

**Flavor and
Function: A
Historical and
Cultural Exploration
of Food**

By Meghan O'Kelley

Learning Objectives

- I will post the updates sent to me by Patrick Merscher on the NOVIC Tomato Trial on my WordPress e-journal to document the progress of the project.
- I will create week-long projects to explore and discover the historical and cultural implications of different foods, as demonstrated in Thomas Jefferson's Crème Brûlée by Thomas J. Craughwell. Other text will include Founding Foodies by Dave DeWitt, Food Fights & Culture Wars by Tom Nealon, and What Our Ancestors Ate and Why it Matters: 100 Million Years of Food by Stephen Le.
- I will work with a group of other students to rehabilitate Evergreen's Elizabethan herb garden to allow us to eventually dry herbs, package teas, and sell our products at the Evergreen farm stand.

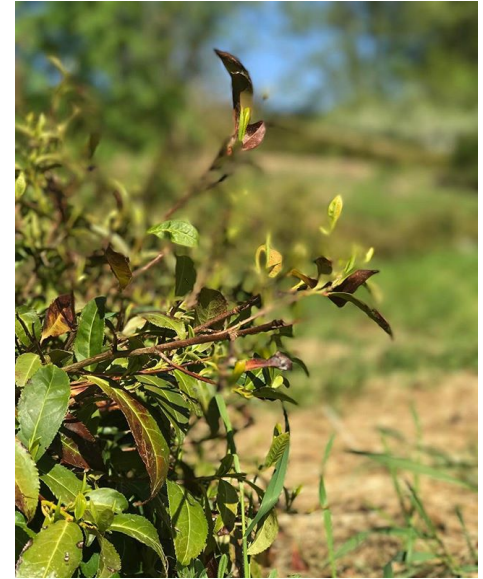
Log, ILC, Map, Image Gallery

Log found [here](#).

ILC found [here](#).

Map found [here](#).

Image Gallery found [here](#).



Did I do that stuff?

NOVIC Trial:

Documentation found [here](#).



They grow up so fast!
All content is courtesy
of Patrick Merscher,
who worked on and
documented this
project.



Did I do that stuff?

Historical Foods Project:

Documentation found [here](#).



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Historical
chicken!



Historical lemonade!

<- Historical bread!

Did I do that stuff?

Herb Garden Project:

Documentation found [here](#).



Best of Seminar Papers

- **Week 2:** In conversation, these text make a strong argument that even from a purely individualistic and selfish perspective, small-scale farming and slow food may be the alternatives to globalization and commodification which offer the most pleasure to the consumer.
- **Week 3:** Though our privileged capitalistic spending on violently manufactured produce may be a result of our wealth, for many, it is not. These agribusiness-dependent means of production mean not only that expensive produce is available to the wealthy elite, but that more affordable produce is available to people who otherwise couldn't afford it. For them, nutritionally, any produce (regardless of its GMO content or exploitative origins) is better than none, and without the privilege of wealth, they don't have the option of being a discerning consumer.
- **Week 5:** If the price of ignorance or the conscious disengagement from the suffering of others is this high, perhaps it is time for us to attempt to feel that pain more deeply, examine it further, and refuse to rest until it has ended for each person suffering it firsthand.

Best of Seminar Papers Continued

- **Week 6:** Land cannot be owned – it is too complex, too biodiverse and unknowable to truly be held by any one species, much less any one person. If we want to respect the history of the land as well as the people on it, we must find a way to offer autonomous ownership back to both the black and first nations peoples from which it was stolen.
- **Week 8:** It's much easier to sell oppression if you package it nicely. You can sell social control if you call it a progressive housing development. You can sell a reliance on an oppressive economic system that dictates who eats and who goes hungry if enough people profit from it. You can sell racism if you call it politeness and the maintenance of order. When I read these books and articles, I wonder what I am being sold. Realizing that so many of the things I love and take advantage of at Evergreen are only available to me because I'm white has been harder than I thought.
- **Week 9:** America isn't just capitalism and packaging – it is the thousands of years of complex communities built around hunting, gathering, and cultivation that survived and thrived across the continent. It is the many waves of immigrants and the gifts and perils they brought, and the African slaves forced here who built community and upheld dignity in the most unimaginable of conditions. It is Ellis Island and Little Italy and the farm-to-table movement and wild corn growing in the plains. It is a great unfinished symphony.

Best of Tasting Labs

- **Week 5:** The human impact of seed ownership or seed sovereignty had never been clear to me before. This documentary was eye opening and thought provoking, and I couldn't help but furiously scribble notes and quotations as I watched. For example, I was instantly struck by Will Bonsall's statement that "genetic diversity is the hedge between us and global famine." Monocropping of GMO seeds seems to some like the perfect solution to global hunger crises, but it seems clear to many scientists and farmers that this will be the swiftest way to plunge us into a global dustbowl.
- **Week 7:** Comfort food is subjective and seems to be based in what you know – foods that are new or adventurous rarely feel comforting in one's most vulnerable moments. Sometimes, we just need a taste of home.
- **Week 8:** First, we tasted honey water, the first stage of the mead. I noticed notes of clover and hay, and a bit of blackberry. Next, we tasted immature mead, from which I got white grape, apricot, mango, rose, and a bit of brown sugar. Then, we tried a short mead, which was carbonated and had a biscuit-like flavor, similar to baked bread. I also tasted praline, orange blossom, and cheese. Finally, we tasted a commercial mead, which I did not like at all. It tasted very animal, almost like manure. I couldn't find much complexity in the flavor because I was overwhelmed by its foulness.
- **Week 9:** I think the first time I had matcha, I was two years old and in Japan. I remember enjoying the bitter grassy tea, especially when combined with the red bean cakes offered with it during a tea break from meditation at a Buddhist temple my family visited. I have so few memories from that time in my life, but the ones surrounding food are much more vivid than I would expect for being so young.

Best of Project Weekly



Mid-Quarter Self-Evaluation

i speak to the cow in the
abattoir:

“i am going to save you
with poetry,”

but he does not listen.

blank eyed and breathing
heavy,

does he anticipate the
drop?

is the memory of death
passed down?

will he contemplate the
end?

i speak to the pyramid of
identical roma tomatoes in
the produce aisle at
safeway:

“i am going to save you with
poetry,”

but they are too far gone,

they do not remember the
sun

or the water

or their ancestors.

these tomatoes are dead
before they are plucked from
the vine,

they have no soul, and they do
not nourish me.

where is the seed that grew
you?

who taught you that a tomato
should be impervious,

the armadillo of fruits,

weathered and armored and
pugnacious, fuming, foaming at
the core,

they fight against my teeth.

where are the split-open,
thin-skinned and honey-sweet
tomatoes of my childhood?

will they ever remember where
they came from?



Best of Bibliography

- Craughwell, T. J. Thomas Jefferson's Crème Brûlée: How a Founding Father and his Slave James Hemings Introduced French Cuisine to America
- DeWitt, D. The Founding Foodies
- Nealon, T. Food Fights & Culture Wars: A Secret History of Taste

And Now....

...for extra drama and flair, I am going to complete the final step in preparing Thomas Jefferson's Creme Brulee, demonstrating in the most theatrical way possible the concept of "farm to table."

Enjoy your taste of history and thank you for listening!

Did I complete my ILC? The proof is in the pudding. Or, custard, as it were...

