

irresistible. The tabletops in both her kitchen and sunroom were covered with trays of *Eccles Cake*, *Mincemeat and Lemon Curd Tarts*, each covered by a fresh tea towel. It is a British tradition that a wish must be made over the first *Mince Tart* of the Christmas season. With a cup of *Tea*, Mom and I often shared this *Sweet Tradition*.

Aunt Nell's home was usually the site of Robinson family gatherings and dinners. Before the *Turkey* was carved or any dish passed, all present would gather around the dining room table. We were hushed and our heads bowed. Grandma Robbie would offer up a heartfelt grace that would often move her to tears as she thanked God for the family that surrounded her. Then, on queue we would all sing "amen."

Mom's contribution to any family gathering was usually *Dessert*. If it were Thanksgiving or Christmas, Mom's *Pumpkin Pies* were an understood offering. On the way to Aunt Nell's, Daddy would stop the Woody (wooden bodied station wagon) in front of Affholter's Creamery for Mom to buy the *Whipping Cream* for dinner. There was always some discussion as to whether or not Affholter's would be open that day, but we were never turned away.

For my fifth birthday, I remember a glorious party. The dining room table was set with china teacups and dessert plates, and pink and blue balloons were hung from the chandelier. And I, in my long red taffeta party dress, sat at the head of the table and my little friends and I dug into *Ice Cream Filled Cream Puffs with Chocolate Sauce*, made by Mom. After opening gifts, we watched "silent" Disney cartoons on the big Kodak home movie screen.

Gram Robbie instilled in me the importance of family gatherings and good conversation. My Aunt Nell inspired in me a love of cooking. And my Mom was my model for turning the daily responsibility of cooking into a gracious and pleasant experience from tablecloths and linen napkins, to well balanced, delicious meals.

This book that I dedicate to you, Kristi and Jennifer, includes most of the best recipes our family has prepared and enjoyed over the generations. *The Sour Milk Chocolate Cake* that Mom made frequently came from the Larkin Cookbook, last printed in 1928. And Gram's "*Bits*" recipe was found in the British War Relief Cookbook, referred to as "*Rocks*." The favorite canning recipes came from a Kerr Book of Mom's priced at **ten cents!** Often when searching out certain recipes, I would simply open the old cookbooks to the pages thick with *Flour*, or stuck together from use. Most of the recipes included in this book are there because a Fond or Loving Memory demanded their inclusion.

♥ **WITH LOVE,** ♥

SUZANNE NELL WIDGERY

(Christmas 2003)