

Hog Killing Pamlico County Style

Pamlico County's environment has, for hundreds of years, been kind to its inhabitants by providing fish, oysters, shrimp, crab, wild game and a rich earth for harvesting crops and raising animals. To enjoy nature's abundance, people have worked hard and often times combined work with pleasure. Such is the case with hog killing which is done today just as it was done a hundred years ago. This is one of the unique things about Pamlico County and hopefully the tradition will be handed down to future generations.



At 4:00 a.m. the fires were started under the iron pots to have the water boiling by daylight.

THERE'S A PLANTING AND A HOG KILLING TIME

The moon, according to legend, influences hog killing time just as it does other areas of life.

Old timers say that if a hog is killed on the decrease of the moon that you get more lard or the lard "tries out" better. Planting works basically the same way and certain crops should be planted during certain phases of the moon. Another saying claims that if you dig a hole and fill it on the decrease of a moon you won't have enough dirt and if you dug a hole on the increase of a moon, you'll have too much dirt.



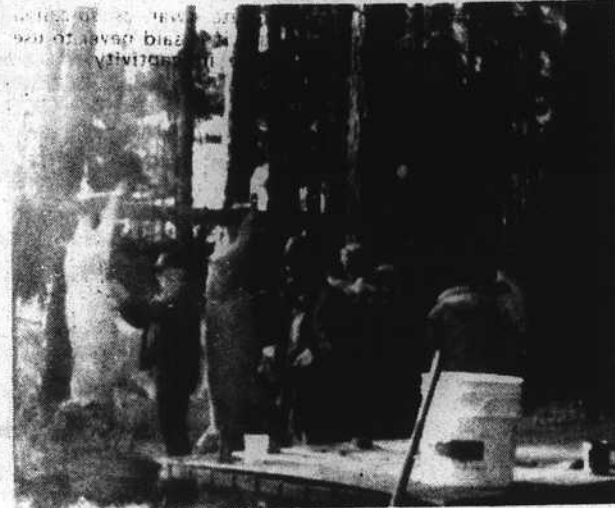
The hog has been placed in the vat of boiling water and the hair tested for scraping.

Frank Learys of Vandemere, entered into a joint hog killing.

It all began about 4:00 a.m. on November 19 at the very last of the full moon—with the first preparation being that of starting the fires under the large iron pots. Two men from Virginia were also in on the hog killing...their first hog killing.

The water in the iron pots was boiling by day break. At the first crack of daylight, the hogs were killed with a gun shot and immediately stuck in the throat for bleeding. They were brought to a large vat filled with boiling water, temperature of approximately 150 degrees, to prepare the hog for scraping the hair off. The water temperature is critical since it can set the hair if it is too hot. The testing begins at this point...with the rolling and turning of the hog in the vat of boiling water. The hog is rubbed to determine if the hair is becoming loose and ready for scraping. The Hams, Learys and others prepared a thick bed of clean straw to lay the hogs on after removing them from the vat for scraping. The hog was removed and scraping begun by David and Billy Paul, Jim Ramsey, Ponce Ham, Ponce Jr., and Cliff Mezitta. Ponce stated that hog scrapers are used now but scraping used to be done with large butcher knives. It takes about 5 minutes to scrape a hog that weighs about 200 pounds. Ham said that you have to scrape quickly because as the hog cools the hair begins to set. The straw helps keep the hog clean and also helps hold some of the heat in while the scraping is being done.

After the scraping is completed, the hog is run up a scaffold, hanging it by putting a gaffle in the heel strings (leader or tendon). The hog is then split by cutting the belly side, starting at the hind legs and continuing straight down the middle to the neck. The cutting has to be done carefully so that the intestines are not cut. After splitting, the intestines, liver, lites and haslet are removed. The gutting was done by Henry Williams, Frank Leary and D. L. Carawan. The fat was then cut from these parts and saved for lard. The hogs were left hanging to cool approximately 1 1/2 hours.



The hogs are hanging on the scaffold.

DINNER BELL RINGS

While the hogs cooled the traditional dinner was spread. Mary Ellen Ham and Gladys Leary prepared about 65 hot homemade biscuits, collards, fresh meat stew which is a traditional dish, sweet potatoes, tea and homemade coconut pie.

HOG KILLING TIME NOVEMBER 19, 1980

The Ponce Ham family, along with Karen Verme and the



This hog has been scraped, split and is now in the process of being cleaned.

FULL STOMACHS AND BACK TO WORK

The hogs cooled and were removed from the scaffold and placed on the cutting table. Helping with the cutting were Mrs. Allie Leary of Hobucken, Mrs. Rachel Williams of Rt. 1 New Bern, Debbie Hudson of Cash Corner, Sadie Paul, Patricia Pegram and Lola Carawan.

The hogs were cut into hams, shoulders, rib sides, pork chops, etc. 85 pounds of sausage was made and 1 stand of lard, which is equal to about 5 gallons, along with cracklings...a fine show for this November 19 day.



The hog is placed on the cutting table...and as you can see, they didn't waste any time!

PICKLING RIB SIDES

The Hams also pickle their own rib sides or salt pork. Ponce and Mary Ellen placed the sow belly and rib sides in dry salt for about 3 weeks. At the end of three weeks, they removed the meat from the juice-like salt. The salt draws the juices from the meat.

To make the pickling solution, they filled a large pot with water and placed a raw egg in the shell into the pot. The salt is then added to the water until the egg floats. When the egg floats, the brine is right. The egg is removed. The Hams placed the sow belly and rib sides in a large plastic container and poured the brine or pickling liquid over the

pork. They suggested using only plastic, glass, or enamel containers, crocks or wooden barrels for pickling since some metals are corrosive.



Judging from the smiles on all the faces, work, fun and a home-cooked meal are a good combination.

MAKING LARD & CRACKLINGS

The fat scraps were saved from the intestines, lites, etc. and cut into chunks for making lard.

The fires were set under the iron pots and the chunks of fat were dropped in. When the lard "tries out" it is strained through cheese cloth leaving the cracklings strained out. The cracklings are used in corn bread or in hot biscuits.

SOAP MAKING

Ponce Ham's grandmother, Mrs. Lola Carawan of Mesic, recalls her memories of soap making. Years ago she made her own lye soap. Mrs. Carawan said that lye soap was a fine soap for washing clothes, leaving them fresh and bright. Washing, many years back, was an ordeal since clothes were boiled in iron kettles outside and well water was not always near by.

Like Mrs. Carawan's mother, Mrs. Carawan always soap. She used the parts of the hog that were scraps, including fat trimmings, and skin.

Again, the iron kettles were fired-up outside with the pork trimmings placed in the kettle. Water was added to cover the scraps and about 1 cup of lye was added to this. She used the scraps from 4 or 5 hogs. The cooking process begins and the lye eats up the scraps as the soap cooks.

"The soap," said Mrs. Carawan, "is tested much like you do candy...taking out a spoonful occasionally to test it for hardening. If it holds its shape and becomes firm, you know it's ready." When pouring her soap up, she used a long, large container to pour it in. When it was hard, it was cut into blocks and then placed on a board to store in the smoke house.

WASH DAY

When wash day came, usually on Monday and Friday, Mrs. Carawan would place lye soap shavings and water into her iron kettle outdoors and let it come to a boil. Before placing her clothes in the kettle, she would use a "rub board" to help loosen stubborn stains. The pre-rubbed clothes and linens were ready for the wash pot. They were placed in the kettle and moved gently around and around in the soapy water with a large stick. After they came to a boil, they were removed from the wash kettle with the stirring stick and the "rub board" process repeated. They were then rinsed and hung on the line to dry in the fresh air and sunshine. By 8:00 in the morning Mrs. Carawan had her washing finished. Said Mrs. Carawan, "I loved it, and wish I could do it again."

Aurora Jr. Youth Meet

On February 15 the Aurora Jr. Youth met at the church with 15 members present.

Individuals were remembered with cards by the group. Bible stories were told.

At the close of the meeting, refreshments were enjoyed.



Slang for a crew-cut is a "pig shave."

Trojans Take Two

The Trojans were faced with their "second" tough game of the near-ending season. They entertained the Mattamuskeet Lakers in Aurora on Tuesday, February 10. Two Trojan squads came out victorious.

The Aurora Junior Varsity has recuperated from its loss to the Junior Bulldogs as they led 31-22 at halftime and 48-32 at the end of the 3rd quarter. They then ended the game with a final score of 72-53. Their TBC standing is 16-1, the number one team!

The Lakerettes swam their way to a 45-53 victory. The Trojanettes were behind by only 2 points (12-14) at the end of the 1st quarter. Both teams played excellent defense which showed in their half-time score of 24-27. The 3rd

quarter was the highlight of the game as both teams performed great shooting skill with the score 38-41 at the end of the quarter. Even after much hustling the Trojanettes could never overcome their guests.

The skilled Trojan varsity squad stayed safely ahead of their competitors throughout most of the game. The Trojans led 15-8 at the end of the 1st quarter and 35-22 at halftime. The Lakers surged back in the 3rd quarter and were trailing by only 6 points. In the final quarter the Trojans fought to stay ahead, with 55 seconds on the clock, the score was 56-53. The Trojans managed to fit 5 points into that span of time and defeated the Lakers 61-56.

Goose Creek Island Ladies' Auxiliary

The Goose Creek Island Volunteer Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary met February 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the Lowland Community Building with 11 members and 1 new member present.

Appreciation was expressed to those who made the Soup & Hot Dog Day such a success on February 7th.

The Auxiliary recognized a profit of \$296, plus a \$200 donation that was greatly appreciated.

There is a membership drive underway for February.

The Auxiliary will hold their next meeting on March 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the Hobucken Community Building.

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Morton House 24 oz. BEEF STEW 1.29		Kraft 1/2 gal. ORANGE JUICE 1.19	
Mericco Butterme not BISCUITS 3 cans/1.00		Joy, Dishwashing 22 oz. LIQUID 99¢	
Mazola 1 lb. MARGARINE 79¢		Glad 10 TRASH BAGS 1.29	
Sue Bee 1 lb. HONEY 1.19		Made Rite long loaves BREAD 3/1.00	
Maxwell House 10 oz. COFFEE 3.99		head LETTUCE 39¢	
Pocahontas Cut GREEN BEANS 3 '1.00		Fresh lb. TOMATOTES 59¢	
Pocahontas Cream Golden CORN 2 cans/89¢		lb. RUTABAGAS 19¢	

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<p>Sunday Buffet</p> <p>Served from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm CHOOSE FROM</p> <p>Shrimp, oysters, roast beef, clam strips, fried chicken, 6 vegetables, a variety of desserts & rolls.</p> <p>All you can eat \$3.75 Children 4-11 \$2.75 Children under 4 No Charge Beverage extra</p>	