

2019

Review of *Independence Cake: A Revolutionary Confection Inspired by Amelia Simmons, Whose True History is Unfortunately Unknown* by Deborah Hopkinson

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Recommended Citation

Kloosterman, Erin E., "Review of *Independence Cake: A Revolutionary Confection Inspired by Amelia Simmons, Whose True History is Unfortunately Unknown* by Deborah Hopkinson" (2019). *Library Intern Book Reviews*. 230.

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Independence Cake

Hopkinson, Deborah

Illustrated by Giselle Potter

New York: Schwartz & Wade Books, 2017

After the Revolutionary War, a girl named Amelia Simmons lost her parents and needed somewhere to go. She went into service with the Bean family and soon learned how to clean, spin, knit, weave, and garden. Even though her days were full, Amelia wanted to take on a new challenge and wanted to learn to cook in the new American way. She studied cookbooks and taught herself to bake and cook, creating new techniques to help her cakes rise. Her baking became so famous that she was asked to create cakes for George Washington's inauguration. Washington declared her cakes to be delicious, and Amelia went on to share her knowledge of cooking in the first cookbook written by an American. The historical nature of this book would make it an interesting accompaniment to a lesson plan on George Washington or The Revolutionary War, however, educators must be sure to stress that the information is imaginary, not biographical. The illustrations are bright and add to the story, but many of the figures are mature and stylized, and this might be off-putting to some young readers. The recipe included in the back is very informative and could allow a teacher to incorporate STEM activities into the lesson plan.

Optional

Erin Kloosterman, Centennial Library Intern