

Editorial Postscript

Readers of OLD-TIME NEW ENGLAND for Fall 1966 may be interested to know that the Society's *American Cookery*, 1812, which so charmed Barbara G. Carson and Caroline C. Hollingsworth, is one of several early editions of our very first cookbook by an American author. Originally published in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1796, it was so well received that a second, revised edition appeared in Albany that same year. (Until very recently this latter edition, undated, was believed to have been published in 1800.) Unlike some subsequent printings, the 1812 edition is similar to the second and therefore contains numerous recipes not found in the original work. A comparison of these editions reveals that the first word of the recipe "To smother a Fowl in Oysters" was originally "Fill," the "Gill" of the 1812 edition being a printer's error. The author of this outstanding American work was Amelia Simmons about whom nothing is known beyond her claim of being an American orphan.

Aside from its interest as being our first, her work on cookery is also of great significance for using certain American foods and American words for the first time in print. A discussion of the importance of Amelia Simmons' accomplishment may be found in the *William and Mary Quarterly* for January 1957. *American Cookery* has had a number of modern reprintings, among them a facsimile edition by the Oxford University Press, a limited edition now hard to come by. The Society's copy of the 1812 edition is one of only four known examples.

(Signed) MARY TOLFORD WILSON
(MRS. ARTHUR M. WILSON)