

Who's Who In The Kitchen

# Mrs. Rosa Davis Has Love In Her Heart And "Good Food" On Her Table

By Audrey C. Lodato  
Post Staff Writer

Rosa Davis may be a "senior citizen," but there's plenty of bounce left in her voice, twinkle in her eye, love in her heart, and good food on the table. After growing up in Winnsboro, SC, she and her husband Robert L. Davis, Sr., moved to Charlotte. She recalls the First Ward neighborhood where their family spent many happy years. "There was a love in our neighborhood. We didn't have much, but there was a feeling of togetherness." She praises the education her children got there, too. "There is something to be said for the school. The children all grew up industrious."

The Davis family eventually moved to Biddleville "because the children could walk to Northwest High School and then to Johnson C. Smith." Besides son, Robert "Bob" Jr., and daughter Rosalie (now Meeks), Rosa Davis took in three of her brother's children when they became orphaned.

With all these mouths to feed, it comes as no surprise that Mrs. Davis can cook up a storm. As with so many women, she learned to cook from her mother. Her father was a farmer and her mother "laid out some good stuff for you. She never knew whom my father was going to invite home for Sunday dinner after church," she laughs. "I had finished eleventh grade by the age of 12, and I was too young to go to college," she continues. "I stayed home and helped my mother cook, sew, and do housekeeping." When she was 13, she got a job cooking for the local postmaster and his wife.

The young Rosa was thrifty and industrious. She saved her earnings and married Robert Davis when she wasn't yet 16. Herself the third of eight children, family has always been an important part of Mrs. Davis' life. She has nine grandchild-

ren and 16 great grandchildren; most of the family lives in this area. "I think I'm so fortunate," she declares. "They haven't forgotten Grandma." Son Bob often comes over for one of his mother's meals, and other family members visit regularly.

Mrs. Davis shares some of her philosophy. "There's no life like family life," she affirms. "So many homes have failed. Parents are more interested in what their children have rather than what they can be. Character is more important than material things." She adds, "I was good to them, but I was firm. If I said no, I meant no."

Church has also been an important facet of Mrs. Davis' life. A member of Mt. Moriah Primitive Baptist Church for "about 59 years," Mrs. Davis relates that the whole family has been involved. "We work in it," she remarks. "We have a mutual respect for each other," she says of the members. "We've known each other all our lives." The niece she took in as a child was the church organist from the time she was 11 until she graduated from Johnson C. Smith at age 22. "I wouldn't do without the church," Mrs. Davis adds. "It's been wonderful for us."

Although residents of Charlotte most of their lives, Mr. and Mrs. Davis spent a number of years in New York after their children were grown. They've been back 10 years now. Although she loved New York, it appears Mrs. Davis can be happy wherever she is. "Life is meant to be lived for people," she asserts. "God willed it this way." In thinking about her eventual passing from this earth, she says she has told her pastor, the Rev. T.W. Samuel, "I don't want to live for people and die by myself."

This very much people-oriented person shares with Post readers some of the recipes she loves to share with family and friends.

### ECONOMICAL SPAGHETTI SAUCE

- 5-6 slices fatback
- Onion
- Bell pepper
- No. 2 can of tomatoes
- Pinch of sugar
- Salt

Fry out fatback. In the grease, saute diced onion and bell pepper. Add tomatoes, sugar, and salt to taste. Simmer about an hour. Toss with drained cooked spaghetti and top with grated sharp cheddar or other cheese.

### "1-2-3-4" CAKE

- 1 c. butter
- 2 c. sugar
- 3 c. flour
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. flavoring

Cream butter with sugar. Gradually beat in eggs and flour; add baking powder and flavoring, beating until well-blended. Pour batter into 3 round layer pans. Bake at 300 degrees until cake begins to pull away from side of pan and when toothpick inserted into middle of cake comes out clean. ("This is the basic foundation for chocolate, coconut, or any other flavor cake.")



Mrs. Davis prepares to add tomatoes to pan for "Economical Spaghetti Sauce." Fatback, onion and bell pepper add flavor to this meatless tomato sauce. (Photo by Audrey C. Lodato)

### POUND CAKE

- 3 c. sugar
- 1 c. butter
- 6 eggs
- 3 c. flour, sifted
- ¼ tsp. baking powder
- pinch of salt
- 1 c. milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla or lemon extract
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil

Cream sugar and butter. Add eggs one at a time. Mix baking powder and salt with flour. Add alternately with milk, beating into sugar and egg mixture. Add extract and oil. Bake in greased tube pan at 300 degrees for at least one hour. ("The vegetable oil added at the end of mixing keeps the cake from falling. Also, don't open the oven door for at least an hour while baking. After an hour, you can test the cake. Turn the oven off and leave the cake in for a little while.")

### BAKED CHICKEN

("Like my mother used to make.") Wash whole chicken, rub with butter, and salt and pepper to taste. Place a piece of foil over the breast and bake in covered roasting pan at 300 degrees until done (insert knife blade into chicken to see if it's still bloody). Serve with cornbread stuffing.

### CORNBREAD STUFFING

Crumble together cornbread and toasted white bread. Add diced celery, poultry seasoning, sage, minced onion, salt, pepper, and some butter. Mix in some chicken stock from roasted bird. Bake in pan until browned. ("I usually make the chicken the night before and then have the stock for the stuffing.")

## Black Pioneers Cooked With Imagination

By Alfred E. Cain for Kraft, Inc.  
Special To The Post

During the period just after the Civil War, the Black-American experience reached an all-time low. In response to the faltering Reconstruction, Blacks gathered their belongings, took their fate in their own hands, and joined the migration westward. Most settlers, white or black, had similar experiences taming the Wild West. Getting there was half the battle. Because these pilgrims would be in a sense starting a completely new life, they took with them whatever they felt would ease their adjustment to strange surroundings.

According to the editors of "Better Homes and Gardens Heritage Cook Book," "Pioneer cooking meant working with limited ingredients and a lot of imagination. For example, when sugar was scarce and even sorghum molasses was in short supply, pumpkin or watermelon juice boiled to a syrup might be substituted. During a blackbird plague, blackbirds took a prominent place on the menu. A Nebraska farm paper... lists 33 different recipes using corn. As for coffee, it might be made of parched barley, okra seeds, carrots or cornmeal and molasses that had been fried, powdered and semi-burned; but it seldom had anything to do with coffee beans. Most households owned a coffee grinder, but it was used to grind corn."

During summer, pioneer living was relatively easy, but food was often scarce in winter. Nevertheless, families managed to serve up savory meals. The principal cooking utensil was the Dutch oven, which served as fry pan, stew pot, bread, cake or pie pan. It's small wonder that one-dish meals were frequent.

Prominent among pioneer recipes were dishes featuring mill-ground



Corn bread like the pioneers used to make.

corn. Kraft has developed some up-dated versions, which are presented here. Cheddar Skillet Biscuits are quick and easy. Baking on top of the stove cuts down on energy consumption and kitchen heat. Country Corn Bread has a hint of

### COUNTRY CORN BREAD

- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 cup flour
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 2 eggs
- 1/3 cup Parkay margarine, melted
- ¼ cup honey

Combine dry ingredients. Add combined milk, eggs, margarine and honey, mixing just until moistened. Pour into well-greased 9 or 10-inch skillet. If you don't have a skillet, a regular baking pan will do. Bake at 400 degrees, 20 to 25 minutes or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Serve warm.

sweetness and should prove a welcome addition to your cornbread recipe collection.

### CHEDDAR SKILLET BISCUITS

- 1-2/3 cups flour
- ½ cup milk
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons Parkay margarine
- 1 cup (4 oz.) shredded J.L. Kraft Select sharp natural cheddar cheese

Combine dry ingredients; cut in margarine until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in cheese. Add milk, mixing just until moistened. On lightly floured surface, knead dough ten times. Roll to ½-inch thickness. Roll with a delicate touch or the biscuits will be tough. Cut with floured 2-inch cutter. Place in well-greased 12-inch skillet. Cover; cook over medium heat 15 minutes or until underside is golden brown. Turn. Cover; continue cooking 5 minutes. Serve warm. Approximately 1 dozen

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