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>> James Harrod: Many people think they know green beans, but there are more than just the traditional green beans we scarf down every Thanksgiving. Depending on what part of Appalachia you are focusing on the concept of "green beans" could vary in shape, size, and color. One style of bean harvesting centers around harvesting beans from heirloom seeds. These "heirloom beans" are thought to be far more worthwhile than the various beans available at supermarkets. You can plant these seeds and the same product will grow, thus making them heirloom beans. The Californian company Rancho Gordo specializes in these beans. On their website they list all their beans in stock and the names are unique and colorful. They are wide-ranging, from "Lila Beans" to the "Royal Corona Bean." There are certainly bean names that will make you scratch your head. Certain varieties of bean dishes are thought to be unique to Appalachia, like shuck beans and leatherbritches, however Ronnie Lundy said in class, the root of these beans is actually international, harkening to Germanic roots. In William Woys Weaver's *Heirloom Vegetable Gardening: A Master Gardener's Guide to Planting, Seed Saving and Cultural History*, he also draws attention to Germany's ties to the bean saying, "The oldest depiction of the common garden bean in a European work is thought to be a 1543 cut-out of a bush bean in the German herbal of Leonhart Fuchs." Despite this consensus that the bean harkens back to 16th century, the bean's presence in America is a little more hotly contested, with people claiming both Old World and New World origins, but this most likely just stems from Americans' tendencies towards altered history. Typically, the categorization of beans doesn't follow standard classification, rather they are emphasized by their features and intricacies. This trend results in names like the "snap" bean, or the "butter" bean. Traditionally these names arose because of the various subtleties of the bean. Nowadays, Weaver says the beans get "organized scientifically according to how the seeds germinate and whether the two seed halves push above the surface or remain below it". The people who know beans best, however, seem to be the farmers. Kentucky farmer Bill Best has witnessed green bean production for the majority of his life, being raised by his parents who were subsistence farmers. Best's story became recognized on a more widespread level when his article surrounding his harvesting family was published in 1988. He commented, "I thought I was the only one frustrated by the current state of fruits and vegetables". Best further discusses the problematic nature of vegetable production in the first scene of *The Southern Foodways Alliance* documentary *Seed Saver*, he using the analogy of Jack and the beanstalk he says, "I think the problem has become today that the giant has won". The "giant" he is referring to is superstore manufacturers of vegetables, and specifically for Best, ConAgra Foods. He goes on in the documentary to state, "It doesn't pay to put our trust in the seed companies whose only interest is in the bottom line". One of the types of bean Best farms are considered heirloom beans, like what we discussed before. These beans also combat the more "big business" vegetables. Although, as Ronnie Lundy discussed in class, these vegetables found in the supermarket might lessen the profits of many farmers, but they also provide more affordable options for people who struggle to purchase the locally grown food of farmer's markets. So, to highlight some of the ways store bought beans and locally grown beans could be confused for each

other, I've asked my friend, Justin Hrabovsky, to do a blind taste test to see if he can tell which is which. Justin are you ready? Ok. First bean coming at you. What do you think?

>> Justin Hrabovsky: Store bought.

>> Harrod: Store bought? Ok. Second bean. Your thoughts?

>> Hrabovsky: Local.

>> Harrod: Local. He was wrong. That's it

[laughter]

>> Harrod: The impact of green beans also extends to literature. In Tony Early's piece in Cornbread three titled "Two Grandmothers", he depicts the green beans his grandmother would can as symbolic for her perseverance, as her beans were the only things remaining after a particularly cruel frost. Green beans are also a staple to cook books because of the variety of ways you can prepare beans and the large net of people who enjoy the beans, they appear in a barrage of dishes; these include salads, casseroles, stir-fry, lasagnas, sandwiches, and, of course, on their own. One example of the green bean's ever present nature in southern cookbooks is in John Egerton's "Southern Food: At Home, On the Road, In History" in which he includes a recipe for preparing green beans in the traditional "mess of beans" style. Egerton was originally from Atlanta, but his family settled in Cadiz, Kentucky, where John completed high school. He went on to publish many works for periodicals and ended up being one of the founders of The Southern Foodways Alliance. He kicks off his section on green beans by announcing his allegiance to the "Kentucky Wonder Pole Bean", which he sustains, have no peer. Egerton's recipe for green beans is quite manageable. All it calls for is a two-inch cube of salt pork, 4 cups of water, 1 lb of beans (snapped and stringed), and 1 tsp. of salt. He says this recipe captures the green bean's maximum taste. To illustrate some of the varieties of ways green beans are displayed in cookbooks, here's a recipe included in The Brevard Music Center's cookbook "Cooking in Harmony", titled "Herbed Green Beans". This style of preparation is a zesty spin on the classic. The recipe here calls for, 1 lb of green beans (cut into 1 inch lengths), $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of butter, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of minced onion, $\frac{1}{2}$ clove of garlic minced, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of celery minced, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. of rosemary, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. of basil, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. of salt. These recipes included in this cookbook are accumulated from a variety of members of the Brevard community. This is an effective way to garner green bean recipes as they are so popular, and because everyone has their preferred way of eating them. Obviously many people love green beans. As Egerton states in his cookbook, "Properly cooked, they are generally considered the most popular dinner-table side dish in the whole region".