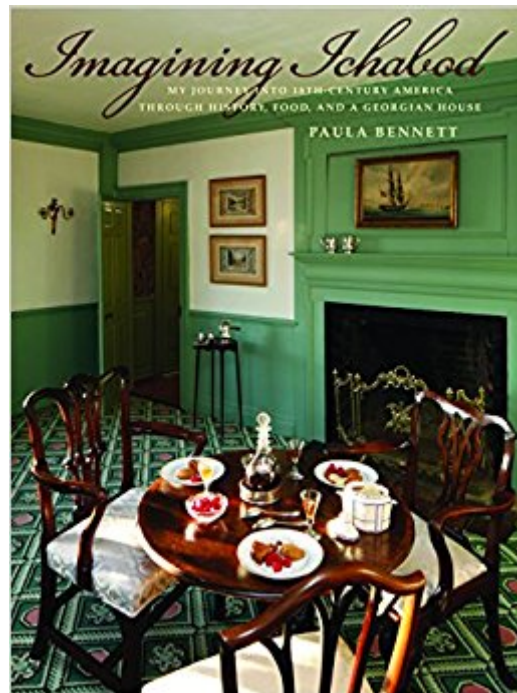


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Imagining Ichabod: My Journey Into 18th-Century America Through History, Food, And A Georgian House



Synopsis

Journey into America's past with this warm, personal account of living in a historic New England Georgian home and the family who owned it for over 200 years. Rich local and national history of 18th-century America and depictions of daily life. Includes 25 adapted historic recipes, county records, inventories, a military diary, and details on 18th-century cooking ingredients, fabric, paint, and antiques discovered from a present-day archaeological excavation. Prompted by a serendipitous visit to a bookstore, an epiphany leads Paula Bennett and her husband, Harvey, to southern Maine where they spontaneously buy the General Ichabod Goodwin House with its original nine-over-six windows, wide-plank painted wood floors, early Georgian moldings, and an 8-ft wide hearth perfect for cooking. While learning about 18th-century décor to inform the furnishing of her historic home, Paula diligently researches the house's first inhabitants. She begins to imagine daily life in 18th-century New England, specifically for the first two Goodwins who lived on their property a father and son, both named Ichabod. Join Paula and Harvey as their shared passion for history leads to an archaeological dig outside their front door, connecting them even more to life in early America, and their avid interest in the culinary arts leads the author to explore and recreate historic recipes, 25 of which are woven throughout the text. Their journey culminates in cherry-picking from the past, recreating aspects of the 18th-century and adapting them into their 21st-century lifestyle.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As the photographer for "Imagining Ihabod", I was primarily intent on the technical and aesthetic issues of depicting Paula Bennett's recipes and the spaces in her house. Since food and cooking fires don't allow for leisurely photography, the concentration required to photograph quickly didn't allow me much attention to discuss Paula's underlying motivations for writing her book. When I finally read my own hard copy, I realized how dedicated Paula has been for many years to her quest to understand and empathize with the people who lived in her historic house. The expression "making history come alive" is admittedly over-used but in Paula's case it is most fitting. She is passionate enough about her connection to the day to day lives and challenges of the Goodwin family that her narrative has given me a new understanding of what life was like in those days. Living only ten miles from the Goodwin house, I now have a broader view into our town and its development, and I hope Paula's excitement about local history as so dynamically expressed in her book will motivate readers to look at the history of their own communities (and the areas beyond) with more curiosity and appreciation. The book is engaging on many levels but it is Paula's boundless fascination with her subject that held me to the end.

A delightful adventure into the experience of living in an old New England house -- with carefully researched history, beautiful photos and authentic recipes to match. Paula Bennett explores the times of the Ihabod Goodwin family in a corner of Maine whose history has not been much written about in our times. Like author Sarah Orne Jewett, who wrote over 100 years ago, Bennett is fascinated with the 18th century generations who felled trees, milled lumber and built ships on an inland tidal estuary before and during the American Revolution. Through the book we can live the stories of one particular family-- and are able to imagine!

There were things I enjoyed about this book: the discoveries revealed as the writer researched the history of the house, the property and its earlier inhabitants, and the way she put the history of the house into context with concurrent historical events. But at times I was distracted by the uneven quality of the writing. For someone with an advanced college degree, the author seemed to struggle at times with grammar and sentence structure. I found the writing style disconcertingly awkward, a little overwrought at times, and wondered where was her editor? I was also disappointed that there were so few pictures as I had expected more photography from the preview. I was annoyed at the dismissive tone she used when stating they had to order carpet and paints from England when there are very good sources in the U.S. here for reproduction textiles good enough for many well-known historical house museums, and then she resorts to furnishing the house in part with

reproductions and mid-century modern dining room furniture? Huh? There are times when she sounds boastful about finding the resources she used for her historical research when she is hardly the first person to have done any of these things, so overall I wasn't as impressed as I had hoped to be. I think a good editor would have improved the structure and overall voice of the narrative so the actual story could come through without these distractions. It probably doesn't bother a lot of people, but these flaws left me feeling disappointed when I finished the book and unlikely to recommend it.

Wonderful book - a personal journey of purchasing and owning an old house in ME.

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