



How American Children
Became the Fussiest
Eaters in History



picky

helen zoe veit



Picky: How American Children Became the Fussiest Eaters in History

Helen Zoe Veit, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of History at Michigan State University and the director of the "What America Ate" and "America in the Kitchen" projects.

John Waller, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of the History of Science and Medicine at Michigan State University.



Thursday, February 26, 2026, 7:00 PM CT

Register: www.bit.ly/VeitFANWebinar

BONUS BOOK GIVEAWAY, sponsored by FAN!

Details on Zoom registration page.

This event is #freeandopentothepublic and will be recorded. Suitable for youth 12+

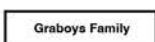
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: HELEN ZOE VEIT, Ph.D. – ON ZOOM

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Thursday, February 26, 2026 | 7:00 PM CT

Picky: How American Children Became the Fussiest Eaters in History

A FAN webinar featuring Helen Zoe Veit, Ph.D., in conversation with John Waller, Ph.D.

REGISTER: www.bit.ly/VeitFANWebinar

Bonus Book Giveaway: FAN is giving away copies of *Picky* to randomly selected Zoom attendees. Details on the webinar registration page.

Are children naturally picky, or did pickiness develop over the past century? *Picky: How American Children Became the Fussiest Eaters in History* by historian **Helen Zoe Veit, Ph.D.**, is an eye-opening investigation into why American kids no longer eat broadly and with gusto. As an award-winning historian of American food, Veit demonstrates compellingly that mass childhood pickiness is a cultural invention – not a biological inevitability.

Pickiness used to be almost nonexistent. Well into the 20th century, Americans saw children as joyful omnivores who were naturally curious and eager to eat. Kids in the past loved spicy relishes, vinegary pickles, and bitter greens. They spent their allowances on raw oysters and looked forward to their daily coffee. American parents of the past assumed children could enjoy the same food as adults, and they almost always did.

So how did modern kids become such incredibly narrow eaters? *Picky* shows how fussy eating gradually came to define "children's food" and to reshape American diets at large. And maybe most importantly, it explains how we can still use parenting tools from the past to raise happy, healthy, wildly un-picky kids today.

Veit is an associate professor of history at Michigan State University and the director of the "What America Ate" and "America in the Kitchen" projects. She was an advisor for HBO's *The Gilded Age*, and her work is often cited in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and more.

Veit will be in conversation with **John Waller, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of the History of Science and Medicine at Michigan State University who has published seven books spanning science, medicine, and social history, and has just completed a major study of group dynamics across the past 12,000 years of human history.

This event is suitable for youth ages 12 and up. It will be recorded and available on FAN's website and YouTube channel.

Sponsored by **FAN**, in partnership with The Alliance for Early Childhood, The Avery Coonley School, Baker Demonstration School, Beacon Academy, Bennett Day School, Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School, Brickton Montessori School, British International School of Chicago, Catherine Cook School, Chiaravalle Montessori School, Compass Health Center, Countryside Day School, Evanston Township HS D202, Family Service Center, Foundation 65, The Frances Xavier Warde School, Francis W. Parker School, Glencoe D35, Glenview Public Library, Gorton Center, Hyde Park Day School, Kenilworth D38, Lake Bluff D65, Lake Forest Community High School D115, Latin School of Chicago, Leo Catholic High School, Libertyville D70, Lycée Français de Chicago, Near North Montessori School, North Shore Country Day, Northwestern University Office of Neighborhood and Community Relations, Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy, Pope John XXIII School, Regina Dominican High School, Resurrection College Prep High School, Rogers Park Montessori School, Roycemore School, Sacred Heart Schools, St. Bernard's School, Santa Clara University School of Law, Science & Arts Academy, The Sonia Shankman Orthogenic School, Stevenson High School D125, Township High School D113, Township High School D214, TrueNorth Educational Cooperative #804, Wilmette Public Library, Wolcott College Prep, Youth & Opportunity United.