book on the subject, Jennifer 8. Lee’s *The Fortune Cookie Chronicles*, which I found too thin and glib for my taste. I only wish Coe had begun his book with the fourth chapter and finished it by adding three more.

—Robert Ji-Song Ku, Binghamton University, State University of New York

**Fresh: A Perishable History**  
Susanne Freidberg  
408 pp. $27.95 (cloth)

Great history focuses on forks. Not the utensils, but the metaphorical “forks in the road”: the way things could have been if different choices were made. Susanne Freidberg’s *Fresh: A Perishable History* examines a quality we have come to expect of all our foods: freshness. Today’s consumers, no matter their location, assume that their vegetables will be crisp, their fruit unbruised. Freidberg goes back to the origins of the technology and infrastructure that make these assumptions possible: the rise of refrigeration, changes in transportation, and the advertising campaigns that convinced New York consumers to purchase iceberg lettuce from California. Many people find it unbelievable that our supermarket options could be any different from how they are now: having a large selection of foods from around the world that retain at least the trappings of freshness for astounding periods of time. Freidberg’s achievement is in revealing the legacy of this expectation and delineating what is both lost and gained in the push for “fresh” food.

Freshness means different things for different kinds of food. For some, such as fruit, freshness is mostly about appearance and texture; for others, such as milk, freshness is an indicator of a disease-free product. Freidberg discusses how the longevity of freshness differs from food to food. She explores the changes in technology that allow a food to appear fresh, indeed behave as fresh, for increasingly long periods of time.

At the heart of the history of freshness is refrigeration. Freidberg’s analysis begins with a short history of preservation through cold. The principle of using cold to preserve freshness was employed by the ancient Chinese, the Romans, and the Mediterranean societies that hauled in ice from the Alps. The mass-market ice trade, however, began in earnest in the northeastern United States during the first half of the nineteenth century (p.20). Freidberg fills the book with interesting anecdotes, like the story of entrepreneur Frederic Tudor, whose first shipment of ice to Martinique was so spectacular a failure that he used it to make ice cream on the docks while the rest of his cargo melted. The soon-booming ice trade struggled, and failed, to suppress the rise of refrigeration. The first chapter affirms that while cold clearly worked as a preservative, it took time, technological improvements, and careful advertising to make it accepted and available in households worldwide.

The remainder of the history turns to individual types of food. The foods discussed are those that once were living, or came from a living creature: vegetables, fruit, beef, milk, fish, and eggs. Freidberg does not address preservatives or preservation in a more general sense, which keeps the scope manageable and leaves room for future work.

Freidberg dedicates a full chapter to each type of food. This division results in multiple overlaps in both characters and information, making the last several chapters feel significantly less revelatory than the first. Interweaving the topics temporally might have made the history more cohesive, and less repetitive. Currently, Freidberg’s history resembles a series of separately publishable articles linked together in an overarching framework.

The chapter divisions do, however, allow Freidberg to examine different time spans and explore different themes. The history of beef packaging and transport, for example, is tied to patriotism and national security, since both Britain and the United States believed that their soldiers needed red meat to be effective. The history of fresh eggs, on the other hand, focuses more on discoveries related to hen productivity and the enormous shift from seasonality and preservation to year-round availability. Many of Freidberg’s quiet observations, such as the 1871 recipe she provides for preserving six-month-old eggs (p.90), lead to a complete reevaluation of what should be expected from food. Other sections, such as her discussion of the introduction of “vitamines” into the American vocabulary in the early 1920s (p.167), describe trends that are surprisingly familiar. New as they might seem, discussions of nutrition, accessibility, and national pride have been linked to food freshness for well over a century.

At the heart of Freidberg’s analysis, particularly in the vegetable chapter, is a dimension missing from many other current analyses of food production: the role of the worker in the production of food. Although Freidberg certainly doesn’t sing the praises of international distribution networks or month-old vegetables, she does point out that these networks can provide food to those in remote locations and provide work for the most needy. A full movement to the “locavore” philosophy, which promotes the consumption of only those foods locally available, neglects to consider the
Garlic Capital of the World: Gilroy, Garlic, and the Making of a Festive Foodscape
Pauline Adema
Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2009
xiii + 196 pp. Illustrations. $25.00 (paper)

Since 1978 Gilroy, California, has held an annual garlic festival, establishing itself as the garlic capital of the world. In Garlic Capital of the World: Gilroy, Garlic, and the Making of a Festive Foodscape, Pauline Adema traces the history of this festival, identifies some of the processes surrounding it, and explores its cultural implications. As the title suggests, the book expands beyond Gilroy to look at the meanings of such events and the ways in which they reflect contemporary American life and concerns. The topic is a timely one—and significant—since food festivals are currently enjoying popularity throughout the country as a strategy for marketing local food, creating an image or brand for a place, building communities, and developing local economies.

Adema addresses these topics, placing them within contemporary contexts of globalization and American culture. The book is based on ethnographic and historical research and offers a good background of the development of this festival. A significant contribution is the discussion of the way in which the festival might mirror labor relations in industrial agriculture, with the workers “hidden” and relegated to two contests on garlic braiding and topping. A chapter on an unsuccessful food festival is also included as a comparison to the commercially successful Gilroy one. Adema also draws upon theories and methods from a range of disciplines—American studies, folklore, oral history, cultural anthropology, and cultural studies. Her overviews and summaries are useful, but I have several concerns about this book.

First, the summaries of theory frequently leave out significant works that should be credited, and she claims some terms as her own. The concept of foodscape, for example, has been used extensively by folklorist Eve Jochnowitz. The phrase “place-based foodways” was introduced into academic and public-sector folklore dialogues by Rachelle Saltzman, while any discussion of food and ethnic identity should include the scholarship of Bill Galore: Festival Inversion, Subversion, and the Enactment

Secondly, the discussions of theory are not always connected to the discussions of Gilroy. Theories tend to be summarized but not consistently used in shedding insights into the processes behind the making of the festival. The result is that parts of the book read like reviews of literature. Similarly, Adema tends to use a number of concepts and terms that are not explained fully. Because of this, the text reads to me, at least, as unnecessarily jargonistic.

Finally, claims are made about the meanings and significance of the festival that I feel are not substantiated. For example, did the Gilroy festival really accelerate garlic’s acceptance by mainstream America (p.45)? How does the “presence of festival queens affirm[s] the importance of female authority in American culture in general,” or the young women vying for this royalty affirm “the significance of garlic as iconic of positive elements of Gilroy as a community” (p.65)? Similarly, the discussion of the comparison festival, PigFest, states first that it failed because of the “social semiotics of pigs” and American’s negative associations with the animal, but then goes on to discuss successful uses of pigs as iconic images of places. (This chapter as a whole seems like an aside since it does not directly address the Gilroy festival, and the book’s title focuses on Gilroy.)

With those caveats, the book does cover a lot of ground and suggests connections among diverse realms of scholarship, such as marketing, tourism, and cultural studies. The chapter titles reflect the range of approaches and speak for themselves, so I include them here: Chapter 1, “Making a Foodscape: Gilroy and the Iconization of Garlic”; Chapter 2, “The Festivalization of Garlic: Creating and Celebrating Community in Gilroy”; Chapter 3, “From Foreign to Fad: Garlic’s Twentieth-century Transition”; Chapter 4, “Garlic Galore: Festival Inversion, Subversion and the Enactment