

## Good Times: Good Food

Food has always been intertwined with Elks fellowship and entertainment.

April 1901 saw the initiation of a lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks in the then Territory of Hawai'i. The new initiates immediately celebrated their status with food and drink, meeting the next day's dawn as they returned home. Those good times were less refined than the more formal events that followed. Dr. and Mrs. C. B. Cooper (first ER) held a "swell and most enjoyable function" in Waikiki to honor the visiting Elks who had officiated at the initiation. Refreshments were "interspersed between the sets" of dancing and band music. At 11 o'clock a gong sounded and a toast was made 'to our absent brothers'.

Hawaii's Elks combined aspects of a benevolent and relief association with those of a patriotic and social group. Like many societies active in Hawaii, the Elks set up a restaurant and bar, held social gatherings, and maintained residential rooms for members' use when 'in the city'.

At first the Lodge held meetings in rented rooms, but soon announced that an unfinished structure at Miller and Beretania Streets would be renovated as their home. *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser* reported that one ground floor room would be renovated as a "grill room"- good food being important to a good lodge. The "presence of a grill room below will add materially to the attractiveness of the place." With renovations completed the "antler wearers and their ladies" partied on November 20, 1901. "Refreshments, accompanied by the now famous Elks Punch, [and] a collation with ices"<sup>1</sup> were served.

A members and candidates meeting was held December 17, 1901. Again, food and entertainment smoothed this 1900's networking. For those not in attendance, the *Advertiser* provided details: around the room, seating had "small tables interspersed, so that the refreshments, which formed one number of the program, could be within reach of each." During intermissions "Elks punch was served, and sandwiches distributed." Questioning by this historian has yet to turn up a recipe for Elks Punch.

Lodge 616 served as a home for all Hawaii Elks for many years. In friendship, November 1923, Oahu Elks, under Exalted Ruler Julius Asch, held a meeting on Maui, traveling by interisland steamer. Arriving Elks were loaded into automobiles at the wharf. At their hotel they "leaped from the cars" and cried out "When do we eat??" An evening of fun, highlighted by dinner and dancing followed. The next day, Elks were received at the Haiku home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Wolf with "tables loaded with sandwiches, salads and cake and the plates were replenished as fast as they were cleared of contents and late in the afternoon hot coffee was served."

Good food was always part of Elks meetings and socials. “Refreshments were served” when

- in 1925, an all-islands Elks meeting closed with a picnic in Manoa Valley;
- in 1945, the Lodge hosted a dance to entertain 30 visiting women Marines;
- in 1962, the Lodge sponsored a teen record hop;
- in the 1970s, Exalted Ruler Jim Demarest, in his regalia as *Checkers* of TV fame, hosted Honolulu’s young newspaper carriers.<sup>2</sup>

For 100 years Elk spouses have filled tables with sandwiches on Maui and picnic baskets in Manoa. Ladies of the Elks and Emblem Club have supported community welfare programs with fundraisers, often with wholesome creations from their kitchens. Bazaars and Bake Sales continue that tradition of Good Works - Good Food. Contributions such as the *Honolulu Elks 2001 Centennial Cookbook* let members serve tested ‘refreshments’ from Elk kitchens. Experience family recipes in the flesh (Bake Sale) and on the hoof (*Centennial Cookbook*). The next Bazaar might supply needed pots and pans.

Save Elks History! Remind yourself and your family of your place in the story. History is more than dates, rulers, wars, and who hit whom. History is in those stories you tell at holiday gatherings. Tell your stories and be sure to include the taste, the smell, the sound, the feel of being there. Tell the story about the recipe that flopped when the Grand Exalted Ruler was visiting from the mainland, or the turkey that slide off the platter and so everyone went to the Club for Thanksgiving.

When your Elk herd gathers during the holidays, make a dish from an Elk cookbook or experience today’s Grill Room at the Club. Sit down to share an Elks meal and pass on your own stories. Oh, and remember to ask if anyone has the recipe for “Elks’ Punch”!

Anita Manning, Lodge Historian

References:

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*Pacific Commercial Advertiser*. April 16, Sept. 7, 1901; Oct 23, 1925; Oct. 12, 1969

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<sup>1</sup> Collation - a light meal. Ices - drinks with ‘real’ ice, not common in 1901.

<sup>2</sup> Those refreshments didn’t meet the USDA balanced menu test: hot dogs, ice cream, candy, and sodas!