

# Food Talk

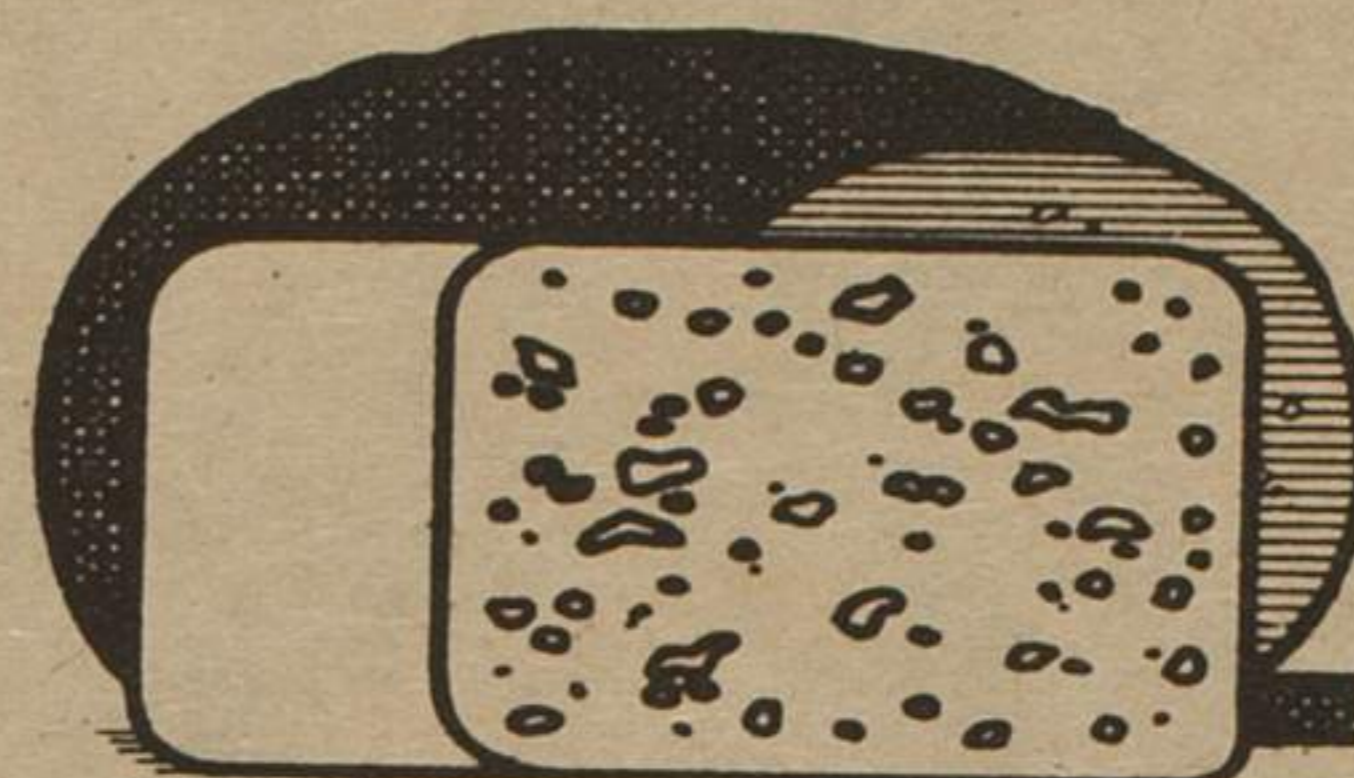
Emmenthal derives its name from the Emme Valley in Switzerland where it was first produced. It is one of the most difficult of all cheeses to make. Its manufacture requires detailed skill and excellent ingredients. The milk must be of high quality because, unlike many other cheeses, the taste of the milk remains largely unaltered by its manufacture. The quality of the cheese is judged in part by the clarity and freshness of the taste of the milk in the finished product. Not only must the cheese be made with the highest quality milk, it must also be made with great skill. For example, the cheesemaker must be able to judge when the Emmenthal has developed eyes of the right size and quality for it to be removed from the warm fermentation rooms to the cool cellars where it matures. He does this without slicing the cheese open to look beneath its rind because that would interfere with the fermentation of the cheese. Instead, he determines the progress of fermentation by thumping and



tapping the cheese - the sound and touch reveal much to a skilled ear.

Aging is a critical step in the production of Emmenthal. The Swiss Cheese Union requires that it be aged a minimum of four months and it is often aged up to ten months or more. Emmenthal that Switzerland exports is aged according to the taste of the country to which it is sent. Most of the younger cheeses are exported to the United States, whereas other European countries prefer the riper cheeses. In contrast, most pre-packaged domestic Emmenthal (Swiss) is aged only 60 days, the minimum required by United States law. The result is that domestic Emmenthal is usually bland in taste. Another cause for its poor quality is that it is aged in vacuum sealed plastic bags. A good Swiss is washed and rubbed daily with salt so that the cheese gradually develops a rind which protects it and contributes to the curing process. Some domestic manufacturers alter the manufacture of their Emmenthal in such a way that no holes are

created (normally they are made by bacterial action). They and others who wish to sell another cheese as an Emmenthal have holes gouged in the cheeses with utensils similar to melon ballers. This combination of shortcuts in the production of domestic Emmenthal has resulted in a limp, rubbery, slightly bitter cheese. Compare that to the flavor of Swiss



Emmenthal which is sweet and often likened to the taste of hazelnuts or walnuts. Only a very few domestic manufacturers of Emmenthal in Wisconsin still produce a palatable cheese. Most have succumbed to the less time consuming methods which result in the bland Swiss we usually encounter in the grocery store.

Swiss Emmenthal is an excellent melting cheese (as is Gruyere, a very similar cheese made in Switzerland) and adapts itself well to any dish requiring a good melting cheese.

## French Onion Soup

4-6 medium onions, sliced  
2 tablespoons butter or oil  
6 cups beef broth (bouillon cubes)  
6 slices toasted bread  
½ cup or more grated Swiss Emmenthal or Gruyere  
salt and pepper to taste

Cook onions in butter or oil until browned. Add broth and seasonings; simmer 30 minutes or pressure cook at 15 pounds pressure for 12 minutes. Place toast in 6 individual bowls (ovenware), cover each with equal amounts of soup and cheese, and heat under broiler or in oven until cheese is melted.

## Croque Monsieur (sandwich)

For one sandwich: Combine about 1/8 cup of Swiss and 1 teaspoon heavy cream or softened butter, then spread on 1 slice of bread (the French remove the crusts) or an English muffin. Top with a slice of ham and a second piece of bread. Dip sandwich in an egg mixture (one egg beaten and 2 tablespoons milk) and fry in butter (or margarine, not oil) until golden on each side.

## Co-op Truckers (cont.)

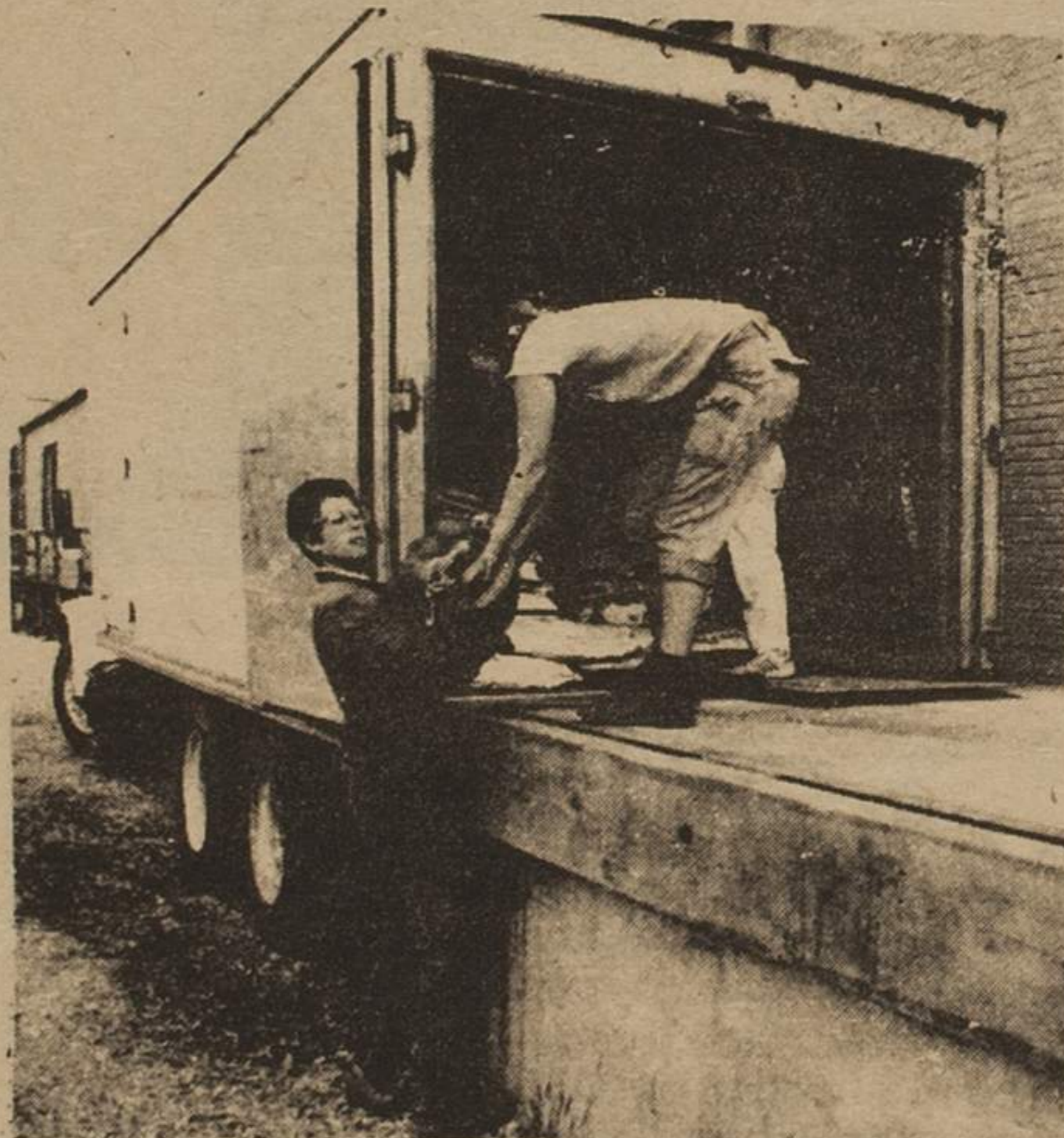
say, "Yeah," and I'll say, "How much does the child weigh?" Let's say 30 or 40 lbs. And I'll say, "This bag weighs 25." You know it's not even in their reality to come out there and start moving bags. They're usually waiting for a man to do it. And yet when they see women doing it, it's like, "Oh! Maybe I could move bags too. Maybe I could pick that up."

Boeth: And it's just the opposite too. With some of the women in Cabool when I pulled a 100 lb. bag of flour down the end of the truck, and the men stepped up and said, "You all can't do that." And I said, "If there's two of them, they surely can," and they said, "Yes, we can." And they did it; they moved it. From then on the men just sort of gave them the space to do that. It was really nice.

HL: What kind of reactions do you get from people on the street?

Martha: The double-takes, when people see two women in the truck are interesting. Like we'll see someone poke the person they're with and point in our direction. Or women we pass, say driving in a town, will break into a big grin. Sometimes they'll stick up a fist.

Boeth: Or some people give you this unbelieving stare, like they won't accept that that's a woman. But it's great to pass women on the road, especially young women, just so they see...Look! You can drive a truck if you want! You can do anything you want to!



HL: How do you become a member of the collective? Martha, Patti mentioned that she was a member and you weren't at a certain point?

Martha: That involves training. You need to be trained first. I think this is one thing we all need to talk about, to decide how we all feel about it, as far as guidelines for how people will become members in the future.

Oshun: I personally feel it's not just a job situation. It's more a total experience, that in that collective we struggle with interpersonal things, our old programmings, whatever we need to be working on at that particular time, and that's part of the commitment you make, that you don't just drive a truck. It's a more total experience than that, which is why I see it as an alternative

job to a job that you have on the outside, out there in the regular 9 to 5.

HL: How big is the truck?

Boeth: The gross weight is 59000 pounds. The truck itself weighs over 19000, so that means you can carry about 30000. It's a 15 ton truck.

Oshun: It's a 22 foot box which is the longest box that you have without a semi, without a tractor trailer. We started out with a 16 foot, gas engine, 5 speed, 2 speed rear end, and we're now in a 22 foot, diesel engine, 10 speed transmission. Our next step is a tractor-trailer.

Patti: Which we need right now.

HL: So what is a typical run like?

Oshun: I'll tell you what a run is like: 15 hours a day, 18 hours a day, three to four hundred miles, 5-10 stops a day, and that goes on for four to six days while you are on the road. You have schedules to meet. You have to be there during working hours for the businesses you pick up, and sometimes you have to be there by two o'clock. It's very intense. It really extends your limits in a lot of areas. You have to stay with the truck, you have to be there all the time

mentally. There's no way you can space out in a diesel truck. You move a lot of food around, you meet a lot of interesting people. I think it's very romantic in the beginning, it's a very romantic thing. And then it gets to be a job on some levels. But it's different because you're your own person, you're making decisions. You do have slots that you have to fit into, but there's nobody telling you what you have to be doing. We set up our own schedules, and we work within those confines, but they're confines that we set up ourselves. It's flexible in that we can change things around and work with people. It's a real cooperative system, meeting the needs of the drivers, of the collectives, of the co-ops, and I feel like we really work together to do that. There's a lot of interchange and input; it's not just a routine that you have to follow. Because we're working collectively, we are able to use all of our facilities when we work. It's emotional, it's physical, it's intellectual, it's all there... Well, I guess you could say in that article that if there are any women that are interested in truck driving in a feminist collective, an all-woman feminist collective, we're real open to hearing from you.

Jim Baggett

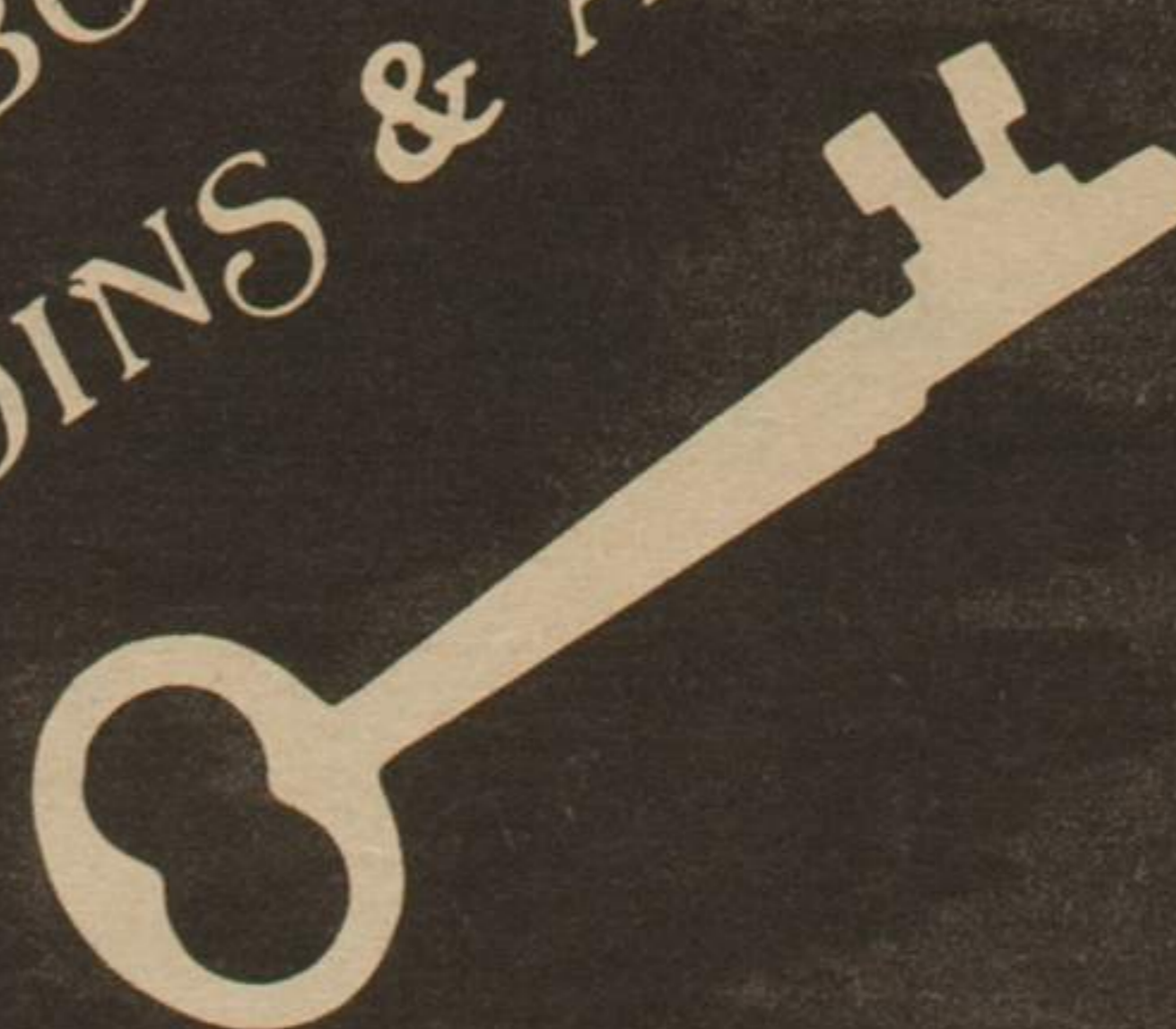
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