Boucherie to relive its history at Vermilionville

In the days before electric refrigeration - more than 100 years ago in South Louisiana - neighbors gathered almost every weekend during the winter months for a boucherie. On January 26, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., members of the Vermilionville community and volunteers will recreate the custom of preparing a pig and cooking up various products so that everyone could have fresh meat during the winter. Activities will be centered at the Fausse Point living history area and at La Forge, the blacksmith's forge.

Vermilionville craftspersons and interpreters will take part in the preparation and cooking of such traditional boucherie foods - tuffs as gratons (cracklins), boudin (rice sausage), fresh sausage, frie, casse de rentier (backbone stew), and will explain through their actions why boucheries were so common more than a century ago.

Folklorist Dr. Barry Ancelet of the University of Southwestern Louisiana describes boucheries as much more than a means of assuring one's family of fresh meat during the winter months. He says the custom provided a way for friends and family to meet, exchange information, and get to know each other on a regular basis. He credits boucheries with forging the closeness, interdependence, and trust still very evident among pioneering families in South Louisiana of the 1800s.

Bite-size samples of boucherie products will be available to members and visitors, and larger portions will be available for purchase in La Cuisine de Maman (Vermi-