

Hannah Cutting-Jones

Research Interests

I am a food historian, blogger, and teacher who studies the ways in which history intersects with and impacts culinary beliefs and practices, and how these change over time. I am particularly fascinated by the social and cultural history of foodways, or the ways in which food shapes our interactions and relationships - food taboos, eating in public spaces, and gendered eating practices, for example.

My recent scholarship focuses on the effects of colonialism on foodways in the Pacific and North America. In my dissertation, "Feasts of Change: Food and History in the Cook Islands (1825-1975)," I explored the effects of Christianity and commerce on Cook Islands' foodways and revealed some of the ways in which food illuminates both the arc of cultural change and the resilience of resident populations. The Cook Islands, like other Island nations during this period, went from complete reliance on local food production to a significant dependence on imported goods. My dissertation explored the reasons Cook Islanders made these changes, or were forced to make them, and the impacts these changes had on their society. I particularly focus on food's shifting cultural and environmental meanings throughout this period and the ways that women both possessed outsized influence and bore the brunt of the transformations. Cook Islanders welcomed new foods into their diets, but they also continued to utilize traditional cooking methods and feasting practices and to cultivate culturally significant crops such as taro and breadfruit for local consumption. To be clear, this is not just a story of Western impact on Cook Islanders, but a story of their creative adaptation and cultural strength.

I have also begun research on a new project entitled "The Protein Wars" funded by the AHA Jameson Fellowship at the Library of Congress, which I hope to take up later this summer in person. "Protein Wars" extends my interest in the connections between meat production, colonial settlement, and nutrition while extending my geographical purview to the United States. The project will also draw upon the courses I have developed at the University of Oregon on the global history of vegetarianism and food ethics. Protein is arguably the most compelling and controversial dietary component in modern history. From the initial discovery of protein as an essential nutrient in the mid-nineteenth century and continuing to present-day battles between meatpackers and makers of plant-based burgers, Americans have wrestled with how best to produce, market, and consume protein-rich foods. Our hunger for protein has, in many ways, shaped how we have established our food systems and even defined what it has meant to be an American: a constant supply of cheap, abundant protein.

Recent Publications

"'One Extensive Garden'?: Citrus Schemes and Land Use in the Cook Islands, 1900-1970" in Ted Melilo, ed. *Migrant Ecologies*, forthcoming with University of Hawai'i Press, 2021.

"Jane Goodall" and "Margaret Mead," in Candice Goucher, ed. *Women Who Changed the World: Their Lives, Challenges, and Accomplishments through History*, 4 v., forthcoming with ABC-CLIO, 2021.

"'The Conscience of the Community': The *Au Vaine* of Rarotonga," the *Journal of Pacific History*, 2019.

Blog: "But first, we eat" (<https://hannahcuttingjones.wordpress.com/author/hannahcuttingjones/>)