

Abel Colley Tavern Stew

The Fayette County Historical Society selected the recipe for their signature stew after holding a stew cook off in September 2016. The recipe, with a few modern day changes, came from old clippings and letters from the Moore and Malone family dating back to the 1860's.

Both families were Fayette County residents and were descendents from Ireland. Elizabeth Malone was married to David Brooks. He was a farmer and a laborer as listed in the US census and was also stated in his obituary. David was also in the military; he volunteered on November 22, 1862 in Pittsburgh and joined Company F, the 14th Regiment PA Cavalry with Captain Springer's Company. In one of his letters to his wife he talks about "missing her and her stew".

The stew contest was in keeping with the tradition of hospitality of the National Road, and our facility's origin as a tavern/inn. This stew will identify the quintessential menu item that represents the National Road Era. The September meeting in 2016 was devoted to sampling and selecting the specific dish.

Peter Colley born onboard a ship on the way to this country and opened his 1796 tavern to early travelers. We don't know any of his recipes, but do know of the great fireplaces he had in his tavern, particularly the one in the basement that was big enough to cook a steer. Abel, his son and builder of our Abel Colley Tavern, carried on this tradition first at his very successful Green Tree Tavern and later at the fine brick house we occupy. Because they were Irish and because soups and stews were a mainstay of colonial diet, stew was likely a standard item on their menus.

The stew will be just the beginning as we will also develop a complete meal: bread, dessert and a drink.