

eateries grew less popular nationwide. It is no surprise, then, that the renewed historical and culinary interest in diners that began in the late 1970s was centered in New England. Restored diner cars offering both authentic and updated versions of diner fare began to reopen all over the region, many of them serving such traditional regional dishes as steamers, johnnycakes, and coffee milk. Notable New England diners include the Moran Square Diner (a Worcester Lunch Car diner) in Fitchburg, Mass., Jigger's Diner in East Greenwich, R.I., and the Central Diner in Worcester, Mass.

In 1985 the Modern Diner, a Sterling Streamliner that first opened in Pawtucket, R.I., in 1940, became the first diner included on the National Register of Historic Places, opening the way for 14 more diners to be declared historic sites. Today, diners are appreciated as unique forms of American architecture and as culinary and cultural institutions with New England roots.

Richard J. S. Gutman, *American Diner: Then and Now* (1993); Gutman, "The Diner," *American Heritage* 44 (1993); John F. Mariani, "The Return of the Great American Diner," *Esquire* 123 (1995).

Sarah J. Purcell

Doughnuts Long a staple of New England breakfasts, doughnuts are also the stuff of New England verse:

Cut in diamonds, twists or rings,
Drop with care the doughy things
Into the fat that swiftly swells
Evenly the spongy cells.
Watch with care the time for turning,
Fry them brown, just short of burning.
Roll in sugar, serve when cool,
This is the never failing rule.

Legend has it that the doughnut was invented in the mid-19th century by a Maine sea captain, Hanson Gregory, who, needing both hands to right his ship's course, stuck his piece of fried bread onto a spoke of his ship's wheel. The more prosaic version is that Gregory cut out the middles of his mother's fried-dough cakes because they were not cooked through. Either way, doughnuts have been fodder for New England folklore ever since. Among the folktales of Maine is the legend of the famous Coffin family, who invented doughnuts that turned themselves over in the cooking fat and jumped out of the pan when they were done.

In the era before franchise restaurants, spiced doughnuts were a breakfast mainstay in northern and eastern New England, while muffins held sway in the south. Eventually doughnuts made their way throughout the region and the nation. Traditionally served with cold cider, milk, or coffee, the fried confec-



Dunkin' Donuts shop in Dorchester, Mass., 1967

tions come in any number of shapes and flavors, as rings, rounds, or twists, plain, sugared, spiced, glazed, or filled with jelly. The Philbrook family, for instance, innkeepers since the mid-1800s near Shelburne, N.H., perfected the White Mountain doughnut, a small, featherlight variety. The secret to good doughnuts, they contend, is using sour milk or buttermilk in the batter, seasoning it with a little bacon fat, taking care not to add too much flour, and cooking the doughnuts in lard. Frederick Wiseman's four-hour film *Belfast, Maine* (2000) features a lengthy segment on doughnut making in that small midcoast city.

One gets a sense of the doughnut's place in New England folk culture from the reminiscences of Gertrude E. Olsen, of Mansfield, Mass. "My mother was always known as 'Auntie' or 'The Doughnut Lady' to the people of our community," she told the food writer Sara Stamm. "Each Saturday, she replenished our doughnut crock, and each Saturday the paperboy, the mailman, the milkman, and the grocer lingered to chat a bit and enjoy some hot doughnuts straight from the kettle on the old wood-burning range. We children could hardly wait for the first doughnut holes, which she would fry on the pretext of testing the fat, but really to see our delight in savoring their goodness to the accompaniment of ice-cold milk."

In 1946 William Rosenberg founded Industrial Luncheon Services, a company that delivered meals and coffee-break snacks to factory workers on the outskirts of Boston. The

success of that enterprise led Rosenberg to open his first coffee and doughnut shop, the Open Kettle, in Quincy, Mass. In 1950 Rosenberg changed its name to Dunkin' Donuts. The shop was first franchised in 1955, and the chain went public in 1968. The company raised its profile considerably in 1978, when it aired its first network television commercials. A British conglomerate, Allied Domecq, bought Dunkin' Donuts in 1990. Dunkin' Donuts, with corporate headquarters located in Randolph, Mass., is now the largest chain of coffee shops in the world, operating 5,000 franchises in 40 countries. In one year Dunkin' Donuts serves enough freshly brewed coffee for every person in Rhode Island to have 577 cups.

Doughnut legends are still being created, and Massachusetts is the scene of an ongoing battle over the popular sweet. In 1998 the eight-year-old schoolgirl Emma Krane of Somerville launched a campaign to name Boston Cream the state's official doughnut. Legislators from the Berkshires, trying to level the commonwealth's tilt toward the metropolis, stalled the effort, however—despite a nationwide poll conducted by Dunkin' Donuts, which conclusively determined that America's favorite doughnut is what that chain terms the Boston Kreme.

Brooke Dojny, *The New England Cookbook: 350 Recipes from Town and Country, Land and Sea, Hearth and Home* (1999); Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration, *Maine: A Guide "Down East"* (1937); Fred Halliday, *Halliday's New England Food Explorer: Tours for Food Lovers* (1993); Sara B. B. Stamm, *Favorite New England Recipes*, 2d ed. (1991).

Louis Mazzari

Down East "Up to Boston," they say, and "down to Maine." Some swear that *down east* is a seafaring phrase dating back to the 1700s. With prevailing winds blowing from the west, when you sail from Boston to Bar Harbor, you're sailing to the east and downwind. Londoners, too, used to travel down to Edinburgh. Bostonians may go down to Gloucester, but one thing is clear: down-easters are Mainers—from Kittery to Fort Kent, from Calais to Coburn Gore. Such, at least, is the reigning philosophy at *Down East* magazine.

Down east Yankees are busy, thrifty, and averse to squandering anything, whether time, energy, or words. They employ a language that is direct and concise but also rich and vividly graphic. Generally nasal, slurred, and hesitant, down east speech used to encompass a great variety of patterns. *Maine: A Guide "Down East"* (1937), issued by the Works Progress Administration, found "as many Maine dialects as there are States in the Union." Today, the most familiar traits of native speech include