Family Loaf

This recipe is from Essex, recorded by May Byron for her 1915 cookery book, *Pot-Luck, or the British home cookery book*.

> *Take one and a quarter pounds of flour, two ounces of yeast, one saltspoonful of salt, and about one pint of milk or more, with a little warm water to make the temperature of blood heat. Have a deep basin or better still a small bread-pan, put the flour in and pile it around the sides of the basin to make a deep hole in the centre, mix the yeast in a cup with a little milk and water till it is nice and smooth but not thick. Now pour it into the centre of the flour and sprinkle a little flour on the top of the yeast, cover the basin with a cloth and put it in front of the fire, to rise for about an hour, continually turning the basin round. Then mix lightly with a wooden spoon so that the yeast is well mixed in the flour; then, with a hand, mix in gradually the milk and water, till the dough is nice and light but not too moist. Put the basin on a chair and kneed well with the knuckles till the dough looks nice and smooth. Butter a tin or tins, put the dough in, cover with a cloth and place in front of the fire to rise nicely but not too much. Now have a nice hot oven ready, put the bread on the lower shelf for three-quarters of an hour, and then on the upper shelf with greased paper on top of the tins for another three-quarters of an hour. Watch it about every twenty minutes, for to open the oven too often spoils the bread.*
> *For making brown bread use wholemeal flour instead of ordinary flour.*

This recipe assumes that you have a coal fireplace and a hearth, a Kitchener oven and brewer's yeast. These items are difficult to find today.

To translate:

575g strong white flour; 2 sachets of dried yeast;
1 teaspoon of salt; 750ml of whole milk; 300ml of warm water.

Set the oven at 190°C. Mix the flour, salt and yeast and add the milk. Work into a firm dough using the warm water to top up the liquid as required. Leave to prove in a warm place for an hour. Knock back and kneed, dividing the dough into 2 loaf tins. Prove for 45 minutes then bake in the middle of the oven for 45 minutes. Cool on a rack when baked.

Historical Bread Recipe