Peaches—an outline of relevant info for a Foodstuff Research project

I. Origins and early usage (chronological and topical)
   a. Botanical information, varieties, characteristics
   b. growing conditions and needs
   c. origins as a cultivated plant: China—technologies such as grafting and irrigation, preparation and consumption technologies such as drying
   d. meanings in ancient China:
      who were the growers, pickers, consumers—gender, class, location
      poetry from 2000 BCE mentioning peaches
         The Peach Blossom Land as fairyland, play based upon
      peach blossoms as symbols of vitality/immortality
      peach branches vs. evil on new year’s
      blood tonic for those with poor blood
      Chinese medicine yin yang of peaches
   e. meanings in ancient Japan, Korea, Vietnam
      Bridal flower, heros born in peach trees, symbol of long life
      Blossom festivals

II. Geographic spread of peaches
To India, throughout S Asia (chronological)
Then by Persians to Rome, “persian apples” for the rich
Use by Samarkand royalty to cultivate influence in Chinese courts
   Ironic importation of Chinese-origin peaches to T’ang lovers of luxury
Greece by 300 BCE, Alexander the Great’s introduction of peaches to Europe
What you needed before you could have a peach: class access to peaches
Travel to America via Spain, dispersal by native people after 1560s
   Rapid spread so Europeans thought peaches were native
Arrival in England, France 17th century
   French association with femaleness
   French infatuation
Victorian English obsession with peaches for the rich
   Peaches Melba
US Gold Rush dried and fresh peaches, cling peach varieties
Tom Sawyer giving Becky Thatcher a peach
III. Modern peaches (chronological and topical)
    Production 1900-present—areas of world and US that grow peaches
    Georgia as the “peach state” and peaches in the US South
    Varieties that ship well vs. taste good and global demand
    Variations such as nectarines
    Organic vs. sprayed peaches
    Distribution
    Fresh vs. frozen and canned peaches
    Fruit cocktail and white peach Bellinis
    Cannery closures
    Consumption
    Fresh, frozen, pied peaches
    Social meanings:
    *James and the Giant Peach*
    *TS Eliot’s Do I dare eat a peach?*
    *Epitah for a Peach:* David M. Masumoto’s book on dying varieties
    Farmers markets revive peaches