The Enslaved People of Van Cortlandt Plantation
Curriculum for Grades 6, 7, 8
Notes to the Teacher on Food Mapping

The ethnographic methodology of food mapping popularized by Lidia Marte. Food mapping can be seen as an extension of a diet, a common nutritionist and dietician's tool. Food mapping can be harnessed by individuals and or communities to gather and demonstrate where and how people grow, purchase, cook, eat or celebrate commensality in a geographic zone. The mapping practice can be generated in photographs, drawings, as an oral history, harnessing GPS technology, or as a performativity through the production of a dish. Marte's work engaged both researchers and respondents to generate maps based on Dominican immigrant food practices on the island and in New York City. Preparation, ingredients, and process were documented to better identify and illuminate how food can connote home through ideas of memory and nostalgia.

To map is to trace. To trace is a means "to draw," but also "a mark of a former presence or a small amount." Thus, tracing boundaries of "home" through a food map means producing a graphic depiction of food-place connections and can reveal the former presence of cultural histories experienced from the present through the unnoticed threads that food relations create. Food serves to ground body-place-memory in the way immigrants live and re-imagine their cultural histories in consecutive 'homes,' manifesting their movements through neighborhoods, cities, and countries (Marte 2007).

The second strategy will involve farming and food based Primary Data Based Questions, (DBQ). Food and cooking are an ideal interlocutor to coalesce issues and questions that bridge research in culture and practice through the lenses of anthropology, history, and science. Two simple examples can be found when we utilize cookbooks as narrative texts.

Students can be asked to answer some of these DBQ questions verbally, in essay form, or by creating projects that illustrate the results of their inquiry. The goal here is for them to be able to begin to utilize historical resources to think critically, realize the differences between subjective and objective materials, including developing an understanding of where bias may lie.

Recipes can also be mined as markers of technological and procedural advances in culinary history. If we consider the ingredients Baking Soda and Baking Powder, we know that alkaline leaveners date back to ancient civilizations commonly in the form of pearl or potash potassium carbonate) that also produced lye for soap making or skinning hominy corn. This early bicarbonate of soda becomes a manufactured product in the U.S. around 1790. Additional acid is needed for leavening usually supplied by butter or soured milk. Salertus, (potassium bicarbonate) an early nineteenth century improved leavener version of modern Baking powder

appears in print in the 1830s. By the 1850s true baking powder, containing both bicarbonate of soda and acid in the form of cream of tartar, tartaric acid. Double-Acting Baking Powder, a two-stage chemical, that is more stable than earlier versions, since it leavens twice, pre-baking and in the oven is developed in 1887. Therefore, by tracking an ingredient we may be able to ascertain the age of a recipe or the knowledge and skill of the cook (Olver 1999/2015).

Original documents can be either text or image based or physical structures. One example on the property that is food related is the remnants of the Rhinelander Sugar House, (and residence) that was originally erected between William and Rose Streets in lower Manhattan. It was the last of the sugar house prisons of the Revolutionary period.

Contingent upon their age and grade level students can be asked to answer some of these DBQ questions verbally, in essay form, or by creating projects that illustrate the results of their inquiry. The goal here is for them to be able to begin to utilize historical resources to think critically, realize the differences between subjective and objective materials, including developing an understanding of where bias may lie. Ultimately, we want teachers and students to see and appreciate the synergistic relationship between geography, an important and neglected field, science, anthropology and history by demonstrating the strength of interdisciplinary research and application of theoretical frameworks. Short term outputs can include having students bring in familial recipes for study and comparison with 18-19th century receipts. We can also utilize Ian Cook's method, "follow the thing" to try and trace a common foodstuff or ingredient back to the source where it was grown, and then map how our food arrived in the store or in our home kitchen (Cook 2004). Food is a powerful modality to use for research and drawing interdisciplinary connections since academic disciplines from biology, botany, chemistry, physics, history, gender, race, ethnicity, economics, sociology, geography and anthropology are present in food and foodways.

As the project evolves a later phase will be to have the students participate in mapping the original agricultural areas, including the grist mill where grains were ground into meals and flours. Planting heirloom varietals of the vegetables, grains and herbs that were cultivated on the Van Cortlandt property will yield both greater knowledge of earlier agricultural knowledge, as well as presenting a microcosm of the food system, which will be a benefit for both children and their educators.