

#31 Mincemeat as the War Pie



Antique mincemeat tart pans



NONE SUCH still on the shelf at Kinsley Food Pride

Every year my mother (Eloise Tillotson LaRue) made mincemeat tarts for Christmas. I never developed a taste for mincemeat myself, but my mother had this English tradition handed down in her family. In fact, I inherited the set of little tin tart pans pictured above which she got from her grandmother (Rosina Kirk Straw). Mom thought she had brought them to northern Michigan from England in 1879, and they may have originally belonged to her great grandmother (Eleanor Dawson Straw). Forgive my need to honor these women by name, but the tart tins are one of my favorite things, even though I bake cherry or strawberry tarts in them.

Traditionally, mincemeat is a mix of chopped dried fruit, brandy, spices, beef suet and beef. The directions for one 19th century recipe goes as follows:

Stone and cut the raisins once or twice across, but do not chop them; wash dry and pick the currants free from stalks and grit, and mince the beef and suet, taking care the latter is chopped very fine; slice the citron and candied lemon and orange peel, strain the juice and when all the ingredients are thus prepared, mix them well together, adding the brandy when the other things are well blended; press the whole into a jar, carefully exclude the air, and the mincemeat will be ready for use in a fortnight (two weeks).

It's easy to see that homemade mincemeat is quite a bit of work. Like my mother, early American cooks did not want to spend the time and effort required to make it. For that reason, ready-to-use condensed mincemeat is one of the oldest American convenience foods and has been steadily marketed in the U.S. for more than 100 years. In the *Kansas City Times*, the NONE SUCH MINCE MEAT brand boasted:

"1884-1817, For 33 years NONE SUCH MINCE MEAT has cost you only 10¢ a package. Today, with all food costs high, NONE SUCH still sells at 10¢ a package. Same Quality, Same Price." (NONE SUCH MINCEMEAT is still available at Kinsley Food Pride for \$7.07 a jar.)

World War I had brought on food shortages. The 1916 wheat harvest had been lower than usual. In 1917, many U.S. farmers were in the armed services which left the country not only short of farm workers, but also in need of food to feed the soldiers. Agricultural products were getting less accessible and more expensive, as mentioned in the mincemeat ad. The rationing of sugar, flour, meat, and other food items was about to begin.

In the November, 1917 issues of the *Graphic*, the Merrell-Soule Company (later Borden) advertised NONE SUCH MINCEMEAT that made a specific appeal to the American housewife's patriotism with the simple act of baking a pie with only one crust. They called it a "War Pie".

WAR PIE
It Has No Top Crust

You serve yourself and your country well when you bake a War Pie, and for goodness use

NONE SUCH MINCE MEAT

"Like Mother Used to Make"

Save flour, labor, shortening, and expense. Also try a NONE SUCH Mince Pie with whole wheat or rye flour crust. It is very healthful.

Use NONE SUCH Mince Meat for regular mince pies, cakes, puddings, and cookies.



Merrell-Soule Co.,
SYRACUSE, N. Y.

Bake a War Pie

You bake it with **NO TOP CRUST** — and you use

NONE SUCH MINCE MEAT

"Like Mother Used to Make"

And half the flour, shortening, labor and expense **YOU SAVE**, as the U. S. Food Administration recommends.

Also try a pie crust with whole wheat or rye flour.

Use **NONE SUCH** for your regular pies, cakes, puddings, and cookies.



Merrell-Soule Company, Syracuse, N. Y.

Bull Durham, mentioned in the previous post, and NONE SUCH MINCEMEAT would be just the beginning of companies incorporating the war into promoting their products.