

SANBORNTON WOMAN'S COOKING HAS INTERNATIONAL FLAIR (*Laconia Evening Citizen*, June 21, 1977)

By John Zanes

Sanbornton – In terms of medieval cookery, four-and-twenty blackbirds baked in a pie is not too far-fetched. “We know that they baked dwarves in a pie ... I suppose our modern equivalent is a nude girl jumping out of a cake at a gala dinner,” said Lib Andrews.

Mrs. Andrews, who has achieved considerable local fame for her cooking, has what must be one of the outstanding cookbooks of all time. It is a notebook, and the recipes recorded in it are from her experience working with international cooking at the University of Connecticut when her husband taught there, from her own interests, and from years of cooking for her husband's graduate students, attempting to make the food of whatever country the student was from authentic.

For nine years in Sanbornton she did the luncheon at Market Day, “something different every year.” There has been Greek cuisine, hot ziggety, coachmen's special and Chinese egg rolls, among other things. “I think I proved that people in Sanbornton will eat something besides ham and beans,” she said.

A few friends from Connecticut, 34 of them in a bus, dropped by on a recent weekend. She put together a parsnip chowder, Scotch eggs and baked some French sourdough bread. This year, at Market Day, on July 9, she will give a demonstration of how to make English muffins, as part of the morning offerings.

In the many countries where she and her husband have lived she has always attempted to master the cuisine of the country, as authentically as possible. Her husband's students interested her in international cooking, but she has turned the situation around. Last year in Denmark she cooked an American Thanksgiving Day dinner, with all the trimmings, for Danish guests.

As interesting as the vast range of kinds of cookery that she has at her fingertips are Mrs. Andrews' stories of her experiences. Dr. Andrews was the first Fulbright professor to go to the University of Poona in India. Her schedule for feeding graduate students was to take them in groups of 10, the better to get acquainted; there were about 60 to invite to dinner. She planned a big buffet, and went to the market herself, in the market “that mutton was just plain old goat,” she said, but she planned a big buffet. Among other offerings she prepared a large bed of rice. Two of the girls who attended did not touch the buffet, not even the rice. Fortunately they could eat home-made fudge, and they ate a lot.

She asked three students who were especially good friends to find out what she had done wrong, and discovered that the fact of the rice having been garnished with hard-boiled eggs moved it beyond the limit of vegetarianism that the girls, who were Jains, could eat. But the students assured her that they had solved the problem. They had passed the word “if the professor's wife is going to cook, you're going to eat.”

A tragedy occurred to one of the Indian students, a married student, when his wife's clothes caught fire from a stove in his house, and she was fatally burned. In putting the fire out he was severely burned. His friends came and asked her to prepare food for him while he was hospitalized, and she did. He needed high protein, and after she had cooked “those boys came on their motorcycles and picked it up and took it to him ... nothing much better than a baked custard in that case.”

The boy recovered, and then the Andrews left Poona, he came to the train. “He was the last one to see us in our compartment, with armloads of flowers...” Mrs. Andrews paused for a minute, thinking about graduate students fed over the years. “It makes for a gratifying relationship ... feeding the students.”

She has fed faculty and parents, as well. When the Andrews family was at Washington University, in St. Louis, she instituted a custom of a Commencement Day Party, with a luncheon. Families and friends came from around the country, and there was no occasion of the sort scheduled. One year she served blueberry pie, made with frozen blueberries from New Hampshire: “they didn't have them from anywhere.”

She baked 65 blueberry pies. "I never did it again ... I would never do it again ... I know better."

At Connecticut the international cooking program was a project undertaken in establishing a campus women's club; there was no organization of the kind when they went to the campus. With people from all over the world at the college, the range was wide.

In Sanbornton Mrs. Andrews has turned her talents to such community projects as Market Day, and she has done the meal for workers at Town Meeting. Once more she is involved with vegetarian cooking, because there [are] a number of people in the town, at the Ashram and elsewhere, who are vegetarians, and she feels that it should be possible for everyone to be involved in community activities. "Community is terribly important," she said, and thinking again of the good uses of good cooking, "You can always find someone that needs a lift."

Cooking is a happy thing for Lib Andrews, and an important element of human contact. Receiving the opinion of an Iraqi student that her cooking was like his mother's, or teaching a Chinese woman in Connecticut, used to servants, how to cook Chinese, or feeding a series of graduate students, notoriously inadequately fed, food touches humanity.

There is an old argument as to whether a good cook can properly be called an artist. That demonstration of how to make English muffins, at Market Day on July 9, may add a little weight to the answer.

[Photo with caption: Lib Andrews of Sanbornton checks some of the utensils she uses in cooking of one sort or another. All of the dishes hanging on the wall are used, and there are more. A practitioner of international cuisine, she has cooked the meal at Market Day for nine years; this year she will be giving a demonstration of how to make English muffins, in the morning of Market Day.]

TILTON-NORTHFIELD BPW NAMES 'LIB' WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT (*Laconia Evening Citizen*, October 16, 1979)

Tilton – The Tilton-Northfield Business and Professional Women's Club is honored to present its Woman of Achievement for 1979, Elisabeth C. "Lib" Ham Andrews of Sanbornton. Mrs. Andrews, *Evening Citizen* columnist – "Cooking With Lib," and foreign and gourmet cooking instructor for the Laconia Adult Education program, was honored at last week's club meeting. She was presented a Woman of Achievement certificate and a gift.

The following history, written by Elizabeth Cotsibas, club president, was read at the meeting.

Lib was born in Campbell, Mo., the fourth of six children. One of her earliest recollections is that of riding on a train on the route where her father served as the conductor. The family moved to St. Louis about 1925. During her high school years in St. Louis, Lib was active in nearly all sports. Other activities included membership in the National Honor Society, senior class secretary, and Botanical Club president.

After graduation from high school, Lib attended a business school briefly and also worked in a shoe polish factory where she earned eight dollars a week as a secretary. In the fall of 1932 she entered Washington University in St. Louis on a half-scholarship and also worked at the university during the school year. Studies at the university were a split botany-math major. Numerous activities included serving as president of Mortar Board, a senior women's honorary society, and election to the biological and math honorary societies, and participation in each sport in season. Lib was graduated from Washington University in 1936. Her first job was as Girl Reserve secretary of the Alson, Ill., YWCA, and included being in charge of the girls' summer camp.

Lib met Henry in an advanced botany class while a senior at the University. She visited New Hampshire for the first time in the summer of 1937 and developed an immediate liking for the country and the people. As she had learned to swim in the muddy Mississippi she was especially impressed with the fact that she could open her eyes under water in the lakes here and see something!

On a Thursday in January, 1939, Lib and Henry were married and spent their honeymoon in Florida – doing some botanizing on the side. Three children appeared: sons Hollings T. in 1940, Henry III in 1945, and daughter Nancy in 1948. From this time on most summers were spent in Sanbornton. During the fall semester of 1950 Henry was on leave and working at Harvard. The family lived on the farm and the two boys attended the school at the "Square." A similar experience was repeated in the fall of 1958.

After daughter Nancy's arrival in 1948, Lib went back to school to take some education courses, and later engaged in student teaching at a school near her home in Webster Groves, Mo. Following this she held several jobs at Washington University. Employment at the university was the result of her being invited to work with foundations to gather data on what they had to offer on faculty research support. This involved occasional trips to New York to visit the foundation offices.

Later Lib served as coordinator of convocations, conventions, and visitors to the university in general. The university held a lecture program and each Wednesday during much of the school year a distinguished person was brought to the university. It was Lib's task to meet and entertain these guests during their visit. In this way she met many people such as Eleanor Roosevelt and Martin Luther King, and others. This was a "half-time" job – that took about double-time!

Over the years Lib has had an opportunity to travel. During the summer of 1958 Henry was working in Liege, Belgium, so Lib, the children, and a nephew toured much of northern and central Europe. From 1960 to 1961 was spent in Poona, India. Here Lib gave many cooking demonstrations for various benefits. She also entertained students and staff in her home which generally was not done. On numerous occasions Lib has engaged in such ventures where she did the unusual, and always to the benefit of the people concerned. Further traveling during school vacations in India added greatly to her culinary stock of knowledge.

In 1946 Lib lived in Stockholm, Sweden for about six months. The highlight of her visit here was the sumptuous Thanksgiving dinner she prepared for the staff members of the Natural History Museum. The fall of 1976 was spent in Denmark where Henry was teaching at Aarhus University. Here Lib engaged in a weaving course, entertained students, and again prepared a Thanksgiving feast for students and staff. The Danes love to eat and drink, so it was several hours after dinner before the last of the guests departed, very full and very happy.

Since 1970 Lib has made many visits to England, sometimes staying a few months, sometimes only a week or so. In Cambridge, where she lived most of the time, Lib became involved in cooking demonstrations at the Cambridgeshire Country Centre for adult education. This is a large and very active organization with three or four staff members concerned with the culinary arts. On one visit to Cambridge, Lib was asked to do a cooking demonstration for the next 20 minutes after she had arrived at the apartment!

For approximately ten years, from January 1965 to the summer of 1975, Lib lived in Connecticut. One of her more interesting activities at Storrs was the organizing of a Foreign and Gourmet Cooking Class with the Faculty Wives Club.

Since this time, Lib and Henry have been at home in Sanbornton. Their lovely old house is beautifully restored and tastefully decorated with souvenirs of their many travels. But the busiest room in the house has to be the kitchen. Here Lib spends many hours preparing foods of all kinds, holding cooking classes, and entertaining many guests. However, her generosity doesn't stop here in this kitchen.

Untold amounts of specially prepared meats, vegetables, breads, and desserts go out to benefit suppers and socials all year long. Complete meals go to families in need around the community. Guests in her home will always leave with fresh vegetables from her large garden, or a jar of pickles or marmalade.

But in addition to the special talent, Lib is a devoted wife, mother and homemaker. She is a true friend to all who know her and an asset to the community.

GREAT NEW ENGLAND COOKS: LIB ANDREWS, SANBORNTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE (*Yankee Magazine*, June 1981)

by Susan Mahnke; photography by Carole Allen

Her English muffins are her calling card and the foundation for a wide-ranging repertoire of recipes collected during travels all over the world.

“Honey, I’m the English muffin queen of the Lakes region – and I’m working on all of New England!” Lib Andrews said in her expansive manner as she escorted us into her hilltop home in Sanbornton, near lakes Winnisquam and Winnepesaukee. Her husband, Henry, a retired professor of paleobotany, was hard at work on a monograph in his study, so we went directly to the kitchen, Lib’s “study” and the heart of this 200-year-old farmhouse. One whole wall of the kitchen is taken up with the massive brickwork of a walk-in fireplace (now inhabited by a woodstove) and side ovens, with a hand-hewn beam forming the mantel. On a large pine table in front of the stove rested two bowls of English muffin dough, ready for cutting and baking. Lib has made English muffins for friends and family all around the world – India, Ethiopia, Belgium, Denmark, wherever Henry’s travels in search of plant fossils took the family – but most of them originated right here in Lib’s kitchen, mixed according to a “secret” recipe Lib got from her sister years ago.

Since moving full-time to Sanbornton with Henry’s retirement, Lib has concentrated her English muffin proselytizing at home, demonstrating the charms of the yeasty bread at schools, senior citizens’ groups, and clubs. She and several assistants will be making muffins by the hundreds at Sanbornton’s Market Day on July 11, with proceeds going to the local historical society’s efforts to restore the old Lane Tavern. Lib has even appeared at a costume party as the English Muffin Queen – wearing a mask, hat, and earrings made from (you guessed it) English muffins!

If all the people who have benefited from Lib’s wonderful cooking and generosity with food were lined up, they would probably stretch from Sanbornton three times around Lake Winnepesaukee and back, for she is a natural cook and an inspired teacher – and best of all, she’s seemingly tireless. There was the time the Andrewses were living in St. Louis, where Henry was teaching at Washington University, and they had their traditional Commencement Day luncheon for Henry’s students, as usual the day before the family was to leave for their summer home in Sanbornton. Eight-five students consumed 65 of Lib’s blueberry pies, plus the rest of a full-scale meal she had prepared by herself.

And there were the years when Market Day was just starting in Sanbornton, and Lib was trying to think of something different to attract people. “I did kooky things, like make Chinese egg rolls for 300 – it proved they didn’t need to make just ham and beans. We didn’t make much money that first year but we sure had a peck of fun,” she said cheerfully. Wherever she has lived she’s organized classes in gourmet and international cooking, using her large ring binders full of recipes (“Some folks think I take this cooking kinda serious,” she deadpanned) gleaned from years of travel and experimentation in her own kitchen. A cooking class she led in Laconia last April included nights devoted to Chinese, Korean, Indian, “Tex-Mex,” and international stews. Lib prepares for each one with the care of a Ph.D. student going to defend a doctoral thesis. When she showed a junior high class how to make English muffins in a lesson on the properties of yeast, she arrived with the dough in three different stages so she could show every step from mixing to baking in the 42 ½ minutes allowed her. When lunch period intervened, Lib calmly told the students, “Don’t anyone feel obliged to come back after lunch, because all we’re going to do is finish eating these muffins,” and to no one’s surprise every student returned, lured by the irresistible smell of hot muffins and melting butter.

“Are your muffins really better than Thomas’s?” we asked. Lib gave us a baleful look and said with great dignity, “They’re two entirely different beasts.” And so they are. Her English muffins are softer inside, lighter, and more fragrant, with enough nooks and crannies to please any butter addict. Lib uses a series of muffin cutters made out of old tin cans: tomato paste cans for cutting hors d’oeuvre-size muffins, mushroom cans, tuna cans, soup cans. “Thomas’s probably uses cutters the size of peach cans,” Lib

remarked. Her English muffins are baked on ungreased electric skillets (she has two of them; in fact, she has nearly two of everything in her kitchen, so as not to get “caught short”) on a layer of stone-ground cornmeal that is slowly heated until it gives off an unmistakable nutty odor and begins to brown slightly. (Baking muffins in the oven would make them spherical, not flattened.) The unbaked muffins, which have been resting on a layer of cornmeal on cookie sheets, are gently placed on the hot skillet, not touching each other, with their cornmealed sides up; when they are browned on the bottom, she carefully turns them with a spatula and bakes the other side. She shakes out the browned cornmeal from the skillet and adds a new layer for the next batch. “Our kids (the Andrewses have three grown children) always liked them a little underdone – mostly because they couldn’t wait,” Lib said. “Sometimes they would have to eat three or four of them to make sure they were good.”

Lib brought up a jar of greengage plum jam to eat with our muffins, the jam coming from a seemingly inexhaustible supply of foodstuffs in Lib’s cellar. There are three freezers full of frozen breads, berries, garden produce, pies, meats, and even the English Muffin Queen regalia. Shelves gleam with canning jars filled with jam, tomatoes, maple syrup, and pickles. “We don’t have any excuse for going hungry,” Lib notes.

Soon the muffins were baked and we couldn’t wait to split and toast them, just eating them hot with lots of butter and that golden jam. Lib served up steaming bowls of cream cheese and leek soup with ham, a rich and filling soup that may well head the Andrews family hit parade of favorite foods. The leeks come from the garden outside the kitchen windows. “Henry plants and I weed,” Lib said. “We usually grow leeks, which are very tedious, grown from little seedlings about the size of a pencil lead (you need your bifocals!); peapods and snap peas; three kinds of green beans, which last year got hopelessly ‘integrated’; zucchini, which I’ve had to learn to make in about 150 different ways – you can’t give enough of it away; raspberries, strawberries; asparagus; onions; cabbage; and parsnips, which we leave in over the winter to harvest in the spring, when they’re extra sweet.” Lib loves to make soup using parsnips – parsnip and black bean soup, and experimental soups, “like parsnissoise and vichysnips.

“Of course, not everything you make always turns out perfectly, or the way you expect it to,” Lib said. “Once I was making baked beans, and instead of grabbing the jar of maple syrup, I poured in Kahlua by mistake! We laughed about Kahlua Beans until we tried them – they were delicious! There’s an old saying,” she reflected, “ ‘The beauty of handwork is in its imperfections,’ and I say this to all my cooks. I’ve always had a lot of encouragement – Henry’s been game to try anything. You just can’t learn to cook with a meat-and-potatoes man!”

The fudge we ate for dessert reminded Lib of the day she once spent with Eleanor Roosevelt, who arrived at 7 a.m. for a speech at Washington University in the mid-1950s, alone, carrying her own bag, and helping herself down the train steps. Lib was in charge of arrangements that day. When Mrs. Roosevelt left at 10:30 that night, she was no longer carrying her own suitcase – but she was holding a tin of Lib’s homemade fudge. “I’m going to give a speech tomorrow to the Altrusa Club on ‘My Day with Eleanor Roosevelt,’ so I thought I’d better make some of the fudge to pass around,” Lib said, packing up a plateful of it for us to take home. Laden down with fudge, plum jam, and as many English muffins as we could make away with, we left, promising to return for Market Day on July 11 to see Lib in action once again.

[Followed by recipes for:

- English Muffins
- Gwendolyn Special
- Coachmen’s Special
- Cream Cheese and Leek Soup with Ham
- Scalloped Rhubarb
- The Ubiquitous Crab
- Scotch Eggs
- Susan’s Three-Day Coleslaw
- Avocado Mousse
- Bow Tie Casserole
- Ham Loaf and Mustard Sauce

Mile-High Strawberry Pie
Fudge à la Louise]

TABLE TALK LED TO COLUMN

(*Laconia Evening Citizen*, January 23, 1996)

By Sarah Chung

SANBORNTON – What first passed as a casual remark over Sunday dinner between neighbors evolved into a 12-year tradition for the surrounding community. The differentiating factor between this mean and countless others is that the neighbors in question were Alma Smith, owner of the *Laconia Evening Citizen*, and Lib Andrews.

Several weeks after that fateful Sunday meal, “Cooking with Lib” began the first of 624 – give or take a few – consecutive weekly appearances.

In her weekly column, Andrews would share a recipe with the *Citizen* readers with sometimes a corresponding story. Although the directions for every concoction did not originate from her own kitchen, Andrews always insisted on several test runs on each submission before sharing the recipe with readers.

“And I want to tell you – that’s a lot of cooking,” said Andrews.

Andrews was never at a loss for subjects. “It’s amazing to me but there always seemed to be something,” replied Andrews when asked if she was ever stuck for a story idea. Often times inspiration came from her extensive travels with her husband Henry. The couple globetrotted for years as he was a professor of paleobotany, the study of plants and geographic formations.

“I really had to work hard not to repeat myself,” stated Andrews on the most difficult aspect of producing a weekly column. She admitted, though, that story ideas would sometimes come at the last minute requiring her husband to “drive over the article quite early Tuesday morning.”

But even when the popularity of her column spawned demonstrations and lessons, Andrews never missed a deadline. Indeed during her years of “Cooking with Lib” Andrews gave innumerable demonstrations for community organizations while also conducting a weekly lesson for an adult education class at Gilford High School.

There seems a symmetry in Mrs. Andrews joining the workforce when the couple settled in Sanbornton for retirement. Just as Mrs. Andrews had supported her husband in his professional endeavors, he supported her in her writing and cooking, delivering her column to the newspaper office every week and even “helping” in the kitchen when his direct assistance was needed.

Still a regular host of dinner parties for her friends and neighbors, Andrews bowed out as a cooking columnist about the time her friend Alma Smith sold the *Citizen*. “Cooking with Lib” made its last appearance on Sept. 26, 1990. Andrews says she doesn’t miss the pressure of the weekly column at all. “I just knew when ‘enough was enough,’” said Andrews.

OBITUARIES

(*Laconia Evening Citizen*, April 19, 1997)

SANBORNTON – Elizabeth (Lib) H. Andrews, 82 of Wells Road, and formerly of Storrs, Conn., died April 17, 1997 at Lakes Region General Hospital in Laconia.

Born in Campbell, Mo., the fourth daughter of Alex C. Ham and Roxy B. (Howard) Ham, she received her bachelor's degree from Washington University in St. Louis. L

Lib is known throughout the Lakes Region for "Cooking with Lib," her weekly column which appeared in *The Citizen* for 12 years; and as the "English Muffin Making Queen of the Lakes Region."

Her love of cooking and her unending enthusiasm for food and friends touched many and initiated lasting friendships. Lib taught foreign and gourmet cooking classes to the University of Connecticut League in Storrs, Conn., and, later, adult education classes in Gilford and Laconia.

She is remembered for Market Day lunches to benefit the Sanbornton Historical Society, Bam Gallery Openings, edible accompaniments to fund-raising events for the Belknap Mill Society, and English muffin making demonstrations for local schools, libraries, and other special-interest organizations.

While living in other parts of the world with husband and "best friend," Henry, Lib skillfully shared her cooking and friendship with the Cambridge County Centre in Cambridge, England. She cooked for her husband's students in Poona, India and Arhus, Denmark, and the Botanical Staff at the National Museum in Stockholm, Sweden.

Lib was honored to be a featured cook in *Yankee* magazine's *Great New England Recipes* and assisted with the production of several League cookbooks; most notably, she served as State Cookbook chair for the N.H. Chapter of the American Cancer Society's *A Taste of New Hampshire – Second Helpings*.

Survivors include her husband of 58 years, Henry N. Andrews Jr.; two sons, Hollings T. Andrews of Cookeville, Tenn., and Henry N. Andrews III of Westfield, N.J.; a daughter Nancy Andrews Adams of Sanbornton; Lib's youngest sister, Frankie Sue Foshie of Nampa, Idaho; nieces and nephews.

A service will be held for Lib at Sanbornton Congregational Church in Sanbornton Square, on Monday, April 21 at 2 p.m.

Services under the direction of Wilkinson-Beane, 164 Pleasant St., Laconia.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Belknap Mill Society, The Mill Plaza, Laconia, N.H. 03246; or the N.H. Humane Society, PO Box 572, Laconia, N.H. 03246.