



Who was “Miss Inglenook”?

Kermon Thomasson, former editor of *Messenger* magazine, discovered who the iconic “Inglenook Girl” was who graced the cookbook cover. Read his two editorials—from Nov. 1984 and Feb. 1985—below.

For insights into what the brethren were like at the turn of the century, no serious student of that era could afford to overlook the *Inglenook Cook Book*.

That the Brethren were still largely rural is evident, for instance. From its pages you can learn how to dry or “corn” beef—a hundred pounds at a time. It tells how to make “Twentieth Century Apply Butter,” but it’s not something you would make in the kitchen: “For 10 gallons, take 20 pounds of sugar, and a 3-hooped tub of quartered apples.” The recipe for roast goose devotes its first 12 lines just to getting the feathers off. And you have to skin and clean the squirrels before you can make your “Squirrel Croquettes.”

You don’t have to look far to catch the “Pennsylvania Dutch” character of the Brethren. There are six recipes for “Snitz and Knep.” There is “Pawn Haas” and “Green Tomato Pie”—four recipes, even if the one we offer on page 13 is from a modern cook book. And, of course, there’s Chow Chow.

I sneaked a look at “Drinks” to see if the old Brethren were—as we picture them—teetotalers. About the most exciting sounding drink listed is “Ginger Beer,” but later on, as I thumbed through home remedies “For the Sick,” I came across “Eggnog.” Eggnog? Not my idea of a sickroom fare. But I read on: “To add to its strengthening qualities, two teaspoonfuls of wine or brandy may be added if desired.” Wonder how many “desired” it?

Finally, I must tell my real fascination with the *Inglenook Cook Book*: The original book cover shows a drawing of a Dunker cook in her kitchen. Not everyone knows that the



drawing was done from a 1901 photograph. Who was she—the daughter of some Elgin staffer of the time? Did she go on to a career in modeling or home ec, or have her own TV cookery show? Is she still alive, aged and forgotten in some Brethren retirement home, living in the now dim glow of her brief fling as “Miss Inglenook 1901”? If any reader knows, or has a clue, let me know at once.

—The Editor
Messenger, November 1984

The November *Messenger* cover featured an adaptation of the cover art of the 1901 *Inglenook Cook Book*. In that month's Page One column I told of my interest in learning the identity of the woman in the drawing and asked for readers to respond if they knew who she was.

It wasn't long before letters started arriving. A few offered speculation that proved wrong. But on November 7, I got a letter from Lula M. Carrier Henderson, of Perkins, Okla., telling me that "Miss Inglenook" was her cousin, according to what her mother had always said. In a few days another letter came, from Rena Neff Wright, of Nokesville, Va., substantiating Mrs. Henderson's claim with photocopied pages of a book about the Carrier family.

Letters began to flow back and forth. In December I got a phone call from Beth Wilson, of Torrance, Calif. Her husband, Steven Wilson, is a great-grandson of "Miss Inglenook." And through Mrs. Wilson, I got in telephone contact with Ellen Wilson Sanner, of Placerville, Calif., 81-year-old daughter of "Miss Inglenook," herself!

So now the story can be told: "Miss Inglenook" was Anna Evans Wilson.

Anna's grandfather William Henry Carrier was from Rockingham County, Va. He and his wife, Sarah, eventually settled in Missouri. Their daughter Rebecca Susan married Richard Evans, and they were the parents of Anna, our model.

Why or how Anna came to be on that book cover, even her last surviving child, Ellen, was unable to tell me. Anna married a Baptist man, Samuel Wilson, and joined his faith. They wound up in Oakland, Calif. Anna died relatively young, November 10, 1928, and is buried in Oakland's Mountain View Cemetery.

Ellen Sanner, far removed from the Church of the Brethren world, was astonished to learn that her mother, gone more than half a century, had made the *Messenger* cover. Yes, she remembered the Brethren—"Dunkards, as we call them," she chuckled. But she was surprised to learn that the cook book is still in print, and has always been one of the Brethren Press' hottest items. And guess what, Ellen has her mother's copy of that bestseller!

-The Editor
Messenger, February 1985