

# A CONGENIAL ATMOSPHERE:

**Meredith Worley and the Aurora Inn, 1958-1975**

compliments of the aurora inn

since 1833

aurora-on-cayuga, n.y.

noted for its congenial atmosphere and fine food



mr. & mrs. j. worley, mgrs.

gifts - beverages - rooms

IN 1958, THE AURORA INN (WHICH HAD BEEN OWNED BY WELLS COLLEGE SINCE 1943) OPENED ITS NEW DINING ROOM OVERLOOKING THE LAKE.

The inaugural event was Mother's Day. The Inn's new managers were always listed as Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Worley, but it was Mrs. Worley who would make the Inn especially "noted for its congenial atmosphere and fine food."



## Aurora Inn

Formal Opening of the New Dining Room  
Mother's Day - May 11, 1958



Tomato Bouillon

Frosted Fruit Cup

Fresh Shrimp Cocktail, \$ .75 extra

### Relishes

Roast Leg of Spring Lamb, <i>Mint Jelly</i>	\$ 2.85
Half Broiler, <i>Cranberry Sauce</i>	2.50
Roast Pork and Dressing, <i>Applesauce</i>	2.50
Prime Rib Roast of Beef, <i>Au Jus</i>	3.50
Deep Sea Scallops, <i>Tartar Sauce</i>	2.50
Grilled Ham Steak, <i>Special Cherry Sauce</i>	2.75
Broiled Delmonico Steak, <i>French Fried Onion Rings</i>	3.25

Whipped Potatoes

or

Candied Sweet Potatoes

Frenched Green Beans with Mushrooms

Fresh Asparagus, *Creme Sauce*

Choice of Salads

Sherbet

Homemade Breads

### DESSERTS

Our Own Homemade Pies

Chocolate or Strawberry Sundae

Ice Cream or Sherbet

Coffee

Tea

Milk





*Matthew Henry Panton wrote lots of poetry.*

MEREDITH VERA PANTON WAS BORN DEC. 16TH, 1908, IN OAK HILL, KANSAS; SHE WAS THE SIXTH CHILD OF SCHOOLTEACHERS IRVING AND MYRTLE PANTON.



Meredith's great-grandparents Henry and Eliza (Webster) Panton came to America from England in 1847. Their son, Meredith's grandfather, Matthew Henry Panton, was born in England in 1842. He had a farm and timber claim west of Oak Hill; he was a graduate of the University of Chicago, a teacher, and a poet.





*Irving and Myrtle Panton  
on their farm west of Oak Hill  
with Owen, Velma, Nellie & Eva.  
They both taught school  
for several years.*

Since Meredith later listed a “family hotel” as part of her experience, it’s possible that this modest enterprise sparked her interest in hotel management. It was an interest that she followed at Kansas State University, later working for the Boss hotel chain.

WHEN MEREDITH WAS VERY YOUNG, THE FAMILY MOVED TO OAK HILL SO THAT THE CHILDREN COULD ATTEND SCHOOL THERE. AFTER THE YOUNGEST HAD GRADUATED, IRVING AND MYRTLE RETURNED TO THE ORIGINAL PANTON FARM, AND RAN THE OAK HILL HOUSE AS A HOTEL AND BOARDING HOUSE.



*Alpha, Meredith, Bernard  
and Bernice were also born  
on the farm above. When  
the twins were four years  
old, they bought this  
place in town in Oak Hill  
Kansas, and lived there  
until the youngest were  
through High School. Then  
they moved to the farm.*



IN 1946, MEREDITH AND HER HUSBAND, JOHN HOWARD WORLEY, MOVED TO CAYUGA COUNTY, WHERE HOWARD HAD A DAIRY FARM IN LOCKE. HE TOO HAD BEEN A KSU STUDENT AND HAD MANAGED HOTELS IN THE MIDWEST FOR 20 YEARS.





A 1963 article about the Aurora Inn described dining in the Worley years:

“American Home Style Cooking, with a variety of entrees, roasts, steaks and chops and delicious home baked breads and pastries, comes from the immaculate kitchen of Chef Alex Hertl....Six women, skilled in the Inn’s special preparation of food, assist Chef Hertl.”

The author went on to describe the meals in mouthwatering detail, including the ever-present sherbet cups, as well as the prices, astonishing to us today. The skilled cooks included Evelyn Berry, Mill Frye, Libby O’Herron, Lula Wood, and Reba Hitchcock, baker of the famous “mile-high pies.”

and delicious home baked breads  
immaculate kitchen of Chef Alex  
c, serving breakfast from 8 to 10

ner from 6 to  
ls are served  
d buffet only  
skilled in the  
d, assist Chef  
iced menus,  
ture a \$1.00  
trees ranging  
Sunday dinner  
Roast Rib of  
Broiled Del-  
ps with Tar-  
n with Fruit  
Jus, Lobster  
prime Tender-  
dinner, in a  
nclude soup, juice or fruit cup;  
andied sweet potato; choice of  
rber; home made breads; dessert  
ffet at \$2.00 features a variety



“Meredith”  
Worley



M. Worley  
Very  
Good

Refrigerator

Scald  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk  
Add stir in 6 tablespoons sugar  
1 " " salt  
5 " " shortening

Cool to lukewarm  
Measure into bowl  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup lukewarm water  
Add 2 packages or cakes yeast, dry  
or compressed

Let stand until dissolved, stir Add  
lukewarm milk mixture  
Add stir in 1 egg beaten  
2 cups sifted all purpose flour  
Beat until smooth Add stir in  
additional  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cups flour.

Place dough in greased bowl and  
knead top with shortening. Cover  
Store in refrigerator at least 2 hrs  
or until needed. Keeps 4 days

Evelyn Berry's  
recipe book  
that she used and kept  
at my house when  
she cooked at the Aurora  
club in the 1950's + 1960's.

Very Good  
M. Worley

Dark Devils Food Cake

2 cups sifted flour  
 $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups sugar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp baking powder  
 $1\frac{3}{4}$  tsp soda  
1 tsp salt  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  cup cocoa  
 $\frac{2}{3}$  cup shortening  
1 cup water  
1 tsp vanilla  
3 eggs

Sift dry ingredients into bowl.  
Add shortening + water. Beat 2 min  
medium speed. Add vanilla + eggs  
Beat 2 min more, scraping bowl  
constantly. Bake 35-40 min  
in 350 oven.

Patricia Bianconi saved her mother's book of Inn recipes. Several of Meredith's recipes are for no-knead breads, ideal for a busy kitchen. The above recipe calls for the dough to rest in the refrigerator. It is a richer variation of the 2016 Recipe of the Year just announced by King Arthur Flour.



ANOTHER  
REVIEW, THIS  
FROM 1971,  
TAKES YOU TO  
THE SUNDAY  
EVENING  
BUFFET OF  
FOND MEMORY,  
A FEAST FOR  
\$3.95.

1971

LET'S GO OUT

## Historic Aurora Inn . . . A Fine Place to Dine In Aurora



M. Larrabee III

By MARSHAL LARRABEE III

Henry Wells, founder of Wells College, must have eaten like a king.

You can eat regally also when you dine at the Aurora Inn, the original part of which first known as the Aurora House, was built by Mr. Wells' partner, Colonel E. B. Morgan, in 1833.

An addition, completed in 1958, houses a fine buffet every Sunday evening. Mrs. J. H. Worley is your hostess. After she's seated you at one of the tables, all with a delightful view of Cayuga Lake, your waitress brings the first course, a choice of soup, tomato juice, or luscious shrimp cocktail (imagine — and at no extra charge — the whole buffet costs only \$3.95).

Then you help yourself to a fantastic array of palate tempting salads. I tried some of each and you can too — there was tossed salad with choice of dressing, tuna salad, potato salad, fruit jello with mayonnaise, and my favorite, a Waldorf style salad with marshmallows and fresh fruit.

Also on the buffet table are relishes, home-baked breads, and delicacies like deviled eggs, sardines, and smoked oysters. When it's time for the main course you return at your own pace and fill your plate with hot macaroni and cheese, scalloped clams, sweet potato, hot dog sections, fried chicken, baked beans, carrots, and sliced roast beef.

By dessert time it's good that you don't need to get up. Your waitress offers several flavors of ice cream — I had the toasted almond, but could have chosen peppermint stick, vanilla, or coffee. Then, as the setting sun throws its stream of light upon the interior brickwork, one savors very good coffee and reflects perhaps on the kind of life Henry Wells lived.

Enjoy yourself!



MEREDITH AND HOWARD WORLEY, WHO HAD TWO SONS, HUGH AND JAMES, CONTRIBUTED IN MANY WAYS TO THE AREA COMMUNITY: HOWARD (WHO DIED IN 1985) THROUGH THE LOCKE AND POMONA GRANGES, IN ORGANIZING THE CAYUGA COUNTY FARM BUREAU, AND WITH THE CAYUGA-OWASCO LAKES HISTORICAL SOCIETY; MEREDITH (WHO DIED IN 2002) THROUGH THE UNITED MINISTRY OF AURORA, THE FINGER LAKES ASSOCIATION, THE LOCKE GRANGE AND THE ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR.

But especially, those of us privileged to enjoy the “friendly, gracious atmosphere of the Inn” and its “American food *par excellence*” recall above all the congenial hospitality of Meredith Worley.

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