidebook, *Adventures in Good Eating* eventually does state criteria explicitly and list an assortment of small gripes and advice. The attempts at recruiting others to share in the tastemaking process were constant and clear throughout all of his initial publications, though, and they included not just advice for consumers and producers but pointed out which objects, like automobiles, and abstractions, like state map co-ordinates, are necessary to assembling a "modern" sense of things.

To further his sense of what he considered good, beginning in 1939 Duncan Hines also published *Adventures in Good Cooking and the Art of Carving in the Home* (normally referred to as *Adventures in Good Cooking*) that sold well and thus was annually updated and re-printed for nearly two decades. Of note is what Hines presented as the genesis of the cookbook, that after visiting restaurants listed in his guidebook and eating their most famous dishes, "friends have eagerly sought an opportunity to try to prepare these same dishes in the intimate and friendly atmosphere of their own home kitchen.... intrigued with the pleasant prospect of giving their

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 17.

own personal interpretation” of them.<sup>190</sup> Hines’ story of creating a cookbook is not fanciful, as by 1938 he had begun receiving letters telling him that a collection of recipes from his recommended restaurants would be greatly appreciated by his fans.<sup>191</sup> As was his typical practice, Hines generated this cooking text by collecting information from his extensive network. He requested and received famed recipes from the restaurants listed in his guidebook, assuring restaurateurs that he would not be asking for and then releasing their most prized secret recipes but, rather, would be reinforcing the valuable association of critic and restaurant in tastemaking by having all 466 recipes listed with the name of the restaurant or person that gave it to him.<sup>192</sup> Hines also intentionally designed the cookbook to match the size, format, and color and design scheme of his initial publication, the more famous restaurant guidebook.<sup>193</sup> The recipes ranged from what were already considered classics of American cooking, such as the many regional variations on corn cakes, as well as examples of the newly popular ethnic flavors of “cosmopolitan dining”, such as *turlu dolma* (lamb and rice stuffed vegetables) from the then-famous Omar Khayyam’s restaurant in San Francisco.<sup>194</sup>

The book’s section on “The Art of Carving in the Home” is thirty pages of detailed instructions, complete with photos and drawings, of the cutlery and carving techniques necessary for large sub-primal cuts of beef, pork tenderloin, crown roasts of lamb or pork, leg of lamb, whole hams, whole turkey, chicken, duck, or goose, and whole fish. Not always included in cookbooks in the era, Hines’ inclusion of instruction on carving stemmed from his opinion that

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid., *Adventures in Good Cooking and the Art of Carving in the Home* (Bowling Green, KY: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1939), v.

<sup>191</sup> Lyman H. Bellows to Duncan Hines, December, 26 1938; Duncan Hines to Lyman H. Bellows, January 12, 1939, in Box 1, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>192</sup> M.L. McGuckin to Duncan Hines, July 3, 1939; Duncan Hines to M.L. McGuckin, July 15, 1939, in Box 1, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>193</sup> Duncan Hines to John Sheele, September 23, 1939, in Box 1, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>194</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Cooking* (1939), 65-77, 170. This publication has no actual page numbers, instead Hines assigned each recipe a number.

“correct carving...adds greatly to the charm and grace of dining” because “When one carves with ease and grace... it immediately bring forth enthusiastic and favorable comment.”<sup>195</sup> Hines’ repeatedly mentions the desire to give an impressive appearance as the reason for carving and follows norms of the era by gendering the performance of this task as male. Of course, Hines cited and gave thanks to what made his advice possible, the suggestions of the National Live Stock and Meat Board. As correspondence shows, his reaching out to this group was proactive and served as a shared venture in making a taste for carefully carved meat in the home dining room, once again extending Hines’ tastemaking activities through associating it with more things.<sup>196</sup> Even more, between latter sections of the cookbook Hines wedged in a page advertising yet another enterprise, his mail-order “Duncan Hines Kentucky Hickory-Smoked Hams.”<sup>197</sup> He also put in a page advertising his other publications as of the first printing of *Adventures in Good Cooking* in 1939, which were by then the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of *Adventures in Good Eating* and the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Lodging for a Night*.

### **From Emerging to Establishing**

Hines’ many publications show that from the outset his tastemaking would be multi-faceted in its sources of information, resources of materials, reasons for relevance, and outlets of influence. As the foreword to his fame-fostering guidebook proclaimed, Hines’ “good taste” was “not easily confined to a single channel” of his interactions with American culture and commerce. He associated eating well with nice lodging and satisfying cooking, and to become an authority on each of these matters he enlisted a great many others’ efforts and knowledge. As such, Hines’ tastemaking was from day one a group effort, and avowedly so. The groups he

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., n.p.

<sup>196</sup> Duncan Hines to M. McComb, June 9, 1939, in Box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>197</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Cooking* (1939), n.p.



acknowledged were his social contacts and volunteer “detectives”, but in accounting for the taste made by Hines we can see that he relied upon a range of associations and a bevy of other reasons and resources: the discourse of discovering American foodways and its practice of searching for them; communications like national print media through which to disseminate this discourse; technologies like automobiles to empower the practice of searching, collecting, and consuming regional foodways, as well as to distribute more widely their regional ingredients; commerce to develop restaurants catering to the trend of eating out and regional foodways; and cultural conventions of consumer criticism like honesty, expertise, and a middlebrow perspective. The emergence of Duncan Hines in 1936 as the first national critic of restaurants was thus an outcome of the intersection of multiple trends. Hines innovated by linking all of these together in order to make sense of the newly discovered ways that food could be American, modern, and provide experiences of “good eating.” Having emerged as an up-and-coming tastemaker by 1940, the next chapter shows how Hines established his position as “the authority” on American food, extending his influence even more widely and securely by mediating the associations and activities that built and maintained his tastemaking network.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Ventures in Good Eating:

#### Mediating a Consumers' Republic of Drivers<sup>198</sup>

Fame is fickle and things change. Having arrived in the landscape of American popular culture, working at the intersection of large-scale changes in American society and heralding the new traffic patterns this intersection was creating, Duncan Hines was not necessarily destined to continue his success. The transition from emerging to establishing himself as a nationally-recognized authority on American food required that Hines find a valued role and create something stable enough to become a common material in American life. Hines found his role in the figure of America's restaurant critic, nationalizing a role that had previously been localized to particular cities. He performed this role through a guidebook, a text that made sense of changes in American eating habits.<sup>199</sup>

Found in the introduction to his book on lodging, the most revealing evidence of how Hines thought of his work as a critic and guide is an allegory he tells:

Once upon a time, so the story goes, there was a rich nobleman who traveled far and wide in order that he might enjoy the comforts of the inns he visited and sample the splendid food and wines which graced their tables. It is related that in his search for excellent fare and comfortable lodgings, he sent one of his servants on ahead to test the amenities of those places which might be worthy of a visit.

It was agreed that the servant would leave a sign on the doorpost of the inn, by which the master would know whether to turn aside in order to sample its wares and take his ease. If the quality of these were above the ordinary, the symbol to be written on the doorpost was the word 'Est'

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<sup>198</sup> Hines' critical ventures took place within the context described in Cohen, *Consumers' Republic*, and Seiler, *Republic of Drivers*.

<sup>199</sup> On Hines and his guidebook as setting new precedents, see Rebecca Spang, "All the World's a Restaurant: On the Global Gastronomics of Tourism and Travel," in *Food in Global History*, ed. Raymond Grew, 79-91 (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 79; Collin, "Gastronomy in American Society"; Raitz, "American Roads, Roadside America"; Schwartz, "Duncan Hines: He Made Gastronomes out of Motorists."

Should the servant discover the wines and foods to be of unusual excellence, he was to repeat the symbol twice, ‘Est, Est.’ One day, having come far by a road so untraveled that he might easily have missed his way, the man came upon a quaint and charming inn, deep by the roadside, and upon approaching closer, observed that his servant had written upon the doorpost, ‘Est, Est, Est.’ So enamoured of the place did the master become that he lingered on and on. In fact, his journey was ended, for here he sojourned the rest of his days, deep in the conviction that it represented the ‘ne plus ultra’ of his years in search.

In ‘Adventures in Good Eating,’ ‘Lodging for a Night’ and ‘Vacation Guide’ many travelers have found a reliable servant who has gone ahead, as it were, and posted the places where pleasant and satisfying meals, lodging and vacations are to be had.<sup>200</sup>

Hines saw himself as the servant in this story and the word “service” showed up regularly in his remarks about his activities as a critic. In reality, Hines truly was attaching signs to places he felt were the not just good but the absolute best, those deserving three “Est” marks on their door.<sup>201</sup> It is telling that he calls his audience noble masters and humbly calls himself a mere servant, for this flattery relaxes consumers into believing that he is “reliable.” It also naturalizes and romanticizes a situation that was in fact a concerted effort to create a system of sensemaking that had never existed before. Perhaps a more appropriate allegory would have been that of the Pied Piper.

This chapter analyzes how and why Hines solidified his position of influence by focusing on one of the two most significant ways in which he accomplished it, his guidebook. The other major channel of influence was articles and other press about Hines, which is the subject of chapter three. In this chapter I argue that *Adventures in Good Eating* established Hines’ ability to make sense of taste because in writing a national guidebook to restaurants for motorists, he organized a situation by working with the materials present, combining aspects of traditional forms, like gastronomic criticism, as well as developing practices, like American automobility

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<sup>200</sup> Hines, *Lodging for a Night* (1940), v.

<sup>201</sup> The allegory’s suggestion that Hines was a lowly servant is misleading given the fact that his sign leasing scheme made him the equivalent of over \$300,000 a year in today’s value, as calculated according to a range of values offered by the historical relative value computations found at <http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/>.

and consumerism, to guide Americans through the changing commercial and cultural landscape of the United States. As Karl Weick and Kathleen Sutcliffe's field-defining research in organizational studies demonstrates, people make sense of large, complex situations—like the still-developing roads and restaurants of mid-century America—through creating “plausible images that rationalize what people are doing” that end up “enacting more or less order into those ongoing circumstances” that agents are struggling to comprehend. Sensemaking begins when “the current state of the world is perceived to be different from the expected state of the world, or when there is no obvious way to engage the world,” and occurs through “reading, writing, conversing, and editing.”<sup>202</sup> Americans often complained that finding “good” restaurants was difficult while that industry underwent significant changes and tentative expansion, and Hines' text was an answer to this confusing new situation.

In his guidebook, Hines took advantage of the resources provided by his context to form a network of signs and books that mediated between restaurants and customers. His mediation enacted two senses of “media”: as something in the middle, an item between other things that often serves to influence how these things interact, like how a critic mediates between producers and consumers; and as a form for expression, a mode of representation like the guidebook that put opinion into a form that communicated ideas clearly and could be distributed widely. That a critic mediated through text makes sense given the unsure state of taste's meaning relative to its sensation. The language of taste is arbitrary and so media is necessary to make sense of taste because aligning one person's experience of sense with another person's experience of sense requires a third sense shared between them, usually spoken or written language. Because of this relationship of sense-sensation to sense-signification, Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson argues that

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<sup>202</sup> Karl E. Weick, Kathleen M. Sutcliffe, and David Obstfeld, “Organizing and the Process of Sensemaking,” *Organization Science* 16.4 (2005): 409-421.

“culinary texts” like guidebooks are used to form taste because their unchanging material and meaning “stabilized the ephemeral culinary product and connected” through “communication linking supplies, producers, and consumers in a set of common understandings” presented in the media.<sup>203</sup> For all of these groups, “certainty grows when the judgments of perception become simplified” by an object separate from human subjects.<sup>204</sup> Steven Shapin calls such objects “intersubjectivity engines,” items like the Wine Aroma Wheel that create “Taste communities” through their members “using the same predicates to refer to their experiences.” In other words, “what taste is and how it is formed in the interactions between people and objects, people and people,” occurs when the terms that create and communicate the expression of experience are settled upon, widely available, and practiced together.<sup>205</sup>

Mediators and their media have become common to modern societies because these roles and their attendant representations help to bridge the often wide geographic and social distances between parts of commodity chains that stretch across countries if not continents.<sup>206</sup> Mediators, from critics to shopkeepers and advertisers, transport the materials and translate the meanings between where a food and its foodways come from and where it will be consumed, helping consumers and producers alike to make sense of them. A fair amount of negotiation and translation is needed so that these diverse parts can connect. Bruno Latour thus argues that mediators must “transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry,” and not always for nefarious reasons but often out of the need to mediate between significantly different audiences or reshape something for disparate uses.<sup>207</sup> In fact, how

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<sup>203</sup> Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste*, 84, 85.

<sup>204</sup> Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 98.

<sup>205</sup> Steven Shapin, “The Science of Subjectivity,” *Social Studies of Science* 42.2 (2012): 177, 178. Objects are needed because “entities that don’t sleep and associations that don’t break down allow power to last longer and expand further.” Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 70.

<sup>206</sup> Appadurai, “Commodities and the Politics of Value.”

<sup>207</sup> Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 39.

a mediator forms connections and communicates is usually through media, like text. In other words, *information is transformation*. “To provide a piece of information is the action of putting something into a form,” and the benefits of this relationship is that a form “allows something else to be transported from one site to another.”<sup>208</sup> Because such series of transformations are prevalent in modern food chains, Arjun Appadurai argues that as aspects of foodways are commodified, “knowledge *about* commodities is itself increasingly commoditized” as well.<sup>209</sup> As a consequence, Ian Cook and Philip Crang contend, “constructed meaningful knowledges about (food) commodities and their geographies,” like food criticism, “and technologies for the material embodiment of these knowledges,” like cars and restaurants, “become a crucial means of adding value” to foodways.<sup>210</sup>

Putting this in terms of Hines’ situation, he had experiences of restaurants that he judged as good based on sensations he enjoyed, which he transported around with him by transforming them into a list that he kept in his pocket, which was then transformed into a detailed guidebook so that he could transmit this information to others, and this information, now in the form of a guidebook and not a mental checklist, was turned into a resource for decision making by consumers, and furthermore Hines’ information was also transformed into roadside signs stating that some person of significance recommended a specific restaurant. Going to eat there thus reinforced the system of Hines, restaurants, guidebooks, signs, and the rest of the gambit of automobility and consumerism. It is through this process that Hines mediated middle-class Americans’ relationship to food, for historically it was this growing community of consumers who were eating in restaurants more than ever before, interested in discovering the experiences

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>209</sup> Appadurai, “Commodities and the Politics of Value,” 48, 54.

<sup>210</sup> Ian Cook and Philip Crang, “The World on a Plate: Culinary Culture, Displacement, and Geographical Knowledges,” *Journal of Material Culture* 1.2 (1996): 34.

of regional American foodways, and using automobiles, consumerist attitudes, and middlebrow criticism to engage in them. To understand how Hines used a text to mediate context, the next two sections of this chapter show first, the proximate conditions of restaurants that provided an opportunity for Hines' criticism and second, how this situation fits within the larger history of restaurants' and criticism's co-existence. Thereafter, the rest of this chapter will look closely at the construction of Hines' guidebook, including its forebears, noting how its form and content attempted to make sense of American tastes.

### **Why Hines:**

#### **From a "Golden Age" to a "Gastronomic Downfall"**

While Hines was busy compiling his list of recommended restaurants as a traveling salesman, in 1931 Julian Street, a journalist and author, wrote a two-part narrative on changes in American tastes during his lifetime. It appeared in the same best-selling periodical, *The Saturday Evening Post*, that just seven years later would display Hines to the nation. First, Street states that "Gastronomy's Golden Age" in America was from the 1890s until the 1920s. This age, he suggests, happened when "the plain old-fashioned cooking which for a century had satisfied the mass of Americans" became "outmoded" due to "excursions into the mysterious realms of the *haute cuisine Francaise*."<sup>211</sup> The causes that Street cites as ending the golden age were the habits engendered by rationing during World War I and what he thought were the devastating effects of Prohibition, especially the loss of wine's civilizing influence and aristocratic presence on the brutish Americans. Street also griped about Americans' conservative tastes, saying of customers that, "They like to see an extensive menu, listing perhaps 200 items, because it makes them feel

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<sup>211</sup> Julian Street, "What's the Matter With Food? (part 1)," *The Saturday Evening Post*, January 31, 1931, 112.

that they are in a luxurious place, but after looking it over they order the same old things.”<sup>212</sup> The “they” he speaks of is not stated but is inferred. In a passing quip that “there are no gourmets any more,” his comments on diners were aimed at what we historically know were the next new dining crowd and their tastes: the middle class and what Street calls the “polyglot tendency of the times.”<sup>213</sup>

Street then turned to the situation of individual Americans whose material conditions, he believed, could not help but make bad senses of taste:

People who day after day make a seven-minute midday meal from a sandwich made of lettuce and mayonnaise, canned sardines, or a wisp of chicken, washed down with a chocolate soda, cannot, in the very nature of things, care or learn to care for good food. The girl who eats such lunches regularly, and later marries, can hardly be expected to know good from bad; and her husband, if he has done likewise, will not be sufficiently familiar with good food, or with the rudimentary laws of nutrition to expect much. . . . we have developed a new generation lacking the knowledge of good food and the taste for good food, and having no means to make up their deficiencies.<sup>214</sup>

According to Street, a key reason for such poor conditions is that “Criticism by people who understand the good things of the table helps to keep a restaurant up to the mark. Unfortunately, there is little criticism of that kind in the United States today.” Furthermore, the worst of American “eating reaches its depths in many of the wayside feeding places for motorists,” exactly the types of restaurants where Hines’ search for good eating made its mark.<sup>215</sup>

As a further sign of shifting times, Street’s opinion on the rapidly increasing amount of roadside restaurants was quickly countered. In *Fortune* magazine, James Agee’s article on “the

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid., “What’s the Matter With Food? (part 2),” *The Saturday Evening Post*, March 21, 1931, 94. Furthermore, Street declares, “In France people have an eye to the seasons, ordering what happens to be good at the time; over here they want their lamb chops, chicken, guinea hen and calves’ liver regardless of whether or not it is fresh.” *ibid.*

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 94, 96.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 94, 97. The changing of the food guard appears more evocative when considering the fact that Street and Hines not only knew each other but Street wrote a section on wine pairing and selection that appeared in Hines’ guidebooks, even after Street’s death in 1948. This fact is not surprising given the habits of Hines, for he was ever the connector, always the moderate man friendly with all types of differing groups and accommodating to their sensibilities.



Great American roadside” argued that the burgeoning roadside “is incomparably the most hugely extensive market the human race has ever set up to tease and tempt and take money from the human race.” Moreover, the “American continent; this American people; the automobile; the Great American Road, and—the Great American Roadside,” Agee lists, “combine in simple fact to mean a new way of life, a new but powerfully established American institution.”<sup>216</sup> The cause of this system, and its greatness, were in Agee’s opinion due to Americans’ essence as a restless people, and thus immediately upon introduction the “automobile became the opium of the American people.”<sup>217</sup> This opiate helped form tastes, as Agee begged more entrepreneurs to develop roadside food options beyond what he saw as a menu of hot dogs, ice cream, and fresh produce stands.

Having experienced precisely what Agee recounts, in his regular column for *Harper’s* Bernard DeVoto lauded the food of America beyond its cities, remarking that in his travels “The food served in restaurants throughout interior America is better than I expected.”<sup>218</sup> DeVoto thought that “The plugging of ‘domestic science’ departments in high schools seems to have been the greatest leverage” in improving American food, through greatly aided by the fact that “the economic system has co-operated by distributing fresh vegetables.” As a consequence, the lowly lunch counter at each town’s drugstore “has an honorable place in the American cuisine; an essential and progressive part of our culture,” and so much so that “its understanding of food is more intelligent than that of the average restaurant.”<sup>219</sup> That DeVoto calls this comprehension intelligent is perhaps fitting, for the history of restaurants show that as these businesses developed so too did a system of information and evaluation of them.

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<sup>216</sup> James Agee, “The Great American Roadside,” *Fortune*, September 1934, 53.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>218</sup> DeVoto, “Notes From a Wayside Inn,” 447.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 448.

## **The Logic of Restaurants:**

### **Choice, Evaluation, Democratization**

Basic to the history of restaurants in the West is the practice of consumers collecting information in order to evaluate similar establishments and choose “the best” amongst them.<sup>220</sup> In fact, in Rebecca Spang’s history of its origin she argues that “the restaurant’s logic of personal choice and specialist evaluation became generalized models” for each society that adopted it.<sup>221</sup> Restaurants began in the 1760s with, and got their name from, serving a bouillon broth called a *restoratif*, a move toward simple foods in reaction to the complex and detailed French cuisine being created at that time. Yet it was not until after the French Revolution that the restaurant developed its “distinctive practices” including “ordering from a menu, paying only for what was ordered, sitting at a small table with friends, and having a choice of times available” for dining.<sup>222</sup> Altogether these fostered a logic of individualized choice in that each eater is in charge of what they will eat, who they will eat with, and when and where they will do so. Further encouraging this logic was the publication of Grimod de la Reynière’s *Almanach des Gourmands*, a 1800s guidebook that discussed what restaurants existed and evaluated, according to Reynière’s expertise, which of them were preferable for what reasons. As “a product of nineteenth-century Europe, where a rapidly urbanized, industrialized, and highly mobile population became increasingly heterogeneous” yet increasingly connected by modern communications and transportation, this form of “food criticism [was] defined both by its mode

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<sup>220</sup> I qualify restaurants with a geographic term because restaurants first appeared in China during the Song dynasty, developing their own forms and traditions separate from and much before Europe. See E.N. Anderson, *The Food of China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); Nicholas M. Kiefer, “Economics and the Origin of the Restaurant,” *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly* 43.4 (2002): 58-64.

<sup>221</sup> Spang, *The Invention of the Restaurant*, 7.

<sup>222</sup> Shore, “The Development of the Restaurant,” 305.

of diffusion—through mass media—and by its objective, which [was] to influence dining decisions.”<sup>223</sup> Through a publicly available and thus widely discussed text, Grimod de la Reynière influenced dining by guiding restaurants’ mostly wealthy customers to treat eating at a restaurant as a unique foodway with its own sense of taste. Elliott Shore contends that “Grimod helped to fix in the minds of his readers the restaurant as a place apart, with its own rules, where learning to read the menu and to order the right foods and wines developed into an act of taste that would take an effort to perform correctly. The client as well as the waiter had to obtain a degree of expertise.”<sup>224</sup> The origins of the restaurant in France show that its advent immediately spawned critics publishing mass-market guidebooks instructing the public on where they are, what they consist of, and how to correctly consume while in them.

Stephen Mennell argues, though, that such criticism was a reaction to “A public [that] already existed; it was not created by the gastronomes.” Furthermore, “gastronomes” and “gastronomic guides are part of the more general consumer movement” of the public, and thus the publications of critics like Grimod “have, whether they intended to do so or not, also performed a democratizing function in the shaping of taste. Gastronomic writings, in common with all manners books, perform this function because the moment they are printed they disseminate knowledge of elite standards beyond the elite.”<sup>225</sup> In the United States, this process of democratization occurred gradually to both eating out and its criticism. American restaurants initially catered to the wealthy but by the turn of the twentieth century they experienced what would be a constant expansion of their customer base in the following decades. As a

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<sup>223</sup> Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, “Michelin in America,” *Gastronomica* 8.1 (2008): 49, 50.

<sup>224</sup> Shore, “The Development of the Restaurant,” 309.

<sup>225</sup> Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 289, 272, 266.

consequence, the size and diversity of the restaurant industry increased exponentially and someone, like Hines, had to help make sense of all this change.

Though his judgment of decline is debatable, Julian Street's description of a changing of the vanguard of dining was historically accurate. Andrew Haley has shown that by 1920 dining had shifted from a customer base of mostly elites to a wider middle class audience. These new patrons felt "that the individual preferences of consumers" mattered more than restaurateurs' desires to cook and serve food in a certain way.<sup>226</sup> This consumer-first perspective was mediated by restaurant guidebooks, like Hines' text, that "helped demarcate the boundaries of the...taste community" by guiding consumers through "the multitude of choices that the new consumer culture offered," working to "provide ephemeral snapshots of trends, sustaining distinction not as a timeless and unquestioned standard but as a specific and immediate recommendation about where a middle-class diner might like to eat."<sup>227</sup> Of the many trends shaping different new forms of eating out, the largest trend that Duncan Hines' reviews provided a snapshot of was the popular advent of automobility that happened concurrent to the middle-classing of restaurants.

From the eighteenth century onwards, eating out was practiced in the United States in the forms of inns, taverns, roadside stands, market stalls, and daily provision services like bakeries. In fact, the development of the American restaurant was a consistent movement from its affluent origins toward the goods and services provided by these more middle and lower class venues. This occurred as restaurateurs in the nineteenth century catered to more niches of consumers whose needs were shaped by particular situations of work, leisure, and mobility. For example, convenience and speed was a common feature of eating out by the 1880s when buffets, cafeterias, and lunch counters began serving workers in need of food without the leisurely pacing

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<sup>226</sup> Haley, *Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class*, 234.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

of the classic French-style restaurant.<sup>228</sup> Fred Harvey provided the same “respectable” style of service for bourgeois railroad tourists with little time and few options to eat thanks to trains’ tight schedules.<sup>229</sup> Increased urbanization and industrialization in the late nineteenth century grew demand for this style of service; restaurants responded by catering to even more specific clientele and their tastes, especially the middle-class and the “homemade” style of food they preferred.<sup>230</sup>

The democratization of eating out was hastened by Prohibition, whose impact on restaurants was significant enough to act as a decisive turning point in their history. Alcohol sales were by far the biggest creator of profits and their dissolution crippled not just the finances of restaurants but drove away many customers, specifically upper class men from expensive steak houses and aristocratic restaurants and lower class men from saloons that provided free lunch for customers who bought alcohol.<sup>231</sup> Prohibition also encouraged a “tremendous expansion in the levels below, particularly among those catering to the middle and lower-middle classes of both sexes. In the ten years after 1919 the number of restaurants in the country tripled.”<sup>232</sup> The acknowledgement of new niches of customers led to the invention of many new forms of dining, including experiments with styles of service such as the automat, tearoom, café, luncheonette, soda fountain, and the diner.<sup>233</sup> Automats innovated through using newly invented

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>229</sup> Lesley Poling-Kempes, *The Harvey Girls: Women Who Opened the West* (New York: Paragon House, 1989); Barbara Haber, *From Hardtack to Home Fries: An Uncommon History of American Cooks and Meals* (New York: Free Press, 2002), 87-106.

<sup>230</sup> Barbas, “Just Like Home: ‘Home Cooking’ and the Domestication of the American Restaurant”; Whitaker, “Domesticating the Restaurant: Marketing the Anglo-American Home.”

<sup>231</sup> Madelon Powers, “Decay From Within: The Inevitable Doom of the American Saloon,” in *Drinking: Behavior and Belief in Modern History*, ed. Susanna Barrows and Robin Room, 112-131 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

<sup>232</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 185.

<sup>233</sup> On the sea-change in dining in the early to middle twentieth century see “The Old (Restaurant) Order Changeth,” in Ibid., 183-193; “Catering to the Middle Stripe” in Haley, *Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class*, 68-91; Mariani, *America Eats Out*.

automating technology to serve the growing urban audiences of public food consumption.<sup>234</sup>

Tearooms innovated by often locating in historic buildings or popular department stores, emphasizing an atmosphere of antiques and respectability, and employing a hostess and table service that was neither highly refined nor completely informal.<sup>235</sup> Andrew Hurley shows that diners—the places not the persons—changed significantly across the early twentieth century in order to attract more families and not just working-class males between labor shifts. They switched their interior design to be more “homey” and moved their operations out of urban areas to busy commercial roads in the suburbs to reflect the demographic expansion and geographic extension of the middle class, their new target audience.<sup>236</sup>

Similar to diners, in the 1920s the White Castle chain pioneered what would become “fast food” as it is commonly known today, serving quickly cooked food in uniform, modular buildings that could be moved overnight, accommodated little to no room for customers to sit and stay, and offered a highly limited menu.<sup>237</sup> The Howard Johnson chain furthered roadside dining by employing brightly-colored roofs, erecting large road signs, and pioneering the use of traffic surveys to identify the best place to open a restaurant. Aimed at the goal of serving simple food cheaply, quickly, and to the largest audience possible, pioneering middle class restaurants like Howard Johnson and White Castle, according to David Gerard Hogan, “created a cultural

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<sup>234</sup> Nicolas Bromel, “The Automat: Preparing the Way for Fast Food,” *New York History* 81.3 (1999): 300-312; Shuldiner, “Trapped Behind the Automat: Technological Systems and the American Restaurant, 1902-1991.”

<sup>235</sup> Whitaker, “Catering to Romantic Hunger”; *Ibid.*, *Tea at the Blue Lantern Inn: A Social History of the Tea Room Craze in America*.

<sup>236</sup> Andrew Hurley, “From Hash-House to Family Restaurant: The Transformation of the Diner and Post-War World II Consumer Culture,” *Journal of American History* 83.4 (1997). On the genealogy of vendor stands on city corners turning into chuck wagons near factories turning into diner in the suburbs, see Padraic Burke, “Rolling Carts and Songs of Plenty: The Urban Food Vendor,” *Journal of American Culture* 2 (1979): 480-487; Joseph T. Manzo, “From Pushcart to Modular Restaurant: The Diner on the Landscape,” *Journal of American Culture* 13.3 (1990): 13-21; Richard J.S. Gutman, *American Diner: Then and Now* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000). For a larger analysis of postwar spatial and social shifts in the culture and commerce of working and middle-class consumption, see Andrew Hurley, *Diners, Bowling Alleys and Trailer Parks: Chasing the American Dream in the Postwar Consumer Culture* (New York: Basic Book, 2001).

<sup>237</sup> Philip Langdon, *Orange Roofs, Golden Arches: The Architecture of American Chain Restaurants* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), 30-45; Jakle, *Roadside Restaurant in the Automobile Age*, 20-67.

norm for eating meals outside of the home” in the 1920 and 30s, helping “sustain a widely fragmented and heterogeneous society” of consumers by offering them standard, regular culinary experiences.<sup>238</sup>

The development of eating out in the twentieth century trended toward more than just standardization, though, as Elliott Shore notes that the diversification of restaurants and their attendant customer bases simultaneously led elsewhere:

The democratization of eating out led not only to vast chains serving identical, portion-controlled meals in themed restaurants whose largest costs were in advertising, but it also had the contrary effect of developing an appreciation for a less predictable cuisine, the rediscovery of local cooking, regional dishes and the joys of the small restaurant, where the service might not be up to the ceremony of the Ritz, but the essential nature of the experience returned to concentrate on the taste of the food. In the United States, the roadside diner, the soda fountain, the crab shack and the country inn nurtured a newly discovered respect for the oldest tradition of the restaurant, as a place to get clean, wholesome, good food in pleasurable surroundings.<sup>239</sup>

Lucy Long agrees with Shore, adding that even though “the mobility, individualism, affluence, and consumerism that characterize American culture... shaped American foodways” towards mass-market industrial and fast foods, these influences also inspired “a corresponding increase in nostalgia for place as well as an awareness of distinctions between the various regions and types of place in the United States.”<sup>240</sup> This occurred because, as many scholars contend, modes of transport create affects that articulate the discourse and ideologies of that mode’s era.<sup>241</sup> For

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<sup>238</sup> David Gerard Hogan, *Selling 'em by the Sack: White Castle and the Creation of American Food* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 21. Key to such standardization was the increasing amount of innovations in food technology, including stainless-steel cookware (1927), homogenized milk (1927), molded pounds of butter (1928), mass-produced and preservative-aided sliced bread (1928), the electric mixer (1931), as well as industrial-sized toasters, ovens, and deep-fat fryers. Mariani, *America Eats Out*, 107.

<sup>239</sup> Shore, “The Development of the Restaurant,” 330-331.

<sup>240</sup> Lucy M. Long, “Introduction,” in *Culinary Tourism*, ed. Lucy M. Long, 1-20 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 13.

<sup>241</sup> Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (New York: Berg, 1986); Mark Simpson, *Trafficking Subjects: The Politics of Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Tim Edensor, “Automobility and National Identity: Representation, Geography and Driving Practice,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 21.4/5 (2004): 101-120.

automobility in the early to mid-twentieth century these included regionalism and consumerism.<sup>242</sup> Altogether, even though the definition of a restaurant was changing in response to the democratization of dining and the mobilization of its customers, the logic of choice and professional evaluation remained intact, a continuous pattern since Western restaurants' origin in France. Accordingly, Hines helped Americans make choices by providing a new form of guidance that made sense of new relationships with food, organizing Americans' automobility, regional exploration, and consumerist habits around information and evaluation.

### **Guidebooks Before Hines**

Though guidebooks and restaurants coincided from the origin of the restaurant onwards, before Duncan Hines American guidebooks of a gastronomic sort were limited to a local scope and impact. In the decades before *Adventures in Good Eating*, and to some extent after as well, guides were usually the products of journalists in large cities who knew about restaurants through their work canvassing the city on their beat, whether that was crime and politics or “lifestyle” and the arts. George Chappell’s guide to New York and Jack and Hazel Dodd’s guide to San Francisco, both published in 1925, present two typical approaches to surveying and recommending restaurants. Chappell’s guide parses the city into chapters that vary in organizing principle between geographic areas and attractions like “Broadway: The Theater Zone, From the Circle to the Square” and topical coverage like “Eating Among the Artists.”<sup>243</sup> He readily admits that his “major emphasis” is “rather on the place than on the food. This, I think, is as it should be. Food, in itself, is good, but not good enough,” so it is necessary to “convert the dull necessity of

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<sup>242</sup> On automobility and consumerism, see Gudis, *Buyways*, 41; Seiler, *Republic of Drivers*, 47. On automobility and regionalism, see Belasco, *Americans on the Road*, 23-24; Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, 40.

<sup>243</sup> George S. Chappell, *The Restaurants of New York* (New York: Greenberg, 1925), 81-94, 47-59.



eating into a pastime and a study of humanity.”<sup>244</sup> For example, he spends an entire chapter on the new fashion of supper clubs, an “elusive” and “latest form of entertainment” requiring instructions in advance of the socially vexing “question of admittance” without “letters from proposer and seconder and character testimonials from their pastor.”<sup>245</sup> Chappell’s guide ends with an un-numbered advertisement section with full-page drawings and attractive fonts informing the reader of a number of restaurants that, of course, Chappell championed throughout the text, like the famous Voisin’s and Hotel Brevoort. It is this practice of advertising the places recommended in the guidebook that Hines and his peers complained about, arguing that such a close relationship between critic and producer negated the supposed objectivity that many felt was the basis of criticism’s value.

Originally published as features in the magazine section of *The San Francisco Bulletin* called “Where San Francisco’s Bohemians Eat,” the Dodds’ guide to San Francisco is a very slim guide, only fifty pages, that places its advertisement up front, displaying before the reviews begin a page-long section extolling the virtues of the Hupmobile, a new model of car. In fact, the very last page of the guidebook tells readers the guidebook will be “a colorful souvenir for the guest to take home with him, or mail to friends,” and so would you please “Write to the editor of Bohemian Eats or instruct your advertising agency to do so and learn of the many advantages why you should advertise within the pages of this booklet.” Clearly geared toward visitors, the Dodds’ guide exhorts tourists to “come again” and “feel the magnitude of the friendliness” that San Francisco offers. The descriptions try to guide, literally, the diner through the layout of the establishment, its menu, the cuisine it represents, and the subtle traditions and styles of service it upholds. For example, they give reassuring instruction for someone completely unaware of how

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 164, 167.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 107, 109.

to differentiate between Spanish and Mexican food when visiting the Castilian Café and, further, put these foreign foodways in a sense an American could understand—an entire section, entitled “Tortillas Replace Bread,” explains that practice.<sup>246</sup>

Two later guides take these two examples—one long, descriptive, and social, the other short, informative, and culinary—and amend both to different ends. John Drury’s *Dining in Chicago* takes on Chappell’s approach by writing a three hundred page book on the social settings of Chicago’s restaurants, covering every section of the town and its unique flavors. Drury is quite verbose, writing reviews of the loose gastronomic style that weave in bits of history, ethnic folklore, asides on dining trends, close descriptions of dishes, and reporting on the social scene, glamorous or criminal, that frequented each restaurant. In just a few pages descriptions range from the witty literary—“Here you may see those two highly-polished instruments, the chafing dish and the saxophone, manipulated by the fingers of experts”—to unbridled joy—“Escargots Bourguignonne! Moules marinière! Pâté de foie gras!”—and the kind memories of the familiar—“When Chicagoans think of sea foods they think of Ireland’s.”<sup>247</sup> Drury covers a wide variety of places, from the largest coffee shop in the country at that time, Merchandise Mart, capable of serving 10,000 customers a day, to the most exclusive and fashionable French *maison*, Chez Louis.<sup>248</sup> That he sub-titled his work “An Intimate Guide” was an apt choice and he created it through combining Chappell’s attention to the scene with a hungry cosmopolitan’s interest in new, diverse flavors.

Selmer Fougner’s *Dining Out in New York* followed the lead of the Dodds, publishing a short guidebook that mostly disregards the social scene in favor of describing dishes and

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<sup>246</sup> Jack L. Dodd and Hazel Blair Dodd, *Bohemian Eats of San Francisco* (San Francisco: n.p., 1925), n.p. None of the pages in this book are numbered.

<sup>247</sup> John Drury, *Dining in Chicago: An Intimate Guide* (New York: John Day, 1931), 61, 63, 67.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 87, 101.

providing practical information like addresses. For Fougner this was a conscious decision to improve upon previous guidebooks, declaring that “No attempt is made in any of these [guidebook’s] lists, however, to tell the prospective diner-out just what to order in the better restaurants of New York, and that is the need which this little book proposes to fulfill.”<sup>249</sup> Indeed, consideration of dishes was never on Chappell’s mind when he surveyed the landscape of New York dining in 1925, but fifteen years later Fougner outlined a handful of dishes at each restaurant, detailing, for example, how the Ritz Carlton made Supreme of Chicken Veronique by having “breast of chicken... placed over the sliced ham and the dish is ornamented with skinned seeded Muscatel grapes.”<sup>250</sup> Of Jean’s Restaurant, and their famous vichysoisse, Fougner practically spells out the entire recipe, noting the exact amount of liquids used.<sup>251</sup> Moreover, the design of Fougner’s text did not imitate the prose paragraph style of Chappell’s, the Dodds’, or Drury’s guides, but instead followed a programmatic format repeated for each listing: name, address, phone number, type of cooking, specialty or recommended dish, and then a string of terse sentences giving whatever other information Fougner felt was most pertinent to understanding a restaurant, from hours of operation to prices of dishes.

### **A New Guide to a New Landscape**

“In the United States, preparing, cooking, and eating food (or drinking wine or other beverages, for that matter) is often no different a process than getting gas and driving our cars. Discernment in our commodity culture relies on external information, not personal knowledge.”<sup>252</sup>

Karl Raitz argues that as motorists gained familiarity with the new landscape of American roads and roadsides, they “became more sophisticated and increasingly sought

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<sup>249</sup> G. Selmer Fougner, *Dining Out in New York* (New York: H.C. Kinsey & Co., 1939), vii.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>252</sup> C. Nadia Seremetakis, “The Memory of the Senses: Part 1 & 2,” in *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity*, ed. C. Nadia Seremetakis, 1-43 (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 15.

refinement and trustworthiness in the business they patronized,” but were still unsure how to discern which places could be trusted from the cues available to them as they drove around.<sup>253</sup> In providing heuristics to guide decision-making, Hines felt he was “doing something for the traveler as nearly ideal as possible” through “working out this experiment in service to those who appreciate the refinements of good living, while seeing America.”<sup>254</sup> He called his guidebook “a reliable directory” made “available to discriminating motorists,” though it was “not intended to tell people living in a city where to eat in their home town,” but instead “the information therein is mighty convenient for anyone traveling in a strange territory.”<sup>255</sup> By the 1930s, motorists were seeing an increasingly cluttered roadside of signs, lights, architecture, buildings, and other items constructed to attract consumers in cars, what Catherine Gudis has called “corridors of consumption.”<sup>256</sup> In terms of motorists trying to make sense of this landscape, Hines believed that when “on a pleasure trip—particularly in strange localities—it is important to take no chances,” and so *Adventures in Good Eating* could reduce the risks.<sup>257</sup> In fact, *Publishers’ Weekly* explicitly calls Hines’ text the product of having “discovered that roadside signs were not always dependable guides to good food.”<sup>258</sup> As Hines said, “my travels have taught me never to judge any eating place by its front appearance. Gay neon signs and bright chrome can smoke-screen a lot of filth in back. Also, the reverse is true; a drab front may hide a gem of a restaurant.”<sup>259</sup> Since others’ signs were not much use, Hines provided his own, first in the guise of a guidebook and eventually through official “Recommended by Duncan Hines” road signs as well.

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<sup>253</sup> Raitz, “American Roads, Roadside America,” 385.

<sup>254</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1938), ix, x.

<sup>255</sup> Duncan Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (Bowling Green, KY: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1941), x, vii.

<sup>256</sup> Gudis, *Buyways*, 5. See also Raitz, “American Roads, Roadside America,” 379-386; Jakle, *Signs in America’s Auto Age: Signatures of Landscape and Place*.

<sup>257</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1941), viii.

<sup>258</sup> “From Hobby to Publishing,” 354.

<sup>259</sup> Hines, “How to Find a Decent Meal,” 97.

Duncan Hines guided motoring consumers to restaurants through a guidebook that synthesized aspects of texts in related genres. In general, the early twentieth century gastronomic guidebook combined aspects of the travel guidebook with arts and literary criticism. Of the travel guidebook, Robert Foulke says it “spins on an axis of information and is in fact ephemeral and consumable,” and so these texts “must be up to date, accurate in detail, responsible in using sources, authenticated by the writer’s direct experience, selective yet reasonably comprehensive, clearly focused, analytic in structure, organized for quick reference, and easy to read.” As a consequence, “they experiment with idiosyncratic personal voice at great risk” because travelers often desire accurate information before anything else.<sup>260</sup> Of critical reviews, Robert Blank notes two general types, the connoisseurial review and the procedural review. The former will “invoke the experience, talent, and personal sensitivity of the expert reviewer” while the latter will “point to [the review’s] explicit procedures and add that anyone could, in principle, follow the procedures and duplicate the results.”<sup>261</sup> Furthermore, the connoisseurial review’s “one-reviewer-one-product-one-review nature makes them particularly suitable for new or unstable product categories, where the products are changing rapidly and the interests of the audience are not yet clear.” Procedural reviews, Blank says, “are better suited to products in stable, well-established categories where the criteria for a good product are well understood.”<sup>262</sup> Hines’ guidebook combined the informatics of the travel guide with the aesthetics of the connoisseurial review and yet, as made abundantly clear by his system of crowd-sourced recommendations, he encouraged others to follow his procedures and duplicate his results, like a procedural review,

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<sup>260</sup> Robert Foulke, “The Guidebook Industry,” in *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel*, ed. Michael Kowalewski, 93-106 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 95, 96.

<sup>261</sup> Blank, *Critics, Ratings, and Society*, 151.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

and he would compile, edit, and publish their evaluations. Hines' guidebook combined aspects of other genres as well.

Genres are made to accomplish tasks and are multi-purpose in practice; as Amy Devitt notes, "studying genre is studying how people use language to make their way in the world."<sup>263</sup> "Situation and genre are so tightly interwoven as to be interlocked," Devitt notes, and subsequently "genre entails purposes, participants, and themes" that should be interpreted as responses to their context, which includes both proximate pressures as well as historical legacies.<sup>264</sup> In terms of genre and history, the restaurant guidebook is a longstanding practice of modern societies. Of situations like these, Devitt posits that, "If genre responds to a recurring situation, then a particular text's reflection of genre reflects that genre's situation," so that new variations on an established genre "fulfill new functions of a group, reflect new relationships among participants, and otherwise adapt to the changing needs of the changing people who use them."<sup>265</sup> Applied to Hines' situation, his guidebook responded to restaurants moving from urban spaces and affluent audiences to more suburban and rural spaces and the middle-class audiences that motored to consume in them. In addition, Hines spoke to these audiences by creating a guidebook that mixed aspects of existing genres in order to respond to the various expectations he needed to satisfy, especially those related to driving and criticizing.

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<sup>263</sup> Amy J. Devitt, *Writing Genres* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), 9. On how genres are social-cultural, see Carolyn R. Miller, "Genre as Social Action," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70.2 (1984): 151-167; Marie-Laure Ryan, "On the Why, What, and How of Generic Taxonomy," *Poetics* 10 (1981): 109-126.

<sup>264</sup> Devitt, *Writing Genres*, 22, 13. That genres are historical, neither eternal nor essentially necessary, and thus reflect interlocking judgments of value and use for particular communities, see Michael B. Prince, "Mauvais Genres," *New Literary History* 34.3 (2003): 53-479; Hayden White, "Anomalies of Genre: The Utility of Theory and History for the Study of Literary Genres," *New Literary History* 34.3 (2003): 597-615; Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

<sup>265</sup> Devitt, *Writing Genres*, 21, 101.

**“motorists carry his guidebook as they do road maps”<sup>266</sup>**

Though a critic of their practices, Duncan Hines built on the examples provided by his predecessors in restaurant guidebooks while, in a crucial difference, adjusting his text for a different context.<sup>267</sup> Whereas John Drury and the Dodds focused on a single city and wrote for those who could more or less navigate them with ease by foot, taxi, or public transportation, Hines attempted to cover the entire nation and provide information for those who were venturing by car into places that were far from home, often in rurally isolated places about which they knew nothing. To make such places attractive he combined the concern for scene found in Chappell’s work, the sprawling coverage of Drury’s guide, and the attention to dishes present in Fougner’s and the Dodds’ text. Hines also combined the informatics of travel guides, a genre related to but separate from restaurant guides, and the mix of description and evaluation common to aesthetic criticism—but that does not begin to cover the scope of things included in his publication. Overall, *Adventures in Good Eating* is a varied text stuffed with much more than restaurant listings: scenic photographs, directions, self-promotion, *nota bene*, culinary proverbs, consumer testimonials, recipes, and quite a few texts written by other experts, like a section on how to choose wines. It appears that Hines associated many things with his version of “good eating.”

Because it was for motorists, Hines’ guidebook was designed to physically fit in glove compartments and, thanks to him providing precise information on restaurants’ locations, Hines intended for its use in conjunction with navigational texts like maps, signs, and itineraries. In fact, full-page advertisements from 1947 show Rand McNally’s road atlases publicized alongside Duncan Hines’ guidebooks to restaurants and lodging and yet another travel writer’s book on

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<sup>266</sup> MacKaye, “Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?,” 16.

<sup>267</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1938), ix.

Mexico.<sup>268</sup> Hines also put in each guidebook multiple reminders for consumers to take the effort to get up-to-date maps and, of course, the newest edition of his guidebook as well:

When motoring I always carry a Rand-McNally Road Atlas which shows highways in each state as well as Canada and Mexico

To avoid disappointments and missing new interesting places, be sure you are traveling with the latest edition of ‘Adventures in Good Eating’. There are 596 additions and changes since the 1941 edition.<sup>269</sup>

That Hines’ guide for hungry motorists was paired with maps fits the history of popular cartography, which in the early twentieth century was strongly influenced by consumerism. James Akerman has shown that the style of maps then dominant in the United States ignored topography and sites of local, unique interest “to reduce the road to a series of interval distances, destinations, and travel times” with no regard for the spaces between destination points.<sup>270</sup> Susan Schulten agrees and argues that the resulting “focus [was] not geographical relationships but locations,” a vision of particulars without any context but the current nation-state.<sup>271</sup> Motorists’ maps further “encouraged the growth and health of automobile-related consumption” by having been paid for and promoted by oil companies and other roadside services.<sup>272</sup> As maps were increasingly destination-oriented, Hines ably supplied information on such destinations.

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<sup>268</sup> Advertisement, “Travel Books Offer Endless Hours of Adventures” in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>269</sup> Duncan Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (Bowling Green, KY: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1950), 95 (1950); *Ibid.*, *Adventures in Good Eating* (Bowling Green, KY: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1942), 153.

<sup>270</sup> James R. Akerman, “Selling Maps, Selling Highways: Rand McNally’s ‘Blazed Trails’ Program,” *Imago Mundi* 45.1 (1993): 80. See also James R. Akerman, “Blazing a Well-Worn Path: Cartographic Commercialism, Highway Promotion, and Automobile Tourism in the United States, 1880-1930,” *Cartographica* 30.1 (1993): 10-20.

<sup>271</sup> Susan Schulten, “The Limits of Possibility: Rand McNally in American Culture, 1898-1929,” *Cartographic Perspectives* 35 (2000): 20. See also Susan Schulten, *The Geographical Imagination in America, 1880-1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Denis Cosgrove, “Maps, Mapping, Modernity: Art and Cartography in the Twentieth Century,” *Imago Mundi* 57.1 (2005): 35-54; Mark Monmonier, *Rhumb Lines and Map Wars: A Social History of the Mercator Projection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

<sup>272</sup> James R. Akerman, “Twentieth-Century American Road Maps and the Making of a National Motorized Space,” in *Cartographies of Travel and Navigation*, ed. James R. Akerman, 151-206 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 154. See also James R. Akerman, “American Promotional Road Mapping in the Twentieth Century,” *Cartography and Geographic Information Science* 29.3 (2002): 175-191.



Hines' restaurant listings began and ended with information like the address, hours of operation, and the average prices of common dishes. In displaying practical information presented in regular formats, he was following the models of the travel guidebooks that came before him, publications like Baedeker's handbooks for nineteenth century travelers, the Green and Blue Books that guided the earliest motorists with turn-by-turn information on how to get from here to there, guides to cities for tourists, and previews of exotic locales by railroad companies.<sup>273</sup> The fact that these guides were paid for by advertising or published on behalf of a commercial association, like a hotel group, troubled consumers like Hines because in their minds such a relationship made the intention of the guide's recommendations suspect.<sup>274</sup> In response, Hines made a conscious effort to abstain from advertising, and he constantly reminded everyone of this fact to prove his value as a trustworthy mediator.

Because he was guiding people through places they probably had never visited before, in his text Hines occasionally played the role of historian and contemporary commentator. A few of the state-by-state sections of his guidebook begin with descriptions of the area, and he seemed to have done so only for states that most Americans in the 1930s had not toured for leisure or while on vacation, like Alabama or Kansas. For example, he explains Nevada as "The one state where gambling is legal, and on account of this those places that serve food derive much of their profit from the tables. Once more we have one of those high, wide and handsome states where when men eat they EAT and no foolin'."<sup>275</sup> In effect, and contrary to Robert Foulke's warning against

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<sup>273</sup> Karl Baedeker, *The United States, with an Excursion in to Mexico* (London: Dulau and Co., 1893); *The Automobile Official Blue Book 1912*, ed. Henry Macnair (New York: The Automobile Blue Book Publishing Co., 1912); *Automobile Green Book 1922*, (Boston: Scarborough Motor Guide Company, 1922). "Pocket Directory and Guide of Richmond, Va.," (Self-published: Robert Waitt, 1927), in box 4, folder 7, and "Arizona Winter" (Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, ca. 1920s), box 1, folder 5, in Travel brochure and map collection, #6591, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library, Ithaca, New York.

<sup>274</sup> *New England Tours: 1932 Eclipse edition* (New England Hotel Association, Inc.), in box 2, folder 6, Travel brochure and map collection.

<sup>275</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1941), 189.

this practice, Hines was using his unique personal voice to enliven the practice of placing a foreign territory in frames that the average reader could understand but with a food-focused twist. As such, he was providing a follow-up to the popular and well-received descriptions of areas found in the federally published pamphlets that guided Americans through the newly invented national park system, texts that were handsomely revised in the 1920s and 1930s thanks first to the National Park Service's "See America First" campaign as well as through the funding of the New Deal's WPA.<sup>276</sup>

The majority of the guidebook's text is listings of recommended restaurants, and while the format of each listing is consistent the content within that format is highly variable. The first variation is the amount of information given for each restaurant. For example, his description in the listing for the Prince George Hotel in Toronto, Ontario is descriptive, personal, and anecdotal:

When I am in Toronto I enjoy eating at this old hotel. It is a good deal the type of the old Palmer House, Chicago (not rebuilt). Meals are not cheap nor high priced. Dinner is around \$1.25. It is one of those quiet, very British places where the regular 'eaters' look you over as much as to say 'How did that tourist bouncer get in here?' I am confident you will like the fine cooking here.<sup>277</sup>

The very next review underneath the Prince George Hotel is for the Robert Simpson Co., and its description consists of one sentence: "The Arcadian Court in this department store is another good dining room in Toronto." Similarly, the listings for Haines Cafeteria in Gainesville, Captain Tom's in Miami, Italiano Café in Hollywood, and Morrison's Cafeteria in Jacksonville, Florida, all appear on the same page and each have no description, no address, nothing but a name of the restaurant and the town. Yet on the same page is a two hundred-word write-up, one of the

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<sup>276</sup> Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880-1940* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001); "Mesa Verde National Park – Colorado," United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1936) in box 1, folder 16, Travel brochure and map collection.

<sup>277</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1938), 54.

longest in the guidebook, for Chalet Suzanne in Lake Wales, Florida, a place that Hines' lauded loudly and continuously through out his career.<sup>278</sup>

When Hines did provide a listing that was more than non-existent but less than a personal paean, the contents were still quite variable and often focus mostly on things besides food. Of the Brookdale Lodge in Brookdale, California, Hines writes a recommendation that isn't: "This is a 'novelty' place. It has a mountain brook gurgling through the dining room, trees, moss, rocks between the tables. I did not stop there while in Calif. this winter, but many of my readers recommend it. Dinners are \$1.50."<sup>279</sup> Of the Hotel Jamestown in Jamestown, New York, Hines just guesses that things "are" what they "were," even mixing verb tenses in one sentence: "A very high standard was maintained in the dining room and the rooms are immaculate. I have not been there for several years but have no reason to think that conditions have changed. Prices moderate."<sup>280</sup> Of the Occidental Restaurant in Washington, D.C., he begins hesitantly, "I think it is 14<sup>th</sup> street," before explaining its attractions, which were not really the food despite saying so: "Famous for sea food and also for its clientele. Walls covered with autographed pictures of practically all the famous men—and some infamous by now—who have come to Washington in the past 50 years. Full of senators and congressmen a good deal of the time."<sup>281</sup> Similarly, the listing for the Stage Coach Inn in Gloucester, Massachusetts, has more than half of its verbiage describing colonial history and "furnishings," a habit common to Hines' recommendations of anything "olde," especially if the establishment was in New England.

Overall, for a guide to good eating the most common manner in describing a place's goodness was to provide details on every thing that evokes taste, as in sense of style and design,

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid., 161.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid., 68.

and only on occasion something that evokes taste, as in sensation on the tongue. For instance, the prototypical listing is similar to that of the Hawley Manor in Newtown, Connecticut:

The ground itself came to the Hawley family in trade with the Indians in 1705 and remained in the family until 1930. The fine old house and guest cottages both of which retain the best of the old together with necessary modern improvements, are surrounded by seven acres of orchard, arbors, sunken gardens and lawns. You dine, sumptuously and in piece, on the screened porch overlooking the garden from whence have but recently come the vegetables and berries on your table.<sup>282</sup>

In contrast, the Dew Drop Inn in Forsythe, Georgia, receives a comically short, given its contents, and grammatically incorrect description: “Many say ‘The best Pecan pie in the world.’” Nothing else is said. On the same page, the Cloister Inn in Sea Island, Georgia, is called “A delightful inn with tennis, sea bathing, swimming pool, short iron golf course, trap shooting, riding croquet, and golf. Very good food.”<sup>283</sup> In this listing’s twenty-one words only three talk about the food. Hines does not ignore longer descriptions of food, it is just that such text is not as common as his loving depictions of interior decorating and grounds landscaping.

Extended discourse on food occurs infrequently, as with The Lee Hoffman Hotel in Cresson, Pennsylvania, that has “good country sausage, hams and chickens, etc. Very fine, young and plump fried chicken and honest to goodness waffles, Italian spaghetti way above the average. A reputation extending to Calif. and Mexico for excellent Chili, old-fashioned Buckwheat Cakes, first run maple syrup and hot biscuit.”<sup>284</sup> Most food descriptions are not this long but are like the listings found elsewhere on the same page as Lee Hoffman’s, wherein The Fountain House in Doylestown receives a single sentence—“Boneless shad, roast capon, filet mignon are some of the dishes on the dinner menu”—as does the Hotel Washington in Chambersburg above it—“Filet mignon, roast stuff duckling with apple sauce, broiled fresh shad

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 200.

roe with bacon are some of the good things you will find on their menu.” The culinary content of this listing is also typical of Hines’ recommendations, in that the listings that have their food described are overwhelmingly common “American” foods like fried chicken, ham, dinner rolls, corn cakes, and perhaps local specialties that by the 1930s were not considered that obscure or strange, like chili con carne.

While some of the listings were revised through subsequent editions, quite a few were not, which brings up his method of compilation. First, Hines defends the variability of his listings in his “Introduction” by exhorting the reader:

**Do not judge a place** by the length of its listing. Many times I would like to devote more space to listings and descriptions. But I must maintain a convenient size book.

**When there is no comment** in connection with places listed, it means that I have not received detailed information in reply to my letters or it arrived too late to be included. Many of these inns I know are outstanding.<sup>285</sup>

If Hines knew these places were outstanding, then it begs the question why no comments were made, since if he knew these places he would not need to receive information from other people. Instead, his excuses aside, Hines depended so heavily on other people giving him information, relied so much on his multiple secretaries to organize the text, and was so hyper-actively mobile that he had no choice but to print whatever he had amassed whenever it was due to the printer. Louis Hatchett’s chronicle of Hines’ personal life is quite clear that Hines was constantly on the move, and this hyper-drive in some ways got worse as he aged, became more famous, and toured the country even more than ever.<sup>286</sup> The Duncan Hines papers in the archive at Cornell University consist of scrapbooks tracing his week by week movements from the mid-1940s until his death, and the plethora of press clippings show that he was motoring from city to city on

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid., x.

<sup>286</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*.

press junkets for weeks at a time, with only brief stops at home in Kentucky as he crisscrossed the country.<sup>287</sup> “I think of myself in the role of host to many, many friends,” Hines said, and his guidebook reflects this open, congenial, and affirmative approach, with the results being a text made up of whatever others gave them.<sup>288</sup> In sum, it appears the associations he had with others were crucial to his networking as sources of extensive information and evaluations.

### **Paratext:**

#### **The Pragmatics of Influence**

Between the listings in *Adventures in Good Eating* was much more text. While the listings associated good taste with a number of things that have no flavor, like scenery and history, so too did the multiple types of interstitial text between the listings form taste through associating a great many things with good eating besides actual food. It is in these liminal spaces between restaurant listings that Hines proffered his aesthetic judgments through an assortment of paratexts, the smaller pieces of “secondary” text that help make sense of the bulk of the “primary” text. Paratext includes the “the liminal devices—titles, signs of authorship, dedications, epigraphs, prefaces, notes, intertitles, epilogues and the like—that mediate the relations between text and reader.”<sup>289</sup> The prefix para- denotes the position and function of this type of text, in that “A thing in ‘para’... is not only simultaneously on both sides of the boundary line between inside and out. It is also the boundary itself, the screen which is a permeable membrane connecting inside and outside.”<sup>290</sup> Gerard Genette sees this space as “a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an

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<sup>287</sup> Volumes 2-8, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>288</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1942), xi.

<sup>289</sup> Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), xi.

<sup>290</sup> J. Hillis Miller, “The Critic as Host,” in *Theory Now and Then*, 143-170 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 144.

influence on the public, an influence that—whether well or poorly understood and achieved—is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it (more pertinent, of course, in the eyes of the author and his allies).<sup>291</sup> This definition holds true with Hines’ paratexts as these quips and asides reveal strong feelings, gastronomic philosophies, and advice on many non-culinary practices that provide a much deeper and wider senses of Hines’ taste than his variable restaurant listings. It was as if Hines was telling readers to come for the information in the listings to fulfill practical needs, but stay for the anecdotes in the paratext, and perhaps reform your tastes by becoming acquainted with senses of many things that Hines associated together to guide others’ adventures.

Duncan Hines began each edition of *Adventures in Good Eating* with paratexts that always told the same stories. The very first section after the title page was a one-page “Foreword” by Forrest Crissey, a staff writer for *The Saturday Evening Post* and author of the book, *The Story of Foods* in 1917. He introduces Hines by vaunting his sense and sensibility, noting that, “his discrimination in the appreciation of ‘good living’ has revealed itself as phenomenal and amazing” because “This discernment is marked by a peculiarity in that it is distinctively American and wholly independent of European gustatory standards.” Crissey says this was because Hines grew up eating the good, wholesome, and wholly American food of a respectable Kentucky family, and then updated his taste for a new era by having “motored widely over our country” to first make a “private list compiled for the benefit of his personal friends” that has since been “designed as an authentic guide for the motoring public to the good food America has to offer.” Further, Crissey declares, “I regard Duncan Hines as an authority in this field... a connoisseur in ‘good eating’ of the best American type. You may safely entrust

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<sup>291</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 2.

your nominations to his careful editorship.”<sup>292</sup> Before even encountering Hines’ opinion, the readers are told through which associations—like respectability and region—they are to make sense of Hines as all-American, authentic, and therefore an authority.

On the very next page Hines furthers senses of his taste based in innovative practices. “My interest in Wayside inns is not the expression of a gourmand’s greedy appetite for fine foods but the result of a recreational impulse to do something ‘different,’” Hines declares, “to see as much of America as possible, to test its outstanding food, to meet interesting people along the way.” In doing so, he encountered people of comparable habits and sentiments, and “Most of these tourists produced private lists of ‘best places’ and nearly all of them remarked that there ought to be a reliable directory of the most desirable inns available to motorists. *This idea intrigued me.*”<sup>293</sup> He admits that his work builds on “the intense public interest in ‘good places at which to eat’” and answers the as yet unanswered query, “where will we find a place to dine or lunch that will suit our personal tastes?” Quoted from is his original version of this explanation, for Hines’ “Introduction” saw constant but minor revisions in subsequent editions. As would become his hallmark of composing this text, the many pieces that comprised the guidebook varied from year to year, tinkered with according to the demands of his fellow motorists. For example, the 1938 edition’s “Introduction” responds to requests from his audiences for photographs and maps with paragraph-long explanations on why he cannot comply, yet subsequent editions lack this text.<sup>294</sup> To maintain his guidebook’s relevancy Hines was always adjusting its contents to make sure that the senses of taste he proffered coincided with the conditions in which they would be made. Hines admitted as much, explaining to his readers that

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<sup>292</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1937), n.p. The wording of this foreword never changed through subsequent editions of the guidebook.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1938), x.



of preparing foods and making tastes for them, “it is a co-ordination of the efforts of a group of human beings” and thus “peculiarly sensitive to human variations.”<sup>295</sup>

One of the groups he was coordinating encompassed his most trusted recommenders of restaurants, and a large paratext before the restaurant listings was “An Appreciation,” a listing of the most significant persons out of “the thousands of people who have written” to Hines.<sup>296</sup> Here the fact of Hines’ criticism as a group effort is underlined quite forcefully as he provides the names, address, and sometimes the occupation of some of his friends and fans. That he paraded them was both a nod of gratitude to those he sincerely was thankful for as well as an attempt to raise the value of his guidebook by showing off the social standing of those who helped make it. As Louis Hatchett says of Hines, “People who had succeeded in life, Hines felt, could be trusted; they had completely managed their careers and finances” and therefore “had superior tastes.”<sup>297</sup> Hines’ standard of excellence was the reflection he saw in the mirror, so in the “Appreciation” section he goes out of his way to note that of “the number of people scattered throughout the country” who he trusted the most “many of them [are] retired from business.”<sup>298</sup> Hines’ use of status signifiers continue in another paratext, “Wines” by Julian Street, a section that amplified Hines’ criticism through including and building on another’s expertise. This text continuously changed in contents and overall length, even switching names from “Imported Wines” in its first year of inclusion in 1938 to “Wines” after 1941, presumably due to the World War’s effect on importing goods from Europe. By 1948, the year Julian Street died, an additional sub-section on “Wine with Food” appeared and in 1954 it expanded greatly after Hines had, behind the scenes, been searching for years for information on wines, asking the expert Morrison Wood, the owner

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<sup>295</sup> Duncan Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (Bowling Green, KY: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1948), ix.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi.

<sup>297</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 57.

<sup>298</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1942), xvi.

of the Gladstone Hotel in New York, the Wine Institute, and *Gourmet* magazine for up-to-date advice.<sup>299</sup>

The rest of the front matter varied from year to year. Sometimes there was a “Warning to Places Listed” about customers impersonating Hines to get free meals.<sup>300</sup> Often there were page-length advertisements for his other publications with drawn depictions of their appearance, as well as advertisements to purchase a case in which to place the guidebooks, though both of these varied by whether they were in the front matter before the listings or the back matter afterwards.<sup>301</sup> On occasion, as in the 1954 edition, there were page-long instructions on how “To determine the direction you are driving from the sun’s position any time of day,” or a diatribe on “The sanitary conditions” that he was famous for criticizing.<sup>302</sup> The content of the back matter after the restaurant listings were similar to the front matter, including a blend of advertisements for Hines’ products, like his mail-order “Hickory-Smoked Hams”; self-promotional testimonies about how “Many business concerns have used this book with equally good effect” as gifts for clients; notes like “May I Have Your Co-Operation” that ask Americans to promote his guidebook by showing it off to others; and a space to collect autographs of chefs and restaurateurs.<sup>303</sup> By the late 1940s much of this back matter was gone as the guidebook continued to swell the number of listings but the actual number of pages remained constant. In the ensuing squeeze, Hines’ eliminated most of the paratexts around the listings but kept the paratexts in the front matter.

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<sup>299</sup> Letter, Gladstone Hotel to Duncan Hines, July 15, 1948 and August 13, 1948; letter, Morrison Wood to Duncan Hines, 9 September 1952; pamphlet mailed to Duncan Hines, n.d., *Gourmet presents A Vintage Chart of French and German Wines 1945-1952*; press release mailed to Duncan Hines, n.d., Wine Institute (San Francisco), “Wine Lines” by Don Holland, all documents in box 1, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>300</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1942), xii.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1950), xx-xxi; Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1942), xix; Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), xxi.

<sup>302</sup> Duncan Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (Bowling Green, KY: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1954), n.p; Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), xii.

<sup>303</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1941), 312, 310, 315, 316.

The greatest number of paratexts in *Adventures in Good Eating* were the lines that Hines snuck between individual listings and state-by-state sections, usually on the bottom half of pages. Though many of these one-liners are repeated in multiple editions, so too did new proverbs and protests appear in each edition, adding more to the pile of disparate things associated with Hines and his senses of things. For example, since his descriptions of food in restaurant listings were often not always food-focused, the quips between the listings was where he revealed his gastronomy:

THE finest lemon pie I ever had was in a town of fifty people. It cost ten cents. One of the poorest was in a large New York hotel. That cost forty cents.

Superior food in a top place, the kind you remember with pleasure, is expensive and justly so.

ABOUT one man in a hundred will stand up and admit he likes ice cream soda. The other ninety-nine will stand by and envy him.

HALF an avocado costs about six cents. Lettuce, two heads for five cents. Avocado salad at seventy-five cents seems a bit high.

MUCH of our cooking falls down through the fact that too many cooks are still trying to discover something that will take the place of good butter, fresh eggs, rich milk and a loving touch. It just hasn't been done yet.

In the run of the mine roadside eateries, coffee makes me think it contains an overdose of stove polish or liquid from a storage battery. Nor do I like chicory in my coffee. My! how tastes do differ.<sup>304</sup>

These do not form a consistent line of argument, as his comments about prices seem to say that price both is and is not an indicator of quality. Further, he both declares principles about what makes food good (simple, fresh, rich, and loving) and admits that tastes differ, obviating the need for culinary principles. These contradictions and confusions were common; for instance, he reacts to the same question with two different answers:

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<sup>304</sup> Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1937), 100; Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), 206; Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1938), 77, 134, 171; Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), 96.

IN ANSWER to a question as to ‘What is the most important thing in a restaurant?’ a proprietor replied ‘sharp knives.’ My answer would be cleanliness.

No matter how fine the restaurant equipment, how thorough the sanitation, efficient the management or attractive the decorations—the most important person on the payroll is a good cook.<sup>305</sup>

Similarly, from focusing on a singular cause to the larger ensemble that creates “good eating,”

Hines both defines what’s necessary and cannot define it:

Dining out—when you encounter sanitation (restroom included), a good cook, sparkling silver, glassware and dishes, appetizing food that looks good and tastes good along with real coffee and a sharp knife—you wind up as happy as a bee.

A PLACE may have fine food, excellent service, and pleasant surrounding and yet not ‘ring the bell.’ There is an intangible something that causes customers to return again and again.<sup>306</sup>

As revealed in his nod to the key ingredient of *je ne sais quoi*, Hines sometimes considered that what was more important than the food were the details of dining, about which he often had more to say than the food:

Practically always the silverware is clean. But many times the design is so ‘flossy’ that it does not look so.

‘IT’S the little things that tell’ as a man remarked about his next door neighbor’s small girl. Clean tops to the ketchup bottles, steel knives that are sharp, no smears on the sugar bowls, comfortable chairs, plenty of room to pull your chair away from the table without polishing off some dame.

GOOD service greatly adds to the meal. I’d rather have spinach nicely served than a thumb in my ‘puree a la.’

A DOG owner is sometimes a bigger crank about his hound than a woman about her child. Tip to bonifaces. When you see a customer who has a dog outside, ask him if he’d like a few *good* bones for it.

AHEM! May I whisper a word about clean and handy restrooms.

BEHIND EVERY CIGARETTE DAMAGE to linen, carpet, upholstery, furniture, is a selfish and careless smoker.

<sup>305</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1941), 171; Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), 138.

<sup>306</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1954), 180; Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1938), 97.

You can avoid disappointments if you make a point of arriving at the beginning of a meal and in that way you will usually fare better than those who come in late.<sup>307</sup>

The range of things Hines associated with dining well included much more than food, mainly non-human entities like dogs, microbes, and material culture but also manners and timing. The good in good eating thus significantly relied on actors and factors well beyond actual eating.

The advice Hines gave extended beyond restaurant recommendations and dining room practices and into matters of driving, business ownership, and friendship. On driving, he warns his fellow motorists:

***You change drivers at 40.***

IF AN accident occurs while your car is traveling under *40 miles an hour* there is only *one chance in 44* that someone will be killed. But—if an accident occurs while your car is traveling over *40 miles an hour* there is *one chance in 19* that someone will be killed....  
Death begins at 40!<sup>308</sup>

While speed kills in a physical sense, apparently bad manners kill fun in a social sense, for Hines notes that:

FREQUENTLY A SMALL PARTY OF FRIENDS will plan a trip together. Every member of such a group should decide for himself or herself whether the party is going to be wholly congenial and whether all the members have enough common interests to preserve amity. On selfish self-willed person can spoil the happiness of a whole party; there must be some ‘give and take’ on the part of all to keep things rolling smoothly.<sup>309</sup>

While telling customers how to play nice in a group, so too did Hines feel it was his place to tell business owners that they needed to be part of the “in” group:

THE National Restaurant Association stresses the slogan ‘Good Food is Good Health’ which I believe is a good one. Thousands upon thousands of worth while eating places in America have learned much and profited by their membership in this splendid organization.

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<sup>307</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1938), 55, 127, 102, 138; *Ibid.*, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1942), 114; *Ibid.*, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1941), 114, 110, 122.

<sup>308</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1941), 87.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

If I were to undertake the problem of serving the public satisfactorily with good food, I would consider a membership quite essential. Valuable information may also be gained by reading *The American Restaurant Magazine* and *Restaurant Management*.<sup>310</sup>

Hines prided himself on being beyond the sway of “commercialism,” his word for what he considered to be unethical practices, like allowing the restaurants he recommended to also place advertisements in his guidebook—despite the fact that in the comments above he is blatantly advertising on behalf of the National Restaurant Association. No money may have been exchanged, and thus the relationship is not “commercialism,” but favors are being exchanged. The National Restaurant Association is the exact same organization that gave Duncan Hines his own dinner and speech at their annual conferences, a platform that he used to tell them what’s right and wrong with their industry.<sup>311</sup> In turn, Hines advertised for this commercial group.

It should be noted, again, that Hines was a professional salesman. His guidebook’s editions were always littered with promotions of himself and, on occasion, of others, as well as testimonials to the value of Hines from consumers and restaurateurs. On himself and his publications, Hines notes that:

Sales executives have purchased ADVENTURES IN GOOD EATING in quantities for presentation to hard boiled prospects. I could tell you of surprising results. In many cases the sales resistance of years standing were melted and some astounding business resulted.

Articles about DUNCAN HINES and his books have appeared in the ‘Saturday Evening Post,’ ‘Readers Digest,’ ‘Coronet Magazine,’ ‘Better Homes and Gardens,’ and many others.

‘Adventures in Good Eating’ and ‘Lodging for a Night’ are helpful in traveling by bus, airplane or train, as well as automobile. Useful when visiting unfamiliar localities and cities.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1938), 175.

<sup>311</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 127.

<sup>312</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1937), n.p.; Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), 227, 251.

Hines also had no problem promoting other authorities whose knowledge covered areas beyond his expertise:

*Other Eating Places in New York City*  
*KNIFE AND FORK IN NEW YORK*  
*by Lawton Mackall*  
*is an interesting book which lists a great many more places than we have room to*  
*include in ADVENTURES IN GOOD EATING*

Books on the art of using wine, Sherry, Port and Madeira, in cooking, for zest and subtle flavor, are available in book stores. Among these are ‘A Wine Lover’s Cook Book’ by Jeanne Owen and ‘With a Jug of Wine’ by Morrison Wood.<sup>313</sup>

Including others in his enterprise was natural to the outgoing, sociable Hines, and so Hines used these contacts to generate testimonials from restaurateurs praising the value of his guidebook to their businesses:

*Many people, armed with the ‘Red Book’ came to us this summer and told us that they traveled by it exclusively. Golden Apple, Ganaoque, Ont., Canada*

*It is surprising the interest your book is creating. Everyone speaks very highly of it, and I am sure it is going to be a great service to the traveling public. The Krebs, Skaneateles, N.Y.*

*Your book has been responsible for more new business this year than the total results obtained from a number of other sources costing us quite a little each year. It is a great idea, beautifully done and greatly appreciated by the many who have purchased the book. Lake Wesauking Lodge, Towana, Pa.<sup>314</sup>*

The difference between “commercialism”—now called pay-for-play or payola—and Hines’ own money-free system is not as large as he framed it in order to make himself look good: they both trade favors, it’s just that the latter does it without direct transfers of cash but instead with transfers of social capital *that are then turned into cash*, in the form of increased product sales for the restaurant and Hines. The idea that Hines’ system was beyond “commercialism” is false because the mutual back scratching still occurred, the influence peddling was still present. This is

<sup>313</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1950), 226; *Ibid.*, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1954), 181.

<sup>314</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1938), 193, 208, 213.

not an attack on Hines' character but rather a recognition that social networks are nothing but avenues of influence and that the immediate presence or absence of money is irrelevant because eventually a significant amount of *money is generated precisely because of* these relationships. The existence of the relationship and its uses toward ultimate ends matters more than occasional means like money.

One move that helped Hines' relationships with his readers was his printing numerous testimonials to his greatness that he quoted from the thousands of letters he received each year. He encouraged these letters so that he could collect restaurant recommendations from them, and he rewarded the writers by putting their words and identities in his guidebooks. Like all things Hines related, the number of these testimonials was extensive, and displaying them all for each year would take an entire volume unto itself. The space for the testimonials in the text becomes gradually decreased and so those below are pulled from just one edition, 1941, with a range of testimonials:

I love your book. I can sit down and spend a whole evening reading it, and get the same sort of kick that a combination of 'Pickwick Papers,' 'The National Geographic,' and my grandmother's cookbook would give me. M.H.R., West Virginia

Your book is a swell idea. I have been cataloging places of this sort for a good many years. C.V.S., Indiana

You have provided a real service for those interested in better living, and I certainly wish to compliment you. It is always gratifying to have one's own opinions corroborated by authority, and I am most pleasantly impressed with the fact that your comments about places I know agree so closely with my own. E.R., Ohio

Have felt the need of a book like this for years, as it is so hard to find good unless you know where to look for it. Mrs. N.K., Wisconsin

Bought your book in New York. Gained seven pounds driving back to Chicago. 'Nuf said. R.J.F., Illinois



My son called your book our 'Bible' and we had it with us all the time. Mrs. B.C., Illinois

I am a dietician and food is my big interest. I enjoy using your book very much. MRs. C.H., Illinois

My choice for 'Book of the Month.' W.M.H., Ohio

No automobile should be without a copy. G.W., New Jersey<sup>315</sup>

All of the above was free advertising for Hines and, more importantly, a piling up of evidence to support his cultural authority. By embracing his fans Hines was encouraging their loyalty, which in turn could increase the likelihood that they would promote his book by word-of-mouth and continue to perform reconnaissance on restaurants for him. Yet as a “a co-ordination of the efforts of a group,” Hines admitted his network was “peculiarly sensitive to human variations.”<sup>316</sup> While his guidebook’s editions stabilized opinions on what was the best, but only for a year or less, so too did Hines rely upon the static qualities of other objects to maintain a consistent and clear message on the American landscape. While his listings linked the signifiers of “good food” to the signifieds of restaurants he deemed worthy of recommendation, Hines used actual physical signs to complement and extend the process of making taste.

### **Hines’ Signs:**

#### **The Limits of the System**

Hines’ biggest piece of advertising was a complex of signs that tied his network together. The cover of his guidebook had the same image through out all editions, and it was a drawing of a roadside sign that says “Adventures in Good Eating” and hangs just before a restaurant with a car parked in front of it. From the perspective used the viewer is placed in the position of driving

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<sup>315</sup> Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1941), 24, 53, 61, 100, 107, 111, 121, 226, 248.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), ix.

down a road and seeing a sign from Hines indicating that one of his recommended restaurants is ahead. This depiction was realistic since Hines leased roadside signs to those restaurants that were in the most current edition of his guidebook. The terms of the rental were that he owned the sign and, thus, if a restaurant was removed from his guidebook due to complaints about sub-standard service, then Hines would revoke the sign. Even if a place was not removed from his listings these signs had to be annually replaced anyways, as Hines intentionally changed the design and color of these signs to stay ahead of those places that were removed from his guidebook but had not removed Hines' sign from a nearby roadside. In addition, Hines made profits of over \$35,000 a year on the sign rental fees, a sum ten times more than the average American income in the mid-century.<sup>317</sup>

Though the Staley Sign Company of Indianapolis was in charge of this system of signs, disobedient business owners were common enough for Hines to regularly complain of them, stuffing his guidebook with paratextual lines like, "Avoid places having signs with my name unless they are in the current printing of my books. Some have used signs with my name which have never or ever will be recommended by me."<sup>318</sup> Also, the back of his guidebook often, but not always, had a picture of that year's current sign design with a reminder underneath it that "This is the authorized Official Identification Sign." In the mid-century signs were crucial to the economy of roadside accommodations, especially before the 1960s when the industries and spaces involved in this type of commerce were just beginning to develop.<sup>319</sup> Signs were how Americans oriented themselves when encountering new places through their car windows. Moreover, signs were the metaphor through which Hines conceived of his entire project of tastemaking, as seen in his allegory of the servant discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

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<sup>317</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 129-130, 209.

<sup>318</sup> Duncan Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (Bowling Green, KY: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1951), 321.

<sup>319</sup> Gudis, *Buyways*; Jakle, *Signs in America's Auto Age*.

While ostensibly a metaphor of guidance, the allegory's characterization of the critic-consumer relationship as akin to masters and servants also speaks to the social aspects of the construction of the network that created his guidebook's list of recommendations, particularly who was in the community of restaurant diners in mid-century America and, in a silent contrast, who could never be allowed into the process of making taste. Hines' signs were not for everyone.

The initial audience of Hines was what Daniel Boorstin calls a "consumption community," a group that "consists of people who have a feeling of shared well-being, shared risks, common interests and common concerns that come from consuming the same kinds of objects."<sup>320</sup> Hines' connection to this community was well-known, as articles about *Adventures in Good Eating* frequently noted that as "Hines and his wife swapped experience in good eating with other motorists," they "began to accumulate lists of restaurants which he exchanged with other people, and before he long he had achieved a minor-league reputation as a connoisseur."<sup>321</sup> That they could swap "experience" was possible because they were ascribed the same subject position—white, affluent, culturally respectable, physically and socially mobile—and could thus share in its privileges together. Explicitly stated,

The Hines public consists largely of persons like Hines—middle aged, of substantial income, who travel for pleasure. They are accustomed to certain comforts. At the sight of antediluvian plumbing or gravy reminiscent of library paste their dispositions ruffle perceptibly. Hines feels it his sacred duty to protect his fellows.<sup>322</sup>

Not said here is that the composition of this "public" was akin to the design of the highways that supported it: both were limited access. It is not just that Hines' recommendations were suited towards those with "substantial income," but that mid-century automobility and consumerism was shaped by widespread, legally supported racism. As a consequence of the country's color

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<sup>320</sup> Boorstin, "Welcome to the Consumption Community," 22.

<sup>321</sup> Horace Sutton, "The Wayfarer's Guardian Angel," *Saturday Review of Literature*, November 27, 1948, 38.

<sup>322</sup> Phyllis Larsh, "Duncan Hines," *Life*, July 8, 1946, 17.

line, in 1936 Duncan Hines published a red guidebook for white motorists while in 1937 Victor Green published a green guidebook for black motorists.<sup>323</sup>

Duncan Hines never discussed race directly and his only race-related remarks were the rare mention of “colored cooks” or “mammies” working in Southern restaurants, and only to praise their skill and champion them as a foundation of the regional foodways of the South. While complimentary on the surface, these comments re-inscribed the oppressive status quo of mid-century social relations by conjuring up images of black women working as kitchen servants and thus connecting their making good food in the present with their being good slaves in the past. In general, beyond such rare comments, research into Hines and his entire network echo Cotten Seiler’s experience:

My own archival research on early automobility in the United States, for example, furnished virtually no documentary evidence of a widespread awareness of driving as a privilege of whiteness—though of course it was. Even [guidebooks for African Americans] dared not speak this truth explicitly. This historical vacuum can be partially attributed to the ways in which white supremacy was a discourse both commonsensical (therefore not in need of explication) and logically tenuous (therefore deliberately hidden from scrutiny).<sup>324</sup>

African Americans, however, were cognizant of how white supremacy shaped their experiences on the road throughout most of the twentieth century. At a time when signs of “No Coloreds” dotted the American landscape, Hines’ signs did not have to say that—everyone knew whom these were for and whom they were not for.

Though by the 1930s many American could afford a car, consuming by automobile was a highly circumscribed act for African-Americans and other oppressed groups, for “the space of

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<sup>323</sup> Victor Green, *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (New York: Victor H. Green & Co., 1937). Other guidebooks for African Americans in the pre-Civil Rights era were *Travelguide, Go: Guide to Pleasant Motoring* and *The Afro-American’s Travel Guide*. On Americans’ use of the color line to parse foodways in the 1930s, see Bégin, “Taste and Race in the New Deal Sensory Economy.”

<sup>324</sup> Cotten Seiler, “The Significance of Race to Transport History,” *The Journal of Transport History* 28.2 (2007): 308.

the American road, like the contours of citizenship, was established under specific regimes of racialized inequality and limited access whose codes it reproduces.”<sup>325</sup> The texts of the American road were shaped by these conditions, and thus a “racial wedge drives deep into road book conventions,” wherein “White travelers [were] often alert to charm, atmosphere, and authenticity consume along the road. They exercise this unacknowledged privilege by ‘investing’ in establishments that please them” while “A black traveler’s money could not purchase the power to enjoy charm or good service or the company of colorful natives.”<sup>326</sup> In fact, African-American experience was the opposite of charming, beset by what Cotton Seiler calls a “near-constant anxiety on unfamiliar roads” as they searched high and low for accommodations that would actually accommodate them.<sup>327</sup> This racial dichotomy of consumers’ options underscores Frank Trentmann’s insight that consumers are not only made but made differently, so that some people are told they are consumers and given options through which to enact this role while others are denied this identity and the access it affords.<sup>328</sup> In terms of the early twentieth century, American consumers were made according to the “new ideal of the mobile citizen in which the rights of citizenship were defined... in terms of geographical mobility and commercial access.”<sup>329</sup> African

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<sup>325</sup> Ibid., “‘So That We as a Race Might Have Something Authentic to Travel By’: African American Automobility and Cold-War Liberalism,” *American Quarterly* 58.4 (2006): 1093.

<sup>326</sup> Kris Lackey, *RoadFrames: The American Highway Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 22.

<sup>327</sup> Seiler, *Republic of Drivers*, 114. On the history of accommodations for African-Americans, see Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 183-236; Susan Sessions-Rugh, *Are We There Yet? The Golden Age of American Family Vacations* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 68-91; Andrew W. Kahr, “The Political Work of Leisure: Class, Recreation, and African-American Commemoration at Harper’s Ferry, West Virginia, 1881-1931,” *Journal of Social History* 42.1 (2008): 57-77. See also Robert E. Weems, Jr., *Desegregating the Dollar: African-American Consumerism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1998); Andrew Wiese, *Places of Their Own: African American Suburbanization in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Laura Warren Hill and Julia Rabig, ed. *The Business of Black Power: Community Development, Capitalism, and Corporate Responsibility in Postwar America* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2012).

<sup>328</sup> Trentmann, “Knowing Consumers – Histories, Identities, Practices,” 11. See also Frank Trentmann and Vanessa Taylor, “From Users to Consumers: Water Politics in Nineteenth-Century London,” in *The Making of the Consumer: Knowledge, Power, and Identity in the Modern World*, ed. Frank Trentmann, 53-79 (New York: Berg, 2006).

<sup>329</sup> Shaffer, *See America First*, 219.

Americans wished to follow such ideals and become full-fledged consumers, and in the face of severe constraints against doing so the “emergent black middle class... adopted the automobile not only as a means to circumvent segregation, but as a material expression of racial uplift ideology.”<sup>330</sup> In effect, they were using the discourse of automobility against the mid-century practice of automobility, wherein the former created “powerful dreams of adventure and freedom” enacted through “the capacity to go anywhere, to move and dwell without asking permission,” but the latter greatly curtailed such opportunities.<sup>331</sup>

As the African-American middle class engaged in automobility so too did they use it toward consumerist ends, driving for leisure, vacation, and roadside attractions. They wished for consumerist means, as well, such as the logic and processes of choice, evaluation, and democratization—except the last of these was withheld. African Americans could not use Duncan Hines’ guidebook because the restaurants recommended were on the other side of the color line. Denied the commercial access central to dominant conceptions of citizenship, they innovated by creating their own sources of information and means of guidance through which to consume by car. Just as Charlie Wiggins had to create his own circuits for African American race car drivers, so too were taste networks formed for black motorists through publications such as *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, *Go: Guide to Pleasant Motoring*, and *The Afro-American’s Travel Guide*.<sup>332</sup> These compiled much fewer restaurant listings than Hines’ book plus they had to cover many more consumer services since segregation shaped the entire gambit of accommodations and goods basic to travel and leisure. The listings also did not have prolix

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<sup>330</sup> Kathleen Franz, “‘The Open Road’: Automobility and Racial Uplift in the Interwar Years,” in *Technology and the African-American Experience: Needs and Opportunities for Study* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 132.

<sup>331</sup> Featherstone, “Automobilities,” 2.

<sup>332</sup> Todd Gould, *For Gold and Glory: Charlie Wiggins and the African-American Racing Car Circuit* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2002). On mid-century negro guidebooks, see Seiler, *Republic of Drivers*, 105-128; Gretchen Sullivan Sorin, “Keep Going: African Americans on the Road in the Era of Jim Crow” (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Albany, 2009).

descriptions of the places they recommended, a detail that gives food to thought on how restrictions on resources, like commercial access, impact the process of making sense of taste, specifically food talk.

### **An Association**

In the analysis of *Adventure in Good Eating*, Antoine Hennion's contention that "taste effectively depends on everything" is well supported by the diversity of things that Hines associated with "good eating."<sup>333</sup> Furthermore, the synthesis of these things in a textual form appears to have been a variable and makeshift process that combined aspects of different genres to create a new type of guidebook for a new context of consumption. Comprehensively, Hines' guidebook shows that when in interaction with the wider world a simple representation of information about restaurants could act as a significant mediator in the transformation of consumers' habits and producers' work. Hines' taste emerged as socially powerful as his name was associated with good taste, restaurants were associated with his name, and consumers associated them together thanks to books in glove compartments and an accompanying system road signs. Altogether, consuming food and driving across America were connected in newer ways than before, as people, products, principles, and places were associated together because Hines suggested as much in his role as a mediator.

Context influenced text and text influenced context. But just as Hines' guidebook was limited in audience to white Americans and as a result alternatives were created by African Americans, so too was Hines' influence limited and his authority rebuffed, remade, and reused by others to create alternate images of Hines, representations that competed with and complemented those fostered by Hines himself. Taste is formed by influences that intersect to

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<sup>333</sup> Hennion, "Taste and Sociology," 111.

create a network through which action takes place, but Hines did not entirely control the process of making taste. The following chapter shows the give and take of the relationships forming mid-century American foodways, the two-way streets of influence.



## CHAPTER THREE

### “The Great Consumer”<sup>334</sup>:

#### Creating and Maintaining Credible Authority

“I finally got a *Saturday Evening Post* editor to recognize my first edition. That’s when I became an authority.”<sup>335</sup>

Duncan Hines was an experienced and successful salesman in printing and advertising. He was also by all accounts a highly extroverted and energetic person, constantly on the move and in touch with his legions of social contacts. Hines knew the importance of public displays that were well designed and well placed, and he knew how to make such advertising happen. In the use of the words “finally” and “recognize,” the epigrammatic quote above on “when [Hines] became an authority” shows that he had been pressing writers and editors to write about him. Hines reveals that he knew gaining cultural authority came through recognition by cultural arbiters, and maintaining authority would come in part from subsequent articles in other widely read publications like *Reader’s Digest* and *Life*.<sup>336</sup> The figure behind the guidebook would then become associated with images conjured by a press trying to make sense out of Hines’ unique form of criticism.

If taste is based in assemblage, as I contend, then analyzing the making of taste must trace the associations that are made between things involved in the tastemaking. In his book *In Search of Lost Time*, Marcel Proust famously associated the taste of a *madeleine* with experiences in his childhood. As shown in the previous chapter, in his guidebook Hines associated the taste of foods at his preferred restaurants with any number of things, many of

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<sup>334</sup> This nickname was given to Hines by the revered journalist, Ernie Pyle. Marion Edwards, “They Live to Eat,” *Better Homes & Gardens*, March 1945, 70.

<sup>335</sup> Duncan Hines, quoted in Art Rhodes, “Top Gourmet Ate Old Biscuit Dough,” *Orlando Evening Star*, February 11, 1953, in volume 8, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>336</sup> “Phenomena remain only as long as one maintains them.” Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 93.

which were non-culinary, from local history to interior decorating. But associations made between Hines himself and the world around him were often out of his hands and in that of media outlets and the public at large. Hines attempted to associate his name with honesty, excellence, trust, expertise, and reliability, and his peers, fans, and the press sometimes aided these associations, confirming them or lending them extra weight, but sometimes they altered these associations or created their own.

This chapter focuses on the public representations of Hines in the media as well as Hines' handling of relationships behind the scenes and through the disruptions of the Second World War. Though criticism is obviously the central product by which a critic is deemed useful or not, how tastemakers are regarded by media outlets and whether they cultivate or neglect relationships with the constantly changing world around them significantly affects whether their authority occurs in the first place, recurs regularly, or stops altogether. Archival records reveal the push and pull of creating and maintaining Hines' authority, an aspect common to all public figures but central to the design of his tastemaking network. Hines' sense of taste was so dependent on resources beyond himself that this reliance empowered those in the network to make sense of Hines on their own. In his guidebooks, Hines tried to form consumers by giving them instructions on eating and invitations to join his brigade. While he had control over these texts, the other set of texts key to Hines' influence, news articles and other press about him, were not under his control yet nevertheless extended his name. Furthermore, food rationing during World War II and the cultural and commercial shifts of the postwar era posed challenging contexts and conflicting relationships that Hines had to react to in order sustain his position of influence.

### Cultural Authority, Credibility, Context

Because their advice is a blend of information and opinion, gastronomic guides must make claims to, and find supports for, their authority. As a mediator of culture, a food critic is a “cultural authority,” a figure that seeks to influence others via “the construction of reality through definitions of fact and value.” Unlike legal or social authorities that find justification and force action through tradition, threats of violence, or religious ordainment, a cultural authority must rely on “the probability that particular definitions of reality and judgments of meaning and value will prevail as valid and true.”<sup>337</sup> The probability of prevailing increases when the authority’s guidance “is consonant with general principles and skills” deemed relevant by the context around the authority.<sup>338</sup> In other words, cultural authority is the outcome of a performance that is congruent with its context, in that an authority’s guidance must have practical relevance in material terms and the image or reputation associated with the authority must be deemed credible in social terms.<sup>339</sup> Altogether, establishing Hines as a critic with significant influence required much more than compiling a list of recommendations. The success of Hines was predicated on him being positively associated with things pertinent to his circumstances and doing so through media and representations made widely available to the public and considered attractive by them.

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<sup>337</sup> Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), 13.

<sup>338</sup> Nicholas Abercrombie, “Authority and Consumer Society,” in *The Authority of the Consumer*, ed. Russell Keat, Nigel Whiteley, and Nicholas Abercrombie, 43-57 (London: Routledge, 1994), 44.

<sup>339</sup> As Steven Shapin notes, “credibility is the outcome of contingent social and cultural practice” because “there is not a set of criteria [of credibility] distinct from a particular culture that uniquely determines what will be believed within it.” Steven Shapin, “Cordelia’s Love: Credibility and the Social Studies of Science,” in *Never Pure: Historical Studies of Science as if It Was Produced by People with Bodies, Situated in Time, Space, Culture, and Society, and Struggling for Credibility and Authority*, 17-31 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 18, 21.

As a critic attempting to speak expertly about the entire country—“the man who brought a continent to accept his standards in restaurants”—Hines needed to have his name broadcast.<sup>340</sup> As Steven Shapin notes, “if shared belief is to be secured and maintained, it must travel great distances,” geographically and socially, and thus requires a medium through which to transmit, display, and secure trust.<sup>341</sup> For Hines, this space-spanning process occurred through “the first dominant discursive medium of mass culture in American history—the popular magazine.” Before the popular advent of the television in the 1950s, “they were the only medium that reached a national audience on a regular basis” and “they did not claim to represent a particular subculture” but the nation at large. Magazines thus held the power to grant a “kind of legitimacy on certain ideas and images by bringing them before a national audience.”<sup>342</sup> They were mostly read by the middle class and more frequently in the Midwestern and Western areas of the United States.<sup>343</sup> As “a product of profit-driven corporations that wanted to appeal to the largest possible audience,” magazines “shaped messages that attracted readers” to them. “They played upon audiences’ fears, stroked their egos by justifying their lifestyle, and fed—or created—the myths governing their understanding of the world,” David Welky notes. In this manner, they “sought to be relevant.... by creating an illusory national culture to which all readers belonged, a national set of ideas and principles to which all Americans supposedly subscribed.”<sup>344</sup> As a critic attempting to speak expertly about an entire nation’s tastes, Hines’ project fit well into the cultural consensus creation attempted by mainstream national magazines. Local newspapers followed these efforts, often discussing Hines in similar terms though they tended to emphasize more local

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<sup>340</sup>George Murray, “Taster for a Continent,” *Chicago American*, May 9, 1956.

<sup>341</sup>Shapin, “Credibility and the Social Studies of Science,” 30.

<sup>342</sup>Schneirov, *The Dream of a New Social Order*, 4.

<sup>343</sup>James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture: Journalism, Filmmaking, and Broadcasting in American since 1941*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 15.

<sup>344</sup>David Welky, *Everything Was Better in America: Print Culture in the Great Depression* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 4.

concerns, like which nearby restaurants Hines approved of, and were much more likely to portray Hines as an eccentric and colorful person. In fact, it is in local press that you find critiques of Hines absent from features on him in national publications like the *Saturday Review* or *Better Homes and Gardens*.

Central to Hines' attraction was that his writing and representations of him often tended toward a folksy, down-to-earth persona that could enjoy food in all its regional variations. As part of the upsurge in middlebrow criticism, Hines' image was an approachable middle-point: he was an authority yet still an everyman. Representations of him were amenable to the tenor of his context in other ways. He was portrayed as a self-made man, a readymade Horatio Alger story for the press to recount.<sup>345</sup> The *Saturday Evening Post*, the first national journal to write about Hines, "was the first American magazine to appeal directly to a male audience, and for the first four decades of the twentieth century was the champion of Victorian masculine ideals," as defined as "a property-owning man of character who believed in honesty, integrity, self-restraint, and duty to God, country, and family."<sup>346</sup> That Hines appeared in this magazine, more than once, was suitable. Hines' own family described him as "a Victorian, who dressed conservatively, was always clean shaven and had a conservative philosophy toward life."<sup>347</sup> His guidebooks and the quotes given to the press were constantly professing his ethical integrity and the restraint he showed in how much he ate and how much money he did *not* make from being a critic because he prioritized honesty over profiteering. In addition, publications like the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Collier's*, *American Magazine*, and *Esquire*, amongst others, folded ideals and habits of

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<sup>345</sup> On the prevalent discourse of the "self-made" man in the early twentieth century, see Irvin G. Wyllie, *The Self-Made Man in America: The Myth of Rags to Riches* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1954); John Cawelti, *Apostles of the Self-Made Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

<sup>346</sup> Tom Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man: American Magazines and Consumer Culture, 1900-1950* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 51, 10.

<sup>347</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 125.

consumerism into definitions of manhood in the early 20th century, opening up an interest in male consumerism and attention to cultural trends—like eating out and cooking—much as magazines had done the same for women in the late nineteenth century.<sup>348</sup> Duncan Hines’ image as “the Great Consumer” and an enthusiast for food, two things usually seen as feminine concerns, made him attractive to magazine editors looking for topics to cover. The economic influence of his recommendations, in conjunction with his ability to give “good copy” (i.e. colorful quotes), also appealed to local newspapers looking for something exciting and different passing through the town’s pages.

Altogether, Hines’ image was amenable to representation in a variety of guises, a byproduct of Hines’ openness to other people and reticence in criticizing them. As his depiction in *Life* magazine said, “Rival gourmets feel that Hines’ many enthusiasms exclude him from their select fraternity, but Hines, far from being slighted, is inclined to boast about his catholic tastes.”<sup>349</sup> Hines wanted a nationwide audience and so, for instance, he intentionally kept his paperback guidebooks inexpensive to reach the widest swath of consumers possible, and its price was a constant \$1.50 throughout its twenty-plus years of publication. To put this in context, the average prices for mass-market paperbacks in the 1940s and 1950s were 25 to 50 cents while those for hardcover books were \$3.59 in 1947 and \$4.61 in 1957.<sup>350</sup> In order to become “the authority on the geography of eating in this country” that he proclaimed to be, and to enact the all-American gastronomy he extolled in his career-capping magnum opus, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, Hines’ image in the press and relationships behind the scenes were worked to make

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<sup>348</sup> See Kenon Brenzeale, “In Spite of Women: ‘Esquire’ Magazine and the Construction of the Male Consumer” *Signs* 20.1 (1994): 1-22; Carole Turbin, “Fashioning the American Man: The Arrow Collar Man, 1917-1931,” *Gender & History* 14.3 (2002): 470-491; Stefan K. Cieply, “The Lineaments of Personality: *Esquire* and the Problem of the Male Consumer” (Ph.D. Diss., University of Maryland, 2006).

<sup>349</sup> Larsh, “Duncan Hines,” 17.

<sup>350</sup> Albert Greco, Clara Rodriguez, and Robert M. Wharton, *The Culture and Commerce of Publishing in the 21st Century* (Stanford: Stanford Business Books, 2007), 26.

him appear as an “American eater” rather than a gourmand who lived in America.<sup>351</sup> As Hines firmly stated, “I am no gourmet.”<sup>352</sup>

In this chapter I argue that though Duncan Hines’ credibility as an authority was initiated by his system of guides and signs being so valuable to consumers and producers alike, it was secured by Hines having made himself so easy to relate to and even contact. Editions of *Adventures in Good Eating* were replete with constant requests for updates on restaurants, copies of recipes, and any other gastronomic information, and as a consequence he received thousands of letters and dozens of visitors to his house. That he published the address, with a photo, of his private home in Kentucky practically invited people to visit his house, which indeed occurred. He loathed how often and how confidently motorists would stop at his house and expect to be entertained if not fed and lodged. Yet Hines had little right to complain by making himself so available: he had trained Americans to follow the hundreds of roadsigns across the country that indicated the establishments “Recommended by Duncan Hines” and then placed another large roadsign, similar in design, that indicated exactly where he lived on the outskirts of the town of Bowling Green. At the same time, Hines was a relentlessly mobile person, constantly driving to check on restaurants and hotels, and while passing through towns to make “inspections” he also spoke to as many local newspapers as would hear him. Thus Hines encouraged others, including journalists who created press about him, to work for him even as he recruited more citizens to his tastemaking network.

With Hines so available, in person and in text, consumers and producers attempted to influence him and, for some, compete against him. Hines’ tastemaking network was about

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<sup>351</sup> Clementine Paddleford, “60,000 Miles of Eating,” *This Week Magazine*, January 12, 1947, 25; “Eater,” *American Magazine*, April 1941, 80.

<sup>352</sup> Timothy G. Turner, “Duncan Hines Finds ‘Good Eating’ Here,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

associations and relationships, and influence goes both ways through these channels. As much as he attempted to form tastes and consumer habits, others attempted to influence him and use his name and his system toward their own ends. Consumers, restaurateurs, and other critics and cultural commentators used him as the butt of jokes, engaged in wholesale copying of his texts' content and designs, and, in a few cases, made fraudulent claims of him recommending a restaurant of which he did not approve.<sup>353</sup> In contemporary terms, Hines' gastronomic enterprise ran on an open-access network. While the benefit was an intimacy with those consumers, restaurateurs, and journalists he depended on to further his name and his tastemaking, the cost to Hines was exposure to persons and events beyond his say.

### **Duncan Hines in Mainstream Magazines**

The image of Hines as portrayed in mainstream magazines was of a folksy and genial man, approachable yet also knowledgeable due to experience, and trustworthy in ethic and judgment. Every article explained his background and the origins of his guidebooks, fairly straightforward narratives that were not much different from what Hines told about himself in the introduction to every edition of *Adventures in Good Eating*. He was a traveling businessman who enjoyed food, he made a list of favorite out-of-town restaurants for his own use, he shared it with other salesman and eventually friends in Chicago, these persons found this list both immensely helpful and to their tastes quite accurate, and then through an official publication of this list and good local press about it Hines became known as a restaurant critic. His rise was meteoric, going from copying a list into Christmas cards in 1934 to publication in 1936 to achieving the status of

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<sup>353</sup> Besides chasing down restaurateurs who did not return their "Recommended by Duncan Hines" road signs after being dropped from his guidebook, Hines also sued someone who published a text that clearly plagiarized his guidebook as well as someone who sold fraudulent, unauthorized "Recommended" signs to restaurants. Carol Lynn Gilmer, "Duncan Hines: Adventurer in Good Eating," *Coronet*, November 1947, 105, 106.



authority by 1938. Hines' credibility began in descriptions of his career as a "master printer," a sign of success and skill, who "carried his stomach around with him like a Stradivarius violin," a symbol of aesthetic excellence and sensitivity.<sup>354</sup> In addition to his business resume, most articles bolstered his skills with quantitative displays of experience, touting how Hines "traveled more than 1,000,000 miles over this country's highways" and visited "9,000 eating places" before becoming a critic, sometimes driving "as much as 500 miles [to find] a square meal" to his liking.<sup>355</sup> Further, in an article published ten years into his career, his stamp of "recommendation is a thing of vital importance to more than 5,000 restaurants owners... who draw their customers from the 900,000 American who have bought and the millions who have consulted the Hines guides."<sup>356</sup> Proving that Hines was a credible critic thus rested on initially showing by sheer mass the degree to which others trusted him, immediately and quickly.

While efficacy is undoubtedly a preeminent concern when consulting advice on consumer goods, the affect and appearance of those giving the advice has a strong impact on their acceptance. The first press article about Hines describes him as "a modest person.... a stocky, greying, slightly-grumpy citizen of Bowling Green, Kentucky, who till recently was merely a successful Chicago salesman."<sup>357</sup> Subsequent portrayals followed this characterization, as Horace Sutton in the *Saturday Review* called him "a homey individual with thinning gray hair and glasses who looks like everybody's grandfather."<sup>358</sup> The *New Yorker* called him "a bluff, ruddy, and vigorous man of seventy-four, with close-cropped white hair, a not unexpected

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<sup>354</sup> MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?," 16.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid; Paddleford, "60,000 Miles of Eating," 24; "Eater," 80. Since *This Week* is no longer in existence, it should be noted that this publication was the most widely distributed week-ending publication in the country. Alexander, *Hometown Appetites*, 144.

<sup>356</sup> Larsh, "Duncan Hines," 16.

<sup>357</sup> MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?," 84.

<sup>358</sup> Sutton, "The Wayfarer's Guardian Angel," 38.

*embonpoint*, and the pleased expression of one who has turned a good deed into a gold mine.”<sup>359</sup>

*Newsweek* also called him “ruddy” while noting that “He eats five times a day, but never quite eats his fill at any sitting,” explaining how despite “eating for a living for twenty years [he] weighs just about the same as when he started.”<sup>360</sup> Similarly, “Hines’ work shows in his figure, which is inching toward corpulence, his love for his work in his dark-eyed twinkle, his little-boy grin.”<sup>361</sup> Even the dust-jacket copy of Hines’ “mellow gastronomical memoir” described him as “an erect and well set-up individual, just short of six feet tall, with thinning gray hair, a ruddy complexion, a genial twinkle in his eyes, and only slightly on the rotund side.”<sup>362</sup>

Characterized as “a real extrovert and a true Southerner,” Hines was depicted as folksy yet wise, an image extending out of his grandfatherly persona.<sup>363</sup> First, as a “true Kentuckian [he] is an expert on hams,” curing his own authentically “with hickory ashes and salt and pepper and a bit of saltpeter.”<sup>364</sup> That “he personally selects” his meat supported his credentials as an authority, and since “he is a small town boy from Kentucky [his] knowledge of food is unlimited.”<sup>365</sup> Other articles echoed this idea, like Marion Edwards’ assertion that “Hines’ theories about food go back to his Kentucky boyhood.”<sup>366</sup> Besides being bred for expertise on food, Hines’ identity as southern was also used to cut a figure of a down-home all-American “regular guy,” as seen in comments that while traveling Europe, “We had more fun than a case of monkeys, but I’ll be durned glad when that train gets in tomorrow night and I get me some hot

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<sup>359</sup> “Best,” *New Yorker*, April 17, 1954.

<sup>360</sup> “Eating for a Living,” *Newsweek*, May 23 1955.

<sup>361</sup> Edwards, “They Live to Eat,” 31.

<sup>362</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*.

<sup>363</sup> Gilmer, “Duncan Hines: Adventurer in Good Eating,” 101.

<sup>364</sup> MacKaye, “Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?,” 82, 84.

<sup>365</sup> Frank J. Taylor, “America’s Gastronomic Guide,” *Scribner’s Commentator*, June 1941, 15; Gilmer, “Duncan Hines: Adventurer in Good Eating,” 101. Taylor’s article was reprinted in a condensed version in *Reader’s Digest*, an event that greatly helped Hines by exposing him to one of the largest print audiences available at that time. Frank J. Taylor, “America’s Where-to-Eat Expert,” *Reader’s Digest*, June 1941.

<sup>366</sup> Edwards, “They Live to Eat,” 70.

biscuits.”<sup>367</sup> While these representations show a genial fellow with a humble but respectable background, at the same time he was seen as a tireless crusader.

Press on Hines always mentioned his concerns over sanitation and his practice of impromptu kitchen inspections, “one of the myths Duncan Hines deliberately perpetuated about himself.”<sup>368</sup> The point of the myth was to scare restaurateurs into attention and encourage consumers to become voluntary inspectors on his, and their own, behalf. His judgment of sanitation was displayed as a requirement above reputation, menu, or other considerations:

“Hines started going into a restaurant kitchen before he ordered his meal. If the owner refused to allow him, Hines declined to eat in the dining room. If the kitchen was dirty, he walked out.” In turn, Hines was called “harsh in his verdicts,” having “dropped out of his book dozens of places that fail to live up to standard he thought they should maintain... in particular as regards to cleanliness.”<sup>369</sup> In a large magazine spread Hines was even photographed standing in a kitchen, hands on hips, peering down his nose through spectacles to judge the *mise en place* of a cook who is hiding in the background. The caption reads that, “the back, not the front, is what counts with Hines, who sometimes tips dishwashers.” In the same article Hines’ image was drawn as stern and vehement:

I would like to be food dictator of the U.S.A. just long enough to padlock two thirds of the places that call themselves cafes and restaurants, and about half of those offering lodging to the public. While I had the power, I would pass a law requiring that before anyone could be a cook or chef he or she would have to go to a school to learn sanitation, cooking and the chemistry of food, and one requiring periodic health examinations for restaurant employees of all categories.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> Horace Sutton, “What Do You Want, Oomph in Your Butter?,” *The Saturday Review*, July 17, 1954, 31.

<sup>368</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 85.

<sup>369</sup> Taylor, “America’s Gastronomic Guide,” 16.

<sup>370</sup> Hines, “How to Find a Decent Meal,” 18-19.

In contrast, the introduction to later editions of *Adventures in Good Eating* included a section, “The sanitary conditions,” which professed, contrary to Hines’ dictatorial dreams, that “I have no idea of attempting to police the food industry or of telling other people how to run their businesses, but I shall continue to give my approval and my support to the thousands of operators who are making a sincere effort” to keep high standards of sanitation and safe cooking practices. Hines encouraged his readers to follow him, because even though “many laws have been passed in States all over the nation to safeguard the public’s health, yet nothing will accomplish so much so quickly as an aroused public opinion.”<sup>371</sup> Though the inspections were mostly mythic their effects were real, for in response to Hines’ gripes The Maramor of Columbus, Ohio, gave scheduled kitchen tours booked two months in advance. Another Hines’ favorite, the Rathskeller of Rockford, Illinois, installed a plate-glass window between the dining room and the kitchen, a rare design for a family-styled, sit-down restaurant in the 1940s.<sup>372</sup>

A crusader and yet down-to-earth, Hines was described as a “no self-righteous do-gooder [that] lives, all the same, by what he calls a ‘live-right, do-right’ credo.... He has also been characterized by his friends as ‘the man Diogenes was looking for.’ He dismisses encomiums gracefully.”<sup>373</sup> Positioned as directly opposite the practices of other critics’ publications, Hines’ honesty was called “the missing ingredient for a successful guidebook.” His “Puritan-like code of business ethics” avoided money ties of any sort because “once he succumbs, he says, he has lost his most valuable asset—independence.”<sup>374</sup> Horace Sutton claimed that the source of this ethic came from his career in business. “Mr. Hines got to be the wayfarer’s guardian angel,” Sutton suggested, “because he refused to work for a salary. He wanted his income to be based

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<sup>371</sup> Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), xii.

<sup>372</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 161.

<sup>373</sup> Sutton, “The Wayfarer’s Guardian Angel,” 39. The reference to Diogenes of Sinope points to the apocryphal story of the Greek cynic philosopher searching, in vain, for a truly honest man.

<sup>374</sup> Gilmer, “Duncan Hines: Adventurer in Good Eating,” 101, 102, 103.

directly upon what he earned,” so he became a traveling salesman.<sup>375</sup> The implication was that Hines fulfilled the image of the “self-made man” whose character is forged by mobility, ambition, and discipline, prospering or failing by his own effort and appearances. Furthermore, though “He may look like a lawyer, he may have the attitudes of a businessman, but there runs through his conversation a tender and touching attachments to such items as unsweetened cornbread, white first-run maple sirup [sic] and properly cured hams, which at once stamps him as a sentimentalist and poet.”<sup>376</sup> Despite the hard work, this suggests, Hines was still a cultured capitalist. “He is interested in vegetables from the seed stage right through to the hollandaise sauce,” a learned man “fascinated by beef from the calf stage right through to the charcoal-broiled steak.”<sup>377</sup>

To help him investigate new listings and check-up old listings Hines at first relied mostly on people he knew closely or were famous enough and successful enough in their careers that he trusted them. As the press described, “all of them have eaten and slept badly: many of them have done almost as much touring as Hines and are glad to contribute their information toward the correlating” of a guidebook.<sup>378</sup> “They are not paid employees—’You can’t buy service like theirs’—but are acquaintances whose judgment in food he has found reliable,” said Marion Edwards, quoting Hines.<sup>379</sup> For Hines, “without these assiduous volunteers... the books would be out of the question” since it is the “several bank presidents, professors, corporate executives, all proud to be Hines’ checkers” that aid in generating the listed recommendations.<sup>380</sup> While accurate descriptions of Hines’ “detectives,” these representations also served the function of

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<sup>375</sup> Sutton, “The Wayfarer’s Guardian Angel,” 38.

<sup>376</sup> MacKaye, “Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?,” 80.

<sup>377</sup> Gilmer, “Duncan Hines: Adventurer in Good Eating,” 101.

<sup>378</sup> MacKaye, “Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?,” 17.

<sup>379</sup> Edwards, “They Live to Eat,” 30.

<sup>380</sup> Taylor, “America’s Gastronomic Guide,” 15.

lending weight to Hines' opinions because these were explained to be in part derived from wealthy elites, persons who in the mid-century were still often associated with being the finest judges of all things aesthetic. Hines eventually relied upon all voices as sources of information, employing multiple secretaries at a time to handle the mail sent to him containing information to update his publications.<sup>381</sup>

The close proximity of Hines and his fans was encouraged by representations of him as simultaneously a leader of and friendly peer in a consumption community. Carol Lynn Gilmer, writing in the *Coronet*, suggested that "Hines doesn't write for his readers—he talks to them" in "conversational prose [that] not only makes good reading but inspires confidence in his fans." In addition, Hines publicly "[spoke] of the restaurants in his books as the Duncan Hines Family" in an attempt to create communities of consumers and producers alike.<sup>382</sup> Through connections he forged with restaurant owners and industry V.I.P.'s, starting in 1941 he inaugurated the "Annual Duncan Hines Family Dinner" at the National Restaurant Association's annual conventions. This banquet brought together the restaurateurs and hoteliers listed in his guidebooks as a celebration of their inclusion in his self-made family. Hines' gave long talks at these annual dinners, holding forth on the state of the industry from his perspective as a mediator of its culture and commerce.<sup>383</sup>

Hines was represented as so humble that he was just another friend in one's life. First, his guidebooks, "written from the traveler's point of view, without the slightest effort at literary style... exuded the author's sincerity."<sup>384</sup> In fact, Hines' text and his body are even

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<sup>381</sup> Hines' secretaries, whose office was in a dedicated portion of his private home, were also in charge of selling his guidebooks. About 80% of his guidebooks were sold from this office and after World War II he sold nearly 250,000 copies a years. Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 118; Herb Hansen, "Duncan Hines Approves Fine German Food Here," *Milwaukee Sentinel*, October 14, 1955, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>382</sup> Gilmer, "Duncan Hines: Adventurer in Good Eating," 104, 105.

<sup>383</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 127, 202-203.

<sup>384</sup> Taylor, "America's Gastronomic Guide," 14.

blended together in Carol Lynn Gilmer's description of him: a "well-tailored man in his 60's, Hines, like his books, combines good taste and mature judgment with boyish exuberance.... Like his books, he is unassuming, unpretentious.... Like his books, he combines good nature with crusading earnestness."<sup>385</sup> Second, in these books he constantly asked for help on validating the accuracy of his recommendations and even published his home address as well as photos of his house and front lawn. Consequently, "so many users of his books detour to Bowling Green in their travels and drop in unannounced from all parts of the country that it overtaxes his southern hospitality."<sup>386</sup> Hines' trustworthiness, friendliness, and availability even inspired "A New England man" to write "him a letter telling him that he wanted to buy a 40-acre farm in Kentucky. He asked Hines to please take care of the transaction for him and enclosed a signed check, the amount space left blank."<sup>387</sup> Steven Shapin argues that to secure belief it must be transportable across social and geographic distance, and here trust in Hines' judgment circulated completely, out to a reader and back to Hines.

Mainstream national publications were overwhelmingly positive in their representations of Hines, though there were glimpses of the quirks that local newspapers would revel in. Magazine editors kept the writing geared towards showing him as professional, informative, and relatively modest, but Hines' penchant for colorful quotes were probably too eye-catching to ignore. For instance, despite his characterization as a morally up-right, hardworking Victorian, Hines' irreverent wit creeps out in him revealing that, "When people ask me to say grace I thank the Lord for the sunshine and the rain and all the good food, that's all. It sure startles 'em."<sup>388</sup> Of the food he encounters after his hungry prayers, "There's too much baby on the menu. Baby

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<sup>385</sup> Gilmer, "Duncan Hines: Adventurer in Good Eating," 104.

<sup>386</sup> Taylor, "America's Gastronomic Guide," 15.

<sup>387</sup> Larsh, "Duncan Hines," 17.

<sup>388</sup> Sutton, "The Wayfarer's Guardian Angel," 39.

beef, baby lamb, baby lobster, baby chicken, baby this and baby that. Who wants to eat babies, anyway.”<sup>389</sup> Complaints were balanced by earnest displays of sensual glee:

“My, my, my,” he’ll say, smacking his lips in reminiscence, “what food that girl has! The world’s most outstanding lime pie!... But before you get started, they’ve brought in the watermelon pickle—the best in America—and three kinds of soup. You have to keep moving back from the table to disguise the loosening of your belt. They serve a salad—it’s so doggone beautiful you hate to destroy it. The dressing has lumps of Roquefort cheese the size of the end of your little finger. Oh, honey, that’s the one place where you absolutely bust!”<sup>390</sup>

Altogether, the mainstream press provided an image of Hines with enough experience, knowledge, and financial success to be deemed a credible expert. But as maker of middlebrow criticism, Hines’ image balanced his high positioning in cultural hierarchy with a body, a wit, and a set of manners that evinced a humble, ordinary, friendly, yet earnest man who loved his “personal hobby” of dining so much, and was so “good” at it, that it became “a serviceable enterprise” to a country of motoring consumers.<sup>391</sup> As Hines said of himself, “My interest in wayside inns is not the expression of a gourmand’s appetite for fine foods,” but instead it is at heart a “game of exploring the country as unofficial observers of its resources.”<sup>392</sup> While exploring the country, enjoying the local culinary resources of each region also put him in touch with dozens of newspapers whose editors, it appears, were happy to extol his authority, cajole his personality, and yet frequently criticize, tease, and make fun of the eccentricities of his habits and the substance of his statements.

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<sup>389</sup> Taylor, “America’s Gastronomic Guide,” 17.

<sup>390</sup> Larsh, “Duncan Hines,” 17.

<sup>391</sup> Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken, 1976), 17.

<sup>392</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), vii. Though the 1948 edition is cited, this same language appears in all editions.



### Duncan Hines in Local Newspapers

While local newspapers often echoed the tropes and terms for discussing Duncan Hines, smaller publications appeared to have had both more freedom to criticize Hines and more incentive to applaud him. Though they were careful to not offend advertisers and important stakeholders in their community, local newspapers were not always beholden to corporations and their advertisements since local press was tied to more local concerns. Not until the 1950s was Duncan Hines himself a corporate brand, and so smaller publications had a certain amount of freedom to criticize Hines without too much fear of reprisal through the loss of advertising revenue. On the other hand, Hines' approval of restaurants and lodging was a true financial blessing, especially for those businesses in rural and less popular areas for tourists, a fact entrepreneurs openly admitted to during Hines' reign.<sup>393</sup> As they often took on the role of championing their community, local newspapers were obliged to promote Hines and the local businesses he recommended in the hopes of attracting the economic and social benefits of his network. Local press often would have an article announcing his visit that usually discussed if not listed local places listed in his guidebooks.<sup>394</sup> Local governments were also frequent participants in these celebrations, as Jacksonville (FL), Minneapolis, Nashville, New Orleans, and Jackson (MS) each made him an honorary citizen and at least seventeen more towns gave him gold "keys to the city" in appreciation of how his recommendations helped local businesses.<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>393</sup> Larsh, "Duncan Hines," 17.

<sup>394</sup> Mary Nolan, "Duncan Hines Envis Us for Many Fine Restaurants," *The Cleveland Press*, June 20, 1947; "Famous Gourmet Visits Salt Lake," *Desert News* (UT), September 8, 1950; Sue Scattergood, "Duncan Hines is City Visitor," *The Birmingham News* (AL), October 16, 1951, all documents in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>395</sup> Eileen Razek, "Adventurous Duncan Hines Seldom Does Own Cooking", *Casper Tribune-Herald* (WY), August 6, 1957, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers. Another article listed Hines' other awards and titles as "Kentucky Colonel, Admiral in the Great Navy of the State of Nebraska, Royal Connoisseur of Culinary Collations – St. Paul Winter Festival, Honorary Citizen of Minneapolis, Honorary Commodore of the Fleet of the Minneapolis Aquatennial, Honorary Chef Extraordinaire-Duluth... [and] Honorary Constable of Frying Pan Creek (Oregon)."

If a local newspaper was not engaged in promotional efforts in concert with Hines, many used the appearance of Hines in their area as a chance to draw in readers, noting that a celebrity was in town and had interesting things to say. In the parlance of journalists, Hines “gave good copy.” As Hines’ biographer, Louis Hatchett, notes from his interviews with Hines’ family members, Duncan had “an outsized personality” that enjoyed telling stories and being the center of attention.<sup>396</sup> As my analysis of his guidebook suggests, Hines tended to think associatively, addressing one topic only to think of an anecdote that led in another direction. Many journalists intimated this habit as well, noting how “His conversation—like the Old Virginia Brunswick stew he had just finished—was made up of a number of things” as “Hines moved from one brief remark to another, in a manner possibly produced by the writing of books, full of hundreds of terse, individual items.”<sup>397</sup> Of his random remarks, Hines himself admitted that, “I never know until the last minute what I’ll talk about” when giving a speech or addressing a group of journalists, “but it won’t be politics.”<sup>398</sup> The outcome was a potpourri of advice and judgments, like encouraging American to “bake your own bread—at least once in a while,” and not for health or financial reasons but so that the “fragrance of baking bread fills the whole house and makes you hungry.”<sup>399</sup> His rule of avoiding politics was not entirely true, as he would often assert that, “If the overfed were underfed, and the underfed had enough, we would have no

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Mary Alice Bookhart, “The Distaffer,” *The Clarion-Ledger* (MS), February 3, 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>396</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 125.

<sup>397</sup> Rebecca Marston, “Noted Food Expert Says Southern Home-Cooked Dishes ‘Delectable.’” *The Free Lance-Star* (VA), March 30, 1948, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers; James Benet, “Travel Guide Hines Samples S.F. Cuisine,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, March 4, 1956, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>398</sup> “Duncan Hines Reveals How to Tell a Corn-Fed Steak,” *Des Moines Register*, October 7, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>399</sup> “Cooking is Finest Art, Duncan Hines Asserts,” *Rocky Mountain News*, July 25, 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

wars.”<sup>400</sup> His frequent forays into the grassroots politics of purchaser-consumer activism was also evident in his pleas that, “although sanitary codes have been immeasurably improved,” it was diners’ complaints and purchasing decisions that were the most powerful influence in changing restaurateurs’ habits.<sup>401</sup>

Many of Hines’ comments were displays of knowledge that could serve to maintain his status as an authority on food. These tended to be anecdotes for use, for example, his contention that “You can tell because the white is fat if the cattle were cornfed and yellow if grassfed.”<sup>402</sup> But on matters of taste, the line between fact and opinion is never clear. For instance, Hines once declared that, “Few people like medium rare beef. They want it cooked as gray as a battleship. Therefore, few have tasted the real beef taste.”<sup>403</sup> The “real” taste of beef is a preference as the cooking of muscles of a cow do not make its flavor less or more real, just different. The printing of such a statement, though, may have been less to establish facts than run with mildly provocative but folksy and fun quotes, such as Hines’ declaration that “Eggs should be fried sunny side up. The yolk should be like a little round gold ball that stands up and smiles and says, ‘Howdy, neighbor, it’s good to see you.’”<sup>404</sup> Local press appeared to enjoy prodding him for off-beat anecdotes, using quotes on his opinions of unusual foods he had encountered. “I like anything but squid, ‘possum, groundhog, rattlesnake meat and other varmints,” Hines said in

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<sup>400</sup> Grace Hartley “Well Known Gourmet Gives Advice to Cooks,” *Atlanta Journal*, October 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>401</sup> Mildred Woods, “Experts Agree on State of Things Gastronomic,” *Arkansas Gazette*, September 1, 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers. Driving safety was a favorite topic for Hines to opine on with vignettes and attention-catching language: “I keep to the right side of the road and let the Rebels and Yankees pass me by. I never drive at night, as I am afraid some friend may have had one drink too many, and I am even more afraid of the teenagers – those wonderful boys and girls who fail to realize how dangerous an automobile can be. They see ‘120 m.p.h.’ on the speedometer and want to find out if their car can really go that fast. Do you know that in 1955 approximately 12,550 youngsters were killed? That is 34 a night thruout [sic] the year!” Hines quoted by Lucy Key Miler, “A Million Miles,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 3, 1956, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>402</sup> Evabeth Miller, “Adventures in Good Eating Flavor Duncan Hines’ Talk,” *The Peoria Star*, October 30, 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>403</sup> Marston, “Noted Food Expert Says Southern Home-Cooked Dishes ‘Delectable.’”

<sup>404</sup> “Duncan Hines Likes Good Food, Unusual Watches,” *The Shreveport Times*, October 12, 1942, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

reply to a query on dislikes, and it was common for articles, especially in the headlines, to focus on Hines' reactions to "odd" foods like uncommon seafoods or Hawaiian poi, "which he compares to billboard paste seasoned with sawdust."<sup>405</sup> Sometimes Hines' more flashy quotes were less about entertainment and more concerned with instigating changes even if this meant stretching the truth a bit, as in his claim that an entire "third of the nation's deaths come from diseases which originate from bacteria on dishes, utensils, and food from the poorer eating places."<sup>406</sup> Articles were not entirely focused on provocative statements, though, for a good many of Hines' quotes tended toward simple changes he wished to see, like having "the salad served first; it's a custom he would like to see become country wide. It helps prevent over-eating and it gives the chef time to prepare the main course properly."<sup>407</sup>

A common topic was technology, and journalists' treatment of the subject in regards to Hines tended to veer toward either presenting Hines as a sober authority with accurate declarations or an eccentric obsessed with shiny, new mechanical objects. Even before lending his name to an extensive line of ingredients and kitchen appliances Hines was an enthusiast for the outpouring of household technologies in the mid-century, owning "innumerable gadgets" that "overflowed from the spacious kitchen into the garage" of Hines' country home.<sup>408</sup> Feature articles repeatedly highlighted Hines' possession of "all the latest electrical equipment": the first "deep freeze units" for home use, the first refrigerator to "deliver [water] ice-cold from a spigot

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<sup>405</sup> "Your Wife Best Cook, Gourmet Writer Says," *Springfield Daily News* (IL), October 22, 1947 in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers; James Garst, "Duncan Hines' Love of Good Food Becomes Publishing, Cake Mix, Ice Cream Business," *Wall Street Journal*, November 5, 1952, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers; Joe Creason, "'Please, Mr. Hines, Won't You Try Some of this Nice Whale Blubber?'," *The Courier-Journal* (KY), July 7, 1957, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers; Henry Mitchell, "Duncan Hines Comes to Town and Sups – But Not on Squids," *The Commercial Appeal* (TN), October 18, 1951, in volume 7, Duncan Hines papers; Pat Robinson, "Duncan Hines Likes Food – Except Unborn Octopus," *Texas Statesman*, February 10, 1956, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>406</sup> "Food Epicure Duncan Hines Makes Checkup Visit Here," *Decatur Herald* (GA), June 7, 1947, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>407</sup> Fern Storer, "More Salad, Less Dessert Keeps Duncan Hines Thin," *The Cincinnati Post*, October 21, 1952, in volume 7, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>408</sup> Barbara E. Scott Fisher, "Skimming Over Country by Car, No Chore To Authorities on Eating and Lodging Places," *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 8, 1948, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

in the side,” the first stand-alone broiler that could cook a “frozen steak to a turn without first defrosting it,” and even a custom-built “little deep freezer that will run off an extra battery in my car, so I can always carry my own ice cream when we travel.”<sup>409</sup> Conversely, many representations of Hines focused, sometimes exclusively, on the topic of his obsession with watches. Without exaggeration, Duncan Hines often would have on his person a dozen or more watches at a time, with multiple watches worn on both of his forearms, a few in each of his coat pockets, and more hidden in surprising places:

Ticking sounds come from his cuff links. Inside pockets harbor a leather notebook complete with a watch, and a gold pencil similarly equipped. Repeaters and calendar clocks that tell the month, the day, and the phases of the moon, come out of secret hiding places, along with chimers whose tinkling alarms chirp like crickets.<sup>410</sup>

So common was this association between Hines and his unusual fascination with watches that entire articles were devoted to skewering Hines as an eccentric, albeit a kind and lighthearted one.<sup>411</sup> Such depictions would not come across as aberrant views of Hines, as he was proud to speak of his unusual eating habits, especially his habit of eating ice cream for breakfast, an anecdote that can be found in countless articles but most clearly explained here: for breakfast, “I have orange juice and vanilla ice cream with corn flakes, I set a dish of each before me—take a little ice cream in the spoon and dip and coat it in the corn flakes. Very tasty and eliminates cream and sugar.”<sup>412</sup> What kept Hines from appearing as the clichéd “crazy old guy” was the

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<sup>409</sup> “Duncan Hines: A Man Who Likes Good Living,” *Bookshop*, July 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers; Miller “Adventures in Good Eating Flavor Duncan Hines’ Talk”; Garst, “Duncan Hines’ Love of Good Food Becomes Publishing, Cake Mix, Ice Cream Business”; Woods, “Experts Agree on State of Things Gastronomic.”

<sup>410</sup> Lucy Key Miller, “Front Views & Profiles,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 5, 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>411</sup> William Styles, “Hines Watches Appetite, Watches Watch Over Him,” *The Cincinnati Post*, February 11, 1954; Joe Creason, “The Time? Ask Duncan Hines,” *The Courier-Journal* (KY), April 4, 1954; “With Time to Spare, Hines Will Never Be Late to Dinner,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, March 9, 1955, all articles in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>412</sup> Mary Frances Fuqua, “Cooking on the Keys,” *The Arizona Republic*, March 11, 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

appearance of a sense of humor that hinted at a self-awareness of his foibles. In response to Hines' well-known love of vegetables, a reporter once asked about his impressive garden, assuming that he had one because his house and accompanying acreage was so large that a census-taker defined it as a farm. Hines replied, "I only grow two things. Weeds and tired of looking at them!"<sup>413</sup>

Since he seemed to have no problem with others teasing him about his habits, local press teased Hines in ways that showed skeptical views of the tastes of this tastemaker. While his practice of ice cream for breakfast was presented as quaint, his favorite cocktail was portrayed as a bizarre concoction: "This consists of watermelon pickles, a whole egg, cream, grenadine punch, honey and lime. To date, this is only recommended by Duncan Hines himself."<sup>414</sup> One of Hines' favorite foods was the "almond soufflé" at the fashionable Voisin's in New York City, and when he described it as made of "eggs and sugar—and 90 pct. air," a journalist's deadpanned response was that its flavor "Must be like swallowing a bicycle pump."<sup>415</sup> Some were more aggressive in their response to Hines' preference for what was then considered unusual dishes, like soufflés, with opinion columnist Robert L. Chase arguing that "A man [like Hines] whose palate has to be tickled with rare sauces and whose appetite has to be stirred with trickily-named and improbable dishes ought to be skipping a meal anyways."<sup>416</sup> In fact, rejecting Hines' tastes and, moreover, his network, whether fully or slightly in jest, was a common angle for the press. For example, Ruth Millett complained that Hines' lodging book "was too good" because in her experience of trying "to stay at a Duncan Hines recommended" place she "heard

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<sup>413</sup> Miller, "Front Views & Profiles."

<sup>414</sup> Alfred Kay, "Nibbler, Scribbler Duncan Hines," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 15, 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>415</sup> Rhodes, "Top Gourmet Ate Old Biscuit Dough."

<sup>416</sup> Robert L. Chase, "Duncan Hines Needs an Appetite," *Rocky Mountain News*, July 26, 1950, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

the same story.... Sorry—but we haven't a room left." Her new method "as we pull into a town" is to "look to see what places Mr. Hines tell us meet with his approval" and skip them to "drive around until we find a hotel or tourist court NOT listed by Duncan Hines."<sup>417</sup>

The proud display of doing the opposite of Hines' advice, and of restaurants gleefully claiming to be "NOT recommended by Duncan Hines" showed up in numerous articles, almost a genre unto its own. In fact, a restaurant industry journal noted that "Reno is a fine town to eat in, although no Reno restaurant is mentioned in Duncan Hines'" guidebook, and thus "one Reno restaurant advertises on billboards at the approaches to the city: 'Les Lerude's Better Foods—NOT Recommended by Duncan Hines.'"<sup>418</sup> Bob's Steak House in San Francisco made the same proclamation on a street sign and on their menu, whose cover read, "Ask Anyone – Bob's – An Adventure in Good Eating – However – NOT RECOMMENDED BY DUNCAN HINES – BUT – 'Food You'll Remember.'" Further, as a counterpunch to why Hines might have left this restaurant out of his listings—his hyper-attention to sanitation—this restaurant's menu had a small type-box declaring that, "Our Kitchen – The cleanest and finest – Best equipped in San Francisco, is always open for your inspection. Ask the hostess to show you through. THANKS 'Bob' Campbell."<sup>419</sup> Perhaps this publicity worked, for when a restaurant posted a roadsign, "Duncan Hines never heard of the place" in rural Arkansas, just mere mention of his name was "effective even when advertising in reverse... as his name provided the magic touch that brought diners flocking to its table."<sup>420</sup> Others went further, rejecting Hines' recommendations on account of his roadsigns being unreliable guides, his tastes being too finicky, and his guidebooks

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<sup>417</sup> Ruth Millett, "Duncan Hines in Reverse," *Park City Daily News* (KY) August 13, 1947, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>418</sup> "Why, Duncan, This is Rebellion!" *Tavern Talk*, January 6, 1951, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>419</sup> "Bob's Steak House," menu, San Francisco, CA, ca. 1954, in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.

<sup>420</sup> Mary Alice Bookhart, "The Distaffer," *The Clarion-Ledger* (MS), February 3, 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

too often providing too little helpful information.<sup>421</sup> The conversation was not one-sided, though, for Duncan Hines responded to criticism.

Aided by his three or more secretaries, Hines wrote scores of letters every month, and of those still in existence most of these were kind and short replies to questions about recipes.<sup>422</sup> The only records of Hines defending himself were when such letters became public thanks to the press. For instance, Hines' letters showed up in a hotel industry journal that, in his opinion, had printed erroneous information that was, in his terms, the product of "some screwball writer."<sup>423</sup> Similarly, a dust-up in Arizona in 1947 over allegedly negative comments from the critic inspired a string of articles, published letters to the editor, and private letters between the local newspaper editor who brought the tussle to the public's attention.<sup>424</sup> Hines' volatile relationship with those in Arizona continued a few years later, with a business-owner quite upset to hear Hines say that "the finest place in the world to eat is at home" in a speech to Arizona restaurateurs. The same group "had presented him with a custom-build Cadillac with enough insurance and enough gasoline to last for almost the life of the car," a surprise gift to Hines on his birthday, an effort conceived and executed by a group of business owners in Phoenix in 1949 as a show of thanks for the increased commerce caused by Hines recommending their

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<sup>421</sup> Frank A. White, "Get Set for Drab, Expensive Eating on Vacation Trip," *Martinsville Reporter* (IN), August 16, 1958, in volume 5, Duncan Hines papers; Bill Ladd, "Duncan Hines Hasn't Seen Anything Until He's Sampled Some of These," *The Courier-Journal* (KY), September 30, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers; Harry Boyd, "What the Tourist Wants to Know," *Los Angeles Examiner*, September 13, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>422</sup> Of the approximately one hundred letters found in the Duncan Hines papers at Cornell University, at least half are responses to ordinary Americans' inquiries on recipes he published in his cookbook and, eventually, his syndicated newspaper column. Having received hundreds of letters per week to his office in Kentucky for fifteen years, the total number of letters he or his employees wrote on his behalf would conservatively be estimated as in the hundreds of thousands. Alas, most of the records from his home and office have not been found by myself, his biographer Louis Hatchett, or William P. Barlow, Jr., the premier private collector of Hines-related materials.

<sup>423</sup> Duncan Hines, "Screwball," *Tourist Court Journal*, June 1953, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers; "Duncan Hines Explains," *Record Patent Trader*, May 1, 1958, in volume 5, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>424</sup> Lou Witzeman, "Hines Puts Thumbs Down on Phoenix Hospitality," *Arizona Times*, April 22, 1947; Duncan Hines, "Duncan Hines Protests," *Arizona Times*, n.d., 1947; unsigned, "Come Back, Mr. Hines," *Arizona Times*, n.d., 1947; letter, Duncan Hines to John Boettinger, May 19, 1947; all documents in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.



establishments. The author found it rude for Hines to make such remarks, seemingly anti-restaurant, to restaurateurs “who are largely responsible for the success of your publishing venture” as well as a very large and expensive gift to him.<sup>425</sup> Later, Hines caused another row in the press with his comments on coffee, of which he had very strong and, some might say, unusual preferences seeing as he put “a pinch of salt and a bit of butter the size of the tip of one’s finger” into his morning cup.<sup>426</sup> Though Hines had complained of the coffee in New Orleans since 1942, saying that locals “over-roast” the beans and further ruin it with “that chicory—I hate the dad-blamed stuff,” it was not until 1954 that similar comments provoked a bevy of aggressive replies from the denizens of Louisiana.<sup>427</sup> Criticism of his criticism did not change Hines’ opinion, for eight months later he continued to disparage the thick, chicory-laced coffee of the Crescent City.<sup>428</sup>

### Duncan Hines in Cartoons

Representations of Hines also regularly occurred in graphic media, not just text. A celebrity by the 1940s, Hines was exactly the sort of figure ripe for use in cartoons’ satirical commentary on American life in the mid-century. Building on depictions of him in both national

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<sup>425</sup> Unsigned, “Dear Duncan Hines!” *Pacific Coast Record / Western Restaurant*, May 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers. A copy of the postcard sent out to drum up interest and collect money for the gift still exists. With bright red signs of “Urgent” and “Top Secret”, the card says that since Hines “makes very little out of his books” and yet restaurateurs benefit so much from them, “Why not [buy] a new Cadillac for his birthday present?” After giving the address for sending checks to the ringleaders of the secret project, the card concludes in red font “We have been taking a free ride on Duncan; let’s give him a ride on us!” Unsigned, “Duncan Hines’ Birthday,” postcard, ca. 1949, in the Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.

<sup>426</sup> Rebecca Marston, “Noted Food Expert Says Southern Home-Cooked Dishes ‘Delectable’.”

<sup>427</sup> “Duncan Hines Likes Good Food, Unusual Watches,” *The Shreveport Times*, October 12, 1942; “Hines Finds N.O. Food Good, But Not Coffee,” *New Orleans States*, February 1, 1954; W.S. Allen, “Orleans Should be Proud of its Good Food – Hines,” *The Times-Picayune*, February 1, 1954; Mary Crossley, “Gourmet’s Order: Sweet Roll, Coffee,” *New Orleans Item*, February 1, 1954; Elsie Brupbacher, “Duncan Hines Gets Key,” *New Orleans States*, February 1, 1954; Pie Dufour, “See Here, Mr. Hines, that Coffee Crack Calls for Pistols at Dawn,” *New Orleans States*, February 2, 1954, all in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>428</sup> “Italians make lousy coffee,” and “In New Orleans, it taste like it’s made with Mississippi mud.” As quoted in “Duncan Hines ‘Perfect’ Menu Would be Fancy,” *Louisville Times*, October 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

magazines and local newspapers as an authoritative expert as well as a cranky, hungry guy, cartoonists most often used him as a symbol of knowledge and desire. Their work frequently depicted Hines' authority and the knowledge put in his guidebook as so trustworthy as to cause problems. In *Esquire* magazine, a cartoon depicted a crowded restaurant wherein one diner, an older mustachioed man in a tuxedo, says to his companion as he wipes the side of his mouth with a napkin, "Frankly, I think Duncan Hines goofed."<sup>429</sup> Also, commenting on the uses of Hines' judgment, a cartoon in the *New Yorker* shows a crowded supper club watching a cabaret show with a couple in the foreground, the wife looking perplexed and saying to her husband, "I'm going to look at that book the minute we get back to the car. I don't believe Duncan Hines ever recommended this place." The husband holds a menu in his hand but with a mischievous smile is ignoring his wife to lustily stare at the cabaret dancers about to kick their bare legs into the air.<sup>430</sup> Similarly, another cartoon depicts two older women peering inside a raucous room where men are fighting, a gambling table is in full swing, couples make trysts in the corners, and a prostitute, half naked and smoking a cigarette, entertains three men. One elderly lady peruses her copy of *Adventures in Good Eating* while the other looks at the bawdy scene and asks, "Cora, are you positive Duncan Hines recommended this place?"<sup>431</sup>

The topic of trust and standards continued in the use of Hines as an arbiter beyond sit-down restaurants. In the *Miami Herald*, a cartoon portrayed an irate wife, still in her cooking apron, standing up from the dinner table to address a bored-looking husband with a full plate of food, sarcastically jabbing at him, "Not up to your standard—Mr. Duncan Hines?"<sup>432</sup> Beyond the dinner table, a well-known syndicated cartoon, "The Better Half," showed a woman looking in

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<sup>429</sup> Granson, "Untitled," *Esquire*, February 1956, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>430</sup> Unsigned, "Untitled," *New Yorker*, February 24, 1951, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>431</sup> Moss, "Untitled," n.p., October 26, 1948, in volume 5, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>432</sup> Barbara Shermund, "Untitled," *Miami Herald*, May 6, 1956, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

the mirror to judge the appearance of a fancy hat that she had just bought, with a man leaning on a wall behind her, smoking a cigar while snarling, “Who designed it—Duncan Hines?”<sup>433</sup> In *The Raleigh Times* of North Carolina, another syndicated cartoon showed a hospital’s post-natal care unit with four cribs lined up, and in them three babies suckle on baby bottles while a fourth, reading a book, turns to them to say, “I see Duncan Hines recommends this place.”<sup>434</sup> Outside the hospital and in the battlefield, an unattributed cartoon posed a soldier up to his waist in snow while behind a drift in the distance is a building with an active chimney. The soldier looks at a sign pointing him toward the building that reads, “Fox Co. Mess – Recommended by Duncan Hines.”<sup>435</sup> Hines’ reputation loomed so large and wide that a cartoon in *The Saturday Review* presented a street scene of two houses: on the left a colonial house with a picket fence has a roadside sign in front of it declaring, “George Washington Slept Here,” while on the right a mid-century modernist ranch home has a roadside sign stating, “Duncan Hines Slept Here.”<sup>436</sup>

Hines’ authority over finer dining establishments was most commonly extended to jokes about street food. In the *New Yorker*, at a crowded sporting event a woman critically gazes over the selection available from a hot dog vendor standing in the aisle, and he tells her, “Well, lady, I’m not recommended by Duncan Hines, if that’s what you mean.”<sup>437</sup> Likewise, another cartoon, unattributed in source, portrayed two businessmen walking by a hot dog cart parked in the street, and as the vendor is dressed conspicuously and sharply, like a *maitre d’* at a high-end restaurant, one businessman remarks, “Tony isn’t quite the same since Duncan Hines mentioned him in his latest book.”<sup>438</sup> Altogether, these cartoons each used Hines as an entity so worthy of trust that his

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<sup>433</sup> Bob Barnes, “The Better Half,” n.p., ca. 1957, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>434</sup> Fred Neher, “Us Moderns,” *The Raleigh Times*, August 13, 1951, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>435</sup> No information is provided besides “Hamburg 24<sup>th</sup> Div 550” written in a corner of the cartoon. Found in volume 8, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>436</sup> Harry Mage, “Untitled,” *The Saturday Review*, August 27, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>437</sup> B. Tobey, “Untitled,” *New Yorker*, July 14, 1956, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>438</sup> Eric Ericson, “Untitled,” n.p., April 14, 1948, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

judgment reined over anything and sparked desires from consumers and producers alike. A consequence of such a strong influence was often construed as fear. Both *The Saturday Evening Post* and the *Christian Science Monitor* published scenes of a *maitre d'* screaming at waiters for accidentally spilling food all over Duncan Hines and a *maitre d'* excoriating line cooks for dropping a chef's toque in a soup served to Hines.<sup>439</sup> Kitchen staff feared Hines too, as multiple cartoons depicted chefs discussing, in three different representations, the "cold sweat" induced by having Hines in the dining room, the further anxieties caused by Hines' indecipherable reaction to what he was served, and then possible skepticism and trepidation as some wondered whether the guy eating sumptuously in their restaurant *truly was* Duncan Hines after all.<sup>440</sup>

Like the real-life restaurateurs that proudly declared to the public that they were not recommended by Duncan Hines, artists extended the symbolism of Hines beyond the connotations of trust employed in most Hines-related cartoons. Jimmy Caborn's "Adventures of Little Rodney" depicted two young boys speaking to a woman in her front yard, with one boy gesturing to the other while telling the woman of his friend, "He's canvassing the neighborhood for the best pie and cake... sort of a junior Duncan Hines," as they lick their lips and intimate they need her best baked goods for inspection.<sup>441</sup> Similarly, in another cartoon two traveling hobos stand in front of a house speaking with a woman standing in the doorway. One hobo contentedly eats a sandwich while the other, pencil and paper in hand, asks the woman, "May we have your permission to list you in 'Adventures in Good Eating'—hobo edition?"<sup>442</sup> The presence of someone as critical as Hines was not always welcome, as the *Army Times* ran a

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<sup>439</sup> Burr Shafer, "Untitled," *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 22, 1948; Bob Erickson, "Untitled," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 4, 1949, both in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>440</sup> P. Barlow, "Untitled," *New Yorker*, n.d., in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers; Robert Day, "Untitled," *Collier's*, June 20, 1953, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers; Unsigned, "Untitled," *Wall Street Journal*, December 1957 (no day given), in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>441</sup> Jimmy Caborn, "Adventures of Little Rodney," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, September 14, 1947, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>442</sup> J.G. Farris, "Untitled," n.p., n.d., in volume 7, Duncan Hines papers.

cartoon wherein three soldiers stand in line in a military mess hall, with two soldiers staring ahead in fear as a third soldier gets a large stock pot dumped on him while an angry cook glares, daring them to complain with the quip, “Any Duncan Hineses present?”<sup>443</sup> While this is a funny take on what happens when the authority Hines symbolized confronts a context in which such renown does not matter, more curious were depictions of Hines and cannibals. In one cartoon, two men, drawn in just loincloths to signify the stereotype of tribal savages, stand behind an enormous cauldron boiling over a wood fire. One man says to the other, of their cannibal cooking, “You know who I’d like to eat here? Duncan Hines.”<sup>444</sup> In another, two tribesmen stand in a jungle while a British colonial explorer, in a pith helmet and military clothing, sits in a cauldron cooking over a fire with a worried look on his face. One tribesman admires his cannibal feast, licking his lips, while the other tribesman stirs the pot and consults his copy of Duncan Hines’ *Adventures in Good Cooking*.<sup>445</sup>

As to “why cannibalism fascinates us at the end of the second millennium” enough to inspire these cartoons “is a difficult question” since the colonial encounter that inspired this Western obsession is long passed.<sup>446</sup> Humor can be hard to explain, especially when about something as stark as death.<sup>447</sup> Lacking the publication context surrounding these representations of Hines and cannibals, I can give no fuller answer besides pointing out the racism of their stereotypical depictions of the tribesmen as naked savages with decorative bones piercing

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<sup>443</sup> Jack Tippit, “Untitled,” *Army Times*, November 24, 1953, in volume 8, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>444</sup> Rodrigues, “Untitled,” *News Front Magazine*, July 1958, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>445</sup> Bob Richardson, “Untitled,” *Argosy*, February 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>446</sup> Peter Hulme, “The Cannibal Scene,” in *Cannibalism and the Colonial World*, ed. Peter Hulme Francis Barker, and Margaret Iversen, 1-38 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 10. The numerous and wide-ranging “approaches to cannibalism [is] a walk through the history of theory in the human sciences,” as Shirley Lindenbaum notes, with blame for this Western trope explained by linking colonialism to anything from Jungian psychoanalysis to strict evolutionary materialism. Shirley Lindenbaum, “Thinking About Cannibalism,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 480.

<sup>447</sup> James A. Thorson, “A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Morgue: Some Thoughts on Humor and Death, and a Taxonomy of the Humor Associated with Death,” *Death Studies* 9.3-4 (1985): 201-216.

through their noses. In the least, these cartoons are evidence of how strong the association was between Hines and a sense of trust, even though his authority was over a matter as variable, if not personal, as taste preferences in food. All of the cartoons blend and put into a compact form the general guise of Hines as an authority, an image fostered by national magazines and local newspapers alike, and Hines as a comical figure, an image born from his portrayal as eccentric in smaller press articles. These representations testify to how recognizable was Hines, a situation that his brand name food products would take advantage of.

### **Duncan Hines in Correspondence and Changing Contexts**

The collected correspondence of Hines corroborates his depiction as a friendly person. It also shows that sometimes the provocations, jokes, and critical commentary surrounding Hines were not necessarily the fault of Hines' sharp judgments or perception of him as erudite but odd. For example, a striking set of letters in the archive reveal how Hines handled his relationships behind the scenes, as this correspondence is representative of his well-mannered exchanges with his many fans, regardless of their feelings toward him. The events centered around a woman from Gladewater, Texas, who signed her letters "Mrs. Ralph Prince," repeatedly criticized Hines, and attempted to draw *The Dallas Morning News*, *Gourmet* magazine, and a famous restaurant into her firestorm.

Mrs. Prince's first complaints were on the repeated publication of a recipe for raw spinach salad and its dressing. As is still practiced today, media outlets and cookbook authors often reuse with scant revisions recipes already published. The recipe in question was attributed to Omar Khayyam's, a popular restaurant in San Francisco that Hines and many others recommended. Mrs. Prince noticed that both *Gourmet* magazine and Duncan Hines, in his

weekly syndicated column, had published similar versions of the recipe for salad and dressing, the difference being that *Gourmet* reduced the amount of liquid in the dressing by half.

Apparently, Mrs. Prince thought the discrepancy in versions to be scandalous and sent accusative letters to both *Gourmet* and Hines. The magazine's associate editor, Ann Seranne, responded with an explanation that they based their recipe on what was published in the cookbook *Dinner at Omar Khayyam's* and they had revised it based on their tastes; liquid was reduced because the dressing felt watered down to them. Yet Seranne stirred Mrs. Prince's anger further by criticizing Hines and *The Dallas Morning News*, who ran Hines' syndicated column, saying to Mrs. Prince: "perhaps you would like to ask the Dallas Morning News and Mr. Hines some questions, chief of which is, would they, or you, like to consume one quart and a half of liquid which contained an entire tablespoon of salt and three whole tablespoons of paprika? We think not. Not to mention that tablespoonful of Worcestershire sauce. We think that even a glance at the recipe given in the News shows that it is not practical."<sup>448</sup> Emboldened by Seranne's response, Mrs. Prince wrote to the offending newspaper because, as she said, "I'd like to know who errs. A poor or incorrect recipe is worse than no recipe at all." Further, in a postscript she warned them that "I almost called your hand when a fried shrimp recipe was published, calling for the shrimp to be boiled first! Horrors!"<sup>449</sup> Julie Benell, the newspaper's food editor, kindly responded with a two-sentence letter that said, "there are no typographical errors" and "we are passing along your letters to Duncan Hines."<sup>450</sup> The contrast in length and tone of the responses from the two editors is striking: Benell wanted nothing to do with this situation while Seranne was eager to prove the superiority of *Gourmet's* tastes over Hines.

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<sup>448</sup> Anne Seranne to Mrs. Ralph Prince, August 8, 1952, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>449</sup> Mrs. Ralph Prince to Food Editor of *The Dallas Morning News*, August 13, 1952, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>450</sup> Julie Benell to Mrs. Ralph Prince, August 15, 1952, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

In his response, a month after the editors' responses, copies of which he had obtained, Hines informed Mrs. Prince that the recipe came directly from the owner of Omar Khayyam's in 1939, five years before the publication of the Khayyam cookbook, and that the recipe was "double checked and tasted" and "this is the first time it has been questioned." Further, to her postscript about proper shrimp procedures, Hines spends three paragraphs patiently working through evidence from his publications to show Mrs. Prince that she was incorrect in her accusations of Hines' recipe calling for the boiling of shrimp. Hines writing is plain-spoken, lacking the exclamation marks and subtle one-upping done by *Gourmet's* associate editor, and instead praised that publication: "As for *Gourmet* in New York City, I have their recipe book and like it; in fact, I have presented them to friends as well as their magazine which is interesting indeed."<sup>451</sup> Mrs. Prince appears to have not taken well to Hines' fair and polite rebuke, as only eighteen months later she thought she had found another recipe scandal in his syndicated column in *The Dallas Morning News* and dashed off another accusatory letter. This time she charged Hines of plagiarizing an oatmeal bread recipe from Dartmouth College, even saying that she knew this because, as she said to Hines, "YOU had given" the Dartmouth recipe in some previous publication of his that she of course does not cite.<sup>452</sup> Hines replied that he does "not find any evidence in my files" of a Dartmouth origin of his recipe and, furthermore, explained to her that many people often create identical recipes without knowledge of each other. Hines kindly concluded, "I am always appreciative of your interest in my recipes and always welcome any comment you may make."<sup>453</sup>

Hines' patient and courteous reply to someone with a inexplicable grudge was typical of his letters to fans, in that he was never dismissive in handling those who had problems with his

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<sup>451</sup> Duncan Hines to Mrs. Ralph Prince, September 11, 1952, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>452</sup> Mrs. Ralph Prince to Duncan Hines, February 2, 1954, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>453</sup> Duncan Hines to Mrs. Ralph Prince, February 18, 1954, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.



recipes and was slow to anger or rude responses. To a reader who had trouble making a *sabayon*, a hard-to-master Italian recipe of whipped eggs, Hines admitted that “it is a little tricky” and due to many complaints about its complications “we have discontinued” publishing the recipe.<sup>454</sup> Hines was thorough and mannered in his responses to the public. He was quick to point out when an error in a recipe was because an editor made revisions without his permission yet, in contrast, he could sympathize with a Colorado baker’s problems with a cake recipe and promise to test it some more, even though the problems were clearly due to the cook’s ignorance of how higher elevation significantly changes the chemistry of baking.<sup>455</sup> To help fans with their cooking problems, Hines would walk them through the details of, for instance, thermometer calibration.<sup>456</sup> If he could, he would respond to a recipe problem by writing to the restaurant that gave him the recipe, and then forward on to the home cook what advice the chef had come up with to get the recipe right.<sup>457</sup> Requests for recipes for dishes not yet included in his cookbooks and columns were responded to in full, with Hines pulling recipes out of his files of unpublished material and his collection of several hundred cookbooks.<sup>458</sup> In letter after letter, Hines was concise and polite, vowing to check on mistakes, ask the right experts, and readily express gratitude for compliments and helpful advice given to him. In response to this kindness, Hines’ fans wrote as if he were a friend open to intimate details, for letters to Hines were often long due to people revealing personal, family details to him or professing their theories and techniques to improve the minutiae of, say, making coffee.<sup>459</sup> It should be noted that one of Hines’ many

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<sup>454</sup> Duncan Hines to Mrs. William Payne, June 5, 1950, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>455</sup> Duncan Hines to Mrs. R.C. Price, May 28, 1948; Duncan Hines to Mrs. Norman Stevens, May 28, 1948, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>456</sup> Duncan Hines to Miss I.L. Black, September 13, 1948, in box 1, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>457</sup> Allenwood Inn to Duncan Hines, July 10, 1941; Duncan Hines to Mrs. T.E. Morris, August 5, 1941, in box 1, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>458</sup> Duncan Hines to Mr. Roy E. Boffenmeyer, January 5, 1948, in box 1, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>459</sup> Ray Lasley to Duncan Hines, May 3, no year given; Hefco Laboratories to Duncan Hines, September 25, 1951, in box 1, Duncan Hines papers.

secretaries probably wrote much of his correspondence but Hines signed off on all letters after inspecting them. Like his network of restaurant detectives sending information on businesses to him, so too did Hines utilize the efforts of others—in this case his secretaries—to maintain the myriad relationships he curated. The impressive feat was the consistency of the tone of responses to the thousands of letters received at the office of Adventures in Good Eating, Inc. in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Duncan Hines' correspondence also highlights the extent to which his gastronomic enterprise was affected by the changing landscape around him, specifically the impact of World War II on American foodways and the postwar rise of a competitor in food criticism, *Gourmet* magazine. On the former, letters show Hines' efforts to cope with the country's culinary predicament of rationing during World War II.<sup>460</sup> Though no commentary was added to explain why, the first glimpse of Hines at least thinking about cooking in a wartime context are shown by receipts from him purchasing pamphlets from other authorities, "Relative Economy of Nutrients in Servings of Some Commonly Used Foods" from Cornell's agriculture extension program and "Vegetables" from the federal Department of Agriculture.<sup>461</sup> A few months later Hines was prompted by a letter to turn the problem of rationing into an opportunity for the patriotic publishing of wartime cooking advice. The manager of the Penn Harris Hotel in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Franklin Moore, wrote to Hines about "one of the big problems" in the foreseeable future, even after the war, "is to try to figure out a way to make good things to eat out of such foods as will be available," declaring that "I know of no better man in the United States" to

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<sup>460</sup> On American food during World War II, see Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

<sup>461</sup> Duncan Hines to Agricultural Experiment Station, Cornell University, June 6, 1942; Duncan Hines to United States Department of Agriculture, June 6, 1942, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

figure this out than his friend Hines.<sup>462</sup> Hines was inspired by this inquiry to make a wartime rationing cookbook, and a copy of the form letter that Hines used to contact multiple restaurants for help with recipes shows that he used Franklin Moore's letter, and his influence as a restaurateur, to convince other restaurateurs that a wartime cookbook would be a great idea. Hines calls Moore's idea for recommendations on cooking within the confines of rationing a "self explanatory" concept, and that he himself was "anxious to do anything I can that will be of benefit to hotel and restaurant operators." Hines declares that "It is not my intention... to make money, but I shall be satisfied if it is helpful and I can get back the small cost of preparing and printing the data."<sup>463</sup>

Unfortunately, Hines received few responses. His friends at the Gladstone Hotel in New York were eager to help, sending recipes for venison, stewed muskrat, horse meat, and pamphlets on cooking with rations by the YMCA and the *New York Herald Tribune*, then the largest daily newspaper in the country.<sup>464</sup> From others Hines received recipes for cow brains, calf's head, and stuffed heart that he clearly marked up from use, presumably in testing the recipes just as he had tested all of the recipes that ended up in his *Adventures in Good Cooking*.<sup>465</sup> Hines also received a few pages from the National Restaurant Association with recipes for braised ox joints, baked soybeans, and rice omelets.<sup>466</sup> Due to the lack of response to his inquiries, and the changing conditions of what was rationed, Hines abandoned the project of a wartime cookbook. The inspiration for this venture, Franklin Moore, remarked to Hines that he

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<sup>462</sup> Franklin Moore to Duncan Hines, January 7, 1943, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>463</sup> Duncan Hines to Ralph Stephens, February 5, 1943 in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>464</sup> Gladstone Hotel to Duncan Hines, January 2, 1943; Gladstone Hotel to Duncan Hines, January 19, 1943; Gladstone Hotel to Duncan Hines, February 3, 1943; Gladstone Hotel to Duncan Hines, February 16, 1943; Gladstone Hotel to Duncan Hines, February 18, 1943; all in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>465</sup> Olympic Hotel (WA) to Duncan Hines, March 23, 1943; Mrs. K's Toll House Tavern (MD) to Duncan Hines, n.d; both in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>466</sup> National Restaurant Association, "Suggestions and Recipe for Meat Alternates and Extenders," pamphlet, ca. 1943, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

was “thoroughly disillusioned about the [lack of] results of your letter to hotel and restaurant men regarding recipes of unrationed foods,” explaining the silence of his fellow hoteliers as due to their “selfish statesmanship” and self-interested “politics.”

The war also put a halt to a side business that Hines had worked on since moving to Bowling Green, Kentucky, from Chicago in 1939. After only a few years of production, records show that Hines put a cured pork business on hold because of the impact of rationing on meat prices but still received many requests for his country hams, and sometimes he would refer requests to other producers.<sup>467</sup> It did not help Hines that general articles about ham cited him as an expert, something that surely encouraged more requests for Hines’ line of cured meat even after he had suspended the business.<sup>468</sup> Louis Hatchett says that he briefly attempted to revive the business in 1951 but this effort trailed off, a casualty of Hines’ constant whirlwind of projects, events, and travel.<sup>469</sup>

The war’s effects on Hines’ guidebooks were mixed. Wartime mobilization increased the number of its users by putting Americans on the road but the loss of employees to military enlistment hurt the restaurant industry, at least in Hines’ view, as did the rationing of gasoline. He felt that during the war, “More persons ate at cafes then, and as business increased, cafe help became less experienced and food suffered when it was mass produced in cauldrons.”<sup>470</sup> Nevertheless, *Adventures in Good Eating*, “packed in the glove compartment beside the road map in prewar days,” said one article, “now peeks out of the back pocket of dusty G.I. trousers

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<sup>467</sup> Duncan Hines to J.A. Frohock, October 28, 1947; Duncan Hines to Mrs. Charles N. Fulcher, April 21, 1948; Duncan Hines to Peter A. Flesberg, February 11, 1950, in box 1, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>468</sup> Joseph Garretson, “All About Kentucky Hams Today,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 25, 1949, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>469</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 209.

<sup>470</sup> “Your Wife Best Cook, Gourmet Writer Says,” *Springfield Daily News* (IL), October 22, 1947, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

and the crowded traveling cases of tagalong brides and wartime businessmen.”<sup>471</sup> Furthermore, thanks to the restaurant industry’s “exemption from rationing, the tripling of the number of women workers, and massive amounts of overtime work and pay,” from “1939 to 1946, restaurant sales almost quadrupled.”<sup>472</sup> Hines guessed that after the war “the wartime family habit of going to the restaurant once a week to save rationing points will carry over because it also saves mother. More frequent travel by motor, train, and plane will increase the demand for public dining rooms.”<sup>473</sup> In fact, within just months of the war’s end, over a half million copies of his guidebook were sold as Hines was welcomed into a postwar era preoccupied with consuming.<sup>474</sup> Hines also predicted that, “When these fellows come back, they’ll surprise people with the way they eat. They won’t be satisfied with leathery eggs or vegetables in billboard paste or dishwasher soup. They’ll have sampled meals around the world, and they’ll expect home to produce the best.”<sup>475</sup> While perhaps hard to prove, this hypothesis that soldiers’ exposure to foreign foodways made for changed tastes when they returned to the United States has become a common conjecture, and one used to explain the postwar popularity of *Gourmet* magazine and the Europhilic tastemaking of Julia Child.<sup>476</sup>

Launched just before the attack on Pearl Harbor, *Gourmet* magazine competed with Hines to be the fount of gastronomic wisdom in mid-century United States. The publication caught on despite the fact that wartime restrictions were more significantly damaging to *Gourmet*’s assemblage of taste than Hines’, in that *Gourmet* looked to Europe for culinary principles and inspiration even as war cut off access to imported goods and travel abroad. David

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<sup>471</sup> Edwards, “They Live to Eat,” 30.

<sup>472</sup> Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, 127.

<sup>473</sup> Edwards, “They Live to Eat,” 30.

<sup>474</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 149; Cohen, *Consumers’ Republic*, 7-10, 112-165.

<sup>475</sup> Edwards, “They Live to Eat,” 30.

<sup>476</sup> Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, 122, 214-220.

Strauss argues that, “the magazine shrewdly made use of issues arising from the war,” like cooking within the confines of rationing and a temporary focus on American foodways, decisions forced on them by the privations of war and a high-tide of patriotism.<sup>477</sup> For example, Pearl Metzelthin’s reflective commentary on defining “a gourmet” person took a typical explanation—“A gourmet is a gourmet because of his special qualities of taste and intelligence”—and tried to show how we can “all become gourmets, in this time of emergency.”<sup>478</sup> The magazine’s editor, Earle R. MacAusland, even attempted to make culinary peace with the scourge of gourmets’ tastes, the industrial foods forced on Americans by rationing, yet this truce was of course achieved by refracting American conditions through European traditions. He argued that gourmets “have no quarrel with canned goods when properly used” but better foods were found in the “unrationed” foods gleaned from wild fields and grown in private gardens, though such a practice is born out of the wisdom of “French provincial cuisines,” not American victory gardens.<sup>479</sup>

Frankly, as Strauss admits, “*Gourmet* viewed French provincial cuisines as the prototype for gourmet dining,” and so “promoting American food and wine” was a makeshift measure “in the absence of imports from Europe” during the war.<sup>480</sup> Consequently, the promotion of American foodways faded once the war was over, for then the magazine no longer had to compromise their convictions by acting congenial toward American tastes they had encouraged because of the contingent pressures of wartime privations and patriotism. The feature-length coverage of American regional foodways and seasonal ingredients during the war were demoted

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<sup>477</sup> Strauss, *Setting the Table for Julia Child*, 141.

<sup>478</sup> Pearl V. Metzelthin, “Who is a Gourmet?,” *Gourmet*, September 1942, 20, 21.

<sup>479</sup> Earle R. MacAusland, “Why Worry?,” *Gourmet*, May 1943, 7. The magazine’s chef, who also wrote a monthly column, argued in the magazine’s first issue that gastronomy, “more than any other manifestation of taste and sensibility suffers at the slightest disturbance in economic conditions.” Louis P. De Gouy, “Gastronomie sans argent,” *Gourmet*, January 1941, 18.

<sup>480</sup> Strauss, *Setting the Table for Julia Child*, 154.

to smaller columns as the postwar peace meant a return to *Gourmet*'s central concern, Europe.<sup>481</sup> As John Erskine opined in their pages, "Texas is famous for its beef" but "nobody visits Texas in order to learn how beef should be cooked," and so the beef will be wasted until "Dallas has an Antoine's"—in other words, until Americans follow the French, even with American foodways.<sup>482</sup> Following that logic, only California wine received consistent coverage in the postwar pages of the magazine because it had finally inched away from the "uneven quality" of the "gallon jug" and began emulating the "fine table wine" experienced by American gourmets on "wine-drinking holidays in France or Italy or Spain or the Rhineland."<sup>483</sup>

Despite its dim view of American foodways *Gourmet* nevertheless tried to compete on Hines' turf, publishing their own guidebook to restaurants for motorists. It copied the design of Hines' guidebook and its system of relying on everyday Americans for recommended restaurants yet tried to put distance between Hines' taste and their tastes, especially Hines' rhetoric of sanitation's importance in making good taste.<sup>484</sup> The play of mimicking Hines and mocking him is clear and immediate, shown in the titles of the competitors: Hines' text is *Adventures in Good Eating* while *Gourmet*'s text, launched ten years later, is a *Guide to Good Eating*. Second, immediately upon opening *Gourmet*'s guide, the "Foreword" of its earlier editions says the text's

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<sup>481</sup> For examples of their temporary focus on American foodways, see "Long Live King Salmon!," *Gourmet*, July 1941; Louis P. De Gouy, "Everybody Likes Ice Cream," *Gourmet*, July 1942; Randolph Sheldon, "Land of the Sourdough," *Gourmet*, July 1943.

<sup>482</sup> John Erskine, "To See Ourselves," *Gourmet*, April 1943, 26.

<sup>483</sup> Frank Schoonmaker, "Vin Ordinaire in America," *Gourmet*, October 1947, 14. Like so many articles in *Gourmet*, Schoonmaker begins with the compliment that America's "gastronomic resources" are "the envy of the civilized world" but proceeds with commentary pointing in the opposite direction.

<sup>484</sup> Strauss, *Setting the Table for Julia Child*, 146. As Strauss admits, *Gourmet*'s guidebook mirrors Hines, having the same formatting for the organization of sections of the text as well as the same format for each restaurant listing. The two books have the same dimensions, with Hines' in red while *Gourmet*'s is the opposite color, green. As Hines' descriptions were written in a single voice and were widely variable in length, tone, and specificity of content, the *Guide to Good Eating* had descriptions made up of stringing together one to four concise but detail-oriented quotes from different *Gourmet* subscribers whose initials followed each sentence. *Gourmet*'s text lacks the paratextual elements sprinkled through out Hines' guidebook, but such gastronomical asides were probably deemed unnecessary because readers could turn to any issue of *Gourmet* magazine to find plenty of such culinary anecdotes and *nota bene*.

origin was a “response to urgent requests for a reliable directory of good eating places.”<sup>485</sup> The introduction to Hines’ guidebook stated that its origin was in response to Americans having “remarked that there ought to be a reliable directory of the most desirable inns.”<sup>486</sup> The copying of phrasing stands as a performance of the same rhetoric but through a voice that thinks itself a “better” way of making taste. In fact, by 1952 the “Foreword” of *Guide to Good Eating* was no longer saying it was responding to a need for a reliable directory but instead, in *Gourmet’s* opinion, the guidebooks had fulfilled that need so well that their “recommendations...make GOURMET’S GUIDE the most reliable restaurant directory in the country.”<sup>487</sup> The rhetoric of outdoing Hines unfolds further, with MacAusland’s “Foreword” stating that,

Obviously, no one individual can live long enough to eat his way thoroughly around this enormous country. The tastes of any one group of individuals vary with the individual, so there is no common denominator. The problem, therefore, is to find the restaurants and hotels where people who *know* good food like to eat.<sup>488</sup>

The first line is a jab at Hines. By 1947 his narrative, widely known, was of someone eating and driving his way across the country non-stop for decades. The next two lines appear contradictory—after admitting that there is no commonly shared aspect between tastes, and instead these are unique to each person, MacAusland proceeds to hold up certain persons’ taste as at least epistemologically better. But if there is no common denominator, then there is no need to rely on someone else beside yourself—so what is the “therefore” there for? The first declaration levels the gastronomic field flat so that—and here’s the “therefore” turn—*Gourmet* can then rebuild the landscape of hierarchy with themselves as the “higher,” superior taste. This occurs because of instead relying on the wider audience of Hines’ fans, who were the basis of

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<sup>485</sup> *Gourmet’s Guide to Good Eating in the United States and Canada*, (New York: Gourmet Magazine, 1947), n.p.

<sup>486</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1937), n.p.

<sup>487</sup> *Gourmet’s Guide to Good Eating in the United States and Canada*, (New York: Gourmet Distributing Co., 1952), n.p.

<sup>488</sup> *Gourmet’s Guide to Good Eating*, n.p.



much of Hines' guidebook's recommendations, *Gourmet* relies on a more select and thus supposedly better informed audience of recommenders, a group that MacAusland calls "the best and most appreciative patronage" in the country. The erecting and vaunting of hierarchy is not entirely insular, though, as this gastronomic talented tenth (or less) will work "to raise the gastronomical standards of appreciation and selection of the American people," just as Hines felt he was accomplishing.<sup>489</sup>

As seen in his reply to the irate Mrs. Prince of Gladewater, Texas, Hines read *Gourmet* magazine and thought well enough of it to be a subscriber and approve of the very large cookbook they published soon after their imitative guidebook.<sup>490</sup> The two tastemakers would eventually go off in different directions, though. *Gourmet* would help usher in the Europhilic sensibility that rose to prominence in the 1960s, symbolized by Julia Child, while Hines would spend the last decade of his life, the 1950s, promoting his brand of ingredients and appliances and publishing not just more guidebooks but an even wider variety of miscellaneous texts, like pamphlets for stove manufacturers. The magazine assembled a sense of taste based on associations of foreign travel, sophistication, hierarchy, luxury, and Europe as Hines pressed on with his assemblage of domestic mobility, democracy, mass-market consumerism, and America.

### Commercial Expansion

In his form letter to dozens of restaurants sent to kick off his unsuccessful effort to publish a wartime cookbook, Hines admits that due to the war "sale of my travel books naturally has slumped, but fortunately the sale of the recipe book... has been advancing," and predicts that "as soon as the war is over there will be the greatest tourist trade in the history of the United

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<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

<sup>490</sup> *The Gourmet Cookbook*, (New York: Gourmet Distributing Corporation, 1950).

States and I am doing everything possible to have the book ready for that time.”<sup>491</sup> In fact, Hines’ greatest commercial success was after the war, and the crest of his influence over restaurants occurred then. As a consequence of this, demand for Hines’ authority grew. It increased so much that it was after the war that Hines finally fully relented to incessant requests to endorse products, agreeing to launch a line of Duncan Hines brand name foods. As argued in the next chapter, the creation of Duncan Hines the brand was built on the authority created and maintained by his image in the press and his relationships behind the scenes. Trustworthy, knowledgeable, kind, and energetic: the association of Hines with these attributes created representations well suited to use in selling mass-market goods. His reputation as an active, resourceful, and polite authority with catholic tastes was also an advantage in the brand-building processes of presenting well, making deals, and closing sales. Moreover, once again Hines’ socially and geographically extensive network of tastemaking would prove to be an asset, as consumers and restaurateurs—his “detectives” and his “family”—contributed greatly to creating and circulating Hines’ brand to the country for him.

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<sup>491</sup> Duncan Hines to Ralph Stephens, February 5, 1943 in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **Making Duncan Hines™:**

#### **Developing a Sense of Cake**

By the end of the 1940s, Duncan Hines had widely acclaimed fame, a well-known name, and an extensive network of consumers, cooks, restaurateurs, and hoteliers guided by his signs, recommendations, and senses of taste. Regularly called an authority on food and dining, his opinion had significant economic consequences, with business owners admitting that, “being a member of the Duncan Hines Family means a chance to stay in business, thanks to the customers who place an almost blind faith in the Duncan Hines endorsement sign.”<sup>492</sup> Hines knew the worth of his name, hence the incessant reminders in his guidebooks and in articles about him that he was ethically above-board. As he saw himself, his judgment’s value was based in its independence from the commercial influences of “pay-for-play” that can sully the relationship between critics and that which they critique. Hines stood for quality and he only wanted to be associated with things based on his recognition of their quality rather than the reception of gifts to garner his favor.

Duncan Hines spent his career, the first one before retirement, as a traveling businessmen working in the field of advertising and sales. While this experience may have informed his views on commercial influence, it also put him in touch with an entire country of commerce, generating contacts that he used to create his network of restaurant detectives that inspected businesses for him. The converse of this relationship was that influence could flow from the other direction, and it did in the form of growing amounts of entreaties to endorse companies’ products. While asking for celebrities and public figures to endorse things was nothing new by the mid-century, these

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<sup>492</sup> Larsh, “Duncan Hines,” 16.

requests for his imprimatur occurred during what Harvey Levenstein has called the “Golden Age of Food Processing.”<sup>493</sup> What eventually transpired was Hines’ acquiescence, after dozens or more attempts, to the process of turning his critical fame as a food expert into a brand name of food products, a decisive change in the association between Hines and aspects of American foodways.<sup>494</sup> During his lifetime the origin of his authoritative status remained well known so long as his guidebooks and signs reminded Americans that Hines was, first and foremost, a critic of consumer goods and services. But the creation of the Duncan Hines brand presented a third sort of career for him, a sense of Hines that is still active sixty years later in the twenty-first century and, thanks to its ubiquity then and now, over-determines the meaning of Hines in the annals of American foodways.

In this chapter I argue that this last incarnation of Hines made taste through the same process of assemblage evident in his system of connecting consumers and restaurants through automobility, commerce, and media. His established network not only bolstered the launching of his brand in terms of cashing in on his social reputation, but the material logistics of the Duncan Hines brand involved a networked process of product making that mirrored Hines’ tastemaking as a critic. Just as Hines the critic made sense of Americans’ taste for restaurants by having others do the work of promotion and information reconnaissance for him, so too did Hines the brand make sense of Americans’ taste for processed foods by outsourcing his products’ creation and promotion to a nation-wide system of franchised sub-contractors. In addition, his brand was

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<sup>493</sup> Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, 101.

<sup>494</sup> The brand was actually not Duncan Hines’ first product endorsement. Briefly, he allowed his name to be used by Swift, the meatpacking company. Their advertisements would show a dish made with a Swift product, like bacon, and mention that this dish was served at a famous restaurant, of which they’d reprint its listing and description from Hines’ guidebooks. Advertisements, “Williamsburg Inn,” November 1940; “Pocono Manor Inn,” December 1940; “Chalet Suzanne,” February 1941; “Crane’s Canary Cottage,” April 1941; “The Old Chase House,” July 1941; “Lowell Inn,” October 1941, *Good Housekeeping*, in Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition and History (HEARTH), Albert R. Mann Library, Cornell University Library.

unintentionally aided by restaurants and hotels that spread his name far and wide by putting his logo on their countless promotional items, such as postcards and matchbooks.

The upside to this dependence on a diffuse network of operations was the meteoric success of Hines branded products during his lifetime. The downside was how this process relegated Hines' posthumous existence to a single association—processed foods—that outlasted other senses of taste he promoted, like regional foodways. As the resources that created and sustained Hines' networks during his lifetime faded, so too did Hines' tastemaking recede after his death, with his status as a significant gastronomic voice replaced by a commercial iconicity that has obscured the majority of what Hines attempted to accomplish as a critic. That Julia Child remains influential to some but Hines does not is because the things that make sense of her tastes are still operative while the technology, commerce, and media that supported Hines' tastemaking were superseded. Despite his groundbreaking criticism he has become, rather, just the cake mix guy.<sup>495</sup> Hines-Park Foods, Inc., a joint venture between Duncan Hines and Roy H. Park, introduced that cake mix. This chapter will therefore discuss at length the work of Park because it was he that set up and managed Duncan's brand.

### **Hines-Park Foods, Inc.**

“My purpose is to improve the health of the nation.”<sup>496</sup>

To speak of the development of the Duncan Hines as a brand name is to speak of Roy H. Park, the only man who, amongst many suitors, convinced the critic to invest his social and cultural capital into a brand new venture. Park's fundamental reasoning for approaching Hines

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<sup>495</sup> It is no wonder that Louis Hatchett's biography of Duncan Hines life is subtitled “The Man Behind the Cake Mix” even though his chronicle reveals a lifetime mostly full of other accomplishments.

<sup>496</sup> Duncan Hines commenting on the purpose of his food brand. “Name of Duncan Hines to be Used on Quality-Controlled Food Products,” *Park City Daily News* (KY), June 4, 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

was simple: if, as many contended, that, “His name has become a national byword,” then his name could easily become a national brand.<sup>497</sup> The name of the company they founded, Hines-Park Foods, is indicative of how important each were to the launching of the brand, with Hines bringing his name and his extensive network of fans, businesses, and products to the incorporation and Park contributing the resources of his advertising agency as well as his experience in the business of agriculture.

Roy H. Park was by training a journalist who in the 1930s published successful agriculture industry periodicals such as *Cooperative Digest* and handled advertising and marketing for farming cooperatives like the North Carolina Cotton Growers Association. The success of the *Digest* caught the attention of other executives, contacts that Park used in 1942 to parlay his way into buying the Agricultural Advertising and Research firm in Ithaca, New York. The firm managed the advertising for one of the largest agricultural cooperatives around, the Grange League Federation, amongst other cooperatives near or on the east coast. His quick success even led to being hired to drum up farmers’ support for Thomas Dewey’s unsuccessful presidential bid of 1948. Afterwards he returned to advertising for farmer coops and was given the task of helping sell food in a postwar era that posed new challenges.<sup>498</sup>

Selling food had always been a competitive field with low profit margins, but the era of mass consumption after World War II saw a significant increase in the amount of competition as thousands of new products flooded the market and pricing battles ensued, prices further affected by regulations lingering from the Great Depression, wartime rationing, and the up-and-down of postwar economic conversion. This crowded market was the outcome of a complex blend of

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<sup>497</sup> Gilmer, “Duncan Hines: Adventurer in Good Eating,” 100.

<sup>498</sup> Bob Knox, “State Man Uses Magical Name to Build \$50 Million Idea,” *North Carolina State College News*, August 1955, 6-7, in Box 2, North Carolina State University, Office of Alumni Relations, Publications, UA 010.200, Special Collections Research Center, North Carolina State University Libraries, Raleigh, North Carolina.

supply factors like increased agricultural productivity thanks to corporate consolidation, vertical integration, technological innovation, and resulting economies of scale, as well as demand factors such as steadily rising wages, the Baby Boom, and social fads that were attendant to the demographic shift to suburbs.<sup>499</sup> In addition, the marketplace for food shifted from small, independent grocers making sales one-on-one with customers to chains of supermarkets that focused on selling branded items (as opposed to non-descript “private label” items) through self-service shopping of open shelves.<sup>500</sup> In this context, Park’s clients asked for a way to distinguish themselves in a crowded market; Park suggested buying well known but failing brands that were up for sale, like Green Giant, which the Grange League declined. Instead, Park was tasked with creating a new brand from scratch.

Perhaps given his background as a journalist, Park approached his project by doing in-depth research into what types of advertising campaigns were succeeding and why. The role model that he studied was Sunkist oranges, itself a revolutionary product of a farmers’ cooperative utilizing modern advertising to create a true innovation in conceiving commodities, something businessmen of the 1930s marveled at and envied.<sup>501</sup> Sunkist was the first instance of differentiating produce by making a brand of it, an idea from the groundbreaking advertising executive Albert Lasker.<sup>502</sup> As seen in the late nineteenth century with Nabisco’s Uneeda

Biscuits, cereals such as Kellogg’s Corn Flakes and Post’s Grape Nuts, and Heinz’s line of 57

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<sup>499</sup> Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, 101-107. A full account of the density of factors involved in the producing and consuming of processed foods in the mid-twentieth century is found in chapters two and four of the unpublished research, Timothy Miller, “The Path to the Table: Cooking in Postwar American Suburbs” (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 2008), 37-38, 126-157.

<sup>500</sup> James M. Mayo, *The American Grocery Store: The Business Evolution of an Architectural Space* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 157-180. Supermarkets also took advantage of innovations in distribution and refrigeration and followed the postwar demographic shift to the suburbs. Inside of them, the increase in branded items met with an increase in other forms of persuasion, entertainment, convenience and comfort, as from better lighting, larger and more attention-assaulting displays, air conditioning, self-service refrigeration cabinets, carefully constructed aisles and shelves, larger shopping carts, and sometimes even childcare services.

<sup>501</sup> “Cooperation at a Profit.”

<sup>502</sup> Jeffrey L. Cruikshank and Arthur W. Schultz, *The Man Who Sold America: The Amazing (but True!) Story of Albert D. Lasker and the Creation of the Advertising Century* (Cambridge: Harvard Business Review Press, 2010).

varieties of their “pure” products, processed and packaged food had been branded before but never had a vegetable or a plant, normally left unadorned, been given a slogan, an icon, and all the other trappings of being a branded item. Douglas Cazaux Sackman’s history of the California orange industry notes that after overcoming farmer’s resistance to paying for advertising, the Sunkist brand, owned by the California Fruit Growers Exchange, “persistently pushed citrus into the public eye, giving it a kind of celebrity status” through an emphasis on iconography—the perfectly round orange, vibrant in color, reflecting the Eden of California—and the influence of new ideas in nutrition, specifically the craze for vitamins and pure foods.<sup>503</sup> The campaign stated that, “Two things about oranges...should be emphasized: First, they are very healthful fruits—to which fact your physician will testify. Second, California oranges are a *fresh fruit the year round*.”<sup>504</sup> To bolster the former claim, the brand actively sought the endorsement of “professional men, homemakers, social leaders, doctors and nurses, and teachers,” while on the latter claim, Sunkist “emphasized that oranges weren’t just luxuries” in order to rewrite their longstanding connotation as a “special fruit to be cherished at Christmas” only.<sup>505</sup> Thereby, oranges were made both ubiquitous and fashionable, associations usually seen as exclusive of each other.

Roy H. Park admired how Sunkist had given the “glamour treatment” to something mundane, an idea that solved what he thought was the ultimate problem in advertising for food: putting “more sizzle on the steak.”<sup>506</sup> Beyond the issue of a crowded market for processed foods, Park was trying to make sense of Americans’ tastes while under the sway of two perceptions

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<sup>503</sup> Douglas Cazaux Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 95.

<sup>504</sup> Pamphlet, “Sunkist Recipes: Oranges – Lemons.” Los Angeles: California Fruit Growers Exchange, Inc., 1916: 7. As found at <http://books.google.com>.

<sup>505</sup> Sackman, *Orange Empire*, 104, 195.

<sup>506</sup> “An Adventure in Food Marketing,” *Tide*, August 3, 1951, 43.



prevalent in that time period: that food consumption was already at its natural limit set by human anatomy and physiology, and that food was a commodity bought according to efficiency of price rather than as a fashionable good acquired for display purposes or an aesthetic experience desired for feeling its life-enhancing qualities. The first assumption was what manufacturers called the “fixed stomach,” an idea that “Americans could not be persuaded to eat more food. Increased profits would therefore have to come mainly from two sources—economies in production and more value added to what they produced.”<sup>507</sup> Park accepted the fixed stomach concept but gave his twist on its consequences, arguing that, “the capacity of the human stomach is 40 fluid ounces, yet it is usually stuffed with the wrong kind of food.” For him, the wrong foods were low quality products that offered little in the way of nutrients and personal satisfaction to consumers, and thus he responded to the limits of the “fixed stomach” by attempting to shift the quality of its contents. Park connected this notion of quality to the second assumption, that food was primarily judged by and bought on price. In his words, “we [advertisers] haven’t done a good job of glamourizing food and selling quality,” while promoting “perfume or beauty products” and big-ticket items like cars with advertisements based on glamour was widespread and seemed to be accepted by consumers.<sup>508</sup> Park professed that, “selling the quality in food” is “sound selling because it recognizes the desire and ambition of every American to move up toward a higher standard of living.”<sup>509</sup> With his branding project focused on quality, Park then conducted research and realized the name best associated with quality food at that time was Duncan Hines. The sales pitch he made to Hines was unique: Park said “We were the only people to approach

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<sup>507</sup> Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, 108. Elsewhere, Levenstein notes that in a crowded market “any increase in the consumption of one food commodity would have to be at the expense of others: the advertiser’s version of the rule of substitution. As a result, producers of the same commodities formed trade associations to promote the virtues of their products,” a trend evident in Roy H. Park’s agency’s work for farmer cooperatives and agricultural exchanges. *Ibid.*, *Revolution at the Table*, 152.

<sup>508</sup> “An Adventure in Food Marketing,” 43.

<sup>509</sup> Knox, “State Man Uses Magical Name to Build \$50 Million Idea,” 8.

him without the promise of making him a fortune,” and instead approached Hines with a pitch that their vision of the Hines brand would fulfill Duncan’s personal goals and maintain his values as a critic. Park presented to him the argument that even though the brand was commercial in means, its ends were cultural. The clinching comment from Park was that “By making your name more meaningful in the home, you can upgrade American eating habits.”<sup>510</sup> Park also offered Hines influence over the brand’s quality control procedures by giving him say over which products would be developed and, after testing by food scientists and Hines himself, which would be chosen for mass-market release under the Hines brand name.<sup>511</sup>

That Hines finally gave into one of the dozens of offers that businesses had made to him was due to how Park sold Hines on the ability of the products to change Americans rather than making change in Hines’ bank account. He accepted Park’s vision, sincere or not, of upgrading American food because it matched Hines’ own perspective on his work as a critic. Someone who worked for the Gladstone Hotel in New York City, presumably a manager, and who signed his letters “Gordon,” was a frequent correspondent with Hines. Among the letters still existing out of the hundreds of thousands that passed through Hines’ office, those between Gordon and Duncan show a degree of familiarity and honesty not found in any other letters. They display a rare glimpse into strong opinions and coarse language that even the notoriously gregarious Hines would normally not reveal to the public. As part of a spate of letters related to Hines’ failed attempt at making a wartime rationing cookbook, Gordon dashed off a tirade that spelled out ideas that Hines had hinted at but expressed in more congenial ways, namely his quest, stated in

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<sup>510</sup> As quoted in Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 190.

<sup>511</sup> Edgar H. Scholnik, “Duncan Hines,” *The Advertiser*, February 1953, 16, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

his very first utterances to America as a critic, “to improve the quality of your food and your service.”<sup>512</sup>

Angered by a recipe printed in the *New York Herald Tribune* that provided multiple substitutions of ingredients that he felt were central to the dish, changes that catered to personal preferences against spice and alcohol, Gordon vented,

Whyinhel do American recipes cater down to tastes rather than up to tastes?! Whoinhel cares whether a husband does not like spicey food or alcohol (sherry) mixed with his food?! ... The correct way, of course, is to state the complete best recipe and then at the bottom of the recipe add a note of alternative tricks if part of the recipe is not desired. This completely American trick of catering down to a tasteless public will never improve our eating sensibilities. Good things, or the best of anything, can never be realized or arrived at by half measures.... Once again, allow me to heap piles of something on the dear, benign Jane Davieses of the world who admittedly cook their food unseasoned because a few people don't like salt! It is not right, and we will never get anywhere with improvement of our food preparation if we continue on these very wrong and incorrect premises.<sup>513</sup>

While not uttered by Hines himself, this rant echoes a belief that Hines had partially expressed from time to time as he performed a critic's delicate dance of encouraging and eviscerating. Gordon's comments expressed the belief that despite a middlebrow, populist stance to the public, a tastemaker like Hines was a leader pulling the masses to a better state that they would never find because they would not know to look for it. For instance, in a widely circulated article from 1947, Hines said that “From observing thousands of travelers in eating places I have concluded that the average American fails to get good food, either because he doesn't know what good food is or because he is too timid to insist upon good food.”<sup>514</sup> Conversely, of the restaurants that serve these uninformed customers, Hines had scolded their lack of professionalism before: “In America, a restaurant is a business; while in Europe it is a profession. That is why in America some eating places do not continuously stack up to the reputation held at one time and expected

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<sup>512</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1937), n.p.

<sup>513</sup> Gordon of the Gladstone Hotel to Duncan Hines, February 2, 1943, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>514</sup> Hines, “How to Find a Decent Meal,” 99.

of them always.”<sup>515</sup> Overall, to solve this lack of knowledge and standards Hines felt that “Nothing but a long-time program of education is going to improve” the situation.<sup>516</sup> Motivated by Park’s appeal to his goals—to “upgrade American eating habits”—Hines signed on to Park’s business plan for a brand development based in selling quality. Furthermore, to make do on his project of upgrades Hines stipulated that his portion of the brand’s profits be donated to the Duncan Hines Foundation, which gave scholarships to students at the hotel and restaurant management programs at Cornell and Michigan State universities as well as supported the efforts of the Sanitation Foundation.<sup>517</sup> Both the products in the boxes and the proceeds from them were intended to improve the consumption and production of food in the United States.

### **Making and Shipping**

By the time Park had convinced Hines to be the face of his clients’ products, the Grange League had backed out of the branding project, and so Park was left with a business plan to sell branded products but no businesses to make them. This situation was not a complete loss because this issue connected with observations from Park’s research to suggest an alternate system for the process of making, shipping, and promoting products. After studying the Sunkist operation in California, Park had realized that though he admired their approach to branding, his business plan was for a smaller operation. In short, “ad rates were too high for a small manufacturer” to promote nationally like Sunkist did, “and freight rates were prohibitive” to shipping products from all corners of the country to all the other corners of the country.<sup>518</sup> Dedicated to “knocking down freight costs,” Park switched up the typical flow of commodities: “Instead of having the

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), 193. The professionalization of the restaurant industry was an abiding passion of Hines, and is discussed at further length in chapter five.

<sup>516</sup> Wilma Morrison, “Gourmet Says Fault Eaters,” *The Oregonian*, July 4, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>517</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), x.

<sup>518</sup> “An Adventure in Food Marketing,” 43.

products brought to the label, he brought the labels to the products.”<sup>519</sup> With experience in the cooperative model of agriculture, Park realized that a franchising model would keep distribution costs down while also allowing him and Hines to pick and choose the best manufacturers for each line of items under the brand. After testing and approval of their products, small regional producers would fix Hines labels to their items and send them out to stores immediately in their area, rather than having the products shipped from all over the country to Ithaca, New York, or some other location for labeling and then sending them back out again for commercial distribution.<sup>520</sup> In addition, Hines-Park advertising would be localized and spear-headed by regional producers, though they were required to contribute 2 percent of their gross sales to Park-Hines Foods, 25 percent of which went to national advertising managed by the Hines-Park office.<sup>521</sup>

With the brand built on a franchising system that localized production, distribution, and sales, Duncan Hines was once again having a network extend across the country to spread his name and create products for his brand just as his system of roadside signs had spread his name as a critic and his many “detectives” and fellow motorists had supplied information for his guidebooks. This delegation of duties cut costs by using new resources for managing logistics. After World War II, a “new geography of food production and consumption” was formed by the replacement of railroad shipping’s expensive and limited reach with the low-cost and flexible

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<sup>519</sup> Knox, “State Man Uses Magical Name to Build \$50 Million Idea,” 8.

<sup>520</sup> Duncan Hines did indeed test the products that ended up in his brand, sampling wares at his home in Kentucky, Hines-Park Foods’ offices in Ithaca, New York, or at the food science laboratories in Indianapolis that did chemical tests preceding Hines’ quality control inspections. The tests were blind, in that Hines chose products he felt were “the best from many samples, not knowing whether it would cost 50 cents or \$2 flat. He demanded only that it be good” to his taste. In contrast to then standard practices in the food processing industry, quantitative measures of product “quality” were eschewed in favor a qualitative perception built “upon a combination of such factors as purity, wholesomeness, flavor and appearance.” Joan S. Bey, “There’s a Formula on Being a Food Expert,” *Indianapolis Times*, September 22, 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers; “Cooking is Finest Art, Duncan Hines Asserts,” *Rocky Mountain News*, July 25, 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers; “Adventures in Good Merchandising: A Report on Duncan Hines Quality Foods, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.,” 19, Hines-Park Foods, Inc., Ithaca, NY, February 1951, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>521</sup> “An Adventure in Food Marketing,” 43.

mobility of trucking that “could provide customized hauling... particularly for highly perishable (and more valuable) items such as frozen foods.”<sup>522</sup> This handling was made possible by a “revolution in warehousing” that included better temperature control of storage facilities, standardized pallets, assembly flow principles adapted from manufacturing, and, upon leaving the warehouse, the invention of trucks capable of keeping food frozen in 1949. The Birdseye brand of frozen items, for example, used these developments to strategically place processing plants in the best agricultural regions while also taking advantage of short routes between the plants, the farmers supplying them, and the markets to which they shipped. Due to these operational efficiencies and coupled with extensive advertising, sales of, for instance, frozen French fries increased 1800 percent from 1949 to 1959.<sup>523</sup> Hines-Park took advantage of these new patterns in production and distribution since their top-selling item in the 1950s was Duncan Hines Ice Cream. Maps of product delivery in Hines-Park merchandising guides show a regional network similar to Birdseye’s, with plants in multiple regions distributing heavily within a fifty to hundred mile radius around them.<sup>524</sup> The range of Hines products and their origin was wide, with mushrooms packed in Pennsylvania, pimientos from Florida, tomatoes and beans canned in Ohio, butter and cheese from Illinois and Wisconsin, and fruits and vegetables processed in California.<sup>525</sup> Distribution covered 39 states through 35,000 dealers selling to grocery stores.<sup>526</sup>

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<sup>522</sup> Hamilton, *The Road to America’s Wal-Mart Economy*, 100, 117.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-126.

<sup>524</sup> “Adventures in Good Merchandising: A Report on Duncan Hines Quality Foods, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.,” 17, and “Adventures in Good Merchandising: A Report on Duncan Hines Quality Foods, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.,” Hines-Park Foods, Inc., Ithaca, New York, 1951, 18, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>525</sup> “Duncan Hines Franchises,” *Packaging Parade*, August 1950, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers. Products included packaged versions of apple sauce, fruit cocktail, artichoke and celery hearts, beets, beans, carrots, coffee, citrus juices, olives, peas, pecans, vegetable shortening, margarine, salad dressings, and even canned chicken and turkey. “Adventures in Good Merchandising: A Report on Duncan Hines Quality Foods,” 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Hines-Park Foods, Inc., Ithaca, NY, June 1951, 24-25, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers; “Hines-Park Adds Canned Poultry,” *New York Journal of Commerce*, December 7, 1950, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>526</sup> “Ice Cream Sales Vary, Duncan Hines Reports,” *Confectionery-Ice Cream World*, August 13, 1951; “National Ads for Duncan Hines,” *Ice Cream Field*, July 1951, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

Hines-Park Foods was also following the business trends of the day in other ways that were no less material in type. The rise of processed foods in the 1950s encouraged the practice of making “value added” products, the practice of enlarging the value of a product, in dollar and personal terms, by precooking, freezing, and otherwise processing the food. Creating what was considered conveniences in form and function, by some measure these value added features were the cause of increased spending on food in the 1950s rather than typical rising costs like inflation, labor, and the fluctuation of crop prices.<sup>527</sup> What ensued were not new foods but new forms of established foods, like nondairy cream, a trend that made processors supersede the significance of farmers in the food chain. As Tim Miller explains, “it was they, instead of the farmers, who truly created the products American purchased” since consumers did not think they had bought “flour grown by a certain farmer” but instead had “purchased flour ground by General Mills, and, more specifically, they purchased Gold Medal Flour.”<sup>528</sup> The importance of processors in the modern food chain had been established decades earlier, symbolized best by late nineteenth century meatpacking in Chicago and Kansas City, but by mid-century processors’ power and their push to cater to convenience had spread to all sectors of the food business.<sup>529</sup> The importance of processing and the industrialization of food would continue, becoming soon the dominant force in the United States, a narrative present in popular and scholarly accounts.<sup>530</sup>

The extent to which the Hines brand engaged in making value added products varied across the entire line of foods. Within two years of the brand’s launch in 1949 it promoted 165 products from 120 packers and manufacturers, including jams, pickles, mushrooms, spices, and

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<sup>527</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 109.

<sup>528</sup> Miller, “The Path to the Table”, 143.

<sup>529</sup> Horowitz, *Taste, Technology, Transformation*, 1-42.

<sup>530</sup> Deborah Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Robert Kenner, “Food, Inc.,” (2010).

eventually cookware for stoves and outdoor grills.<sup>531</sup> Most of these products were canned or boxed, and items like jams and pickles required precooking, but these foods had been available in such forms for decades. While the Hines line did not delve as deeply into what was the leading edge of the value added trend, frozen foods, the baking mixes were decidedly value added. The core of the Hines-Park approach to sales was a focus on quality, so to distinguish their brand of cake mixes and play up notions of being better made, Hines mixes switched the typical formula, asking cooks to add eggs to the mix rather than requesting they add liquids. The instructions on the first run of boxes of Duncan Hines cake mixes were the following, presented as advice from Hines himself:

America's Leading Authority on Fine Foods: To keep that home-made touch in home-baked cakes—and to make baking easier for you—I have helped develop this cake mix. I have found that strictly fresh eggs mean a better cake... in appearance, flavor and freshness. That is why I ask you to add fresh egg whites in the directions below.<sup>532</sup>

The use of the terms “touch” and “fresh” attempt to maintain of a sense of good taste by giving this thoroughly industrial product an infusion of the natural and the traditional, a pinch of the authenticity of home cooking. Whether this difference actually made a difference in the perception of taste is not only hard to tell but is a subjective judgment outside of the purpose of my research—which is the analysis of taste's occurrence, not a debate over aesthetic hierarchies. For whatever it may be worth, from the 1950s until the present day Duncan Hines Cake Mixes have consistently sold well, the only product still made out of the dozens once under the Hines brand.

There was one product about which there is some data on its physical composition that can be used for interpretation of its material difference. Duncan Hines Ice Cream was a quarter

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<sup>531</sup> “An Adventure in Food Marketing,” 44.

<sup>532</sup> Original print plate, “Duncan Hines’ 3-Star Cake Mix,” Nebraska Consolidated Mills, Omaha, Nebraska, n.d., in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.



denser in mass and a third richer in fat than any similar products on the market. Placing itself in the “premium” category of ice creams, the product was originally developed by the Lehigh Valley Cooperative Farmers and despite being more than half as expensive, 46 cents, than Lehigh’s standard pint, at 26 cents, the Hines pints sold as many units as the standard.<sup>533</sup>

Although Hines has been remembered for his cakes mixes since, Hines Ice Cream led the brand’s line of items and was promoted to be as “pure as money can buy” and “as rich and smooth as can be.”<sup>534</sup> Perhaps not as extreme a value added product as, say, frozen fried fish sticks, Hines-Park sold its ice cream, like all of their products, with a rhetoric that could be called “value included.” Rather than focus on touting the time-efficient conveniences offered by processing, which were value added procedures, Roy H. Park instead argued that their products’ excellence was based in being high-quality ingredients in the first place, and thus not in need of extensive pre-cooking and other added treatments to create their value. Instead, the value was supposedly inherent to the product. Though it was merely advertising copy, the brand’s discourses of quality and ingredient selection matched Hines’ gastronomic opinion “that no food comes off the stove any better than when it goes on to be cooked.”<sup>535</sup> Park sold Hines on becoming a brand because he convinced Duncan that through superior quality products they could “upgrade American eating habits,” a sales pitch that they made to the nation through commentary by Park, a range of advertising campaigns, and the traveling salesmanship of Hines himself.

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<sup>533</sup> “Duncan Hines Ice Cream in Debut,” *Ice Cream Field*, August 1950; “Duncan Hines Ice Cream Franchised to Charleston Dairy Farm,” *Ice Cream Review*, April 1951, both in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>534</sup> Evabeth Miller, “Adventures in Good Eating Flavor Duncan Hines’ Talk,” *The Peoria Star*, October 30, 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>535</sup> Helen Messenger, “Simple Foods Get Enthusiastic Duncan Hines Recommendation,” *Denver Post*, March 12, 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

### Promoting and Selling

As head of the advertising agency that was turned into Hines-Park Foods, Inc., Roy H. Park brought the Hines brand to market with a widespread campaign that attempted to advertise food by changing the terms of its promotion. Park tried to change how value was constructed by the discourses most commonly used in food advertising at that time. In a message that was repeated by numerous industry journals, Park argued that, “Food has been sold too long on price and not on the basis of value received,” with “value” defined “in terms of satisfaction and efficiency.”<sup>536</sup> He felt that, “In every other line [of consumer goods] we upgrade the consumer but in food we tend to sell mainly on price to meet the basic bodily needs.”<sup>537</sup> On the latter, for years food companies “have recognized nutritional advances by stressing vitamins and health-giving qualities in our advertising; but,” he noted, “we haven’t given enough weight to the fact that when it comes to eating, man does not live by bread alone.”<sup>538</sup> Park refers to the line from the Gospel of Matthew to highlight other senses of what eating means to consumers besides being fuel for the body and an expense to manage. And so to change conceptions of value Park pleaded that, simply put, “we should sell all the joys that go with good eating,” such as aesthetic appreciation, family fun, tradition and heritage.<sup>539</sup> Like Hines, Park was arguing that the good in good eating is based in food’s associations to other things, like joy. But in order for these things to “go with” the consumption of food they have to be attached by discourse, and there was Park’s largest commercial and cultural intervention. While defining satisfaction may be relatively

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<sup>536</sup> “Stress Value and Efficiency,” *Kansas City Grocer*, May 1951, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers. Park’s comments were disseminated by many periodicals: “Untitled,” *National Food Distribution Journal*, May 1951; “Selling Policy Change Urged on Food Products,” *Commercial Bulletin*, May 4, 1951; “Untitled,” *Food Packer*, June 1951, all in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>537</sup> “Grocery Men Urged to Boost Quality Foods,” *Food Field Reporter*, October 8, 1951, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>538</sup> “‘Food Sold Too Much on a Basis of Price’: Roy Park So Tells Ad Federation,” *Food Field Reporter*, June 29, 1953, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>539</sup> Knox, “State Man Uses Magical Name to Build \$50 Million Idea,” 8.

straightforward, and selling such a notion as easy as demonstrating that a product “tastes great,” the common use of the term efficiency pointed toward getting the largest quantity of calories for the lowest price. Park tried to shift that sense of value toward getting the largest range of associations packed into a price, arguing that consumers would be willing to pay for a higher priced product if they received a high quality product—or rather, a product with many qualities suggested as attached to if not inherent within it.<sup>540</sup> To Park this was a revolution ripe for the packing, for in his rhetoric, “there has never been a surplus of quality foods—there has always been a scarcity.”<sup>541</sup>

Roy H. Park thought he had found a way forward through the thicket of brands, a way to sell premium products in a category of goods structured around avoiding higher expenses. Citing nebulous evidence, Park boldly declared that “The American people want to be sold and serviced on better food just as they have been sold [on] better education, better clothing and bigger and better automobiles,” a more positive version of the rant by Duncan Hines’ friend, Gordon of the Gladstone Hotel.<sup>542</sup> When Park said, “the American people,” he truly meant everyone, because in his accounting the “great opportunity to sell more quality foods is not confined to the executive and professional groups alone, but runs through our entire population.” Thus, Park “reasoned that with about 155 million plates to fill three times a day” the food industries have “half a billion opportunities to sell something better every day.” In trying to expand the market for food he referred to the “better” things that have been sold to Americans besides food, and this shows Park’s other intervention besides his language of quality and its senses of value. By the middle of

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<sup>540</sup> Roy H. Park, “Not by Bread Alone,” *Canning Trade*, October 1, 1951, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers. As the Hines-Park merchandising guide for brokers said, “Better foods cost more per can, but in terms of good nutrition and enjoyment, it is well worth the difference.” In “Adventures in Good Merchandising: A Report on Duncan Hines Quality Foods, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.,” 3.

<sup>541</sup> “An Adventure in Food Marketing,” 46.

<sup>542</sup> “Grocery Men Urged to Boost Quality Foods,” *Food Field Reporter*, October 8, 1951, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

the twentieth century, food in the United States had not yet been broadly conceived of as a luxury good and thus was not part of the cycles and fields of social distinction and emulation. Park knew that goods are often material manifestation of social identities and aspirations, as seen in his comments that “our family life, our business contacts and our social activities are usually tied in with what we eat and drink.” The second half of this comment laments the lost opportunity presented by such ties: “but we have not sold glamour or the intangible benefits of good food.”<sup>543</sup> While the intangible benefits were usually explained by his language of quality and its articulation of ingredient selection, his mention of “glamour” shows the other aspect of his rhetoric and its intended effects, the dynamic whereby associating a thing with glamour activates ambitions to social ascension, and in turn this desire motivates consumption of that supposedly better thing. Park attempt this re-positioning of food as a desired object by placing the Hines brand’s national advertising campaigns in up-market and aspirational publications like *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Business Week*, *Esquire*, *Holiday*, *The New Yorker*, and the *New York Times Magazine*.<sup>544</sup>

Park was aware of his situation: that in contrast to the dominant trend in food sales toward value added products his campaign was an “off-beat sales philosophy.”<sup>545</sup> It was a risk to venture away from conventional practice but he was prepared to forego “price lines or price brands” because he was “willing to stake our future on the premise that Americans want and will buy better foods.” Park said, “our business is good eating,” repurposing a catchphrase from his

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<sup>543</sup> “Sales Executive Says People Want Better Foods for Table,” *Michigan Food News*, October 22, 1951, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>544</sup> “Duncan Hines Foods Adds New Markets and New Products,” *Advertising Age*, December 5, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>545</sup> This quote was a business analyst’s opinion of the Hines-Park quality-based promotions. Robert Perry, “The Sales Pull in a Name,” *The Financial Post* (Toronto), July 18, 1953, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers. Park’s understanding of value added (“better”) products was the following: “The average consumer in 1950, who actually paid \$342 for food, was spending \$245 for the same foods which he purchased in 1935-39 for \$119, and the extra \$97 went for additional and better food. In other words 30 per cent of his 1950 food money was going for better eating.” In “Stress Value and Efficiency,” *Kansas City Grocer*, May 1951.

partner's best-selling *Adventures in Good Eating*.<sup>546</sup> Park was aware that in order to make his stake he had to rely on the significance of Duncan Hines' accomplishments and reputation, but he thought this branding was different from the scores of previous instances. "Unlike many other franchise programs where the aim is to exploit a name that is in common usage," Park proclaimed, "our program is based on putting the kind of food into the package that will maintain and enhance the brand."<sup>547</sup> In other words, quality occurs not because a name associated with quality is attached to an object but because there is quality inherent in the materials that meet the high standard of quality thought to be inherent to Duncan Hines and his network of good eating, cooking, and lodging. Physical sensation matches cultural sense, both of which were considered to be of quality. To Park, this pairing of value was so obvious and so obviously valuable, that he compared the introduction of quality products, "the right foods," to "like Christianity or democracy—all you had to do was get people to practice it" and they'd be convinced of its superiority.<sup>548</sup> Audience placating rhetoric aside, Park was betting heavy on a name to lift his brand above the onslaught of competition during a historical high tide of brand sales.

In the industry journals that covered the launch of the Hines brand this new line was usually highlighted as an example of a hot new trend that its readers, other businessmen, needed to buy into. In short, an attractive brand name "is important today when 70 per cent of all food products move through super markets, where the power of the brand name moves the product off the shelves," one journal noted.<sup>549</sup> As for the Hines brand, "With the trend of ice cream sales rapidly going from over-the-counter to packaged goods and from drug stores to grocery stores,"

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<sup>546</sup> "'Joys' of Food 'Can Be Sold,' Parley Hears," *Supermarket News*, June 22, 1953, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>547</sup> "'Food Sold Too Much on a Basis of Price': Roy Park So Tells Ad Federation," *Food Field Reporter*, June 29, 1953, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>548</sup> "An Adventure in Food Marketing," 43.

<sup>549</sup> "Recipe for Building a Food Business," *Marketing Toronto*, August 1953, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

another journal said, “the Duncan Hines name will give an independent manufacturer the opportunity to step up and get his share of the market for premium ice cream.”<sup>550</sup> This sentiment recurred throughout industry press, with articles from across the country imploring how, given the “continued trend toward self-service sales” it was “imperative” to sell recognizable and fashionable brands.<sup>551</sup> The upside of the Duncan Hines brand was that even though it was yet another fledgling entrant in a crowded field, survey research showed that “the Duncan Hines name stands for good food and good eating among the top half of the American people who are the most brand conscious and most able to buy the brand of their choice.”<sup>552</sup> Though some bemoaned the trend toward mass-market brands, as well as the concomitant rise of supermarkets, even the mainstream press noted that the power of Duncan Hines might be hard to ignore.<sup>553</sup> Articles in *The Wall Street Journal* noted that “Members of the flour-milling industry might well cock an eye at such ballyhoo and goings-on” around Hines because despite the fact that “Per capita flour consumption in the U.S. is at an all-time low of 133 pounds,” the Hines Brand was

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<sup>550</sup> “Duncan Hines Container Unveiled,” *Ice Cream Field*, May 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>551</sup> “Duncan Hines Label Goes to Market,” *Canning Trade*, August 7, 1950, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid. On coverage of Hines in business press, see “Duncan Hines Label,” *Western Canner & Packer*, October 1950; “Sun-Up Introduces Hines Ice Cream in Houston, Texas,” *Southern Dairy Products Journal*, November 1950; “Fostgage Growers Plan to Use Name of Duncan Hines,” *Produce News*, December 23, 1950; “Duncan Hines Label Wins Favor for 150 Products,” *Canner*, January 20, 1951; “Duncan Hines Extends Ice Cream Franchises,” *Confectionery-Ice Cream World*, March 19, 1951; “Duncan Hines Adds New Thrill to Salads,” *Food Mart News*, June 1, 1952, all in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>553</sup> In Response to Roy H. Park’s campaign for sales rhetoric centered on notions of quality, a small food business owner angrily responded that their was too much emphasis on name brands, which obviates the one-on-one service relied upon by small grocers to survive: “A little more service and salesmanship would undoubtedly be a big help to the food industry, but the large supermarkets have left themselves with little opportunity for personal selling. The giant price tags seem to be the chief selling point, for there is almost no personal contact except with the girl at the checkout counter. The small corner grocery still tries to do a selling job by stressing quality and service, but it’s hard to compete with the supermarket’s giant price tags. Even the corner grocery is handicapped, because many stores give quick delivery to telephone orders.” Quote from “Untitled,” *American Business*, May 1951, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

“setting sales records for Nebraska Consolidated Milling Co.,” the franchise that developed the Hines cake mixes.<sup>554</sup>

The sales success of Hines branded items was swift, promoted by aggressive advertising campaigns that focused on local promotion paid for by local franchised processors that put the Hines name on their products. The budget for national advertising was 75 percent less than competing brands and so Hines-Park Foods, Inc. had to be strategic. Though promotions appeared in major national magazines, the central office for the brand created graphics and wrote copy for the local franchises to use in promotions within their regions.<sup>555</sup> Accounts state that the Hines brand, jointly promoted by franchises and Hines-Park, “literally blitzes a town when it moves in. Color ads, so necessary in food promotion, are splashed on billboards and in local papers. Many radio and TV spots are used, as well as redemption coupons.”<sup>556</sup> Sales from these efforts were positive. For example, upon introduction of the Hines cake mixes to Minnesota, sales were so high that its competitors took to drastic measures, with Betty Crocker running a half-off sale for their mixes and Pillsbury offering three-for-one specials.<sup>557</sup> Consumer research showed that “85% to 95% of Duncan Hines Mix purchases were repeat customers” and, further, they “have won acceptance in families which previously shunned mixes.”<sup>558</sup> Combining all products under the label, by 1953 sales were over 100 million packages thanks to the support

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<sup>554</sup> Felicia Anthenelli, “Adventures in Good Selling, or a Ballyhoo Blitz for a Cake-Mix,” *Wall Street Journal*, (Chicago ed.), December 17, 1952; James Garst, “Duncan Hines’ Love of Good Food Becomes Publishing, Cake Mix, Ice Cream Business,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 5, 1952, both in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>555</sup> Hines-Park Foods had a \$1.5 million budget for advertising, while peer businesses’ budgets averaged around \$6 million. Anthenelli, “Adventures in Good Selling, or a Ballyhoo Blitz for a Cake-Mix.”

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>557</sup> “Duncan Hines’ Mixes Pressing Leading Brands,” *Advertising Age*, July 21, 1952, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>558</sup> “Duncan Hines Mixes Sales Are Expanded,” *Western Family Preview*, September 1953, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

provided by a wide range of promotional items.<sup>559</sup> In time, the label had franchised manufacturers creating Duncan Hines china sets and stainless steel pots and pans. There was even a branded credit card service, the Duncan Hines Signet Club, that was “honored for food lodging, beverages—and even entire vacations—by 2700 Duncan Hines recommended establishments.”<sup>560</sup> Like the man himself, the Duncan Hines brand appears to have tried everything at least once.

Included in the promotional materials sent to franchises for their local use were, for instance in 1951, nine pre-recorded radio spots, scripts for radio announcers, mats for newspaper advertisements, signs and posters, and other options for drumming up interest like direct mail.<sup>561</sup> Archives of other Hines-Park promotional materials show similar texts and graphics. What is notable was that the majority of advertisements tried to make the products attractive through their use in day-to-day life, with ad copy such as, “For Parties, For Guests, For Downright Family Enjoyment—Duncan Hines Ice Cream.”<sup>562</sup> Surprisingly, advertisements rarely capitalized on Hines’ work as a critic or even showed his face or figure. The Duncan Hines logo—a riff on the design of his roadside signs—was always there because logos are basic to brand advertising, but little other presence of Hines is found. A text box to explain Hines’ identity might briefly describe his best-selling authorship of *Adventures in Good Eating* and *Lodging for a Night*, yet no other sense of his taste was established. Instead, senses of the

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<sup>559</sup> “Growth of Hines-Park Explained to Ad Group,” *Confectionery-Ice Cream World*, June 22, 1953, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>560</sup> Duncan Hines Dinnerware, Stetson China Company, Lincoln, Illinois, n.d; Duncan Hines Stainless Steel ‘Waterless’ Cookware, Regal Ware, Inc., Kewaskum, Wisconsin, n.d; James L. Byrom’s Duncan Hines Signet Club card, Hines-Park Foods, Inc., Ithaca, New York, 1956, all in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.

<sup>561</sup> “Duncan Hines Sales Builder Kit,” Hines-Park Foods, Inc., Ithaca NY, Fall/Winter 1951, in volume 3, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>562</sup> Proofs for National Duncan Hines Brand Advertising, Hines-Park Foods, Inc., Ithaca NY, September 1955, in volume 1, Duncan Hines papers. “Treat your Family and Friends to”, n.p., n.d. in volume 1. Most of these advertisements attempted to suggest Duncan Hines Ice Cream as the answer to all situations, an item for the bridge club, PTA meetings, birthdays, holidays, hot weather, and more. See also, Window promotional displays, Hines-Park Foods, Inc., Ithaca, New York, n.d., in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.



product were highlighted, as Park himself commented that, “The cornerstone of our [promotional] program has been to have special quality you can taste, see, smell, or feel.”<sup>563</sup> Indeed, much of the advertising copy was devoted to sensuous descriptions, like “Duncan Hines Ice Cream is wonderfully smooth, never marred by grains or icicles. Its memorable flavor lingers long after your last delicious spoonful. And the mouth-melting richness of Duncan Hines Ice Cream beckons you to enjoy this taste thrill again and again.”<sup>564</sup> Even the advertisements that do mention Hines as “a guide to eating” still focus on the product’s “quality – an ice cream that is RICHER – that TASTES BETTER that is SMOOTHER – and that has MORE REAL CREAM in every pint.”<sup>565</sup> This approach extended to other products besides the brand-leading ice cream. The advertisements for Duncan Hines bread relied on proving that, through sensing quality, this bread by smell has “the rich fragrance that brings back memories of Grandma’s kitchen,” by touch “has substance, does not mash down when you squeeze it,” by sight has a “creamy natural color, the fine close grain,” and by taste is “bread as you remember it.”<sup>566</sup> Even Hines branded pepper mills were promoted according to sensory evidence, with “A Word From Duncan Hines” explaining the science of “volatile oils” that “rapidly dissipate” if you do not use a finely made grinder that provides “the true piquancy of pepper at its best.”<sup>567</sup>

Though Hines’ face and opinions as a critic were perhaps not central to the brand’s advertising campaigns, nevertheless Hines-Park Foods attempted to use some of the associations regarding him to begin the process of creating brand associations, hoping that these would

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<sup>563</sup> Robert Perry, “The Sales Pull in a Name,” *The Financial Post* (Toronto, ON), July 18, 1953, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>564</sup> Advertisement proof, “All Over Town... Duncan Hines Is Winning Friends,” Hines-Park Foods, Inc., Ithaca NY, September 1955, in volume 1, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>565</sup> Pamphlet, “3 Reasons Why You Should Ask For... Duncan Hines Ice Cream,” Hines-Park Foods, Inc., Ithaca, New York, n.d., in volume 1, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>566</sup> Advertisement proof, “Duncan Hines Home Style Enriched Bread”, Hines-Park Foods, Inc., Ithaca, New York, n.d., in volume 1, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>567</sup> Pamphlet, “Duncan Hines Pepper Mill,” George S. Thompson Corporation, South Pasadena, California, n.d., in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.

become successfully attached to products when perceived by the public. Where Hines was used in promotional campaigns was as a traveling salesman, regularly going on junkets for the brand throughout the country. With the launch of the brand he also began writing a syndicated column and, as always, was involved in multiple side-projects related to food and his cultural authority over it. Numerous small promotional items hawked Hines-Park foods as well—yet these were not made by the office of Hines-Park Foods in Ithaca, New York. Unwittingly, restaurants and hotels forwarded the Duncan Hines brand through their constant use of the name and logo of Duncan Hines, the critic and author. The Duncan Hines network that made sense of taste through assembling many parts and processes continued to expand, including ever more persons, objects, and associations.

### **Ephemeral Promotions of Ephemeral Notions**

“He realized that the agency itself is but one facet of the complex that makes for the sale of a product or service.”<sup>568</sup>

While Roy H. Park employed standard corporate operations such as consumer surveys, print campaigns, and press releases, the Duncan Hines brand was broadcast to the nation by a bevy of much smaller but more numerous items and acts. Because Hines himself spent a career as a traveling salesman and as a critic was perpetually peripatetic, he was sent by Roy H. Park on tours that included stops at grocery stores, radio stations, and other promotional events. He also continued to write and develop side-projects just as he had before becoming a brand name, over the age of 70 but still churning out articles, pamphlets, and lending his name to a variety of non-brand activities. Regardless of their content, these activities forwarded Hines’ name and maintained his fame as an authority, bolstering his brand as surely as it did for his officially

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<sup>568</sup> Knox, “State Man Uses Magical Name to Build \$50 Million Idea,” 8.

brand-related activities. Arguably, non-brand promotions spread the Duncan Hines network to areas a traditional promotional campaign might not have reached.

The extensive system of business contacts, recommended restaurants and hotels, and supportive fans that Hines had built from 1936 to 1949, the start of his brand, continued to expand and develop until his death in 1959. Because he had cultivated a sense of intimacy and bonhomie with his audiences, and because his guidebooks and roadside signs had iconic imagery, businesses in particular began to use the Hines logo in all of their materials. From the 1930s on, restaurants advertised by way of promotional items that historians and collectors often call ephemera: giveaways and tchotchkes that circulated in the billions. These objects were common things of mid-century life that, if made by a Hines' recommended business, would prominently display his name and logo and thus circulate Duncan Hines—as brand and as critic—ever wider and more constantly. Insofar as the logo for Hines the brand was based on the logo for Hines the critic, the millions of postcards, matchboxes, and pamphlets that displayed the badge of culinary honor, “Recommended by Duncan Hines”, were unwittingly doing work for Hines-Park Foods.

Roy H. Park knew that having Hines as his brand meant taking on the extensive network that had made Hines so famous and still so commercially and culturally influential. The official merchandising guide for the brand touted how the “momentum of untold worth of publicity” created by Hines-related non-brand and pre-brand activity greatly benefited the brand, and urged brokers and sellers to take advantage of this unique situation wherein a brand was already pre-developed and distributed by signs and fonts that echoed the brand's package labels.<sup>569</sup> Since brands rely on recognition and the accumulation of associations, the promotional ephemera created by restaurants as well as publications and public appearances by Hines built the brand by

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<sup>569</sup> “Adventures in Good Merchandising: A Report on Duncan Hines Quality Foods, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.,” 3.

continuing to place Hines in the public sphere and maintain his relevancy by connecting him to whatever was popular at that moment. Taste is an ephemeral physical sensation on the tongue and an ephemeral social sensation in a culture.

Since old age slowed him down little, Hines just kept on driving as always, combining his duties as a critic, an authority, and a brand when making public appearances. Records show that Hines was regularly on brand-related junkets that attracted the attention of the newspapers in each locale he visited on his cross-country drives.<sup>570</sup> Hines' numerous jaunts took him to all lower 48 states as well as Mexico, a place he was fond of after having worked there as a young adult. He regularly touted the food of Mexico and toured as he could, even receiving the honor of "distinguished visitor" by Mexico's Secretary of the Interior Angel Carbajal while visiting in 1955.<sup>571</sup> In fact, Hines' itinerary throughout the 1950s was full of countless events in between brand-related appearances like the "Duncan Hines Day" promotions that he would attend in grocery stores across the country.<sup>572</sup> As an authority on American food, he was frequently asked to judge culinary competitions, like newspapers' recipe contests and a variety of regional festivals.<sup>573</sup> As a critic, he was asked to speak expertly on the state of culinary matters at

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<sup>570</sup> For examples, "Duncan Hines to Stop at Cosgriff Tonight," *The Craig Empire Courier* (CO), September 6, 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers; James Boynton, "Chefs Will Outdo Themselves; Duncan Hines Here Monday," *Detroit Sunday Times*, September 27, 1953, in volume 8, Duncan Hines papers; "Famed Epicure Eats Five Time Daily to Prove 'Eating is Fun, Important'," *Times-News* (ID) August 5, 1955, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers; Nelson Ober, "Duncan Hines Ate Here—Somewhere," *Kansas*, August 13, 1957, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>571</sup> Mary Martinez, "Colonyscope," *News of the World* (MX), March 2, 1955, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>572</sup> Advertisement, "Tomorrow, February 4, is Duncan Hines Day in Jackson," *Jackson Daily News* (MS), February 3, 1954; "Tomorrow, March 16 is Duncan Hines Day in Salt Lake City," *Desert News and Telegram* (UT), March 15, 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>573</sup> "Unusual Recipes Will Win the Prizes," *The Cincinnati Post*, October 13, 1952, in volume 7; "To Be Judge at Chicken Festival," *Caroline Sun* (MD), May 10, 1958, in volume 5; "Duncan Hines, Others to Judge Creole Cookery," *Rice Journal*, October 1951, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

conferences and schools, as well.<sup>574</sup> While on tour, Hines would also appear on radio and television shows in between events.<sup>575</sup>

When not on the road, Hines still found time to publish a variety of pieces—in fact, the extent of Hines’ writings was so wide that merely listing them would take many pages, and so the following selected pieces are discussed to show the variety of his work. Some of these articles were revised versions of information found elsewhere, like a series in the general interest magazine *Coronet* wherein Hines would “take... readers to some of the some of the outstanding restaurants which are listed in his famous book,” and a similar series for automotive magazines.<sup>576</sup> He was often asked to write advice columns that stretched out into full-features for smaller papers, too. A string of articles for the *Ithaca Journal* allowed him to recycle quips hidden in the interstices of his guidebooks, opinions like how seasoning “must be used with discretion as an artist uses his pigment.” In pieces like these he could build if not remind others of his sense of taste, the critical but all-American gastronomy that he professed with colorful quotes like, “I’ve always believed that one reason genuine French cuisine often over-shadows our average American cooking is because it is more apt to be edible. But when one finds real oyster stew, roasted turkey, blueberry pie, clam chowder, and many others at their best, our own native cooking comes to the fore.”<sup>577</sup> Often he would recycle nearly the exact same phrases for different markets, telling the residents of Kansas as well as North Dakota, for instance, to “Eat

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<sup>574</sup> Mildred Woods, “Experts Agree on State of Things Gastronomic,” *Arkansas Gazette*, September 1, 1950, volume 6, Duncan Hines papers; “People Eating More Balanced Meals, Hines Tells School,” *St. Louis Globe Democrat*, November 4, 1953, in volume 8, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>575</sup> Prudence Penny, “Duncan Hines Is Guest on Hospitality Time,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 21, 1953, in volume 8, Duncan Hines papers. Promotional photograph for Duncan Hines’ appearance on “To Tell the Truth,” CBS, September 10, 1957, in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.

<sup>576</sup> Duncan Hines, “Adventures in Good Eating,” *Coronet*, February 1948, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers; Duncan Hines, “On the Road with Duncan Hines,” *Motor Trend*, September 1955, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers. Duncan Hines, “Some of the Unusual and Better Eating Places among my Favorites,” *Buick Magazine*, May 1947, in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.

<sup>577</sup> Duncan Hines, “Duncan Hines Says: Let’s Make Most of Mealtime,” *The Ithaca Journal*, March 24, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers. See also, “Duncan Hines Tells: How to Select a Restaurant,” *The Ithaca Journal*, March 10, 1949; “Duncan Hines Says: Anybody Can be a Good Cook,” *The Ithaca Journal*, March 17, 1949.

food and enjoy it. Never make eating a chore. Always be happy at mealtime and always remember that food is a gift, every dish a treasure over which to linger.”<sup>578</sup> Many of Hines’ articles expanded the range of things associated with Hines. For example, he wrote about his love of gardening by waxing poetic on “the gold of carrots, the warm reds of tomatoes and beets, the cool greens of lettuce, peas and beans,” while displaying his expert knowledge on plants such as *Osmunda cinnamomea*.<sup>579</sup> Likewise, Hines wrote about game hunting to express his affection for its culinary opportunities, that “something about outdoor cookery—the warm sunshine, the fresh airs that whets the appetite, the general good fellowship—that adds zest and tang to the food.”<sup>580</sup> Hines would appear in journals of all types, from obscure industry periodicals to glossy national magazines, to show how far his knowledge stretched.<sup>581</sup>

It should be noted that not all of Hines’ publications were successful, like his guidebook for vacation spots, a clear attempt to capitalize on what was a new and growing consumer trend.<sup>582</sup> Launched in 1949, the same year as the creation of Hines-Park Foods, the *Duncan Hines Vacation Guide: Good Places to Spend an Enjoyable Vacation* never reached the acclaim or sales figures of his restaurant and hotel guides. This guide was perhaps unnecessary because it provided information that consumers could have probably found on their own. If so, then the only reason to consult Hines’ recommendations would be for his critical opinion, but *Vacation Guide* lacked the voice of Hines in its listings and, similarly, had none of the amusing paratexts so prevalent in his restaurant guide—and that is because he did not write it, his secretaries

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<sup>578</sup> Duncan Hines, “Let’s Make the Most Out of Mealtime,” *The Valley News* (ND), March 24, 1949; Duncan Hines, “An Editorial,” *The Wichita Beacon*, September 21, 1950, both in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>579</sup> Duncan Hines, “I Like Vegetables,” *Flower Grower*, May 1958, 37.

<sup>580</sup> “Game Cooking I’ve Liked,” *Sports Afield*, March 1959, 84, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>581</sup> Duncan Hines, “Duncan Hines Picks Ten Best Motels in U.S.A.,” *Look*, January 12, 1954; Duncan Hines, “Dog Day Menus,” *Food Seller’s Digest*, September 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>582</sup> Aron, *Working at Play*, 237-257; Orvar Löfgren, *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 213-239; Sessions-Rugh, *Are We There Yet? The Golden Age of American Family Vacations*.

compiled it based on questionnaires sent to well-known places.<sup>583</sup> Perhaps due to its lack of sales and style, this last of Hines' four guidebooks also failed to register in the landscape of popular culture and commentary. Archival records show that mid-century media outlets rarely ever mentioned it.<sup>584</sup>

Hines' most widely circulated writing was for a syndicated column that reached over 20 million Americans in over 100 newspapers.<sup>585</sup> In these pieces, published three times a week by mostly smaller local presses, Hines would pack into a few short paragraphs the historical or commercial background of a dish before giving its recipe.<sup>586</sup> Similarly, in the 1950s Hines began writing, or had ghostwriters create, pamphlets with collections of his favorite recipes that were often distributed by whatever company he had become associated with. While not exactly opening the proverbial flood-gates, Hines' work with Roy H. Park led him to endorsing many other products, from Monsanto plastics to United Airlines, the Wine Advisory Board to Estate Range ovens.<sup>587</sup> In the mid-century, pamphlets were published in the millions to educate consumers and are a prime but underutilized source in food history. Their publishers included processed food companies, produce co-operatives and marketing boards, meatpackers and livestock associations, appliance manufacturers, cleaning supply industries, and any other commercial venture involved in selling a foodstuff or the technologies surrounding the activities

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<sup>583</sup> Duncan Hines, *Vacation Guide* (Bowling Green, KY: Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., 1953); Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 176-177.

<sup>584</sup> The only sustained discussion of the vacation guidebook is found in "Duncan Hines Adds Another New Book," *The Cherry Circle* (IL), September 1948, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>585</sup> "An Adventure in Food Marketing," 43; Letter, Duncan Hines to Anna Hollett, Holett's Steak House (MO), January 8, 1952, in box 1, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>586</sup> For example, Duncan Hines, "Chicken Country Captain Has Famous Admirers," *The Virginian-Pilot* (Norfolk, VA), June 20, 1958; *Ibid.*, "Try Turkish Cream," *The Vindicator* (Youngstown, OH), June 29, 1958, both in volume 5, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>587</sup> Advertisement, "For adventures in good living... Monsanto Plastics," *The Saturday Evening Post*, ca. 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers; Pamphlet, "Duncan Hines' Report on Lodging and Dining in Hawaii via United Air Lines Mainliners," n.d., n.p., in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.; Advertisement, "Bring out the goodness... with Wine," Wine Advisory Board, San Francisco, n.d., in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.; Advertisement, "Estate Gas Ranges," *McCall's*, March 1952, in volume 7, Duncan Hines papers.

of the kitchen.<sup>588</sup> Since Duncan Hines regularly followed the trends of his era, he too showed up in many pamphlets. For *This Week* magazine he created a pamphlet on his dozen favorite dishes, ghost written by Clementine Paddleford; for Gulf Oil he gave instructions on turkey carving at Thanksgiving; for Standard Oil he showed off his house and family; for Fleeer Gum he told stories of and gave recipes for regional foodways.<sup>589</sup> Combined with similar recipe collections published for Hines-Park Foods' promotions, all of the above activity provided Hines with a constant presence in the public and an ever-growing range of associations between him and the world around him, from sport hunting to flower growing to any number of recipes recommended and places visited.<sup>590</sup>

The most numerous bits circulating the Hines name and fame were ephemera produced by restaurants and hotels that wanted to promote their businesses, especially promoting the fact that they were included in Hines' guidebooks of recommended places. Putting these things in context, before television advertisements, and arguably in greater quantity than print advertisements, ephemera were a significant channel for promotion and instruction. For instance, packs of matches were produced by the billions before the 1960s, and according to histories of these items they were popular amongst producers and consumers alike.<sup>591</sup> They displayed sophisticated artwork and creative designs, and were particularly well suited to restaurants that

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<sup>588</sup> Jim Heimann, ed. *Kitchen Kitsch: Vintage Food Graphics* (Cologne: Taschen, 2002); William Woys Weaver, *Culinary Ephemera* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 173-191.

<sup>589</sup> Clementine Paddleford, "Duncan Hines Twelve Favorite Dishes," in *This Week Magazine* (New York: New York Herald Tribune, 1946); Duncan Hines, "How to Carve Your Turkey," Gulf Oil, Co.: New York, n.d; "Scenic South," Standard Oil Co., n.p., Volume 11, number 11 (1954), 14-15; "Anecdotes and Famous Dishes from Bountiful America," Frank H. Fleeer Corporation: Philadelphia, n.d., all in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.

<sup>590</sup> Duncan Hines, "25 Recipes Selected by Duncan Hines," n.p., 1949, in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr., Oakland, California; Duncan Hines, *Duncan Hines Favorite Recipes* (Ithaca, NY: Hines-Park Foods, Inc., 1954); Ibid., *The Duncan Hines Dessert Book* (New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1955).

<sup>591</sup> Weaver, *Culinary Ephemera*, 119-133. Weaver says that, "like postcards and souvenir menus, the matchbook owes its effectiveness to the innocuous and offhand role it play in the culture of tourism, giving visitors a verifying relic to display and share with the folks back home." Ibid., 124-125.



used them “to display their immaculate buildings and taste-tempting cuisine.”<sup>592</sup> Hines’ recommended restaurants’ matchbooks regularly squeezed in graphic replicas of his red guidebooks and signs to remind customers that this establishment was associated with the best.<sup>593</sup> Hundreds of restaurants use these giveaways, handed out by the millions, while also selling souvenir postcards with even larger displays of Hines’ name to signal his approval of a place. Surveying a collection of over 400 postcards from restaurants recommended by Hines shows frequent mention of him, usually on the back of the card, in a cluster of information like name of restaurant, location, and its affiliation with the American Automobile Association (AAA). Thus, to read any message on the postcard would lead one’s eyes directly to the Hines’ insignia or at least the line, “Recommended by Duncan Hines.” In addition, this advertising could potentially be bolstered by discussion of the restaurant on the postcard’s handwritten text: approximately 70 out of the 400 collected have writing on them, with 15 actually discussing the food. For instance, a postcard made by the Glockenspiel restaurant, signed “Mary” and sent to Miss Bartine Gates of West Pittston, Pennsylvania, said, “We had a delicious luncheon here. You’d like it.”<sup>594</sup> While the terseness of notes was typical, the writing still brought attention to Hines and his network of restaurants, signs, and guidebooks, which in turn aided the recognition of his name to the benefit of his brand. Even Hines himself had postcards made with photographs of his home in Kentucky on the front and promotional information on the back.<sup>595</sup>

Altogether, the Hines brand was developed due to the efforts of an array of things that placed his name in front of the eyes of countless consumers. Opening your pocket to light a

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<sup>592</sup> H. Thomas Steele, Jim Heiman, and Rob Dyer, *Close Cover Before Striking* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1987), 53.

<sup>593</sup> Matchbook, Spenger’s Fish Grotto, Berkeley, California, n.d., in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.

<sup>594</sup> Postcard, The Glockenspiel, Fleetwood, Pennsylvania, postmarked July 27, 1956, in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.

<sup>595</sup> Postcard, Duncan Hines’ home office, printed by Baxtone, Amarillo, TX, n.d., and Postcard, Duncan Hines’ home office, n.p., 1949, both in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.

match, receiving a postcard from a friend on vacation, reading the most recent issue of *Life* magazine, driving down a highway, listening to radio programs, visiting a grocery store, buying a new appliance and reading its instructional pamphlet—Duncan Hines and his logo could be encountered at any moment and in many forms by Americans living in the middle of the twentieth century. As evident in Duncan Hines the critic’s vast network of signs, books, restaurateurs, and vocal fans, so too did Duncan Hines the brand take advantage of the enthusiasm surrounding Hines that motivated others to invoke his name for any number of purposes, in any number of situations. The Hines empire was vast by any measure—dollars spent, businesses involved, products manufactured, persons enthralled—and so to understand the activity that eventually created an icon in American culture is to see a wide and dense landscape of things all working in their own way to circulate Duncan Hines, attract associations to the name, and thus proliferate its use and consequently enlarge its value.

### **From Famous Critic to Faceless Brand**

“The value of a brand is not the pretty lithographed label on the package but the mental association that flashes in Mrs. Brown’s mind when she sees that label.”<sup>596</sup>

The brand launched by Hines-Park Foods proved so popular and successful, with \$50 million in annual sales by 1955, that it lasted for only seven years before it was purchased by a much larger corporation, Procter & Gamble.<sup>597</sup> At the time, this Cincinnati-based company was not known for processing food but making cleaning supplies, and so Hines’ line was their foray into a new market. Despite the change in ownership Roy H. Park stayed with the brand, working

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<sup>596</sup> “Adventures in Good Merchandising: A Report on Duncan Hines Quality Foods, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.,” Hines-Park Foods, Inc., Ithaca, NY, June 1951, 30, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>597</sup> Herb Wallace, “Park Row Paragraphs,” *Park City Daily News* (KY), September 18, 1956, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

for Procter & Gamble until 1969. Park oversaw the publication of Hines' guidebooks and other, smaller Hines-related productions like the Signet Club credit service, which were separated from the brand and administered by the Duncan Hines Institute in Ithaca. No longer run out of Hines' home-turned-into-office in Kentucky, Park greatly changed the scope and organization of *Adventures in Good Eating* after 1956, with the books put out "through new distribution channels" as "the number of inspectors in the combing process [was] tripled," and "new listings of a higher type" were targeted, perhaps an attempt to move upscale to the market guided by *Gourmet* magazine's restaurant guidebook.<sup>598</sup> Park even attempted to turn the national-scaled *Good Eating* into multiple regional guidebooks but ended up keeping the format the same, expanding it but reducing Hines' quirky descriptions and removing his revealing paratexts.<sup>599</sup> As for Duncan Hines, his biographer, Louis Hatchett, says that scant "evidence remains of Hines' daily activities after the Procter & Gamble purchase," but it appears that he traveled less and thus "spent his leisure time at home with his nieces and nephews," a happy second retirement since his family "knew his real love was entertaining others" as the extroverted, wise-cracking center of attention.<sup>600</sup> He did do some promotional activities for Procter & Gamble, but for the most part Hines' relentless movement slowed down in his final few years.<sup>601</sup>

Hines passed away in 1959 of lung cancer and was warmly remembered. The obituaries written by news services such as the Herald Tribune News service, the Associated Press, and United Press International spoke of him in neutral terms, chronicling his rise as a critic in 1935 to his branding in the 1950s in mainly plain, factual terms, and seldom discussing other aspects of

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<sup>598</sup> "Map Giant Expansion for Duncan Hines," *The Chicago American*, May 7, 1957, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>599</sup> "Regional Guides for Duncan Hines," *Southern Hotel Journal*, June 1959, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers; *Adventures in Good Eating*, (Ithaca, New York: Duncan Hines Institute, Inc., 1959).

<sup>600</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 255.

<sup>601</sup> Eileen Razek, "Adventurous Duncan Hines Seldom Does Own Cooking," *Casper Tribune-Herald* (WY), August 6, 1957, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

his life like his three wives and extended family (Hines had no children).<sup>602</sup> Smaller presses that wrote their own obituaries, or modified ones circulated by news services, were more revealing in their commentary. Calling his name a “familiar byword,” the Kentucky newspaper closest to Hines’ hometown was the first obituary to note that his “books are credited with raising standards in American eating places,” a refrain common throughout the obituaries.<sup>603</sup> From Cincinnati, another obituary credited Hines as having single-handedly changed “public dining from a gastronomical gamble to a creature comfort of reliability.”<sup>604</sup> A Missouri paper remarked that after having tasted “the full range of good restaurants with all types of restaurants,” Hines not only “discovered some splendid out-of-the-way restaurants and gave them national renown” like a critic would, but in the process he also “bequeathed to the American public the zest for the search” for good American food, like an educator. Hines brought to the fore of American culture a concern for and sensitivity toward tasting food that had not existed on a mainstream, national, popular culture level before him, and thus many believed that “no American name is more immediately associated with human pleasure than the name of Duncan Hines.”<sup>605</sup> From Maine, another article thought Hines left a “rich legacy of better eating,” and because of it “today’s weary motorist is more adequately equipped” to appreciate American foodways than before he had guided the nation’s sense of taste. “Americans are great believers in expert opinion,” the anonymous author declared, and as a cultural authority the “total effect of his effort was to make it easier for the hungry to taste the fare better at mealtime.”<sup>606</sup>

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<sup>602</sup> “Duncan Hines, Gourmet and Author, Dies,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 16, 1959; “Duncan Hines, Arbiter of Food, Lodging, Dies,” *The Washington Post*, March 16, 1959, both in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>603</sup> “Duncan Hines, Travel, Food Authority, Dies,” *The Park City Daily News* (KY), March 16, 1959, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>604</sup> “Duncan Hines,” *Cincinnati Post and Times-Star*, March 19, 1959, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>605</sup> “Duncan Hines’s Great Hobby,” *Kansas City Times*, March 17, 1959, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>606</sup> “Duncan Hines Ate Here,” *Maine Sunday Telegram*, March 22, 1959, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

Opinions of Hines as a positive reformer of eating habits were in fact widely held, as found in research by the consumer studies specialist Ernest Richter on the associations attached to Hines during his lifetime. “What do you think about when you think about Duncan Hines? What fleeting images cross your mind?” he asked, and the answer he received was guidance toward quality that was based in expertise but given without putting on airs of superiority or bludgeoning audiences with pedantry. Americans “want to be counseled on what to do but never TOLD what to do,” the research said, and Hines was one of the first critics to establish this type of relationship. Unlike many critics and authorities that came across as stern, stubborn, commanding, and patronizing father figures, Hines’ persona was perceived to be like an uncle, and like grandparents and aunts, “Uncles counsel and protect us, but they are permissive.”<sup>607</sup> Altogether, Hines was associated with knowledge, quality, trust, and a congenial spirit that wanted to share his joys with others—Hines dearly wanted to improve and upgrade American eating habits but did so through charismatically inspiring a crowd, not dictatorially demanding his way or the highway. His way was the highways that everyone else traveled, too.

Hines’ opinion was that “The long-abused American stomach is suffering...from ignorance,” and the result is “People just don’t know how to taste.”<sup>608</sup> Hines enacted such a program of knowledge giving, as comments on how to improve the practices of cooking, eating, and talking about food pepper his guidebooks’ and inspired his how-to articles.<sup>609</sup> What’s more, upon launching his brand of foods, Hines said of this culinary enterprise, “My purpose is to

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<sup>607</sup> “The Duncan Hines Image,” *Southern Hotel Journal*, July 1959, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>608</sup> Morrison, “Gourmet Says Fault Eaters.”

<sup>609</sup> Hines, “How to Find a Decent Meal.”; *Ibid.*, “Duncan Hines Picks Ten Best Motels in U.S.A.”

improve the health of the nation.”<sup>610</sup> He sincerely believed this had happened during his life, and argued that,

[Americans] are eating only 2 lb. more food per year than they did 58 years ago. But there was a great difference in the type of food consumed. We now eat more meat and fowl, more fruits and vegetables, cheese and milk. In addition we are eating better because we have become more conscious of good food and more critical of poor food and because incomes today let us satisfy our tastes.<sup>611</sup>

Further, of the trend toward processed foods that he aided, he believed that “The art of cooking is not degenerating because of so many mixes and shortcuts.”<sup>612</sup> Unfortunately for Hines, opinion since the 1950s has not been as kind toward processed foods and, moreover, the larger corporate consolidation and industrialization of food that made processing so prevalent and powerful. In 1948, before the brand, Hines said that his “business which started as a hobby has now become a crusade for better living. Very simply: my whole idea is to improve the health of the nation by giving more people sanitary, appetizing food.”<sup>613</sup> A year later he signed on to becoming a brand because he thought, like the vast majority of his peers, that processed foods were indeed sanitary, healthful, and thus an actual improvement of material conditions for many Americans, separate from the much-discussed convenience factor. Furthermore, the chorus of criticism of processed food companies due to environmental negligence, nutritional deficiencies, and political corruption was decades away from occurring. As to whether the food was appetizing, opinions vary, and, as Mark C. Smith has shown, attempting to taste the past is impractical and

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<sup>610</sup> “Name of Duncan Hines to be Used on Quality-Controlled Food Products,” *Park City Daily News* (KY), June 4, 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>611</sup> “We Consume Two Pounds More Food,” *Canadian Grocer*, ca. 1958, in volume 4, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>612</sup> Donna K. Parker, “Gourmet Hints Offered By Duncan Hines,” *Desert News & Telegram* (UT), March 16, 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>613</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), x.

unnecessary, a move that is beside the point, which is to understand how tastes are contingently formed.<sup>614</sup>

Upon his death, it was believed that Hines' "gustatory works will live on" in the form of his legacy as a critic that professionalized the restaurant industry and sensitized Americans to their own foodways.<sup>615</sup> That has not been the case. While many American that are currently above a certain age do remember Hines as a person and have fond memories associated with following his signs and guidebooks, the success of the Duncan Hines Cake Mixes has created the dominant associations surrounding the name Duncan Hines. Because of the many food brands like Betty Crocker that have used a fictitious persona to sell products, Duncan Hines is often assumed to be just another invention of advertising executives. This notion is furthered by the lack of Hines' face on branded items, unlike many other name-based brands. In addition, due to the highly competitive market for processed foods the line of items under the Hines brand was quickly whittled down from nearly 200 products to a dozen or less cake mixes at any time.<sup>616</sup>

While the physical products have been consistently popular with cooks since the 1950s, the cultural connotations have slowly worn away. By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the name Duncan Hines was only associated with cake in the cultural memory of most Americans, and if they were under the age of thirty years old they may smirk at hearing his name mentioned, chuckling to themselves as they recite lines from the three dozen rappers whose lyrics refer to him. Hip-hop culture employs the name Duncan Hines not for culinary reasons but as a synonym for cake, a word that in urban slang means money and/or packages of cocaine, two common

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<sup>614</sup> Mark M. Smith, "Producing Sense, Consuming Sense, Making Sense: Perils and Prospects for Sensory History," *Journal of Social History* 40.4 (2007): 841-858.

<sup>615</sup> "Duncan Hines Ate Here."

<sup>616</sup> Victor Hillary, "Product Profusion: Food Producers Flood Supermarkets With New Items," *Wall Street Journal*, January 2, 1958; "Brand-Name Battle: Grocer's Profits vs. New Consumer Foods," *Time*, June 15, 1959, 88, in box 294, folder 18, and Amy Vanderbilt, "Social Acceptance of Convenience of Foods," speech at National Food Editors Conference, October 3, 1960, all in box 304, folder 32, Clementine Paddleford papers, Morse Department of Special Collections, Kansas State University Libraries, Manhattan, Kansas.

topics in rap songs.<sup>617</sup> Possibly because this is the only widely viable association between Hines and American popular culture, the current owner of the brand, Pinnacle Foods, decided in 2010 to run an advertising campaign called “Hip Hop Cupcakes” developed by the famous advertising agency, BBDO.<sup>618</sup> At the end of a television commercial for the campaign, freshly baked cupcakes are iced with a chocolate frosting which when applied to the cupcakes cause them to grow facial features and start singing, eerily mirroring aspects of the racist blackface performances made famous by Al Jolson.<sup>619</sup> Controversy ensued and the advertisements were quickly pulled off the air.<sup>620</sup> Having jettisoned the history of gastronomic criticism that made the brand possible in 1949, and now possessing a faceless brand free-floating without cultural connection to its current context of 2010, Pinnacle Foods desperately groped for any association with which they could make sense of taste.

Duncan Hines was first and foremost a critic, and what has been lost the most about him, even to those that remember him well, was his gastronomic outlook beyond the phrase “good eating” on the guidebooks that made his fame. Whether sensing the end of his life or encouraged by Roy H. Park to further promote the name Duncan Hines, Hines wrote a memoir, published in 1955, that narrated his life by way of pleasant memories of flavorful dishes and the places where they were served if not historically developed. The following chapter analyzes *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey* in concert with his lifetime of culinary commentary to present Hines’ overarching perspective on what is American food and which of it is tasteful. Placing this work

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<sup>617</sup> This number was determined by a query search of the rap lyric database, <http://www.rapgenius.com>, combined with my own knowledge of the genre.

<sup>618</sup> Ken Wheaton, “Duncan Hines’ ‘Hip-Hop Cupcakes’ Shows Necessity of Diverse Work Force,” *Ad Age*, December 14, 2010. <http://adage.com/article/the-big-tent/duncan-hines-hip-hop-cupcakes-shows-necessity-diverse-work-force/147669>.

<sup>619</sup> “Duncan Hines Hip Hop Cupcakes Being Considered Racist!,” *Youtube*, December 10, 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v0BeSz5LRCY>.

<sup>620</sup> Jim Edwards, “Chocolate Surprise: Backlash Forces Duncan Hines to Pull “Racist” Cupcake Ad,” *Moneywatch*, December 13, 2010. [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505123\\_162-42746863/chocolate-surprise-backlash-forces-duncan-hines-to-pull-racist-cupcake-ad/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505123_162-42746863/chocolate-surprise-backlash-forces-duncan-hines-to-pull-racist-cupcake-ad/)



within the arc of the early to middle twentieth century shows how it assembled an all-American gastronomy based in regional foodways and wove together a lifetime of Hines' quips, rants, and praises for the things he associated with good taste. In addition, there was a surge of publications about American foodways that occurred in the years before and after his death, a forgotten burst of narratives and philosophies of food that presage the ideals of contemporary tastemakers.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### The Place of Taste:

#### Duncan Hines' All-American Gastronomy

In the introduction to *Adventures in Good Eating*, fellow food writer Forrest Crissey describes Duncan Hines' sense of taste as "marked by a peculiarity in that it is distinctively American and wholly independent of European gustatory standards."<sup>621</sup> The peculiar aspect was that at the time of the guidebook's initial publication in the 1930s good taste, born out of "good breeding" and gastronomic rumination, was commonly understood to be a possession of Europeans that Americans lacked. If any Americans did have it, this was because they had studied the masters of culinary commentary in Paris, and perhaps London as well, imported practices from there, and adjusted them to fit an American context.<sup>622</sup> Hines' gastronomic criticism took a completely different path by focusing on American restaurants and surveying them nationwide by car, a practice that led to his title as "the authority on the geography of eating in this country."<sup>623</sup> Of his many guises—from critic to brand name, hobbyist to expert—Hines is least remembered for his gastronomic opinions despite the fact that these ideas presage concerns in the contemporary criticism of food. Some may recall his *Adventures in Good Eating* but few know of his philosophy of what made such eating good and, further, how novel such thoughts were relative to the history of food in the United States.

Published at the end of his career but overshadowed by his more famous guidebooks, his magnum opus, *Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey*, collected and organized many of the key gastronomic thoughts that Hines had professed throughout his career and the experiences that

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<sup>621</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1938), v.

<sup>622</sup> Strauss, *Setting the Table for Julia Child*, 43-69.

<sup>623</sup> Paddleford, "60,000 Miles of Eating," 25.

inspired them.<sup>624</sup> As he saw it, the “main purpose” of his career as a critic “was to raise the standard of U.S. eating” by making Americans aware of what was available and what was possible.<sup>625</sup> As seen in chapter four, Hines as both a guidebook writer and brand spokesman thought all his endeavors were helping to upgrade food practices. Similarly, in his gastronomic memoir Hines sought to raise standards in the United States by encouraging Americans’ appreciation of and attention to their foodways through setting an example of how to do so. In this chapter I argue that Hines’ memoir attempted to make geographic sense of his own tastes, and in doing so followed patterns set by other mobile writers who have made national “cuisines” in modern societies by synthesizing regions through a touristic gaze that filters experience through notions of authenticity. As the culinary map of America that graces its cover makes plain, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey* was a deeply nationalistic text that supported Hines’ opinion that “At its best I think American cookery the best in the world.”<sup>626</sup> The memoir also reveals Hines’ fundamental principles of what makes things taste good, ideas that he had scattered across his previous publications and that upheld the value of local, seasonal, simple, and authentic foodways. Though articulating these principles for different reasons than recent iterations, Hines’ gastronomy nevertheless set a precedent for contemporary tastemakers who in recent years have also championed the cause of local and seasonal foods, adding on ecological practices of sustainability while maintaining the goal of searching for authenticity. This pattern suggests that in modernity taste is placed, a shift in the understanding of aesthetics from being abstract ideals for the few to becoming grounded practice for the many.

Hines described his *Food Odyssey* as a “revisitation of many of the places that I have especially enjoyed; to have you meet some of my old friends, to learn some of the interesting

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<sup>624</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*.

<sup>625</sup> Paddleford, “60,000 Miles of Eating,” 24.

<sup>626</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1941), 152.

facts about food that I have learned, and to share with you some of my adventures in good eating.”<sup>627</sup> Like his guidebooks, it blends memoir with histories, recipes, geographic surveys, and opinions and preferences regarding food, switching between these modes from paragraph to paragraph in the same random pattern as his habits of speech, as shown in chapter two. In fact, the memoir is in many ways a larger version of his restaurant guidebook since it too was “an authentic guide for the motoring public to the good food America has to offer.”<sup>628</sup> Steering Hines’ Odyssean wanderings were cultural compass points, in that he warned readers from the outset of the memoir that “This must be a geographical rather than a chronological rambling; it will have to follow the road map and not the calendar. I have visited too many places too many times to remember in just what order things occurred.”<sup>629</sup> While his aging memory was his excuse for eschewing time as an organizing principle, the choice of structuring his reflections on America in spatial terms is understandable. He became a critic after years of experiencing the American culinary landscape through extensive, incessant automobility. It is this mobile method that connects Hines to larger global patterns of culture creation and commentary.

Scholarship on food and nation is plentiful and the connection between these two things appears endemic to modern societies.<sup>630</sup> David Bell and Gil Valentine argue that, “food and the nation are so commingled in popular discourses that it is often difficult *not* to think one through the other.”<sup>631</sup> Yet, as fellow geographers Ian Cook and Philip Crang note in their oft-cited work,

foods do not simply come from places, organically growing out of them, but also make places as symbolic constructs, being deployed in the discursive construction of various imaginative geographies. The differentiation of foods through their

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<sup>627</sup> Ibid., *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 32.

<sup>628</sup> Ibid., *Adventures in Good Eating* (1950), v.

<sup>629</sup> Ibid., *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 32.

<sup>630</sup> The literature is as numerous as there are nation-states; for an entry point see Belasco, ed. *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*.

<sup>631</sup> David Bell and Gill Valentine, *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 168.

geographies is an active intervention in their cultural geographies rather than the passive recording of absolute cultural geographic differences.<sup>632</sup>

As such, culinary mapping, like cartography in general, is created on the basis of spatial differentiations that are not neutral but involve biases from the configuration of scale, the influence of historical context, and the cultural intents of the representation.<sup>633</sup> Duncan Hines' linking of foods to places was particularly influenced by what made possible his experiences of foods and places: automobility. Driving presented him with tourist experiences and the idea that, relative to all of his driving, the places he visited were stable entities formed long ago and sustained since by tradition.

Food is in fact a regularly mobile thing, it having being moved by commercial trade and cultural exchange for millennia. Scholars thus know that foodways “are continually hybridizing processes rather than fixed things,” and so, in accounting for tastes, the stories told about “ingredients, knowledges, technologies and practices—culinary and otherwise—cannot have any straightforward ‘origins’.”<sup>634</sup> Instead, the process of “associating foods with places” causes people to “recirculate an imagined geography” that accounts for foods and foodways by forcing them into immobile categories.<sup>635</sup> These are not accurate depictions of a complex reality but representations that simplify the situation to make it easier to digest, mentally and physically.

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<sup>632</sup> Cook, “The World on a Plate,” 140.

<sup>633</sup> J.B. Harley, “Maps, Knowledge, and Power,” in *The Iconography of Landscape*, ed. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen S. Daniels, 277-312 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Monmonier, *Rhumb Lines and Map Wars: A Social History of the Mercator Projection*.

<sup>634</sup> Ian Cook, Phillip Crang, and Mark Thorpe, “Regions to be Cheerful: Culinary Authenticity and its Geographies,” in *Cultural Turns/Geographical Turns*, ed. David Crouch, Ian Cook, Simon Naylor, and James R. Ryan, 109-139 (Harlow, UK: Prentice Hall, 2000), 113. See also Sarah Gibson, “Food Mobilities: Traveling, Dwelling, and Eating Cultures,” *Space and Culture* 10.1 (2007): 4-21.

<sup>635</sup> Jennie Germann Molz, “Eating Difference: The Cosmopolitan Mobilities of Culinary Tourism,” *Space and Culture* 10.1 (2007): 16. What is remarkable is that due to increased mobility in the modern era, thanks to changes in transportation technology and media circulation, “actual places and localities become ever more blurred and indeterminate,” and yet “ideas of culturally and ethnically distinct places become perhaps even more salient.” Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, “Beyond ‘Culture’: Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference,” in *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Ethnography*, ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, 33-51 (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 39.

Furthermore, geographical accounts of food are often written by tourists and professional travelers, like Hines, whose journeys have consistently turned into searches for “the real,” the purportedly pure origins of things. Hence “the dominant position” in theory “is that tourism should be interpreted as a quest for authenticity” configured by the biased “gaze” of this touristic perception.<sup>636</sup> Since claims of authenticity are determinations of value, they are contingent upon the context that informs such decision-making.<sup>637</sup> Further, authenticity is almost always embodied by objects whose materiality lends the arbitrary character of authenticity the solidity its proponents wish it possessed; thus, food is constantly conceived of in terms of authenticity.<sup>638</sup>

Mobility, authenticity, and nationalism come together in modern societies to invent culinary traditions whose conception is circulated in mass media. Arjun Appadurai has shown that cookbook writers have created national foodways by synthesizing disparate regions through a search for authentic, venerable practices. Just like Hines’ work, these cookbooks offer the “interplay of regional inflection and national standardization” that “reflects and reifies an emerging culinary cosmopolitanism.”<sup>639</sup> Globally, Appadurai notices that cookbooks “are fueled by the spread of print media and the cultural rise of the new middle classes” of modern societies that desire guidance on food, a situation directly parallel to that of Hines’ guidebooks.<sup>640</sup> But “if, as Benedict Anderson has famously proclaimed, the nation is an ‘imagined community,’” Bell

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<sup>636</sup> Chris Rojek and John Urry, “Transformations of Travel and Theory,” in *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, ed. Chris Rojek and John Urry, 1-19 (New York: Routledge, 1997), 11; John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (New York: Sage Publications, 1990). See also Dean McCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976); Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>637</sup> Edward Bruner, “Abraham Lincoln as Authentic Reproduction: A Critique of Postmodernism,” *American Anthropologist* 96.2 (1994): 397-415; Richard A. Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Charles Guignon, *On Being Authentic* (London: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>638</sup> Sian Jones, “Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves: Beyond the Deconstruction of Authenticity,” *Journal of Material Culture* 15.2 (2010): 181-203; Jennifer Hillier, “Authenticity,” in *Proceedings of the Eighth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy*, ed. Jennifer Hillier, Barbara Santich, and Catherine Kerry, 66-70 (Adelaide: 1996).

<sup>639</sup> Appadurai, “How to Make a National Cuisine,” 6, 7, 8.

<sup>640</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

and Valentine note, “then the nation’s diet is a feast of imagined commensality.”<sup>641</sup> Hines’ memoir was an attempt to imagine such a feast, conjuring a national table as wide as the continent, as diverse as the clichéd melting pot, and as abundant and rooted in historical memory as the cornucopia that symbolizes America’s mythic shared meal, Thanksgiving.

### Places and their Products

Before opening his memoir, readers of *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey* would be hard pressed to not notice its cover, a drawing that extends across the front, spine, and back of the book. This pictorial map was not unique, for these types of cartoon representations of the country were a mid-century trope repeated on oil companies’ promotional maps, often on the flipside of a practical road map rendered by professional cartographers whose business boomed in the mid-century.<sup>642</sup> The figures and icons were usually chosen to attract attention to tourist activities, like colorful miniatures of people sun bathing and fishing along the coasts of Florida.<sup>643</sup> Maps that represented entire regions of the country would choose items symbolic of historic places, like miners in western mountain ranges, or icons of popular culture, like potatoes in Idaho and outlaws in Dodge City.<sup>644</sup> Not confined to road maps, the nation-as-cartoon design even showed up on guidebook covers, in-store posters, and puzzles for children.<sup>645</sup> JoAnn Conrad argues that through their “conflation of the ‘scientific’ and the ‘playful’” these pictorial maps presented “an integrated text of Americanness” whose suggestiveness was camouflaged by how ordinary and

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<sup>641</sup> Bell, *Consuming Geographies*, 169.

<sup>642</sup> Douglas A. Yorke, John Margolies, and Eric Baker, *Hitting the Road: The Art of the American Road Map* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1996), 25-29, 52-53; Akerman, “American Promotional Road Mapping.”

<sup>643</sup> “Gulf Info Map: Florida,” *Gulf Oil*, Rand McNally: Chicago, n.d., in box 1, folder 22, Travel brochure and map collection.

<sup>644</sup> Map, “Interstate Travel Guide, Western United States, *Socony-Vacuum Oil Company, Inc.*, General Drafting, Co.: New York, n.d., in box 4, folder 12, Travel brochure and map collection.

<sup>645</sup> *Gourmet’s Guide to Good Eating*; “From Hobby to Publishing.”; “Duncan Hines Cookies Presents A Picture Map Puzzle of the United States of America,” Procter & Gamble, n.d., in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.

innocuous they appeared.<sup>646</sup> Duncan Hines' cover image seems to follow this pattern by depicting a chef in the middle of the country holding a cornucopia that spills its contents across the nation. States are symbolized by foods, like Virginia ham and Florida citrus fruit, while Duncan Hines, smiling with a bib and silverware, attentively waits to consume from his location in Kentucky. The United States is portrayed as a wide plate of abundance ready for motorists to explore and experience. With all lower 48 states now in the Union, and in a postwar era of peace and prosperity, readers are led to consume the modern republic from ocean to ocean just as Hines had done before.<sup>647</sup>

Originally titled "There's No Accounting For Taste," Hines nevertheless did attempt to account for his own tastes by chronicling the key events that shaped his tastes, organizing his memoir by the places in which they occurred.<sup>648</sup> An avowed regionalist his entire career, the book focuses on regions of varying sizes and characterizations, with New York City receiving its own chapter while the entire Midwest, which Hines defined as Ohio to Colorado, was squeezed into another chapter. Hines' adventures in good eating began in rural areas and indeed it was his discovery of restaurants in out-of-the-way areas, "obscure spots seldom found by travelers other than truck drivers," that set his recommendations apart from previous critics.<sup>649</sup> His memoir thus begins with his gastronomic genesis, a chance event that took place in Cheyenne, Wyoming, in 1899. Hauling goods for Wells-Fargo, Hines got stuck in a freak July snowstorm and wandered without hope before stumbling upon a roadhouse. "The best meal I ever ate was an order of ham

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<sup>646</sup> JoAnn Conrad, "Mapping America: Re-Creating in the Cartographic Imagination," *Cultural Analysis* 9 (2010): 19.

<sup>647</sup> "Such maps incorporated various aspects of modernity: the new spatial perspectives introduced by powered flight, the scale and logic of contemporary spaces that are comprehensible only from above, the synoptic vision of modern state power, and twentieth-century mass culture of which tourism is an expression." Cosgrove, "Maps, Mapping, Modernity: Art and Cartography in the Twentieth Century," 51.

<sup>648</sup> Mary Martinez, "Colonoscope," *News of the World* (MEX), March 2, 1955, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers. That phrase is a translation of the old culinary proverb, *de gustibus non disputandum est*, usually understood as "there is no way explain each person's taste preferences," they are idiosyncratic to each person.

<sup>649</sup> Taylor, "America's Gastronomic Guide," 13.



and eggs” that he had in that “frontier café,” but he then quickly shifts to calling it his “best-remembered dinner.” He felt “nothing has since ever tasted as good as that platter,” an admission that shows how much the good in good taste is a product of the situation that conditions such tastes.<sup>650</sup> If hunger makes the best sauce, then this was his best meal because he had felt an extreme hunger after a harrowing incident. While such a story fits perfectly into the personal, reflective style of the memoir, it also highlights how random and particular Hines’ taste could be, products of chance just like the experiences of Odysseus. Further, the extremes of the incident adds adventure into good eating, echoing his guidebook’s title but, more importantly, enticing the reader to view their physical sensations of taste as fun and cultural sense of taste as fundamental to their lives, and perhaps fundamentally American because that’s where these take place.

Homologies of spaces and symbols, like those on the cover of *Food Odyssey*, are not natural, as in organically growing out of the ground on their own. Though many of Hines’ associations of place and taste were common and longstanding, like shellfish along New England’s coast, others were more particular, influenced by the opportunities afforded to him as an affluent consumer and eventually a famous critic. When pressed for a hierarchy of places, Hines throughout his career said that, “You can’t say this place or that place is the best,” instead you can only figure out what tastes best to you.<sup>651</sup> For himself, he admitted that, “I like variety. I taste one thing, then move on to the next.”<sup>652</sup> This imperative of movement, perhaps encouraged by automobility, is found in each of the chapters where the narrative jumps around although these transitions are not always explained. For example, in the chapter on New York City Hines

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<sup>650</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 1.

<sup>651</sup> “Eating for a Living,” 75.

<sup>652</sup> Elsie Brupbacher, “Duncan Hines Gets Key,” *New Orleans States*, February 1, 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

tells of his admittance in the Lucullus Circle, a private club of epicures. Invited to one of their events, Hines was surrounded by diners debating wines and the supposed effects of terroir on them. When asked for his opinion, Duncan replied, “Gentlemen, as long as it tastes good I don’t see that it makes any difference which slope of the vineyard it came from.”<sup>653</sup> Hines’ narrative immediately jumps to a completely unrelated anecdote, speaking about Stoddard’s Atop Butler Hall, a rooftop restaurant at Columbia University where a professor invented technology to foster an ultra-efficient, human-less kitchen. Hines’ narrative then hops again without explanation to discussing other favorite restaurants in New York. He ends the chapter with five detailed pages discussing the distribution of produce through the city via the Washington Street Produce Market, enthralled with the complexity of the city’s hidden food chain. After tracking all the various efforts of all the different “jobbers” who must coordinate to ship in, select, pay for, and move out the ingredients, he carried away “one impressive fact: that all of the transactions are based on faith—faith in the integrity of both the buyer and seller—and without this faith the whole incredibly complicated structure would soon crumble.”<sup>654</sup> While the leapfrog habits of the writing provide no definite form to make sense of, the associative logic reveals the conditional existence of Hines’ tastes. These conditions, though, must be experienced on hand, hence why Hines rejected considering the terroir of wine, a situation he could not observe, in favor of what he *can* taste in his own glass. Perhaps this was the point of his long, detailed anecdote on ingredient distribution: foodways are logistically complex networks of perishable materials and durable technology and yet this system runs on something quite human, something as transitory as faith.

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<sup>653</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 42.

<sup>654</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

After the New York chapter Hines spends the bulk of the memoir strolling through regions that he organizes according to what were by then popular cultural conceptions of America's regions: New England, the South, the Midwest, and the Northwest, with California and Louisiana set apart as unique places unto themselves, separated from regions that would subsume them. Hines' love of New England was constant through his career as a critic, and perhaps somewhat of a surprise given his identity as a Southerner. His opinion was that "the awakening to good food is most marked... in New England, which is the best place in the United States to eat."<sup>655</sup> This is because the food is "as simple and unadorned as any in America," the area has "been settled longer than most of the country" and thus New Englanders "have a long heritage of fine cookery," and the "famous Yankee frugality" has forced them to find and use local ingredients. Also, because their cooking seemed simple he thought "New Englanders have fewer gastric disturbances and spend less time at the drugstore and the doctor's for that complaint than any other provincial group in the country."<sup>656</sup> While some of the details of this argument are particular to him, like his opinions on digestion, the general adulation of New England foodways as the foundation of American eating was common and longstanding.<sup>657</sup> Like many foreign to this area, Hines was mesmerized by the colonial history of New England, buying into the stereotype that "Yankee culture, no matter the immigrant dilution, preserved a persistent identity," and "the New England landscape retained a sense of the past critical to perceived regional character."<sup>658</sup> Abundant proof of Hines' holding to this idea is found in his guidebook's listings for the states of New England, which repeatedly vaunt old restaurants

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<sup>655</sup> Taylor, "America's Gastronomic Guide," 17.

<sup>656</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey*, 129, 131.

<sup>657</sup> On the history of considering New England to be America's culinary home, see Elaine N. McIntosh, *American Food Habits in Historical Perspective* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), 174-205; Richard Pillsbury, *No Foreign Food: The American Diet in Time and Place* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 22-51; Leslie Brenner, *American Appetite: The Coming of Age of a Cuisine* (New York: Avon, 1999), 11-15, 86-88.

<sup>658</sup> Jakle, *The Tourist*, 207. See also Joseph A. Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 263-309.

because if “countless famous personages have crossed [the] historic threshold” of a place, then “New England fare of excellent quality” occurs in and because of such an “atmosphere teeming with old and interesting associations.”<sup>659</sup> Considerations of history led Hines to a focus on ingredients as well.

Imagining foragers in the past, Hines cites “Yankee ingenuity” taking on the “challenge” of making cranberries and lobsters taste good, using these ingredients to prove a point about the wisdom of regional foodways. Hines thought the cranberry was “as much a part of New England as the little farms against the snow and the dark, forested hills” because making food out of this “bittersweet little red fruit” required New Englanders “to get the best of a bargain” by the “Yankee ability to ‘make do’ with whatever was at hand.”<sup>660</sup> Similarly, “lobsters and New England are one and the same thing to anyone who appreciates good food” because they were considered simple, humble, and historically linked to the area.<sup>661</sup> Hines’ choice of lobster continues a common culinary fakelore, a mythology built around a food and its accompanying foodway.<sup>662</sup> As George H. Lewis has exposed,

the significance of the lobster... was crafted more by literate summer visitors who had adopted the state and saw in the lobster a symbol of uniqueness than it was by local residents, who saw lobsters traditionally as a low-status food item but one that was now, due to outside demand and heavy fishing, becoming both scarcer and higher-priced.<sup>663</sup>

Hines was exactly one of these affluent summer tourists, culturally influential consumers who re-made the lobster as a commodity of high value, erasing its history as an abundant and cheap food

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<sup>659</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1941), 140.

<sup>660</sup> Ibid., *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 70-71.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>662</sup> Andrew F. Smith, “False Memories: The Invention of Culinary Fakelore and Food Fallacies,” in *Food and Memory Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2000*, ed. Harlan Walker, 254-260 (Devon, UK: Prospect Books, 2001).

<sup>663</sup> George H. Lewis, “The Maine Lobster as Regional Icon: Competing Images Over Time and Social Class,” in *The Taste of American Place: A Reader on Regional and Ethnic Foods*, ed. Barbara G. Shortridge and James G. Shortridge, 65-84 (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998), 68.

for the poorer natives of Maine. For this reason, as Lewis notes, the lobster is the symbol on Maine's license plates despite the fact that natives of the state overwhelmingly wanted the moose to symbolize the hardscrabble reality of living in Maine year-round. What Hines' acceptance of this mythology shows is that many of the experiences informing his narrative were configured by his social position's relationship to its context, so that his associations between places and tastes were not always purely personal epiphanies but often products of sociological trends in history that have inspired cultural tropes.

As with Hines' apprehension of New England, so too did he conceive of the Midwest in terms from American popular culture. "Midwestern cookery is like the land," he said, "solid, unadorned, and good; and, like the land, there is always plenty of it" in the form of "noble Old World dishes" brought to America.<sup>664</sup> This perspective fits the stereotyped "image of midwestern food [as] meat and potatoes, home cooking, basic ingredients, and few spices or surprises," and is further said to symbolize "traditional, wholesome American food" because in the Midwest resides "an emphasis on hearty and filling foods; a conservative approach to new tastes and ingredients; and a pride in well-crafted, functional dishes that are economical and efficient."<sup>665</sup> Indeed, Hines lauded Midwesterners for the same reasons as New Englanders: because of their investment in eating foods of their region, and the fact that these foods were seemingly solid and simple. Conversely, Hines lived in Chicago for decades and this urban experience often led his associative memory to drift from the Midwest's rural past to the industrial and cosmopolitan cities that he knew first-hand. Beginning his Midwest chapter with pages on "the richness of the soil" and the "sturdy peasants" who immigrated to farm it, Hines spends almost the rest of the

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<sup>664</sup> Taylor, "America's Gastronomic Guide," 17; Hines, *Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey*, 129, 131.

<sup>665</sup> Lucy M. Long, "Green Bean Casserole and Midwestern Identity: A Regional Foodways Aesthetic and Ethos," *Midwestern Folklore* 33.1 (2007): 32, 39-40.

chapter updating the image of immigrant pioneers to reflect a new world of rural entrepreneurs and big city attractions.<sup>666</sup>

As Hines declared in a widely circulated “how-to” article, “my travels have taught me that it is not the big, high-priced hotel dining rooms or the swanky city cafés that serve the most memorable foods, but the wayside places whose owners have enough imagination to feature the products of the area.”<sup>667</sup> This principle of valuing small local businesses is supported in his Midwest chapter where he goes out of his way to highlight his favorite restaurants in out of the way places. For example, Hines’ favorite restaurant in the United States was the Lowell Inn in Stillwater, Minnesota, a place he visited so often that he became best friends with the proprietors, Nell and Arthur Palmer. (His other favorite was also a rural restaurant run by a thrifty entrepreneur, Virginia McDonald’s Tea Room in Gallatin, Missouri.) What Hines admired was that the Palmers were professional actors whose careers were halted by the Depression, and yet when they accepted an offer of running a failing hotel, “having decided to become hotel people they made up their minds to be the best hotel people that they possibly could and to both that meant quality.”<sup>668</sup> Hines praised Lillian Jae of The Smogasbord in Stow, Ohio, for the same reasons, marveling at how she left a career as a writer to run a restaurant and through hard work and attention to customer service was succeeding in less than two years since opening her business.<sup>669</sup> A similar back-story explains Hines’ love of The Stockholm in Detroit, Michigan, a place that though not rural was highlighted because the owner, Siggan Sjunneson, had no prior experience in running a restaurant yet still excelled at it because she “made quality her

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<sup>666</sup>Hines, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 129, 130.

<sup>667</sup>Ibid., “How to Find a Decent Meal,” 100.

<sup>668</sup>Ibid., *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 139.

<sup>669</sup>Ibid., 144.

watchword; and she has never compromised with it.”<sup>670</sup>

But for all of Hines’ love of small places run by hard working upstarts, much of his Midwest chapter is spent ogling trendy and expensive restaurants in big cities. Hines was not above the fads of the day and he lived in Chicago for over thirty years. He admits that, “I was born and have spent most of my life far enough away from coconuts and palm fronds and other things tropical so that to me they connote adventure and faraway places, and that’s one of the reasons why I so much enjoy Don the Beachcomber’s.”<sup>671</sup> Like the famous Trader Vic’s in Oakland, California, this place relied on the inauthentic “exotic tiki lounge” concept popular in the mid-century wherein restaurants served sweet and highly alcoholic cocktails paired with Americanized versions of so-called “Polynesian” dishes. Though a defender of the authentic, apparently Hines would occasionally drop his guard and get caught up in spectacle. Across town in Chicago, he was equally impressed by The Pump Room. Resplendent with chandeliers and murals, it was a restaurant of high theater where your first waiter “will be dressed in a brilliant scarlet coat and black silk knee breeches, with his feet encased in shiny pumps with large buckles,” and your second waiter will be “splendid in livery and a blackamoor’s turban with three ostrich plumes.”<sup>672</sup> In contrast to his love of places like the Lowell Inn, what these passages on fashionable urban restaurants reveal was that Hines enjoyed many types of restaurants, and his praise for rural entrepreneurs and urban showmen both came from the same principle, which was Hines’ conviction that it did not matter what you did as long as you did it well. To invoke the food-based cliché, he judged apples as apples and oranges as oranges, never forcing a cafe in a desolate corner of Montana into an unfair comparison with an exclusive supper club in New York City.

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<sup>670</sup>Ibid., 164.

<sup>671</sup>Ibid., 157.

<sup>672</sup>Ibid., 162.

Another aspect of Hines' gastronomy of regional foodways is uncovered when his memoir ventures to a place, California, that was still somewhat of a cipher to the American popular imagination despite being an emerging leader in the culinary arts and the most agriculturally productive state in the nation. Because its foodways were still largely unfamiliar to many, it is California where Hines had to make sense of taste in the most explicit terms, explaining to his audience what delights came from this native-yet-foreign place. Noting its ethnic diversity and good weather, Hines says that "To a gourmet, the bringing together of these different elements of climate and population means a tremendous variety of food" for him to describe.<sup>673</sup> Hines spends this chapter talking ingredients, explaining the things that only grow in California, like dates, avocados, and olives, as well as artichokes and abalone. Avocados, "still considered a delicacy" in the 1950s, is depicted for the inexperienced as having,

pulp under the thin dark-green skin [that] is creamy, yet firm, approaching the consistency of velvety ice cream. The flavor is extremely delicate—'kind of a tasteless taste,' one of my friends once said. Most people have very definite opinions on avocados; they either like them very much or they detest them. I think that one has to acquire a taste for them.<sup>674</sup>

Similar remarks occur in Hines' illustration of the artichoke, as he painstakingly details how "you got about attacking something that looks like a fat, green pine cone, and is just about as difficult to cut with a knife."<sup>675</sup> The focus on ingredients is the theme for other chapters as well, especially that on the Pacific Northwest where his memory's tour of Oregon and Washington is structured around describing different products of the sea.<sup>676</sup>

Even though his identity was often framed as a Southerner, Hines did not put as much effort into lauding Southern traditions as he did other regional foodways, seldom discussing it

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<sup>673</sup>Ibid., 174.

<sup>674</sup>Ibid., 176.

<sup>675</sup>Ibid., 179.

<sup>676</sup>Ibid., 197-208.



unless prompted to do so by others.<sup>677</sup> His opinion was that Southern cooking is “the most misunderstood gastronomy in the country” because popular culture imagines there are only two Southern diets, “golden fried chicken and biscuits” for “the gentry” and “hog jowl, turnip greens, and collards” for everyone else, while for him the “vast bulk of Southern cooking lies somewhere in between.”<sup>678</sup> Furthermore, when these foodways are translated into commercial settings “so many of the imitations are poor,” and thus he feels “that it’s in the homes of my hospitable Southern friends that I’ve tasted the finest of southern cuisine.”<sup>679</sup> The memoir’s chapter on the South thus consists of mostly home cooking recipes for biscuits, gravy, and fried chicken. His recipe for “Pot Liquor”—traditionally collard, mustard, or similar greens cooked in a spicy, porky, fatty broth brightened by vinegar—reveals perhaps the deeper reason for his reticence regarding Southern food. Hines did not like spices, bitterness, uncommon textures, and the strong presence of fat or oil, and so it would make sense that his version of pot liquor substitutes mild cabbage for the slippery, earthy, and bitter flavor of collards and mustard greens, keeps the peppers to a minimum, and lacks the vinegar that further enhances the strong flavor of traditional versions of this dish. Simply put, Hines’ tastes were for the milder flavors of New England and the Midwest than the more vibrant flavors of, for example, the Cajun and Creole foodways of Louisiana. Of New Orleans, he “can’t at the moment recall another city where so many herbs and spices” are used, which for him is not a compliment since his widely-circulated pamphlet on the “Nine Magic Rules To Be a Good Cook” advised cooks to “Keep Herbs on the Shelf” because food only needs “subtle seasoning,” otherwise you “smother the food’s natural good taste.”<sup>680</sup> Since Southern foodways’ strong flavors do not make sense to him, he wonders,

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<sup>677</sup> Marston, “Noted Food Expert Says Southern Home-Cooked Dishes ‘Delectable.’”

<sup>678</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 103.

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>680</sup> Paddleford, “Duncan Hines Twelve Favorite Dishes,” 2.

“if that seasoning of graciousness and kindness and southern gentility didn’t give Southern cooking much of its flavor” and attraction, quite a sly backhanded compliment.<sup>681</sup> Despite being uncomfortable with the differences between his own tastes and that of the region he grew up in, Hines was open to the culinary differences he experienced in foreign places.

Hines’ memoir also ventures overseas, to Hawaii and Mexico as well as Europe. Having worked in and near Mexico, Hines was well acquainted with their foodways. Without the weight of prejudice born of ignorance that besets most commentary on Mexican food, which happens because most Americans have only encountered “Tex-Mex” simulations of it, Hines patiently walks his audience through key dishes and unsettles stereotypes. He too had “always heard that Mexican food was hot and overseasoned, and I was pleased to discover that” staples of their diet, like tortillas and beans, “were on the bland side” compared to expectations.<sup>682</sup> Hawaii, on the other hand, is described much differently as Hines had much less familiarity with the place than Mexico. He visited Hawaii as a tourist and even endorsed United Airlines’ service to Honolulu.<sup>683</sup> Subsequently, this tropical place is perceived as “never-never land come true.... it’s like a stage setting” symbolized by the *luau*, which,

like most things Hawaiian, has felt the impact of twentieth century civilization, and has taken on some aspects of the New England clambake, the Southern barbecue, and the Sunday picnic in the park. It’s not unusual these days to... find a loudspeaker system and a microphone... the food will be traditional, however, even though the poi comes in paper cartons and the tiny salted shrimp are served in strawberry baskets.<sup>684</sup>

Here Hines appears to recognize the performative and culturally hybrid aspects of the culture displayed for tourists, a situation that Hawaiians have self-reflexively understood while

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<sup>681</sup>Hines, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 105.

<sup>682</sup>*Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>683</sup> Pamphlet, “Duncan Hines’ Report on Lodging and Dining in Hawaii via United Air Lines Mainliners,” n.d., n.p., in Collection of Wm. P. Barlow, Jr.

<sup>684</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 215, 216.

exploiting it for economic gains and a sense of identity.<sup>685</sup> As for Hawaiian foods, he describes the exotic flavors of poi, papaya, and mango, all of which were intellectually attractive to him because they were foreign and yet physically not to his taste because of that. He also enjoyed the Chinese and Japanese restaurants of Hawaii that he perceived as more authentic culinary expressions than mainland ones because, according to his logic, their geographic proximity to their Asian origin places them closer to the gastronomic truth.<sup>686</sup>

Just a year before publishing his *Food Odyssey*, Duncan Hines traveled to Europe for the first time. This event was anticipated with much interest because, as *The New Yorker* said, Hines' declaration that "American cooking is the best in the world" would be more convincing "if he could claim some first-hand experience of European cooking."<sup>687</sup> His first reaction seemed to confirm his detractors' opinion that he was too provincial in his tastes: "My reaction to Europe is I should have tried it twenty years ago" before he became a critic, insinuating that such a gastronomic education was lacking from the sense of taste he had developed as a critic.<sup>688</sup> He loved that in Europe food was a priority, that "Eating, to your Frenchman, is not just a way of appeasing his hunger, but a gustatory experience. Each course—indeed, each mouthful—is savored and thoroughly enjoyed before he passes on to the next."<sup>689</sup> The majority of his comments on Europe were positive and focused on ingredients, for Hines enjoyed the different versions of foods he'd had in the United States as well as new experiences. He praised Spanish blood oranges, the size of European asparagus, the quality and quantity of fresh breads, the cheeses of Switzerland, and the sausages and freshwater fish of Germany, just to name a few of

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<sup>685</sup> Kristin McAndrews, "Incorporating the Local Tourist at the Big Island Poke Festival," in *Culinary Tourism*, ed. Lucy M. Long, 114-127 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004).

<sup>686</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey*, 217-221.

<sup>687</sup> "Best."; "Hines Abroad," *New Yorker*, July 24, 1954.

<sup>688</sup> "Hines Abroad."

<sup>689</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey*, 229.

his highlights. He gushed even more about eating near Avignon because the details “were unforgettable. There was celery root with anchovy sauce, artichoke bottoms, tiny onions, tomato slices, and beets. There were tiny asparagus stalks with shredded carrot, chopped parsley, and chervil, and many other tidbits to arouse the appetite. The more solid portions of the meal consisted of mussels fried . . . in butter, charcoal-roasted cockerel, veal kidneys, coffee, and mousse with nuts.”<sup>690</sup> Visiting Europe was a culinary eye-opener and Hines reveled in the quality of the ingredients and the attention to detail. Of course, he did have his gripes, namely the noise and insects that accompanied some restaurants’ outdoor seating, the habit of not eating dinner until 9 p.m. or later, the French predilection for thick sauces on many dishes, and, as always, complaints about coffee, this time directed at the Italians: “How the devil can you make coffee so lousy?”<sup>691</sup> Culinary cultural differences went both ways, though:

When the Hines visited Europe last summer they looked forward to having spaghetti with real garlic flavor. After they had ordered, the waiter asked if they wouldn’t have some South African melon. Mr. Hines asked for some salt for his. The waiter looked puzzled, but brought the salt. Then came the spaghetti—served with marmalade. “How come the marmalade,” asked the visiting gourmet. “Well, you Americans eat salt with melon, so you probably like marmalade with spaghetti,” was the young Italian’s reply.<sup>692</sup>

American journalists teased Hines too, as those covering his return delighted in poking him for complaints, with multiple articles making space for his colorful rants against octopus: “Couldn’t choke the damn thing down,” and “I can’t see why people would eat those crazy little octopus things unless they were intoxicated.”<sup>693</sup>

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<sup>690</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>691</sup> Sutton, “What Do You Want, Oomph in Your Butter?.”; “Hines Abroad.”

<sup>692</sup> Mary Frances Fuqua, “Cooking on the Keys,” *The Arizona Republic*, March 11, 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>693</sup> Sutton, “What Do You Want, Oomph in Your Butter?.”; “Hines Abroad.” On prodding Hines for odd gripes, see Henry Mitchell, “Duncan Hines Comes to Town and Sups—But Not on Squids,” *The Commercial Appeal* (TN), October 18, 1951, in volume 7, Duncan Hines papers; Pat Robinson, “Duncan Hines Likes Food—Except Unborn Octopus,” *Texas Statesman*, February 10, 1956, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers; Joe Creason, “Please, Mr.

Overall, “of the famed European cuisine,” Hines reply was that as “a generality, I will say it was very good.” This was not a surprise to him, since he felt each country “is no different from any other country. You can always find good food if you know what you want, where to go, and how to order it.” The differences he experienced that stuck with him were the “little extra touches that pleased” him.<sup>694</sup> These displayed an attention to detail that, in his eyes, was evidence of a greater professionalism in the culinary arts as practiced in Europe. Hines’ “insistence upon the correctness of seemingly little things” was because “It’s always seemed to me (and, granted, I may be wrong in this) that anyone who can’t take care of the little things can’t be trusted with the big ones.”<sup>695</sup> Though the little things could turn into a laundry list of non-culinary minutia, as seen in the paratexts of his guidebooks discussed in chapter two, nevertheless Hines did indeed have a set of basic principles that he thought would guide anyone to good eating regardless of situation.

### **Principles and Their Products**

Like the Homeric epic its title references, Hines’ memoir was all over the map in its structure and style. Within each chapter the narrative would jump from topic to topic often without any apparent reason other than Hines’ mind following its own associative logic. His anecdotes were often revealing and always amusing, but these can obscure the principles that he was clear about if and when he stated them, which was inconsistently. As the memoir makes plain, his gastronomy was never presented in a concise and deductive treatise but his memoir does point toward many of his core values that he scattered across the hundreds of quotes he

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Hines, “Won’t You Try Some of this Nice Whale Blubber?,” *Courier-Journal* (KY), July 7, 1957 in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>694</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 228, 237, 230.

<sup>695</sup> *Ibid.*, 263, 264.

gave journalists or squeezed into his guidebooks. The second to last chapter of *Food Odyssey* is not a survey of a region but a discussion of his most deeply held opinions. “The history of man is basically nothing more than the story of his quest for food,” Hines says, and to him this process had not ended. In fact, contrary to elite opinion’s dim view of their fellow citizens, “We in American seldom realize that food is so much talked-of” and how much “American-educated taste buds” are seasoned with knowledge.<sup>696</sup>

Before arguing for his gastronomic principles and the good tasting dishes they produce, Hines harshly criticizes the state of American taste. He begins by asking, “Did you know that almost three people out of ten have little or no sensation of taste?,” a remark he had made public before.<sup>697</sup> Simply put, “People just don’t know how to taste,” Hines declared, “They get the sour and sweet sensations from the end of their tongues and that is all. Like hound dogs they swallow food whole and miss all the rest of the delicate flavoring of the best-prepared dishes.”<sup>698</sup> To make matters worse, American “Taste buds are pretty much dulled after a session with the cocktail glass and one might just as well serve sawdust on a plate as far as taste appeal is concerned,” and so too “will excessive smoking” ruin the ability to taste.<sup>699</sup> The reason for these bad habits, Hines surmised, was because “Food is just fodder to the majority” and thus most “people don’t take time to enjoy their food.”<sup>700</sup> Though harsh words, Hines was not criticizing those below him from an elite position. “I’m no gourmet,” he said, just a man who enjoys food, “and it doesn’t take [being a gourmet] to enjoy the adventure of discovering outstanding foods

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<sup>696</sup> Ibid., 239, 241.

<sup>697</sup> Ibid., 242; Robinson, “Duncan Hines Likes Food—Except Unborn Octopus.”

<sup>698</sup> Wilma Morrison, “Gourmet Says Fault Eaters,” *The Oregonian*, July 4, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>699</sup> “Duncan Hines, Authority on Good Eating, Visits City,” *La Crosse Tribune* (WI), July 21, 1953, volume 2, Duncan Hines papers; Hines, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 242.

<sup>700</sup> Robinson, “Duncan Hines Likes Food—Except Unborn Octopus.”; “Duncan Hines ‘Perfect’ Menu Would be Fancy,” *Louisville Times*, October 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

by the wayside. All I've had to be is appreciative.”<sup>701</sup> Appreciation and time were the same thing to him, presaging the Slow Food Movement of the late twentieth century in saying that “The time we take to consume a meal has a bearing on how well it tastes.”<sup>702</sup> The answer to the problem was education, for “the average American fails to get good food, either because he doesn't know what good food is or because he is too timid to insist upon good food.”<sup>703</sup> For that reason the last chapter of his memoir, after his chapter on gastronomic principles, outlines how he had supported education and enlightenment: through his brand name products whose higher quality elevated the American palate, his guidebooks with lots of information and the best advice, and his charitable donations to the Sanitation Foundation and restaurant and hotel management departments at universities.<sup>704</sup>

Hines wanted to upgrade consumers' as well as producers' habits, and so his efforts to professionalize the food industries (and hostelry) were a significant but overlooked aspect of his contributions to American culture. He believed that “There is no finer art in the world than taking raw food and making it into a delectable dish,” and as art this practice takes training and dedication.<sup>705</sup> To the point, “In America, a restaurant is a business,” he said, “while in Europe it is a profession. That is why in America some eating places do not continuously stack up.”<sup>706</sup> In Europe, “a chef is a cook who has gone to school and served a long apprenticeship to learn food preparation and cooking. In the United States, every fry cook in a hamburger stand calls himself ‘the chef.’ This probably explains why most Chef's Specials are ground-up leftovers.” Likewise with the service staff, in that overseas, “waiters are trained to take abuse from patrons and think

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<sup>701</sup> Hines, “How to Find a Decent Meal,” 100.

<sup>702</sup> Duncan Hines, “Duncan Hines Says: Let's Make Most of Mealttime,” *The Ithaca Journal*, March 24, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>703</sup> Hines, “How to Find a Decent Meal,” 99.

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.*, *Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey*, 255-266.

<sup>705</sup> “Cooking is Finest Art, Duncan Hines Asserts,” *Rocky Mountain News*, July 25, 1950, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>706</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1948), 193.

nothing of it, but in the United States they are just people who happen to be working there.”<sup>707</sup>

Hines did not lob such criticism from afar, as he was active in the restaurant industry, attending the National Restaurant Association’s annual conventions and, moreover, lecturing them every year on what they were doing right and wrong and how to improve themselves.<sup>708</sup> He plugged for the association in his restaurant guidebook, stating like a salesman that “Thousands upon thousands of worthwhile eating places in America have learned much and profited by their membership in this splendid organization. If I were to undertake the problem of serving the public satisfactorily with good food, I would consider a membership quite essential.”<sup>709</sup>

Hines also harangued government officials and the general public to do their part in upgrading food knowledge and professionalizing the culinary arts. Invited to speak to the Ohio State Health Commissioner’s Conference in September 1942 because of his well-known advocacy of sanitation, Hines pleaded for the regulation of cooking through licensing. As he saw it, all across the country “food [was] being prepared by people who have failed in previous occupations and possess no knowledge of the proper preparation of food,” and to protect against these interlopers, “I believe no license or permit for operating a public eating place should be issued unless the owner can pass an examination which would prove his knowledge and ability.”<sup>710</sup> An alternate suggestion was that “the state governments [should] see to it that everyone with a spatula and three months’ experience on a hamburger grill can’t hire out as a chef. This could be done by requiring a definite apprenticeship covering all aspects of professional cookery.”<sup>711</sup> Yet, in truth Hines had little faith in government officials. In his experience “so many food inspectors are lax, ignorant, politically minded or influenced by free

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<sup>707</sup> Ibid., “How to Find a Decent Meal,” 99.

<sup>708</sup> Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 127.

<sup>709</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1938), 175.

<sup>710</sup> As quoted in Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 142.

<sup>711</sup> Wilma Morrison, “Gourmet Says Fault Eaters,” *The Oregonian*, July 4, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.



meals and liquor” that eaters like himself “are forced to other weapons,” namely consumer activism, a truly American tradition that hit a high-tide at exactly the same time as Hines’ career as a critic.<sup>712</sup> “I invite anybody who shares my peeves to join Pet Peevers, Unlimited,” he announced, and “If I can induce a million peevers to work with me, we can make America a safe place to eat, quicker than it can be done by laws.”<sup>713</sup> Diners should not be shy about complaining and making demands, but use their role as “purchaser consumers” to harness the power of markets for change rather than rely on regulatory pressure.<sup>714</sup> They should also avoid poor performers and instead only patronize better restaurants—the ones that he recommended, of course.

If consumers were in charge of changing restaurants and their own habits, Hines provided plenty of principles with which to guide them. His foremost piece of advice was to search for food that was local, seasonal, and prepared by those in the business of good food, not the business of making money. Harvey Levenstein’s claim that Hines was “quite a fan of chains” is without merit.<sup>715</sup> Hines thought that “The best cooking... is done in small quantities,” and differing lists of his favorite restaurants consist predominantly of small places run by entrepreneurs.<sup>716</sup> He “appreciate[d]” the problem of producing food in quantity” and “at a reasonably low price,” but the “enemy” of good taste was “the efficiency man” who puts

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<sup>712</sup> On the deep history of American consumer activism, see T.H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Glickman, *Buying Power: A History of Consumer Activism in America*.

<sup>713</sup> Hines, “How to Find a Decent Meal,” 19. This call for a mass crusade was heard, with a small newspaper in Michigan citing it and begging its readers to help: “Duncan Hines may be called finicky but he has done a great deal for American stomachs and will do considerably more if given a little moral support.... We have done that, and have at least once taken an unsavory mess out to the proprietor where he lolled in his filthy kitchen, and have many and many a time wished we had left before starting to eat.” “Untitled”, *Nashville News*, May 1, 1947, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>714</sup> On the twentieth century trend of “purchaser consumers,” see Cohen, *Consumers’ Republic*, 7-11, 18-109.

<sup>715</sup> Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, 47, 125.

<sup>716</sup> Paul Pebbrook, “Full Time Hobby,” *Airlanes*, September 1946, 17; Hines, “How to Find a Decent Meal,” 19; Paddleford, “Duncan Hines Twelve Favorite Dishes,” 3-10.

corporate chain profits ahead of all else.<sup>717</sup> Conversely, his praise of small places was not automatic, as he felt “many small restaurants muff their big opportunity to serve local dishes and turn out poor imitations of big-city hotel food instead.”<sup>718</sup> Marion Edwards surmised that “the basis for Hines’ belief that each region should emphasize and learn the possibilities of its own foods” is found in his childhood, wherein “most food served was home-grown or made from home-raised products,” a notion supported by his memoir’s passages on his upbringing.<sup>719</sup> Hines’ conviction that “the best American cooking is regional cooking” came with a key qualification, that its superiority “is dependent upon the season when local specialties are available.”<sup>720</sup> The practical reasons for this belief were considerations of time: regional foods tended to be traditional and thus time-tested, and regional foods tend to be more fresh and ripe because they are eaten at the right time, when they are in season, and the short distance between local farms and local tables means less time for things to lose flavor or begin to decay. Thus he asked, “why should I stuff myself with chicken in California, when the whole Pacific Ocean, full of sea food, is right offshore?”<sup>721</sup> It is so much cheaper and fresher to “specialize in products near at hand. Why not utilize green corn, cream, eggs and cheese dishes, good chickens rather than tough steaks and meats that must come from a distance?”<sup>722</sup> His love of the local was also an argument for “the natural,” a term loaded with ideology.<sup>723</sup>

Hines’ preferences were even more specific than seasonal regional foods, as he liked ingredients served as simply as possible. In his experience, the superiority of foodways of a “native origin deriv[es] its authority from the preservation of natural flavors rather than from the

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<sup>717</sup> MacKaye, “Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?,” 84.

<sup>718</sup> Paddleford, “60,000 Miles of Eating,” 36.

<sup>719</sup> Edwards, “They Live to Eat,” 71; Hines, *Duncan Hines’ Food Odyssey*, 6-13.

<sup>720</sup> MacKaye, “Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?,” 81.

<sup>721</sup> Hines, “How to Find a Decent Meal,” 100.

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1941), 166.

<sup>723</sup> Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

invention of artificial ones.”<sup>724</sup> If fresh, local food is best, and its value is maintained by cooking it with the least amount of interference from other ingredients, hence his distaste for spices. On this principle, he felt he was fighting an uphill battle, for in his experience “so-called chefs douse [foods] with strong seasonings, catsups and sauces so that all anybody can taste is condiments,” and “you lose the flavor of the” main ingredient, which to him is the point of the dish.<sup>725</sup>

Similarly, he detested “dishes disguised with French names” because “fancy names don’t make food taste any better,” but instead act like a sauce that obscures the culinary truth underneath.<sup>726</sup>

While Harvey Levenstein claims Hines had a fetish for cleanliness, I would add that this was superseded by his fetish for ingredients served as starkly as possible.<sup>727</sup> He wanted to highlight ingredients’ “natural” flavors as much as possible through the isolation and concentration of flavor that he felt was best accomplished by simplicity. Hines thus tapped into discourses of simplicity that imagine that “the simple” was the most direct path to the pure, an ideal imagined to have magical powers of intensity, integrity, honesty, freedom, cleanliness, frugality, and an aura of spirituality that supposedly lends simple things a superior essence.<sup>728</sup>

Prioritizing simplicity underscored the need for quality, as Hines “believe[d] that no food comes off the stove any better than when it goes on to be cooked.”<sup>729</sup> He complained of “how

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<sup>724</sup> Paddleford, “Duncan Hines Twelve Favorite Dishes,” 3.

<sup>725</sup> Hines, “How to Find a Decent Meal,” 99.

<sup>726</sup> Ibid; Paddleford, “60,000 Miles of Eating,” 36. In rejecting French names for dishes Hines was also inspired by a swell of popular opinion that came from fellow consumers wishing to wrest control of dining from elite patrons, a trend that came out of a long-term waning of French influence over American culture. Andrew P. Haley, “‘I Want to Eat in English’: The Middle Class, Restaurant Culture and the Language of Menus, 1880-1930,” *Midwestern Folklore* 29.2 (2003): 25-36; Bertram M. Gordon, “The Decline of a Cultural Icon: France in American Perspective,” *French Historical Studies* 22.4 (1999): 625-651.

<sup>727</sup> Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, 47.

<sup>728</sup> David E. Shi, *The Simple Life: Plain Living and High Thinking in American Culture* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001); Michael Symons, “Simplicity,” in *Proceedings of the Eighth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy*, ed. Jennifer Hillier, Barbara Santich, and Catherine Kerry, 9-23 (Adelaide: 1996); Joshua Colt Gambrel and Philip Cafaro, “The Virtue of Simplicity,” *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 23 (2010): 86-108.

<sup>729</sup> Helen Messenger, “Simple Foods Get Enthusiastic Duncan Hines Recommendation,” *Denver Post*, March 12, 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers.

hard it is to find simple dishes finely prepared,” convinced that “much of our cooking falls down through the fact that too many cooks are still trying to discover something will take the place of good butter, fresh eggs, rich milk and a loving touch.”<sup>730</sup> Some have wondered why Hines always recommended ordering ham and eggs as a consistent failsafe option if a customer was unsure of a restaurant’s offerings.<sup>731</sup> His ingredient fetish formed this sense of taste, for in his opinion it would “require a very poor cook to spoil good ham, and the best chef cannot rejuvenate a bad egg.”<sup>732</sup> Hines did enjoy other things, and like many professional critics he craved variety. Replying to the question of his favorite dish he often did say ham and eggs or a similarly simple and homey dish, but he also often mentioned three other favorite things most would consider to be unusual: onion pie, cheese “cigarettes” (a savory profiterole), and almond soufflé.<sup>733</sup> Hines was also a loud advocate for vegetables, campaigning for them as often as he did other ingredients or gastronomic principles. His argument was two-fold. First, “If people would stop eating potatoes, meat, and gravy, and nibbled more rabbit food, they’d be a lot better off” because “you won’t need pills” and it will “add more years to your life.”<sup>734</sup> Second, “Americans could take a lesson from the Chinese and not overcook vegetables” in large pots of water, which leaches out their vitamins, and “Eat as many as possible with their skins on,” because sometimes this is the most nutritious part of a plant.<sup>735</sup>

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<sup>730</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1941), 153; Taylor, “America’s Gastronomic Guide,” 17.

<sup>731</sup> Taylor, “America’s Gastronomic Guide,” 18.

<sup>732</sup> Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating* (1954), 271.

<sup>733</sup> Lon Atkin, “Here’s a Man Who Really Knows Food,” *Amarillo Daily News*, March 29, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers; “Duncan Hines ‘Perfect’ Menu Would be Fancy,” *Louisville Times*, October 1954, in volume 2, Duncan Hines papers; “Best.”

<sup>734</sup> Sutton, “The Wayfarer’s Guardian Angel,” 38; Mitchell, “Duncan Hines Comes to Town and Sups—But Not on Squids”; “Duncan Hines Adds Another New Book,” *The Cherry Circle*, September 1948, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>735</sup> Bret A. Dietz, “Most Men Eat Too Fast, Duncan Hines Says Here,” *The Dayton Daily News*, November 14, 1951, in volume 7, Duncan Hines papers; Hines, “I Like Vegetables.”

Though Hines promoted regional, fresh, and simple foods, he was aware that the practices and principles that produced them were waning. Toward the end of *Food Odyssey*'s penultimate chapter on gastronomy, Hines steps back from arguing for his values to reflect on changes in American eating habits since his rural childhood in the late nineteenth century. "It is becoming increasingly difficult to generalize about foods and our food habits," he admits, "since both are changing so rapidly. We're a restless people, and as we move from place to place we take our habits with us, so that a strictly regional dinner is becoming a thing of the past."<sup>736</sup> Instead, "We still have what we call regional specialties but they are no longer confined to the regions where they originated," with automobility, commerce, and nationalized media transporting, transmitting, and transforming local curios into national dishes.<sup>737</sup> Hines was mostly optimistic about the future of food, noting that "There have been many changes since Grandma's day and, except for the size of our breakfasts, they're all for the better."<sup>738</sup> The improvements he cites include better technology like gas ovens, refrigerators, and canned foods, and lighter diets with more protein and fewer carbohydrates. Moreover, "Hines thought that the next generation would eat much more sensibly than this one" thanks to access to "infinitely more varieties of meat, poultry, dairy, fruit, and vegetable products."<sup>739</sup> He also felt that "food is getting better in this country as competition is tightening" the market and causing contending companies and restaurateurs to raise the bar on quality.<sup>740</sup>

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<sup>736</sup> Ibid., *Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey*, 242.

<sup>737</sup> Mildred Williams, "'Men Prefer Simple Food' So Says Mrs. Duncan Hines," *The Richmond Leader*, October 9, 1953, in volume 8, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>738</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey*, 245.

<sup>739</sup> "Eating for a Living," 75; Timothy G. Turner, "Duncan Hines Finds 'Good Eating' Here," *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

<sup>740</sup> Wilma Morrison, "Gourmet Says Fault Eaters," *The Oregonian*, July 4, 1949, in volume 6, Duncan Hines papers.

### Putting Taste in its Place

Most of Duncan Hines' opinions were not outliers, especially his gastronomy American food as based in regional foodways. Others were similarly inspired around the same time period, some who preceded Hines but influenced him, like Kenneth Roberts, while others followed him and were directly inspired by Hines' example, like Clementine Paddleford.<sup>741</sup> Throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, authors in different parts of the country wrote regional cookbooks that chronicled what they felt were local traditions worth saving, many of which were based in immigrant experiences.<sup>742</sup> Building on these texts, as well as the Depression era regionalists discussed in chapter one, in the late 1950s to 1960s a spate of cookbooks were published that conceived of American food as based in regional foodways, a cohort of texts that even included a dictionary of American culinary terms.<sup>743</sup> Like Duncan Hines, these books' authors had traveled across the country and "collected... recipes from a wide variety of kitchens" to find the "many regional specialties" that fed the country.<sup>744</sup> They each "attempted to tell the story of American through its foods," writing narratives of "those marvels of delight that each [immigrant] group

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<sup>741</sup> Duncan Hines to Kenneth Roberts, July 25, 1939, in box 2, Duncan Hines papers; Alexander, *Hometown Appetites*, 125.

<sup>742</sup> Brobeck, ed. *Fifty Years in a Maryland Kitchen*; Hibben, *American Regional Cookery*; Lothe, *The Best from Midwest Kitchens*; Ruth Berolzheimer, ed. *The United States Regional Cookbook* (Chicago: Culinary Arts Institute, 1947); Bowles, *Secrets of New England Cooking*; Marvin, *Bon Appetit: The St. Louis Cook Book*; Marion Flexner, *Out of Kentucky Kitchens* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1949); Marihelen McDuff and Jane Trahey, *A Taste of Texas* (New York: Random House, 1949); Marion Brown, *The Southern Cook Book* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951); Helen Brown, *Helen Brown's West Coast Cook Book* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1952).

<sup>743</sup> August Ernst Forster, *American Culinary Art* (New York: Ahrens Publishing Co., 1958); Clementine Paddleford, *How America Eats* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960); Helen McCully, Eleanor Noderer, and Heleen Duprey Bullock, *The American Heritage Cookbook and Illustrated History of American Eating & Drinking* (New York: American Heritage, 1965); Lila Perl, *Red-Flannel Hash and Shoo-fly Pie: American Regional Foods and Festivals* (Cleveland: The Worldwide Publishing Company, 1965); Ellen C. Shannon, *American Dictionary of Culinary Terms: A Comprehensive Guide to the Vocabulary of the Kitchen* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1962); Stephen Longstreet, *A Salute To American Cooking* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1968).

<sup>744</sup> Paddleford, *How America Eats*, v.

has created out of a faraway past in the new, magnificent American that surrounded them.”<sup>745</sup>

The focus on immigrant groups was a constant through these publications, with Stella Standard declaring that Americans “are the most fortunate people in the world to have a country peopled with countless races and nationalities,” and like the people, “The climate is so varied, the very soil seems to offer gratitude and hospitality by producing almost every vegetable and fruit to suit all tastes and requirements.”<sup>746</sup> The result of these two resources working together, ethnics and regions, was that “American cookery is the most diversified and colorful in the world” and thus contains “enormous vitality and immensely varied cooking knowledge.”<sup>747</sup> The consequence, as Sidney Dean stated, was that “we have no national menu” but, “Instead, we have developed a miscellany of overlapping regional cookeries interwoven in a hand-me-down fabric of culinary inclusiveness.” Furthermore, this tradition of diversity “gives American food and cooking the prestige and glamour far too long attributed solely to foreign cooking.”<sup>748</sup> Altogether, the mid-century upsurge in regionalist culinary publications synthesized disparate parts of America to make sense of the associations between places and tastes.

The motivation for these authors seems to have been the desire to declare identity in the present and document traditions for posterity, while also determining what was and is still authentic. Also, many of these authors were friends of Duncan Hines, like Clementine

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<sup>745</sup> Mary Margaret McBride, *Harvest of American Cooking* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1956), xviii. On the “blurring of the boundaries between local and foreign cuisines” in the twentieth century, see Liora Gvion, “What’s Cooking in America? Cookbooks Narrate Ethnicity: 1850-1990,” *Food, Culture & Society* 12.1 (2009): 53-76.

<sup>746</sup> Stella Standard, *Complete American Cook Book* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1957), 222. Even the Europhilic *Gourmet* magazine thought that, “Good food and good living has always been a great American tradition. At our very fingertips in this land of glorious plenty lie an abundance and variety of foods unequalled anywhere. And our native, unquenchable thirst for discovery is now leading us daily into new and exciting channels of exploration in the realm of fine food and drink.” Earle R. MacAusland, “An Introduction to Gourmet,” *Gourmet*, January 1941, 4. On the discourse of abundance in America, see Warren I. Susman, “Toward a History of the Culture of Abundance: Some Hypotheses,” in *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), xix-xxx.

<sup>747</sup> John and Marie Roberson, *The Famous American Recipes Cookbook* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1957), ix.

<sup>748</sup> Sidney Dean, *Cooking American* (New York: Bramhall House, 1957), n.p.

Paddleford and Mary Margaret McBride. In her sprawling *How America Eats*, and the 845 newspaper columns she wrote that accompanied it, Paddleford “sought to undermine ideas that most people and had about American cooking—that it had no authenticity, that it consisted of meals made entirely from packaged foods, that it was unexciting and uninviting.”<sup>749</sup> Mary Margaret McBride, a famous radio host, noted that in the 1950s “we are all bombarded constantly with news of dehydrated steaks, faster mixes, even food squeezed from tubes.... So you may ask: Why a cookbook at all in such times?” Her response was that the allure of the authentic process of handling raw ingredients and cooking from scratch will call people back, “So in the twenty-first century I predict that women will still be swapping recipes.”<sup>750</sup> John and Marie Roberson admired that “Our aim in writing” about America’s regional foodways “has been to help give lasting character to this colorful and mouthwatering potpourri” by presenting “a host of truly authentic” recipes found in “treasure troves of old manuscripts, notebooks, and cookbooks.”<sup>751</sup> On the discoveries of authentic Americana, Hines and his peers seem caught in a trope of mobility-born observation, for whether as a tourist abroad, a native at home, or a scholar conducting research, many have argued that regardless of the reason for travel the process instigates searches for authenticity.<sup>752</sup> American artists and historians working in the same milieu as these food writers also collapsed notions of locality, authenticity, and history into each other, to re-create and preserve cultural forms.<sup>753</sup>

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<sup>749</sup> Alexander, *Hometown Appetites*, xxiii, 207; Paddleford, *How America Eats*.

<sup>750</sup> McBride, *Harvest of American Cooking*, xviii, xix.

<sup>751</sup> Roberson, *The Famous American Recipes Cookbook*, ix.

<sup>752</sup> Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1997); Lisa Heldke, “But is it Authentic? Culinary Travel and the Search for the ‘Genuine Article’,” in *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, ed. Carolyn Korsmeyer (New York: Berg, 2005); Britta Timm Knudsen, “Emotional Geography: Authenticity, Embodiment, and Cultural Heritage,” *Ethnologia Europaea* 36.2 (2006).

<sup>753</sup> David E. Whisnant, *All That is Native and Fine: The Politics of Culture in an American Region* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983); Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).



Across the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the re-discovery of American regional foodways appears to be generational. Every twenty years another cohort of Americans extols the culinary abundance and diversity of the United States, for in the 1980s there was another surge of publications constructing the nation's "cuisine" out of its local traditions.<sup>754</sup> Twenty years after that, in the contemporary era of "foodie" culture, a new set of authors have championed American food as capable of providing the local, seasonal, and sustainable foodways that are currently considered authentic.<sup>755</sup> By this last iteration of this pattern in American gastronomy a countervailing critique had emerged, one that recognized that the "two themes" of the local and the authentic "are normally found together and both rest on an appeal to tradition: this food is the product of a continuous and collective endeavor, it pre-dates industrialized food systems and its value derives from that opposition." The problem with this logic is that "authenticity is not a survival from some prelapsarian world of peasants and artisans," but a reaction to contemporary pressures.<sup>756</sup> For instance, as globalization stays apace, the local has been retrieved as a bulwark against it.<sup>757</sup> With corporations mass producing

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<sup>754</sup> Representative texts include, James Villas, *American Taste: A Celebration of Gastronomy Coast-to-Coast* (New York: Arbor House, 1982); Ronald Johnson, *The American Table: More than 400 Recipes that Make Accessible for the First Time the Full Richness of American Regional Cooking* (New York: Morrow, 1984); Sallie Y. Williams, *American Feasts: The Best of American Regional Cooking* (New York: Morrow, 1985); Mary Brandt Kerr, *America, a Regional Cookbook* (Secaucus, NJ: Chartwell, 1986); Betty Fussell, *I Hear America Cooking: The Cooks and Recipes of American Regional Cuisine* (New York: Viking, 1986);

<sup>755</sup> For example, see John L. and Karen Hess Hess, *The Taste of America* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2000); Fritz Sonnenschmidt, *American Harvest: Fifty Premier Chefs Share Their Favorite Recipes from America's Regional Cuisines* (New York: Lehar-Friedman Books, 2000); Cynthia Holling-Morris, *American Regional Cuisine* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2002); Pascale LeDraoulec, *American Pie: Slices of Life (and Pie) from America's Back Folds* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002); Burt Wolf and Andrew F. Smith, *Real American Food: Authentic Regional Cuisine* (New York: Random House, 2006); Rebecca Gray, *American Artisanal: Finding the Country's Best Real Food, from Cheese to Chocolate* (New York: Random House, 2008).

<sup>756</sup> Jeff Pratt, "Food Values: The Local and the Authentic," *Critique of Anthropology* 27.3 (2007): 294, 295. See also Jörn Lamla, "Consuming Authenticity: A Paradoxical Dynamic in Contemporary Capitalism," in *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society*, ed. Phillip Vannini and J. Patrick Williams, 171-185 (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009).

<sup>757</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalizations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Adrian Peace, "Barossa Slow: The Representation and Rhetoric of Slow Food's Regional Cooking," *Gastronomica* 6.1 (2006): 51-59.

commodities, the buying of original objects has regained popularity.<sup>758</sup> Environmental degradation increases, and thus sustainable practices are offered as the healing alternative.<sup>759</sup> It is in such contexts that Americans have recently made sense of their tastes, attempting to figure out which places stay true to principles and practices that produce what is perceived as good eating.

The anthropologist Sidney Mintz is well known for his critique of attempts to summarize American foodways. Similar to my analysis of American history, he too sees repeated attempts at creating a national culinary identity out of perceptions of regional customs. But for Mintz, collecting regional cuisines and presenting them as a mosaic that constitutes American cuisine is false because “variety does not equal a cuisine, and is not the same as a cuisine,” for “*regional* cuisines [are] the only ‘real’ cuisines, anyways,” and thus “national cuisines are not cuisines in the same sense.”<sup>760</sup> Though our view of trends in history is similar, I disagree with his assessment of what is and is not American because his invocation of the “real” reveals an investment in the discourse of authenticity, the same arbitrary ideal that inspires the cultural commentary he seeks to deconstruct. As a determination of value, claims of what is the authentic or the real are subjective human responses to proximate conditions.<sup>761</sup> Scholars have thus come to understand that evaluating which foodways are authentic or “real” is not something that can be objectively established.<sup>762</sup> Instead, claims of authenticity are “expressions of specific interests

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<sup>758</sup> David Lewis and Darren Bridger, *The Soul of the New Consumer: Authenticity — What We Buy and Why in the New Economy* (London: Nicholas Brealey Publications, 2001); James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine, *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* (Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press, 2007).

<sup>759</sup> Julie Guthman, “Fast Food/Organic Food: Reflexive Tastes and the Making of ‘Yuppie Chow’,” *Social & Cultural Geography* 4.1 (2003): 45-58; Craig J. Thompson and Gokcen Coskuner-Balli, “Enchanting Ethical Consumerism: The Case of Community Supported Agriculture,” *Journal of Consumer Culture* 7.3 (2007): 275-303..

<sup>760</sup> Mintz, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom*, 112. Italics in original.

<sup>761</sup> “Value, the personal and social importance of a sense of authenticity, is what crucially remains” after authenticity claims’ “ontological types, their historicity, system coherence and consensus have become attenuated” by analysis of their conditional existence. Nikolas Coupland, “Sociolinguistic Authenticities,” *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 7.3 (2003): 429.

<sup>762</sup> Sharon Hudgins, “In the Eye of the Beholder, on the Tongue of the Taster: What Constitutes Culinary Authenticity?,” in *Authenticity in the Kitchen: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2005*, ed. Richard Hosking, 238-251 (Devon, U.K.: Prospect Books, 2006).

within the communities in question.”<sup>763</sup> I therefore contend, like Krishnendu Ray, that rather than “quarrel over whether an American national cuisine exists” in absolutely verifiable empirical terms, it is more productive to investigate “the kind of food some Americans have...come to imagine as American” food within the contexts that influence this imagining.<sup>764</sup> Rather than adjudicate authenticity, I seek to analyze its creation in the context that is instigating such claims. As such, Hines made sense of American taste the same way his peers did. He creatively pieced together a large and diverse country’s gastronomy out of the resources available to him, with practices like automobility, structures like modernity, and discourses like authenticity combining to suggest that the local/regional is where taste takes place.

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<sup>763</sup> Paul A. Bramadat, “Toward a New Politics of Authenticity: Ethno-Cultural Representation in Theory and Practice,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 27.1 (2005): 16.

<sup>764</sup> Ray, “Nation and Cuisine,” 290.

## CODA

Though the brand name was sold to Procter & Gamble in 1956, both Duncan Hines and Roy Park continued to work in the business of food: Park as an executive at the brand's new owner and Hines still driving across the country to eat, promote, and criticize. After Hines' death in 1959, Park continued to publish updated editions of *Adventures in Good Eating*, which he had been in charge of since the mid-1950s. Only three years later the restaurant guidebook came to an end, with Park announcing this decision in terms of the passing of an era:

the American traveling public no longer needs the services provided by the Duncan Hines Travel Books. The great need of 27 years ago has been erased by the remarkable upgrading of eating and lodging facilities all over the country. Today's traveler is no longer a hardy pioneer challenging an uncharted sea with a stomach of iron and a back of steel. No matter his personal tastes, his financial well-being, or the direction of his wandering, the traveler today has a near infinite choice of high quality eating and lading places. For example, Duncan Hines could find less than 200 places he thought worthy of mention at the time he published his first list of superior eating places. But today it is next to impossible to list all the worthy eating places in a practical-size book.<sup>765</sup>

Park's sense of the moment was accurate, as many have cited this period as when American automobility changed. The Federal Highway Act of 1956 formally integrated pre-existing routes into a national system while funding its further extension, a change in the networking of American roads that guided motorists away from rural roads to limited-access highways.<sup>766</sup> Though such legislation is an apt symbol of standardization, most agree that it was a late addition to the corporatization and cultural homogenization of the American roadside that had been taking place since the 1920s.<sup>767</sup> This shift in the patterns of automobility meant that Americans no

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<sup>765</sup> Quote found in Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 262.

<sup>766</sup> Seiler, *Republic of Drivers*, 129-148; John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *Motoring: The Highway Experience in America* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 146-160.

<sup>767</sup> Belasco, "Commercialized Nostalgia"; Richard Pillsbury, *From Boarding House to Bistro: The American Restaurant Then and Now* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990); Raitz, "American Roads, Roadside America"; Jakle, *Roadside Restaurant in the Automobile Age*.

longer needed guidance to a patchwork of local roads, a change that not only put Hines' publication out of business but also greatly affected the fortunes of mapmakers and the many entrepreneurs of the American roadside.<sup>768</sup> No longer uninformed and unaware, Americans had “moved into an era of confidence about traveling,” Park remarked. He said that the fact “That America now really loves to travel (but no longer need a guide book as a glove compartment ‘must’) is a great tribute to the pioneering efforts of Duncan Hines.... [He] played a vital role in the constant upgrading which has brought about the present happy state of affairs across the country.”<sup>769</sup>

The dissolution of the need for Hines' tastemaking network by changes in its resources coincided with changes in food fashions. By the 1960s, journalists and food company executives had noticed two divergent trends, one toward imported gourmet foods and the other for more industrially processed foods.<sup>770</sup> The popularity of French food, a fad that has come and gone multiple times in the history of American culture, swelled again as more Americans ventured overseas in an era of postwar peace.<sup>771</sup> Regional American foodways went out of fashion as fads in food spun in circles, cycling through various ethnic cuisines, both in America and abroad, before briefly returning to American traditions and then venturing back out into “fusion” cuisines.<sup>772</sup> In this post-1960s era, Julia Child emerged as a tastemaker that made sense of taste in a new way, within and because of a number of new influences on food in America: the popular advent of cooking on television, the financial success of her Baby Boomer audience and

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<sup>768</sup> Yorke, *The Art of the American Road Map*, 114-129.

<sup>769</sup> Quote found in Hatchett, *The Man Behind the Cake Mix*, 262-263.

<sup>770</sup> “Big Appetite for Gourmet Foods,” *Business Week*, August 23, 1958; “U.S. Grows an Educated Palate,” *Business Week*, January 31, 1959; “Revolution in the Kitchen: What It Means to Family and to Industry,” *U.S. News & World Report*, February 15, 1957; Amy Vanderbilt, “Social Acceptance of Convenience of Foods,” speech at National Food Editors Conference, October 3, 1960, all documents in box 304, folder 32, Clementine Paddleford papers,

<sup>771</sup> Harvey A. Levenstein, “Two Hundred Years of French Food in America,” *Journal of Gastronomy* 5.1 (1989): 67-89.

<sup>772</sup> Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, 213-226.

their aspirational desires for Europhilic culture, the globalization of ingredient sourcing, and the non-stop evolution of cooking technology. Child has also passed away, and yet unlike Hines her status as a significant tastemaker in the United States remains intact because her personality and sense of taste are still made available and operative by her adaptation of culinary commentary to a new form, television, something Hines only engaged in briefly before his death.<sup>773</sup> Similarly, Hines' peer in mid-century tastemaking, Clementine Paddleford, has also been swept aside despite being the first food journalist in the United States, another casualty of the reconfiguration of the assemblage of America's food chains after 1960.<sup>774</sup> Just as Child eclipsed Hines thanks to changes in media, so too did Craig Claiborne supersede Paddleford in the movement to a new gastronomic context whose resources were assembled to support a different sense of taste.<sup>775</sup>

If Hines has been forgotten but Child is still lionized, it is because the network that supported Hines no longer exists while the assemblage surrounding Child's tastemaking persists because its resources are still relevant, especially television. Child's continued status as a tastemaker has also been aided by the fact that her associations were never paired with a commercial brand of commodities. As seen with Hines' brand, there's no way to control or predict how the associations attached to one's name by a brand's activity will play out, for brands are managed for profits within the vicissitudes of the market. In contrast, James Beard's status as a tastemaker has been stable after his death because it has been associated with an institution premised on heralding what is the most popular sense of taste in contemporary foodways, the James Beard Awards, the most prestigious, publicized, and trend-setting award in

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<sup>773</sup> Dana Polan, *Julia Child's The French Chef* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

<sup>774</sup> Andrew F. Smith, Kelly Alexander, Betsy Wade, Colman Andrews, and Molly O'Neill, "Clementine Paddleford: America's First Food Journalist," conference panel, The New School, New York, New York, June 23, 2010. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYfAy2aYmyk&lr>.

<sup>775</sup> Andrew F. Smith, Betty Fussell, Anne Mendelson, John T. Edge, David Leite, and Molly O'Neill, "Craig Claiborne and the Invention of Food Journalism," conference panel, The New School, New York, New York, June 11, 2009. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfjySjSKHGg>

the culinary industries of the United States. Like Child, Beard's sense of taste persists because the assemblage that supports such activity is still operative and, vitally, has maintained relevancy within the culture it seeks to influence. Because of *how* it was institutionalized, the sense of taste created by and associated with Beard will never be out of fashion since it determines what's considered "in" within a significant area of influence on American food, its most famous and cutting-edge chefs. Nowadays, all that Duncan Hines has left to speak for his sense of taste is a box of processed food, a famous one but a product that could disappear much more quickly from the cultural landscape than would Beard's awards or Child's television shows. Cake boxes tell contemporary Americans nothing about Hines' accomplishments and influence on American foodways during a period of large transitions in the middle of the twentieth century.

Changes in the things that surround criticism are the key to the role and content of criticism. Critics are mediators, first and foremost, and the very practical basis of their existence too often gets ignored in favor of their aesthetic opinions. The pragmatics of making your criticism relevant and valuable is contingent on the resources and structures of your context. So too will the philosophy within criticism be a product of what a person has experienced through the mediators that bring things to the critic, like media, or brings the critic to things, like automobility. The availability of an opinion, the relevance of an opinion, and the substances that inspire that opinion's initiation and continuation call upon an entire world of things. In other words, culinary commentary "cannot live by food alone, and neither can it live only by words." Accounting for taste is thus to study "how particular phenomena create and sustain a collective cultural consciousness," which are the social trends and material infrastructure that offer this consciousness the goods that it will consume as well as the ideals by which such things will be

considered good.<sup>776</sup> “What is served... and what people generally eat,” says Peter Scholliers, “is the outcome of changes in a long chain, including agriculture, agribusiness, trade, retailing, mediating agents (such as the dieticians and the mass media), cooking, presentation, and, finally, waste disposal.” As such, “food fulfills many purposes besides pure biological ones.”<sup>777</sup>

Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson says that “the greater the association of nonspecialists in the gastronomic enterprise, the more numerous the social connections and the greater the social impact” of that gastronomy.<sup>778</sup> A crucial qualifier is that “phenomena only remain as long as one maintains them,” which means these associations and connections must be kept up or otherwise things falls apart.<sup>779</sup> Entropy is not just a law of physics, it is a fact of society because human beings are just as temporary as the matter with which we make life and make sense of it.. Eventually the influence of Julia Child’s sense of taste will dissolve. Conversely, if Child’s and others’ viewpoints are sustained it will not be because they grasped an eternal or objective excellence. A sense of taste is maintained through things that further its process of connecting persons, products, places, and principles, durable materials that nevertheless do not last forever. Lionizing one taste as superior because it is supposedly timeless is hubris, for taste is an ephemeral act dependent on material things with a definite lifespan.

In this dissertation, my intervention in scholarship is an attempt to take a full account of what is involved in making sense of taste rather than a partisan, personal judgment of taste according to its aesthetic superiority or inferiority. Taste is biology and taste is social and these two senses of taste become conjoined by mediators, those numerous entities that transform food,

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<sup>776</sup> Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste*, 20, 10.

<sup>777</sup> Peter Scholliers, “Novelty and Tradition: The New Landscape for Gastronomy,” in *Food: The History of Taste*, ed. Paul Freedman, 332-357 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 334.

<sup>778</sup> Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste*, 93.

<sup>779</sup> Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, 93. Or, to put it another way, “Ideas never escape from the networks that make them.” (ibid.) A practice can only go so far as the network that supports it. The dissolution of a network and its resources, actors, and infrastructure means the end of the practices – physical and mental – it had made possible.



transport it, transmit understandings of it, and otherwise do the work necessary to the long and complex series of transformations that constitute the food chain. Within this process of transformations, associations are made between foods and the persons, places, principles, and many other things that, relative to the foods, appear to explain, identify, or otherwise make sense of the food. Therefore, it takes an assemblage to make sense of taste, a network of many things that work together. Different configurations of commerce, technology, and media will mediate the materials and meanings of food and, in conjunction, offer up ways to connect these together. Taste is thus a temporary relationship to food mediated by layers of influence intersecting for a short time, and as these influences always shift, so too will relationships with food change. A certain taste for food will emerge, persist, and disband based on the contingencies of the network surrounding it. Some networks last longer, some extend farther, and others are more adaptable over time than others, but all are dependent on temporary phenomena.

The importance of Duncan Hines is that his criticism underscores how mediated and contingent are senses of taste, a point proven by how irrelevant Hines' tastemaking has become to the current consciousness of American foodways, a perception that inspires narratives of American food that either ignore him or dismiss him as being a "sorry" gastronome.<sup>780</sup> Lost is how Hines presaged many contemporary concerns such as eating regional, seasonal, and authentic foods. In terms of particular influence, Hines did not change the interior or service of dining but he was right in the midst of the professionalization of food production and the popularization of food consumption, changes brought on by shifts in automobility, consumerism, technology, and media. He helped both consumers and producers make sense of these changes, and while some of his perceptions were biased due to his touristic gaze, nevertheless Hines was, in his terms, trying to "upgrade" eating habits by sensitizing Americans to the details of its

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<sup>780</sup> Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*; Kamp, *The United States of Arugula*; Strauss, *Setting the Table for Julia Child*.

practice. Whether discouraging distractions in the dining room or explaining the agriculture of obscure ingredients, Hines tried to train consumers to appreciate how food was made and, in turn, how such making affected what that food tasted like. In doing this, Hines' tastemaking stayed true to the two impulses that appear inherent to gastronomic criticism from its inception after the invention of the restaurant in post-Revolutionary France: the striving for excellence through articulating standards of what is "good" food and yet the democratization of where "good" is found and who is making such declarations.<sup>781</sup>

I contend that the democratization of taste is Hines' silent legacy, nationalizing and encouraging a trend that had begun to coalesce just before the start of his career as a critic.<sup>782</sup> Hines was fond of rephrasing the classic gastronomic idea, expressed in Latin, *de gustibus non disputandum est*. That is, to Hines "taste is a very personal matter" because "each of us is a gourmet in his own way," and so he would "not argue with those of you who disagree with my choice of a favorite food because your preference is yours and mine's mine" — "only you know what you like best."<sup>783</sup> As seen in his memoir, Hines suggested that in accounting for one's tastes people will learn to be more knowledgeable of what exists out there, more appreciative of which of it they like, and possibly even reflect deeper on why they like what they like and why such things exist in their culture as they experience it. Altogether, Hines provided a role model for how to examine one's taste. The critical aspect was how his associative logic linked events and

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<sup>781</sup> Mennell, *All Manners of Food*, 266-290, 317-332; Shore, "The Development of the Restaurant," 309-329; Johnston, *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape*. In fact, democratization has been the dominant pattern for all types of cultural criticism of all types of objects and subjects of popular culture. See Kammen, *American Culture, American Tastes*.

<sup>782</sup> As Andrew Haley observes, while "the first restaurant guides did little more than create lists of the most exclusive restaurants" in early twentieth century, "operating under the assumption that every diner wanted a French meal, the reviewers of the mid-twentieth century described the food and offered advice, not dictates." Thus, consumers "were empowered to match their personal preferences to the available restaurant offerings" since guidebooks were now "rationalizing the complex world of consumption without championing an absolute ideal of taste." *Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class*, 230.

<sup>783</sup> Hines, *Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey*, 60, 246, 254, 247.

ideas, a revealing of the network of things that placed his taste in its context. Tastemaking continues to follow this process, and the general public has begun to acknowledge this and use it to profess new gastronomies.

Our articulation of taste includes many more things than what our tongues touch, hence why taste is often judged in terms of its non-culinary origins and impacts. Nowadays, taste is judged in terms of its relationship with ecology and political economy. Holistic studies of the food chain have noticed how certain transformations of food within that chain, like those by industrial processors and factory farms, have significant influence on the world we live in, and so contemporary opinion is that our tastes should express our ethical, environmental, social, and political stance toward such transformations.<sup>784</sup> At the same time, however, there is growing resistance to this idea, a counter-argument which wants to restrict taste to physical senses and exclude other senses of why a tasty thing is considered good or bad, edible or inedible—the difference between understanding food as “just food” or “food that is just.”<sup>785</sup> In other words, this is the difference between seeing food as merely fuel that really does not matter beyond that function or understanding it as a foundation of human life whose materiality and meaning has significant consequences that impact all aspects of society. This difference is currently under debate, with heated arguments for or against foodies, for or against organic ingredients, for or against taking “food miles” into consideration when purchasing consumables.<sup>786</sup>

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<sup>784</sup> For instance, Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*.

<sup>785</sup> James E. McWilliams, *Just Food: Where Locavores Get It Wrong and How We Can Truly Eat Responsibly* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2010).

<sup>786</sup> B.R. Myers, “The Moral Crusade Against Foodies,” *The Atlantic*, February 9, 2011. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/03/the-moral-crusade-against-foodies/308370/>; Francis Lam, “Do We Need B.R. Myers Moral Crusade Against Foodies?,” *Salon*, February 11 2011. [http://www.salon.com/2011/02/11/br\\_myers\\_moral\\_crusade\\_against\\_foodies/](http://www.salon.com/2011/02/11/br_myers_moral_crusade_against_foodies/); Tim Lang, “Locale/Global (Food Miles),” *Slow Food*, May 19, 2006; Robin McKie, “How the Myth of Food Miles Hurts the Planet,” *The Guardian*, March 22, 2008. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/mar/23/food.ethicalliving>

In a column published in 2013, L.V. Anderson complains about how the “food movement” has begun “insisting that good taste was also capital-G good: Food that is good for the environment, for animals, for workers, for community-building, and for health will also taste the best.” Anderson believes that this “argument is seductive but specious—what tastes good to one person won’t taste good to another,” and so you cannot force non-culinary considerations of what is good into how we make sense of taste.<sup>787</sup> In other words, taste should be restricted to judging a food’s flavors on the tongue, disregarding the political and ecological consequences of the transformations and associations surrounding that food. Anderson is right to point out how making sense of taste often includes thinking about food’s connection to other things, but there is no alternative to this process. Making sense of taste depends on the world around it, an assemblage of human actors and non-human factors that create different outcomes in each instance of their networking. Anderson thinks only things on the tongue matter to how something tastes when it is apparent that the value of a taste as good or bad is determined in relation to all the other things associated with the entire foodway that grew, processed, shipped, sold, represented, and ate the food that is sensed and then judged. Altogether, “sensory experience needs translation into an idiom that encompasses” the context in which such experiences take place.<sup>788</sup> Expressions of taste have to match the physical sensations made available by agriculture and commerce with cultural sense made attractive by media.<sup>789</sup> Since experience has multiple modes, meanings, and material influences, therefore taste is as potentially varied as experience and its expression, and taste’s dynamics are as complicated as the chicken/egg relationship of

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<sup>787</sup> L.V. Anderson, “Against Foodies: You Are What You Buy,” *Slate*, May 3, 2013.

[http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/books/2013/05/against\\_foodies\\_alison\\_pearlman\\_s\\_smart\\_casual\\_reviewed.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/books/2013/05/against_foodies_alison_pearlman_s_smart_casual_reviewed.html)

<sup>788</sup> Ferguson, *Accounting for Taste*, 18.

<sup>789</sup> “Any culture establishes the limits within which all people... have experiences, limits created by the material environment and the technological base, by the conventional meanings attached to objects and actions, and by the vocabulary of concepts and words that serves as the interpretative context for experience.” Orvell, *Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture*, xix.

experience and expression.<sup>790</sup> Food is fuel, symbol, tradition, invention, nature, culture, agriculture, and more, *all at the same time*. Seeing food as proper, powerful, or poignant only when active in one association—excellence, or environment, or tradition—dishonestly reduces the complexity of food’s existence while also reducing the ability of influencing others’ tastes. Food inhabits many ways in this world, and thus commentary on foodways needs to include as much of the world as possible if it wishes to impact as much of the world as possible.<sup>791</sup>

Taste occurs when senses of experiences become related to senses of expression. Tastemakers like Duncan Hines are those who attempt to mediate this relationship, coordinating connections as ephemeral as the feeling of flavors on tongues. If such connections persist, it is because the relationship is reinforced by resources and through repetition, and is eventually renegotiated in favor of the requirements demanded by the endlessly changing world around it. Investigating the conditions that form our tastes can thus be an exercise in reflecting upon the attachments that we engage in but do not contact without mediation, choose without constraint, or control without influence. Taste on the tongue is as ephemeral and conditional as taste in society. And these too shall pass.

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<sup>790</sup> Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

<sup>791</sup> On recent revisions of tastemaking as socially, politically, and environmentally responsive to its context, see Roger Haden, “Lionizing Taste: Toward an Ecology of Contemporary Connoisseurship,” in *Educated Tastes: Food, Drink, and Connoisseur*, ed. Jeremy Strong, 237-290 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

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