

Even George Would Like This Cake

By FAITH GILLESPIE
Queens of Hearts

The day this appears on your doorstep will be George Washington's birthday.

Our son Patrick will be four on the day before, so we were looking at the calendar in gleeful anticipation. There was George Washington's picture.

"Who's that guy?" Patrick wanted to know.

"That's George Washington," I said. "His birthday is the day after yours."

"Where does George Washington live?" was the next question.

"Oh, he doesn't live in the world at all anymore," I explained. "He's dead."

There was a long pause.

Finally Pat asked, "If he has got dead, how come he has a birthday?"

So off we went into a big discussion about how people can have a birthday when they can't have a birthday party, the two ideas being inseparable in the four-year-old mind. That was the part that bothered Patrick.

The part that bothers me is that I said all I had to say about George Washington last year, in spite of the remarkable fact that he is the only person whose birthday is observed as a legal holiday in every state in the union.

As I recall, I said that he was a great man, among other things, but a somewhat destructive child with long hair, so if your son cuts up things with hatchets and refuses to get his hair cut, he may grow up to be President, provided he is steadfastly honest, of course.

Anyhow, several other people were born on February 22, and some of them did some significant things, even if their births aren't honored in every state in the Union.

Among them are the composer Frederic Chopin (1810) and dear old James Russell Lowell the poet (1819), and someone named Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell (all that) in 1857.

Robert Stephenson Baden-Powell was the fellow who invented the Boy Scouts, which is something I never knew before. He was a soldier in the British army, and he decided that British boys weren't getting physical exercise and outdoor life (doesn't that have a familiar ring?), so he got the Boy Scouts going in England in 1907, bless his heart.

As things worked out, however, it is George Washington whose day this is, so I guess it is fitting to publish a recipe in his honor.

This one is a chocolate cake with cherries, and ever since I ate it at a birthday party in 1947, I've thought it was great. It doesn't come from a package mix, but think of old George and the Revolutionary Army at Valley Forge, and the ordeal won't seem half bad.

MRS. BRUNET'S CHERRY CHOCOLATE CAKE

Cream together 3/4 cup soft butter with 2 cups sugar. Cream in 2 egg yolks and 2 squares melted (or liquid) unsweetened baking chocolate.

Sift together 3 cups sifted flour and 1 teaspoon soda. Drain a 6-oz. jar of maraschino cherries into a measuring cup and add buttermilk to make 2 cups. Add flour and liquid alternately to the creamed mixture, beating until smooth after each addition, starting and ending with flour.

Fold in 2 stiffly beaten egg whites. Add the well-drained cherries cut in quarters, and 3/4 cup coarsely broken walnuts. It doesn't hurt to mix a little flour into the cherries and nuts first, to keep them from sinking.

Bake at 350 degrees for 50 to 55 minutes, until a toothpick stuck in the center comes out clean.

Go ahead and have a party for George Washington, even if he can't come.

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