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Granny's Legacy

Lynn Coble owns more than 6,500 cookbooks. She has more recipes than she'll ever be able to try, yet she hunts for more.

By DIANE SUMMERVILLE

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Lynn Coble remembers the moment she found it. It was a hot day, and she was rummaging through a box at a flea market in Alamance County. She pulled the little book out of a pile of leaflets (the kind of cookbook you don't see anymore). She glanced at the faded brown cover and read across the bottom of it, "Asheboro Street Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C."

Lynn smiled — that was the church her granny grew up in. If the story ended here, that would have been enough. Lynn, who lives with her husband and son in Randolph County, collects community cookbooks. She's been collecting them since she was a teenager, when her grandmother who was raising her died and Lynn started cooking for her grandfather and herself.

"After a little while, Paw said to me, 'I don't know about you, but I'm getting kind of tired of McDonald's,'" Lynn says. So she started looking for recipes, and that led to cookbooks.

Today, almost 40 years later, her collection numbers more than 6,500 — her teenage son, T.J., stopped counting at that number when he and his mom organized all the books recently. And those are just the books she's kept. To support her hobby, Lynn, who many know only as the Cookbook Lady, sells and trades books. If she finds she has duplicates (or triplicates), she'll cull them from the volumes that fill bookshelves and boxes.

But she'll never sell the Asheboro Street Baptist Church cookbook. As she flipped through the first few pages that day at the flea market, she discovered a church directory. And there, under the Vs, she saw Granny's name — Miss Elizabeth Vowell of Bellevue Street. The book was published in 1926; Granny would have been 16 years old.

"It was better than finding gold," Lynn

Granny's Potato Candy

- 1 small potato
- 1 pound powdered sugar
- a few drops of vanilla
- creamy peanut butter

Boil a small potato in skin until done. Cool and peel, then mash in a medium bowl until there are no lumps. Add a few drops of vanilla. Slowly work in powdered sugar until dough forms. Roll out on surface that has been sprinkled with powdered sugar. Spread with creamy peanut butter, and roll into a log shape. Slice into ½-inch pieces. Refrigerate in tightly covered container.

— Elizabeth Vowell Sharpe

Lynn Coble's family gobbles up her granny's potato candy every chance they get.



The shelves in Lynn's library are filled mostly with North Carolina community cookbooks. Her favorite is *Carolina Cooking*, produced by AT&T Pioneers. She keeps two copies: one that she uses regularly and one that she'll have buried with her.

says, pressing her hand to her chest. "I felt for a minute that she was there with me."

When you lose someone as important as Granny was to her at such a young age, it leaves a hole, a space not easily filled.

"If I could have her back for one day," she says, "just to let her know how much I appreciate what she did for me ..."

Lynn's grandparents took her in when she was small. And they loved her and raised her. As she walks among her books, occasionally pulling one from a shelf and sharing the story of where it came from or why this one or that one is special, Lynn often says, "I'm just sentimental."

One time a book dealer offered to buy her entire collection, which includes first editions and books so old the directions don't refer to temperatures but use terms like "low fire." She told the dealer no. Not because his offer wasn't reasonable, but because he couldn't possibly offer enough.

Most of Lynn's collection is made up of church and community cookbooks, all from Southern towns, most from North Carolina. She has thousands of them, their red, green, blue, and white plastic spines running the lengths of her shelves.

"Yes, I probably have a thousand of the same pound cake recipe," Lynn says. "But every cookbook is different. Every recipe is in there for a reason. To me, they're meaningful because they meant something to the person who put them in there."

She thinks of Granny. And she points to a black-and-white photo that she took of her grandmother, in the kitchen, not long before she died. And she knows why these old cookbooks are so important to her.

"It goes back to this lady right here." 🇺🇸

Diane Summerville is the senior editor at Our State Magazine.

Aunt Helen's Brown Sugar Pie

- 1 cup light brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons flour
- dash salt
- 2 eggs beaten
- ½ teaspoon butter flavoring
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ⅔ cup milk
- 1 piecrust, unbaked

Mix all ingredients until creamy. Pour into piecrust. Bake at 300° for 30 minutes or until set.

—Helen Wilkes

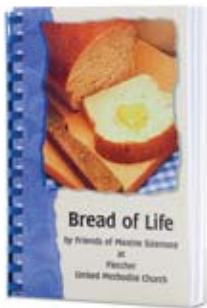


When Lynn Coble's grandmother passed away, her aunt, Helen Wilkes, welcomed Lynn into her kitchen to learn how to put a hearty meal on the table. Between her grandmother's early guidance and the lessons she learned at her aunt's side, Lynn grew into an exceptional cook. Here, she shares with readers a recipe for brown sugar pie that helps her feel close to her family.

Lynn Coble's Chicken Pie

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1/3 cup flour
- 1 tablespoon chicken bouillon or 1 cube
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 3 cups milk
- 3 cups chicken, cooked
- 1 cup peas, cooked
- 1 cup carrots, cooked and diced
- 1 cup potatoes, cooked and diced, or rice, cooked
- 1 Pillsbury refrigerated piecrust, uncooked

Preheat oven to 375°. Melt butter in medium saucepan. Add flour, bouillon, salt, and pepper. Stir until blended, then stir in milk until thickened. Add chicken and vegetables. Pour into casserole, deep-dish pie plate, or skillet. Add top crust. Bake for 45 minutes.



Maxine Sizemore, a member of Fletcher United Methodist Church for more than 50 years, started the Bread of Life bake sale at the church to raise money for the town's first Relay for Life. When she died of cancer, the church honored the memory of her dedicated service and inspiring kindness with the *Bread of Life* cookbook. All proceeds go to Relay for Life. To order, contact the church office at (828) 684-7155.

Scalloped Corn and Tomatoes

- 6 cups corn
- 2 cups bread crumbs
- 1 stick butter
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 6 tomatoes, sliced

Put a layer of corn on the bottom of a greased 3-quart casserole dish. Cover with a layer of bread crumbs. Dot the bread crumbs with butter, and salt and pepper to taste. Add a layer of sliced tomatoes. Dot the tomatoes with butter, and salt and pepper to taste. Alternate layers in this way until the pan is full. End



with a layer of bread crumbs. Bake in a preheated 350° oven for about 30 minutes or until crumbs are brown. Yield: 8-10 servings.

— Jean Aiken

Strawberry-Nut Bread

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1¼ cups vegetable oil
- 2 cups strawberries, sliced (fresh or frozen)
- 1½ cups pecans, chopped

Combine dry ingredients. Add eggs, oil, strawberries, and pecans. Stir just until all ingredients are moistened. Spoon batter into two well-greased loaf pans. Bake at 350° for 60-70 minutes until cake tests done. Cool in pans 5 minutes. Remove to wire rack to cool completely. Freezes well.

— *Maxine Sizemore*





In 2005, the Golden Garbers at Garber United Methodist Church in New Bern put out the word they were producing a cookbook. Members responded with oodles of recipes that fill *The Joy of Sharing*. All proceeds support the church's missions. To order a copy, contact the church office at (252) 637-4022.

Swiss Asparagus Casserole

- 5 tablespoons butter, divided
- 2 cups fresh asparagus, sliced diagonally
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 1 tablespoon flour
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup Swiss cheese, shredded
- ¼ cup cracker crumbs



Melt 2 tablespoons butter in large skillet. Sauté asparagus for 2 to 3 minutes until barely tender. Remove from pan, and set aside. In same skillet, sauté onion in 2 tablespoons butter until onion is soft. Stir in flour, salt, and pepper. Cook for 1 minute until flour is well blended. Add sour cream and shredded cheese. Cook, stirring constantly, over low heat until cheese melts. Spoon asparagus into a buttered shallow baking dish. Top with cheese-and-sour-cream mixture. Sprinkle with crumbs, and dot with remaining butter. Bake at 400° for 20 minutes. If top is not brown, place under broiler for an additional minute or two.

— Ann K. Sprenger



Crock-Pot Italian Pork Chops

- 4 to 6 lean pork chops
- 1 tablespoon oil
- ½ pound fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 (8-ounce) cans tomato sauce
- ¼ cup dry sherry or water
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon each of salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon parsley flakes
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- ½ teaspoon basil
- 2 medium green peppers, cut into rings
- Egg noodles, for serving



Trim excess fat off pork chops. In a medium skillet, heat oil and brown chops on both sides. Drain pork chops on paper towels. Put mushrooms, onions, and garlic in the bottom of a Crock-Pot. Arrange pork chops on top of vegetables. In a bowl, combine tomato sauce, sherry (or water), lemon juice, salt, and spices. Pour over chops. Cover and cook on low for 7 to 9 hours. Thirty minutes before serving, add green pepper on top of chops. Serve over egg noodles.

— *Chuck Simpson*

