Cutting Of Last Sugar Cane Still Cause For Big Celebration

By MRS. TOTTIE GUIRARD

CATAHOULA — In the old days, any corn, sugar cane, tobacco, fell had more time for having their own fun instead of looking and listening to others enjoying theirs. Also, they enjoyed many celebrations which we are no longer forgetting and which our children know nothing about.

I have in mind a particular celebration which I enjoyed as a child and which my family and friends and Jim and I enjoyed again this harvest season. This celebration was the "Cutting of the Last Sugar Cane." Before we had cane cutting machines, all cane was cut by hand. The workers arrived early in the morning and worked late into the afternoon. This was called "can't see" and "can't eat!" that is, from "can't see AM. at "can't see" P.M.

Race With Time

With farm families it was a race with time against an early frost. Workers worked wherever they were cutting. This meant that food was prepared and served in the fields by the women who "cooked on the hoof." The men set out preparing the food and kept the bowlers filled. They also drank while they cut and started the "cold snap" on the morrow, at sunset, the fields were water cane and we had one whopper (the fields were water cane and we had one whopper) but who can stand still of a celebration even "more" than the one we had.

Our Celebration

One afternoon at sunset, on the most beautiful afternoon we had ever seen, we had a last sugar cane cutting celebration.

Jim and I invited our neighbors (who also grew sugar cane) and their children and all of those who grow our cane for us. In all, I think we were about 25 Cajuns.

We had set up a table on a farm lane and on it we had bottles of wine and ice cold beer and soda and papers to go with it. Orphe (Baby) Romero came from town and played the accordion according to us.

Dance In Mud

After I'm and I had offered our prayers of thanksgiving and after Jackie and Howard, finally concluded the last sugar cane in that whole big field we had, we all settled down and everything we could think of. Soon we were all into the cold wind blowing and so we turned the water running into our shoes and the mud which almost, but not quite, kept us from dancing.

Jim had not gone down three long planks for the women to stand on (the fields were water logged) but who can stand anything when Baby plays his accordion better than what we used to and soon we all moved over to the turnrow and no one cared about the mud.

It was as though God had accepted our prayers of Thanksgiving and had added for our enjoyment the most beautiful sunset any of us had ever experienced.

As this set in, the whole sky turned to gold. Back of us a sliver moon started its way across the heavens. We saw the moon after dark and the crescent flying in perfect formation in the golden sky.

The Last Canes

What a setting for Cajuns dancing and celebrating in their own fields, with their friends and neighbors, the cutting of the last sugar cane.

Certainly this called for a celebration and celebrate their God. One stalk of cane was left standing in the field. Neighbors were advised of the fact that the moonrise was a sure tip. The last stalk would be cut. The neighbors took an hour off from their own gathering and all rushed to the celebration.

Canes were used as torches. Men put the long sticks in their belts or carried them to the bouquet.

Stalks were stuck in the happiness and colors and made the area look like a thousand candles placed at the sides of the roads.

Ribbons and colored paper turned the last stalk of cane and the children sat about in a circle, laughing and singing.

Joy Of Wine

A glass of wine or whiskey, or both was passed around and the children enjoyed homemade and sea cakes. They sang old French songs and congratulated the host on his good fortune. The climax came when the host passed around and congratulated the host on his good fortune. The climax came when the host on his good fortune. The climax came when the host on his good fortune. The climax came when the host on his good fortune. The climax came when the host on his good fortune. The climax came when the host on his good fortune. The climax came when the host on his good fortune.

Music. The stalk is adorned with colorful garlands and paper and a bright aluminum foil.

Lively Music — A glass of wine and a quarted Cajun fiddle dance in the field and the children danced to the music of paper and a bright aluminum foil.

Fun Now

Our Cajun ancestors did not miss a chance to have fun and a celebration was hardly over before another was in the making. Cajuns say "when you're dead it's for a long time, we have fun NOW!"

This year God was especially good to us, which does not mean that He didn't give us a hard time. First a high-water scare and then Hurricane Carmen came along. Finally, Hurricane Carmen weakened just before reaching us and the cold weather held on, even as the rains fell off until all of our cane was cut and hauled to the mill. All. Nearly every last cane and it became our very own last sugar cane and we had one whisper of a celebration even "more"