

Lizzie Black Kander & Culinary Reform in Milwaukee

1880 – 1920

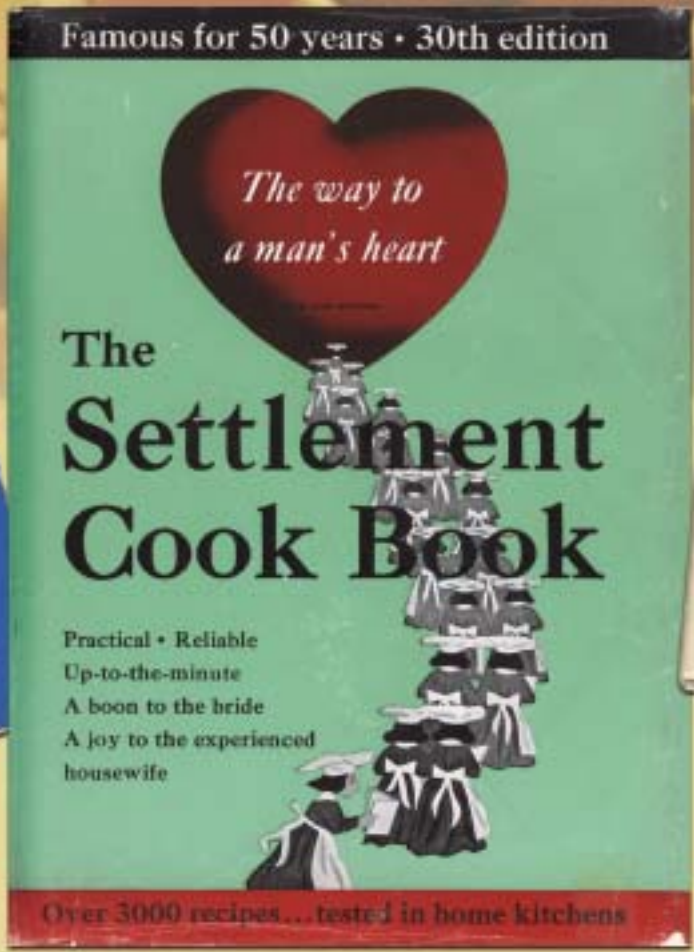
By Angela Fritz

Once, when being interviewed by the food columnist for the *New Yorker* magazine, American chef James Beard was asked if he had a favorite cookbook. Beard replied, “Actually, if I consult a cookbook at all, it is likely to be by one of these sensible, flat-heeled authors like the famous Mrs. Kander.” As Beard’s familiarity with her attested, Lizzie Black Kander’s reputation was a national one. No wonder. This “sensible” woman’s book, *The Settlement Cook Book: The Way to a Man’s Heart*, had been available for over fifty years by the time Beard’s career was heating up in the 1950s, and *New Yorker* readers knew Kander as a household name. In the post World War II, baby-boom years, users of the cookbook may have focused more on the book’s subtitle, as women all over the country returned to the kitchen in order to “get” their man. But in the city of Milwaukee, the book’s main title still served as a reminder of a place, “The Settlement” (and its successor, the Abraham Lincoln Settlement House), where multiple generations of Jewish immigrants had learned to abandon their traditional cooking practices, and adapt and assimilate to middle-class customs and values. The goal in Milwaukee was not to catch a man, but to become an “American.” It was Lizzie Black Kander who set those goals, and in the course of achieving them, cre-

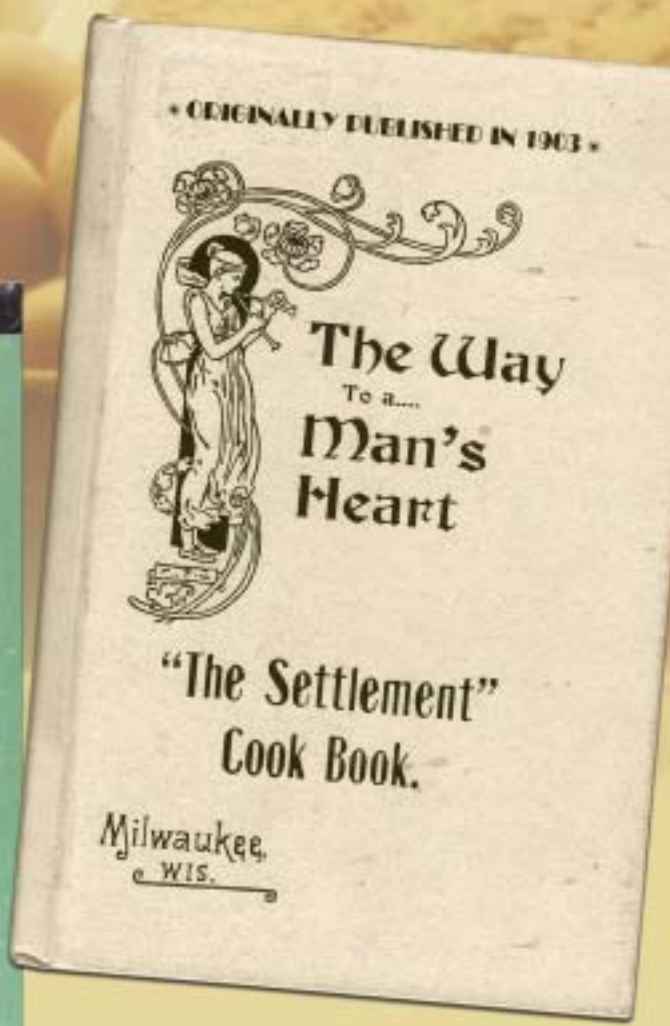
With forty different editions and more than 1.5 million copies sold since it was first published in 1901, The Settlement Cook Book became a household fixture in homes throughout the nation. Famous chefs and family cooks alike shared the lessons of Lizzie Black Kander, the cookbook’s author.



The Settlement Cook Book



The Settlement Cook Book



The Settlement Cook Book

ated a piece of American culture that could be found in kitchens throughout the country.¹

Although often characterized as the “Jane Addams of Milwaukee,”² Kander never lived in the urban ghetto, never collected scientific data to back widespread Progressive reforms, never joined the labor movement or fought political bosses, as Addams had. Kander understood that food was a powerful means of religious and cultural expression, and she used culinary reform to gain control over the effects of massive immigration and industrialization, to aid in the assimilation of immigrant girls, and to introduce immigrant women to American consumer culture. As one historian noted “even when immigrants shed their native languages and clothing in an attempt to conceal their cultural background, cuisine remained a marker of difference.”³ Applying the “melting pot” metaphor, Kander drew upon the power of food to bring social harmony to a religious community threatened by class divisions.

In the 1870s, Milwaukee’s Jewish community was primarily of German ancestry, and Russian Jews consisted of fewer than seven percent of the Jewish population in the city.⁴ Overall, the larger segment of German Jews paid little attention to Russian Jews before 1870 because “charity cases” were easily remedied by personal benevolence. Elizabeth, “Lizzie,” Black was born on May 28, 1858, of English and Bavarian descent to John and Mary (Perles) Black. The Blacks lived on Milwaukee’s South Side, having moved from Green Bay in 1844. Opening a dry-foods store, John Black contributed to the commercial development of Milwaukee’s flourishing retail businesses. Far from any overcrowded tenement, the Blacks had joined over two hundred German-Jewish families who, by the 1850s, lived comfortably as artisans and merchants in the heart of America’s Deutch Athens.

As founding members of the Reform Temple Emanu-El, Kander’s parents agreed with the mission of the new temple in “reconciling religion with the progressive ideas of the age.” Mary Perles Black instructed Lizzie and her siblings that “home reigned supreme.” According to Mrs. Black, “it was women’s obligation to provide moral guidance and spiritual uplift within the home . . . a woman’s work is mapped out for her by the will of God.” A woman’s role “is to respond to the

call of love and duty in the household and the rearing of the family . . . by being well-trained in all the domestic arts.” Domestic education and religious tradition were interwoven in the Black’s kitchen. The family knew “no other than a laden table which groaned with excellent food.” Their kitchen was filled with aromatic smells of *kuchen* and *meandelbreit*. The Passover Seder table was a feast for rejoicing “in memory of the brave forefathers who fought and struggled for freedom, liberty of thought, and preservation of religious belief.”⁵ For Lizzie’s mother, the preparation and consumption of food

provided the context to express domesticity, ritual, and Jewish identity.

Although her mother strongly defined a sense of womanhood for Lizzie and her sisters, this definition did not exclude the educational opportunities that Milwaukee’s growing German-American community offered to its girls. In 1878 Lizzie was named the valedictorian of her class at Milwaukee East Side High School and her valedictory speech, entitled “When I Become President,” broached the traditional gender roles of the day. Attesting to its audaciousness, the *Milwaukee Sentinel*, which covered the event

reported that Lizzie’s speech was “the event of the evening.”

Half political satire, half political commentary, Black denounced individuals who were bribing politicians in the name of special interests. At the age of twenty, this idealistic valedictorian called for an overhaul of the American political system by challenging politicians to return to the simple virtues of “truth, honesty, virtue, and love.” She spoke of the need to restore economic individualism and political democracy to American cities. In her opinion, however, social decay could not be entirely blamed on the effects of rapid industrialization, urbanization, or capitalism but from the general willingness of women to escape personal responsibility. According to Lizzie Black, the suffrage movement had caused women to ignore their societal responsibilities. Instead of promoting meaningful social change, women reformers’ initiatives were an “unproductive distraction.” She believed that the women’s movement spent too much time talking about the “wrongs and grievances” which men have afflicted on them instead of reminding women “of their real work and position” in society.⁶

Like many female reformers, Lizzie Black envisioned a



In Milwaukee, cleanliness was not just appreciated, it was a civic duty. The city’s health department issued this poster, ca. 1917



WHS Name File

Lizzie Black and Simon Kander, ca. 1880.

Simon Kander's business and political contacts proved to be a great resource for his wife.

new humane state that would propagate family values, thereby, improving the lives of women and children. Occurring under the aegis of “municipal housekeeping,” women could use their “natural” ability to manage the larger home of the city.⁷ In her opinion, women’s maternal and moral skills could remedy the problems arising from immigration, inadequate public services, and incompetent political leadership.

Acting as settlement workers, club-women, and public school teachers, women could use their “maternal sensitivities” to prepare immigrants to succeed in the larger world as productive American citizens. Urban reform attracted Lizzie because it offered the opportunity to expand women’s sphere while sustaining traditional gender roles. Claiming that women’s sphere did not have to end with the walls of their home, Lizzie



Milwaukee Jewish Historical Society

Shmuel and Chaya Laya Levinson in front of their kosher butcher shop on Walnut Street in Milwaukee, ca. 1900.

Black turned to the most practical and expedient outlet for women's leadership, the women's club. Shortly after graduation in 1878, she joined the Ladies Relief Sewing Society, an aid society that would provide the foundation for nearly all her future reform work.

It was at that time, the beginning of the 1880s, that economic depression and a severe winter in Milwaukee had increased the needs of newly arrived immigrants who were becoming more visible in the city's Haymarket District. The Sewing Society's existence culminated from one Rabbi's plea to the women of the community "to come together in a more unified benevolence movement." According to the Rabbi, the ultimate mission of their charity work was to "civilize" immigrant families, so they do not "succumb in isolation" to "their semi-Asiatic existence."⁸ Lizzie Black's career in social reform began during this wave of increased immigration, and both the waves of immigration and her leadership grew stronger as time elapsed. It was also at this time that she married Simon Kander. She met Simon, a native of Bal-

timore who moved to Milwaukee in 1868, through their mutual interest in public school reform. The couple married on May 17, 1881.

By 1895 Russian Jews comprised thirty-nine percent of the Jewish community in Milwaukee. With the increase of immigration, Milwaukee saw the emergence of a "colony of Russian Jews" occupying the junction of East Water and North Water Streets. "By 1898 two settlements of Russian and Polish Jews existed in the downtown district. One was near the Haymarket and bounded by Chestnut, Third, Galena, and Sixth Streets. The other was near the German market, East Water, and Knapp Streets." The "new" immigrant's distinct style of living was not welcomed by all Milwaukeeans. As the immigrants settled in the downtown areas, residents complained of a "filth" and "horrible stench" emanating from the ghetto.⁹

Kander worked as a truancy officer from 1890 to 1893, and the position allowed her to view firsthand the home conditions of Milwaukee's Russian immigrant families. Borrowing from the investigative approach of the settlement house movement, Kander reported, "there is no location in the city



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Photographer Lewis Hine's work became famous as it captured urban life in America in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This family, although in close quarters, enjoyed a meal in a clean and neat environment.

where property is so cheap, rents so high and accommodations so poor. Old buildings that were originally designed for one family are inhabited by many. Upstairs, downstairs, and damp, dark basements are divided and subdivided into apartments, with very little alterations." Kander denounced the Jewish ghetto as "a deplorable situation, threatening the moral and physical health of the people."¹⁰

With attentive club-women as her audience, Kander described publicly the conditions of Milwaukee's urban ghetto, "[more] thrilling than any of the modern comedies or dramas placed upon the stage are the many pathetic yet grotesque living pictures daily seen in the Ghetto of our own city." Kander challenged her cohorts to "enter its unique atmosphere, ramble through its dirty alleys, climb its rickety stairs, descend to its dark, damp basements. But before knocking on the doors of its wretched hovels let us not forget that kindness and consideration must be shown its inmates."¹¹

Convinced that the immigrant mother had to be recruited to adopt "American" standards as her own, Kander hoped to reach as many immigrants as possible "by intelligent and sys-

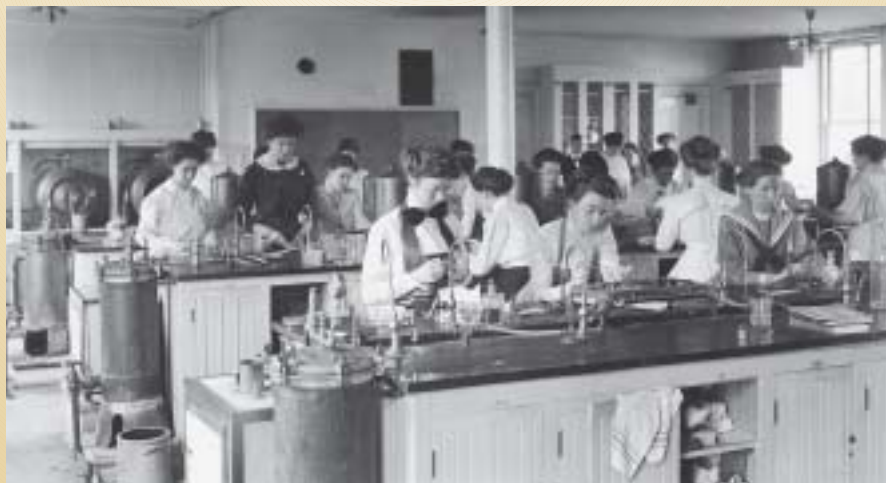
tematic friendly visiting." The goal of friendly visiting was to go into homes and "assess" the extent of need for each immigrant family. Such programs were designed to Americanize hard to reach immigrant mothers isolated in their home as well as channel immigrant women to other Jewish charitable services. Kander advised volunteers, "Do not dictate, but rather suggest changes and improvements," and she encouraged friendly visitors to "foster the pride of home and family . . . make the home cheerful by gifts that can not be pauperized, but rather tend to refine and elevate the immigrant's taste."¹²

Kander's motivations for supporting the Americanization movement were complex, going far beyond her civic or religious sense of obligation. Unwilling to accept social reform as inherently Christian, in 1895, Kander joined the newly formed Milwaukee Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), established to provide cooking, sewing, and English classes to Russian immigrants. She believed that Jewish women had an important role in "advancing the history and the customs of their forefathers."



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At an Americanization pageant on May 18, 1919, Milwaukee's Jewish community celebrated with a blend of American and Jewish symbols, all to present the tableaux, "First Message of Civilization."



University of Wisconsin Archives

Lizzie Black Kander was not alone in her scientific treatment of food preparation. In 1903 the University of Wisconsin established a field of study, which would lead to a future degree program, dedicated to home economics and human development. The School of Human Ecology celebrated its centennial in 2003, about 90 years after this photo was taken.

Framing her work as an extension of Jewish womanhood, Kander defined her philanthropic policy as a religious expression of American Reform Judaism.¹³

But she was not entirely altruistic. Central to the attitude of Milwaukee's Jewish reformers was their view of the impact of mass migration upon their social status. Kander echoed these sentiments in her reports to the Ladies Sewing Society, "we must uplift our downtrodden and shiftless poor, not alone for their own sake and for that of humanity, but for the reputation of our own nationality. Their misdeeds reflect directly on us and every one of us, individually, ought to do all in his power to help lay the foundation of good citizenship in them."¹⁴

Concerned that cultural differences would tarnish the socio-economic position of German Jews in Milwaukee and heighten anti-Semitism, Kander headed the movement to educate the newcomers, stating, "We must be careful lest history again repeats itself and the outcome of all these religious wars, again, culminate in the persecution of the Jews." She encouraged Jewish women to join the Americanization movement "to try and inspire a love for self-reliance, for truth, and for cleanliness into the hearts of their coreligionists."¹⁵

In 1895 Kander expanded immigrant aid services by establishing a bathhouse for immigrants, utilizing a high-profile Milwaukee resource, the Schlitz Brewery. For Kander, the elimination of dirt was intrinsic to the process of integration. The Keep Clean Mission, located next to the Schlitz plant, piped in the excess water from sterilized beer bottles for an immigrant bathhouse. The Mission reached one hundred children ranging from five to ten years of age who were given "short sermons on cleanliness." These talks reflected on specific points of hygiene as well as larger messages about clean living.¹⁶

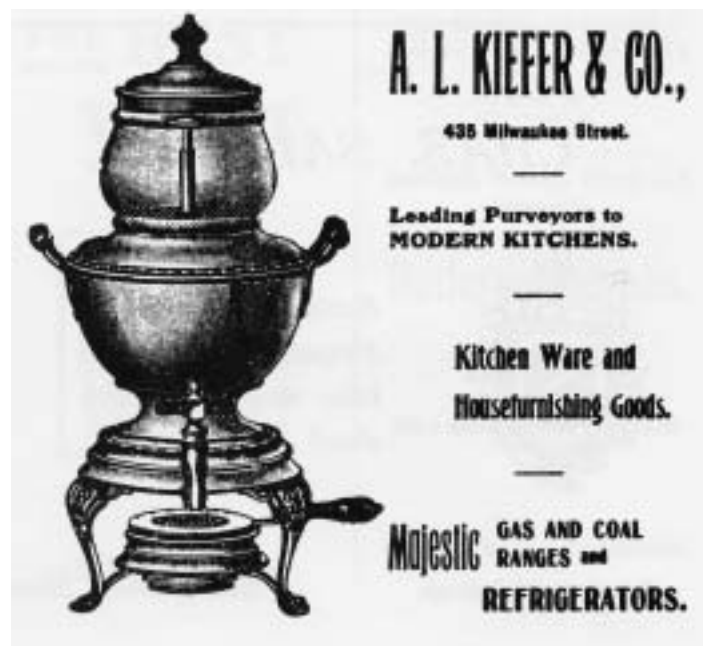
On March 27, 1900, the women of the Mission united with the Sisterhood of Personal Service to form "The Settlement." Kander was named president of the settlement house located at 507 Fifth Street. The Settlement's basis for financial support was largely dependent on Kander's ability to raise funds among Milwaukee's business elite. Many investors were friends of Lizzie's husband, Simon. In the late 1880s he had established his own real estate company, and he served as Republican State Representative from 1907 to 1909. His real estate ventures and political activity offered Lizzie the opportunity to solicit contributions for her settlement work. Lizzie Kander appointed many of these men to the Settlement's Board of Directors, and their thousand-dollar subscriptions enabled the Settlement to operate for the first year.¹⁷

For the Settlement House to run longer than one year, it needed a more secure source of funding. Kander found the solution to her financial dilemma by drawing upon one of the most popular activities at the Settlement, her own cooking classes. During one meeting of the Settlement's Cooking Committee, Kander suggested combining her cooking classes with recipes contributed by her fellow club-women to publish



The Settlement Cook Book

Ingot Soap sponsored an advertisement in the original Settlement House cookbook. Although many advertisers were marketing food, drink, and cookware the importance of hygiene in the kitchen made soap a natural sponsor of the book.



The Settlement Cook Book

A. L. Kiefer & Co., found a perfect spot for their "Kitchenware and Housefurnishing Goods" in the pages of The Settlement Cook Book. The book's success in Milwaukee guaranteed customers.

a charitable cookbook. When Kander and her committee approached the Settlement's Board of Directors for the \$18 it would cost to print the cookbook, however, the gentlemen refused to provide the funds. The Board declared the cookbook an "extravagance," although they jokingly assured the ladies that they would be happy to share in the profits.¹⁸

Resolved to see the cookbook published, Kander approached Merton Yewdale, owner of a Milwaukee printing

company. Mr. Yewdale assisted the Cooking Committee in financing the cookbook by soliciting advertisements among prominent businesses within the German-Jewish community. In 1901 the first edition of *The Settlement Cook Book: The Way to a Man's Heart* was published. Sandwiched between Kander's "heirloom" recipes were advertisements for Milwaukee's finest culinary products including Gallasch Mustard, Adolph Ahrlers Confectionery Delights, and Charles Ludwig's Hamburg Sausage.

Immigrants taking Kander's cooking classes bought the book for a nominal fee, while the rest of the books went on sale at Milwaukee's Boston Store for fifty cents. Within one year, the first edition copies of the cookbook, written by Kander and co-authored by Mrs. Henry Schoenfeld, sold out. By the end of 1901, profits from the first edition reached \$500. The first edition of *The Settlement Cook Book* contained twenty-four lessons and five hundred "heirloom recipes" contributed by women who "set some of the finest tables in Milwaukee." Kander selected the recipes that would be included in the cookbook with suggestions by members of the Lincoln House Cooking Committee. According to her maid, Helen Krieg, Kander "experimented with different proportions, revising, and discarding, until she reached what she considered a successful product." By guaranteeing that "the recipes were tested in her own kitchen," Kander invoked the authority of an experienced homemaker and cast herself as a cultural authority on Jewish-American cuisine. Within the pages of *The Settlement Cook Book*, ethnic heritage was translated through the steaming vapors of Kander's kitchen for future generations to come.¹⁹

The cookbook provided the Settlement with operational funds for nine years. In September 1910, the Settlement was given notice to move by their landlord. As classes and club attendance multiplied, it became apparent that the Settlement would have to move to larger facilities. Moreover, Kander realized that the economic and social stability for her reform work was contingent on owning a building. To raise the \$30,000 for the new building, Kander turned to the Settlement's most "liberal contributors." Using recipes from her famous cookbook, Kander sought to prove

the way to a man's heart was through his stomach.²⁰

Hosting a dinner with all their favorite dishes, Kander served taste-tempting dishes from the businessmen's "boyhood days." The men feasted to their heart's delight on *creplach*, *Matzo kloes*, *fleschen*, *poppy seed homentaschen*, and *prune kolatschen*. At the end of the night, each man had contributed between \$500 to \$1000 toward the funding of the new building. Also, Kander persuaded A.J. Lindeman to donate one coal range and twelve gas burners, the Gaslight Company provided free installation, and Pritzlaff Hardware Company supplied culinary utensils for the cooking school at the Abraham Lincoln Settlement House.²¹

According to Kander, the Lincoln House "stood for domestic science" as activities trained girls to become "good housekeepers and homemakers." Kander's lessons aided immigrant girls to "do battle with the industrialized world," and "equip them to become economical and efficient homemakers and intelligent Mothers."²²

By 1911 the new kitchen in the Abraham Lincoln House was lauded as a place that would "make the visiting housewife clasp her hands in an ecstasy of delight, so nearly does it approach the ideal kitchen."²³ The "pride" of the settlement was the "up to date" and "fully equipped domestic science kitchen" "a model of convenience and cleanliness." Special morning classes were held for mothers and after-school classes held for girls. Lectures were given on the value of foods with special attention given to the selection and preparation of meals.

Under Kander's instruction, immigrant women learned to make "cereals, cream soups, biscuits and scalloped dishes." Kander believed that such "educational methods" aided in "bettering the home conditions of immigrant families." The cooking classes Americanized immigrant women by leading them through the entire learning process of buying and preparing American dishes.²⁴

In her classes Kander offered instruction in kosher cooking as well as "practical housekeeping lessons" including scrubbing and washing dishes, setting the table, and serving meals. Kander operated under the premise that the immigrant's "Old World" dishes did not translate to the industrialized city. Although many members of Milwaukee's German-Jewish community believed that Russians' adherence to dietary laws



WHS Museum 2002.49.6

Cream City Ware furnished Milwaukeeans with locally made kitchenware that was both "pure" and "safe."



Milwaukee Jewish Historical Society

The original Settlement House on Fifth Street shared its name with the famous cookbook and benefited from the book's success.



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*When the landlord of the original "Settlement House" refused to renew the lease in 1910, sales of *The Settlement Cook Book*—and a little homemade cooking for some influential donors—once again raised funds for Kander's work. This new building, the Abraham Lincoln House, was completed in 1911.*

were antiquated in modernized cities, Kander did not blatantly condemn the laws for fear of alienating immigrants. Instead, Kander and her fellow Jewish club-women astutely downplayed the laws by subtly equating the religious observances to a class distinction. "The Jews of a higher social grade may not be insistent upon a strict enforcement of the old Mosaic laws concerning the preparation of foods, but the Jews of the lower class, especially the Russian Jews, are particular in their observance of the 'kosher' laws." If the Settlement was to reach the intended audience, cooking courses had to seemingly adhere to the laws of *kashruth*, or dietary laws.²⁵

To attract immigrant girls to the cooking classes at the new location, Kander recruited Alida Pattee, a graduate from the Boston School of Cooking known as the "kitchen missionary," to give twenty lessons to a class of eighteen pupils using a kosher plan. Compared to the strict adherence of the Russian pupils, Pattee's notions of kosher cooking were vague, and she made "mistakes that horrified the children." One Milwaukee newspaper reported that Pattee forgot about the kosher laws and mixed up the custard and bouillon spoons. Immigrant children, aghast at Pattee's nonchalance, informed her that to be able to use the spoon again, she would have to purify the spoon by burying it in the backyard. By the end of the summer, Kander took over teaching the class, revising her cooking classes to curb overt dietary infractions.²⁶

As she had done before, Kander emphasized the kosher laws in relation to their "hygienic value." For the most part, Kander's classes de-emphasized the religious importance of the dietary laws. In America, Kander explained, the laws were "not necessary to physical well-being as in the days of Moses." In Kander's cooking classes, she taught that the appearance of food became just as important as the nutritional value as she "taught the art of preparing food that was

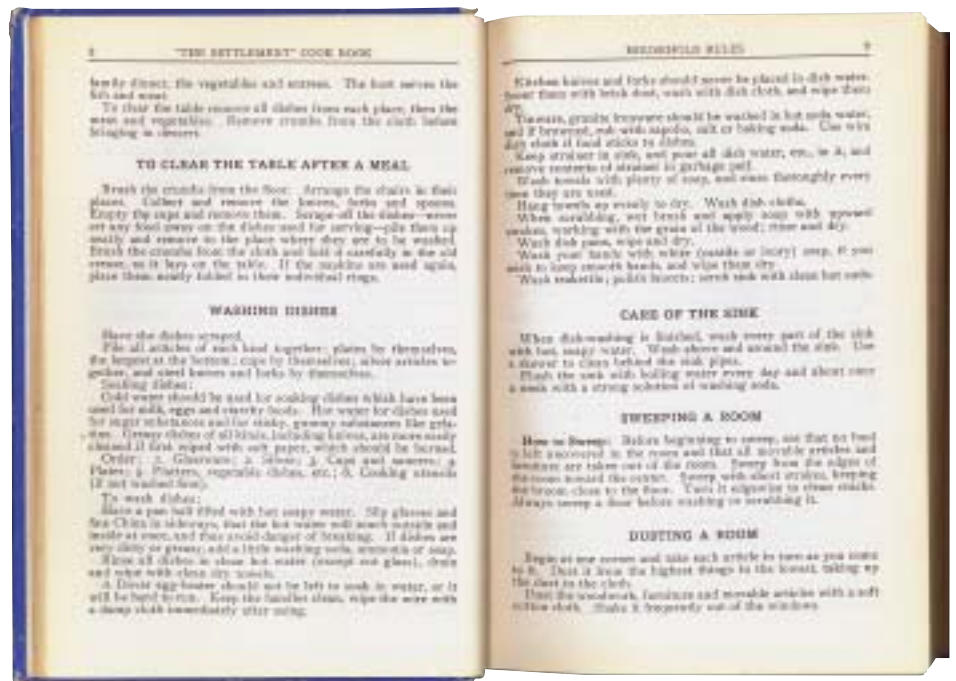
acceptable to the eye as well as the palate." Although considered one of the most successful fund-raising cookbooks in American history, *The Settlement Cook Book* emanated from Kander's efforts to Americanize Russian immigrant women through cooking classes. To save time for her pupils in transcribing recipes prior to class, Kander published her cooking lessons and recipes in printed form. In addition to a time-saving device, the cookbook aided in broadening Kander's Americanization efforts. *The Settlement Cook Book* replicated cooking classes, textbook style. In this way, Kander's Americanization efforts were taken directly into the immigrant's home. The printed word lent authority to the Americanization lessons, as the published recipes reached a wider segment of the immigrant community.²⁷

For Kander, Americanization was implemented under the guise of science via the Anglo-American cuisine of a laboratory kitchen. *The Settlement Cook Book* was steeped in principles of scientific cooking. New scientific food jargon was integrated into Kander's lessons, as she described food properties when "studied microscopically." Elaborate charts classified "organic" foods into nitrogenous and non-nitrogenous matter. Percentages represented the nutritive values for each food group, based on their protein, carbohydrate, mineral, and fat content. Emphasizing neatness, order, and exactitude, immigrants followed prescribed recipes. The first lesson included explicit instructions on the most accurate methods for exact measurement of a speck or any material, "a speck of anything is what will lie within a space 1/4 inch square." In addition to making meals more scientific and ordered, the cookbook familiarized immigrant women with the basics in American cuisine, including recipes for oatmeal, baking powder biscuits, doughnuts, pot roast, and apple pie. The cookbook

characterizes the transformation of the Russian immigrant's diet with the emphasis on red meat as it included over twice as many recipes for red meat than fish. Kander stated that fish, the main staple in the Russian immigrant's diet, was "less stimulating and nourishing than the meat of other animals." Moreover, the immigrant's practice of soaking kosher meat was discouraged because it "dissolves part of the organic salts, the soluble albumen, and the extractives or flavoring matters."²⁸

One quarter of the classes represented in the cookbook, was devoted to desserts. Entire chapters are dedicated to kuchen, custards, puddings, pudding sauces, ice cream, sherbet, pastries, pies, cakes, tortes, cake frostings, cookies, and candies. Many immigrants characterized America as a cornucopia of culinary delights and Kander's cooking classes attest to the abundant use of processed sugar.

While introducing Jewish women to American foods such as baking powder biscuits, pot roast, and doughnuts, the emergence of processed foods helped to standardize Jewish-American cooking. *The Settlement Cook Book* provided an entire chapter on how to use "revolutionary" products such as baking powder. Kander encouraged the use of processed



The Settlement Cook Book

Kander's cook book offered more than recipes; specific directions in cooking, cleaning, and food preparation at the most basic level were all a part of a distinctly American education for immigrant women and girls.

foods because they provided shortcuts to make cooking more efficient. Some of the recipes called for brand name products including Knox's Gelatin, Crosse and Blackwell's Mocha Essence, and Shewsbury Catsup. In addition to packaged food, *The Settlement Cook Book* advertised new kitchen gadgetry that accompanied the industrial age. Recipes called for

The Way to a Man's Heart . . .

Poppyseed Torte

- 18 eggs,
- 18 tablespoons sugar,
- 18 tablespoons ground poppyseed,
- 3/4 lb. grated almonds,
- 1 wine glass brandy,
- Rind and juice of a lemon,
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon,
- 1 1/2 strips German chocolate,
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder.

Mix poppyseed, almonds, cinnamon, chocolate and baking powder. Beat yolks of eggs, add sugar and stir well, then brandy, lemon and the dry ingredients and lastly, fold in the whites beaten stiff.

Bake in large spring form in moderate oven. Grease the form.

Herring Salad

- 3 herring, cleaned and picked to pieces,
- 3 apples,
- 3 boiled potatoes,
- 1/2 cup mixed nuts,
- A little piece of cooked veal,
- 1 pickle,
- A little onion,
- A little pepper,
- A little sugar,
- A few capers,
- 4 hard-boiled eggs.

Chop all fine, mix the yolks of the eggs with a little vinegar, and mix all together.

Recipes are from the 1903 edition of *The Settlement Cook Book*.



Milwaukee Jewish Historical Society

The Reform Advocate, a Chicago publication, featured this Settlement House cooking class in its November 30, 1907, article "A History of the Jews of Milwaukee."

the use of dover beaters, a variety of dessert molds, double boilers, angel food cake pans, ramekins, and chafing dishes.²⁹

Immigrants were introduced to lessons in the fine art of making toast points or daisy oranges for garnishing. For Kander, nothing was more repulsive to a refined appetite than food that looked messy on the plate. Operating under the premise that meals must be visually appealing, immigrants labored over salads that were served "on lettuce leaves, in cups made by scooping out tomatoes, cucumbers, oranges, lemons, and apples."³⁰

In consonance with Kander's adherence to Reform Judaism, *The Settlement Cook Book* did not strictly adhere to Jewish dietary laws, especially the allowance of shellfish, non-Kosher cuts of meat, and the combination of meats and dairy products, all of which are strictly forbidden. There were recipes for crabfish cream soup, scalloped oysters, crawfish butter, and lobster. Recipes included hindquarters cuts of meat including rump and tenderloin and butter and cream appear in meat dishes.³¹

Many foods that Eastern European Jews ate in the "Old Country" were given new status in the cookbook as they were altered to fit their new context. For example, gefilte fish was transformed into herring salad complete with nuts, capers, and veal. Kander sought to add color to the everyday cabbage eaten by Russian immigrants by "make a wreath of the red [cabbage] all around the white, keeping the lines distinct and smooth," for aesthetic appeal. Immigrant girls were reported to be "astonished" that "plain everyday, boiled cabbage . . .

dished up on their home tables several times a week, took on a daintiness of appearance" in Kander's cooking classes.³²

Instead of preserving Orthodox Jewish dietary laws, *The Settlement Cook Book* tried to bring elegance and decorum to the Jewish home through haute cuisine.³³ *The Settlement Cook Book* served as a manual for the dramatization of middle-class values at the Jewish table with the inclusion of cocktails such as Manhattans, Mint Juleps, and Champagne Punch. Kander had been greatly influenced by French cuisine including recipes for Delmonico Salad Dressing with chopped truffles, Water Lily Salad, and *pate de foie gras*. Equally emphasized were traditional recipes from New England including English Brown Bread, Flemish Carrots, Welsh Rabbit, Mince Meat, and Old English Fruit Cake.

But of all countries, Germany had the biggest influence on recipes included in *The Settlement Cook Book*. By the time the Lincoln House was established, seventy-two percent of Milwaukee's population was of German origin. Milwaukee's food industries reflected German flavor with the establishment of skillful manufactures of German cheese and lager beers. By 1920 Milwaukee boasted fifty sausage manufacturers, and many types transferred to the United States unaltered. The adherence to German tradition is reflected in *The Settlement Cook Book* with German dishes, virtually unmodified, complete with German names. Dishes included *Berliner Pfann Kuchen*, *Hasen Pfeffer*, *Murberteig*, *Springerlie*, *Hesterliste*, and *Pfeffernusse*. By reflecting the cuisine of the dominant Anglo-American culture, Kander sent the subtle message that cuisines which were most successful in infiltrating American kitchens were those that resembled the cooking of Western Europe.³⁴

Kander's cooking classes represented in *The Settlement Cook Book* attempted to change Jewish diet by making it more scientific, American, and elegant. She applied her advice through sample menu lessons, where she substituted baking powder biscuits, red meat, and white sauces for pumpernickel bread, herring, and pickled vegetables. In addition to Americanizing the immigrant's palate, cooking classes prepared immigrant girls for their future vocation as mothers and imparted skills that compensated for the ignorance of the girls' own mothers. *The Settlement Cook Book* made it possible for immigrant girls to take homemaking skills home after

a day's lesson, challenging mothers to adjust to "American" rules of diet, sanitation, and etiquette.³⁵

As Kander's initiatives for dietary reform progressed in the Settlement, she sought to expand her programs to Milwaukee's community at large. In 1920 Kander organized the Kitchen of Nations for Milwaukee's Food, Household, and Electrical Show. The exposition, sponsored by Milwaukee's Grocer Association, was lauded as "a gigantic pageant of things for the home" including "food preparations, beverages, dairy products, furniture, musical instruments, [and] model dining rooms." The Food Show was heralded as the "show of 1,000 wonders" sure to attract "the housewife, the college professor, the immigrant, and the businessman." The *Journal* carried daily articles and advertisements for the seven-day event, describing it as the very best medium for advertising because it offered "a splendid opportunity for coming into contact with the consumer." In addition to kitchen gadgetry, food booths included Fleishman's Yeast, Foulds' Cake Mix, Goodrich Pie Filling, Kraft Elkorn Cheese, and Mazola Corn Oil.³⁶

The most attended event at the Food Show was Lizzie Kander's "Kitchen of Nations," featuring native dishes prepared in fifteen ethnic kitchens.³⁷ Over thirty-two women's organizations and thirty-six hundred volunteers prepared and cooked "ethnic dishes in their original form." Volunteers were drawn from the Home Economics Club, Catholic Community House, Abraham Lincoln House, Polish Housewives League, Council of Jewish Women, Ladies Benevolent Society, Women's Cathedral Institute, and the American Legion.³⁸

"Native costumed" cooks prepared Polish Barszcz, Chop Suey, French Crepes, Italian Ravioli, and New England Gingerbread. Women dressed in folk costumes and decorated their booths with native furnishings. Other booths sponsored ethnic music and folk dances while women gave samples of

Hungarian goulash made with Regal Macaroni and apple strudel made with Mazola Corn Oil.³⁹

The Food Show brought local businesses, the processed food industry, and Americanization agencies together in hopes of attracting immigrant women to integrate new consumer products into their native dishes. The *Milwaukee Journal*

enticed immigrants into attending the event by promising that sample food would rekindle memories of immigrants' homelands. The *Milwaukee Journal* reported that one Eastern European woman, upon seeing her "Old World Kitchen" cooking Polish Barszcz, "timidly put out an elbow and pushed a little closer [and] threw up her hands" exclaiming,

'Just like we used to make.' [The woman's] lips moved rapidly, emitting words in her native language. The woman was rewarded with a double portion. Her satisfaction was apparent in the lip smacking as she ate every morsel, lingering over it as long as possible.⁴⁰

In the end, the *Milwaukee Journal* for October 17, 1920, reported that the Kitchen of Nations was a

"potent force in Americanization work." One club-woman was convinced that the Kitchen of Nations had been "a wonderful education to all the women of Milwaukee. It has brought nationalities closer together, into a melting pot of common endeavor." Another volunteer stated that the value of the event was the "lessons of manipulation" in which the kitchens presented "old materials into new form." Seeking to enhance national unity, the Food Show was described as an "inspiring event" that would be "far-reaching" and further extend "opportunities to educate" "our many-nationality fellow citizens." in democracy.⁴¹ Throughout Lizzie Kander's life, she remained devoted to her campaign to Americanize immigrant women. Motivated by scientific optimism, a belief in progress, and a religious conviction fueled by Reform Judaism, Kander was dedicated to creating a more unified system of immigration aid that would



Milwaukee Journal, April 29, 1911

Though her expertise in the kitchen was paramount, Lizzie Black Kander displayed her masonry skills as she laid the cornerstone to the Abraham Lincoln House on April 29, 1911.

foster the development and assimilation of Milwaukee's Jewish community. As Kander worked for the improvement of immigrant home life and educational reform, she emerged as the leader of women's Americanization efforts within Milwaukee.

In April 1907, Kander was elected to the Board of School Directors and would use her influence to instigate Milwaukee's first public program of industrial education for girls. In 1909 the Milwaukee Public School Board passed Kander's resolution and established a Girls' Trade School. For Kander, the establishment of a Girls' Trade School was a milestone. "American" housekeeping would be taught through extension courses in the public school and reach a wider audience of Milwaukee's working-class women.

Kander's involvement with *The Settlement Cook Book* would also extend the lessons of her cooking classes to a wider audience. From 1914 until her death in 1940, Kander would edit and revise each new edition of the cookbook. The accumulated royalties of *The Settlement Cook Book* reached \$50,000 by 1925. The most successful American-Jewish charity cookbook has gone through some forty editions and sold more than 1.5 million copies since it was first published in 1901. Not only did the cookbook represent a successful "female business venture" at a time when entrepreneurial opportunities were limited for women, but it is considered an indispensable item in most Jewish households, and in households of other faiths as well, attesting to its wide-range of influence.⁴²

During World War I, Kander headed the Food Conservation Committee of the Milwaukee County Council of Defense, visiting immigrant homes and providing demonstrations on methods of conserving food. During the Depression, Kander established one of the first food exchanges in the country. The Lincoln House Food Exchange employed immigrant women on a part-time basis to cook food in large quantities to sell at the Exchange for a nominal fee. In her later years, Kander wrote a cooking column for the *Journal*—devoted to culinary ideas for celebrating American holidays with corresponding recipes, decor suggestions, and party activities. In 1931 the Abraham Lincoln House officially became the Jewish Community Center, largely financed by The Settlement Cook Book Company.⁴³

It may seem that Lizzie Black Kander led a paradoxical life. Like so many other Progressive female reformers, she accepted traditional gender roles while at the same time expanded the public boundaries for women. Yet, this was the woman, who, upon high school graduation, announced her ambition to the world, and so it should not be surprising that she directly influenced Milwaukee policy and culture, while indirectly influencing the daily decisions made in the heart of homes across the country—the kitchen.

Notes

- ¹Marguerite Fowle, "Lizzie Kander's Legacy: Milwaukee's Settlement Cook Book," *Milwaukee* 10 (Nov., 1965), p. 46.
- ²*Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*, July 26, 1940.
- ³Gwendolyn Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood: Inequality in the Welfare State, 1917–1942* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 90.
- ⁴Louis J. Swichkow and Lloyd P. Gartner, *The History of Jews in Milwaukee* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1963), pp. 70, 175.
- ⁵Julia Heller, "A Letter to My Granddaughter," 1920, Lizzie Black Kander Papers, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, Urban Archives. (Hereafter cited as LBK Papers, Urban Archives.)
- ⁶"When I Become President," June 28, 1878, LBK Papers, Urban Archives.
- ⁷Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991), p. 141.
- ⁸Swichkow et al., p. 84.
- ⁹*Milwaukee Sentinel*, Jan. 31, 1892; Swichkow et al., pp. 87, 84.
- ¹⁰Report of the Settlement, Nov. 7, 1909, LBK Papers, Urban Archives.
- ¹¹"Yearly Report to the Members of the Ladies' Relief Sewing Society," Jan. 3, 1895, LBK Papers, Milwaukee County Historical Society. (Hereafter cited as LBK Papers, MCHS.)
- ¹²*Ibid.*; Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, p. 94; "Friendly Visiting Among the Poor," LBK Papers, Urban Archives.
- ¹³Lizzie Black Kander to Mrs. C.S. Benjamin, October 23, 1896, LBK Papers, Urban Archives.
- ¹⁴"Yearly Report to the Members of the Ladies' Relief Sewing Society," Jan. 3, 1895, LBK Papers, MCHS.
- ¹⁵*Ibid.*; "Our Philanthropic Policy," LBK Papers, Urban Archives.
- ¹⁶Lizzie Black Kander to Mrs. C.S. Benjamin, Oct. 23, 1896, LBK Papers, Urban Archives.
- ¹⁷Swichkow et al., p. 119.
- ¹⁸Fowle, p. 42.
- ¹⁹*Milwaukee Journal*, July 25, 1940; Interview with Helen Krieg, January 6, 1960, LBK Papers, Urban Archives.
- ²⁰*Jewish Community Blue Book*, p. 87.
- ²¹*The Evening Wisconsin*, Feb. 15, 1915.
- ²²"Domestic Science as Taught in the Settlement," Speech to the South Side Women's Club, Nov. 11, 1902, LBK Papers, MCHS; Speech on the 25th Anniversary of the Girls' Trade and Technical High School, Dec. 7, 1934, LBK Papers, MCHS.
- ²³Unidentified newspaper clipping, June 27, 1920, LBK Papers, Urban Archives.
- ²⁴"Domestic Science as Taught in the Settlement," Speech to the South Side Women's Club, Nov. 11, 1902, LBK Papers, MCHS; *Milwaukee Free Press*, Nov. 10, 1912.
- ²⁵Third Annual Report to Members of the Milwaukee Jewish Mission, June, 1899, LBK Papers, Urban Archives; "Only Kosher Cooking School in West," Feb. 5, 1898, unidentified newspaper clipping, LBK Papers, Urban Archives.
- ²⁶"Only Kosher Cooking School in West," Feb. 5, 1898, unidentified newspaper clipping, LBK Papers, Urban Archives.
- ²⁷*Ibid.*; *Milwaukee Journal*, July 25, 1940.
- ²⁸Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Women and Cooking at the Turn of the Century* (New York: North Point, 1986), p. 128; *The Settlement Cook Book*, pp. 69, 2; Nancy Sinkoff, "Educating for 'Proper Jewish Womanhood': A Case Study in Domesticity and Vocational Training, 1897–1926," *American Jewish History*, 77 (June 1988), p. 594; *The Settlement Cook Book*, p. 57.
- ²⁹*The Settlement Cook Book*, pp.34, 56, 89.
- ³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 20, 171, 79.
- ³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 60, 75.
- ³²*Ibid.*, pp. 84, 82.
- ³³Susan Braunstein and Jenna Weissman Joselit, eds., *Getting Comfortable in New York: The American Jewish Home, 1880–1950* (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1990), p. 80.
- ³⁴Waverly Root and Richard de Rochemont, *Eating in America: A History* (Hopewell, New Jersey: The Ecco Press, 1976), p. 305.
- ³⁵Mink, *The Wages of Motherhood*, p. 88.
- ³⁶*Milwaukee Journal*, Oct. 7, 1920.
- ³⁷*Ibid.*, Oct. 1, 1920.
- ³⁸*Ibid.*, Oct. 3, 1920.
- ³⁹*Ibid.*, Oct. 7, 1920.
- ⁴⁰*Ibid.*, Oct. 8, 1920.
- ⁴¹*Ibid.*
- ⁴²Fowle, p. 42.
- ⁴³Swichkow et al., p. 227.

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