

The Cosmopolitanism of Printed Recipes in the Early Modern Maritimes

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The *Early Modern Maritime Recipe* (EMMR) database includes hundreds of recipes for a diverse array of things: medical remedies, including for dentistry and veterinary medicine – and biting of a mad dog; cosmetics; drinks, including for brewing beer, raisin wine, ginger wine, gooseberry wine; tanning and dyeing leather and treating fabric; paint and varnish; and household instructions, for things like cleaning supplies, laundry instructions, and how to catch rats. There are also recipes for food and many sets of agricultural instructions (how to prevent smut in wheat, how to make pot ash and the like). Some of these test the definition of a recipe. Most of the recipes we found are in English, but a few are in French, Latin, and German. They are from the 1750s onwards and are found in archives in Fredericton, Sackville, Saint John, and Fort Beausejour, New Brunswick; Halifax, Sydney, and Wolfville, Nova Scotia, and Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. The printed recipes are in newspapers, while the manuscript ones are in diaries, letters, loose papers, and notebooks that include an array of other materials, such as accounts and military orders.

The citational practices of the printed recipes we have found contribute a great deal to our understanding the cultural work of recipes in the early modern world. Because no recipe books were printed in the Maritimes before 1800, there are no authored print collections, although recipe books printed elsewhere were read in the Maritimes. What we have instead in this region is single

printed recipes which appeared in newspapers: the *Royal Gazette and Miscellany of the Island of Saint John* (1791-94) from Charlottetown, *The Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser* (from Shelburne, 1785-1796), *Port-Roseway Gazette and the Shelburne Advertiser* (1785-87), *Royal American Gazette* (from Shelburne, 1785-86), and from Halifax, in

The Nova Scotia Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser (1752 onwards),
The Weekly Chronicle (1786-1826),
The Halifax Gazette (1752-65),
Nova Scotia Gazette (1766-70),
Halifax Journal (1780-1800)
Nova Scotia Calendar or Almanac (1776-1800)
Nova Scotia Magazine (1789-92)
Royal Gazette and the Nova Scotia Advertiser (1789-1800)
Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle (1770-89)

Neither have we yet found many volumes of handwritten recipes, collected by individuals or across generations. Such domestic collections are very common in English archives, but in the Maritimes, manuscript recipes are for the most part either loose papers or parts of handwritten books with another focus. The recipe culture of the Maritimes is also more masculine, with only a few recipes as identifiably belonging to women in manuscript form (Sarah Creighton Wilkins's notebook is the exception). The individuals identified as sources for recipes in newspapers so far are all male, as well.

The main feature I want to focus on here is the extent to which the print culture of recipes in the Maritimes challenges the stereotyped and commodified construction of the Maritimes as, in Herb Wyile's words, "contented, insular, communal, rural Folk" – a picture he also challenges in *Anne of Tim Hortons* (239). In this project, we see this perspective undermined by the citation of sources. Naming the source is a common component of a recipe's authority as proved and experimented knowledge, as

legitimate. Sometimes in the early modern world this legitimacy rested on the social class of the source, and we see this in these recipes too. For instance, a recipe for a remedy for whooping cough is printed in *Nova Scotia Gazette* in 1771 as “communicated by a person of distinction” (“Receipt for Hooping Cough”). Another cure, for the Wood Evil, Frog III, Rickets, Goggles or shaking in sheep, comes from a “respectable quarter” (Fraser). But in recipe culture more important than social status is the recipe’s status as proved, a situation that Elaine Leong and Sara Pennell have shown to contribute to the social, gender, economic, and geographic diversity of sources in recipe books. While our printed recipes do not include all of these forms of diversity – most notably there is little gender diversity – they are notable in their geographic diversity. Through the citation of sources from around the world in printed recipes, Maritime print culture is made to participate in a globalized culture of knowledge, one that included institutionalized authorities, “gentlemen,” and other experienced men in Great Britain and the American states, alongside English colonists and colonized peoples, in India and the Middle East, and enslaved people in America. These citations, including their geographical markers, work to place Maritime knowledge on the world stage, make visible networks of alliance that cross national borders, and articulate a shared commitment to what is presented as progress. It is a print recipe culture in which neither women nor local people, such as Mi’kmaq or Acadians, were imagined to participate.

The most common citation practice in these recipes is reprinting recipes with geographic markers that purport to establish an original printed source. A major locale is the American states. Instructions for maple sugar come from an unnamed Boston paper in a letter from Philadelphia (“Untitled Letter”); another on making maple sugar is from a late Philadelphia publication (“Remarks”); a recipe for blackberry jelly asserting its merits in curing gravel and

stone is from the *New York Journal* ("Efficacy"); and a recipe for "Dr Martin's canker powder" is from the *Virginia Gazette*. Irish, English, and Scottish sources are also well represented. The Dublin *Universal Magazine* is the source of a certain cure for the Measles in Swine which was printed in both *Nova Scotia Magazine* in 1791 and, from Charlottetown, the *Royal Gazette and Miscellany* in 1794 ("A Certain Cure"). From the *Hibernian Magazine*, from Dublin, comes a receipt for a red currant wine ("Receipt for Making Currant Wine"). A letter on the extracting of the essence of bark that gives instructions on tanning was taken from the *Londonderry Journal*, as communication from the Dublin Society ("On the Extraction of the Essence of Bark"). A cure for scurvy is from an English magazine ("Cure for the Scurvy"), and the *European Magazine*, published in London, is the source of two sets of instructions about growing and preserving turnips ("Method of Preserving Cabbages"). Recipes for various paint colours are reprinted from the proceedings of the Royal Society of London ("Composition"). The proceedings of the Scottish Royal Society also appear as sources, amongst others from Scotland.

Beyond these English-language print sources, there are also references to other European texts. Instructions on how to "multiply the increase of corn of any kind," appearing in the *Royal Gazette and Miscellany* are said to be extracted from a "small French work now purportedly circulating in America under the title *Agronome*, or the *Farmer's Pocket Dictionary*" (Alletz). A remedy for the gout is "exactly transcribed from a very ancient Dutch author" ("For the Gout"). These geographically marked citations are often not precise enough to allow readers to easily locate the original, but they do perform their engagement with the knowledge culture of the Atlantic world. They imagine a continuity between what English settlers in the Maritime region need to know and what people in Great Britain, Europe, or the American states might already have discovered, and bring that knowledge here to be used.

The recipes also employ citations with geographical markers attached to named individuals. A recipe for making parmesan cheese is said to be brought from Italy by Mr. Arthur Young, well known purportedly for his labours in agriculture. While Mr. Young's experience with cows stands on its own to authorize the recipe, other recipes frame the recipe maker's experience with the authority of institutional affiliations. Starting at the top of European hierarchies of knowledge, directions for making a composition for curing diseases, defects, and injuries in all kinds of fruit and forest trees, signed by William Forsyth in the Royal Gardens, Kensington printed in the same magazine is described as being the consequence of an address to the House of Commons and approved by the king. "A Method of Making Pot-Ash" appears as a letter from a Dr. Dexter to the American Academy of Arts and Science. Other institutions are more regional. A recipe for an improved method of making cider was printed in *Nova Scotia Magazine* as being communicated to the Burlington Agricultural Society – in Massachusetts – by a Mr. Clifford, who professed to have found by many experiments a method that is a great advantage to the cider. Other institutional sources are European. A method of making potato bread is from M. Parmentier Member of the College of Pharmacy at Paris. Recipes like these construct the sources as knowing agents, men whose learnedness in cider-making and potato bread merit particular remembering and whose knowledge has been sanctioned, not just by being printed but by social institutions.

Apart from these English-speaking countries, several recipes also come from other English colonies, where both English colonists and the native inhabitants are named as sources. For instance, a method of dying red and yellow leather printed in *Nova Scotia Magazine* in 1790 is reported as "practiced in the East by Mr Philipppo an Asiatic. For which he received a Reward of 10£ from the Society of Arts &c in England and afterwards their Gold Medal." In a

recipe that contains ingredients named as “eastern drug[s]” that can, as a footnote says, be obtained in Asia, Africa, the Levant, and in Aleppo, Mr. Philippo’s authority is valuable on its own but legitimized by way of the English Society of Arts, which has sanctioned and rewarded him. The awards confirm the recipe’s merit. A recipe “Some account of Lac, with the Method of purifying it for dying Scarlet, Painting, making sealing Wax, Varnishes &c.” in *Nova Scotia Magazine* focuses more narrowly on the English source, a Mr. Robert Saunders, identified as a Surgeon at Boglepoor in Bengal. The text includes a report of his observations of lac on the tree, the progress of the lac insect now in his custody, and the information of a gentleman residing at Goalpara on the borders of Assam. The knowledge of the Bengalese appears in the understatement “it is understood in Bengal,” which nevertheless suggests they already know this technique (Saunders). By printing recipes from such far-flung places – and there are more like this, particularly from India – in Nova Scotian newspapers, colonial knowledge is brought into the service of a new group of English settlers. The transfer of knowledge presupposes that knowledge from one colonial project can enhance another.

The last named geographically-inflected source that I want to discuss is the enslaved American man who appears as the source of an “Effectual Cure for the Stone” in *The Halifax Gazette*. This recipe has layered geographical markers that run up the Atlantic seaboard. The recipe is in a letter from Daniel Roberdeau (a merchant, Brigadier General, and congressman who retired to Alexandria), who wrote to the printer of the *Columbian Centinel* (in Boston) requesting publication of a recipe he had found in a late Alexandria paper. In Virginia, a Richard Major – a minister in Loudoun County (in Virginia) – had learned the recipe from “a negro man [who] proffered to cure him” (“Effectual Cure”). The remedy is an expressed juice of horsemint and red onions, to be taken morning and

evening, but surrounding it is a story of how the Major had originally offered the man three pounds for his cure. The remedy turned out to be so efficacious that the Major gave him his freedom instead. Recipes are often printed, presented as treasures, with recipe books having titles like *The Book of Secrets*, *A Precious Treasury*, and *The Treasurie of Commodious Conceits*. But human freedom certainly raises the stakes around the value of a recipe – even as it records that a man’s life could be thought to be worth, at best, a recipe.

Robert Mayhew has characterized early modern science as a “community held together by ink, both on the printed page and in the written letter,” where citations document scholars’ “imagined communities of scholarly interlocuters and the geography thereof” (77). By 1800, that scientific culture was not eurocentric but characterized by a “cosmopolitan inclusiveness” (88), with ideals set against the constraints of political division. With Maritime recipes, there is something of this, for the politics of the American Revolution don’t seem notably to constrain recipe sharing. But in its cosmopolitan inclusion, all sources are not treated the same. Asian and African American voices appear through report rather than directly. Female and local voices appear almost not at all. The most local source to be cited that we have found so far appears in a method of preparing seed wheat in a 1791 letter from a Mr. Arnold Shaw of Newport to the Secretary of the Agricultural Society for the County of Hants, but if the society has redirected the letter to the paper, the method itself still comes from America. And even though Indigenous plants – the maple tree, for instance – appear in recipes, the recipes for maple are from English and American men who have done experiments on how to collect maple syrup more efficiently or – like this one – from a gent from the East India Company applying a technique from Goa to it.

Where do these observations lead us? Lots of places. These recipes provide a particular perspective on the studies of colonial science and the movement of plants and knowledge about them around the world by Alfred Crosby, Londa Schiebinger, and others. We see a culture that had few local institutional authorities bringing institutions of learning from elsewhere into the region, alongside sources from the American states, Great Britain, Europe, and other British colonies, and where even food recipes are presented as experiments. These recipes also notably document an English settler culture where gathering useful knowledge is presented as a public good. A "Receipt to make Raisin Wine" is published for the benefit of the public and one for potato soup as a benefit to the poor (Close). A recipe for maple sugar begins with the assertion that "He who enables another to obtain any necessary of life either cheaper or more independently than heretofore adds a new source of happiness to man" ("Remarks"). This happiness is being constituted on particular political terms. There are many more questions we can ask about recipes, but I hope that you can see that there is in these recipes, to paraphrase, our most famous Maritime fictional character, a lot of scope for the imagination.

This paper was presented at the October 2017 meeting of the Atlantic Medieval and Early Modern Group.

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