

Barbecue: What It Is And What It Isn't

"Call it barbecue if you want to, but it doesn't rate that name in our book."

And with that statement, Billy Arthur, Chapel Hill columnist, editor, researcher and prolific writer on things "Tarheelia," recently took out after the slick magazines and cookbooks that have the "inside know" of making barbecue.

His story, appropriate now that the political season, incomplete without numerous rallies at which barbecue is the main dish (next to the speaker), is reprinted here. People who have never eaten Eastern-North Carolina barbecue, but thought they knew, nevertheless, how real barbecue was made, have a lot to learn, Billy says.

Although the magazines and the cook books and the grocery displays would have one believe every day is barbecue day, actually the season is just now underway in North Carolina.

Somehow North Carolinians reserve the late summer and early fall for the big barbecues at town festivals, tobacco market festivals, tobacco market openings, and camp meetings. Yet, smaller affairs run through the winter and until the late spring. But, what is a barbecue?

What It Isn't

The magazine advertisements and stories would lead one to believe that a barbecue is a cooking device, something built in the wall, or some little shaky metal contraption you fold up when finished, or a more modern affair with telescoping legs and generous beverage coolers that can be rolled in and out of the house.

The same magazines, newspapers, and grocery shelves would have you believe that barbecue is a sauce. Nothing more.

The popular Southern Cook Book, under the heading of barbecue, lists principally sauces of salt, pepper, brown sugar, catsup, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, chili, vinegar, melted butter or oil, sometimes celery. What else does the book say? It adds that these sauces may be used "to barbecue."

Our dictionary defines barbecue thusly: "Noun—a hog, ox, or other large animal roasted or broiled whole for a feast; also, a feast at which barbecue is served. Verb transitive—To roast or broil whole, to cook meat or fish in thin slices in a highly seasoned vinegar sauce."

Therefore the way we read it, barbecue is neither a cooking de-

vice nor a sauce.

Too, the cook book has a recipe from Georgia recommending "baking" a chicken in a 300 degree oven to barbecue it. An Alabama recipe teaches one to brown the meat under a broiler on all sides in a roaster, then cook it in a 350 degree oven in a sauce. That's barbecue?

Getting Close

A Kentucky recipe is one of only two in the book that come close to barbecue as we know it. It is the only recipe that says one ought to have a firebed, to use oak, hickory or beech wood. The basting sauce recommended tobacco, minced onion, garlic and lemon added to the aforementioned basic ingredients.

And, the cook book author says she has used this sauce "to barbecue." Doesn't she mean to baste?

Be it said for the cook book, however, that it does contain a recipe about as close to real barbecue as one can get. It was supplied by Mrs. Henry Clark Sr., mother of Dr. Henry T. Clark of Chapel Hill. But for her recipe, we'd have to grade the book zero as to barbecue.

Origin

The word "barbecue" hails from "barbacoa" and is an at-

tempt to transliterate a native Haytian term for a wooden framework to support meat or fish to be dried over a flame.

As a noun it has come to mean in its most modern significance a large social or political gathering in the open air at which pigs, sheep or oxen are roasted whole and the feasting is in Gargantuan style.

Many a tobacco market has flourished, a cause espoused, a politician elected, and a church fund raised with a barbecue.

Washington Irving considered the barbecue a "festivity or carouse" and reported that at one he attended the "hog (was) split to the backbone and filled with wine and stuffing, cooked on a huge gridiron and basted with wine."

But North Carolinians regard barbecue as one of the necessities of life. And Tar Heels know how it should be done.

Although Georgia may complain, it is not a bold assertion to state that the barbecue in its true sense is a North Carolina institution and that the Brunswick stew, its concomitant, is confined to even narrower limits.

Now's The Season

The summer or the early autumn before the cotton ripens or fall's first chill is the time and the season for the barbecue. Near some spring, a shallow pit is dug, say three feet wide and 18 inches deep, and of length proportioned to the animals to be barbecued.

Generally, the animals are young pigs, known popularly as "shoots," lambs, chickens, and sometimes coon. Beef is not so popular in these parts.

Well-seasoned hickory branches are gathered and a fire made in the pit and one on the outside. Both are allowed to burn only until the coals remain, and these are covered with the white and almost impalpable powder which forms the ashes of a hickory log. From the fire near the pit the dying embers in the pit are renewed when necessary. But the trench fire must be glowing, yet not fervent, and absolutely smokeless.

The animals to be barbecued are carefully dressed and split wide open, then spread-eagled by hickory sticks, reaching from foot to foot so they will lie flat. The basting or the sop, to use a technical phrase, is made in a pot, and its component parts are of special importance, because much depends upon their proportions. Vinegar is, of course, the base, and butter, red bell pepper, black pepper and salt are added.

The animals are placed over the pit, the projecting ends of the sticks not only supporting them but also providing an easy means of turning them over. Some people spread wire over the pit and support the pigs, but they should still be trussed so they'll lie flat.

The genius of the occasion is the barbecuer, be he professional or amateur. He addresses himself to the task and the obligations of his great function with as much gravity and dignity as a President addressing a joint session of Congress.

The meat cooks very slowly; its turns are frequent; and its basting incessant. Five hours or more are required to make it perfect. It is cooked much as primitive man must have prepared it.

The people who are to eat it are, for the time being, primitive men. They walk about in their shirt sleeves—oftimes the barbecuer is minus shirt—and take many an anxious look at the barbecuing. Savory odors fill the air, and no palate, however jaded, can be indifferent to them.

Brunswick Stew

With equal deliberation and care, the preparation of the Brunswick stew has gone ahead. In this most divine of stews, which would make \$64,000 champion Marine Capt. McCutcheon and Oscar of the Waldorf envious, are many ingredients. The tender meat of the young squirrel or rabbit, chicken, boned and chopped fine, butter beans, tender green corn, tomatoes, finely chopped cabbage, red and black pepper, Irish potatoes, butter, salt and a dash of brandy or wine. The proportions, like those of the sop for the barbecue, are secrets to the mixmaster, either evolved in the brain or palate of the maker or handed down as a tradition.

Many people who are so lucky to be at this kind of a barbecue take, more or less, a few preliminary nips during the waiting. The beverages ranging all the way from Coke and coffee to beer and bourbon.

Now—To Eat

And as the sun westerns a little, appetites become sharper.

The quantities eaten are usually so great as to be nearly fabulous. There is always a rattling life of conversation. All the rural and city wits are active. Wide is the range of talk from politics to cotton, and all differences of opinion are made noth-

ing by the benign influence of the barbecue. All men become equal. The rich, the poor, the farmer, the city dweller.

The reputation, and fame, of a good barbecuer goes near and far, nor does it end even with death. His name is mentioned with tenderness at many a feast after his mission on earth is ended. He ranks very far above the

common cooks.

The fame of the Carolina barbecue has been carried far and wide by lucky individuals from other states who were lucky enough to attend a Carolina barbecue; but they can only tell of their delights. They cannot and do not spread the cult of the barbecue. Its votaries are many, its

priests but few.

That's the kind of barbecue we like—not the ones in the magazines and the cookbooks.

By winding a piece of cellophane tape around four fingers, sticky side out, you can easily pick up lint from wool garments, say clothing specialists at State College.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED

TO SEE THE

BEAUTY AND PERFORMANCE

OF THE ALL NEW

1957 Chevrolet

CARS and TRUCKS

ON DISPLAY

OCTOBER 19, 1956

—at—

Sales



Service

PINEHURST GARAGE CO., INC.

Phone 4951

Pinehurst, N. C.



WHAT

Industry Brings

MOST communities, in their own way, have attractions for some kind of industry. When a new industry employing 135 people begins operating in a community, according to The United States Chamber of Commerce, it can mean:

\$787,000 more personal income per year, \$480,000 more retail sales, \$360,000 more bank deposits, 395 more people, 232 more workers employed, 146 more households, 68 more school children.

It can also mean job opportunities at home for graduates of our colleges and high schools who are now leaving the State. What kind of industry is best suited to your own community at this time? It might be a large, highly technical operation. It might be a supplier to other industry. It could be a handicraft operation, or tourist attraction.

Ask for the free booklet on Community Organization for Industrial Development. It lists scores of ideas for products which may be manufactured to advantage in various communities of the State.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT



This is another in the series of advertisements published by this newspaper, a member of the North Carolina Press Association, as a public service in the interest of the State's industrial development program.



—AT—

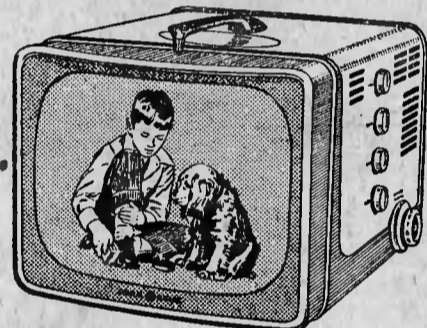
Jones Dept. Store

CARTHAGE, N. C.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18

TV GIVEN FREE

RCA VICTOR
PORTABLE
1957 MODEL



SELECT YOUR
FALL NEEDS NOW
AND USE OUR
LAY-AWAY PLAN
DURING THIS
FALL OPENING
SALE

NOTHING
TO BUY.
JUST COME
IN AND
REGISTER

Drawing for TV Portable
Saturday, Nov. 3 — 5 p.m.

You do not have to be present to win.
Children under 14 not eligible to win

HILL AND HILL 90 PROOF KENTUCKY STRAIGHT BOURBON WHISKEY



\$2.45
PINT

\$3.85
4/5 QUART

THE HILL & HILL COMPANY, DIVISION OF NATIONAL DISTILLERS PRODUCTS CORPORATION, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY.