

MRS. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT'S OWN PROGRAM

May 28, 1940

Description: Broadcast time 1:15-1:30 PM over the NBC Red Network. ER tells her listeners about the picnic she held for the king and queen of England and interviews her baker, Antionette Cowan.

Participants: Eleanor Roosevelt, Ben Grauer, Antoinette Cowan, NBC Announcer

(29:55)

[Ben Grauer:] This is *Mrs. Roosevelt's Own Program*, presented by SweetHeart Soap.

[Theme music 30:01-30:27]

[Ben Grauer:] Last Thursday we met Mrs. Roosevelt in Morgantown, West Virginia. Today, your famous guest greets you from our NBC Studios in Radio City, New York. These programs come to you with the compliments of SweetHeart Soap, one of America's best-liked beauty soaps throughout the past half century. And now ladies and gentlemen, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

[ER:] A little less than a year ago, my husband and I entertained the king and queen of England at a picnic held at Hyde Park. Many of the good things to eat which were served that day were prepared by Mrs. Antoinette Cowan. I've invited Mrs. Cowan to be my guest today and later in the program she will tell us about her fascinating work. It seems strange to think back today to the comparatively carefree time which we enjoyed then. We knew, of course, that clouds hung over Europe, and I'm afraid my husband foresaw much that has happened since for he kept describing possibilities to us which so many other people kept trying to say were after all just imaginings without any probability attached to them. Today, as we look back in the light of what has happened we realize that much that he told us then has become a fact. But, with all the recognition which this young English couple had of the seriousness of their position, disaster did not seem so imminent that they could not enjoy themselves. (32:03)

My husband had decided that we would have a picnic in his cottage at the top of the hill. The trees had not as yet attained their full foliage so we had a view into the distance below us and beyond to the placid, shining, silver river. All the little tables were set up on the porch for the most important guests while the rest of us sat on chairs scattered all around under the trees and balanced our plates on our knees and tried not to upset our cups and glasses. Just as we had in Washington an evening of music which centered round Native American artists, we decided to have here food which was typically American as far as possible. We had two American Indian artists with their accompanist entertain during the picnic. They appeared on a platform built out from the porch under the trees which seemed a perfect setting for making the audience appreciate their art.

Now that I've set the stage, I would like to introduce the lady whose efforts contributed in no small measure to the success of our picnic party, Mrs. Cowan. (33:12)

[Antoinette Cowan:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt. When you speak of my baking for your royal guests, I just can't help recalling a scene from the distant past. A little girl too small to see over the top of the stove is standing on a chair, her apron tied about her waist, and her red curls piled on top of her head as she proudly looks after her cooking.

[ER:] I think I can guess who that little girl was, Mrs. Cowan.

[Antoinette Cowan:] You're right, Mrs. Roosevelt. The little girl was I. I can hardly remember a time in my life when cooking and baking was not a joy to me, but I never dreamed that one day I'd receive an order from you to bake for the king and queen of England.

[ER:] If you'd been baking and cooking for so many years, my only regret is that I didn't make your acquaintance sooner, Mrs. Cowan. I'm curious to know whether you inherited the love for cooking or was it something all your own?

[Antoinette Cowan:] Well naturally, my mother gave me my first cooking lesson. And you may be interested to know that she also taught me the recipe for the gingerbread which I baked for your picnic, but I'm sure that even my mother never baked as much of that gingerbread at one time as I did to fill your picnic order.

[ER:] [chuckles] It was a lot of gingerbread, wasn't it? You know, I've always been curious as to how you managed to get all of your baking finished on time to have it arrive at Hyde Park just as fresh and delicious as though as it had just come out of your oven. How did you rush it to us from New York City so quickly, Mrs. Cowan?

[Antoinette Cowan:] I can hardly believe that I managed it. As you remember, your picnic was held on Sunday afternoon, last June 11. I had to bake about twenty dozen doughnuts, more than twenty-five gingerbreads, and at least twenty dozen Swedish cookies. I started to bake at five o'clock Saturday night and worked right through until morning.

[ER:] I'm sure that Sunday morning was one time in your life when you couldn't stand the sight of a baking oven.

[Antoinette Cowan:] It was hard work to be sure, but even when the baking was finished my task wasn't complete. Everything had to be carefully wrapped then hurried by taxi to the Grand Central Station and put on board train bound for Hyde Park.

[ER:] We certainly hear of many women who work all day over a hot stove, but never before have I heard of working all night over one.

[Antoinette Cowan:] It was my first all-night ex-baking experience too. Mrs. Roosevelt, I have always wanted to ask you which of the cakes did the King and Queen seem to favor? (35:58)

[ER:] As I recall it, they had nothing but praise for all the food, but the queen seemed to be most impressed with your gingerbread. I'm sure many of our listening friends would like to hear some of the delicious ways you prepare gingerbread, Mrs. Cowan. Suppose you tell us something about it?

[Antoinette Cowan:] I'll be glad to. I think gingerbread is one of the easiest cakes to prepare. And what's more, gingerbread can be quickly turned into a number of wonderful surprise dishes. I find gingerbread is delicious when served with whipped cream, or when split while warm and spread with marshmallow whip. It can also be iced with vanilla or chocolate or caramel icing. You can make it more festive by sprinkling grated coconut over any one of these icings. And you can also use it as a shortcake with any kind of fruit. Gingerbread can be kept in the refrigerator for several days, ready to be slipped into the oven whenever you need it. In my opinion, the dessert supreme is warm gingerbread spread with apple butter over which is whipped cream flavored with syrup of preserved ginger.

[ER:] That certainly does sound delicious. And I'm quite sure that it tastes just as good. We were talking before the broadcast about the sending the ladies in our radio audience copies of your recipes, Mrs. Cowan. Suppose we ask Mr. Grauer to tell our listeners how they can get these recipes? (37:26)

[Ben Grauer:] I'll be very glad to, Mrs. Roosevelt. Ladies, to get your free copy of Mrs. Cowan's special recipes for that royally good gingerbread, doughnuts, and Swedish cookies, here's all you do: write your own name and address on a postcard. Address it to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Post Office Box eighty-five, New York City. Now don't send another thing, just your own name and address. These original, easy-to-follow recipes are a free gift to you from the makers of SweetHeart Soap. They're the very same recipes that delighted a king and queen, just as SweetHeart Soap itself has been delighting us Americans for more than half a century. Its purity, its lovely delicate fragrance and its sensible price will surprise and delight you too. Won't you try SweetHeart Soap real soon? And won't you be sure to send for your free recipes? Address Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt at Post Office Box eighty-five, New York City. And now, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt returns to the microphone. (38:27)

[ER:] Mrs. Cowan, who is our guest today, has found a very unusual and profitable way to use her talent for cooking. But you haven't told us yet, Mrs. Cowan, about the doughnuts and cookies which you prepared for our Hyde Park picnic last year. Did they present any special problem?

[Antoinette Cowan:] Well, anyone who's ever baked doughnuts knows how difficult it is to bake a large number at one time. The problem is this: doughnuts have to be kept moist before they're baked in the deep, hot fat. Their lightness depends upon moistness. I don't remember anything as difficult as keeping twenty dozen doughnuts moistened enough and working against time to get them to Hyde Park for your picnic. And I'll never forget the Sunday morning after all my baking was done. I don't believe I was ever so tired before.

[ER:] Well, I hope you took a much-needed and well-deserved rest, Mrs. Cowan.

[Antoinette Cowan:] I wish I could have rested, Mrs. Roosevelt, but even after baking all night I was kept on ru-the run all the next day. It seems that many people had heard that I had received the order to do the baking for your picnic and they called me on the telephone all day long. What they wanted more than anything else were cakes made out of same batter that was used in baking for the King and Queen, But I was too tired to think about baking then.

[ER:] I hope you didn't have to waste the dough that was left over.

[Antoinette Cowan:] Oh no, I find a way to use most everything that is left over from my baking. I even use the holes in my doughnut.

[ER:] I don't quite understand. How do you do that?

[Antoinette Cowan:] I can explain that very easily. You see, when doughnuts are cut by hand, the-the dough in the center is cut out to make the hole in the doughnut. I save these small circular pieces of dough because when they're baked I often serve them in place of cookies or with cocktail canapés.

[ER:] I think that's very ingenious, Mrs. Cowan. I wish we had time to discover more of your cooking and baking secrets, but I'm afraid we'll have to wait for some future time when I hope you'll be my radio guest again. But in the meantime, thank you so much for your very pleasant visit.

[Antoinette Cowan:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt.

[ER:] And now getting back to some of the other highlights of the picnic for the English King and Queen. There were many other delicacies which were sent us from various parts of the country. Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina contributed hams cured in their own special ways. We had smoked turkey from Ossining, New York which proved to be an entirely new dish as far as our English guests were concerned.

The first smoked turkey I ever tasted came from Texas, but since then I've found that the art is being developed in many places. Last fall, I came across an NYA [National Youth Administration] project in Wisconsin where they were training young people, whose families live on borderline farms which afford them no chance for a high standard of living, to develop certain sidelines which would bring in some addition to the family income. Smoking turkeys was one of these projects. I find smoked turkey very rich, but like to use it as a late supper dish.

We also served our picnic guests the most marvelous strawberries which came direct from Secretary [Henry] Morgenthau's farm. Those English strawberries are very fine. We were very proud of our Dutchess County neighbors' ability to grow as fine berries as are to be found anywhere.

Next Thursday, on Memorial Day, I shall have as my guests two young college students -- a young man from Rutgers University and a young lady from Vassar College who will voice some of their opinions on the present-day meaning of Memorial Day to the youth of our country. (42:12)

[Ben Grauer:] Thank you very much, Mrs. Roosevelt. Ladies, when one woman changes her brand of soap perhaps it's a whim. When a few hundred people switch to another brand, it might be just a temporary fad. But when five million careful shoppers change to SweetHeart Soap, friends, there's only one answer. It's a nationwide trend. Now, no doubt these five million new users changed to SweetHeart Soap for all sorts of reasons -- fragrance, purity, thoroughness. We all have our own ideas of what's important in a bath and beauty soap. But the dramatic fact remains five million new users in just two years chose SweetHeart as the soap for them. On this evidence of SweetHeart's ability to please, we invite you to try it. We are confident that it will please you too. Get some this very day.

[Theme music 43:06-43:22]

[Ben Grauer:] [music continues softly] Remember to send for your free recipe, ladies, and treat to your family to Mrs. Cowan's gingerbread and cookies that made such a hit with England's King and Queen. The ingredients are very inexpensive and the recipes themselves cost you nothing at all. [music cuts] I'll repeat the directions: just send your name and address on a postcard to Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Box eighty-five, New York City. You'll receive your recipes soon as a free gift from the fine product that brings you these programs: SweetHeart Soap, famous for fifty years as the soap that agrees with your skin.

[Theme music plays softly] So invite a few friends to listen with you next Thursday same time, same station, when you'll again hear (music cuts) *Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt's Own Program*.

[Theme music 44:10-44:20]

[Ben Grauer:] [music continues softly] This is Ben Grauer speaking.

[NBC Announcer:] [music continues softly] This is the National Broadcasting Company. [music cuts]

[NBC Chimes]

(44:36)

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