

Christmas Electric Carnival booklet shares recipes for then-modern stoves of 1936

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Limestone County Archivist

It must have thrown a bunch of Southern cooks for a loop to suddenly un-learn all they knew about cooking on a wood stove and tweak their recipes for the new-fangled electric ovens showing up in kitchens all over Limestone County.

Fortunately for the cooks of 1936, the Farm Bureau and TVA were ready with a three-day Christmas Electric Carnival, Dec. 3-5 at the courthouse and downtown, complete with cooking demonstrations, a free "moving picture" at the Ritz Theatre, and the presentation of the play, "Tombstone or Washing Machine."

"For many months the Farm Bureau has worked towards bringing cheap power into rural sections of Limestone County," the *Alabama Courier* of Dec. 3, 1936, stated. "It is only fitting now that this great necessity has become a reality that the Farm Bureau should sponsor a fine celebration."

So the Limestone County Commission opened the courtroom and halls of the Limestone County Courthouse to host the carnival, and the *Courier* predicted: "It is believed that much interest will be shown in this great event and that this will be the first step towards making our Athens-Limestone County power development the best anywhere."

Today, you can relive the excitement of the Carnival with reproduction copies of the Carnival program and recipe booklet, available at the Limestone County Archives for \$5 each.

The program opens with a "Brief History of Power Development in Limestone County," which relates:

"Prior to June 1, 1934, the City of Athens purchased power from a private company and distributed it to approximately 650 city customers at comparatively high rates. The rates were so high that very little electrical equipment was used in homes. In fact, there were about 160 refrigerators, 55 ranges and 1 water heater in use. Then, on June 1, 1934, Athens began purchasing power from the TVA and retailing it at the standard TVA scale of rates. These low rates encouraged greater use of electricity, until now Athens, for its size, is the best electrified city in the country. There are now approximately 530 refrigerators, 275 ranges, and 110 water heaters in use."

The program reported that the City of Athens would soon be serving more than 600 rural customers in addition to the electric customers they already had in town.

"This, in itself, is a wonderful undertaking and is one of the largest county-city systems in the country," the *Courier* said. "With the city serving the county, no other one thing could possibly bring both closer together and as time rolls on, this is certain to bring both much real benefit and harmony."

The Christmas Electric Carnival program includes several recipes designed for use with the then-new-fangled technology of electric ovens and refrigerators. To check out the rest of the program and recipes, and to order a reproduction copy of it, visit the Limestone County Archives, or call the Archives at 256-233-6404 or e-mail lcarchives@knology.net.

"Surface Meal"

Pork Chops and Rice

6 pork chops

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup uncooked rice

3 cups canned tomatoes

3 tbs. chopped onion

3 tbs. green pepper

1-1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
2 tbs. fat

Trim chops. Salt, pepper and flour them. Brown chops in skillet using "Medium" heat. Combine uncooked rice, onions, tomatoes, salt, pepper, and green pepper. Pour over chops and cover. When the mixture steams turn switch to "Low" and steam for one hour. Serves 6.

Party Ginger Snaps

1 cup molasses
1/2 cup shortening
2 tsp. ginger
3-1/4 cup flour
1/2 tsp. soda
1-1/2 tsp. salt

Heat molasses to boiling point and add shortening. Sift the flour, soda, ginger and salt, then add to molasses. Shape in rolls about 1 1/2 inches in diameter and 8 inches in length. Wrap in wax paper, and store in refrigerator until wanted. Slice and bake in a hot oven (400 degrees F) for 10 to 15 minutes.