Lynne S. McNeill Publishes New Book

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Associate Professor of English Lynne S. McNeill has co-edited a new book, This is the Plate: Utah Food Traditions (2020), published this month by the University of Utah Press. The book examines Utah’s distinctive food heritage from a folklore perspective, with the title a witty allusion to a famous statement of Utah pioneer Brigham Young’s, “This is the place.” The first book-length work on the subject, This is the Plate features recipes and photographs of food and beverages as it traces Utah food history from pre-contact Native American times through the arrival of multinational Mormon pioneers, miners, farmers, and other immigrants, to today’s moment of “foodies” creativity, craft beers, and the development of “fast-casual” restaurant-chain. The publisher calls the book “scholarly but lively and accessible,” and says it “will appeal to both the general reader and the academic folklorist.”

Dr. McNeill, a folklorist whose research interests include legend, belief, fandom, and digital culture, is the author of numerous articles and the popular textbook Folklore Rules (2013), and the co-editor of Slenderman is Coming: Creepypasta and Contemporary Legends on the Internet (2018) and Legend Tripping: A Contemporary Legend Casebook (2018).

Praise for This is the Plate:

“One of the delights of the book is the contrast between stereotypes of Utah and its food traditions and the reality as it has unfolded historically. The obvious case is the belief that Utah is a dry state, a myth that the book nicely puts to rest.”

—Richard Raspa, author of Italian Folktales in America: The Verbal Art of an Immigrant Woman

“This comprehensive anthology covers every conceivable facet of eating in Utah through a pleasing mixture of voices, topics, authors, and styles. Engaging and well rounded.”

—Anne F. Hatch, folk and traditional arts specialist, Wyoming Arts Council