

Uptown on First Night

by Lynne Belluscio

Once again, LeRoy House will be open on New Year's Eve before the fireworks. There is plenty of parking behind LeRoy House and we'll have lanterns along the sidewalk. The door will open at 7pm and you'll have a wonderful view of the 9 pm fireworks from the front steps. Or it's a short walk down to Wolcott Street. Our old fashioned games will be set out in the parlors. Once again, there will be a skittles championship. And there will be free hot cider, coffee and hot cocoa and some Dutch treats.

I am sure the LeRoy family would be glad that we have decided to have this open house. In the 1820s and 1830s when Jacob and Charlotte LeRoy lived in the house, New Year's Day was the big holiday. It was the custom for gentlemen to go out and visit all the neighbors, while their wives stayed at home to welcome everyone with a table filled with cookies and cakes. We have no idea whether Charlotte and Jacob entertained on New Years, however, in Geneseo, Mrs. Wadsworth mentioned that she stayed at home, and had a table full of cakes, and no one stopped by, much to her chagrin.

If the LeRoys celebrated the New Year, there would have been plenty of traditional Dutch treats. And interestingly, Mrs. LeRoy's 1823 manuscript cookbook has several recipes for Dutch food that would have been served for the New Year. There are two recipes for little deep fried "oliekeoks." Food historians believe that these are the origin of doughnuts. They are also known as "Olibollen" (oil cakes) and



often were made with raisins or citron.

Olikeeoks

4 lbs flour, 1 butter, 1 ¼ sugar, 6 eggs, 1 pt milk. Dissolve the butter and sugar in the milk and then add the flour. 1 gill of yeast, 2 nutmegs, when quite light put them in the cold until hard enough to make up.

Another recipe for Olikeeoks 4 lbs flour, 1 butter, 1 sugar, 1 nutmeg 1 pt milk, some yeast 8 eggs.

Another traditional recipe is for a spicy ginger snap called "gingernuts." Charlotte's recipe calls for pearlsh which is a leavening very much like baking soda.

Ginger Nuts

5 pounds of flour

1 ½ lbs of butter

1 ½ of Sugar

1 oz of Pearlsh

1 qt of molasses

Ginger & spices to your liking

Honey cake is a Dutch New Year's tradition, but it is also served on the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah. (Which in 2017 was in September.) It represents wishes for a sweet new year. Martha Stewart serves it with a cream cheese frosting. Some people describe it as Dutch "fruit cake" – either you like it or you don't.

Honey Cake

6 lbs. of flour, 2 of sugar, 3 ¼ of honey, 2 of citron, 2 oz. of ginger, warm the honey and sugar over the fire, then mix them together, add 1 lb. of butter.

Stop by LeRoy House, New Year's Eve, and sample some of Mrs. LeRoy's Dutch treats. (Don't be surprised if the olieeoks look a little like Dunkin' Doughnut's glazed "Munchkins." I actually found gingernuts for sale on the internet and they are imported from England. And hopefully Wegman's or Walmart will have honey cake available.)