

97 Orchard: An Edible History of Five Immigrant Families in One New York Tenement

by Jane Ziegelman

Discussion Questions

Our discussion will focus on the Introduction and the chapter in the book entitled "Chapter Two: The Moore Family," but you are encouraged to read the other chapters. You may have some "aha moments" when you recognize some traditions in your own family.

1. Why did resentment grow between American born children of immigrants and their parents, particularly regarding foods and ways of eating?
2. Describe the characteristics of the New York's Lower East Side tenement buildings in the 1840s?
3. How do immigrant food traditions display themselves in our culture today? Which countries are noted for their food in the US?

Based on Chapter 2: The Moore Family

4. Did Ziegelman give a good description of the culinary customs of the Moore family that lived at 97 Orchard? Why did she or didn't she? For those of you with Irish roots, how did Irish culinary customs play out in your home? Especially for those of you with no Irish roots, what culinary customs thrived in your childhood home?
5. Describe the history of "hash" and "corned beef." What do these words mean to you? Are they foods you eat? What are some other food-related words that you grew up with?
6. What gave rise to the "eating houses" like Daniel Sweeney's and Patrick Dolan's? What "eating houses" are OUR favorites today?

Based on the rest of the book:

7. With which family did you feel a connection? Why? Do you have ancestors who lived in tenements?
8. Before tenement buildings appeared on the New York skyline, immigrants lived in boarding houses. Why were they particularly popular with the Irish in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s?