



Newsletter

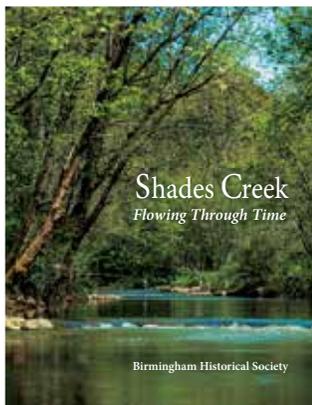
February 2019

Shades Creek to Flow Freely at the Annual Meeting

JOIN US FOR THE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL MEETING on February 25 at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Illustrated talks will be presented by Birgit Kibelka, Brian Rushing, and

Marjorie White, authors and editors of *Shades Creek: Flowing Through Time*. Tom Carruthers Jr. will make remarks. Photographers Abraham Odrezin and Hunter Nichols, whose work is featured in the talks and the book, will join us and autograph copies of the book.

And we shall enjoy tasting the Family Favorite Heirloom Cakes made by our talented members.



About Our Book

Shades Creek—we all know the name and the places the creek meanders through our own lives. Yet knowing the strength and influence of Shades Creek, its history, and how it shapes the world around us is a daunting task without assistance.

All the answers, written as lyrically as the creek streams along, are contained in *Shades Creek: Flowing Through Time* (\$29.95), the newest volume from the Birmingham Historical Society and the 2019 Members' Publication. The story of "our creek" begins 330 million years ago and proceeds through Native American occupation, early settlement, the Civil War, visionary plans for a region in harmony with its natural surroundings—and, more currently, the rise of the environmental movement. The book also features sites to visit along the 55.8-mile creek that runs from Birmingham through Irondale, Mountain Brook, Homewood, Hoover, Bessemer, and Jefferson, Shelby, and Bibb Counties to its confluence with the Cahaba River.

If that's a mouthful, worry not. The reading of the book is assuredly a riveting and enjoyable visit with Shades Creek and the developments it has witnessed over time. It's also an elegant telling of our region's history as seen through an undeniable force flowing from long ago to today's region of distinction.

The very distinguished E.O. Wilson, Alabama native and Professor of Comparative Zoology at Harvard University, had an early look at the book. He writes, "I've now studied the proof of the Shades Creek volume, and I'm enthralled. The book will help to shape the image of our city closer to the reality of its charmed beauty."

Others see the book as a call to action for future generations. Henry Hughes and Michelle Blackwood of Friends of Shades Creek say, "This book is a first step toward understanding the ecological and human history of Shades Creek, restoring what has been lost, and preventing unnecessary loss by employing techniques of preservation and intelligent design where development is inevitable."

Accompanying the book's words are 365 photographs, maps, and drawings to layer the narrative with visuals—from aaaah to informative. "We at the Birmingham Historical Society consider this one of our most important publications to date," says Marjorie White, BHS director. "It continues our mission to fully explore the resources—natural and man-made—that form the city and region we represent and cherish."

Society Calendar

FEBRUARY 25, 3-4 P.M.

Bring Family Favorite Cakes for the Cake Competition
Strange Auditorium, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

FEBRUARY 25, 7 P.M.

The Annual Meeting
Illustrated Talks and Cake Tastings
Strange Auditorium, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

APRIL 14, NOON

Heritage Society Gathering at the Jemison House
Heritage Society Membership required.

APRIL-OCTOBER, 10:30-11:30 A.M.

Walks and Talks feature the diverse cultural traditions
in Birmingham Foodways.
Second Saturdays at Sloss in Grandmother's Garden

2018 Nifty Fifties Cake Competition Winners

Graham Cracker Sponge Cake by Laura Murphy

This recipe comes from a 1953 clipping in my grandmother's recipe book. The cake is featured as "Mary Meade's 24th Cake of the Week" in the *Chicago Tribune*. First published on April 26, 1949 by the *Tribune*, the cake had become one of the "food department's most famous cakes." Mary Meade was the pen name for food editor Ruth Ellen Church.

Cake

6 egg yolks	1 tsp. baking powder
1 cup sugar	1 cup chopped pecans
1 tsp. vanilla	6 egg whites, beaten stiff
1 cup fine sifted graham cracker crumbs	1/8 tsp. salt

Frosting

1 cup whipped cream	1/2 tsp. vanilla
2 tbsp. confectionary sugar	1/2 cup chopped pecans

Beat the egg yolks until thick, then gradually add in 1/2 cup sugar and vanilla.

Crush 12 to 14 graham crackers or put through food grinder. Sift and measure 1 cup crumbs. Combine crumbs with baking powder and thoroughly fold into egg mixture.

Add chopped nuts.

Beat egg whites until stiff; gradually beat in remaining 1/2 cup sugar and salt.

Fold egg whites into yolk mixture, blending carefully.

Pour into 3 greased layer pans.

Bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) for 30 minutes.

When layers are cool, fill and frost with whipped cream, which has been beaten stiff with confectioners' sugar and vanilla.

Sprinkle remaining pecans over top of cake.

Strawberry Shortcakes by Marjorie White

In the 1950s, when strawberries were in season, Strawberry Shortcake was our family's go-to dessert. The "cake" came straight from the *Bisquick* box; the strawberries were macerated (releasing their juices), the cream whipped, and the warm treats immediately consumed by three brothers and me.

Until researching out-of-the-box Nifty Fifties Cakes, it never occurred to me that *Bisquick* made biscuits quickly. (We made biscuits from scratch.) A railroad dining car chef first premixed

his biscuits in 1931, and Betty Crocker and General Mills adopted and popularized this shortcut.

4 cups sliced fresh strawberries	3 tbsp. butter
1/3 cup sugar	1 cup whipped cream
2 1/3 cup Bisquick	with a bit of powdered sugar
2/3 cup milk	
3 tbsp. sugar	

Mix strawberries and 1/3 cup sugar.

Heat oven to 425 F.

Stir *Bisquick* mix, milk, 3 tbsp. sugar, and the butter until soft dough forms.

Drop by spoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake 10-12 minutes until golden brown.

Whip the cream with powdered sugar.

Split open warm shortcakes; fill and top with strawberries and cream.

Prince of Wales Cake by Marjorie Lee White

My grandmother Marjorie Jane Segar Longenecker included this cake in her scrapbook. As a newlywed in the late 1930s, she lived in England. At that time and for many years thereafter, the cake was a popular groom's cake. It's spicy underneath and lemony on top. (The Prince of Wales is the eldest son of the King of England.)

1 1/2 cups sugar	3/4 tsp. ground cloves
1/3 cup butter	1/4 tsp. nutmeg
3 eggs, beaten	3 cups sifted cake flour
1 1/4 tbsp. molasses (not blackstrap)	1 1/4 tsp. baking powder
1 1/4 tsp. baking soda	1 1/2 cups sour milk
1 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon	

(To make sour milk, use 1 1/2 tbsp. vinegar or lemon juice and enough milk to equal 1 1/2 cups. Let stand for 5 minutes before using.)

Cream sugar and butter. Beat eggs and add these and the molasses to butter.

Sift the dry ingredients together and add to the butter, alternating with sour milk.

Pour into two greased and floured cake pans.

Bake in 325 degree oven for 30 minutes or until a straw in the center comes out clean. Ice with Lemon Icing.

Lemon Icing

1 cup powdered sugar **2 tsp. lemon zest**
1 tsp. lemon juice **1 tbsp. milk**

In a medium bowl, combine the powdered sugar, lemon juice, lemon zest, and milk. Stir until the mixture is smooth.

Drizzle over cake.

Chocolate Chip Pound Cake by Carolanne Roberts

This is “my” cake for all occasions. I’ve given my nieces Bundt pans and ingredients to carry it forward. Learned it during my days at *Southern Living* when this recipe was chosen for a compilation of the best cakes. (I agreed.) Bundt pans and box mixes hit the market in the 1950s.

**1 box yellow cake mix (with pudding...
i.e., Duncan Hines, etc.)** **¾ cup cooking oil**
**1 small box chocolate Jell-O pudding
mix** **4 eggs, one at a time**
1 8 oz. container sour cream **½ cup sugar**
6 oz. semi-sweet chocolate chips **¾ cup water**

Mix cake mix, Jell-O mix, sugar together.

Add water in a slow stream, mixing as you go; then same with oil.

Add eggs, one by one.

Mix in sour cream.

Lastly, add chocolate chips.

Grease* a Bundt pan and pour in mixture.

Bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees.

*I spray the pan with Baker’s Joy, a combination of flour and oil that always works for me.

Garnishing ideas:

Ring the base of the cake with strawberries cut lengthwise.

Stuff the center with mint so that it flows out decoratively and serve with mint-chocolate chip ice cream.

Sift powdered sugar on top of cooled cake...looks so pretty!

Cartoon Cake by Kaydee Erdreich Breman

For birthdays, graduations, etc., a cartoon cake from Waite’s was the way to celebrate! Today Savage’s makes the cakes that feature the photographs and illustrations of your choice.

Grand Marnier Mocha Torte by Sumter and Steve Coleman

For more than 20 years, Sumter’s daughter Anne Ledvina has made this cake for Sumter’s birthday. Anne found it in an old cookbook and has modified it over those years, always baking it with a daughter’s love for her mother.

Cake

1 ½ tbsp. instant coffee **3 tsp. baking powder**
1 cup cold water **¼ tsp. salt**
6 egg yolks **1 tsp. vanilla**
2 cups sugar **1 cup ground walnuts**
2 cups flour **6 egg whites**

Dissolve coffee in water. Beat egg yolks until light and add sugar gradually.

Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt; gradually add to egg mixture, alternating with coffee.

Add vanilla and walnuts.

Beat egg whites until stiff and fold into batter.

Pour into 3 buttered and floured 9-inch pans.

Bake at 325 degrees for 30 minutes.

Cool 10 minutes and remove from pans. When layers are cool, cut in half horizontally to make 6 layers.

Filling

1 cup butter, softened **½ tsp. instant coffee**
2 cups confectioner’s sugar **2 tbsp. Grand Marnier**
2 tsp. cocoa **2 tbsp. orange juice**

Cream butter, gradually adding sugar, and then remaining ingredients.

Beat until smooth.

Spread on all of the layers except the top.

Frosting

4 cups confectioner’s sugar **1 tsp. vanilla**
4 tsp. cocoa **1 tbsp. orange juice**
1 tsp. instant coffee **Chocolate leaves or
walnuts for garnish**
4 tbsp. Grand Marnier
4 tbsp. butter, melted

Combine sugar, cocoa, and coffee. Add liqueur, butter, vanilla, and orange juice, beating until smooth.

Frost top and sides of torte. Garnish as desired.

To freeze, place unwrapped cake in freezer until firm; then wrap securely and return to freezer.



Heirloom Cakes Feature Your Faves

Calling all cakes!!

This means that dreamy, wonderful Favorite Cake whipped up by your grandmother, mother, great-aunt, second cousin once removed, etc. If it's a happy taste bud memory, that's good enough to enter the Third Annual Heirloom Cake Contest at the Society's Annual Meeting.

Entering is easy: 1) Dig out the recipe 2) bake the cake 3) enjoy the aroma of memories 4) bring it to the BHS Annual Meeting between 3-4 p.m. for judging, and 5) don't forget to print out the recipe and jot down notes about what you remember—whose cake was it, where do you remember eating it, is it part of your repertoire today, etc. etc.

We'll taste your cake and other entries after the Annual Meeting program (see page 1 in this newsletter).

Questions? Call Carolanne Roberts at 205-999-6582.

2019 HEIRLOOM CAKE COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

Fill out your form in advance.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

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 25.
Winners will be announced during the BHS Annual Meeting.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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

