



Mrs. Owen's Illinois Cook Book (American Antiquarian Cookbook Collection)

Mrs. T.J.V. Owen

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Mrs. Owens of Springfield had the enthusiastic support of her neighbors in compiling her cookbook—it includes a list of their names endorsing her recipes at the beginning of the book. The ladies note that the recipes are original and “choice,” but most important, “the materials called for are within the reach of all, and can be had in any of our western towns.” Because of the still-primitive 19th century transportation system, regional cookbooks like this one began to spring up, created by local cooks frustrated by the lack of availability of ingredients in some national cookbooks.

Mrs. Owens cookbook contains several hundred recipes for a wide variety of ingredients and dishes including soups, fish, meat, vegetables, eggs, bread, pastry, cakes, puddings, pickles and preserves, with sweets and desserts encompassing easily half of the contents, as was often the case in cookbooks of the day. The book contains a wealth of advice for marketing, storing foodstuffs, and housekeeping, counseling young housekeepers to always get receipts for bill payments, to keep an inventory of household goods, choose the simplest glassware and crockery patterns that can be easily replaced, and to start simple and be independent. Young mothers should “watch well, and guard well” the notions that their daughters “imbibe” and with which they grow up.

This edition of *Mrs. Owens Illinois Cook Book* was reproduced by permission from the volume in the collection of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts. Founded in 1812 by Isaiah Thomas, a Revolutionary War patriot and successful printer and publisher, the Society is a research library documenting the life of Americans from the colonial era through 1876. The Society collects, preserves, and makes available as complete a record as possible of the printed materials from the early American experience. The cookbook collection includes approximately 1,100 volumes.

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