



American Midwest
Foodways
Scholar's Grants



Culinary Historians of
Chicago

Culinary Historians of Chicago and
Greater Midwest Foodways Alliance
presents

**The Impact of American Indian Boarding School
Education on Great Lakes Indigenous Foodways:
A Case Study of the Lac du Flambeau Reservation**

Presented by
Amelia Katanski, PhD

Saturday, January 31, 2015
10 a.m. to Noon

At

Kendall College, School of Culinary Arts
900 N. North Branch Street, Chicago

(Located just north of W. Chicago Ave. at N. Halsted St.)

Free Parking (north parking lot across the street, but not in front, please!)

The US has a clear history of limiting Indian people's abilities to harvest, hunt, fish for, or access their traditional foods in order to assert control over Indian communities and advance national policy objectives. Indian boarding school education is one significant way federal actions attempted to subvert native foodways. Students spent half of their time in the classroom and half working on the school farm, learning mainstream agricultural practices in the context of a boarding school curriculum that devalued indigenous knowledge and supported allotment, in which tribally-owned reservation land was broken into homesteads intended to be owned by individuals and run as family farms, producing food that mirrored European-American dietary norms and supplanting endangered traditional foodways.

In this presentation, I will closely examine the agricultural curriculum of the boarding schools and the way those lessons reverberated in students' home

communities, focusing particularly on the Lac du Flambeau Ojibwe community in Wisconsin. Indian students continually asserted intellectual sovereignty over the lessons they were taught at school-adopting, adapting, or discarding material to serve cultural, material, and community needs-and I will explore the ways they did this with their agricultural educations. By examining archival materials about school curricula and reports from field agents, read in dialogue with personal narratives of former boarding school students and other Lac du Flambeau elders, I will argue that the stories elders tell about foodways at Lac du Flambeau indicate that Indian boarding school curriculum did not displace indigenous foodways. On the contrary, the maintenance of indigenous foodways throughout the boarding school era and beyond provided the foundation for the fishing-rights activism of the 1980s and 90s at Lac du Flambeau. In other words, the stories the people of Lac du Flambeau tell about their foodways, and their dedication to passing those stories down over time, despite the attempts of the boarding school agricultural discourse to disrupt them, has fed much more recent assertions of self-determination, identity, and food sovereignty at Lac du Flambeau.

Amelia Katanski is Associate Professor of English at Kalamazoo College in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Dr. Katanski received her PhD in English from Tufts University and earned a MA in English at Tufts and a MA in American Indian Studies from UCLA.

Her research and teaching focuses on American Indian literature. She is the author of *Learning to Write "Indian": The Boarding School in American Indian Literature* (U Oklahoma 2005) as well as a number of scholarly articles on American Indian literary and cultural studies and pedagogy. Her research has explored the relationship among educational institutions, US federal law, indigenous customary law, and indigenous literary traditions. She teaches courses in American Indian Literature, Comparative Indigenous Literatures, and "American Indian Literature and the Law" alongside several courses that focus on food and environmental studies, including an English course on gardens in literature and a first-year seminar on food systems and food justice-both service-learning courses that engage students in the Kalamazoo-area foodshed, working alongside food justice practitioners. Her current research, supported by a faculty fellowship from the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership at Kalamazoo College as well as the American Midwest Foodways Scholar's Grant, focuses on the intersection of storytelling, tribal sovereignty, and food sovereignty in Anishinaabeg communities.

This program is hosted by the Greater Midwest Foodways. To reserve, please e-mail: greatermidwestfoodways@gmail.com.