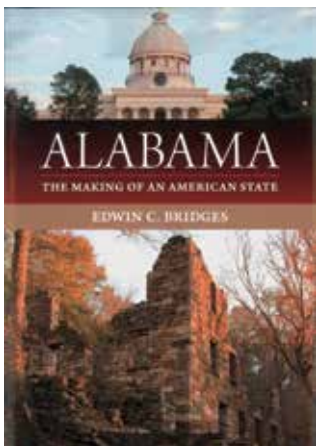


Newsletter

February 2018

Let Us Eat (Heirloom) Cake – Again!

JOIN US FOR THE SOCIETY’S ANNUAL MEETING on February 26 at 7 p.m. in the Hodges Auditorium at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Ed Bridges, the 30-year director of the Alabama Department of Archives and



History and currently acting director of the Montgomery Museum of Art, will inspire us with his illustrated lecture: “A Bicentennial Look at Our State.” After his talk, Carolanne Roberts will announce winners of the Fabulous Fifties Cake Competition, and our distinguished and delightful speaker will autograph copies of his Bicentennial history: *Alabama: The*

Making of an American State. Copies will be available for purchase for \$20.

And we shall enjoy tasting the Fabulous Fifties Heirloom Cakes made by our talented members.

About Ed Bridges’ Bicentennial History

Hailed as a comprehensive resource for anyone seeking a broad understanding of Alabama history, Ed Bridges claims to have been working on this 241-page, beautifully illustrated volume all his life.

When asked by Lenore Vickrey of *Alabama Living* why it is important for Alabamians to understand our state’s history, Bridges responded: “If you think about it, our understanding of history sets the framework for all of our ideas and attitudes—not only about public policy issues, but about



Ed Bridges

encounters we have with people of different backgrounds. To make the best of our opportunities, being as knowledgeable and informed as possible is very helpful. I also think that having an understanding of the concerns and issues of other people helps us work with them more effectively. There are many other reasons, but it also seems to me that we are enriched and broadened as people if we can see ourselves in the larger flow of life of which we are a part.” Bridges will help us see our state’s 200-year history by telling us four stories.

Society Calendar

FEBRUARY 26, 3-4 P.M.

Bring Fabulous Fifties Heirloom Cakes for the Cake Competition, Hodges Auditorium, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

FEBRUARY 26, 7 P.M.

Let Us Eat Cake—Again! The Annual Meeting with Ed Bridges taking “A Bicentennial Look at Our State” and signing his recent history. BBG Auditorium

MARCH 25, 3 P.M.

Richard Coe’s Birmingham, 1934–1935, Gallery Talk with exhibit curator Kate Crawford and historian Marjorie White, Birmingham Museum of Art

APRIL 15, NOON.

Heritage Society Gathering at the Steiner House, Heritage Society Membership required

MAY 12, 10:30-11:30 A.M.

Herbs for Every Garden with horticulturalist Sallie Lee, Second Saturday at Sloss in Grandmother’s Garden

JUNE 9, 10:30-11:30 A.M.,

GMOs in Grandmother’s Garden?? with Sallie Lee, Second Saturday at Sloss

2017 Heirloom Cake Competition Winners

“DEAREST” NUT CAKE by Steve Coleman

“Dearest” was Helen Rosa Randolph Murphee, the matriarch of the Randolph-Coleman family in Birmingham for most of the 20th Century. While learning to make the cake, her grandniece, Marietta C. Monaghan, once asked Dearest, “Where does the rest of the whiskey go?” Dearest replied, “Oh, that’s for the cook. It’s necessary to drink it while you’re waiting for the cake to get done.”

1 cup butter
2 cups sugar
6 eggs, separated
4 cups sifted flour
1 tsp. baking powder
2 tsp. cinnamon
2 tsp. nutmeg
2 pounds pecans
2 large boxes white raisins
2 cups bourbon whiskey
2 boxes dark brown sugar

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Cover raisins with water and boil 3 minutes and drain.

Cream butter and sugar; add the egg yolks, 3 cups of the flour, baking powder and spices.

Roll the boiled raisins and nuts in the remaining cup of flour, and then add all of it to mixture.

Beat the egg whites until they peak and then stir in.

Add and stir in one cup of whiskey.

Prepare a stem pan with a layer of parchment paper on top and pour in the cake mixture.

Bake 1³/₄ hours, testing a with broom straw to be sure that cake is done.

Immediately turn cake out of pan (if pan cools, it will stick).

Coat the warm cake with brown sugar, patting it on. Sprinkle with whiskey as you pat sugar on.

AUNT DOTTIE’S JAM CAKE by Marjorie Lee White

This recipe is based on Louisa May Alcott’s Aunt Dottie’s jam cake. It has been served at Thanksgiving for over a century.

2 cups sugar
1 cup butter
4 eggs, separated
1 cup broken black walnuts
1 cup drained crushed pineapple
1 cup buttermilk
1 cup blackberry jam
1 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
3 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. ginger
2 tsp. ground allspice
2 tsp. nutmeg

Grease three 9-inch layer cake pans and dust them lightly with flour.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

In a large mixing bowl, cream the butter and sugar until light.

Add the egg yolks, nuts, pineapple, buttermilk, and jam. Mix together thoroughly and set aside.

Sift the baking soda, salt, flour, cinnamon, ginger, allspice, and nutmeg, four times.

Add the sifted ingredients to the mixing bowl and mix thoroughly.

Beat the egg whites until they are stiff enough to stand up in soft peaks when beaters are removed.

Fold the egg whites into the mixture.

Pour batter into the pans, dividing evenly.

Bake for 30-40 minutes. The cake is done when the layers pull away slightly from the sides of the pans. Cool the layers on racks, then remove from pans and ice with burnt sugar icing.

BURNT SUGAR ICING

½ cup sugar
(for the burnt sugar syrup)
½ cup hot water
1 tsp. vanilla
¼ cup cream
2 tablespoons butter
2 cups sugar

Put ½ cup of sugar in a small heavy saucepan. Cook and stir over medium heat until it has melted and browned to a caramel color. Remove from heat.

Carefully add ½ cup of hot water to the syrup. It will spatter vigorously, so stand back. Stir briskly until the syrup has dissolved.

In a heavy saucepan, cook the 2 cups of sugar with the cream and the burnt sugar syrup until the mixture reaches the soft ball stage (234-240 degrees on a candy thermometer). Remove from heat.

Add the butter, letting it melt over the mixture without stirring. Cool to 120 degrees.

Add the vanilla and beat the icing until it is glossy. If it hardens too fast, add a few drops of cream. Continue beating until it reaches spreading consistency.

Spread the icing between layers and over the top and sides of the cake.

MIRACLE CAKE by Cornelia LaRussa

My mother-in-law, Ann Bruno LaRussa, as a child (born in 1933) had a best friend, Pauline Verciglio. Pauline’s mother made this cake for the girls, and my husband’s family has been baking it in all our kitchens ever since.

1 cup Crisco
2 cups sugar
4 eggs, room temperature
2 cups plain flour
2 eggs, additional, room temperature
2 tablespoons coconut flavoring

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease a tube pan.

Cream Crisco and sugar until light.

Add four eggs one at a time, beating in each. Add flour, beat.

Add eggs, the additional two, one at a time.

Add coconut flavoring and beat two minutes. Pour into a greased tube pan.

Bake for 1 hour 10 minutes.

SOUR CREAM COFFEE CAKE by Carolanne Roberts

I cannot remember a time without this cake—but it does pre-date me by many, many years. My grandmother, Cleora Rogers Griffith, made this for morning, afternoon tea, and even evening snacking. She got to the point that she could whip this together without referring to the recipe. I wish I'd asked where she found it herself, but I didn't—I like to fantasize that her own grandmother baked it for her just as she made it for me. I just know that the cake has a soft texture laced with swirls of cinnamon and a "crunchy sweet" topping that make me feel at home and happy. And isn't that what cakes are supposed to do—take you away from the everyday and into the special? Btw, food historians trace coffee cakes to the 17th century Europe—and often coffee was the ingredient, not a serving suggestion. How's that for a slice of heritage.

½ cup butter, softened

½ cup Crisco

1 ¼ cup sugar

2 large eggs

8 ounces sour cream

2 cups flour

1 tsp. baking powder

½ tsp. baking soda

½ tsp. salt

1 tsp. vanilla

¼ cup chopped pecans

2 tbs. sugar

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

Powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour an 8-ounce tube pan.

Beat butter and shortening at medium speed with an electric mixer, about 2 minutes, until creamy.

Gradually add sugar, beating at medium speed, 5-7 minutes.

Add eggs, one at a time, beating just until yellow disappears.

Add sour cream, mixing until blended.

In a separate bowl combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Then gradually add them to the butter mixture.

Stir in vanilla.

Spoon half the batter into a greased and floured tube pan.

Combine pecans, 2 tbs. sugar, and cinnamon, swirling half over the "half batter."

Add the remainder of the batter, sprinkling the top with the remaining pecan mixture.

Bake for 55 minutes.

Cool on wire rack for 10-15 minutes, remove from pan, and let cool on wire rack.

Sprinkle with powdered sugar.

MAMA'S ONE DOZEN EGGS FOR TWO CAKES

by Kaydee Erdreich Breman

"Mama," Irma Rae Block Erdreich, knew best! After using 12 egg whites to make an Angel Food Cake, she then set aside the 12 egg yolks to make a Sponge Cake. Never one to waste food, Mama was very happy to have the recipes for these two cakes.

ANGEL FOOD CAKE

12 egg whites

1 tsp. cream of tartar

1 ½ cups sugar

**1 cup + 2 tbs. sifted pastry flour
(Swansdown)**

1/8 tsp. salt

**1 tsp. vanilla or almond
extract**

Preheat the oven to 275 degrees. Locate an angel food cake pan.

Beat the egg whites until frothy, add cream of tartar and continue beating the eggs until light.

Sift the sugar four times.

Sift the flour four times, adding the salt in the final sifting.

Add the sugar to the egg whites, two tablespoons at a time.

Then gradually fold in flour, then add vanilla.

Pour into an ungreased pan.

Bake for ½ hour in a slow oven at 275 degrees, then increase the heat to 325 degrees and bake for 30 to 40 minutes longer.

SPONGE CAKE

12 egg yolks

2 cups sugar

1 cup boiling water

3 cups sifted cake flour

½ tsp. salt

4 tsp. baking powder

2 tsp. lemon extract

Preheat oven to moderate, 300 to 350 degrees. Locate an angel food cake pan.

Beat egg yolks until light.

Add sugar gradually, then hot water, beating all the while.

Add flour, sifted with baking powder and salt, beat thoroughly.

Add lemon extract and beat again.

Turn into an ungreased angel food cake pan.

Bake for about one hour.



2018 HEIRLOOM CAKE COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

Fill out your form in advance.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

NAME OF MY RECIPE: _____

____ Scratch OR ____ Box Mix

MEMORIES OF THIS CAKE: _____

WHOSE RECIPE WAS IT? Details, please! (family stories):

WHAT MAKES YOUR CAKE UNIQUE: _____

RECIPE must be typed and affixed to this form.

Are you willing to share your recipe: Y / N (circle one)

Signature _____ Date _____

Bring to Annual Meeting between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. February 26.
Winners will be announced during the BHS Annual Meeting.



CAKES OF THE FABULOUS FIFTIES

2018 Heirloom Cake Competition Rules

Travel back to the cake culture of the 1950s—boxed cake mixes and frosting were the rage; Bundt pans had just hit the market.

Dive into your family recipe files and find the best of that decade—after the judging (and our featured speaker), we'll all enjoy a tasty romp back in time.

1. Recipe must relate to popular cakes of the 1950s
2. Box cake mixes and “modern” short cuts allowed this year
3. Bake to specifications of recipe—no new directions or additions, please (must be authentic)
4. No mini-cakes or cupcakes; must be traditional “full size” cake for judging
5. May use Bundt pans, angel food pans, layer cake pans, or sheet cake pans as indicated in original recipe
6. Bring cake to event between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m on February 26 in the auditorium of the Birmingham Botanical Gardens; judging begins promptly at 4:15. Latecomers will not be allowed to enter.
7. Only members of the Birmingham Historical Society may enter. However, you may join BHS at the event for \$40/annual membership.
8. Winning cakes and bakers will be announced at the Society’s meeting beginning at 7 p.m. in the Hodges Auditorium at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. The cakes will be served to those attending the Society meeting following the speaker.

www.bhistorical.org
Birmingham, Alabama 35222
One Sloss Quarters

NOVEMBER 5, 1942
75 YEARS
NOVEMBER 5, 2017

