History of Brownies (Chocolate) Written & Compiled by Mary Gage

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History

This is an updated history with new source materials and print outs of older source materials. It pushes the first published "chocolate brownie" recipe back to 1904. However, more sources are needed to accurately complete the history. Does anyone have access to the following *Boston Cooking School Cook Book* editions: 1900, 1901, 1902, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1906, or any other editions up to 1910? A print out or accurate copy of the brownies recipes in those editions is needed.

1893

Palmer House Hotel

"This dessert was created in the kitchen of the Palmer House Hotel during the 1893 Columbian Exposition when Mrs. Bertha Palmer requested the chef make a "ladies dessert" that would be easier to eat than a piece of pie, and smaller serving than a slice of layer cake, which could be used in box lunches at the Women's Building at the Fair." "This recipe is still served today at the Palmer House Hilton on State Street and is one of their most popular confections." - From Epicurious.com submitted by Laureen2000food submitted March 29, 2009

The popular confection is called *the Palmer House Brownie* which is topped with an apricot glaze. The Palmer House Hotel's recipe given in the article does not state if it is the original recipe or a modified version. The Palmer brownie calls for double the quantity of chocolate that normal brownies recipes use and an apricot glaze. The extra chocolate and glaze is not found in the 1904 - 1910 published chocolate brownies recipes. It seems unlikely the hotel's recipe was copied.

Recipe Formats

Up to 1880 ingredients in recipes were given in paragraph form. In Mrs. Linclon's 1884 edition of the *Boston Cooking School Cook Book* she changed the format in the cake section. She formed two columns and listed the ingredients. At the bottom of the columns she wrote out the instructions in paragraph form. This format took a while to trickle down to the everyday housewife who submitted recipes to community cook books. The 1904 *Home Cookery* compiled by the ladies of the Congregational Church (Laconia, NH) has a good example. The Brownies recipe submitted by Mrs. C.F. Pitman was taken from Fannie Farmer's 1896 *Boston Cooking School Cook Book*. It changes the modern format of listing the ingredients in two columns back to a paragraph format. The two recipes are identical, otherwise. Since individual cooks took it upon themselves to change the format in how a recipe was presented the format can not be used to date a recipe. *The old recipes presented in this article have been converted to a standardized format so the ingredient list can easily be compared*.

The Name "Brownie"

Author Palmer Cox popularized the name "Brownie" with the publication of his book *The Brownies, Their Book* in 1887. With the rise in popularity of the book, commercial businesses developed advertising tie-ins to the name. For example, Kodak names its popular camera "Brownie," various candy companies use "brownie" in the name of their chocolate candy treats, Sears & Roebuck Co. name use the name for a cookie.

[Molasses] Brownie (small cake type) 1896

Boston Cooking School Cook Book (1896), page 424 Boston, Massachusetts

Brownies 1/3 cup butter 1/3 cup powdered sugar 1/3 cup Porto Rico molasses 1 egg, well beaten 7/8 cup flour 1 cup pecan meats cut in pieces Bake in small, shallow fancy cake tins, garnishing top of each cake with one-half pecan

1904

Home Cookery (1904, Laconia, NH) page132 Recipe submitted by Mrs. C. F. Pitman

Brownies (Molasses Cakes) 1/3 cup butter 1/3 cup powdered sugar 1/3 cup Porto Rico molasses 1 egg, well beaten 7/8 cup flour 1 cup pecan meats cut in pieces Bake in small, shallow fancy cake tins, garnishing top of each cake with one-half pecan

This recipe is identical to the Brownies recipe in the 1896 *Boston Cooking School Cook Book* except that is was written out in paragraph format instead of Fannie Farmer's listed format. (It was reformated to list format for ease of comparison)

Brownies (Cookies)

1897

Sears, Roebuck Catalogue 1897, page 16, 3rd column Fancy Crackers, Biscuits, Etc. (Biscuits was misspelled it had a D instead of a B) (Biscuits are semi-sweet English style cookies) *Brownies*, in 1-lb papers Doz. \$1.50 Each \$.14

1905

Home Cook Book, Practical Recipes by Expert Cooks (1905, New York) page 315

Brownies (cookies) 1/4 lb. [1/2 cup] butter 1/4 lb. [1/2 cup] granulated sugar 2 eggs Grated Rind of a Lemon 4 oz. [4 squares] grated chocolate 1/2 cup milk pinch of salt 1 lb [3 cups] flour "Stir briskly together, roll out and cut in brownie or other shapes ..."

Brownie Candies

1898 Candy

The Kansas City Journal, Friday, April 1, 1989, page 12, Newspaper Advertisement Emery, Bird, Thayer & Co.

Confections Chocolate Brownies, regular Price 50 cents pound for15 cents

1901 Candy

The Minneapolis Journal, March 29, 1901, page 5, 1st column, Newspaper Advertisement

Easter Candy Chocolate Brownies, each.....5 cents

1903 Candy

The Washington Times [D.C.], Sunday. December 13, 1903, page 16, Newspaper Advertisement Kann & Sons & Co.

Christmas Candies Chocolate Brownies 12 cents a pound

1905 Candy

The Washington Times [D.C.], December 22, 1905, page 3, bottom right, Newspaper Advertisement

Christmas Candies Chocolate Brownies 12 cents a pound

1907 Candy

The Washington Times [D.C.], December 20, 1907, page 5, bottom center Newspaper Advertisement

Christmas Candies Chocolate Brownies 12 cents a pound

Unknown Type

1904 Mansfield (OH) News, July 13, 1904, pg 5, col.4, Newspaper Advertisement

The Latest *Frozen Fudges* and *Neapolitan Cakes* and *Lemon Wafers* and *Chocolate Brownies* Loiselles Bread and Milk Co.

"Chocolate" Brownies Recipes Neither Cake, nor Candy, nor Cookie

1904	1904	1905 ¹		
Home Cookery	Service Club Cook Book	Boston Daily Globe		
Laconia, New Hampshire	Chicago, Illinois	Boston, Massachusetts		
submitted by Eleanora P. Quniby				

Brownies (p 132)	Bangor Brownies (p 68)	Bangor Brownies (p 34)
¹ / ₂ cup butter	¹ / ₂ cup butter	¹ / ₂ cup butter
1 cup sugar	1 cup sugar	1 cup sugar
2 squares chocolate	2 squares Baker's Chocolate	2 squares chocolate
2 eggs	2 eggs	2 eggs
¹∕₂ cup flour	¹ / ₂ cup flour	¹ ∕₂ cup flour
¹ / ₂ cups chopped nuts	¹ / ₂ cup chopped walnuts nuts	¹ / ₂ cup broken walnuts meats
a little salt	"Spread on baking tins"	"Spread thin in buttered
1 teaspoon vanilla		pans." "Cut before cold"
"cut into bars"		

The first two published chocolate Brownies recipes show up simultaneously in 1904 in New Hampshire and Illinois. These are very different geographical regions one is on the east coast and the other is in the mid west. Both are community type cook books by women's groups:

¹ April 2, 1905 p.34

Congregational Church of Laconia, NH and Service Club of Chicago, IL. These two 1904 recipes have slight variations the Chicago, Illinois recipe is called "Bangor Brownies" and called for Baker's Chocolate. Baker's Chocolate established in 1780 was a Dorchester, Massachusetts company. The New Hampshire recipe is called "Brownies" and called for chocolate squares with no company name attached. The New Hampshire recipe also called for vanilla which did not show up in the Bangor Brownie recipe. Otherwise, New Hampshire's basic recipe is identical to the Illinois recipe. In 1905 the Boston Globe published a Bangor Brownies recipe identical to the Chicago, Illinois Bangor Brownies recipe except it does not reference Baker's Chocolate.

These three earliest published brownies recipes with exactly the same quantity of ingredients with one exception, the addition of vanilla to one of them from three different states, suggests there was originally a single source for the recipe. But what was that source?

1907

Lowney's Cook Book Boston, Massachusetts

Bangor Brownies (p 261)Lo¼ cup butter½ d1 cup brown sugar1 c3 squares chocolate2 s1 egg2 e½ to ¾ cup flour½ d½ to ¾ cup flour½ d¼ teaspoon salt¼ d"cut in strips""cut

Lowney's Brownies (p 265) ¹/₂ cup butter 1 cup sugar 2 squares Lowney's chocolate 2 eggs ¹/₂ cup flour ¹/₂ cup nut meats ¹/₄ teaspoon salt "cut in squares" **1910 Revised Edition** *Boston Cooking School Cook* Book, Boston, MA

Brownies (p 495) ¹/₄ cup butter 1 cup sugar 2 squares Baker's Chocolate 1 egg ¹/₂ cup flour ¹/₂ cup walnut meats no salt ³/₄ teaspoon vanilla "cut in strips"

Lowney's *Bangor Brownies* is different from the 1904 Chicago and 1905 Boston Bangor Brownies. Lowney's recipe has less butter, brown sugar instead of white sugar, an extra chocolate square and one less egg. This recipe seems to come from a totally different source than the Chicago and Boston recipes.

Lowney's Brownies is identical to the 1904 Chicago and 1905 Boston Bangor Brownies with the exception of adding a little salt. Also, it changes the Baker's Chocolate name to its own name, Lowney's chocolate squares.

The 1910 Boston Cooking School's recipe for chocolate *Brownies* is a combination of the 1904 Laconia, New Hampshire's Brownies (2 squares chocolate, and vanilla), and the 1907 Lowney's Bangor Brownies (¹/₄ cup butter, 1 egg and cut in strips). At this point it is unknown if the 1910 Brownie recipe is the same as the 1906 *Boston Cooking School Cook Book* recipe as this earlier recipe has not been posted online and is not available to the author.

Chocolate Companies (Boston Area)

Baker's Chocolate

Baker Company was established in 1780 and located in Dorchester, Massachusetts. It was owned by Walter Baker.
Advertisements: *Boston Cooking School Cook Book*1896, 1910 - Walter Baker & Co.'s Cocoa and Chocolate
1911 - Baker's Cocoa and Chocolate

1912, 1917 - Baker's Cocoa and Chocolate, (Blue Wrapper, Yellow Label)

Walter M. Lowney Company

Lowney's Company was established in 1880 and located on Pearl St., Boston, Massachusetts. It was owned by Walter M. Lowney who was born in Bangor, Maine. Advertisement: *Boston Cooking School Cook Book* 1911 - Lowney's Chocolate Bonbons

Both companies sold cocoa and chocolate for cooking. However, each company specialized in different products. Baker's specialty was cocoa and chocolate bars or squares. Lowney's specialty was bonbons, chocolate candies. Baker's continuously advertised year after year in the *Boston Cooking School Cook Book* because its product was used in the cooking process. Baker's chocolate is still produced and used today. The blue wrapper and yellow label are no longer. Today it comes in an orange and chocolate brown colored box.

Lowney's became a successful chocolate candy manufacturer. In the *Illustrated Boston*, *The Metropolis of New England* it states, "In 1886, he [Walter Lowney] sold \$400,000 worth of goods." "He uses one to two tons of best chocolate every day, and turns out from two to three *tons* of finished goods each day."

What's in a name?

At an unknown date after 1893, the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago named its creation, the "Palmer House Brownie". The brownies recipe on-line has the basic (1 to ¹/₂) ratio of 16 oz. sugar to 8 oz. flour which makes the Palmer's a brownie. But as discussed earlier in this article the Palmer House Brownie used double the chocolate found in other early brownie recipes and in addition it had an apricot glaze which none of the other early brownies recipes used. Although the basic brownies recipe matches the common brownies recipe it is not known if this is the original recipe used by the Palmer House and therefore at this point can not be credited with originating chocolate brownies. Furthermore its name was not used even within the Chicago area as evidenced by the *1904 Service Club Cook Book* published in Chicago.

In 1896 the *Boston Cooking School Cook Book* called its small dark chocolate colored cakes made with molasses, Brownies. In 1904 a local group of women from a church called a baked good flavored with chocolate that had more sugar than flour, Brownies. Also, in 1904 out in Chicago another group of women published a similar recipe to the New Hampshire women and called it Bangor Brownies. The following year 1905, the *Boston Daily Globe* published the same recipe which was also called Bangor Brownies. In 1907 *Lowney's Cook Book* from the Walter M. Lowney's Company in Boston published two recipes one for Bangor Brownies which was different from the earlier ones and Lowney's Brownies which matched the earlier Bangor

Brownies recipes. This suggests the Bangor name got widely associated with Brownies but the recipe was altered by different cooks. And in some cases, the recipe remained the same but the name changed as in the Lowney's Brownies' recipe.

In the 1926 edition of the *Boston Cooking School Cook Book* if you reduced the nuts to a ¹/₄ cup and added a ¹/₄ cup Sultana raisins to the batter you had "Sultana Sticks". In *Hershey's* 1934 Cookbook there is "Chocolate Syrup Brownies". In the 1936 New England Cook Book there is a recipe for "Mt. Holyoke Brownies" (Massachusetts). In the 1947 Social Circle Cook Book, Amesbury, Massachusetts there is a recipe for "Eleanor's Tea Room Brownies". In Eleanor Early's 1954 New England Cookbook there is "Ravine Brownies" from the Ravine House in Randolph, New Hampshire. In a regional cookbook Pennsylvania Dutch Cookbook (1961-1972) they had the most appropriate name "Neither Cake Nor Candy (Brownies)". Their recipe called for a ¹/₂ cup walnuts and ¹/₂ cup raisins.

Named recipes created associations with specific companies, places and establishments like hotels. Early on the Bangor name got attached. There is only one town in the United States with that name Bangor, Maine.

Some of these early recipes had slight alterations and some were copied exactly. What remained a constant was the basic recipe. So what is a brownie? It is a chocolate baked good with a ratio of 1 cup sugar to ½ cup flour. This gives the brownie its rich moist texture that is neither cake, nor cookie, nor candy.

Sears, Roebuck Catalogue (1897) Page 17 DACKERS BISCUITS Tors of FLOE manufacture Crack-series, pickles, baking powder and of course, a resign marke up a reight order, and you know the series of the

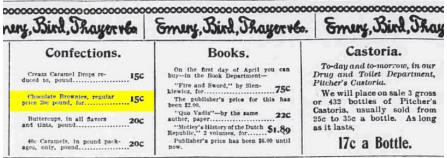
(right) The Washington Times December 13, 1903 Page 16

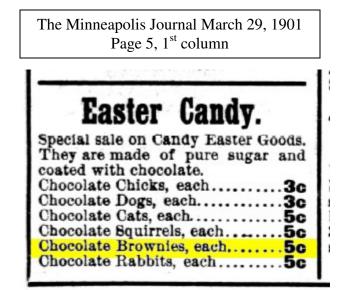
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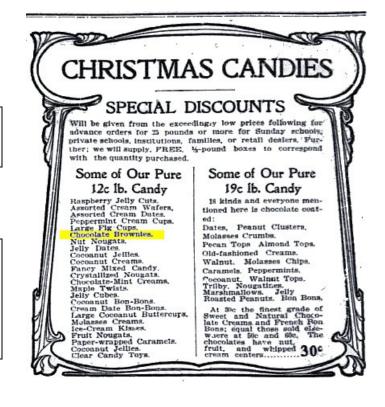
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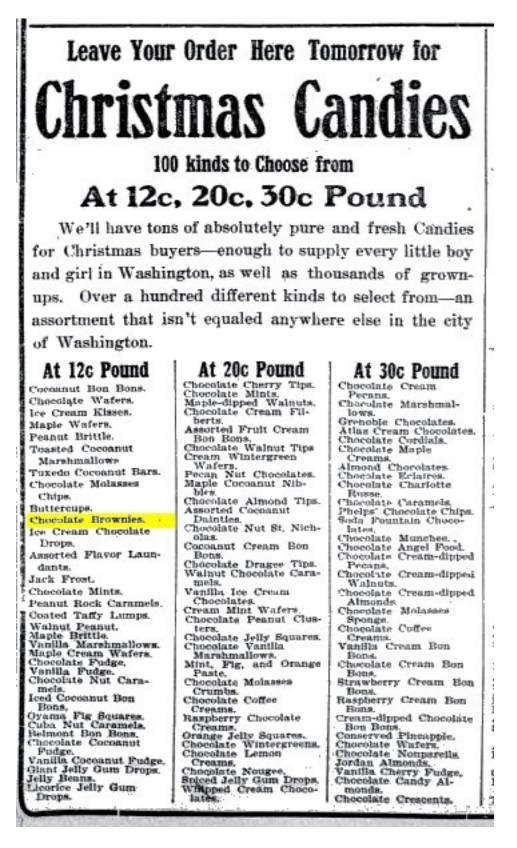
Kansas City Journal April 1, 1898 page 12

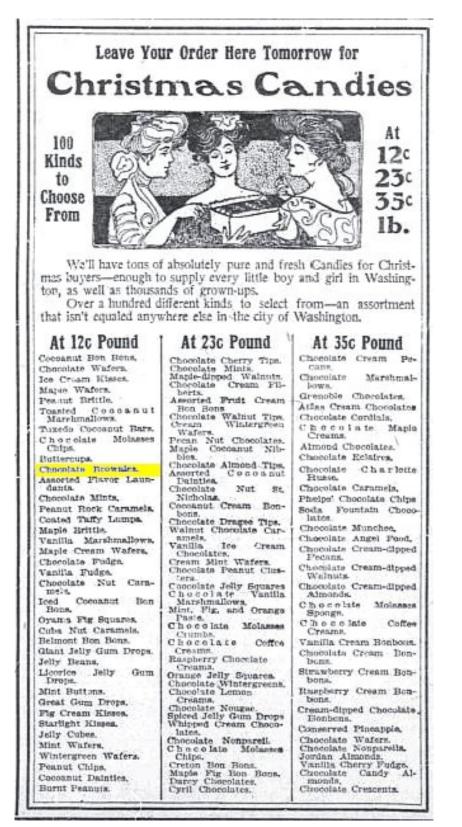
THE KANSAS CITY JOURNAL, FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 1898.











The Washington Times December 20, 1907, page 5, bottom center

Brownies.

1/3 cup butter.	1 egg well beaten.
$\frac{1}{3}$ cup powdered sugar.	3/8 cup bread flour.
1/2 cup Porto Rico molasses.	1 cup pecan meat cut in pieces.

Mix ingredients in order given. Bake in small, shallow fancy cake tins, garnishing top of each cake with onehalf pecan.

Home Cookery (1904, Laconia, NH) page 132

Brownies.

2 squares chocolate, melted,
1 teaspoonful vanilla,
1 cupful chopped nuts,
A little salt.

Bake in quick oven in shallow pan, let rise, then fall. Cut in bars.

Eleanora P. Quinby.

Service Club Cook Book (1904, Chicago, IL) page 68

BANGOR BROWNIES.

Cream one-half cup of butter, one cup sugar. Add two squares (one-quarter cake) Baker's chocolate, melted, two eggs. one-half cup pastry flour and one-half cup chopped walnuts. Spread on baking tins and bake fifteen minutes in a moderate oven.

Lowney's Cook Book (1907, Boston, MA) page 261

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Bangor Brownies

} cup butter	3 squares chocolate
1 cup brown sugar	1 to 1 cup flour
1 egg	1 cup nut meats
	1 teaspoon salt

Put all ingredients in bowl and beat until well mixed. Spread evenly in buttered baking pan. Bake and cut in strips.

Lowney's Cook Book (1907, Boston, MA) page 265

		Lowney's	s Brownies
î (cup butter cup sugar squares Lowney's Chocolate	Premium	2 eggs 1 cup nut meats 1 cup flour 1 teaspoon salt
bu			ining ingredients, spread on en to fifteen minutes. Cut in

squares as soon as taken from oven.

Boston Cooking School Cookbook (Revised Edition, 1910) Page 495

Brownies

- 1 egg, unbeaten 1/2 cup flour 1 cup sugar 2 squares Baker's chocolate, melted
 - ¾ teaspoon vanilla

 - 36 cup walnut meats, cut in pieces

Mix ingredients in order given. Line a seven-inch square pan with paraffine paper. Spread mixture evenly in pan and bake in a slow oven. As soon as taken from oven turn from pan, remove paper, and cut cake in strips, using a sharp knife. If these directions are not followed paper will cling to cake, and it will be impossible to cut it in shapely pieces.