

## Ladysmith Cake Recipe Remixed: A Story about a Culinary Memorial with a Difficult Heritage

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This article considers the connections between food and memory. It examines the food folklore behind the idea of the Ladysmith Cake recipe to demonstrate how specific national confections function as vehicles for collective commemoration and war memory. The recipe's eponymous title refers to the Siege at Ladysmith (November 1899–February 1900), a significant event in the British Empire's Second Boer War (October 1899–May 1902) experience – now referred to as the South African War. Therefore, this recipe commemorates New Zealand's first major offshore military engagement, making Ladysmith Cake an edible war memorial. The recipe, which developed sometime in the early 1900s somewhere within the New Zealand community (the exact date is still unknown) results in a delightful jam-filled batter cake, with walnuts sprinkled on top. It evolved when the mythos that New Zealand households had access to affordable everyday ingredients – butter, eggs, flour, nuts, raising agents, sugar and spices – combined with the desire to express a national identity. Examination of select New Zealand-published cookbooks held in Canterbury Museum shows that by the 1930s Ladysmith Cake recipes – and a couple of other South African War confections – appeared as often as recipes for the better-known World War One food memorial, the Anzac Biscuit. When Ladysmith Cake recipe ideas went online, food websites posted images of the cake and commented on the recipe's connection to the South African War. Who knows why the Ladysmith Cake recipe endured in cultural memory when other South African War confections did not? However, given the Ladysmith Cake recipe's endurance in cultural memory, food historians, cake bakers and recipe sharers everywhere need to remix in the more difficult or hidden aspects associated with this unique confection's heritage. Therefore, this article utilises the dark heritage framework, which is often focused on sites where trauma took place at a certain time, to examine the evolution of the recipe and discuss how its transmission, and the social practices wrapped around it, can play a pivotal role in fostering deeper conversations about inclusion.

**Keywords:** culinary nationalism, dark heritage, food folklore, Ladysmith Cake, Second Boer War/South African War, war remembrance

### An Introduction to Historic Recipes

Throughout history humans have ascribed meanings to food beyond its nutritional value. Some foods become iconic or powerful symbols (Berg 2003). At first iconic foods symbolised the sacred; then with the separation of church and state, iconic foods symbolised nationhood. This article considers the food folklore behind the idea of the Ladysmith Cake recipe to demonstrate how specific national confections function as vehicles for collective commemoration and war memory (Burke et al. 2021). The recipe makes a delicious jam-filled layered batter cake made in the Anglo-American cooking tradition (Weaver 2003; Davidson 2014: 128–130). Its eponymous name commemorates the Siege of Ladysmith, one of three sieges that occurred “in the first phase of the South African War (11–31 October 1899)” (Spiers 2020: 1). Also known as the Second Anglo-Boer War, it was New Zealand's first offshore military engagement and the experience influenced ideas of national consciousness, its memory evident in cookery books. This article connects to the larger theme of food and memory and combines ideas of culinary nationalism (Ferguson 2010) with a dark heritage framework (Thomas et al. 2019; Bond and Carr 2020) to explain why remembering the less glorified aspects of a recipe's history matters (Cedro 2019). Dark heritage tourism is often focused on sites where trauma took place at a certain time, however

the framework is also useful to examine the evolution of the recipe, its transmission, and the social practices wrapped around it, to foster deeper conversations about social resistance and inclusion (Thomas et al. 2019; Bond and Carr 2020).

To set the scene, the recipe's connection to Ladysmith (a small township in northern Natal annexed by the British in 1850) and its role in the South African War is outlined. Next is a discussion about women's relationship to food and war, including explanation about why eponymous recipes exist and how, over time, the Ladysmith Cake recipe endured in cultural memory (as an edible war memorial) when other contemporary South African War confections did not. That the recipe idea – described by Linno Yum (2010) a Tongariro-based food blogger as her go-to afternoon cake – has existed for 120 years provides opportunity to remix in the more difficult or forgotten histories into this unique confection's cultural narrative.

### When Did the Idea of a Ladysmith Cake Recipe First Enter Food Folklore?

Food folklore is the cultural narrative created to explain the origins of nationally distinct recipes. These

narratives mix local, commercial, community and scholarly knowledge that evolve alongside any recipe adaptations (Smith 2001; Leach 2005; Ferguson 2010). The study and preservation of such distinct historic recipes fits UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage framework (UNESCO n.d.). Intangible heritage has its roots in the folklore revival that happened in late nineteenth-century England and Europe and lasted until the 1920s and 1930s. Studies into various folk traditions were conducted at a regional level and were used as a method to foster national identity. Some studies looked at national handcraft traditions, such as Tanya Harrod (1999) who focused on England, and Palmsköld and Rosenqvist (2018) discuss similar developments in the Swedish national handicraft movement. Priscilla Ferguson (2010) looks at French cuisine, which brings together many different regional cooking styles and its relationship to French history. Ferguson's article is useful to understanding how national history and national cuisines are indelibly linked, showing how interwar period cookery books and cooking demonstrations played a key part connecting food to place (Ferguson 2010). Interest in culinary nationalism extended into the twenty-first century, from "Austria to Singapore, from Norway to Brazil, culinary countries vaunt their edible traditions and indigenous foods to promote both tourism and exports" (Ferguson 2010: 105). The scholarship of food historians has also boosted contemporary interest in culinary nationalism.

Food historian David Veart (2008) believes the Ladysmith Cake recipe is unique to New Zealand. In his view, New Zealand women demonstrated their allegiance to the British Empire by appending a patriotic title to a recipe to celebrate the liberation of Ladysmith (Veart 2008: 223–224). Ladysmith was a small yet vital border town that, like Mafeking (now called Mahikeng) and Kimberly, the "Diamond City" (Spiers 2020), fell under siege for several months during the Second Anglo-Boer War. Each town cut from essential supply routes put enormous immense stress on the residents. When liberated, there were exuberant celebrations around the British Empire (Wainwright 1997; Spiers 2020).

Veart's folklore about the origin of the idea of a Ladysmith Cake recipe demonstrates how women play a role as "imperial agents" (Pickles 2009); in this instance, how women supported and commemorated war through food. This practice was observed during the American Civil War (1861–1865) when women compiled fundraiser cookery books with proceeds supporting the war effort. After the war, fundraiser community cookery books contributed to memorials, medical services for soldiers, and welfare for war pensioners and their families (Longone 1997). Women leveraged their position as a bereaved fiancée, sister, mother or widow, as a means to boost sales. Fundraiser community cookery books were soon published in colonial New Zealand.

The food folklore of the Ladysmith Cake recipe serves to connect New Zealanders to a significant military event in a foreign place. When and where the recipe first emerged remains mysterious. It evolved within the New Zealand community in the early decades of the 1900s. The idea of Ladysmith Cake was transmitted via cookery demonstrations in the 1920s. For example, in 1924 Miss Walton's Palmerston North Municipal Gas Department cooking demonstration menu items included: "Cambridge Entree, Ladysmith Cake, Queens pudding and meringues" (*Manawatu Times*, 25 November 1924: 1). These baked goods did not go to waste; sometimes samples were passed around for the public to try, and in this instance Walton's goods were sold at the event (*Manawatu Standard*, 27 November 1924: 2). New Zealand's gas and municipal electric companies also published promotional cookery books with instructions on how to use the new cooking appliance and included already familiar recipes to help customers gain confidence. Therefore, the recipe would most likely have first appeared in a compiled community cookery book.

The Ladysmith Cake recipe reproduced in Veart's book is an early example, published c. 1929–1930 in the *New Zealand Women's Household Guide*, a compiled community cookery book that was distributed by members of the Women's Division of the New Zealand Farmers' Union (Veart 2008: 224). A Mrs W F Poppelwell from Balfour, a small farming community in the south of the South Island, provided the recipe. The recipe included a note to ice the cake when cold with coloured icing. Until the late nineteenth century icing was reserved for special occasion cakes; often made from a combination of marzipan and white royal icing to cover a rich dark Bride or Wedding Cake made with yeast and dried fruits (Charsley 1992; Davidson 2014: 866–867). In contrast, Poppelwell's icing targeted the domestic cook and involved mixing some hot water, a knob of butter and icing sugar together; in addition to colour, glaze icings were also flavoured.

### **Why Some Recipes Get Eponymous Titles**

While there is a long tradition of associating the kitchen and cake baking as a women's domain (Holtzman 2006; Santich 2012), and women played an active role in early development of the idea of the Ladysmith Cake recipe, men also created new recipes and named them after events, people and places (Westney 2007). As Lynn Westney explains, sometime in the 1600s chefs who cooked for the nobility and other powerful patrons popularised the practice of giving eponymous titles to new recipes. Once the new recipe idea had 'fixed', the chef named it so that it could be replicated and remembered, such as Auguste Escoffier (1846–1935), the famous French-born chef who "christened the most dishes with female names" (Westney 2007: 277, 283). In the early 1890s, Escoffier named a dainty dessert *Pêches*

à la Melba after the Australian opera diva, Dame Nellie Melba, when she stayed at the Savoy in London where he worked as a chef (Davidson 2014: 607; Myhrvold 2022). In general, men ruled these high-status kitchens. From the 1800s, better access to education for women combined with a dramatic increase in cookery book publishing in Europe, Britain and America targeted at national citizens rather than the elite (Katz 2003). Informed by motion studies and standardised measures, recipes became more methodical and scientific as it was thought to produce more consistent and tastier results (Veit 2017), yet left room for local and regional innovations, some with eponymous titles. By the 1900s new recipe titles celebrated military leaders (e.g. Napoleon Cake), long-serving monarchs (e.g. Victoria Sponge), and another dish named after Dame Nellie Melba (Melba Toast).

Eponymous recipe titles soon showed up in the colonised territories of Australia and New Zealand. In the early decades of the twentieth century Australasian home cooks had access to locally supplied butter, eggs, flour and commercial raising agents, in addition to goods sourced from around the British Empire like raw cane sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla (Mintz 1986; Katz 2003; Bickham 2008; Walvin 2017). Regional innovations such as Anzac Biscuits, Lamingtons and Pavlova, that have endured in New Zealand and Australian food folklore, used these ingredients. These regional recipe innovations were both simultaneous and collective; people swapped ideas through their social networks, sampled variations at cooking demonstrations and saw prizeworthy examples on display at agricultural shows (Leach and Inglis 2006; Leach 2008; Symons 2008; Santich 2012). As identity markers, these distinct regional recipe ideas built on old and familiar cooking traditions (Ferguson 2010). Furthermore, recipe titles linked to important events, people and places over time started to function as vehicles for collective commemoration and to boost ideas of nationalism (Westney 2007; Cedro 2019). As Westney argues, “understanding of the origins of recipe names and naming practices contributes to the overall understanding of their place within culinary history and culinary onomastics” (Westney 2007: 277).

Anthropologist Jon D Holtzman (2006) notes that another useful framework is to view food nationalism as an invented tradition that fosters an imagined community. This model has been used by food historians in their analysis of the Anzac Biscuit recipe (e.g. Supski 2006; Copley 2016; Cedro 2019). Food nationalism reached a peak in the 1920s–1930s interwar period whereby cookbooks promoted national diets (Holtzman 2006: 368–367) made with regional ingredients. Interwar period cookbooks also present explicit gendered and heteronormative images of who is in the kitchen (Cedro 2019: 230). Taken together, reading historic cookbooks and recipes run the risk of presenting “a past that never was” (Holtzman 2006: 372) using “a nostalgia-tinged

lens” (Cedro 2019: 230). But food is such a powerful vehicle as it evokes the senses. Studying heritage foods such as Ladysmith Cake traverses the divide between the private and public sphere which provides very useful insights into collective memory and national identity (Holtzman 2006: 373).

Lamingtons, Anzac Biscuits and Pavlova are Australasian culinary innovations that have endured in New Zealand and Australian food folklore. The origin of the Lamington is somewhat unclear. The recipe first appeared in 1902 in *The Queenslander* (Gollan 1978; Symons 2008; Santich 2012). One narrative links to Lady Mary Lamington, wife of Baron Lamington the Queensland Governor from 1896–1901, who in 1900 supported the Brisbane Technical College cookery classes. Another account makes Governor Lamington’s cook or maid servant the inventor of the tasty confection; when preparing a supper reception at the Governor’s home, a sponge cake broke into pieces, which spurred the cook to find an edible solution (Santich 2012). Variations of recipes in printed cookery books are a sign of acceptance (Bickham 2008); a variant of this recipe with a different spelling ‘Leamington cakes’ was also circulating in New Zealand in the early decades of the 1900s (Symons 2008). Another sign of acceptance is the Australian adoption of National Lamington Day, celebrated on 21 July since 2006 – today, participants are encouraged to use the tag ‘#NationalLamingtonDay’ on social media. While the origins of National Lamington Day are unclear, its purpose is to promote the idea of the Lamington as an Australian brand or product and thus a marker of national identity (National Day Calendar 2013–2022a). Lamingtons are also made on 26 January, Australia Day, a public holiday that recognises the date Britain colonised the Australian continent in 1788 (National Day Calendar 2013–2022b).

The Anzac Biscuit recipe, named after the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZACs), links Gallipoli to the home front (Reynolds 2018). Helen Leach views Anzac Crisps, published in the 1918 edition of the Dunedin St Andrew’s Cookery Book, as the protean Anzac Biscuit recipe (Leach 2017), and the recipe idea soon transferred to Australia (Supski 2006; Symons 2008; Santich 2012; Copley 2016; Cedro 2019). The recipe is similar to other rolled oat biscuits: melt together butter and golden syrup, a semi-refined sugar syrup like maple or corn syrup, and a good binding agent (Reynolds 2018). Next, baking soda dissolved in some hot water is added to the warm syrupy mixture making it foam and creating the distinct Australasian Anzac Biscuit taste. Oats give the biscuit texture and additional nutrition (Reynolds 2018). Other Anzac recipes like Anzac Kisses appeared in Australasian cookery books during World War One and until the 1930s (Gollan 1978: 53). As ephemeral cultural objects, not all recipes take hold in the national imagination. With time the Anzac Biscuit recipe became a collective

memory object; each year, in the lead up to the annual memorial services throughout New Zealand and Australia on 25 April, journalists, food experts, historians and individual members of the community commemorate its origin and relive its legacy.

The Pavlova recipe made a moulded jelly dessert (when gelatine was sold in packages) or a large meringue cake created by a chef at a Wellington hotel in honour of Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova's 1926 Australasian tour (Leach 2008; Santich 2012). Like the Anzac Biscuit, the idea of the Pavlova meringue soon transferred to Australia (Leach 2008; Symons 2008). The recipe builds from earlier more familiar European and American Pavlova-style meringue cakes (Preston 2016). However, with time, 'the pav' shaped how Australians and Kiwis think about themselves (Ferguson 2010), and its widespread adoption and subsequent adaptations demonstrate the recipe's service to national identity.

Appending proper names to recipe titles is a tactic employed by its creator to increase its perceived value over time (Westney 2007). As collective memory objects, eponymous recipes like Anzac Biscuits, Lamingtons and Pavlova gained popularity in New Zealand and Australia during the interwar period when regionally distinct foods helped shape ideas of a national identity. Given the shared Kiwi-Australian origin of these three recipes, the absence of a Ladysmith Cake recipe in the surveyed Australian food histories above is unusual, and further research is required by someone with better access to Australian-published community cookery books. Yet this absence somehow validates Veart's claim that the Ladysmith Cake recipe idea is a Kiwi invention (Veart 2008: 20).

### **Dark Heritage as a Framework to Study Historic Recipes**

Dark heritage is a broad concept most often associated with places that remember war, disaster, death and human suffering and includes battlefields, disaster sites and concentration camps (Thomas et al. 2019: 1). It makes a useful concept for teaching history (Thomas et al. 2019: 9). For example, Bond and Carr (2020) explore the interrelationship between dark tourism and dark heritage and show how museum spaces can engage visitors in difficult topics such as the massacre or victimisation of Indigenous people in Australia. Using the Western Australian Museum in Perth as their case study site, the museum's Aboriginal cultural gallery discusses the dark history of Aboriginal race relations in Western Australia. Co-curated with the Whadjuk Nyoongar people, the traditional owners of the land where the museum is situated, the permanent exhibition showcases their history and their diversity, but also "highlights many of the atrocities perpetrated upon them, including the imprisonment, slavery and abuse they experienced" (Bond and Carr 2020: 144).

In Bond and Carr's study, all the research participants, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal visitors, understood that they shared a common history "at least insofar as they all had ancestors who played a role in Australia's colonial experience" (Bond and Carr 2020: 145).

Dark heritage is useful for investigating how people engage with multivocal, controversial, uncomfortable topics, but it is not limited to physical sites and can be applied to intangible heritage objects. This makes dark heritage a useful framework to study specific eponymous recipes that function as commemorative war objects. For example, Flinders University student Emma Muller explored the Anzac Biscuit's historical, social and spiritual significance as an object of war. Its historic value is connected to the ANZAC involvement in the Gallipoli campaign. The social value is related to the biscuit's role in the remembrance of New Zealand and Australia's contribution to World War One. Spiritual significance is intertwined with family memories and rituals connected to eating Anzac Biscuits or using a particular recipe (Muller 2021). However, as Amir Amirani explains, dark heritage opens a window onto "alternative or hidden histories" (in Burke et al. 2021: v), therefore an alternate social and spiritual value could extend beyond war remembrance to promote [afternoon tea] conversations about conciliation, disarmament and peace for example.

Furthermore, as Cedro (2019) points out, the nostalgic "women's comfort and reassurance narrative" that surrounds the Anzac Biscuit is just too heteronormative. "The Anzac myth' perpetuates a fantasy of national character where "[Australian] men are brave and fight/sacrifice to preserve the comfort of domestic spaces, which are coded feminine and full of caring performances" (Cedro 2019: 239). The myth offers comfort but does not provide any space for men to embrace a baking practice without "provoking social commentaries on the boundaries of gender performance". The relationship between gender and baking and "cultural conceptions of femininity, baking and sweet foods", Cedro suggests is "ready to be scrutinized further" (Cedro 2019: 240). Queer and transsexual voices will offer fresh insights into the Anzac Biscuit story, and an intersectional approach that includes class, ethnicity and religious affiliation will also draw out other hidden histories.

### **New Zealand's Boer War**

The South African War, also known as the Second Anglo Boer War (11 October 1899–31 May 1902), was a big public event for New Zealanders and for shaping public history (Rabel 2009). The war was New Zealand's first offshore military engagement, and support for the British Empire's expansion into the mineral-rich Transvaal and Orange Free States was strong. With New Zealand's security linked to the British Empire, Premier Richard Seddon was quick to offer the colony's help (Brooking



2014). New Zealand's volunteer riflemen fought alongside Australians, Canadians and Cape Colony South Africans in the British regiment. Over 450,000 imperial and colonial troops enlisted. New Zealand's contribution included 6,500 men and 30 women who served in the Imperial Army Nursing Reserve (Crawford 2000; Ellis 2000; Brooking 2014; Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2018). New Zealanders were expected to cover expenses (National Army Museum Te Mata Toa n.d.). In addition, more than 300,000 horses served in the cavalry and as food. Only one of the estimated 8,000 horses New Zealanders sent returned home.

Māori offered to serve as a unit, but both the Crown and Colonial Office declined; however, Māori retained their dignity and engaged on their terms (Webb 2018). Individual Māori who identified as mixed race and with some form of prior military service, enlisted using anglicised names. But with no official documents exact numbers are “unquantifiable” (Webb 2018: 22–23, 29). Māori men and women also found methods to raise funds for “their troops” and support their people “at home”, such as the Ngāpuhi Nursing sisters who rode horses to help the sick and provide first aid training to the isolated Māori communities around rural Northland (Ellis 2000; Webb 2018: 29, 40–42).

Pākehā women also formed patriotic groups, such as the Girls Khaki Brigade who dressed in uniform and organised drills (Ellis 2000; Brooking 2014; Robson 2021). Women arranged galas, and sent knitted socks and scarves and baked goods to the men serving in the war.

The war took longer than expected.

The Boers' first move involved cutting off vital rail access to two British border towns in the Cape Colony, Mafeking (13 October 1899 to 17 May 1900) and Kimberly (14 October 1899 to 15 February 1900), followed by Ladysmith (2 November 1899–28 February 1900) in Natal (Spiers 2020). The sieges caused malnutrition, starvation and disease for the town residents; contaminated water in Ladysmith spread “water-borne diseases such as typhoid fever (enteric) and dysentery” (Spiers 2020: 10). In response, the British imperial forces invaded the Transvaal and Orange Free State, destroying farm equipment, burning crops and killing livestock. Such actions caused homelessness and starvation, and the captured Boers, their workers and families were bundled into segregated concentration camps (Webb 2018; Spiers 2020). More lives were lost in Lord Kitchener's experimental concentration camps than in battle (Dickens n.d.; van Heyningen 2020), whereby Black Africans in camps lived on fewer calories and were exposed to worse conditions than captured Boer refugees. Recent archaeological evidence suggests that over 20,000 black lives were lost (Dickens n.d.).

After the war, New Zealand women teachers worked in the concentration camp schools. Serving out one-year contracts they re-educated children in English using a curriculum based on British cultural values (Ellis 2000: 621). Looking back on the situation today, the way the teachers systemically eradicated the camp children of their [native] culture and language, combined with inadequate food and shelter, was a brutal criminal act against humanity of shocking proportions, but does not quite fit the United Nation description of genocide (United Nations n.d.).

Overall, 71 New Zealanders were killed in action or died from wounds in the South African War; another 159 died in accidents (16 from a single train accident) or from disease (Crawford 2000: 59–63; Ministry for Culture and Heritage 2018). After the war, as a marker of national identity and as a demonstration of loyalty to Empire (McFadden 2020), town centres erected public war memorials (Maclean and Phillips 1990; Rabel 2009: 246). In addition, war memorabilia, such as examples of the New Zealand Mounted Rifleman's khaki hat, entered museum collections (National Army Museum Te Mata Toa n.d.).

### **A Case Study Approach**

This investigation into early Ladysmith Cake recipes emerged when on the eve of the Centenary of Armistice of the World War One, a search for Peace Cake recipes revealed signature recipes that fostered memories of war instead (Cobley 2018). Fieldwork was undertaken at Canterbury Museum over the summer of 2019/20 and built on earlier research at the Christchurch Anglican Diocesan Archives, Christchurch City Libraries and the Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury in 2018. The goal was to find a Ladysmith Cake recipe, preferably published prior to 1920, and track its evolution.

Canterbury Museum's eclectic cookery book collection is modest in size and scope. Most books entered the Museum collection as part of a body of donated items or formed part of the Museum's library. Cookery books were sorted based on the following taxonomy: nineteenth century authored household management books; twentieth century instructional domestic science cookery books; commercial promotional cookery books and compiled community cookery books (Leach 2005; Leach and Inglis 2006). Many books were undated, but weights and measures, typeface, paper quality and advertisements provided useful contextual clues. WorldCat offered additional details sometimes missed, such as the name of the commissioned author in commercial cookery books.

The earliest cookery books in the Museum's collection were authored household management books published in the late 1800s by American, British and European

**Vinegar Cake** (Another Mode).

MRS. RICHARDS, N.P.

1lb. flour,  $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. butter,  $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. currants,  $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. sultanas,  $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. raisins, a little lemon peel.

Put flour, sugar and fruit into a basin, rub in the butter, make a heap and a hole in centre, put in two tablespoonfuls of vinegar; next take a cup of milk, put in one desertspoonful of soda, add to vinegar; mix fairly stiff; bake from one to two hours in a good oven.

**Victoria Cake.**

MRS. EDWIN PERRY, Liardet Street, N.P.

Mix 2 eggs, 3 tablespoonfuls of white moist sugar, 2 teaspoonfuls baking powder, 3 tablespoonfuls flour, add a piece of butter the size of a walnut previously melted; mix well together; divide in equal parts; bake on two dinner plates or tins well buttered in a moderate oven; when cold spread a layer of jam. Cost 4d. Bake for 20 minutes.

**Seddon Cake.**

$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. butter, 6 tablespoonfuls sugar, 6 eggs, essence of lemon, sufficient flour to make cake mixture.

Beat butter and sugar to a cream, add one egg (unbeaten) and tablespoonful of flour alternately until eggs are all used. The mixture must not be too stiff. Add teaspoonful baking powder last, and bake about one hour.

**Watermelon Cake** (Very Good).

MISS MONA KING, Waihi, Auckland.

10 ozs. flour, 6 ozs. butter, 5 ozs. sugar, 3 eggs, 1 teaspoonful baking powder,  $\frac{1}{4}$ lb sultanas, 6 drops essence of almond, 1 or 2 tablespoonfuls milk if necessary.

Beat butter and sugar to a cream; take about one third of the mixture, a few drops of cochineal and a few sultanas; put light colour in dish first, then pink, and remainder of white on top. Bake  $1\frac{1}{4}$  hours in moderate oven.

Figure 1. Two eponymous recipes: Victoria and Seddon Cakes. *Taranaki Magic Cookery and Recipe Book* (c. 1907: 33). Canterbury Museum 161/2000 Walker LIB 30186



companies. As expected, the Museum held Isabella Beeton's epic *The Book of Household Management* (1889). Beeton's "foreign cooking section" included "Recipes for Australian Dishes" such as kangaroo tail soup, roast wallaby and parrot pie. Instructive American cookery books included *Scammell Cyclopedia of Valuable Receipts. A Treasure House of Useful Knowledge, for the Everyday Wants* (c. 1885, 1897). In addition to popular medicines made from chloroform, sulphur ether, opium and camphor gum dissolved into alcohol, *Scammell Cyclopedia's* included recipes for a 20 egg Bride Cake and Christmas Cake made with lard and yeast.

New Zealand-published domestic science cookery books, such as Elizabeth B Miller's *Cookery Book. Lessons Given at the Dunedin Exhibition and Under Auspices of the Technical Classes Association* (1890), include British and Australian influences as well as local recipes that reflected the foodways of migrants (Leach 2010: 43–5). Instructional books, like *Colonial Everyday Cookery* (tenth edition, c. 1922; fifteenth edition, c. 1933) covered recipe building (e.g. foundation batter cake), nutrition and meal planning (Miller 1890; Mitchell 2005). In 1901, New Zealand householders tended to their own

domestic duties, and when combined with the domestic helper shortage (Pickles 2009), boosted the fantasy that every New Zealand woman was practical, economical and efficient in the kitchen.

Items most relevant to this investigation were commercial and community and cookery books published from the early 1900s to 1970s. These books offered useful insights into local business, grassroots community organisations and shifts in foodways. Data gathered for this case study investigation focused on the type of cake, and details of continuities and adaptations of the recipe methods and ingredients used. As food historian Helen Leach has cautioned, it is best to treat community cookery books as assemblages; selected for the target audience rather than representative of actual contemporary diets (Leach 2005). Furthermore, as cultural products, these books were not originally destined to become museum objects, but they do make useful objects for historical enquiry. Recipes and cookery books offer a fresh perspective on how New Zealanders "engaged" with their nation and empire (Bickham 2008: 78).

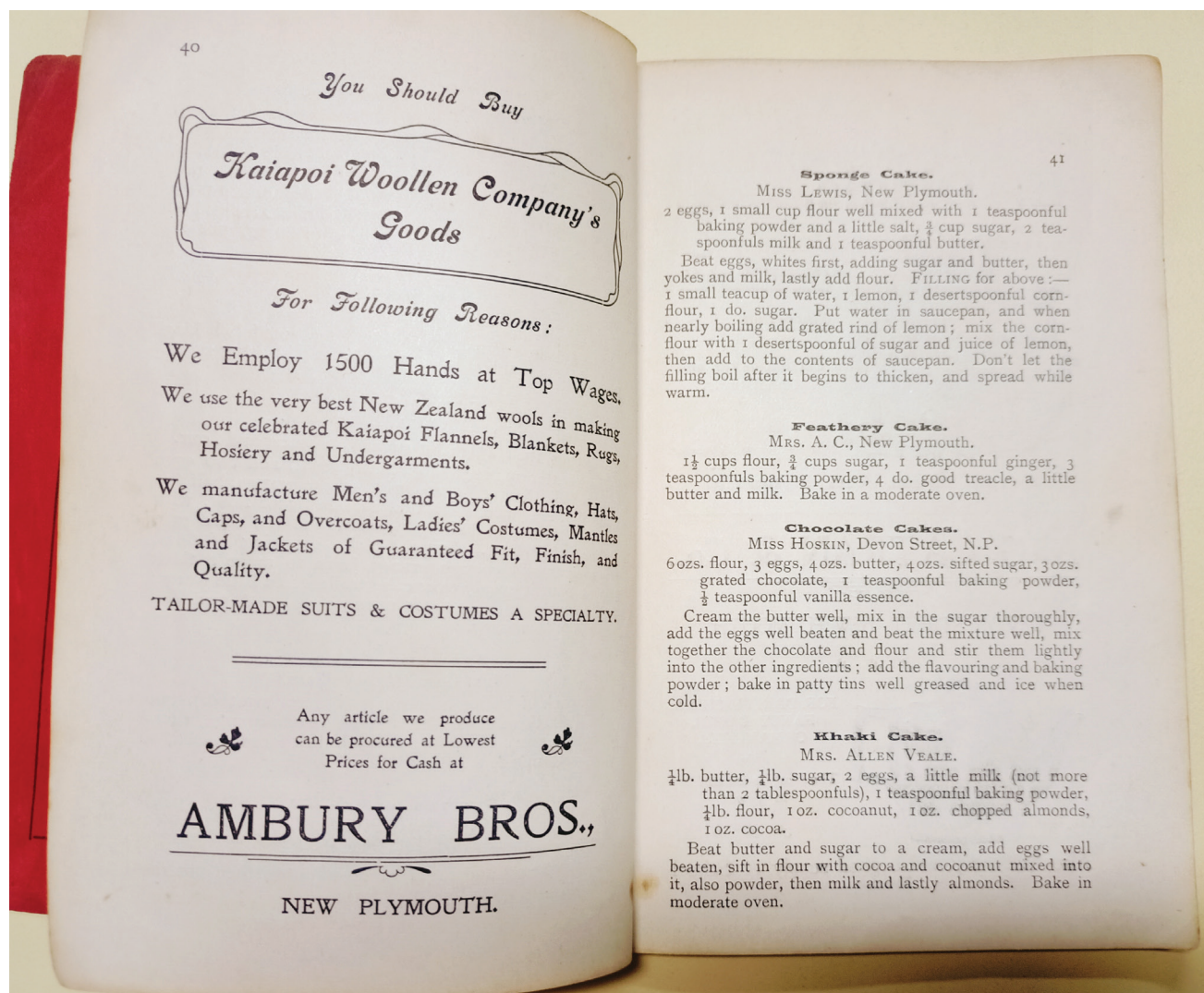


Figure 2. Recipe for Khaki Cake. *Taranaki Magic* (c. 1907: 41). Canterbury Museum 161/2000 Walker LIB 30186

## Findings

The cookbooks were stuffed full of evidence of food nationalism, whereby recipes promoted national foods using local and regional ingredients (Holtzman 2006; Ferguson 2010). These books also presented clear gendered and heteronormative images of who cooked (Cedro 2019: 230). In the early decades of the 1900s New Zealand-published fundraising cookery books captured significant events of the day, some recipes served as “powerful symbols” of nationhood and empire (Bickham 2008: 74). For example, in the *Taranaki Magic Cookery and Recipe Book* (c. 1907), collated by Members of the New Plymouth Wesleyan Methodist Parsonage Fund, a recipe for Seddon Cake appeared just underneath Mrs Edwin Perry’s Victoria Cake recipe (Fig. 1). Premier Seddon died in office in 1906 (Brooking 2014), so this eponymous recipe marked an important political event in New Zealand history. Furthermore, its placement underneath a recipe for an economical yet tasty cake named after imperial figurehead, Queen Victoria, who died in January 1901 is also significant.

Local newspapers promoted the book. The *Taranaki Herald* (3 July 1907: 4) described *Taranaki Magic* as “a handy little volume” that gave “the satisfaction of helping a good cause”. Fundraiser cookery books made useful birthday gifts; Canterbury Museum’s copy has an inscription on the inside cover: “To Alice, with love and best-wishes, January 13th 1908...” To help cover printing costs *Taranaki Magic* also included advertisements such as H E Shacklock Ltd, a Dunedin-based foundry that manufactured the Orion coal range oven (New Plymouth Wesleyan Methodist Parsonage Fund c. 1907: 38).

The Khaki Cake recipe (Fig. 2) presented intrigue – does this sandwich cake pay tribute to the khaki-clad New Zealand infantrymen who served for the British Empire in the South African War, which was still a recent collective national memory? Furthermore, that various New Zealand-based patriotic women’s groups also adopted a khaki uniform and engaged in fundraisers first to support the overseas war, and then support injured soldiers and erect district war memorials (as they did in Australia [McFadden 2020]), makes the Khaki Cake patriotic-link to the South African war more possible. The mysterious origins of the Khaki Cake recipe highlights ways in which food history intertwines with food folklore.

A second South African war recipe for a large almond-flavoured chocolate Mafeking Cake (Fig. 3), supplied by Mrs F Jolly, appeared on page 83 of the *South Auckland Queen Cookery Book* (second edition 1921). The inside cover of this local celebrity fundraising cookery book featured a Raspberry Jam recipe from Lady Liverpool, written on Government House paper. Lady Liverpool lent her name as a well-known and respected figurehead

to promote the book. Again, the *South Auckland Queen Cookery Book* included advertisements, this time with a local flavour, such as Anchor brand butter made from milk supplied by Waikato’s dairy cows. With a small farmer dairy industry supporting New Zealand’s economy and even though a large portion of produce was exported back to Imperial Britain, all four recipes shown in Figure 3 provide a glimpse into how New Zealanders found ways to use their local butter: a good Madeira Cake took half a pound, Shortbread four ounces, three for Date Shortbread and Mrs F Jolly’s Mafeking Cake six. In pre-refrigerator days butter was kept in a food safe and *Colonial Everyday Cookery* (tenth edition, c. 1918–1922: 328) provided instructions on how to keep it “firm and fresh”: “Dissolve 1 teaspoon of powdered borax in 1 cup of boiling water. Soak a cloth for 15 minutes in the solution. Let the cloth cool and then place it over the butter.”

The content of the *South Auckland Queen Cookery Book* second edition was based on the first edition, published in November 1915 when a war was taking place in Europe which through its links with the British Empire, involved New Zealand. Therefore, the editions featured several new national confection recipes, including Anzac Toffee, as in 1915 the Gallipoli Campaign was still underway, and Dominion Pudding in recognition of New Zealand becoming a Dominion in 1907. It also included an Australian-style Lamington Cake recipe. This second edition was compiled by the Hamilton Carnival Tennis Queens and its objective was to raise funds to support the wounded soldiers who had returned to New Zealand in their thousands.

A recognisable form of Ladysmith Cake recipes appeared in community fundraising cookery books published from the early 1930s. Further research is required in other collections to find an earlier recipe. The *Southbridge Women’s Institute Cookery Book* (1932) recipe for Ladysmith Cake offered scant instructions, as foundational baking knowledge was assumed (Fig. 4). Like Veart’s example, this recipe suggested icing the cake when cold. The Southbridge Women’s Institute baking section, like other community cookery books of this era, is laden with nationalistic and imperial-sounding recipe titles like Anzac Biscuits, Everest Biscuits (honouring the early 1920s British expeditions), and Maori [sic] Kisses. On page 11, next to a recipe for Khaki Sandwich is a full-page advertisement for Klondyke Coal, as most rural households still had coal ranges. The advertisement tells readers to support local industry because it’s “cheap, economical” and “Canterbury’s best”.

Some community cookery books listed recipes alphabetically, but not always, however Ladysmith Cake recipes often appeared just below Khaki Cake recipes. While Ladysmith is the most common spelling, other



### MADIERA CAKE (Good).

Half pound butter, 1 large cup sugar (level), 2 large cups flour (level), 4 eggs (beaten),  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup lukewarm milk, 1 heaped teaspoon cream of tartar, 1 level teaspoon soda, essence of lemon or grated lemon rind. Mode: Cream, butter, and sugar, add beaten eggs gradually, then the milk and soda together (dissolved in teaspoonful of boiling water); then the flour and cream of tartar mixed together. Bake in moderate oven 1 to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  hours. This can be made with 1 cup of stoned raisins or figs, in which case use  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar.

MRS. R. THORNES.

### SHORTBREAD.

Four ounces butter, 2 ozs. flour of rice, 2 ozs castor sugar, 6 ozs. flour, pinch of salt. Place butter and sugar on a board and work together in palm of right hand, then gradually mix other ingredients in the same way. Place on slightly floured tin. Bake in a moderate oven for 20 minutes.

MRS. J. GORDON.

### DATE SHORTBREAD.

Three ounces butter,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar, 1 egg,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, chopped dates. Method: Beat butter and sugar to a cream, add egg, and beat well. Then add flour and baking powder. Roll out and spread half with dates. Then cover with other half, and bake in good hot oven.

MRS. H. WINDSOR (Tamahere).

### MAFEKING CAKE.

Eight ounces flour, 8 ozs. sugar, 6 ozs. butter, 3 ozs. almonds (chopped), 4 eggs,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoonful baking powder,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cake chocolate, little essence of almonds. Cream butter and sugar, add beaten eggs, lastly flour, baking powder, and chocolate. Put chopped almonds on top.

MRS. F. JOLLY.

Figure 3. Mafeking Cake, a more ephemeral Boer war recipe. *South Auckland Queen Cookery Book* (second edition, 1921: 83). Canterbury Museum 40/96 Borgfeldt, M. LIB 26510



## WOMEN'S INSTITUTE COOKERY BOOK.

### LOUISA CAKES.

Four ounces butter, 4 ozs. sugar, 8 ozs. flour, teaspoon baking powder, yolks of 2 eggs.

Cream butter and sugar, add yolks of eggs, flour and baking powder. Mix to a dough, then roll out and put in patty pans. Put jam in each (just a little), then whip whites of eggs stiff and add  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. icing sugar and  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. desiccated cocoanut, and put a spoonful on each; bake in a moderate oven till meringue sets.

### LADYSMITH CAKE.

Two eggs, weight in butter, flour and sugar, 1 heaped tablespoon of cornflour, small half-teaspoon soda, 1 small teaspoon cream of tartar.

Beat butter and sugar to cream, add eggs well beaten, then flour, cornflour, soda, cream of tartar. Take less than half of mixture and add 2 teaspoons of cinnamon and little flour; spread on bottom of cake tin, then layer of jam; put white part on top. Bake  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour; ice when cold.

### SPONGE.

Three eggs, 4 ozs. sugar, 3 ozs. flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder.

Beat eggs, then add sugar and beat again. Add flour and baking powder. Bake in sandwich tins for 10 to 15 minutes.

### WALNUT JOYS.

Quarter pound butter, 6 ozs. walnuts, 1 small cup sugar,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 2 teaspoons cocoa, 1 egg,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla.

Beat butter and sugar, add egg, flour, cocoa, etc. Put on sides in spoonfuls. Moderate oven.

### MAORI KISSES.

Half cup of sugar, 2ozs. butter, 2 eggs, 6 ozs. flour, 1 teaspoon ground ginger, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, and 1 teaspoon baking powder.

Drop in spoonfuls on cold tray. Add nuts as liked, and ice top after placing together with jam.

### KISS CAKES.

Half a cup of sugar, creamed with  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. butter, add 1 egg,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cornflour,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup plain flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, essence.

Mix stiff and roll out thin; cut in rounds and bake 10 minutes. Place together with jam.

### APPLE SHORT CAKE.

Two cups flour,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. butter,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar, 1 egg, 1 teaspoon cream of tartar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of soda.

Rub butter into flour, add other ingredients, mix to a paste with milk and egg beaten; roll out and bake with apple between.

Figure 4. Ladysmith Cake, from novel to a now familiar recipe. *Southbridge Women's Institute Cookery Book*. (1932: 15). Canterbury Museum 154/98 Hampton LIB 28232



#### HAZELNUT CAKE.

**Ingredients.**—Four eggs, 6oz sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$ lb minced nuts (finely), 1 teaspoon baking powder, salt.

**Method.**—Beat eggs and sugar, then add nuts and baking powder. Bake in square tin for an hour. Ice when cold.

#### JEWISH CAKE.

**Ingredients.**—Quarter pound butter, 3 eggs, 1 cup sultanas, 2 teaspoons cinnamon, 1 cup sugar,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 2 or 3 tablespoons milk.

**Method.**—Cream butter and sugar. Add milk and eggs well beaten, and then flour, etc., and sultanas. Bake in sandwich tins.

**Icing.**—Two cups icing sugar, 2 tablespoons butter, 1 tablespoon cocoa. Mix until fluffy and then add 1 teaspoon vanilla and 2 or 3 tablespoons strong coffee. (Add coffee gradually).

#### KHAKI CAKE.

**Ingredients.**—One tablespoon chopped almonds, 1 tablespoon cocoanut, 1 dessertspoon cocoa,  $\frac{1}{4}$ lb butter,  $\frac{1}{4}$ lb sugar, 1 teaspoon baking powder,  $\frac{1}{4}$ lb flour, 2 eggs, 1 tablespoon milk.

Bake in sandwich tin for 20 minutes.

#### LADY SMITH CAKE.

**Ingredients.**—Three eggs, weight of 3 eggs in butter, sugar and flour, 1 large tablespoon cornflour, 1 teaspoon baking powder.

**Method.**—Put  $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons spice and cinnamon in half the mixture; put in tin and spread raspberry jam over and cover with other half of mixture.

#### LEMON CAKE.

**Ingredients.**—Quarter pound butter,  $\frac{1}{4}$ lb sugar, 2 eggs, 5 tablespoons flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder, tablespoon grated lemon rind, 2 tablespoons lemon juice.

**Method.**—Beat butter and eggs and sugar to a cream, then add juice and rind, lastly flour and baking powder. Ice with lemon icing.

#### LOUISE CAKE.

**Ingredients.**—Quarter pound butter, 4oz sugar, 8oz flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, pinch of salt, a few drops essence of vanilla, 2 egg yolks.

**Method.**—Beat butter and sugar to a cream, add yolks and essence and salt. Then add flour and powder, and press mixture into a shallow tin. Then spread with raspberry jam, then with the whites of two eggs, 5oz icing sugar, 4oz cocoanut. Bake slowly in cool oven about  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour or till light brown.

#### NUT CAKE (No flour).

**Ingredients.**—Two ounces butter, 2oz sugar, 5oz walnuts, 1 teaspoon baking powder.

**Method.**—Beat butter and sugar. Add nuts and baking powder. Bake in a slow oven 1 hour.

Figure 5. By coincidence the Lady Smith and Khaki Cake recipes are often grouped together, as seen in *St Saviour's Orphanage Cookery Book* (1939: 93). Canterbury Museum Cookery Books/Miscellaneous LIB 28253



## CAKES AND BISCUITS

## KHAKI CAKE ●

4 ozs. Butter  
4 ozs. Sugar  
1 moderate tablespoon Cocoa  
2 or 3 tablespoons Boiling Water  
2 Eggs

4 ozs. Flour  
1 teaspoon  
*Edmonds* Baking Powder  
1 tablespoon Coconut

Cream butter and sugar, add cocoa which has been mixed to a smooth paste with the boiling water. Beat well. Beat eggs and add alternately with dry ingredients. Bake 25 to 30 minutes in 6 or 7 inch greased sandwich tins at 400°F. When cold, fill and ice with Chocolate Butter Icing.

## KISSES ●

4 ozs. Butter  
4 ozs. Sugar  
2 Eggs

4 ozs. Flour  
4 ozs. *Edmonds* Cornflour  
1 teaspoon  
*Edmonds* Baking Powder

Cream butter and sugar well, add eggs one at a time and beat again. Add sifted dry ingredients. Put small spoonfuls on greased trays and bake 8 to 10 minutes at 400°F. When cold, put together with raspberry jam and sprinkle with icing sugar.

## LADYSMITH CAKE ●

6 ozs. Butter  
6 ozs. Sugar  
3 Eggs  
6 ozs. Flour + 1 extra tablespoon

1 moderate teaspoon  
*Edmonds* Baking Powder  
2 teaspoons Cinnamon  
Raspberry Jam

Cream butter and sugar, add well-beaten eggs alternately with sifted flour and baking powder. Take less than half of the mixture, add cinnamon and the extra tablespoon flour. Spread in a greased 7 inch square tin, spread mixture with raspberry jam, put remaining mixture on top. Sprinkle with chopped nuts. Bake about 1 hour at 400°F.

## LAMINGTONS ●

Make Three Minute Sponge (see page 36) and cook in an oblong tin. Leave until next day, cut into squares, and dip each in chocolate icing then roll in coconut. Leave to dry.

## CHOCOLATE ICING:

2 tablespoons Butter  
2 tablespoons Cocoa  
6 tablespoons Boiling Water

$\frac{3}{4}$  lb. Icing Sugar  
Few drops Vanilla Essence

Melt butter, add cocoa dissolved in boiling water. Mix in sifted icing sugar, add vanilla essence, and beat well.

About  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. coconut is required for coating.

## LEMON BISCUITS ●

4 ozs. Butter  
4 ozs. Sugar  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon Essence of Lemon

1 Egg  
8 ozs. Flour  
1 teaspoon  
*Edmonds* Baking Powder

Beat butter and sugar to a cream, add essence. Break in the egg and beat well. Add sifted flour and baking powder. Roll out thin, cut into shapes. Bake 15 to 20 minutes at 375°F. Put together with jam or lemon filling.

Figure 6. An *Edmonds Sure to Rise Cookery Book* Ladysmith Cake recipe was published for the first time in the 1950s and revised for the de luxe edition (fifth printing, 1962: 27). Canterbury Museum 287/76 Reynolds, Rosa Josephine



variations, such as Lady Smith Cake (Fig. 5) appeared in the 1937 and 1939 editions of *St Saviour's Orphanage Cookery Book*. Perhaps the compilers were cognisant of the folklore that the South African town Ladysmith was named in honour of the wife of Sir Harry Smith, Lady Juana Maria Smith.

Commercial interests supported the transmission of the Ladysmith Cake recipe. St Saviour's Lady Smith Cake recipe used 1 tablespoon of Duryea's Maizena, an American manufactured brand of cornflour imported to New Zealand in competition with British and local brands. An advertisement for Duryea's Maizena, "The World's Best Cornflour", appeared on page 72 of the 1937 edition just below a half page advertisement from Turnbull and Jones, agents for the Canadian-made Moffat electric range. The back cover featured Westinghouse refrigerators. In both editions a full colour inside flyer advertised Christchurch manufactured Edmonds "Sure-to-Rise" Baking Powder and included an easy-to-follow Madeira Cake recipe. Both gas and electric range advertisements appear in St Saviour's 1939 edition. The Christchurch Gas Co. Ltd's simple inside cover advertisement said: "Good Cookery! is Gas Cookery", and on page 78, the Christchurch Municipal Electricity Department (MED) explained that the New Zealand-made Atlas electric range was "equal to the world's best" and consumers could "be assured of cheaper, cleaner and healthier cooking". New Zealand's first state-funded power station was built in the Canterbury region at Lake Coleridge and the Christchurch City Council thought electricity must be affordable to every householder.

In the 1930s a cooking range was a big-ticket item and in relation to re-signing the Christchurch agency for the Canadian Moffat range, the City Council debated whether the MED should display and sell New Zealand-made ranges exclusively. Local Councillor, Elizabeth McCombs, who was elected in 1921, thought an embargo against the importation of cooking ranges would not bring additional jobs to the region and complicate trade relations within the Commonwealth (*Press* 1932: 9). The Council ruled not to embargo the Moffat stove and one copy of Mrs D McGill's *Moffat's Cookbook* (1926) found its way into Canterbury Museum's collection.

By the 1950s, variations of the Ladysmith Cake recipes appeared in commercial cookery books. These books promoted cooking appliances or a food-related product. Promotional books copied recipe innovations that had already become familiar within the community (Leach and Inglis 2006: 68). In 1952 a nutless Ladysmith Cake version appeared in the *Edmonds Sure to Rise Cookery Book* (seventh edition, reprint) (Raphael 2021). With four eggs, the recipe made a rather large cake. The inclusion of custard powder is also unique:

#### *Ladysmith Cake*

*½ lb. Butter*

*1 heaped tablespoon Edmonds Custard Powder*

*½ lb. Sugar*

*2 level teaspoons Edmonds Baking Powder*

*4 Eggs*

*½ lb. Flour*

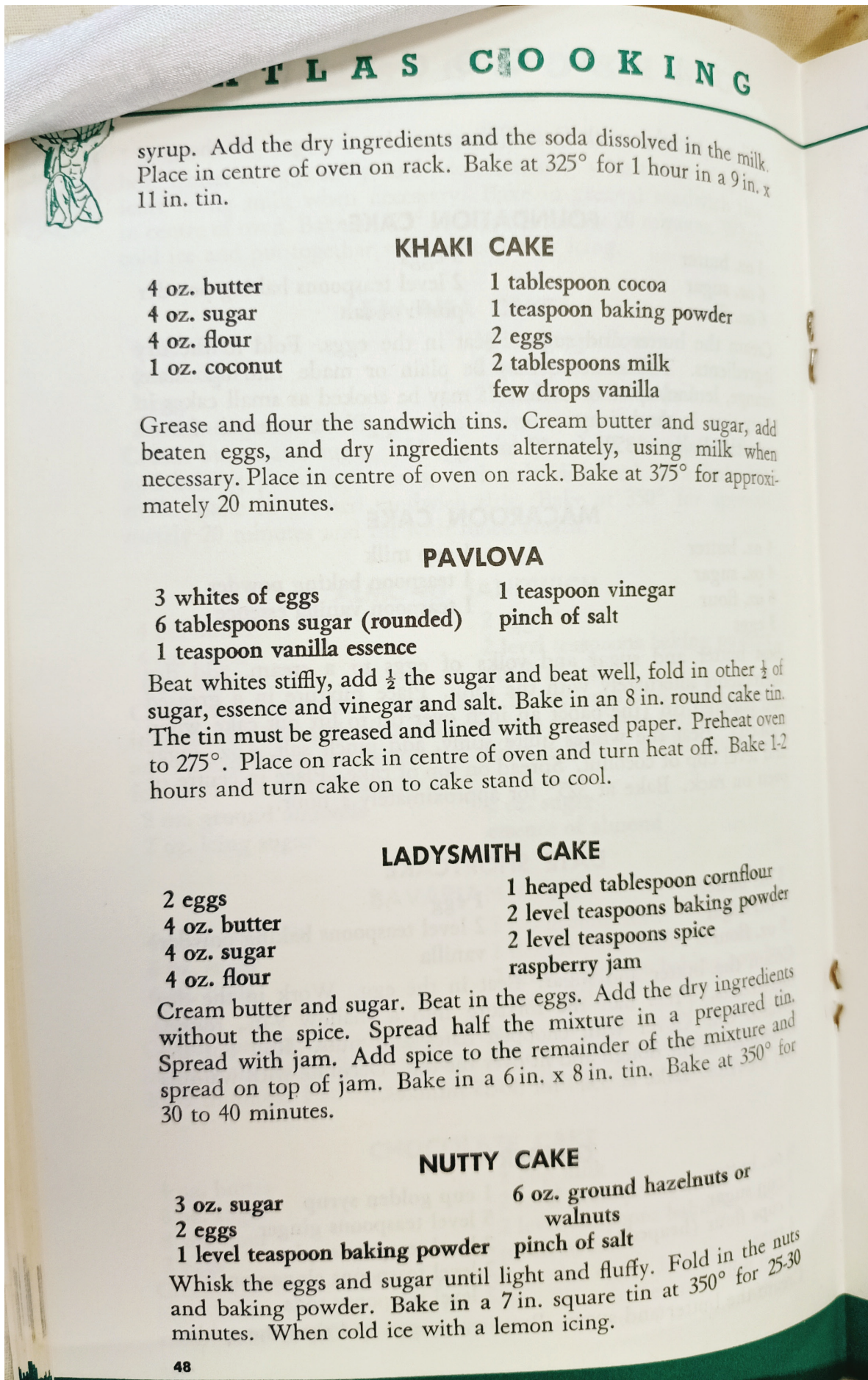
*1 heaped tablespoon Cornflour*

*Cream butter and sugar, add well beaten eggs alternately with sifted dry ingredients. Take less than half the mixture and add 4 level teaspoons cinnamon and 2 extra tablespoons flour. Place in greased tin, spread with a little raspberry jam. Put remainder mixture on top. Bake in greased tin about 1 ½ hours (400°F).*

The seventh *Edmonds* differed from the sixth edition (*New Zealand Herald* 1936) and featured recipes now embedded in national consciousness: Anzac Biscuits and Pavlova; with Khaki Cake and Lamingtons added to subsequent "de luxe" editions (Fig. 6). The deluxe *Edmonds* Ladysmith Cake recipe differed to the seventh edition: the number of eggs was reduced, custard powder removed and nuts added. From the 1950s a number of recipes included instructions to sprinkle the top with chopped nuts, usually walnuts, before baking.

With each decade the new electric cooking technology became more efficient. Another theme that emerged from necessity during the 1930s depression, followed by war time restrictions in the 1940s and early 1950s, was an economy of ingredients. The ethos of making do continued into the 1960s. For example, Marion McCrostie's *Atlas Cookery Book* (eleventh edition, 1965) economical Ladysmith Cake recipe took just two eggs (Fig. 7). However, compared to the brief instructions found in the *Southbridge Women's Institute Cookery Book*, McCrostie included important details about the size of tin (6 x 8 inch), cooking time (30 to 40 minutes), and temperature (350° F). The recipe was easy to follow and used British imperial measurements, "4 oz. each of butter, sugar and flour" (McCrostie 1965: 48). The main purpose of this cookery book was to promote the latest Atlas electric stove. McCrostie, who trained as a teacher, worked for the MED and got involved in community festivals as part of Canterbury College's adult education outreach to rural communities. McCrostie's role was to conduct an afternoon cookery programme (*Press*, 10 June 1950: 6).

Just one Mafeking Cake recipe was found in the New Zealand-published cookery books in Canterbury Museum's collection, suggesting a briefer transmission period than the idea of the Ladysmith Cake recipe. Cookery books published c. 1930–1970s did not include any connection between the Ladysmith Cake (or Khaki Cake) recipe and the South African War, but online recipes do. Did Veart (2008) influence the revival of the recipe amongst food bloggers such as New Zealand's



Atlas COOKING  
syrup. Add the dry ingredients and the soda dissolved in the milk. Place in centre of oven on rack. Bake at 325° for 1 hour in a 9 in. x 11 in. tin.

### **KHAKI CAKE**

- |               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 4 oz. butter  | 1 tablespoon cocoa       |
| 4 oz. sugar   | 1 teaspoon baking powder |
| 4 oz. flour   | 2 eggs                   |
| 1 oz. coconut | 2 tablespoons milk       |
|               | few drops vanilla        |

Grease and flour the sandwich tins. Cream butter and sugar, add beaten eggs, and dry ingredients alternately, using milk when necessary. Place in centre of oven on rack. Bake at 375° for approximately 20 minutes.

### **PAVLOVA**

- |                               |                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 3 whites of eggs              | 1 teaspoon vinegar |
| 6 tablespoons sugar (rounded) | pinch of salt      |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla essence    |                    |

Beat whites stiffly, add  $\frac{1}{2}$  the sugar and beat well, fold in other  $\frac{1}{2}$  of sugar, essence and vinegar and salt. Bake in an 8 in. round cake tin. The tin must be greased and lined with greased paper. Preheat oven to 275°. Place on rack in centre of oven and turn heat off. Bake 1-2 hours and turn cake on to cake stand to cool.

### **LADYSMITH CAKE**

- |              |                                 |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| 2 eggs       | 1 heaped tablespoon cornflour   |
| 4 oz. butter | 2 level teaspoons baking powder |
| 4 oz. sugar  | 2 level teaspoons spice         |
| 4 oz. flour  | raspberry jam                   |

Cream butter and sugar. Beat in the eggs. Add the dry ingredients without the spice. Spread half the mixture in a prepared tin. Spread with jam. Add spice to the remainder of the mixture and spread on top of jam. Bake in a 6 in. x 8 in. tin. Bake at 350° for 30 to 40 minutes.

### **NUTTY CAKE**

- |                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 3 oz. sugar                    | 6 oz. ground hazelnuts or walnuts |
| 2 eggs                         | pinch of salt                     |
| 1 level teaspoon baking powder |                                   |

Whisk the eggs and sugar until light and fluffy. Fold in the nuts and baking powder. Bake in a 7 in. square tin at 350° for 25-30 minutes. When cold ice with a lemon icing.

Figure 7. Marion McCrostie's very economical Ladysmith Cake recipe. *Atlas Cookery Book* (eleventh edition, 1965: 48). Canterbury Museum 2008.22.3 Booklets & Manuscripts



Linno Yum (2010) and Welsh-based The Procrastobaker (2011)? If so, food historians have an obligation to add further fresh insights into the recipe's folklore, such as making more explicit the cultural politics behind the recipe, such as how its method and ingredients have deep connections to the British Empire. Furthermore, as an edible war memorial, the idea of the Ladysmith Cake recipe makes an effective teaching tool. Food evokes the senses and the rituals associated with making, sharing and eating Ladysmith Cake (or any other South African War confection) can invite discussion about national foods and their role in collective memory.

### **What is Ladysmith Cake?**

In the global history of cake baking, Ladysmith is a light batter cake, made in the British (Davidson 2014: 128–130) or Anglo-American cooking tradition (Weaver 2003: 288–292). It took a while for cake to find its place. In the later eighteenth century to early nineteenth century, cakes like Madeira were considered luxury incidental foods, eaten by the social elite and taken with sweet wine or tea (Davidson 2014). By the 1900s, cake baking was more widespread.

The method and order of ingredients matters. To make Ladysmith Cake beat butter and sugar into a cream; next beat some eggs then add alternatively with the dry ingredients cornflour, flour, and baking powder or alternate raising agent. Creaming and beating adds air to the mixture. These air bubbles augment with the heat during the baking process (Davidson 2014). Ladysmith Cake is made of two different coloured batters, which make it similar to Anglo-American Marble Cake – but different. Rather than stir the mixture into each other just before cooking to create the marble effect (Davidson 2014), the vanilla-flavoured Ladysmith Cake batter is layered on top of the spice-flavoured mixture separated by jam filling. The Ladysmith Cake recipe is distinct from the western European pastry/gateau/torte tradition. In addition, modern Ladysmith Cake recipes show a preference for walnuts rather than pecans, which supports the argument there is little evidence of North American influences in this regionally distinct dish. Another cultural factor is how the Ladysmith Cake recipe used everyday ingredients readily available from grocers, merchants and growers. In the early decades of the 1900s New Zealand householders experienced ongoing increased costs (Royal Commission on Cost of Living in New Zealand 1912) therefore, in order for a regional confection to take hold, it needed to fit the budget and fill the stomach.

### **Some Bite-sized Conclusions**

The origin of the Ladysmith Cake recipe is somewhat unclear, which is part of the allure. As collective memory objects, eponymous recipes like Ladysmith gained popularity in New Zealand during the interwar

period when regionally distinct foods formed ideas of a national identity, national diets and national foods. These culinary innovations occurred in conjunction with more reliable, modern cooking technology whether New Zealand made or imported. At this time Kiwi home baking needed to be inexpensive, contain some nutrients and satisfy the appetite, and New Zealand's South African War experience gave rise to a number of new recipes in the Anglo-cake tradition with patriotic titles so that they could be remembered.

The recent 120<sup>th</sup> commemoration of the South African War produced an opportunity to review the long-term impact of the war (e.g. McFadden 2020; Spiers 2020; van Heyningen 2020). While much ink has been dedicated to the idea of the Anzac Biscuit recipe and its connection to World War One, less is known about other commemorative national foods that developed during the same era. A recipe for Anzac Crisps first appeared in 1918, however Khaki, Ladysmith and Mafeking Cake recipes that memorialise New Zealand's South African War experience and demonstrate loyalty to the British Empire were also in circulation and part of this wider national food movement that peaked in the inter-war era. These recipes promoted local, regional ingredients (Holtzman 2006; Ferguson 2010). The "South African war experience set the pattern for New Zealand's later involvement" in other world wars (Crawford 2000), not just from a military history but also from a food history perspective.

The Mafeking Cake recipe, like Seddon Cake, has just about disappeared from cultural memory and the possible link between Khaki Cake and the war is quite hard to prove; yet Ladysmith Cake has endured in national memory as an edible war memorial. As a collective memory object, the recipe has been of service to national identity, with adaptations each generation. While the Ladysmith Cake recipe historical record is fragmented, ephemeral and incomplete, dark heritage provides a useful framework to study eponymous recipes as sites for resistance and renewal.

How could the Ladysmith Cake be considered part of dark heritage? As Amir Amirani explained, dark heritage opens a window onto "alternative" and "hidden histories" (in Burke et al. 2021: v). I argue that this continuing evolution of the idea of the Ladysmith Cake recipe and its folklore can help reconcile the collective trauma experienced by those on the battlefield, under siege, in the concentration camps during the South African War. However, this is only possible if that memory draws in a localised form of restorative heritage praxis. Rethinking about the past can help us understand what happened and why. In South Africa for example, the theme of "not forgetting" shapes Boer women concentration camp testimonies (van Heyningen 2020: 9) reproduced at heritage sites and in history texts. The additional fact that the concentration

camp conditions were even worse for the Black Africans enriches the tragic connection with the folklore of the Ladysmith Cake recipe and heightens its function as a tool for remembering conflict.

How has the evolution of the recipe been a form of resistance or renewal (or how could it)? As an edible war memorial, the rituals associated with making, sharing and eating Ladysmith Cake (or any other South African War confection) can foster conversations about war in relation to conciliation, disarmament and peace. Another factor to reconcile concerns the intersections between race, class and gender. With New Zealand's racial policy geared towards amalgamation, the Crown had no interest in an equal power-sharing relationship with Māori who offered to serve as a unit. Yet as a form of simultaneous protest and support for the war effort, Māori still engaged and have continued to support later offshore military operatives (Webb 2018). These uncomfortable complexities need to be remembered. Another hidden chapter in history concerns the relationship between gender and baking commemorative foods (Cedro 2019). Further investigation into the recipe's transmission and the war using a masculinity, queer and transgender lens is also required.

It is time for journalists, food influencers, historians and individual members of the community to move beyond the Anzac Biscuit and rediscover the complexity of the origins of the Ladysmith Cake recipe and the other South Africa War confections (which aren't really known). To get you started, use the reference to Ladysmith to link the cake recipe to uncover other hidden, often difficult histories. Maybe a thin slice of cake served with a cup of tea or coffee or a small glass of sweet wine can help.

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