

The Ghost in America's Kitchen

Two African American culinary pioneers have dedicated their lives to bettering American culture and lifting the voice of the underrepresented. These men are spiritually connected in their toil, despite being born 200 years apart.

James Hemings, *The Unknown Culinary Founding Father of America*

In 1784 James Hemings was brought to Paris to become the first American trained as a master French Chef. His journey led to the inception of America's dining culture and had political implications that can still be felt today. Hemings' experiences in Paris, Italy, and across the infantile United States are fit for Hollywood. The talented and charming Hemings enrolled in cooking school, learned French, and shared a mistress with Ben Franklin. It was James Hemings who introduced such familiar and iconic dishes as macaroni & cheese, meringue, whipped cream, fusion pasta, and French fries to America's palate, prepared on the precursor to the modern stove - also a Hemings innovation. By 1789 he was a master French chef - the Founding Father of American Fine Dining. He would go on to mastermind the famous Assumption Dinner, which resulted in compromises that built modern America. However, these stories have gone untold, as James Hemings was the enslaved property of Thomas Jefferson.

In addition to his vast culinary impact, James Hemings' patriotic choices in France may very well have preserved America's social standing in the civilized world and kept Thomas Jefferson alive as the French Revolution unfolded around them.

Chef Ashbell, *The Modern Culinary History Warrior*

Ashbell McElveen is a master chef forged in the segregated south. Chef Ashbell attributes his true education to teachers in his segregated school closing the "history" books and telling the true narrative of America through story. Ashbell's foodie family supported the civil rights movement by preparing meals for local South Carolina March on Washington attendees since they didn't have the money for bus fare. Soon after, the civil rights struggle would become much more personal for Ashbell, as he witnessed his mother die of a heart attack because the "white ambulance" refused to transport her to the hospital.

The experiences of Ashbell's youth have fueled him to change American culture - at the table and in the the history books.

The Science of Recognition

A people must see themselves in history to fully understand their potential for future greatness. To better understand the importance of cultural history and individual recognition, social psychologists will provide commentary to illuminate the urgency of correcting fake history. A deep dive into the human experience will show how crucial it is that great men & women be recognized for their achievements. Individual legacy's belong to the whole of society. Americans, especially African Americans, have been deprived of knowing one of their greatest heroes, James Hemings. As Chef Ashbell guides the narrative of James Hemings' life, his own modern day odyssey will come into the view; from the civil rights movement to founding the James Hemings Foundation. Through this battle to correct history, Ashbell himself becomes a crucial part of America's culinary and cultural truth.

The Present is Defined by The Past

Combining historical storytelling with contemporary cinematic visuals will show that the trials and triumphs of James Hemings are as relevant now as they were in the eighteenth century. For example, Chef Ashbell's voice-over describes the extensive daily grind that James Hemings endured as we see a modern, overworked single mother's daily battle to meet the needs of her children, meet the demands of her job and keep the house running. As modern scenery clashes with early American history, we will relate to James Hemings and see his historical odyssey in modern context.

In Truth There is Hope

James Hemings' influence can be found in every American kitchen and the time has come for his name to be known. The determined research of Ashbell McElveen is bringing a lost Founding Father into the light by finally telling the greatest American story that has not been told!