

**THE FOOD OF CERTAIN
AMERICAN INDIANS AND
THEIR METHODS OF
PREPARING IT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649236046

The Food of Certain American Indians and Their Methods of Preparing it by Lucien Carr

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

LUCIEN CARR

**THE FOOD OF CERTAIN
AMERICAN INDIANS AND
THEIR METHODS OF
PREPARING IT**

0
E23f

THE FOOD
OF
CERTAIN AMERICAN INDIANS
AND THEIR METHODS
OF
PREPARING IT.

BY
LUCIEN CARR.

FROM PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, AT THE
SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING, APRIL 24, 1895.

Worcester, Mass., U. S. A.
CHARLES HAMILTON, PRINTER,
311 MAIN STREET.
1895.

ARNOLD ARBORETUM
JAMAICA PLAIN

THE FOOD OF CERTAIN AMERICAN INDIANS AND THEIR METHODS OF PREPARING IT.

THE theory that "a man is what he eats" can hardly be said to account for all the phenomena that attended the progress of the human race from savagery to civilization, and yet there is truth enough in it to justify an examination into the food supply of any people whose position in the scale of development may become a subject of inquiry. Especially is this true of savage and barbarous peoples, or rather it will apply to any people—ourselves for example—in the early phases of existence; for within certain limits, there is believed to be no surer indicator of the different culture periods through which the race has progressed, than can be found in the arts of subsistence as they have been successively developed. Between the fruit and nut diet to which primeval man is supposed to have been limited, and the luxurious dinner table of his civilized descendant, there was a long and wearisome journey; and looking back over the record, we find it divided into certain steps or stages, of which the hunter, the herdsman and the farmer may be considered as living embodiments.

Useful as is this classification, it is arbitrary, and so far as it is based upon only one of the many lines of development along which the race must move, it is incomplete. So, too, there are instances in which, owing to what Morgan¹ terms "the unequal endowment of the two hemispheres" in the way of animal and plant life, it is inapplicable. On the other hand, it possesses the merit of describing states of society that are not only not imaginary,

¹ Ancient Society, pp. 11, 22, 26: New York, 1877.

but are in actual existence; and these states follow each other in such an orderly fashion that civilization may be said to have grown up through them.¹ It is even doubtful whether it could have been developed under any other conditions.

Upon this point an examination into the methods of subsistence of our North American Indians may throw some light. When first known to us, they were hunters, *i. e.*, they were still in the first or lowest stage of existence; for although they cultivated corn,² beans, tobacco³ and

¹ Tylor, *Anthropology*, p. 24: New York, 1881.

² "It was found in cultivation from the southern extremity of Chili to the fortieth parallel of north latitude, beyond which limits the low temperature renders it an uncertain crop": Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 23, New York, 1873. "Le Mahiz . . . est la nourriture principale des Peuples de l'Amérique": Le Page du Pratz, *Histoire de la Louisiane*, Tome III., p. 342, Paris, 1768. "Le mais . . . lequel est le fondement de la nourriture de presque toutes les Nations sédentaires d'un bout de l'Amérique à l'autre": Lafitau, *Mœurs des Sauvages Américains*, Tome III., p. 57, Paris, 1724. Cf. *Maize: A Botanical and Economic Study*, by John W. Harshbarger, Philadelphia, 1893.

³ "There groweth also a certain kind of herbe, whereof in Sommer they make great provision for all the yeere, making great account of it, and onely men use of it, and first they cause it to be dried in the Sunne, then weare it about their neckes wrapped in a little beaste's skinne made like a little bagge, with a hollow peece of wood or stone like a pipe: then when they please they make powder of it, and then put it in one of the ends of the said cornet or pipe, and laying a cole of fire upon it, at the other end sucke so long, that they fill their bodles full of smoke, till that it cometh out of their mouth and nostrils, even as out of the Tonnell of a chimney": Cartier, in Hakluyt's *Early English Voyages to America*, Vol. II., p. 127, Edinburgh, 1889. "Nous y velsmes force citrouilles, courges et petuns qu' ils cultivent aussi": Champlain, describing Indians of New England, Vol. I., pp. 95, 113, Paris, 1890. "Noz sauvages font aussi grand labourage de Petun. . . . Ils soutiendront quelque fois la faim huit jours avec cette fumée": Lescaubot, p. 811, Paris, 1866. Cf. Harlot, in Hakluyt, II., p. 389, Edinburgh, 1889. Adair, *History of the North American Indians*, p. 408, London, 1775. Beverly, *Histoire de la Virginie*, p. 207, Amsterdam, 1707. Le Page du Pratz, *Histoire de la Louisiane*, Vol. III., p. 300, Paris, 1758. Bartram, *Travels through Florida*, pp. 91, 191, Dublin, 1793. Hunter, *Memoirs*, p. 257, London, 1824, tells us that the Osages "raised it for the consumption of their families," and Carver, *Travels*, p. 37, says that the Winnebagoes of Wisconsin cultivated it. In the Relation for 1642, p. 97, and 1667, p. 23, Quebec, 1858, we find that the Sioux, "cultivent la terre à la façon de nos Hurons, recueillent du bled d' Inde et du Petun." Of the religious uses of tobacco, and of its effects physical, mental and moral, consult Lafitau, *Mœurs des Sauvages Américains*, III., pp. 115 et seq., Paris,

other things, and were thus entitled to rank as farmers, yet they had no domestic animals,¹ unless dogs are to be considered as such,² and this made them dependent upon the chase for a large part of their food, and, of course, limited or rather prevented their progress beyond the savage condition in which they were found. Whether, alone and unaided, they could have extricated themselves from this anomalous position, is a matter into which we need not inquire. All that can be said is that they had the buffalo;³ and whilst it was certainly possible for them to utilize this animal in the shambles and in the cultivation of their fields, in such a manner as to give them practical control in the production of their food supply, yet they had not done so; and we may be very sure that without such control, popu-

1724. Marquette, in *Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi*, pp. 35 *et seq.*. New York, 1852. Charlevoix, V., pp. 311 *et seq.*, and VI., pp. 48, 70, 71, Paris, 1744. Ferrot, pp. 20, 21, 96, 276, *etc.*, Leipzig and Paris, 1864. Father Gravier in *Shea's Early Voyages*, pp. 129 *et seq.* Josselyn's *Two Voyages* in 3d Series, Massachusetts Hist. Collections, Vol. III., p. 262. Relations, 1611, p. 16, Quebec, 1898. Williams's Key in *Narragansett Club Publications*, I., p. 48.

¹ Gomara's statement "No tienen sus dueños otra riqueza" in *Historie General de los Indias*, p. 275. Anvers, 1554, is sometimes quoted as proof that the Indians had domesticated the buffalo, but it does not necessarily bear that interpretation, and besides it lacks confirmation. The same remark will apply to Champlain's statement, Vol. I., p. 377, Paris, 1830, that the Indians of Canada "engraissent aussi des ours qu'ils gardent deux ou trois ans pour se festoyer." That the Indians tamed turkeys, eagles, cranes and perhaps some other birds, as well as different kinds of animals, is well known, but they do not come within the terms of my assertion.

² Among the Indians of the plains, dogs were used as beasts of burden at a very early date. On this point see Gomara, in Hakluyt, *Early Voyages*, Vol. III., p. 137, Edinburgh, 1890, and Castaneda in Ternaux Compans, IX., pp. 117, 190. The latter author says: "Les Querechos y Toyas ont de grands troupeaux de chiens qui portent leur bagage; ils l'attachent sur le dos de ces animaux au moyen d'une saugle et d'un petit bât. Quand le charge se dérange les chiens se mettent à hurler pour avertir leur maître de l'arranger."

³ The buffalo was probably a late comer east of the Mississippi. J. A. Allen, in *American Bisons Living and Extinct*, Cambridge, 1878, discusses at some length the question of the eastern limit of the range of the animal, and concludes that except in small numbers and occasional bands, it was not known east of the Alleghany or south of the Tennessee. It did not reach either Canada or New York and the evidence of its existence in Florida and Alabama is regarded as doubtful.

lation must necessarily have been limited,¹ and civilization on the lines on which they were moving was impossible.

But whilst all this is too plain to admit of an argument, it is well to remember that the terms hunter, herdsman and farmer and their analogues, savage, barbarian and civilized man, are general in their character, and like the conditions they describe, are susceptible of division. Indeed, there are occasions when even these minor divisions are so widely divergent that it may become necessary, in determining the culture-status of a people, to lay aside the general classification altogether, and go into a critical examination of the details of their daily life. Such, in fact, seems to be the case with our Indians. For reasons given above, their advance along the lines over which they had to pass in their progress from savagery to civilization, was so unequal that, on comparing them with their fellow savages of the eastern world, they will be found to have lagged behind in certain respects, whilst in others they were far ahead. Obviously, in a case of this kind the term savage, considered as a measure of progress, would have two very different meanings; and naturally enough, pictures taken from two such discordant points of view would have but little in common. To mark these discrepancies, and thus fix the Indian's place in the scale of civilization, as far as a study of the subject will enable us to do so, is the object of this inquiry into the food of certain of our tribes and their different methods of preparing it.

Speaking in a general way, the old chronicler was not far wrong when he told us that the Indian "lived on what he got by hunting, fishing and cultivating the soil."² Unquestionably, he derived the bulk of his food from these sources, though there were times, and unfortunately they

¹ Cf. Gallatin, *Origin of American Civilization*, in *Transactions of the American Ethnological Society*, Vol. I., p. 194: New York, 1845.

² "Leur coutume est que chaque ménage vit de ce qu'il pesche, chause et seme": Sagard, *Voyage du Pays des Hurons*, Vol. I., p. 92: Paris, 1865.

were somewhat frequent, when he was glad to fill out his bill of fare with the fruits, nuts and edible roots and grasses with which a bountiful nature supplied him. Dividing all these different articles according to their nature and origin, and beginning with those the production of which is believed to indicate racial progress, we find that corn, beans and pumpkins were cultivated wherever, within the limits of the United States, they could be grown to advantage. Of these corn was by far the most important; and as it seems to have been the main dependence¹ of all the tribes that lived south of the St. Lawrence and east of the tier of States that lines the west bank of the Mississippi, and as the manner of cultivating it and the different ways of cooking it were practically the same everywhere and at all times, we shall confine our remarks to it and to the Indians living within these limits, merely premising that much of what is said about it will apply to "its sisters," as

¹ "Leur principal manger et vivre ordinaire est le bled d'Inde, et febves du Brésil qu' ils accommodent en plusieurs façons": Champlain, I., p. 374, Paris, 1830. "Corn is their chief produce and main dependence": Adair, *History of the American Indians*, p. 407. "Les vivres que les sauvages aiment le plus et qu' ils recherchent davantage, sont le bled d' Inde, les febves d' aricots et la citrouille. S' ils en manquoient, ils croiroient jeûner, quelque abondance de viande ou de poissons qu' ils eussent chez eux": Perrot, p. 51, Leipzig, 1864. "Their food is generally boiled malze, or Indian corn, mixed with kidney beans, or sometimes without": Gookin, in first series, Mass. Hist. Coll., Vol. I., p. 150. "Ils regardaient toujours le blé comme le principal soutien de leur vie . . . ou qu' il leur arrivât quelque autre fâcheux revers, qui les empêchait d' aller à la chasse & à la Pêche. Alors le Maiz avec quelque peu de Pois, de Fèves . . . servait à l' entretien de leur femmes & de leurs enfans": Beverly, *Virginia*, p. 203, Amsterdam, 1707. I have not an English edition of this valuable little book and make use of a French translation. Cf. Cyrus Thomas in *Twelfth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, pp. 617 et seq., and *Mounds of the Mississippi Valley, Historically considered*, in the Smithsonian Report for 1891, pp. 507-533 inclusive. It may be well to add that in this latter paper, the cultivation of corn by the Indians east of the Mississippi is discussed at length, and the reasons are there given which led me to the conclusion "that they raised corn in large quantities, and stored it in caehes and granaries for winter use." Washington, 1893. "They live on Indian corn, and other fruits of the earth, which they cultivated on the prairies, like other Indians." Narrative of Father Allouez in *Discovery and Exploration of the Mississippi*, p. 75.

beans and squashes were lovingly termed by the Iroquois.¹

And here, at the outset of our investigation, we are met by the fact that modern research has failed to throw a positive light upon the question of its origin. That it was indigenous to America is generally believed, and so, also, the statement that it was first cultivated at some point between the tropics is accepted.² Beyond this we have not been able to go; and without entering into a discussion of the subject, it is probably safe to assume that this is as near the truth as we can hope to get. However, be this as it may, there seems to be no doubt that its domestication took place ages ago, for in no other way is it thought possible to account for the vast extent of country over which its use had spread, and for the number of varieties to which it had given rise. Take our own country, for example, and when the whites first landed here, there were found growing, within certain limited areas, a number of different kinds, distinguished one from another, by the length of time they took to ripen, by the size of the ear, by the shape and hardness of the grain and by the color, though this is said to be accidental.³

In addition to these, which were known to the whites as hominy corn, bread corn and six-weeks corn,⁴ there was still another sort, called by the French *blé fleuri*, and by ourselves pop-corn, of which the Indians were very fond, and which they served up to those of their guests whom they wished to honor.⁵ With so many kinds, and planting them at differ-

¹ Morgan, *League of the Iroquois*, pp. 203, 204: Rochester, 1851.

² "Maize originated in all probability . . . north of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and south of the twenty-second degree of north latitude, near the ancient seat of the Maya tribes." This is Harabberger's opinion in Vol. I., No. 2, of the Contributions from the Botanical Laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania, and I give it as being one of the latest expressions on the subject. Galatin, in *Transactions of the American Ethnological Society*, Vol. I., pp. 196 *et seq.*, may be consulted to advantage.

³ Beverly, *Histoire de la Virginie*, pp. 203 *et seq.*, Amsterdam, 1707. Cf. Le Page du Pratz, Vol. II., pp. 3 *et seq.*, Paris, 1768. Harlot in *Hakluyt's Early Voyages*, Vol. II., p. 336, Edinburgh, 1889.

⁴ Adair, *History of the American Indians*, p. 407: London, 1775.

⁵ Laflau, III., p. 85, Paris, 1724. Charlevoix, Tome VI., p. 46, Paris, 1744.