

“State Cake” bill introduced

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By Hunter W. Hansen

State Sen. Billy Beasley, D-Clayton, is sponsoring a bill that would give the Lane Cake – a recipe conceived in the 1800s – official status in Alabama.

Beasley, who represents Union Springs, is sponsoring SB 166, which would “designate the Lane Cake, which originated in Clayton, Alabama, as the official state cake,” in the words of the bill.

The bill passed the Senate on April 16 and is pending in the House of Representatives.

Beasley said the Lane Cake is deserving of its proposed title. A wood stove in Barbour County was used to manufacture the first Lane Cake.

Beasley has family ties to the creator of the Lane Cake.

“The cake was first created in the 1800s,” Beasley said, “and was made by Emma Rylander Lane and Lucy Parish.”

The cake was made in the kitchen of Lucy Parish, his wife’s grandmother.

“This would be a special way to honor Mrs. Lane and Mrs. Parish,” Beasley said. “It is a rare recipe and was created right here in Alabama, after all.”

The original recipe for the Lane Cake was a feature in Lane’s self-published cookbook from 1898 titled “Some Good Things to Eat.”

Harper Lee’s novel “To Kill a Mockingbird” mentioned the Lane Cake.

Lane’s cookbook was later reprinted at the request of Beasley’s wife, Rebecca.

The famous Lane Cake recipe consists of four layers of white sponge cake with a mixture of raisins, sugar, bourbon, butter and egg yolks, topped with an old-fashioned white icing.

The cake is often prepared during holidays such as Christmas.

Beasley said he has high hopes that the bill will pass.

Union Springs resident Jill Damron said the bill has her full support.

“The Lane Cake is one of my favorites,” she said. “It’s got a hint of the bourbon, and nothing says Southern like bourbon. Am I right?”

What makes the Lane Cake so good? Beasley said it’s the exceptional filling and white icing.

New interest developed in the cake last year when Slate magazine named the Lane Cake the signature cake of Alabama.

Troy University journalism student Hunter W. Hansen of Montgomery wrote this story as part of a project partly funded by the Alabama Press Association Journalism Foundation.