

# ELECTION DAY CAKE

From the mid 17th century, Election Day was considered a great holiday in New England. At that time, Connecticut and New Haven were separate colonies. The sessions of the General Assembly were held alternately between Hartford and New Haven and both towns would try to outdo each other in its festivities.

The Governor was sworn in on the first Wednesday of May when the new gubernatorial term began, no matter when re-elected, and this day was termed Election Day or 'Lection Day. There would always be a big parade. The Governor would be met at the outskirts of the city by Civil and Military Officers with troops and citizens and escorted to the State House to be sworn into office.

Accounts of later years said that picnics would be held by the citizens, children would be given 'Lection Day oranges, men would have a cup of eggnog (or whatever) and the women would always make the famous 'Lection cake.

The following is a recipe I found in the "Westport Advertiser" of May, 1868. I have found reference to this Hartford or Election Day cake in colonial records in 1668.

## Hartford 'Lection Cake

Take a pint of lukewarm milk, a pound of sifted wheat flour, and a small teacup of yeast. Stir gradually together, and set it where it will rise quick. Take a pound of butter, a pound and a quarter of nice sugar; stir them to a cream, and when the sponge is light, work them into it with the hand. Beat four eggs to a froth (the whites and yolk separately) mix the eggs with the sponge, adding (if you can afford it) a wine glass of brandy or wine, and grating in one nutmeg with a little cinnamon. Add another pound of flour, and knead the whole together for fifteen or twenty minutes. The more and better the kneading, the more delicate the cake. Let the dough rise again, and when perfectly light, beat it a few minutes with the hand, and then add one pound of seeded rasins; divide the whole into three loaves, put them into common sized cake pans, well buttered, and set them in a warm place half an hour before they go into the oven. Bake in a quick, but not furious oven, from seventy-five to ninety minutes, according to the heat of the oven using a cover of thick paper if the cake browns too fast.

The lady who cannot make this cake will never be the wife of a governor; and he who does not love it, will never be the husband of a governor's wife.

By Mrs. Evelyn Kerin