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## P A R T O N E

**A Taste of Heritage Foods****A Vision of Cooking**

Food is something I seem destined to care about. In fact, my gift with food came to me after my grandmother Pretty Shield had a vision about it when I was very young.

In her dream there was a young woman in the middle of a stream. Then an older woman appeared on the side of the stream, and she told Pretty Shield that these were gifts: beading and cooking. She should give them to her granddaughters. Pretty Shield had already decided to give the gifts to Cerise, my oldest sister, and me. Since she was the oldest, Cerise got to choose first. She chose beading, so I got cooking.

All my life I've ended up around the food, cooking. I didn't always start there. In the hospital I started as an aide, but then I was helping out in the kitchen, and they saw what I could do there, so they had me stay. Later I worked in restaurants. Then, at Pine Ridge, I was the supervisor of food service. No matter where I've been, I've been around food. That's my gift.

Cerise is a great beader. The best. If you ever see a piece of beadwork done by Cerise Stewart, pay whatever they're asking. It's worth it. She truly has a gift.

But, I've always been kind of glad that she chose beading. That left the food for me.

Even though I have had years of experience in food service (in fact I completed the Indian Health Food Service Supervisor course at the

head of my class), I have written this book from a lodgekeeper's standpoint. The lodgekeeper, or homemaker, has always been a very important role in Crow society. The size of my family is always changing. Sometimes it is just my husband and me; sometimes one of my twelve grandchildren will come by; sometimes it is the whole tribe at a celebration or feed; and sometimes I feel that the whole of humanity is my family as I try to teach the world through my programs. However big my family is, I am happy to cook for them. Providing family members with food is more than just giving them nutrients—it is creating a home for them, keeping the lodge.

So these recipes are not formally tested in spotless lab kitchens in big cities. They are recipes that I have served as a lodgekeeper for my family. You'll want to try them out with yours.

**🍷 Buffaloberry Meat Sauce**

Crush buffaloberries until they look like raw hamburger. Serve on cooked beef or buffalo. You may want to add a bit of sugar to cut the bitter taste. We never used to use sugar, of course, but when it came along it was used by many.

**🍷 Buffaloberry Jelly**

3 pounds of cleaned buffaloberries  
1 cup water  
3 cups sugar  
1 package pectin

Cook the buffaloberries in the water. Add the sugar and cook 20 minutes more. Cool. Squeeze the fruit and liquid through a cloth. Put the juice back on the stove on medium heat for another 20 minutes along with the pectin. Follow the instructions on the pectin box. Fill three or four sterilized pint jars. Cover with lids and rings, sealing and sterilizing while hot.

**🍷 Buffaloberry Cream Cheese Spread**

*This spread is not a traditional recipe at all. I just came up with it while working on this book, but the results are really tasty. I think buffaloberry spread is really good wrapped in a crunchy leaf of romaine lettuce. My editor, Lisa, thinks that it tastes better with fresh coal cakes (little flatbreads) for breakfast. She would like to try it on bagels some morning. Bill suggests that we should strain the seeds out, but Lisa and I think they make a nice contrast to the smooth cream cheese.*

1 pint buffaloberries  
2 tablespoons sugar  
Water  
8 ounces (or more) cream cheese

Place the berries and sugar in a saucepan and add water to just cover the berries. Cook over medium heat until the berries are soft. Let the mixture cool. Stir in the cream cheese until everything is well mixed and smooth. If the spread is too runny, add more cream cheese.

### Buffaloberry Ice Cream and Snow Cones

Sometimes when I was growing up, we would crush buffaloberries, mix canned milk with them, and put the container in the freezer. Before it was completely frozen we'd take it out and eat it. We'd call it ice cream, bullberry ice cream. Sometimes we made this ice cream with the buffaloberries and milk, but we would add snow and a little sugar too.

You can also mix just snow and sweetened berries for snow cones. Place the frosty mixture in cups and scoop it out with spoons.

### Apples

Of course apples don't grow wild in Crow country, but they were already a favorite fruit by the time I was growing up. Bill has four apple trees that bear fruit. We have to watch out that bears and deer don't waste them. Back in the 1940s, baking an apple pie for your husband seemed to be a great way to show him you cared. Actually, it probably still is a pretty good way.

#### *Apple Hollow Pie*

When I was first married, living with Bill up at Fort Belknap, Montana, I really wanted to impress him, and I thought I was a pretty good cook. We had some dried apple rings that I had never seen before. I had plenty of experience with dried wild foods, so instead of telling Lena, Bill's aunt, that I didn't know what to do with them, I just pretended I knew and put them in a pie.

I made a real nice-looking pie and baked it until the top crust was all puffed up and a beautiful golden brown. I proudly placed it on the table, and as soon as Bill came in from a hard day's work, he smelled it, and I told him that we had apple pie for dessert. After the rest of the meal, he told me that he was ready for some pie. I cut him a slice and it was empty! All those dried apples were mashed together in a thin layer on the bottom.

Bill asked, "What is this, apple hollow pie?"

I cried.

His family laughed a lot about that pie, but I didn't think it was funny at the time.

Fortunately, Bill ate it anyway. "It's crusty, but it's nice," he said.

Soon Lena taught me how to use dried apples to make a good, full pie, but I have never forgotten that hollow one.

### **Beverages, Sweeteners, Thickeners, and Seasonings**

Reading about drinks, sweeteners, thickeners, and flavorings, you'll see how Crow cuisine has changed over time.

#### *Beverages*

Water has always been the main drink of the Crow people. Elders tell us that rivers are like the veins of the world. They teach us to respect the waterways and to be thankful to the Creator every time we take a drink.

Clear, cool water from these creeks is good for a body. Nowadays, of course, Crow people drink pop, juice, milk, coffee, tea, and everything else just like everyone else, but I still think that plain, cool water is the best beverage for us.

#### Setting the Stage for Telling Tales

Plain water may be best for your health, but if you want a Crow person to tell you a story, I think you need to have hot drinks.

Awhile back, my grandson called and told me, "If you put on a really big pot of coffee, and get out some peaches and crackers, then I will come over and tell you some stories." The peaches and the crackers must be traditional; I know they are part of the Tobacco Ceremony. I'm not sure what they used in the old days before we had peaches—probably wild plums.

If you want me to tell stories, give me a cup of Earl Grey tea. It really calms me. If you want to hear *real* stories, don't let anyone interrupt or let the phone ring.

Pretty Shield never wasted any time. If she and other women were going to tell stories or sit around and talk, they'd all bring a craft to work on, and they'd have a cup of coffee or tea. They'd work on their