



# SON OF A GUN

by Joe Lanier

A family reunion is a fine time to Joe. I really believe in those things, with all the neck-hugging and food. As family members spread out across the land trying to earn a living here and there, it is good to get together and renew family ties. There are so many things that seem to keep the visiting down any more. . . There are baseball games, football games, summer vacations, trips to the beach. There are as many excuses as there are people. And, excuses are just that — excuses. . . I was at the Turner reunion this past Sunday. One set of the Turners, anyway. As usual I overdid it at the eating table. Martha Grey Miller can be counted on for my favorite vegetable, blue butterbeans. She came through again, and as always they were delicious. I tell you, when that gal gets around a cookstove, she knows what she is doing. Her sister, Alda Norris, ain't no amateur either. Fact of the matter, Mrs. Molly Turner taught all her daughters the fine art of cooking. . . And, these daughters have passed it on down, and they passed it on down. It is just a matter of getting them together and spreading the food out. After one of these feasts, I know how Laura Ross felt on her cruise to the Bahamas. Laura, who works for Wilkins Pontiac in Warsaw, just returned from a "ship trip" to the Bahama Islands. The Pontiac place won the trip for selling the most Pontiacs, and Laura was picked to take the trip. She said that in addition to the regular three meals, there was a mid-morning snack, a mid-afternoon snack and a midnight snack. . . Six meals a day — all filled with goodies. However, she was able to maintain control. . . Some folks have lots of willpower and some don't. . . I don't when it comes to food. I spent most of my life being skinny — skin and bones. . . I was the fellow at the beach that got sand kicked in his face. I even sent off for the Charles Atlas course to help me "fill out to my potential," but it didn't work. . . I even sent off to Radio Station WCKY in Cincinnati, Ohio for some "Weight On." That didn't work either. . . Those were the days when I had to wear a belt to keep my pants up. Now days, I wear a belt for decoration. My belly holds my pants up. . . I think my mom has a lot to do with my overweight now. She made me eat all that was on my plate, saying some children overseas didn't have enough to eat. I never did figure out how my eating turnip greens and rutabagas would keep children overseas from being hungry, but I ate it anyway. . . Some folks said I ate so much I was poor from carrying it around. . . In later life, I find that not to be true. Most parents had a hard time getting their children to eat spinach, but not mine. . . I read where Popeye got big from eating it. I ate lots of it, but it didn't work. Still the skinny little fellow. . . Now that it is fashionable to be skinny, I am overweight. One last thing on this family reunion business. Don't use an excuse not to go to your family's reunion, whether it be on the husband's side or the wife's side. Go to both. I am aware it is not the "in-thing" for the younger generation, and they usually don't like to go. But, we older folks are supposed to show them some of the finer things in life. So bring them along, like it or not. They need it the worst, to be sure — family ties. I am speaking of.

I was listening to Glenn Braswell tell of taking a bath in the "good old days" when the bathtub was a tin washtub with the soap, lye soap. And the only place to keep warm while bathing when it was cold was beside a wood-burning heater. Glenn and his brothers (he has three of them) were all taking baths on a cold winter night. . . probably on Saturday night. . . in the room where the heater was putting forth warmth. . . The side of the tin trash-burner was red hot. Brother Charles complained of being cold as he stood near the heater in the nude. Get closer to the heater, said his mom, who was doing most of the washing of the boys. . . They never would wash behind their ears. . . So Charles backed up a little more, but a little too much. As his rear hit the red hot heater, a frying sound was heard. . . Sizzle. . . Then a scream. Charles jumped straight up in the air, where he ran for about three minutes before hitting the hard wood floor. . . Off he zoomed and went straight under the bed. . . Took us an hour and a half to get him from under the bed," said Glenn. As he was crying and everyone was soothing him, his brothers were laughing. . . "He didn't get very close to a heater after that," said Glenn. . . "But it could have been worse." . . Son-of-a-Gun. . .

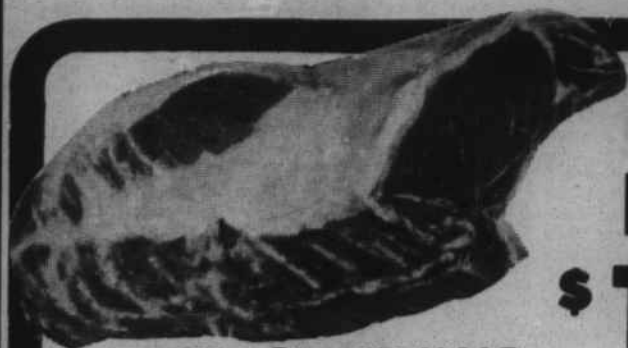
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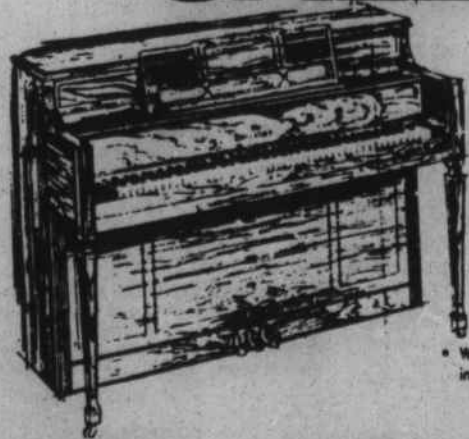
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