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Duncan Hines The Man Behind the Cake Mix

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DUNCAN HINES
THE MAN BEHIND THE CAKE MIX

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

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December 1996
DUNCAN HINES
THE MAN BEHIND THE CAKE MIX

Date Recommended: November 19, 1996

Director of Thesis

Dean, Graduate Studies and Research Date
Throughout the annals of history, there have been countless individuals whose contributions to their societies are routinely overlooked and unappreciated. In America, one individual who falls into this category happens to be Bowling Green, Kentucky native, Duncan Hines, whose singular contribution to American civilization was to popularize—and thus bring into everyday acceptance—something that Americans take for granted today: the practice of eating a meal away from home. While Americans ate their meals in unfamiliar environs long before Hines arrived on the scene, they did so with little enthusiasm. Dining out was not always a pleasure. Travelers frequently suffered severe discomfort when dining away from home; sometimes they even died. To his credit, Hines changed this deplorable condition. Thanks to his campaign during the middle of the twentieth century to get Americans to demand superior service from the restaurants that served them, Americans gradually shed their fears of dining out. Dining out in a restaurant became an experience that Americans looked forward to. Hines, in effect, set the stage for the dining culture that America experiences at present.
The story that unfolds in these pages has never been told before in any adequate detail. This study is an attempt to fill that gap. Works of this sort are not the product of one lone individual, however. The author managed to elicit the cooperation of several individuals during the twenty-five months it took to assemble this information. It is best to divide them into categories of importance when acknowledging their contributions.

Thanks should go first of all to Mrs. Cora Jane Spiller of Bowling Green, Kentucky, the great-niece of Duncan Hines, who gladly provided me hours of her time and allowed me to not only record her memories of her great uncle but also to repeatedly challenge her on numerous occasions when the facts did not always bear out her recollections. I would also like to thank Ed Rider, archivist of Procter and Gamble in Cincinnati, who provided me with a 40-pound box of documents relating to Duncan Hines.

On a secondary level are others who helped make this study as complete a record as possible. Thanks should go to: Jean Brainerd of the Wyoming Historical Society in Cheyenne, Wyoming, who gave me a better understanding of the people who populated Cheyenne and the places that made up that metropolis' geography when Duncan Hines first came to live there. To Terry Tatum of Chicago, Illinois, who
provided me with a wealth of information concerning Duncan Hines during the years when he lived in Chicago, none of which has ever been published in any form. To the staff of the Kentucky Library in Bowling Green, Kentucky, particularly Mrs. Nancy Baird and Miss Connie Mills, for their help and patience with me as I tried to track down every last little detail. To Maj. Gen. Richard Groves of Alexandria, Virginia, for his help in giving me a vital clue to unraveling many of the mysteries concerning Duncan Hines' early life. To Larry Williams of Franklin, Tennessee, who gave me much information about Duncan Hines' association with the Williams Printing Company in Nashville, Tennessee. To Mary Cohron of North Salem, Indiana, and Sara Meeks of Louisville, Kentucky, among other Duncan Hines secretaries, who invited me into their homes and gave me hours of their time as I tried to separate the real Duncan Hines from the public image he presented. To Robert Wright of Fresno, California, brother-in-law of Duncan Hines, who took time out from his vacation in Frankfort, Kentucky, to let me interview him in his hotel room. To Edward and Richard Beebe, former nephews of Duncan Hines, who put up with my questions about their late aunt, Emelie Tolman. Thanks to Elizabeth Duncan Hines, of Bowling Green, Kentucky, for her remembrances about her uncle. Final thanks goes to Mr.
Thomas C. Dedman, Sr., proprietor of the Beaumont Inn in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, and a friend of Duncan Hines, who gave me much information about Hines' relationship with the lodging industry.

On a third and final level, thanks should go to Dr. Carol Crowe-Carraco who, though I was living in Henderson, Kentucky during the entire time this thesis was being written, directed the course of my research and inquiry. Thanks should also go to her and those who have to read it: this manuscript, in its original form, stood at 845 pages and 166,000 words. Further thanks should go to the remainder of my thesis committee: Dr. Carlton Jackson, who signed onto this project only after I pledged to him that I would write in a prose style that was free of academic jargon, and to Dr. Jack Thacker. To them I owe a debt of gratitude for their cooperation in making this project a reality.
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To many Americans Duncan Hines (1880-1959) is just a name on a cake mix package. Few would suspect that in the 1940s and 1950s Duncan Hines was the most trusted name in the food industry. In the early twentieth century Hines was a traveling salesman of printing wares who was keenly interested in discovering safe places to eat during the course of his business excursions. He eventually became well-known among the public for his specialized knowledge of the locations of superior dining facilities. In 1936 he began publishing this information annually in a restaurant guide. By the end of the decade, Hines had become the best known and most trusted dining authority in America. Hines used his influence to reform the restaurant industry, particularly in the area of sanitation. In an era when Americans dined out
infrequently, Hines popularized the idea that Americans should eat more of their meals outside the home. He also shaped the American expectation that dining out should be seen as a form of entertainment. For a host of reasons, the experience of the Second World War expanded his influence throughout America. After World War II researchers discovered that in all matters of food—not just restaurants—housewives trusted Hines more than any other authority. This discovery led Hines to form a partnership with businessman Roy Park. Together they established Hines-Park Foods, which eventually distributed over two-hundred Duncan Hines products. The company was highly successful and was purchased by the Procter and Gamble Corporation in 1956, leaving Duncan Hines a lasting legacy, if in name only.
INTRODUCTION

There is a cartoon from the 1940s that was once every restaurant owner's nightmare. The scene is a dining room of an elegant four-star restaurant, and a waiter has accidentally spilled an entire tray of food onto the head and lap of a nicely attired customer. As a large lump of lasagna rolls off the side of his pate, the angry victim is trying mightily to repress his desire to strangle the clumsy employee. The man's indignant wife, taking matters into her own hands, says to the waiter in a firm and icy voice: "Just wait 'till Duncan Hines hears about this!"¹

Duncan Hines was a man with a penchant for excellence, primarily in matters of food. His contribution to our culture was significant; he helped raise America's restaurant standards as it entered the modern age. He accomplished this feat by exhorting his fellow Americans to do as he did: to demand only the best from the nation's public kitchens. He alerted Americans to the dangers that were present in thousands of poor and mediocre restaurants which were found along the country's

¹ Cartoon, Moonbeams, December 1958, p. 6. Moonbeams is the Procter and Gamble Corporation's company magazine.
highways, and he directed them toward cleaner, more sanitary establishments, ones far more worthy of their patronage. From 1936 through 1962 the Duncan Hines guidebooks alerted the public to some of the best restaurants in the country. Because of Hines' efforts, the traveling public knew of hundreds of restaurants that strived to give their customers the best in restaurant cuisine. Duncan Hines made these restaurants famous, and for 25 years millions of people bought his books, took his advice, and were much wiser and happier for it. It may not have much salience today, but 40 years ago when the public learned that a restaurant was "Recommended by Duncan Hines," they surmised that it must be something really special, because a restaurant could not receive a higher compliment. The following account is the story of one man's efforts to change America's restaurant industry and American expectations of dining out.
Duncan Hines' story does not begin in a restaurant or on the back of a cake mix box but in the south-central Kentucky town of Bowling Green. At the time of his birth, the primarily agricultural city had a smattering of light industry and boasted a population of 5,000 citizens. Like many other families who settled in the Bowling Green area during the early part of the 19th century, Hines' forebears were originally from Scotland. Edward Ludlow Hines, Duncan's father, was born near Bowling Green on November 5, 1842. He was the third son of Fayette and Anne Cook Hines. Edward Hines served in the Confederate Army as a lieutenant in Company E, the Bowling Green regiment of the 9th Kentucky Cavalry under the command of John Hunt Morgan. Edward Hines received several wounds on his stomach as a result of his war service, and his health remained in precarious shape for the rest of his life. He had to take care that he did not over-exert himself and thus make his infirmity still more serious. As a result
of this physical limitation, he never held a steady job.\textsuperscript{1}

Duncan Hines' mother, Eliza Cornelia Duncan, was born in Warren County, Kentucky, of which Bowling Green is the county seat, on August 10, 1846. She was the daughter of Joseph Dillard Duncan and Jane Covington Duncan. The two met during the Civil War and a courtship between them developed after the war. They were married in Bowling Green, Kentucky, on November 11, 1869. To support his wife and family, Edward Hines held several positions, his most notable one being the master commissioner and clerk of the Warren County Circuit Court.\textsuperscript{2}

The union of Edward and Cornelia Hines produced six sons and a daughter, plus four other siblings who died as infants. Their eighth child, Duncan, was born on March 26, 1880.\textsuperscript{3}


\textsuperscript{2} Descendants of Henry Hines, Sr., p. 10; Interview with Spiller, 10 May 1994; Edward Ludlow Hines, autobiographical paper, no. 1 and no. 2, n.d., n.p.; Park City Daily News, 16 February 1920. The master commissioner and circuit court clerk are now two separate positions. When the First World War erupted, Edward Hines retired to a home located at the mouth of the Gasper River, ten miles northwest of Bowling Green, and lived there until shortly before his death on February 15, 1920.

\textsuperscript{3} Spiller, 16 August 1993. The Hines' first child, Hiram Markham Hines, was born on March 9, 1871; he died at age 46 on October 10, 1917. The Kentucky Department of
When she was 38 years old, Cornelia Hines died of pneumonia in Bowling Green on December 29, 1884. Her death caused much unrest among the Hines household. Because of his ill health, Edward Hines proved unable to care for the brood that Cornelia had left behind. Being concerned for their health and welfare, Edward made arrangements for his children to live elsewhere. Some went to live with members of his family; others were sent

Vital Statistics gives Markham Hines' death date as October 12, 1917, but that may have been when it was filed; the Hines' family Bible states his death as October 10, 1917. A year after Markham's birth, a second son was born on April 8, 1872; unfortunately the child died on May 13 and was never named. The Hines' first and only surviving daughter, Annie Duncan Hines, was born on April 5, 1873. She married a distant cousin, a Bowling Green grocer named Arthur Scott Hines, on December 23, 1896. Scott Hines became a prominent local politician and was twice elected mayor of Bowling Green (1925-29, 1941-42). Annie died at age 78 on December 4, 1951. Edward and Cornelia's fourth child was named after his father; Edward Ramsey Hines was born on November 14, 1874 and died on December 5, 1935. Their fifth child was a son named William Warner Hines, who was born on December 23, 1875 and died on August 17, 1948. The Hines' sixth child, John Porter Hines, was born on March 24, 1878; he died at age 83 on June 18, 1961. Cornelia Hines gave birth a seventh time on May 5, 1879 to an unnamed daughter who only lived three months. Then came the birth of Duncan Hines in March 1880. Finally, there were two more children. The ninth child was an unnamed daughter who was born on June 18, 1881; she lived only three days. She was followed by a tenth child, an unnamed son who was born on November 7, 1882 in Colorado; he lived only a day. This last child of Edward and Cornelia Hines was the only one not to have been born in Bowling Green. Shortly before the baby's birth, Cornelia came down with consumption, and Edward took her out west in an effort to arrest her declining health. Spiller, 25 March 1994; Kentucky Registrar of Vital Statistics, file no. 29188; Park City Daily News, 4 December 1951; 6 December 1935; 18 August 1948; 19 June 1961.
to the homes of friends. Duncan Hines was sent to live with his grandparents on a farm in nearby Browning, Kentucky, fifteen miles from Bowling Green on the Morgantown pike.\(^4\)

It was with his maternal grandparents, Joseph Dillard Duncan (1814-1905) and Jane Covington Duncan (1817-1900), that Duncan Hines spent a large part of his childhood along with his older brother, Porter. The two boys usually spent their winters at their grandparents' home, but sometimes they remained there a whole year before returning to Bowling Green to spend some time with their father. Joseph and Jane Duncan raised the boys as if they were their own. They owned many acres of farm land on which much livestock could always be found grazing. They were well-to-do citizens, who were well-educated, aware of their community responsibilities, and active in community affairs.\(^5\)

Duncan Hines first learned to appreciate good cooking from his grandmother. With generations of culinary skill behind her, "Grandma Duncan," as Hines called her, could create all sorts of wonderful things in her kitchen. Unlike modern cooks, her only form of measurement was "a pinch of this and a pinch of that." The only kitchen


\(^{5}\) Spiller, 16 August 1993.
timer she ever owned was the one in her head; she knew intuitively when the roast or the cake in the oven was ready to pull out and serve. She used no cookbooks. Her method of acquiring recipes was by exchanging them with other ladies after church on Sunday. Before his arrival at his grandparents' home, "food," said Hines, "was just something to fill the hollow space under my ribs. Not until after I came to live with Grandma Duncan did I realize just how wonderful good cookery could be." The two predominant ingredients that made his grandmother's cooking taste so delicious, Hines insisted, were eggs and butter. The Duncan household also consumed its share of beef and pork, as well as fresh vegetables from the garden and fish from a nearby stream.

Hines attended a public school in Bowling Green. For a year he also attended St. Columba Academy, Bowling Green's Catholic school on Center Street, which was operated by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. When his primary education had been completed, in the fall of

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7 Ibid., p. 7.
8 Spiller, 16 August 1993.
10 The Bowling Green Junior High School now occupies the site of this now extinct institution. St. Columba closed in June 1911.
1896 Hines entered Bowling Green Business College. He spent two productive years at this institution studying business administration.11

Late in 1898 Hines visited the family physician to see why he had begun to develop "a slight wheeze." His doctor concluded that he had asthma. Years later Hines wrote that "The cure for all respiratory ailments was, at that time, thought to be a move to a dry, mountainous area." His doctor told him to move to that region immediately, lest his condition worsen.12

Before Hines left Bowling Green, he secured employment with the Wells-Fargo Express Company—with some parental help. The President of the Wells-Fargo Company, John J. Valentine, was a Bowling Green native and a friend of Hines' father. A good word from the elder Hines to Valentine was all that was needed for Hines to secure a position with the company. Hines arrived by train in Albuquerque, New Mexico on December 31, 1898, ready to go to work at a salary of $40 per month. Over the next few months, Hines quickly worked his way up the company ladder, first as a clerk, then later as a railroad express messenger, then still later as a freight agent. He was eventually assigned to be a relief man. In this capacity,

11 The Bowling Green Business College was located in downtown Bowling Green on College Street between 11th and 12th Streets.

"he was moved from locality to locality in the Albuquerque area when regular Wells-Fargo agents became ill or went on vacation."

For recreation, Hines soon discovered a new place in Albuquerque to spend his time and salary: a restaurant. Specifically, it was one of a chain of restaurants known officially as Fred Harvey's House. Eating in a restaurant was a new sensation for Hines; he had never been inside one. He found the experience exhilarating. In those early weeks, when he was off duty, Hines usually stationed himself at the counter of Albuquerque's Harvey House. Unlike the dining room menu, which was rather expensive, nothing on the counter menu cost more than 25 cents. Because of his meager salary, the large portions that the Harvey House served their customers afforded Hines the pleasure of eating "like a king." The restaurant chain's passion for excellence was unsurpassed, and it certainly set the stage for the expectations that Hines came to demand in restaurants years later. He was especially impressed with how immaculately clean the restaurant appeared; it reminded him of his grandmother's ubiquitous comments on the importance of "absolute cleanliness when

handling food."\textsuperscript{14}

In early June 1899, just as he was becoming settled into the Albuquerque community, the company ordered Hines to move to Cheyenne, Wyoming. His new assignment, Hines learned, was to be the relief man in the company's Cheyenne office. In this position, Hines soon found himself engaged primarily in desk-work.\textsuperscript{15}

Hines had not lived in town a month when he had the adventure and meal of his life. Hines, then nineteen, left Denver, Colorado, on July 1, 1899, at about 1:30 p.m. in a new Wells-Fargo express wagon. He had been instructed to drive the horse-drawn vehicle to the company's Cheyenne office—a distance of 90 miles. It was his first run, and he was not familiar with the route. There were "no modern roads between the two cities. Only a few trails wound over the sagebrush hills."\textsuperscript{16} He had instructions to sleep at an abandoned sheep camp, which was along the trail fourteen miles from his point of origination, but he never arrived there. Hines had no idea what a deserted sheep camp looked like. He traveled all afternoon, ever hopeful that he would find what he was

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{14} Hines, \textit{Food Odyssey}, pp. 16-17. It should be added that Hines, when he could afford it, made occasional forays into the Harvey House's dining room to sample its fare, but he had to save his money for such occasions.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 18; Spiller, 16 August 1993.

\textsuperscript{16} Hines, \textit{Food Odyssey}, p. 1.
\end{flushright}
looking for. Eventually, as the sun began to set, he realized that he had lost the trail. He was without food in the mountains for four days. With the help of a hermit he met in the wilderness, he found his way back to civilization. He arrived in Cheyenne on the morning of July 4, 1899. By the time he entered the city limits he was practically starving. He approached the first restaurant he saw, one he remembered as "Harry Hynd's Restaurant." It was a frontier hash-house, "where the click of the roulette wheel in the back mingled with the clatter of dishes at the front counter." Hines barged through the double doors and frantically ordered a meal. "I want five dollars' worth of ham and eggs!" he told the counterman. "Well, you won't get it," his host scowled. "Nobody can eat that much ham and eggs." Hines later conceded the counterman was right, but after four days without food, his demand did not seem to him entirely unreasonable. The ham and eggs were quickly set before him and devoured in no time. Many years later Hines wrote, understandably, "nothing has since tasted as good as that platter of ham and eggs. I don't think that anything ever will." 17

17 Ibid., pp. 1-6; 1902-1903 Cheyenne Wyoming City Directory, (Greeley, Colorado: Tribune Press, 1902), p. 94. In the 1902-1903 Cheyenne Wyoming City Directory, Harry P. Hynd is listed as the proprietor of the Capitol Bar; there is no such establishment as Harry Hynd's Restaurant. Hynd ran the dining facility with the help of his wife Nellie. The restaurant must have been the first
Late in 1900 Hines met Florence Chaffin and began seeing her regularly. Florence Marie Chaffin was born on September 10, 1877, in the Cheyenne territory of Wyoming, thirteen years before it became a state. Her father, John Thomas Chaffin, was a Virginian, born in 1845, who had served with the Confederate Army during the Civil War. In early 1868, Chaffin married Mary Jennings Jeffres, and in April 1868 their daughter, Eva, was born. A few months later, the Chaffins left Virginia for Cheyenne, a boom town that had not existed just a few months earlier. Within a few years after the Chaffin's arrival, Cheyenne became the site of an expanded army post, known as Fort D. A. Russell. The fort, originally built in 1867 to protect the Union Pacific railroad workers from Indians, soon became one of the country's largest military outposts.\(^{18}\)

The Chaffins quickly grew to become one of Cheyenne's more respected families. Upon his arrival, John Chaffin first provided for his family as the cashier at Cheyenne's Wilson bank. He also held several other positions including one as the Wyoming territorial assessor, wherein it was Chaffin's job to assess the value of the area's one on the street that arrested Hines' attention, because the same city directory shows there to be eighteen restaurants then serving Cheyenne's citizens.

many properties. This occupation kept him preoccupied for over a decade while his wife, Mary, kept house and tended to the needs of their expanding family, which included, in addition to Eva, the births of Fred (1870), Grace (1872), Howard (1876), and Florence. By the mid-1880s John Chaffin had left public life to become the city's most prominent florist, an occupation that left him prosperous until he died.19

Florence Chaffin had been married and divorced before Hines ever met her. The marriage took place, either soon before or shortly after January 1, 1900, to an army officer stationed at Cheyenne's Fort D. A. Russell. The marriage was a very brief affair, lasting only a few months if not weeks.20

It is not known how Duncan and Florence first met, but the two began to see each other frequently, and eventually they discussed marriage. They had, however, one obstacle in their path to happiness—Florence's mother who did not believe her daughter had much of a future as


20 Interview with Groves, 10 August 1994.
the wife of a Wells-Fargo relief man. Her parents pointed out that Florence's sister, Grace, had married Col. Richard H. Wilson, an army officer, and Mary Chaffin believed that Florence could do just as well. Their romance remained in an awkward, frustrated state of affairs for a long time.21

Late in 1902 or early 1903 Duncan Hines left Cheyenne and the Wells Fargo company.22 He moved nine miles across the state line into Colorado where he became employed by the Coal Fuel Oil Company, a firm which probably used the Wells-Fargo Express to ship its cargo from one destination to another. One of the Coal Fuel Oil Company's operations concerned the making of coke, which the company shipped to Mexico.23

After he had been on the job for a few months, Hines was awarded a vacation. He had never been to Mexico, so he accompanied a trainload of the company's coke to its destination. The train raced through the American Southwest before coming to a stop 45 miles past Nogales,

21 Ibid.

22 Phil Roberts, David L. Roberts and Steven L. Roberts, Wyoming Almanac, (Laramie: Skyline West Press, 1994), n.p. It would be illuminating to know the exact date that Hines left his job as a Wells-Fargo relief man, but Robert Chandler, resident historian of the Wells-Fargo Company in San Francisco, California, says that the answer will never be known because all the company's files from that time were destroyed in the fiery aftermath of the San Francisco earthquake of April 18, 1906.

Arizona, at a "dry, dusty, hot little town" named Cananea, Mexico. Soon after dismounting from the locomotive, Hines struck up a conversation with a local man who saw something in the young man's forceful, colorful personality. At one point he asked Hines if he was interested in a job. Hines asked him how much it paid. "Five hundred dollars a month--in gold," came the reply. This amount was approximately ten times the average wage of the day and Hines readily agreed. When Hines inquired what he would be doing for his generous wages, he was told his position would be a "sort of expediter or trouble shooter" in the traffic department for the Green Copper Company, which was in dire need for someone to fill the job. As it was explained to Hines, "The vagaries of Mexican customs and the natural slowness of transportation . . . often resulted in delayed shipments of mining equipment and other supplies. Delays were costly, and the company was more than willing to pay a good salary to the man who could keep the supply lines open and functioning smoothly." Within a few days Hines found himself a resident of Cananea, working, eating and living with 25 other young Americans approximately his age, most of them mining engineers.24

24 Ibid., pp. 19-20. In this source Hines says that his employer was the Wells-Fargo Company. This may be a mistake on his or the book's editors part, because in every other account Hines states that his employer was the Green Copper Company. Wells Fargo's company historian,
While in Mexico, the correspondence between Hines and Florence continued. In March and then again in December of 1903, Hines received letters from Florence reporting the death of her parents. Early in 1904 Hines received another letter from Florence which told him that she had completed the necessary arrangements concerning her family's estate and that she was leaving Cheyenne; she told him that she was moving to Fort Slocum in New Rochelle, New York, to live with her sister Grace and her husband, the fort's commanding officer, Maj. Richard H. Wilson.²⁵

By the summer of 1905 Duncan Hines had accumulated a sizable bankroll; he was ready to get married and move on to another line of work. He had earlier proposed to Florence via the mail and she eagerly accepted. In mid-September 1905, after he had settled a variety of loose ends and amicably severed his ties with the Green Copper Company, he packed his bags and left Cananea by rail for New Rochelle. Duncan Hines and Florence Chaffin were married on September 27, 1905 at Fort Slocum.²⁶

Robert Chandler, concedes that the Green Copper Company may possibly have been briefly involved with the express giant, but its ties with the firm were only tenuous.

²⁵ Cheyenne Daily Leader, 22 December 1903; Cheyenne Daily Leader, 28 March 1903. Maj. Richard H. Wilson was the commanding officer at Fort Slocum from 1904 to 1906.

When Duncan and Florence Hines first moved to Chicago, Illinois, that fall, Hines went to work for the John T. H. Mitchell Company, a pioneer in direct mail advertising, which had offices in Chicago's Marquette Building. The gregarious Hines soon became one of the firm's best sales representatives.27

Sometime after 1910 the Mitchell company was forced to shift the focus of its operations or perish. Mitchell chose to discontinue his involvement with direct mail and go into printing. Within several months the Mitchell Company became a major Midwestern printer. Because Mitchell could always make great use of Hines' valuable selling talents, the younger man's role within the reorganized company was not affected by the changeover. Hines quickly proved, however, that he could do more than just sell. He rapidly learned the facets of the printing trade and in the space of a year or so made himself known within the industry as one of its more knowledgeable experts.28

Hines and his boss, J.T.H. Mitchell, got along very well; quite often they would call on clients together. When Mitchell had to remain at the office, Hines traveled

27 Chicago, Illinois, City Directory, 1906 and 1907; Adventures in Good Eating, Inc. v. Best Places to Eat, Inc. and Carl A. Barrett, civil action no. 1844 (1940), Duncan Hines Collection, Procter and Gamble, Cincinnati, Ohio, p. 15.

28 Ibid.
alone, calling on distant clients via train. It was while on one of these trips that Hines first began jotting down in a memorandum book the names of good places to eat. He traveled through so many cities and towns that he thought writing them down a sensible practice. He even extended this activity on vacations, and in time his once sparse memorandum book had swollen into a sizable compendium of recommended restaurants. After 1915 his many friends in the sales field who knew of his notebook had given him a list of their favorite eating places in exchange for his. When Hines had time, he investigated their restaurant tips. For him it was just a hobby and remained one for another two decades.29

In late 1914 Hines left the J. T. H. Mitchell Company and started a firm of his own. He and Joseph A. Coyer launched the National Sample and Color Company with Hines as president and Coyer its vice-president. Nothing is known of this foray into entrepreneurship--not even what the company actually sold or did, but it must not have been very successful; the business was listed in the January and July issues of the 1915 Chicago city directories, but by the time the January 1916 directory

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29 Adventures in Good Eating, v. Best Places to Eat, pp. 14-19. In 1940, Hines remembered making his initial restaurant notations around 1915 while with Mitchell, but it must have been before that date, because he left the J. T. H. Mitchell Company in late 1914 to start the ill-fated National Sample and Color Company.
was published, Hines' company no longer existed.\textsuperscript{30}

Hines, however, was a resourceful young man and as soon as he had divested himself of all responsibilities with the National Sample and Color Company, sometime in early 1916 he was once again working, this time for one of Mitchell's rivals, Rogers and Company, with whom he stayed for almost twelve years. In late 1927 Rogers and Company was purchased by the Mead-Grede Printing Company. At Mead-Grede's invitation, Hines remained with the new firm for a few months. As he had with the Mitchell company, Hines' job with both printing firms was to sell creative printing ideas to potentially interested clients and take any orders they requested, such as catalogues and brochures and other print-oriented paraphernalia.\textsuperscript{31}

Throughout his early years as a print salesman Hines never owned a car and did not know how to drive one. But as the 1910s came to a close, Hines increasingly began to realize that he needed an automobile to call on distant clients, particularly those located in small towns that did not have rail service. In late 1919, Hines collected his accumulated savings, went to a Chicago auto dealership, and at age 39 bought his first roadster. Soon

\textsuperscript{30} Chicago, Illinois, City Directory, January 1915; July 1915.

\textsuperscript{31} Adventures in Good Eating, v. Best Places to Eat, p. 2-4; Chicago, Illinois, City Directory, 1917; Chicago, Illinois, City Directory, 1928.
afterward, he no longer took the train to meet his clients. Instead he drove his car to the client's factory.\(^{32}\)

During the 1920s, Hines was out of town and on the road nearly every weekday. He traveled to "manufacturing plants in the Middle West and down East" in states as diverse as New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. On a typical trip he might go from Chicago to Buffalo, New York, on Monday; to Bradford, Pennsylvania, on Tuesday; to Wheeling, West Virginia, on Wednesday; to Huntington, West Virginia, on Thursday; and head back to Chicago on Friday. His route, of course, depended on which company had requested to see him. After 1925 he began to travel well beyond the geographical confines of the Midwest. Wherever he traveled, after his daily appointments had been kept, Hines spent his free time familiarizing himself with the town he was visiting by asking local citizens questions about their restaurants, dutifully recording their answers in his notebook.\(^{33}\)

After being separated from his wife during those days when he wanted her company, Duncan Hines did something that many traveling salesmen still do not do. Instead of flopping down on the sofa for the weekend, not wanting to travel another mile, Hines and Florence spent weekends

\(^{32}\) Ibid., p. 3.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., p. 5; Spiller, 10 May 1994.
together in their new car, traveling America's highways—at least where they existed. In the introduction to an early edition of Hines' famous book *Adventures in Good Eating*, he told of how he and Florence first became interested in traveling on weekends:

My interest in wayside inns is not the expression of a gourmand's greedy appetite for fine foods but the result of a recreational impulse to do something 'different,' to play a new game that would intrigue my wife and give me her companionship in my hours of relaxation from a strenuous and exacting business. She [did] not play golf, [was] not addicted to bridge or to society functions and apparently like[d] to 'go places' with her husband better than she like[d] any other kind of relaxation. . . . The nature of my business oblige[d] us to live in Chicago, although we would [have] like[d] a house in the country. One day on the golf links I suddenly realized the fact that it was unfair of me to find my relaxation in something which my wife could not share. I decided to reform. We had both been accustomed to refinements in good living and on occasional automobile trips together I had noticed that she was especially interested in these provisions for the comfort
and pleasure of tourists. This gave me the idea of giving our recreational motoring trips the spice of definitive objective. Why not make a game of its resources in inns and tourist accommodations?\textsuperscript{34}

Therefore, when Hines returned from business each Friday evening, he and Florence locked their apartment door and "hit the tourist trail, sometimes driving all night to enjoy the scenery by a bright full moon."\textsuperscript{35} Taking these weekend sojourns was their hobby. From the early 1920s through the late 1930s, they averaged between 40,000 and 60,000 miles on the road each year.\textsuperscript{36}

Milton MacKaye wrote, "When Hines began motoring, there was good food in the cities, but in small towns and along the highways the average restaurant was a place of dirty tablecloths, crankcase coffee and pork chops cooked to a cinder."\textsuperscript{37} Once while dining in a roadside inn, Hines was served a portion of "soggy French fries and battleship-gray beef"; his response was to stand up immediately, pay the bill, and walk out without even

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?," p. 80.
tasting it. If it did not look good, it probably tasted worse. Because Hines had suffered through many a horrible meal on business trips, the couple planned their travels around the available good restaurants Hines had listed in his notebook. After all, it didn't matter especially where they went—or how far. They were out "for the fun of it," but the joy they received from traveling inevitably turned to frustration if their food was inedible. Therefore, they were "determined not to wander too far from good provisions." 38

While Hines and Florence were eating their way across the continent, it occurred to them to make a game of it. Florence, thumbing through Hines' memorandum book, would suggest a place to stop and eat; later, Hines would suggest another. When the couple met other motorists in their travels, Hines usually inquired about good places to eat and in this way collected the names of more potentially good restaurants. On receiving a restaurant tip, Hines, in return, freely shared his information. 39 In this way, meal by meal, Hines slowly made additions (and sometimes subtractions) to his already sizable notebook of selected restaurants. Sometimes their weekend food "safaris" took them to eating spots as much as 250


39 MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?", p. 16.
miles from home, "stopping two or three times a day for waffles, sausage and eggs, and at least as often for fried chicken, baked clams or black-bottom pie." Sometimes, however, the food was dreadful. Said Hines: "The library paste served as gravy in some 'short order' places was a personal insult." One trend they noticed in their travels was that, more often than not, much of the unpleasant roadside fare they were served was fried. Once, while passing through a little town in Mississippi, they found a restaurant that fried and served custard.

Sometimes the meat they consumed in roadside restaurants had been adequately refrigerated, but frequently it had spoiled out in the warm air—but was nonetheless served. As the proprietor saw it, there was no sense in letting even bad meat go to waste. At this time, food poisoning as a result of eating in restaurants was not an uncommon occurrence. The reason so many deaths occurred after eating restaurant food was that they were usually unsanitary affairs—and a visit from the local health inspector was a rarity—if at all. When visiting a restaurant in those days, a diner could expect the


41 Press release, Duncan Hines Institute, Inc., Ithaca, New York, February 1959, p. 3, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.

possibility of "undercooked pork chops and decaying salad amidst a decor of greasy walls and flypaper." In fact, what was often dished out to those who frequented restaurants--particularly the restaurants in those non-urban areas which Hines visited--was, save for a few oases here and there, alarmingly sickening when not simply appalling. It was quite common to walk into a restaurant or a railroad depot lunch counter west of the Alleghenies in the early 1920s and be served the usual mealtime fare: "rancid bacon, eggs preserved in lime, bitter coffee made with the local strongly alkaline water, ancient beans, leaden biscuits accurately called 'sinkers,' and 'antelope steak,' so tough you couldn't get your fork in the gravy"--in short, meals that were often prepared by chefs who had no idea what they were doing, but needed a job.  

Hines' keen interest in fine dining establishments soon marked him as an expert on the subject, and his influence eventually extended beyond traveling salesmen acquaintances. Chicago businessmen often called him for recommendations on good places to eat--and what to eat. Over the years, in a slow but ever growing procession, hundreds of the businessmen whom he had met in his travels--and their friends--asked Hines for advice on not

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only the best places to eat but also to sleep.\footnote{44}

In late 1928, after a year on the job, Hines became dissatisfied with his employers at the Mead-Grede Company and took a similar job as a salesman for the Columbian Colortype Company of Chicago. In 1930 he left that company for an identical position with yet another Chicago employer, the Gentry Printing Company. In 1934 Hines left the Gentry company to work as a salesman for one final Chicago printing concern, E. Raymond Wright, Inc.\footnote{45}

By 1930 the number of good restaurants in Hines' notebook had expanded to approximately two-hundred. In 1934, because of their excellent accuracy, the popularity of Hines' recommendations reached critical mass, and his reputation began to expand beyond businessmen. Someone with his precision for detecting truly wonderful restaurant meals could not be kept a secret forever. And, as usually happens when one has specific knowledge about a particular subject, that person becomes an expert the newspapers want to write about.\footnote{46}

One day in 1934 a Chicago newspaper learned of his repute among businessmen and approached him for an article

\footnote{44} Schwartz, "Duncan Hines," pp. 88, 90.


\footnote{46} Adventures in Good Eating, v. Best Places to Eat, p. 16.
about his hobby. Hines saw no harm in the request and granted an interview. After the public learned of his specialized hobby, however, Hines' life was never again the same. Soon his apartment phone was ringing all day long, and this time the calls were not just from salesmen and businessmen but from travelers who, like many Americans, had seen their excursions completely ruined—or worse—by eating in badly managed, unsanitary restaurants. Said Hines, "Executives bound for conferences, musicians going on the road, honeymooners choosing their destination—perfect strangers all—called for advice."

Toward the end of 1935, Hines' reputation as the man who knew the best places to eat and sleep throughout the country had grown so much that one day he realized he was spending all his time answering telephone queries. He was dispensing so much advice that the thought occurred to him to design some literature that would cut down on his time answering his mail and the telephone. Time was money, after all. He had to make a living for himself and Florence. Nobody was paying him for answering queries. Therefore, in November 1935, Hines and Florence compiled a list of the 167 best restaurants in 30 states and ordered 1000 copies of it to be printed on a heavy stock of blue paper. As Christmas approached, the couple mailed the

47 Courier-Journal, 16 April 1941.
list with their Christmas cards to all their friends, business associates, and just about "anyone who had pestered him for a restaurant recommendation." He called the card "Adventures in Good Eating."  

The list was condensed from his memorandum book, which by 1935 consisted of 700 "superior eating places." Hines hoped the list he supplied would give him some piece of mind. However, just the opposite occurred. Within a few weeks he was drowning in a deluge of requests from new people, all asking for copies of his restaurant list. Wrote the Louisville Courier-Journal years later: "Word of the list got around, and there was considerable demand for it. As a matter of fact, Hines almost went broke providing the list free until he realized he had the possibilities of a good thing on his hands, and started charging $1 for it."  

Years later Hines remembered those days as hectic ones:

We got hundreds of requests for cards from people we had never heard of. It made me realize that we had done something that had never before been tried in this country--because there were no authoritative and unbiased guides to good eating. I felt that I could perform a real service to the public by giving them an

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49 Courier-Journal, 7 July 1957.
appreciation of fine food and telling them where they could get a decent meal.50

Bolstered by the favorable public reaction his Christmas card had produced, early in 1936 Hines resolved to convert his restaurant knowledge into book form. By mid-January 1936 his hobby had transformed itself into a phenomenon he could not control. If people were this interested in his specialized knowledge, he reasoned, surely they would be willing to pay for it. Thus was born Hines' famous publication Adventures in Good Eating.

50 "Meet Duncan Hines," Moonbeams, November 1958, p. 5.
CHAPTER TWO

THE LITTLE PUBLISHER WHO COULD

Restaurant guides existed, even in Duncan Hines' day, but they were useless and unreliable. Restaurant historian David Schwartz has written why Hines' guidebook stood out among the rest and why it was significant:

Adventures in Good Eating was not the first restaurant guide intended for defenseless wayfarers. The Guide Michelin had already come to the rescue of discriminating French travelers, and in America directories of hostelries and eateries were available. But the American guides were mostly a sham, financed by the very establishments they purported to review. Hines, on the other hand, snubbed all offers of advertising. He fiercely guarded not only his independence but also his anonymity, making reservations under an assumed name and, in the early days, frontispiecing his books with a 20-year-old photograph of himself as a natty young blade.
But most important, Adventures in Good Eating oriented itself to the automobile at a time when owning one was coming to be regarded as an American birthright. Although Hines included big-city restaurants in the book, his was a trailblazer in featuring the small-town places, the uncelebrated inns and tea-rooms and taverns that his urban audience needed to know about in order to eat well between one city and another. And he told them about these places without the slightest trace of snobbery or literary affectation in a style that exuded humor and humility.¹

Vince Staten, a journalist for the Louisville Courier-Journal, added to this assessment a few years later, when he wrote that

Hines didn't invent the restaurant guidebook. There were other restaurant guidebooks at the time of his publishing venture. But he gave his guide something none of the others had: respectability and integrity. His guidebook became like a trusted friend. Travelers trusted

Hines because of his ethics. . . . He listed a restaurant because it was a good place to eat not because it had a large advertising budget. If he didn't invent the ethical standards that most restaurant critics observe today, he at least popularized them.²

In late January 1936, Hines began assembling a guidebook that listed his favorite restaurants. He hand-addressed and sent out multigraphed copies of simple questionnaires to over 1,000 notable restaurants he had discovered over the years. In his questionnaires, Hines asked restaurant owners the usual questions such as 1) their address, 2) times and days open, 3) average price for breakfast, lunch and dinner, where applicable, 4) if their businesses were air-conditioned, and 5) the house specialty. Ninety-percent of the restaurateurs answered; half of them were printed in the first edition of Adventures in Good Eating.³

³ Adventures in Good Eating, Inc. v. Best Places to Eat, Inc. and Carl A. Barrett, civil action no. 1844 (1940), Duncan Hines Collection, Procter and Gamble, Cincinnati, Ohio, pp. 21-22. Most of the materials Hines used to create his first publication and its related paperwork was thrown away. In Hines' words from the source cited above (p.22): "In moving twice from Wright's [business] to my home and [then later to] Kentucky[,] I discarded many of those [files] because they became too bulky and too cumbersome to handle. Many of the magazines and things of that like were too voluminous and I discarded [them] . . . ."
Duncan Hines was so sure of success with his maiden venture into publishing that he started to make long-range plans. He decided to produce a new, updated edition of his book every year. Restaurants would always come and go, he reasoned. Therefore the publication of an annual edition of his guidebook was essential, so that users of his book could keep up with the latest changes. Hines began to assemble a plan that would transform his career from printing salesman to publisher. In May 1936 he incorporated his sideline business, making it an official commercial concern.4

Hines never worked on Adventures in Good Eating, Inc. on the Wright company's time. He kept his guidebook activities and his regular sales duties separate. But his boss, E. Raymond Wright, was more than willing to help him, perhaps because Hines made him Adventures in Good Eating, Inc.'s vice-president as well as one of its stockholders.5

After several weeks of typing, cutting and pasting his book together, Hines introduced the first edition of Adventures in Good Eating for the Discriminating Motorist. Five-thousand copies of the 96-page book were printed by


5 Ibid. In addition to Wright there were two other unnamed individuals who were the original shareholders in Adventures in Good Eating, Inc. Most likely they were employees of E. Raymond Wright. In 1937 Hines bought out his partners' shares, making him the company's sole owner.
Wright, with whom Hines signed the printing contract on June 9, 1936; Wright charged Hines $1,131.07 for the job.\textsuperscript{6}

Hines "had no regular channels of distribution, but he did permit restaurants which he had recommended to sell his book." Chicago bookstores also put it on their shelves. If someone could not get his book through these avenues, it could be purchased from Hines through the mail. To defray his printing costs, Hines sold the first edition of *Adventures in Good Eating* for $1.00 per copy. Despite Hines' best efforts, however, the book was not an overnight success. He lost money on the first edition, even though he sold all his copies by year's end. His financial loss amounted to $1,539. Nevertheless, the book did serve one useful purpose; the constant stream of daily phone calls ceased invading Hines' home life; there was no excuse to call him now that his book was available. Within a few weeks of the book's publication, the daily phone queries were replaced with appreciative letters commending him for his effort.\textsuperscript{7}

Readers who bought Hines' book discovered that he was not a gastronomical snob. Instead, he was of the people, one man among many who simply wanted a good meal away from

\textsuperscript{6} Telephone interview with Edward Beebe, 7 March 1995; Invoice #5897, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.

\textsuperscript{7} Milton MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop For Dinner?" The Saturday Evening Post, vol. 211, (December 3, 1938), p. 16.
home. In his introduction to *Adventures in Good Eating*, Hines wrote a short credo that would soon characterize and define his existence in the minds of the American public. These words would, in time, forever earn Hines the public's trust and the fame that resulted from that sentiment. He simply wrote:

I have never accepted a free meal or any other consideration from any inn. Those mentioned are included because, in my judgment, they are entitled to be listed on the merits of their food and their service. Until a meal has been eaten and paid for, no mention of the directory is made—and then only if the inn meets its standards.  

Duncan Hines' books were not only informative, they were fun to read. Few individuals could so succinctly inspire daydreams of wondrous meals to be had. The first page of *Adventures in Good Eating*'s recommendations was laced with Hines' characteristic eye-catching phraseology. Therein his readers found charming wordage that tempted—and perhaps induced—them to climb into their automobiles and investigate the culinary delights told thereof.

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Of Stute's Chick-Inn, in Hot Springs, Arkansas, Hines wrote, "Imported Italian foods the specialty here. But it is their good, old, American menu of thick porterhouse or broiled milk-fed chickens that has made Stute's famous. And their beaten cream biscuits, the like of which you have seldom tasted."

Hines could also be matter-of-fact in his description. Hines portrayed the Hotel Del Mar in Del Mar, California, as "a bit of England in southern California--lovely gardens and English cottages set in a 12-acre park with an adjoining beach." And of its restaurant, he wrote: "... the table is excellent. Try their Del Mar lobster or their roast turkey. It will be something to remember."

Sometimes, though, Hines could become lofty when referring to one of his favorite restaurants. Of Kentucky's Beaumont Inn in Harrodsburg, which remains today in most particulars as it was in 1936, Hines described it as:

A white-pillared mansion built in 1847 and for many years the home of the beloved Daughter's

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College. For the past 20 years it has become known throughout America as the delightful and satisfying Beaumont Inn. Here you will find true Southern hospitality at its best. Their food specialties are fried yellow-legged chicken, two-year-old, genuine country-cured, hickory-smoked ham . . . , delicious beaten biscuits, an ample variety of fresh vegetables and their desserts are very, very good.\textsuperscript{11}

Sometimes Hines imparted to the reader more information than necessary about a particular restaurant. Of La Louisiane at 725 Iberville Street in New Orleans he wrote:

Established in 1881 this restaurant still maintains its old world French atmosphere combined with old time Southern hospitality. It is in the heart of Vieux Carre, the old French Quarter and is handsomely furnished with old rosewood, applewood and mahogany. The founder studied for twelve years with Brabant of Paris [a 19th century world-renowned chef] and his

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 30. A typical dinner at the Beaumont Inn in 1936 cost about $1.25.
famous recipes are still followed.12

Designed for readability, information, as well as simple browsing, one could spend an afternoon with Hines' guidebook, reading his concise, enjoyable descriptions of restaurants, many of them far away, and leave the experience a seasoned, contented armchair traveller.

Chicagoans soon came to know Duncan Hines through newspaper profiles. They discovered that he believed himself to be the only resident in the city who had no compunction about driving to Detroit and back in a single day just to eat lunch. They discovered that he thought nothing of driving to Nashville, Tennessee, a distance of 408 miles, simply to taste an apple pie prepared by a woman who mixed chicken fat with her shortening when she created her pie crusts. Newspaper copy of this type made interesting reading, and readers were soon buying Hines' book to see what else he had to recommend. His quotable statements and colorful personality soon made Hines a media favorite and, by ascending to this position, his jocular, forthright comments made him a celebrity. In time, it also helped him sell a lot of books.13

Between the last page and the back cover of the first

12 Ibid., p. 31.
13 Unidentified Chicago newspaper clipping, 1936, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.
edition of *Adventures in Good Eating*, there appeared three perforated postcards pre-addressed to the Wright Printing Company, (Hines' temporary business address) at 856 West Adams Street. For the price of a one-cent stamp a reader could send Hines the names of other restaurants he thought merited investigation. The endorser could check a box if he wanted his name acknowledged in the next edition. Although Hines had already accumulated a number of contacts for new restaurant recommendations, the bulk of whom were primarily salesmen, these postcards enabled him to discover a new generation of individuals with a passion for fine dining.14

There were a few restaurants listed in the first edition of *Adventures in Good Eating* Hines had not personally inspected; they appeared in the guidebook only because trusted friends assured him of their excellence. However, when Hines finally visited some of these restaurants, many of them were removed from the book's second edition and replaced by others Hines believed more accurately reflected his judgment.

The postcards came in with increasing frequency. All contained new information about other new restaurants for Hines to examine. If he were to include the best of these in the second edition of his guidebook, it gradually

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dawned on Hines that he could not handle his project alone. He would have to rely on others of like taste and temperament to investigate these more recent recommendations. To tackle this problem, Hines recruited, in addition to his close friends, those who had either been sending him the postcards or who had been corresponding with him about restaurants. Since all were recommending new restaurants for him to investigate, Hines asked them, when they had time, 1) to investigate new restaurant recommendations, 2) to help him to discover new candidates for future guidebook editions, and 3) to make sure that those restaurants already listed maintained high standards. Hines' contact with these individuals soon gave birth to an informal society, one devoutly dedicated to his project, a group eventually dubbed his "dinner detectives." Hines tested several of the restaurants that these "dinner detectives" recommended. When he determined that their taste and good judgment mirrored his own, he relied on them thereafter.15

Hines enjoyed the company of the "dinner detectives," who usually were successful people. In Hines' day people from this social strata tended to travel enough to

15 "Meet Duncan Hines," Moonbeams, p. 5; Interview with Cora Jane Spiller, Bowling Green, Kentucky, 10 May 1994. Hines never referred to his culinary acquaintances as "dinner detectives." The term was first used in 1938 by Milton MacKaye in his widely-read Saturday Evening Post article on Hines and his activities.
experience "adventures in good eating"; hoi polloi did not. Successful people, Hines believed, could be trusted to have good judgment; when they traveled, they did not eat and sleep just anywhere. They were discriminating, even picky. They were much like himself.¹⁶

Most books of the period ranged from between 35 to 60 cents or, sometimes, $1.00. Hines increased the price of the second edition of Adventures in Good Eating in 1937 from $1.00 to $1.50. The book was strategically priced for a certain type of person, such as his "dinner detectives."

Thanks to his many correspondents, by December 1936 Hines knew he could afford a second edition. Many purchasers of the first edition wrote Hines, asking to be kept informed about a second volume. By the beginning of 1937, "many purchasers [had] a standing order with Hines for all new editions."¹⁷

By early 1937, while preparing to publish his next volume, Hines spent more hours working on his own enterprise than he did for Wright. Even if Wright had paid him to spend his entire time investigating restaurants, there were simply too many leads coming in to follow up; he could not answer the enormous volume of mail pouring into his office. Accordingly, he hired a full-

¹⁶ Spiller, 10 May 1994.

¹⁷ MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?" p. 16.
But even this single secretary was overwhelmed with work. So Hines employed a small staff of women to answer his correspondence. They worked out of his home part-time, usually after business hours. Two of them, Emelie Tolman and Olga Lindquist, worked for the Wright Company. By the middle of 1938, these secretaries answered as many as a thousand letters a week, each recommending additions to Hines' books or offering personal opinions on the ones already listed.19

The second edition to Adventures in Good Eating was released in the spring of 1937 and sold 16,000 copies. Yet for the second year in a row, Hines lost money on his publishing venture. But this time it was only $584, mostly due to business expenses—such as secretaries, postage, lodging, food and gasoline. Nevertheless, as month followed month, word-of-mouth slowly closed the gap between deficit and profit.20

After a turbulent year of trying to work for his employer and himself, Hines officially left the Wright Company around March 1938 under amicable circumstances.


19 Interview with Beebe, 7 March 1995; "Meet Duncan Hines," Moonbeams, p. 5. Emelie Tolman and several of Hines' other Chicago friends helped him type and assemble the first edition of Adventures in Good Eating.

20 MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?" p. 16.
By then he was sure his venture was going to be successful. The second edition of *Adventures in Good Eating* contained a few improvements over the first. The first edition listed 475 restaurants—-the second, 1,250. The new edition also listed Hines' home phone number (MONroe 0006); this was interesting behavior for a man who, just two years earlier, was tired of being pestered with telephone calls.²¹

Hines included a new feature in the second edition of *Adventures in Good Eating*; he listed 26 of his "dinner detectives"; one of whom was Warren R. Gibbs of Berkeley, California. Not long after the first edition of *Adventures in Good Eating* was published, Gibbs had discovered a window display of Hines' book in Chicago's Marshall Field department store. After testing the book's accuracy, Gibbs met Hines and they became friends. Hines made Gibbs the Western Representative of Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., and his West Coast book distributor as well. The only thing Gibbs accepted from Hines as payment for his services was barter: "a bottle or two of rare liquor and a Kentucky country-cured ham." Beginning in August 1936, and for several years afterward, Gibbs drove at least 11,000 miles a year for Hines, and all for the love of letting others know where good meals could be

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The third edition of *Adventures in Good Eating* was published in September 1937, and from this point forward, much to his relief, Duncan Hines' restaurant guide remained comfortably in the black. The third edition of 5009 units cost Hines $799.07.

Hines' tireless efforts to promote his book paid off handsomely. Word-of-mouth advertising increased his sales so that his enterprise made money with scarcely any advertising; the book was a self-promoting engine. In time, Hines' book orders exceeded the production capacity of the Wright Company. Wright could produce small printing jobs but not ones as large as Hines needed. Hines was forced to change printers; he chose R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company, a large printing concern with facilities in Chicago.

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22 Hines, *Adventures in Good Eating*, p. 11-12; MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?" p. 17.

23 Invoice #9226, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G. Hines once stated that he made seven cents on each book, but if this was the case then his business was definitely dropping into a bottomless pit of debt, for at that rate he was only earning $350.63 for the entire print run of 5009 units--not enough to even pay his printing bill. Taxes and operating costs surely did not subtract $1.43 from each book he sold. Hines usually sold all his books. For the third edition, 5009 copies at $1.50 per copy gave him, theoretically, $7,513.50 before deductions for expenses. Because 40% of the profit from each book went to distributors, a more realistic figure that Hines was left with is $4,508--still a substantial amount in 1937. That figure is actually higher because Hines cut out the middle man by selling many books through his office.
For the fourth edition, Hines ordered the Donnelley firm to print 11,500 copies of *Adventures*; it cost Hines $3,068.10. After Hines sold the entire print run, his gross sales came to $17,250.24 Of the books that were printed for the fourth edition, Hines kept 766 copies. On April 10 he received several boxes of his books via Chicago's Picket Truck Line. He kept them scattered in secluded corners of his Cornell Avenue apartment where they were eventually dispersed across the nation. At Hines' instruction the Donnelley Company sent Gibbs 700 copies for distribution.25 After the fourth edition was published, it quickly became obvious that copies for Hines' book would soon be exhausted. Frightful of being caught short, Hines ordered Donnelley to print some additional copies. On July 1, 1938, Donnelley presented Hines with the bill for *Adventures in Good Eating*'s fifth

24 Contract between Duncan Hines and R. R. Donnelley and Sons Company, March 1938, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.

25 Documents concerning Duncan Hines and Adventures in Good Eating, Inc. and R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company, 14 February 1938- 2 May 1938, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G. In addition to the copies the Donnelley Company sent Gibbs, they also sent 100 copies of *Adventures in Good Eating* to Chicago's Marshall Field & Company; the department store set up a large display of Hines' books in their display window; by August Donnelley had sent 700 more copies to Marshall Field. The Dearborn Inn in Dearborn, Michigan, received 120 copies. Most other guidebook recipients were sent the usual number of copies, which ranged in number between five to one-hundred.
printing,: $2,107.18 for 11,595 copies.26

Hines' hobby had become such a profitable venture that he increased his income by printing a volume on his other area of expertise: excellent places to sleep. In the summer of 1938 Hines published the first edition of Lodging for a Night, a guide to 3,000 superior hotels and motels found in the United States. Hines' restaurant guide was known among his public as "the little red book," his lodging guide quickly became "the little blue book." It was Hines' intention for both books to complement each other. Hines stated on the opening page of the first edition of his new book that Adventures in Good Eating was for "discriminating motorists" in matters of food, and Lodging for a Night was intended "for discriminating guests."27

Florence Hines did not live long enough to see how her husband's hobby eventually made him a national icon symbolizing good food, but she knew he was on to something big, and a month before she died she saw the first glimmer

26 Bill of receipt, R. R. Donnelley to Duncan Hines, 1 July 1938, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G. The reason Hines' printing bills varied so widely in expense is easily explained. The price for a printing job is determined by the number of typesetting changes; resetting new printing plates will drive up book production costs considerably. Although changes were made to each edition of Adventures, fewer changes lowered his printing bill. When Hines wanted Donnelley to send him new copies of Adventures so he could fill existing orders, that cost even less; in such cases, Donnelley printed more copies of the current edition.

27 MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?" p. 17.
of it. In the August 6, 1938, issue of Publisher's Weekly, a trade magazine devoted to the book publishing business, a two-page story detailed Hines' spectacular efforts at self-publishing.

The story noted that since the April publication of Adventures in Good Eating's fourth edition, 11,500 copies had "literally sold [themselves] . . . with only word-of-mouth recommendations to push [them] along." The article noted that Hines had recently granted some newspaper interviews and appeared on both Ruth Wakefield's and Mary Margaret McBride's radio shows, describing the book's merits and why it should interest the public.

When Hines visited Philadelphia earlier that year in May, the article continued, he gave an interview to the Philadelphia Evening Ledger. So popular was the resulting piece that the newspaper published 20,000 enlarged copies of it and mailed it to many interested parties. What impressed everyone was that Hines refused to accept advertising in his book. One restaurant offered Hines $10,000 for an advertisement; Hines refused, "preferring to keep his book uninfluenced by any commercial considerations." Although Hines' books were found in the restaurants of which he wrote, the Publisher's Weekly article stated, the steadiest sales had been through "book departments and book stores."

The article told readers of Hines' upcoming book,
Lodging for a Night, a guidebook for travelers who wanted to know about the country's best accommodations, and to look for him in a future bookstore campaign promoting it. Regardless of what happened to her, Florence Hines knew her husband's future held much promise.28

Sometime in 1937 Florence Hines was diagnosed with cancer. A Christian Scientist, she sought no surgery for her troubles and accepted her coming demise as part of the natural order of God's world. In the latter part of the summer of 1938 Florence Hines ceased traveling with her husband. Surviving hotel receipts list Hines as a hotel guest, but not her. Apparently she was in severe discomfort, cancer having spread throughout her body. No doubt Hines would liked to have remained by her bedside, but, Christian Scientist to the end, she likely asked him not to worry about her illness and told him to continue working on his guidebooks. So he did. Surviving hotel receipts and travel records reveal that although he was traveling around the country up until a few days before she died, he did not stray too far from home and did not leave the house regularly.29

Shortly after noon on September 6, 1938, Florence Hines died in their Cornell Avenue apartment. Funeral

services were held on September 8 in the chapel at 4227 Cottage Grove Avenue. She was buried in Chicago. Two days later, Hines returned to Bowling Green and spent a week or so with his brother and sister.  

Throughout that fall Hines continued his extensive travels and might have remained a modestly successful small-time publisher had he not had some luck. Earlier in the year, in May 1938, while journeying through Philadelphia, Hines stopped by the offices of the Saturday Evening Post to visit his friend Wesley Stout, the magazine's editor. Hines told Stout how his publishing venture was proceeding. At Stout's suggestion, the editor commissioned a journalist, Milton MacKaye, who often wrote articles for the Post, to write a feature piece on Hines. Before the month was over, MacKaye interviewed Hines for several days. As is the case with magazine articles, there was a long delay between interview and publication, and Hines nearly forgot about it.  

During the last week of November Hines heard that the Saturday Evening Post article was about to be published. Although glad that it was finally coming out, Hines complained to his secretary, Miss I. A. Bench, "I do not  

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30 Park City Daily News, 7 September 1938; Chicago Daily Tribune, 7 September 1938; I. A. Bench to Franklin M. Watts, 9 September 1938, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.  

know why the SE Post did not let me see proof of article. I gave MacKaye enough material for half dozen stories. So I do not know what they are printing." Three days later, on November 30, the December 3, 1938, Saturday Evening Post article hit the newsstands. Inside appeared a lengthy article of how Duncan Hines' little hobby of visiting good restaurants had mushroomed into a guidebook that was now very much in demand by the reading and traveling public.\textsuperscript{32}

The Saturday Evening Post article was the seminal event in Duncan Hines' life. From its appearance until his death, his life took on new meaning. Overnight he was transformed from an ordinary small-time bookseller into America's most authoritative voice for the best places to eat. So quickly did the public accept him that his sphere of influence eventually extended well beyond the perimeter of good restaurants into other areas, e.g., high standards for restaurant sanitation, equally high standards for lodging establishments, highly prized cookbooks that expanded the scope of home-prepared meals, vacation guides for post-war American families, and much more. Hines reveled in his newfound fame, and never missed an opportunity to promote himself and his venture. At 58, he had a brand new career, and he made the most of it.

\textsuperscript{32} Duncan Hines to I. A. Bench, 27 November 1938, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G; Interview with Spiller, 16 August 1993.
The American public developed an almost instant affinity for Duncan Hines. They met a man who was, in many ways, quite appealing to the popular imagination: colorful, sometimes eccentric, but never dull. His manner reminded many of a favorite uncle; they were comfortable with him. Like many uncles they knew, Hines had discriminating tastes—in everything. Not just any hotel or restaurant would suit him. He was picky about what he ate and where he stayed.

For years, well before Hines' publication appeared, there had been restaurant directories "... of a sort. As one who has used them," Milton MacKaye wrote, "I can testify that they are, at their best, not sufficiently explicit, and at their worst, lousy." The chief flaw in them every one of them, he continued, was that "the American directories are financed by the advertising they contain; however honest the sponsors and however strongly they insist that certain standards be met," they were simply a mass of wholly unreliable information. Whether travelers were using the Guide Michelin series or any
other source-book, not until they arrived at their
destination did they have any inkling of the quality of a
place. Long-distance travel on the nation's highways was
an experience studded with random consequences, usually
filled with anxiety. That Hines' restaurant and lodging
guides did not fall into this category set him apart in
the public mind. To the astonishment of many, what Hines
wrote in his guidebook turned out to be factually
correct.\footnote{Milton MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop For Dinner?" The
Saturday Evening Post, vol. 211, (December 3, 1938), pp. 16-17.}

The fate of the establishments listed in Hines'
guidebook were in his hands. He alone determined which
institution would be listed and which one, when its
excellence deteriorated, would be banished from his pages.
Although in the years that followed Hines was frequently
offered fabulous sums of money by restaurant owners and
innkeepers for a listing, they soon understood and
appreciated the economic benefits they would reap if they
left him alone and improved their establishments to the
point that he found them acceptable. Hines steadfastly
refused to accept any offers of money, and he hammered
home the point time and time again. This fact alone,
particularly because Hines never failed to mention it,
made an impression on those who read his publication. It
was a point of pride with Hines; he simply would not
compromise his integrity to sully the value of his good name. He could not be bought. The only advertisements he printed were for copies of his other guidebook, *Lodging for a Night*, or for one of his country hams.

As Hines traveled about the country, he regularly investigated potential new entries that his "dinner detectives" and others discovered and deemed worthy of his appraisal. He also checked on those entries in his guidebook about which he had received complaints. According to a story that Hines told innumerable times, before dining in a restaurant he never advertised his entry into the premises, and if he made a reservation, he used an assumed name. When he dined, he ordered a meal from the menu, usually "two soups, four entrees and at least three desserts." When served, he sampled a little bit of everything, "usually eating only one dish of each course." After he had paid for his meal—and still not revealing his identity—he asked to inspect the kitchen and the dish washing department. If the restaurant management complied with his request, Hines entered the kitchen for a personal tour, the manager at his side. After a careful examination, if he found the restaurant to have conformed with his strict culinary and sanitary standards, it became a member of the "Duncan Hines Family" of great American restaurants, and it was listed in the
next edition of *Adventures in Good Eating*. And if the restaurant management refused to comply with his request for a tour of its kitchen? Hines left the premises immediately, knowing full well they had something to hide. If a restaurant's management refused to show customers its kitchen, Hines believed, there must be a dark reason behind their refusal. Sometimes, however, Hines did not bother to investigate a restaurant's kitchen. If he asked to see it and was granted instant access, he did not even bother to get up from his table. He assumed that the open invitation was "evidence [enough] that there was nothing to hide."Nevertheless, Hines let the public believe that he always inspected restaurant kitchens. He frequently wrote of doing it, always told newspapers he did it, and made enough personal restaurant inspections to make the public and restaurant owners think he did it. Therefore, as far as the public was concerned, he did it. Periodically he was photographed inspecting kitchens; these pictures, along with the accompanying articles were usually printed in scores of magazines and Sunday newspaper supplements to further the image he intended to create in the popular

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2 Clementine Paddleford, "60,000 Miles of Eating," *This Week Magazine*, 12 January 1947, p. 12.

imagination. The public, including restaurant owners, believed it, and that was enough for Hines. Perception became reality, even though it was not always the case.

Good restaurants were not Hines' only concern. Better eating habits among the American public was an important item on his reform agenda. Hines believed the remedy for this deficiency lay in education and thought himself to be the perfect teacher, and as the years passed he became increasingly vocal on this subject. He believed that the more the public knew of dietary habits, the more quickly they would change them. In 1942, for example, he told Ohio state health commissioners:

Yes, education can change human nature. A recent nutrition-week campaign is said to have improved the eating habits of the people of Indiana by 10%. . . . A fourteen-year drive in the South in favor of green vegetables has cut the pellagra death rate to one-fourth of what it was. 4

By 1938 Adventures in Good Eating listed approximately 1800 restaurants which met Hines' exacting

4 Duncan Hines' testimony given before the Ohio State Health Commissioners' Conference, Columbus, Ohio, 24 September 1942, Duncan Hines Collection, Procter and Gamble Corporation, Cincinnati, Ohio.
standards of cleanliness and excellence. He had, by his estimation, visited 70% of them. The balance of his other recommendations came from his trusted "dinner detectives." By the end of 1939 Hines relied on 300 to 400 of these "dinner detectives" to enable him to track the quality of the restaurants and lodging facilities he listed in his two guidebooks as well as investigate all the new ones potentially worthy of a listing. Hines, of course, could not and did not pay these individuals, nor did they want to be paid; they were simply enthusiastic supporters who shared his love of finding good restaurants when traveling.\(^5\)

Hines' book may have been a guide to the nation's best restaurants, but not to the best in bargain meals; that was not Hines' purpose. He did, however, indicate the scale of menu prices with each listing. He believed that one could not simultaneously eat well and cheaply. A frequent criticism of his book was that he did not offer assistance to travelers who had a limited daily food budget. One correspondent wrote that "Hines erred in listing any place charging more than seventy-five cents

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\(^5\) MacKaye, "Where Shall We Stop for Dinner?" p. 82. Hines does not seem to have relied much on Kentuckians for finding excellent restaurants. In the 1941 edition of Adventures in Good Eating [p. xv], the only Kentucky resident that he listed as a "dinner detective" was Mrs. Caryl Spiller of Louisville; he listed no one from Kentucky in the book's 1946 and 1948 editions or any other future editions. Mrs. Spiller appears in the 1946 edition, but by this time her home is in Evanston, Illinois.
for a meal." Hines countered this charge with the argument that good eating was more of a luxury matter than a democratic one, and that his book was directed to a specific audience, i.e., people who could afford the privilege of eating well. His customer base was usually from either the upper- or upper-middle class, the very people who would think little of bargain meals. For these citizens--those who had the leisure to savor the joys of fine food--Hines' book became an important social document that shaped and developed the way Americans perceived the restaurant industry. Hines, of course, did not list only high-priced restaurants. His critical correspondents notwithstanding, there were places in his guidebook where one could purchase a meal under seventy-five cents; in fact, if one opens a 1938 guidebook--the year of the criticism--he will find hundreds of such restaurants. Overall, though, the average price of a meal in his 1938 guidebook was $1.25.6

The most constant question put to Hines was: where is the best place in the United States to get a meal? He responded that there was no such a place. It all depended on what the individual wanted in a meal. He said that while "New York, San Francisco, and New Orleans [had] the most good restaurants," any traveler who toured New England would find the best selection and a higher density

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6 Ibid., p. 80.
"of consistently good meals along the highways . . . than in any other section" of the country. Conversely, Hines frequently stated, "the most barren" stretch of good restaurants in America was in "the region between Chicago and Indianapolis." Between those two cities, he said, there was not one restaurant on the main highway that he could recommend.7

Hines urged his readers to consume regional specialties; after all, dining out was an adventure in good eating. He urged them to "insist upon fresh chowder in New England, freshwater fish in the Great Lakes region, soft-shelled crabs in Maryland, shrimp in the Southeast [and] Spanish dishes in the Southwest."8

For the administration of his business, Hines may have thought about opening an office in downtown Chicago, but his sister, Annie, had other ideas. During his 1938 Christmas visit to Bowling Green, she asked him to leave Chicago for Bowling Green; after all, Florence was dead, and he had no one to look after him. What if something happened to him? To whom would he turn?, she asked. Hines gave her entreaty serious consideration, all the while turning over in his mind the myriad problems and organizational turmoil that a move to Bowling Green would create. As he looked to an insecure future living alone

7 Ibid.

8 Schwartz, "Duncan Hines," p. 92.
in Chicago without any relatives to rely on in case of emergencies, Bowling Green did, at least, offer some security. He was childless, and thus could not rely on any nearby relatives to look after him should he fall ill. Now that he was financially secure, he no longer needed the Chicago base to secure lucrative sales business. With this thought in mind, Hines finally agreed to return to Bowling Green.⁹

On the evening of March 31, 1939, Hines, his nephew, also named Duncan Hines, and his nephew's wife, Elizabeth, both of whom had driven up from Bowling Green to help him move back to Kentucky, left Chicago in two cars with Hines' belongings and drove through the night to Bowling Green. The next morning Hines established his business in his sister's home at 902 Elm Street in Bowling Green.¹⁰

After his arrival, Hines faced a mountain of work. He had a burgeoning business to manage, and had to accommodate its expansion. Much reorganization had to be accomplished because of his relocation, and he had to act quickly if his guidebook business was to operate smoothly. Before moving to Bowling Green, Hines hired a Cincinnati advertising agency to handle general public relations for

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⁹ Interview with Cora Jane Spiller, Bowling Green, Kentucky, 16 August 1993.

 Adventures in Good Eating, Inc. Then he hired a Chicago firm to handle his books' publicity. He also retained his Chicago attorney, James Black, for matters involving extraneous corporate legal matters.11

During April of that year Hines looked at various Bowling Green properties for Adventures in Good Eating, Inc., settling on a one-room office on the second floor of the American National Bank on State Street between Main and 10th Streets. Although his new office was a better location than his apartment in Chicago had been, it quickly became so congested with paperwork and filing cabinets that he had to expand into an adjacent room. Even with this improvement, a larger office was soon needed. Because of these limitations, Hines considered moving into a house-office combination somewhere just outside of town.12

Because his guidebook business was overwhelmed by mail each day, Hines could not start from scratch in training a new staff. Because he had to be on the road investigating new leads for both his guidebooks, he did not have time to explain to others how he wanted his business to operate. Therefore, before Hines left Chicago he persuaded two of his secretaries, Olga Lindquist and

11 Interview with Spiller, 16 August 1993 and 10 May 1994.

12 Ibid.
Emelie Tolman to join him in Bowling Green.¹³

So fierce was public demand for Hines' books that, in the spring of 1939, he ordered the Donnelley company in Chicago to print an additional 10,000 copies of Lodging for a Night and 35,000 copies of Adventures in Good Eating.¹⁴

Hines' second regular publication, Lodging for a Night, did not receive as much attention as his restaurant guide. First released in 1938, it was an outgrowth of Adventures in Good Eating. This book, wrote Hines, was a response to requests from his readers that he produce a volume instructing them where they could find the best in traveling accommodations.¹⁵

Hines developed criteria for his lodging recommendations: (a) cleanliness throughout the entire lodging facility—not only clean linen but clean bedding as well; (b) quietness—freedom from traffic and other noises as well; (c) comfortable beds; (d) courteous, adequate and unobtrusive service; (e) hospitality. All of

¹³ Ibid., 16 August 1993; Emelie Tolman subsequently married Duncan Hines; Olga Lindquist remained in Hines' employ until 1946, whereupon, it is believed, she returned to her family in Chicago.

¹⁴ R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company to Duncan Hines, 24 April 1939, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.

¹⁵ The book's subtitle accurately described its purpose and mission: A Directory of Hotels possessing Modern Comforts, Inviting Cottages, and Modern Auto Courts, also Guest Houses whose Accommodations permit the Reception of Discriminating Guests.
these were qualities that were sorely lacking when Hines' guidebook was first published.\textsuperscript{16}

T. C. Dedman, owner of the Beaumont Inn in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, knew Hines well. The Beaumont Inn was always listed in both of Hines' guidebooks as an excellent place to eat and sleep. Dedman spoke of the impact that Hines had on the restaurant and innkeeping industry in the 1930s and 1940s,

He was very important to us as an inn and to most of the places that he put in his book. . . . Of course, you could not pay Mr. Hines. There was no membership charge. You were in there or you were out, and there was nothing you could do about it except improve your situation to please him. . . . You could not entertain him. Many times he was by our place, and we'd say "Mr. Hines, we'd like to pick up your lunch" to which he would reply, "absolutely not." You could not. He just wouldn't have that at all. I was a very young man, but we knew him very well because he came fairly often. Even when he was in Chicago, he used to . . . come by the inn once or twice a year. And, of course, when he

moved to Bowling Green, why several times a year we would always see him. But his books, Adventures in Good Eating and Lodging for a Night were certainly most influential so far as all inns or eating places all around were concerned. In other words, we felt that he definitely help put us on the map.17

By the early 1940s most members of the restaurant industry came to prize Hines' efforts in making restaurants better places than they had been in the past. Added Dedman:

If they didn't, then they were crazy. . . . We were most proud to be in his books because they were tremendous as far as business was concerned for us. . . . In those days people would come by and say, "We're traveling by Duncan Hines' books."18

For the Dedman family and many other innkeepers, enough people came by to put an extra $25,000 to $50,000 in the bank. In 1936, Dedman said, "we were very small in

17 Telephone interview with Thomas C. Dedman, Harrodsburg, Kentucky, 19 May 1994.
18 Ibid.
those days and just struggling along, and when we got in his book, there was certainly a noticeable difference."19

Dedman, who was a high school student when Hines first came to eat a meal and sleep at his family's country inn, remembered how Hines inspected his inn:

He stayed overnight a few times at our place—in fact a number of times—but when he didn't, he would ask to see" two rooms "and sometimes three of four." Hines "would ask to see one on the second floor and one on the third floor. Or a couple on each floor. And he would go up and say, "Oh, could I see in this room?" He would pick the room. He wouldn't just take our key.20

When Hines made his inspections, said Dedman, he and other personnel usually accompanied him upstairs "to see if he would comment. He would look in the bathrooms. He would look around to see about cleanliness, feel the beds and that sort of thing."21

How did the lodging industry, on the whole, regard

19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
Hines? According to Dedman, Hines' activities were taken very seriously by the innkeeping industry. Says Dedman, "Those who were not in [his guidebook] pooh-poohed it a little bit, saying it wasn't important. But it was important! It was very important." [Dedman's emphasis].

Dedman summed up in two words the state of restaurants before Duncan Hines came along: "Pretty poor." Remembering those bad old days, Dedman recalled:

The good places to eat were just few and far between. If you didn't know, more or less, where you were going in those days whether it be to Chicago or Detroit or Florida and you had to travel through Kentucky, you would hit some awful places. I can remember on my trips to Florida, when we would get caught between two large cities. Sometimes the food was pretty bad--and lodgings also. Once you got into the cities, such as the Biltmore in Atlanta or the big hotels in Chattanooga, these were very nice. But out on the highways and by-ways, you just didn't want to get caught in between unless you knew where you were going. . . . You could get

\[22\] Ibid.
caught in some terrible places.\textsuperscript{23}

Did Duncan Hines raise the standards of restaurants across America? Dedman believed so:

Many people tried to clean up their places in order to get into Mr. Hines' books, hoping some of his people would come by and recommend them. . . . I think he raised the standards for food and lodging in this country.\textsuperscript{24}

When \textit{Lodging for a Night} was first published, motels were just then forming into the type of accommodations recognized today. Hines discussed the motels of his day:

The newest development in lodging facilities, and one addressed particularly to those who travel by auto, is the type of accommodation which has come to be designated as an auto court. The modern auto court of unified design is not to be confused with the scattered and heterogeneous growth of cabins of every type and description. The single detached cabin, even though containing elementary conveniences, . . .

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
represents at best . . . a primitive effort to meet the modern needs of the discriminating motorist.\(^{25}\)

Although many motels eventually established codes of ethics, Hines wrote his own ethics code and printed it in his book. It was short and easy to follow: (a) only guests with baggage shall be accepted; (b) guests shall register in the regular way and remain all night; (c) drinking on the premises shall not be permitted and questionable trade should be refused.\(^{26}\)

Hines suggested that users of *Lodging for a Night* always tell the innkeepers who recommended their establishment, and upon departure give the innkeeper their opinion of his motel. That someone took the time to comment demonstrated their care. If improvements could be made in the way the lodging was operated, most innkeepers complied. If they did not, someone usually let Hines know of their intransigence.

Not satisfied with two regular publications, in early 1938, Hines decided to supplement his income with a cookbook. His readers wanted Hines to publish a book of recipes drawn from the restaurants he recommended. At


\(^{26}\) Ibid.
first Hines believed this request to be easier asked than accomplished. Most restaurants, he believed, feared publicizing their prized recipes. Once the public knew how to prepare these dishes, they might consume them at home, and stop patronizing the restaurants. Nevertheless, those who wrote Hines were sure he could use his influence to procure at least a few luscious dishes, if not the most famous ones. Never one to miss an opportunity, Hines set out to collect as many recipes as he could.

Hines had no trouble collecting them; restaurateurs were not about to refuse his request. To put them at ease, Hines never tried to obtain a restaurant's most prized concoctions; rather, he merely asked the chefs to provide him with tasty dishes that his readers could prepare at home for their own enjoyment. Besides, Hines said, when the restaurant's name and creator appeared next to the recipe in his book, it amounted to free advertising. Therefore, many restaurants, which had profited handsomely from Hines' guidebooks in the past, were more than delighted to let him have one or two of their cherished recipes. It was the least they could do for one who had done so much for them.27

Hines also prevailed upon his own family and co-workers for various recipes; thus the book contained many

27 Duncan Hines Rotary Club speech, Cave City, Kentucky, 18 August 1943, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.
of those wondrous meals he had known as a boy while living with his grandmother Duncan. Hines called his 1939 book *Adventures in Good Cooking* and *The Art of Carving In The Home*. Soon after publication, it sold 15,000 copies. For a while it was Hines' best selling book.

Some of the recipes were a bit sophisticated for the average homemaker. Sometimes their unusual ingredients, such as maggi sauce, Boulghour and marjoram were not available at the corner grocery store. But there could be no doubt that these recipes, if one followed the instructions exactly as directed, produced delightful results.28

Readers who browsed through a copy of *Adventures in Good Cooking* discovered over 460 recipes. Although Hines had the last editorial word, he relied on his secretary, Emelie Tolman, to oversee the book's production.29

With the 256-page publication of *Adventures in Good Cooking*, the name Duncan Hines jumped off the road and

28 Duncan Hines to F. H. Marquis, 1 June 1939, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G; R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company to Duncan Hines, 1 September 1939, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G; *Adventures in Good Cooking* consistently remained Hines second most popular publication. There was one other time, however, when sales of the cookbook temporarily exceeded *Adventures in Good Eating*. During the Second World War wartime restrictions were imposed on the nation--tire and gas rationing most conspicuously among them. Recreational travel was rarely an option. Because of this circumstance, most Americans remained at home, and guidebook sales dropped; meanwhile cookbook sales remained consistent.

29 Interview with Spiller, 10 May 1994.
into the kitchen. There were not too many cookbooks in the late 1930s, and for that reason Hines' contribution stood out among his competitors. Because many of the book's recipes came from America's best restaurants, the public's interest in Hines' rather novel approach to the cookbook created considerable interest. The book's good sales subsequently broadened Hines' name recognition beyond his usual customers, and its publication represented another step in Hines' name being identified with good food.30

Sometime in the summer of 1939 Hines married his secretary, Emelie Tolman, a blonde, slightly portly woman of Scandinavian descent. He was 59 years old and she 43. It was a marriage of convenience. Hines not only needed a traveling companion, he also needed someone who could handle the sacks of correspondence he carried around the country in his car.31

They moved into an efficiency apartment complex known as The Arms in downtown Bowling Green. The apartment soon proved to be too small. On October 11, 1939, Hines bought a parcel of land on the Old Louisville Road, two miles north of Bowling Green. E. F. Wilkinson and Edgar and


31 Emelie E. Tolman was born Emelie Daniels in Chicago, Illinois on October 18, 1896. In 1920 she married Lee Tolman; the marriage was an unhappy affair and ended about a decade later.
Irene Walker sold it to him for one dollar, and on it he built a Colonial-styled office and home. The Hines moved into their new dwelling in early January 1940.  

By the end of 1939 Duncan Hines had become one of the nation's best selling authors with a distinction: He was also his own publisher. According to the figures he gave his publishing representative in New York, Frank M. Watts, at the end of 1939 his non-Bowling Green sales did best among the five largest outlets handling his books: a) American News, b) A. C. McClurg, c) Baker & Taylor, 4) Doubleday Doran, and 5) Marshall Field. Year-end sales from these five outlets were: Adventures in Good Eating 12,430 copies; Adventures in Good Cooking 2,017; Lodging for a Night 5,949, bringing total sales from those five outlets to 20,396. These figures aside, at the end of 1939 the majority of Hines' book sales were from his mail order service in Bowling Green which, by Hines estimate, accounted for 80% of all transactions. 

The R. R. Donnelley Company produced excellent work for Hines through early 1940, but the long distances

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32 Death certificate of Emelie Tolman Hines, 9 November 1986; interview with Spiller, 16 August 1993 and 10 May 1994; telephone interview with Spiller, 29 June 1994; property transfer, Warren County Deed Book, 11 October 1939, no. 186, p. 509; Duncan Hines to Frank M. Watts, 28 December 1939, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.

33 Ibid. It should be pointed out Adventures in Good Cooking, at the time these figures were compiled, had only been on bookshelves less than three months.
between Chicago and Bowling Green made working arrangements difficult. If a production problem developed, Hines could not always give it the attention it deserved. He needed a highly competent book publishing firm that was near Bowling Green. Late in 1939 his brother, Warner, found a printer for him in Nashville, the Williams Printing Company. Hines made arrangements to meet Tom Williams, a company vice president. Within seconds, Hines gave the executive the proof-sheets of one of his guidebooks and told him to go to work. After examining the size of the job that Hines had given their firm, a collective agreement was made among the Williams executives that Hines' guidebook was too large a project for them to handle, so they contracted with the Methodist Publishing House in Nashville to print the book for them. Nevertheless, the quality of the work impressed Hines enough that he transferred his entire printing business from R. R. Donnelley in Chicago to the Williams Printing Company in Nashville. Hines maintained his ties with the Nashville firm until 1953.34

34 Telephone interview with Larry Williams, Franklin, Tennessee, 31 March 1995.
CHAPTER FOUR

WAR MAKES THE MAN

In 1940 Hines began a personal crusade to clean up America's restaurants. Making use of the respect the public had invested in his name, Hines publicly pressured Americans to demand the same as he did: that American restaurants either clean up or close up. Hines knew that if he kept up the pressure restaurants would eventually conform to his way of thinking.

By 1941 Hines had attended several conventions sponsored by the National Restaurant Association, repeatedly being invited to speak. So popular was his appearance at these forums that, beginning in October 1941, Hines inaugurated a separate function: the "Annual Duncan Hines Family Dinner," an event that gathered those restaurateurs and innkeepers fortunate enough to be listed in his guidebooks, a group that Hines came to refer as the "Duncan Hines Family." This event took place every year for the next eighteen years, usually in one of Chicago's large hotels. At these gatherings Hines gave his "family" members constructive criticism on how to improve their respective facilities. His audience then rewarded him
with a meal in his honor and presented him with a collective gift, usually a car.\(^1\)

Hines made available to these various restaurateurs and innkeepers his Duncan Hines Seal of Approval, a sign to be placed outside their recommended establishment. It was a sign which came to mean much to those who sported it. It was a symbol that could either make or—if it were taken away—possibly break a proprietor when word got out that it had been removed. The sign, which was owned exclusively by Hines, stated simply, in a facsimile of his signature: "Recommended by Duncan Hines." There was a different color-coordinated sign for each type of establishment. Like the books, restaurants were designated by a red sign, places of lodging were given a blue one. When a red sign was posted in front of one of his recommended restaurants, the restaurateur never had to worry about having a full dining room for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Likewise, if a blue sign were displayed in front of a motel, hotel, or a guest house, the owner would almost always have a full house by eight that evening.\(^2\)

In June 1941 Frank J. Taylor wrote an article for

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\(^1\) Interview with Robert Wright, Frankfort, Kentucky, 25 May 1994; Duncan Hines speech at Regional Meeting of Listed Places, June 1942, Duncan Hines Collection, Procter and Gamble Corporation, Cincinnati, Ohio. Hines tolerated collective gifts because acceptance of them could not be said to have favored one presenter over the other.

\(^2\) Interview with Sara Jane Meeks, Louisville, Kentucky, 7 June 1994.
Reader's Digest on Hines entitled "America's Where-To-Eat Expert." What the Saturday Evening Post article in December 1938 started, this one solidified. In Taylor's piece, he quoted a famous chef who told him that Duncan Hines had "done more in four years to lift the standard of the American cuisine than all the cooks had done in the previous forty."³

How did Hines accomplish this feat? Because Hines' restaurant guide became the most trusted book in America on where to eat, any supposedly good restaurant not listed in its pages aroused public of whether or not it was a safe place to dine. Because Hines refused to list restaurants that did not live up to his standards, respectable restaurateurs made an extra effort to keep their kitchens extraordinarily clean. Cleaner kitchens meant better food, and better food meant a possible listing in Hines' guidebook. A listing in its pages meant more customers; more customers meant more profits. So it paid restaurateurs greater dividends to keep their premises clean.

Restaurateurs also knew that if they wanted to remain in Hines' guidebook, they not only had to keep their kitchens immaculate, they also had to modernize their kitchens. Since the acquisition of modern restaurant

equipment was another factor in a listing, Hines pushed this reform as well. New restaurant equipment was always more sanitary than older cookware. In the end, when a restaurant modernized and met Hines' criteria for culinary and sanitation standards, it received a listing—but not until. Hines made no exceptions; he knew that if he did, his reputation would be called into question.  

By late 1942 for every 100 books of Adventures in Good Eating sold to the public, there were 70 copies sold of Lodging for a Night. But, more interestingly, for the first time, Adventures in Good Cooking was outselling Lodging for a Night. The ratio of sales between the restaurant guide and the cookbook was now 100 to 75.  

Despite the growing popularity of the guidebooks, the Second World War was hard on Hines' business. Between 1942 and 1944 the country endured wartime gas and tire rationing, a move which curtailed all nonessential automobile driving by the American public. However, when civilians accumulated enough gasoline coupons, they could go to a nearby city or across the continent. So Hines' guidebooks could still be used, if sparingly.

Those in the armed forces had more opportunity to use

4 Ibid.

5 Duncan Hines speech at Regional Meeting of Listed Places, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G. That ratio did not last long. As mentioned earlier, during the war the cookbook outsold the guidebooks, but the sales ratio is not known.
Hines' books than civilians. In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, Americans mobilized for the war effort, a massive endeavor in which millions of Americans were transported back and forth across the country, usually via train. Due to this mass transportation, many Americans found themselves in strange towns and unfamiliar cities. Unaware of the good (and safe) places to eat or the comfortable places to sleep, many men and women, especially those not accustomed to travel, bought the Duncan Hines restaurant and lodging guides.  

Although the war slowed the promotional tours of his books, Hines traveled as much as he could, not only to promote the war effort but also to keep his name alive among the public. Confident that America would win the war, even early on, he saw it as his mission to boost the morale of the nation's restaurateurs until the war was over. By mid-1942 many restaurant proprietors were agitated over the disruption and turmoil the war created for their businesses. Depending on their proximity to an urban center with a railway line, some restaurants had more business than they could handle; others had virtually no customers at all--particularly if they were located miles from a metropolitan area. To boost their morale and confidence, Hines held several regional meetings for many

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of the proprietors listed in his guidebooks.  

Restaurateurs who had ignored Hines in the past now looked to him for guidance. Hines took advantage of the restaurant industry's weakened condition and gave restaurateurs plenty of advice to save their establishments, and this time most of them listened. He told them to break their bad habits and learn new skills, particularly in providing vitamin-filled balanced meals. Hines also asked them to eradicate another eyesore, one he claimed was driving away countless customers: their dirty rest rooms. At a regional meeting for his listed places in 1942, Hines said, "Remember[:] your guests more than likely come in contact with" [your rest rooms] "before they do your food, and a dirty rest room might influence their opinion of your place. Some operators have found a way to overcome this situation by putting one person in charge and holding them responsible for clean rest rooms." 

Hines' opinions of restaurants influenced the thoughts of the public; they, in turn, registered complaints with elected leaders about restaurant sanitation. Soon, politicians took notice of Hines' complaints and asked him to testify before statehouse

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7 Duncan Hines speech at Regional Meeting of Listed Places, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.

8 Ibid.
committees. Hines told the Ohio State Health Commissioners' Conference in September, 1942, that if he ran a restaurant he would like to see letters six inches high on the entrance door and front display windows showing the grade of the restaurant, and if I operated a restaurant, I would add under the grade Our Kitchen Is Open For Inspection By Our Guests. And then I would add another sign: No Pets Allowed In Kitchens Or Dining Rooms Regardless Of Who They Belong To.9

As the commissioners further questioned Hines, more of his pet dislikes and hatreds about the restaurant industry and restaurateurs came to the fore. Hines had little patience with people who had failed at one career, because they would probably fail at another. He told the Ohio Health Commissioners' Conference:

It seems to me that the American public has suffered enough from food being prepared by people who have failed in previous occupations and possess no knowledge of the proper

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9 Duncan Hines' testimony given before the Ohio State Health Commissioners' Conference, Columbus, Ohio, 24 September 1942, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.
preparation of food, its cooking or the importance of maintaining cleanliness in all departments. I believe there isn't any profession that requires more artistry and talent than the careful preparation and cooking of good food. I believe no license or permit for operating a public eating place should be issued unless the owner can pass an examination which would prove his knowledge and ability in the proper preparation and correct cooking of wholesome, appetizing food.¹⁰

A manifestation of this unprofessionalism led to his chief **bête noire**: restaurant filthiness. Hines told the commissioners:

> It has been found that silverware and dishes become carriers of disease if they are not thoroughly rinsed in 180-degree water after washing. . . . 30% to 45% of the deaths in the United States are caused by diseases in this way. So when a place does not look or smell clean in the kitchen and in the back end, all their chromium fronts won't inveigle me to eat

¹⁰ Ibid.
in their dining room.\textsuperscript{11}

Hines told the commission that he saw some hope for American restaurants with regard to the armed forces:

Recently I spent the day with General Henry, Commandant of the Armored Force Training School at Fort Knox, [Kentucky]. I enjoyed dinner with the soldiers in one of the thirty dining rooms. This particular dining room was equipped to feed 1200 men three meals per day. For some time past they are feeding 2800 men. The kitchen is immaculate. The food is of first quality and all well cooked and appetizing. The present army is doing a lot to educate men not only about sanitary conditions but the correct type of food for a balanced meal and how it should be cooked. When the war is over and these men go back home, they will no longer stand for overcooked meats and vegetables.\textsuperscript{12}

Hines did not have much faith in State Boards of Health, believing they were ineffectual. Before the Ohio State Health Commissioners' Conference, a widely-

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
publicized meeting that many in the restaurant industry attended, Hines said that he had recently

received a letter from a State Board of Health reporting to me on eating places. They thought these places were clean because the State Board of Health inspected them. Once a year might be better than never, but not much. A place may go to the dogs almost overnight. In my opinion, it is first a matter of education to the owners, managers and employees of public eating places. . . . There should be frequent and adequate inspection. For first violations[,] a written warning; the second violation[,] a written violation and a stiff fine, and for the third violation, a permanent revocation of license.\(^{13}\)

When the government did fine a restaurant for sanitation violations, Hines said the penalty was a joke. He cited a government report listing fines for 250 cases. "A little over 8% were fined," Hines told the commission, and most of those fines were for a dollar. "Imagine," exclaimed Hines, "a fine of only one dollar. They would

\(^{13}\) Ibid.
not get away with that in Canada."\textsuperscript{14}

Although Hines was partially immobilized during the war because of gas and tire rationing, the armed forces helped spread his gospel of cleanliness--as well as his fame. At a Rotary Club meeting in Cave City, Kentucky, he said:

I am very happy to report that my books have found a place in the war effort. Millions of our people have been transformed from civilian to military life. They are taxing our transportation facilities to the limit, traveling all over the nation. My travel books . . . are going with many of them--guiding them to the best in unfamiliar places throughout America. I wish you could read the enthusiastic letters I receive from men in the service who are using the books. The government has placed the travel books in the libraries of many camps also in large deluxe transport planes for the use of navy personnel.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1943 Hines established the Duncan Hines Foundation

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Duncan Hines Rotary Club speech, Cave City, Kentucky, 18 August 1943, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.
to promote restaurant sanitation. Providing scholarships to students in hotel and restaurant management schools at both Cornell University and Michigan State University, the foundation also made grants to the National Sanitation Foundation at Ann Arbor, Michigan.16

Hines chose Cornell University because it had the best hotel management school in the country; its four-year curriculum in hotel administration was the first in the United States. Michigan State University had a similar curriculum.17

In May 1945, Better Homes and Gardens magazine, published an article on Hines. Marion Edwards, a staff writer for the magazine, wrote that Adventures in Good Eating was now in its sixteenth printing since Pearl Harbor and was being bought by the public at the rate of 3,500 copies per month. Edwards also reported that it was now a common sight to find copies of Adventures in Good Eating peeking "out of the back pocket[s] of dusty G. I. trousers" as well as from "the crowded traveling cases of tagalong brides and wartime businessmen."

In Edwards' article, Hines told how the war had changed the eating habits of millions of American soldiers. "Let men loose in a restaurant before the war,"

16 Park City Daily News, 16 March 1959.
17 Press release, "History of the School of Hotel Administration," Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, p. 3.
he gushed, "and what did they order? Steak, French fries, iron-crust ed rolls, pie! They drowned the steak in hot sauce so they couldn't tell whether they were eating meat or ground rubber bands." After the war began, rationing and military base mess halls combined to bring about a changed attitude toward food among American males. Before the war American men cared little for what they ate so long as their stomachs were filled. During the conflict, they experienced new types of food and new ways of cooking. Much of this changed attitude, Hines explained, occurred because of the meat shortage. Mess halls began serving a wider variety of non-meat entrees. "Men liked it," said Hines. "And the boys in the mess halls got balanced meals--often for the first time in their lives."

As a result of their experience, Hines predicted that "when these fellows come back, they'll surprise people with the way they eat. They won't be satisfied with leathery eggs or vegetables in billboard paste or dishwater soup. They'll have sampled meals around the world, and they'll expect" the cooks in their "home to produce the best."\(^{18}\)

Hines told Edwards: "The wartime family habit of going to the restaurant once a week to save rationing points," would carry over long after the war ended, mainly

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because wives across America had enjoyed the liberating experience of not having to cook every single day. A day off from "kitchen duty" once a week was a demand to which their husbands would have to acquiesce, if for no other reason than to preserve domestic tranquility.\textsuperscript{19}

"Many new restaurants will open," in the near future, said Hines, "operated by G. I. cooks, whose culinary ability" was most likely to garner his own accolades as well as the public's. As noted earlier, Hines had inspected many G. I. kitchens, had eaten the food prepared in them, and was highly impressed with what he had seen. "When he poked his head into military kitchens," wrote Marion Edwards, "Hines found shiny, scrubbed equipment, glistening pots and pans, sanitary garbage disposal, and impeccable preparation methods." Because the government could not afford to have an outbreak of food poisoning on its premises and thus generate a firestorm of public anger and denunciation, it taught young American soldiers how to cook the right way, always emphasizing sanitation, as well as the proper way to prepare and serve meals. Because of this heartening experience, Hines exclaimed to the press that "lots of restaurants could take a tip from the Army."\textsuperscript{20}

Meanwhile, on the domestic front, Hines stepped up

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., pp. 30-31.
his demand for restaurants to acquire the latest technological kitchen innovations. He said that to get his approval in the future, "every restaurant should install electric dishwashers and as much automatic equipment as they can once it's available." To push restaurants toward progress, Hines began to examine other factors in restaurants, such as "acoustics, design, air conditioning, dishes, and furniture." Said Hines, "restaurants will have to throw out juke boxes and chipped dishes and buy comfortable chairs. They'll have to get modern."  

With the surrender of the Germans in the spring of 1945, the first thing many soldiers wanted to do when they returned to the United States was sit down in a restaurant and devour a big, juicy steak—an experience denied many in uniform since the calamity began. But they did not want just any steak; they wanted the best. This desire soon manifested itself in bookstore sales across the country of Adventures in Good Eating. Booksellers, reported Publishers' Weekly, were soon deluged with requests for Hines' guidebook. Over 500,000 copies were sold within a few weeks of V-E Day.  

But all was not well with Hines on the domestic front. In 1943, Emelie Hines left her husband and moved

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21 Ibid., p. 31.
22 Ibid., p. 70.
back to Chicago. Cultural differences between the two was the most likely reason for the breakup. On December 5, 1945, the Warren County, Kentucky, circuit court granted Emelie a divorce from Hines.

A few months later, on March 22, 1946, Duncan Hines married his friend, Clara Wright Nahm at a private wedding ceremony in his sister Annie's home. Hines quickly worked Clara into his business by making her the chairman of the Duncan Hines Foundation. Another job that fell into Clara's lap was helping Hines compile the annual revisions of Adventures in Good Cooking. 23

By the time of Japan's surrender, Hines' name and his guidebooks had been exposed to millions. Thanks to the circulation his books received among American troops, everyone, it seemed, wanted a copy of Adventures in Good Eating and Lodging for a Night. Everyone wanted his advice. During the next few months, this phenomenon seemed to take on a life of its own. Although flattered by the attention, Hines did nothing to stop it. He was amused by his postwar worldwide popularity and the trust that his name generated. In a March 1946 speech, he said:

It seems ridiculous, but it is true, that I receive a number of letters which do not pertain to my books. For instance, I received a [signed] blank check from a New Zealander asking me to buy him a forty-acre farm in Kentucky. And I have received many letters requesting me to purchase other things; or asking me just where they should settle down when they retire from business or asking me to send them a chef or a hostess. It may sound even more ridiculous, but they even ask me what to name their babies. I receive a number of letters from ex-servicemen and also from the Small Business Bureau in Washington, asking me to advise them in what locality this or that person should locate in order to open up a restaurant, what he should serve and what he should charge.24

By summer 1946 Hines' publishing venture had mushroomed into a large enterprise. New copies of all three books were released in June. By now an estimated 900,000 books had been sold since 1936. With sales at $1.50 per copy, Hines' total business income since its

24 Duncan Hines speech at Duncan Hines Family Dinner, Chicago, Illinois, 29 March 1946, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.
meager beginnings was now approaching $1,500,000.²⁵

Hines' crusade to clean up America's restaurants accelerated after the war, but he no longer confined himself to newspaper and magazine articles. Those who annually bought a copy of Adventures in Good Eating noticed that after 1945 the new editions contained an additional page in the introduction concerning "sanitary conditions." In this section Hines wrote:

The sanitary conditions under which food is prepared is as important as good cooking in promoting and safeguarding your health. . . . You may enjoy a delicious tasting meal and yet suffer the aftermath of violent gastro-intestinal disturbances. Many laws have been passed in States all over the nation to safeguard the public's health, yet nothing will accomplish so much so quickly as an aroused public. . . In this book, I endeavor to list places which comply with recognized federal, state and municipal laws and regulations affecting public eating places. I cannot guarantee the cleanliness of places listed. . . . I have no [intention] of attempting to police

the food industry or of telling other people how to run their businesses, but I shall continue to give my approval and my support to the thousands of operators who are making a sincere effort to give the public of America delicious food prepared under sanitary conditions, and served in attractive surroundings.\textsuperscript{26}

His words carried weight; larger numbers of restaurateurs whose businesses were not listed in Hines' book watched their customers go elsewhere. When they discovered that Hines' influence was at the root of their economic woes, they instituted sanitary measures to entice their customers to return.

For the April 26, 1947 edition of \textit{The Saturday Evening Post}, a publication with a readership of approximately 20 million, Hines and Frank J. Taylor once again collaborated on a widely-read article that further legitimized Hines' cause. Hines wrote that he had a remedy for what he perceived to be the ills of America's restaurants. "I would like to be food dictator of the USA just long enough to padlock two-thirds of the places that call themselves cafes or restaurants," he exclaimed, adding that about half of those he had in mind also

doubled as places of lodging. But since he realized that he would never be America's food dictator, he enlightened his readers with some of his "pet peeves" concerning restaurants and urged his readers to adopt them to fight unsanitary restaurants. Although some of his "pet peeves" had been enunciated countless times before, Hines believed repetition to be the key to success. The goal of his article, acknowledged Hines, was simple: "Mine is a private crusade" but "if I can induce a million [of you] to work with me, we can make America a safe place to eat, quicker than it can be done by laws."  

Hines' number one pet peeve was still a dirty kitchen. He knew that some readers might not embrace his suggestion that they inspect restaurant kitchens and that they would remain passive eaters, risking not only their health but that of others every time they went through the restaurant's front door; so he had some advice about such laziness:

It calls for some nerve to ask to see the kitchen of public eating places, but after you have seen one littered with filth, food and garbage exposed to flies, and sloppy cooks dropping cigarette ashes into whatever they are

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27 Duncan Hines, "How to Find a Decent Meal," Saturday Evening Post, 26 April 1947, pp. 18-19, 97, 99-100, 102.
cooking, you find it easy to screw up your courage. I am nearing my second million miles of wayside eating and I still have my appetite and health, but it is only because I have been a fussy busybody and have walked out on thousands of places whose kitchens were dirty or emitted rancid odors.28

Even before the war, thousands of Americans had already taken Hines' advice along these lines. Because it was listed in Adventures in Good Eating, The Maramor, a restaurant in Columbus, Ohio, had so many requests by its customers to see its kitchen that tours were "stacked up eight weeks ahead" with a limit of five customers allowed on the premises during the busiest hours. Such was the fate of a restaurant owner privileged enough to be "recommended by Duncan Hines." The owners of the Rathskeller, in Rockford, Illinois, had another way to deal with "self-appointed kitchen inspectors." Taking note of the restaurant practices that Hines had praised in the past, the proprietors installed a huge plate-glass window on its premises, one so large that it completely separated "the dining room from the kitchen," enabling its customers to "see the chefs and cooks at work."29

28 Ibid., p. 19.
29 Ibid., p. 97.
At the end of the war, America headed into a long stretch of domestic prosperity. Not only was the economy strong and vigorous, Americans also enjoyed a changed social status. Part of an expanding middle class, one of their most popular endeavors was travel or, as they called it, "sightseeing." With their newly purchased automobiles, they were ready to see America—all of it. And Duncan Hines was there to take advantage of their desires.

In the late 1940s Hines compiled and published a new guidebook for those who wanted to engage in this ever-widening form of American recreation. He called his new book *Duncan Hines Vacation Guide*. The new guidebook, like the others, was revised and published annually. The genesis for the *Vacation Guide*, which first came out in early 1949, came from someone in Hines' employment who thought it a good idea to assemble a travel guide for families who wanted to know the attractions across the country. Such a book would be especially useful for families who wanted to get away from domestic life for a while. Hines had already told travelers where to eat when

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30 For some reason Hines never added an apostrophe after his name in the title.

31 The book was copyrighted in 1948 but did not reach the public until either just before Christmas or within a week or so afterward in early 1949. No known records for precise information, which would help settle this question, are known to exist.
they were hungry and where to sleep when they were tired, so it seemed a natural extension, this logic went, to tell them how to entertain themselves.\footnote{32 Interview with Cora Jane Spiller, 10 May 1994.}

The \textit{Vacation Guide}, color-coded green, was modestly popular with the public; it made money, but it was not the great seller his other two guidebooks were. Many establishments refused to buy the second edition because the public had not yet exhausted the first edition. It is easy to understand why they were unpopular. When a potential purchaser examined a copy, Duncan Hines' hand was nowhere to be found. The book looked as though it was written by someone else. And indeed it was.

The book's contents was put together by Hines' secretaries. They sent fact sheets to selected parks and resorts requesting information about their respective institutions; when the forms were returned, Hines' secretaries copied the information supplied on them. Some establishments, said one Hines employee, were too lazy to fill out the forms they sent, preferring instead to send them back along with a brochure which supplied the information they requested. The implication was that they were too busy to fill it out and that the secretaries had better do it themselves. They apparently did not mind. Said this same employee, since "it was [mainly] information about the location, about the place, the rates
and the hours, any of us could write that."33

Another reason it was unpopular was that none of Hines' humor or old fashioned homilies graced its contents, and thus robbed the book's purchaser a chance to sample Hines' written charm. Another factor accounting for the book's lack of popularity and unspectacular sales was that, even in 1948, a dollar and a half was still a considerable sum of money; someone paying that amount for a book they were going to use only once or twice a year may have been another reason for the unimpressive sales. Still another factor was that few people could afford the places Hines' recommended. A meal might set back a customer two or three dollars, but a room at a resort would cost considerably more--somewhere between $25 and $50 a day, a price which, if adjusted for inflation since that time, few Americans could afford even today.

Interestingly, unlike the establishments Hines featured in previous books, the lodges and resorts he listed in his Vacation Guide did not seem enthusiastic to have his seal of approval. America in 1949 was simply not ready for a book that listed what people could do with their leisure time. Whatever the reason for its very modest success, this one instance was about the only time that Duncan Hines ever misjudged what the public would buy.34

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33 Interview with Meeks, 7 June 1994.

34 Ibid.
Over the years Hines turned down hundreds of proposed schemes to make him rich. If only he would let his name be used for this or that scheme, others promised, he would be rich beyond his wildest dreams. He retorted that he was already rich—or rich enough to satisfy his needs. He had everything he could possibly want, he told them. And with those words he always waved them away with the back of his hand. Roy Park had better luck.

Roy Hampton Park was born on a farm outside of Dobson, North Carolina, on September 15, 1910. After holding a series of positions throughout the 1930s, in 1942 he became the head of his own advertising agency, Agricultural Advertising & Research, in Ithaca, New York, "with accounts billing about $2,000,000" annually. Throughout the 1940s Park's firm grew increasingly successful. Farm cooperatives made up the bulk of his accounts. The company also did work for national advertisers.¹

¹ "An Adventure in Food Marketing: A Case Study of a New Entrant in America's Biggest, Fastest Growing Industry," Tide: The Newsmagazine for Advertising Executives, 3 August
One day in 1947 Park's biggest client, the members of the Grange League Federation Exchange (GLF), a farm cooperative representing towns and cities from Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina, and organizations such as the Dairy League asked Park if he could help them market their agricultural products more efficiently. Since the end of the war, it was becoming more difficult for them to make a profit. The GLF members asked him if it was possible to set up a central selling organization, one that could help them compete in the marketplace. What they wanted, in effect, was a massive farm cooperative under the banner of a single brand name. Their goal was to capture as large a share of the food market as possible.\(^2\)

After much research, Park's research team came up with a potential answer. A farmers' co-operative of canned foods was possible if their products displayed a highly identifiable logo or trademark. They needed to first create and then establish an easily recognizable label that grocery shoppers would associate with superior quality, one which they would gladly pay a higher than normal price. Not surprisingly, this idea was popular

with Park's agricultural clients, and they ordered him to find one. They told Park that as long as the money involved in creating the proposed label did not threaten them financially, they were agreeable to whatever he might devise.³

Park now had only one problem: he had to find a brand name, one that would move products, "something in which an overly cautious public could have trust and confidence." Park assigned the head of his advertising department, Robert Flannery, to come up with an idea to crystallize his concept. After several weeks of testing, Flannery came to Park and ordered him to do something he should have thought of all along: "Bring in Duncan Hines." In the course of his survey research, Flannery discovered that the name housewives most frequently associated with good, quality food was that of Duncan Hines. His survey research also pointed to another interesting fact: Duncan Hines' name was better known nationwide than his fellow Kentuckian Alben Barkley, who was then Vice President of the United States; in fact, Flannery's survey revealed that--even among Kentuckians--Hines' name was better known than Barkley's.⁴

³ "An Adventure in Food Marketing," p. 3.
Park quickly decided that Hines would be the name and face on the GLF's products. He always stressed preparation when meeting others for the first time. "Know everything you can about that person" was his motto. Therefore, before he scheduled an interview with Hines, Park sent one of his employees to the Cornell University library with a camera to photograph literally every article it had on Duncan Hines. On reviewing the articles, Park learned that Hines never risked his reputation to make a dollar. Hines' philosophy, he discovered, could be summed up as follows: you could easily earn another dollar tomorrow, but if you lost your reputation, an opportunity might never again present itself to earn it back. This observation was not lost on Park, and he used it when he met Hines.

Within days Park had absorbed so much information on Hines that he believed he knew him before he met him. Park was so confident that he could sell Hines on his future plans that he designed full-color food labels of dummy cans, cartons and jars of Duncan Hines products so that Hines could see for himself what his concept looked like. When Park reached a point where he believed himself to be thoroughly prepared to meet Hines, a mutual friend, Robert Wilson, set up a meeting between the two.5

5 "An Adventure in Food Marketing," p. 3. Earlier accounts say Park called Hines to set up the meeting, but after Hines' death, Park identified Wilson as the one who
In November 1948, Duncan Hines and Roy Park met at the Waldorf-Astoria Towers in New York City. Hines greeted Park rather acidly with, "So, you're going to make me a millionaire." Park, knowing that Hines was more interested in his reputation than in making money, quietly replied that, no, he did not come to make him a fortune. Rather, he wanted to create a line of food products in Hines' honor. Said Park, "By making your name more meaningful in the home, you can upgrade American eating habits." This statement impressed Hines; no one had ever proposed anything like that to him before. Park expanded his proposal. He told the famous food critic that if he endorsed a company which sold high quality products bearing his name, he would be doing his country a favor by directly influencing better eating habits among Americans. This proposal had tremendous appeal to Hines, for it affected his sense of honor.  

At the end of their first meeting, Park left Hines with the necessary background material for his proposal, but he waited until the next morning to show him the product prototypes. At their breakfast meeting the next

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day, Hines picked up a cardboard prototype and fingered it with some interest. He kept turning the package over repeatedly as if trying to decide if he wanted to go through with Park's proposal. Taking this interest as his cue, Park eagerly showed the rest of the packages to Hines. The next day the two agreed to a six-month trial partnership.  

A week later in Chicago, flanked by their lawyers, they signed a contract, making legal their temporary business arrangement. Park gave Hines a certified check of a substantial amount to show he meant business. There were escape clauses in the contract for Hines; he could pull out of the agreement if his name and reputation were compromised in any way. 

After weeks of test marketing products with Hines name and face on them, Park's dreams of success came true. His instincts were right. Just as he had hoped, Hines' name was like magic. The Duncan Hines name "moved" products. A jubilant Park could not wait to tell his clients, the GLF members, of his successful tests. Unfortunately, he discovered that all his efforts had been for nothing. While Park was trying to lure Hines into a partnership, "enthusiasm among the farmers had dwindled

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8 Ibid.
and leading groups had disintegrated." Said Park years later:

Following the test marketing we went back to our farm cooperative clients with an encouraging report—only to find that there had been a shift in their management philosophy. They had decided to stick to their knitting by providing their farmer members with farm production supplies and leave the consumer marketing of processed foods to the pros in the consumer field.10

Park had to make a decision. He could dispose of the investment he had made in developing the Duncan Hines brand and return his attention to advertising and public relation activities, or he could plunge ahead and develop the Duncan Hines label. He concluded that the latter course held the more promising future for him, but first he sought advice from someone whose judgment he felt secure in seeking. Park turned to H. E. Babcock, the chairman of the board of trustees at Cornell University. Babcock told Park "to set up his own company and seek

10 Roy Park speech, Cornell University, 2 November 1976.
backing from bankers and investment brokers." Park took his advice and in December 1948 Hines-Park Foods, Inc. was born. Park "was almost too successful in selling the idea. His backers talked of millions. It seemed to Park that he would be squeezed out" if he were not careful. "He fought back and retained firm control over his infant company, though this meant considerably less money invested than his new partners had contemplated."11

The newly formed Hines-Park Foods company "then accepted applicants from other small companies for the Duncan Hines label." The only qualification they had to observe was that they had to meet the approval of Duncan Hines--which meant producing a high quality product. Remembering the clauses in Hines' contract, Park did not dare insult Hines with an inferior product. If he did, he knew the partnership and his potential fortune would quickly evaporate. With this in mind, Hines-Park Foods was soon approving products from all over the nation: "chicken from Washington, tomato juice from Ohio and New York, kidney beans from Ohio, coffee from Boston, pickles and relishes from North Carolina, crab apples from Michigan." By September 1949, Hines-Park Foods had licensed sixteen food packagers who were ready to distribute sixty types of food featuring the Duncan Hines

When Hines and Park met again, in March 1949, Park asked his business partner for a six-month extension on their business arrangement. Hines, who had been keeping tabs on Park's activities, asked him point blank if he was making any money on his venture. Park said no, he was not. Hines then asked him why he had not asked him for his help. "Because," Park confessed, "I did not think I could afford you." Hines had to sit down for that; all his suspicions about Park instantly vanished. The young man really was sincere. Hines told Park that he would help him if Park would pay his expenses. All he had to do was ask.

Sales for the second six-month period were better, primarily because Duncan Hines rolled up his sleeves and went to work for his partner. Over the next few months Park impressed Hines with his high energy and business savvy, and in time their friendship grew into a tight bond. On October 14, 1949, Roy H. Park established Hines-Park Foods, Inc., with Duncan Hines as his full partner.

By the middle of 1950, Hines-Park, Inc. had thirty

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12 "An Adventure in Food Marketing," p. 3-4.
13 Park, "Notes from Lempret."
14 Press release, Duncan Hines Institute, Ithaca, New York, 1 October 1957, p. 3, Duncan Hines Collection, Procter and Gamble Corporation, Cincinnati, Ohio.
companies signed for 150 products, and some eighty dairies qualified to carry the company's first big product, Duncan Hines Ice Cream. The company's ice cream was developed and manufactured by the Lehigh Valley Cooperative Farmers dairy at Allentown, Pennsylvania. The introduction of the ice cream line soon caused the cooperative to expend $1,250,000 in new plant equipment just to keep up with the demand. Shortly after it was introduced, the Lehigh Valley dairy produced one million pint containers over a two-week period. At forty-three cents a pint, the dairy cooperative and Hines-Park Foods were making a lot of money.

In July 1950, Hines-Park, Inc. announced that it was entering the cake mix business. The company mounted a full-scale campaign to introduce what Park believed was the finest cake mix on the market; he said his company would produce their best test-marketed flavors: devil's food, white, yellow, and spice.

The manufacturer of Hines-Park's cake mixes was Nebraska Consolidated Mills, Inc., an Omaha, Nebraska, flour milling company that had little experience in consumer marketing. That would quickly change. Under the

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15 The formula was sold to dairies that had qualified to carry the Duncan Hines label.

16 "An Adventure in Food Marketing," p. 4; Park City Daily News, 4 June 1950.

17 J. Allen, Northwestern Miller, 3 July 1951.
able leadership of the company's 32-year-old president, Allan Mactier, the company worked out a satisfactory franchise agreement with Roy Park, and within a few months the small milling company was producing sixteen different kinds of cake and specialty mixes for the Duncan Hines label. After more than a year of laboratory and consumer testing, the Duncan Hines Cake Mixes were introduced in Nebraska and Iowa on June 26, 1951.18

In the winter of 1952 Nebraska Consolidated introduced consumers to Duncan Hines Buttermilk Pancake Mix, followed in April 1953 by Duncan Hines Blueberry Muffin Mix. While other mixes had been marketed as "just add water or milk" convenience items, Nebraska Consolidated altered the formula: they left in the dried milk and disposed with the dehydrated eggs. Each package bore on its front a fatherly-looking picture of Duncan Hines along with the quote "I have found that strictly fresh eggs mean a bigger, better cake . . . in appearance, flavor and freshness."19

Within three weeks the cake mixes captured 48% of the Omaha market. In mid-1952 Nebraska Consolidated Mills

18 North Carolina State College News, August 1955; "Meet Duncan Hines," Moonbeams, November 1958, pp. 7-8, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.

reported to Hines-Park on its cake mixes sales in Iowa and Nebraska: "All the Hinky-Dinky Stores ran out. . . . Safeway ran out during the afternoon, too, so we set out with two five-ton trucks and delivered 389 cases directly to the seventeen Safeway Stores in Omaha and Council Bluffs." Within a few months the plant had delivered 10,000 cake mix cases to Iowa and Nebraska grocery stores. Earlier, in the spring of 1952, Hines-Park made arrangements to make their products available in the Southern states. On the first day the cake mix was available in Bowling Green, Kentucky, one store's entire supply of 1,400 packages was depleted in just a few hours.20

Cake mixes and ice cream were by no means the soul of the company. By the end of 1951, Hines-Park had approved 165 different products from 120 food producers bearing the Duncan Hines name. Their array of food included twenty sorts of jams and jellies, eighteen types of pickles, three kinds of mushrooms, and eleven varieties of ice cream topping. The company's product line-up also included fruit sherbet, steak sauce, Worcester sauce, salad dressing, sea food sauce, ketchup, chili sauce and white bread named, appropriately, Duncan Hines Bread, which was manufactured by Durkee's Domestic Bakery in

Homer, New York. The bread, which usually sold for 25 cents a loaf, soon became one of the company's best selling products, attributable to Durkee's recipe of unbleached flour, honey instead of sugar, and plenty of milk.21

Nearly all the public's exposure to Hines-Park's product line-up was due to Ag Research, the company's advertising arm. In 1949 Ag Research spent only $10,000 on advertising, but by 1952 its spending budget had increased to well over $1,000,000. But advertising alone could not account for the firm's spectacular sales. L. W. Hitchcock of the James H. Black Co. reported an experiment he had conducted in Chicago. With the cooperation of a Chicago food distributor and several of the grocery stores it supplied, Hitchcock put Duncan Hines salad dressing on supermarket shelves for five weeks without any "advertising, store signs, [or] promotion of any kind." Hitchcock wanted to see if consumers would recognize the Duncan Hines brand name and buy the product on the strength of it. They did; supermarkets quickly sold all their available stock. Later, when Duncan Hines salad dressing was advertised in Chicago, Milwaukee and Minneapolis, supermarkets sold close to 9,000 cases within

21 "An Adventure in Food Marketing," p. 5; Grocer's Spotlight, 12 June 1952; Food Mart News, November 1952, p. 78.
a few days.22

While the company's fortunes improved daily, Duncan Hines' life was taking all sorts of interesting turns. In October 1952, he began a regular radio program with Roy Park. According to one newspaper account, Hines' program was "a five-day-a-week radio show [broadcast] over the Mutual Network . . . ." Its purpose was "to feature chats about good food, where to find it, and where to spend the night after you have eaten it." The broadcasts originated wherever Hines was at the time. Hines, meanwhile, had been honored on Broadway, when his persona was plugged in the song "If I Were a Bell" in Guys and Dolls. He even had a horse race named after him: Omaha's "Duncan Hines purse." None of this publicity hurt his syndicated newspaper column; by November 1951, Hines' column was seen in 100 newspapers with a combined circulation of 20,000,000.23

By 1953, just two years after the cake mixes were introduced, three flavors--white, yellow, and devil's food--had captured ten percent of the national cake mix market. Earlier that year Hines-Park Foods had "brought out other Duncan Hines mixes--for pancakes and waffles, gingerbread and muffins." All did well in the

22 "An Adventure in Food Marketing," p. 4-5.

23 Park City Daily News, 19 October 1952; "Duncan Hines, Adventurer," Tide: The Newsmagazine for Advertising Executives, 3 August 1951, p. 3.
marketplace. One year later, according to a survey taken in the South in the summer of 1954 for Progressive Farmer magazine, "the Duncan Hines cake mixes ranked fourth behind Aunt Jemima, Pillsbury and Swansdown, and the pancake mix was fourth behind Aunt Jemima, Pillsbury and Ballard's. In the Spokane market, Duncan Hines cake mixes" ranked "third behind Betty Crocker and Pillsbury, while the muffin mix" placed first. A Fort Wayne study, released in October 1954, showed the Duncan Hines cake mixes to be "ahead of all other brands." When the cake mixes were introduced in Des Moines, Iowa, in 1951, they quickly garnered 26% of the local cake mix market; by 1954 that share had grown to 41%.24

When the Duncan Hines brand arrived on the scene, it transformed the way American housewives perceived cake mixes, and its introduction stirred up the food industry. "When they originally appeared on the market," reported Advertising Age in an article reviewing the brand name's spreading popularity, cake "mixes were promoted mainly as a convenience product." Every housewife who bought a cake mix was expected to follow the instructions on the back of the box: "Just add water and pop in the oven. . . . The Duncan Hines mix turned the tables on the established brands by telling the housewife to add two fresh eggs as

24 "Duncan Hines, Adventurer," Tide: The Newsmagazine for Advertising Executives, 3 August 1951, p. 3.
well as water." This approach to cake mixes attracted an increasing number of consumers, and soon Hines-Park's manufacturing process was copied by other food producers. 25

By the mid-1950s the objective that Roy Park had set for himself—to create a product that people would enthusiastically purchase regardless of its price—had largely been accomplished. Park felt a solid sense of achievement as he confidently explained to others that selling "quality" was a sound approach to sales because, "it recognizes the desire and ambition of every American to move up toward a higher standard of living. It's not enough . . . to stress nutritional values. Food has tremendous possibilities for glamorizing, and we should sell all the joys that go with good eating." 26

In the summer of 1953, Adventures in Good Eating, Inc. underwent a change in ownership. The change came when Hines, now 73, decided he was no longer physically able to maintain the hectic pace his Bowling Green operation demanded of him. After first considering that one of his in-laws could replace him, in the end he decided that the best person to hand over the reins of his business to was Roy Park. Park agreed to take control of Hines' business, but because Park's home and office were

25 Ibid.

in Ithaca, New York, that is where Park decided to move Adventures in Good Eating, Inc. On July 29, 1953, Park established the Duncan Hines Institute at Ithaca, New York, to administer the publishing activities of Adventures in Good Eating, Inc.27

With his characteristic thoroughness and professionalism, Park spared nothing with his new endeavor. Each year Park spent over $250,000 to give Americans the most updated restaurant and lodging information available. "Park's conception of what the guide books should encompass outstripped anything Duncan Hines alone had been able to accomplish."28

In addition to publishing the three annual guides and the cookbook, in 1955 the Duncan Hines Institute produced two books. The first of these was Duncan Hines' Dessert Book, a collection of Hines' favorite after-dinner recipes; the second book, published later in the year, was the ever-so-slightly autobiographical Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey.29

Duncan Hines Dessert Book was published early in the year and distributed by Pocket Books. It had an initial print-run of 250,000 copies. Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey,

27 Press release, Duncan Hines Institute, 1 October 1957, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G; Park City Daily News, 16 March 1959.


originally titled There's No Accounting For Tastes, was touted as an autobiography, but with the exception of the first two chapters, there was little biography to it. The book was essentially a tour of the many restaurants Hines had visited. After working on the book with ghostwriter Fred Glimpse of Phoenix, Arizona, for several months, Hines and Park gave their approval to the book's final form. Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey was published by the Thomas Y. Crowell Co. on September 28, 1955.  

While the Hines-Park firm marketed books to the nation, it also carved out a niche for itself in the food appliances arena; by the end of 1955 the company had licensed over fifty kitchen items brandishing the Duncan Hines name, "from cooking ranges to a Duncan Hines coffee-maker." By September 1955, the company was well into developing another activity, one that proved quite popular: the Duncan Hines Signet Club. Park described this venture as "a travel and credit service" with some 50,000 members whose Duncan Hines credit cards were honored by 2,300 Duncan Hines-recommended eating, lodging and vacation places in Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and the U.S. Members of the Duncan Hines Signet Club could

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30 Park City Daily News, 15 September 1955; "Notes For Duncan Hines Book, There's No Accounting For Tastes," from interview conducted by Roy Park with Duncan Hines, ca. 1954, p. 1, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G; Letters between Fred Glimpse and Duncan Hines during preparation of Duncan Hines' Food Odyssey, summer 1954-January 1955, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.
"eat at the best restaurants" in America—and "pay for their meals at the end of the month."\textsuperscript{31}

On August 17, 1956, the Duncan Hines Institute and Hines-Park Foods, Inc., announced its merger with Proctor & Gamble, from Cincinnati, Ohio, whose main product lines at the time were "soaps, detergents, drug products and shortenings." Some months earlier, Procter and Gamble had decided to expand its line of grocery products--specifically in the area of cake mixes. To achieve this end, it first acquired Nebraska Consolidated Mills, the manufacturer of Hines-Park Food's flour-based products. It then acquired, through an exchange of stock for an undisclosed price, both the Duncan Hines Institute and Hines-Park Foods. Procter and Gamble's purchase of the Ithaca, New York, company included not only all of its research and production facilities but also the use of Duncan Hines' name--which was the ultimate goal of the company in the first place. Procter and Gamble allowed Roy Park to retain his title as company president and to continue operating from his Ithaca headquarters. As part of the acquisition, Park made Procter and Gamble agree to two other demands: 1) P&G had to make him one of the corporate giant's vice-presidents, and 2) P&G had to agree not to hamper in any way the production of the Duncan

\textsuperscript{31} Park City Daily News, 15 September 1955; North Carolina State College News, August 1955.
Hines Institute's guidebook and credit card business.\(^{32}\)

Although Hines' name and face graced the packages of some of Procter and Gamble's cake mixes soon after the acquisition, the full array of Duncan Hines mixes did not appear on grocery shelves until very late in 1957. The corporate giant spent the fall of 1956 and practically all of 1957 giving the cake mixes little improvements—a result of the most intensive consumer testing program in the company's 120-year-old history. More than 40,500 blind taste tests were conducted on housewives nationwide, resulting in a product that proved to be very popular with the general public.\(^{33}\)

In July 1957 the Louisville Courier-Journal caught up with Hines, just as he was embarking on a trip to Alaska. Hines revealed that the royalties he received from the merger amounted to only a fraction of one cent for 24 packages. If his royalty percentage appeared to be a slow method for making money, Hines quickly pointed out that when one considered that every twenty minutes some 20,000 packages of his mixes were going through grocery check-out counters, those tiny royalties added up.\(^{34}\)


\(^{33}\) New product presentation material, Procter and Gamble, Inc., November 1957, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.

\(^{34}\) Courier-Journal, 7 July 1957.
On May 5, 1958, the Duncan Hines Family Dinner was held in Chicago, and it was clear that in the nearly five years since Roy Park had taken over Hines' operation, the Duncan Hines guidebook business had expanded considerably. *Adventures in Good Eating* was into its 50th printing with a volume that included nearly 3,000 restaurants. *Lodging for a Night*, meanwhile, celebrated its 40th printing, and the cookbook, *Adventures in Good Cooking*, had expanded its scope to include 700 recipes. There was also a new development in guidebook sales. Thanks to Park, over 3,000 public libraries were now stocking their reference shelves with each annual edition—something Hines had never considered.35

While Hines was visiting friends in Florida in January 1958, he became ill. A local doctor confirmed his suspicions. Hines arranged through his Bowling Green physician, Dr. A. D. Donnelley, to be examined in Nashville, Tennessee, and it was there that he was diagnosed as having contracted lung cancer. Hines spent much of 1958 in and out of the Bowling Green hospital, suffering greatly.36

By January 1959 Hines had lost much weight, but if he


36 Telephone interview with Cora Jane Spiller, Bowling Green, Kentucky, 12 July 1995.
was gravely ill, he never complained about it. He spent much of his time in bed, sometimes seeing guests and assorted friends. That Hines should meet his end as a result of lung cancer, in retrospect, was not surprising. In the days before Americans knew for certain that cigarettes were harmful to one's health, Hines smoked them to his heart's content. "I almost never saw him without a cigarette in his hand," said Mary Herndon, one of his secretaries. In the end, Hines' habit proved to be his undoing. On Sunday, March 15, 1959, eleven days before his 79th birthday, Duncan Hines died in bed in his Bowling Green home.37

H. B. Meek, dean of the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University, summed up Hines' importance to American culture: "While Duncan Hines' appraisal of public restaurants could not be expected to be infallible, his listings constituted a real service to the traveling public. To the operating restaurateur, Mr. Hines was equally helpful in that he recognized quality and publicized it." Meek concluded that, "We at the Hotel School at Cornell are trying to train young people to maintain high standards of restaurant operation. It has been helpful indeed to have a responsible recognized

37 Interview with Sara Jane Meeks, Louisville, Kentucky, 7 June 1994; Interview with Mary Herndon Cohron, North Salem, Indiana, 29 August 1994; Park City Daily News, 16 March 1959.
authority like Duncan Hines ready to note real merit and to offer an accolade for superior performance."\textsuperscript{38}

There were other tributes commemorating his memory. Hines' obituary in his hometown newspaper took note of his gentle Southern sense of humor and how this quality emerged from the pages of his publications. Such quips as "No doubt poor cooking has caused some divorces," "Lukewarm coffee is best discarded" and "You cannot be a good cook unless you love to cook" were now part of Duncan Hines lore. But what was most remembered was "his criteria for evaluating eating places" which insisted on "cleanliness, courtesy, and ample portions served unobtrusively."\textsuperscript{39}

Roy Park continued to publish the Duncan Hines guidebooks for three more years. In November 1962 he issued an unexpected statement to the press and the members of the Duncan Hines Family of restaurants and inns:

\begin{quote}
Publication of the Duncan Hines Travel Books will be discontinued for 1963. Sales of the books and the display of official Duncan Hines signs will continue until December 31, 1962. Unsold books in your possession after that date
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Ithaca Journal}, 16 March 1959.

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Park City Daily News}, 16 March 1959.
may be returned for refund. If you are leasing official signs, you will receive special instructions concerning lease termination, refunds and returns.\textsuperscript{40}

Park explained why he was terminating publications. It also served as a tribute to the man who changed the way Americans think about restaurant food:

Basically, we have been forced to conclude that the American traveling public no longer needs the services provided by the Duncan Hines Travel books. The great need of 27 years ago has been erased by the remarkable upgrading of eating and lodging facilities all over the country. Today's traveler is no longer a hardy pioneer challenging an uncharted sea with a stomach of iron and a back of steel. No matter his personal tastes, his financial well-being, or the direction of his wandering, the traveler today has a near infinite choice of high quality eating and lodging places.

For example, Duncan Hines could find less than

\textsuperscript{40} Roy H. Park to Duncan Hines Family, 23 November 1962, Duncan Hines Collection, P&G.
200 places he thought worthy of mention at the time he published his first list of superior eating places. But today it is next to impossible to list all the worthy eating places in a practical-size[d] book.

. . . That America now really loves to travel (but no longer views a guide book as a glove compartment "must") is a great tribute to the pioneering efforts of Duncan Hines. Mr. Hines' uncompromising crusade for improved hospitality along America's highways--his unselfish recognition of quality in dining and eating places--played a vital role in the constant upgrading which has brought about the present happy state of affairs across the country.  

Park concluded his remarks by thanking the Duncan Hines Family members for their cooperation over the years and wished them well. And the service that began with an unusual Christmas card in 1935 and blossomed into a publishing phenomenon that many Americans came to cherish became another relic of America's cultural history. And within a generation most Americans only knew Duncan Hines as a name on a cake mix box.

41 Ibid.
CONCLUSION

Fame is an elusive quality. It is, in fact, nothing more than a shared awareness of a particular individual among large groups of people. While it is here today, it will surely be gone tomorrow, often without warning. Duncan Hines did not suffer this fate while he was alive, but it has transpired since his death. Because his name has been out of circulation since 1962, few Americans remember the significance of the man and his contribution to their culture.

What were those contributions? They can be seen everywhere. First, one can see it in the dining culture that pervades the American landscape. While changing social customs and economics has more to do with driving the American family out of the kitchen and into the restaurant, visualize what those individuals would have faced had not Duncan Hines paved the way for national acceptance of the idea that restaurant meals should be enjoyable adventures in fine dining instead of detours into possible peril. Think of what traveling Americans would have faced in the 1960s and 1970s had there not been someone a few decades earlier insisting that Americans demand that their restaurant meals be wholesome, sanitary
and clean.

Even if Americans are not cognizant of the fact, Duncan Hines' influence is with them every day. His influence can especially be found when one considers how Americans regard the food they consume: no matter how hungry they are, they still have high expectations for what they eat. Even America's poor are known to throw food in the garbage if it does not meet their expectations.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate this assertion is to point to an event in January 1977, almost eighteen years after Duncan Hines' death. In Pontiac, Michigan, a Mexican restaurant closed its doors forever after it served several meals that sent a number of people to the hospital. Some later died. It was such an unusual event that it was the subject of national news attention for several days. Had that event happened forty years earlier, no one would have noticed. That the American public now demands that the meals restaurants serve them be risk-free is a testament to the influence of Duncan Hines, even if most do not know he is behind their expectation. And it is because of that expectation that Duncan Hines should be remembered.
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