

The Chitlin Strut

By Joe Lanier

The town of Salley, South Carolina, holds a Chitlin Festival each year the Saturday after Thanksgiving, and it is called "The Chitlin Strut."

ster's dictionary, the correct spelling is Chitterling or chitlings or chitlins. . . But, that is not the way it sounds here in Duplin County or in other southern areas. . . So from here on it is chitlin. To make sure we are all thinking along the same lines, I guess

we'd better define chitlin. A chitlin is a hog intestine and is apt to be over three yards long. The cleaning is very important. . . Some say it needs to be twice slung, stump whipped, and pulled through a forked limb. The smell?

Some say just like the word sounds — raunchy. However, it is also said the smell will send flies, gnats and mosquitos away. Others say the smell is so strong that even leaves on trees will turn the other way. The taste is similar to that of a pork skin, but definitely a taste all its own.

Generally hog guts are used to stuff sausage. The folks in Salley say chitlins are to Salley what Chanel No. 5 is to Fifth Avenue. . . Just think — if the Pilgrims had had chitlins, Salley would be having a turkey strut. . .

Salley began its Chitlin Strut in 1966 in an effort to make a little extra money for the town. There were only about 250 attending the first Strut, but each year the numbers increased until this year, the 17th Chitlin Strut, between 40,000 and 50,000 people were from all over the U.S.A. and even Canada. The town population is 568 and each of the town commissioners is assigned a duty in the pre-preparation for the final day of the Chitlin Strut. . . So, when one is elected to the Town Council, he has three days of manual labor each year free at the Strut. He must work for his town these three days — and most of the three days are 20-hour days.

But the Strut pays off. In 1981 they raised \$16,000 for the town. . . There is no trash pick-up fee, it is free. The water bill is a flat rate of \$3.50. They have a new rescue vehicle. They bought the old train depot and remodeled it into a town hall. They have retired the 1929 Buick fire truck; it is now used only for parades since they have a new one. With the moneys raised this year, they are going to begin the purchase of the old school facility, now abandoned, and turn it into a community center. . . By the way, this is where the chitlin cooking and serving takes place.

In the early years of the Strut, the townspeople did it all. However, it has become too big for them to continue to do it all, and now they rent out spaces, booths and so on and charge \$60 an item. . . For example, if in your booth you would sell hot dogs, popcorn, drinks, candy apples and corn dogs, your fee would be \$300 for that one day. The electricity and water are furnished along with a space to park or set up for the \$300.

The Strut begins each year with a parade at 10 a.m. This year the parade lasted two hours, and it was continuous entertainment from the beginning to the end. Some of the other happenings in-

cluded three country bands entertaining at different locations, a hog-calling contest, a strut contest, a dance, cloggers, a mechanical bull, carnival, helicopter rides, a talent contest, a beauty contest, and all were topnotch.

MYTHS & FACTS

MYTH: Women with acne should avoid all cosmetics.
FACT: Oily cosmetics and heavy moisturizers will

clog pores and make acne worse, but many water-based makeups can be used safely. Because of their ability to cover blemishes, these products provide psychological benefits for many women.

MYTH: Hair must be kept away from the face because it causes acne.

FACT: As long as hair is kept clean and oil-free, contact with the face will not affect acne.

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CHITLINS COOKED THE SALLEY WAY FOR THE STRUT - Boiling, using large syrup kettles. Fill the kettles with chitlins, add onions cut in quarters, salt and pepper. Let cook until tender to cut with a fork. Add

seasoning such as sausage seasoning. Take up from pots and cut into 2- to 3-inch strips and cook with ice. These large kettles were fired for three days, cooking for the 1982 Strut, cooking over 7 tons.



FRYING - Dip the chitlins in flour, add salt and pepper and seasoning. Cook in hot deep fat until golden brown. Serve immediately. Remember, it takes three pounds of raw chitlins to make one pound of fried chitlins.

The price of chitlins from Carolina Pride, a meat packer to the folks at Salley, were 60 cents a pound. They sold a ready-to-eat quarter-pound bag for \$3.



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YEP, THEY'RE GOOD: - Yes sir, good as any I have eaten in Duplin County. I don't know why everyone doesn't eat them, says Donna Lanier.

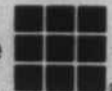
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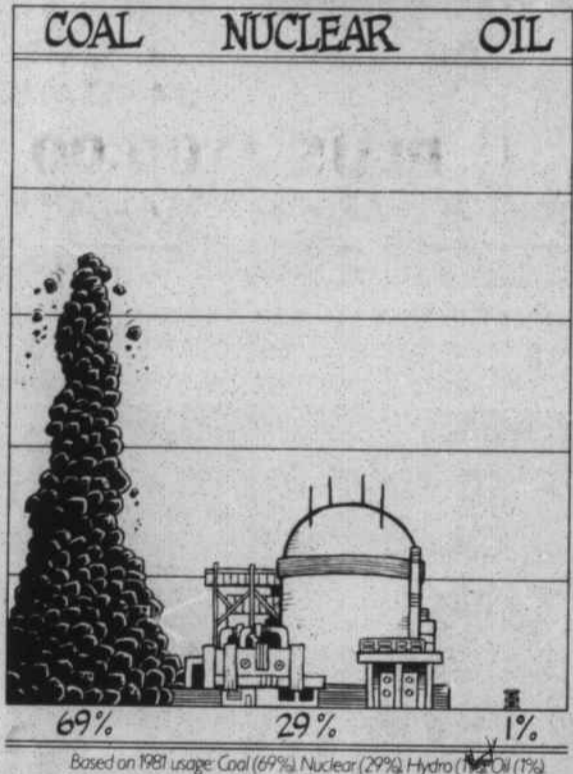


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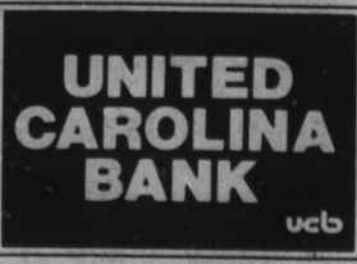
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