Pecan Hole was once a popular game of Cajun children. It resembles the game of marbles, but is played with pecans.

First a hole measuring approximately five inches deep is dug in the ground. Then a line is drawn about six feet from the hole, the same distance as a line is usually drawn for a marble ring, and for the same reason: to “lag” for first and subsequent plays.

The players lag by tossing a pecan toward the line. The one whose pecan lands nearest the line starts the game by tossing a handful of pecans toward the hole while standing behind the line. The aim is to see how many pecans you can get in the hole. The number of pecans initially tossed is determined before the game starts. After the first throw, the game continues with each player “shooting” pecans in the hole until he misses, at which time the next player takes his turn.

“Shooting” is done by placing the fingernail of the middle finger against the back of the first joint of the thumb and flipping the finger against the pecan, sending it gliding toward and hopefully into the hole. All pecans in the hole on a single play belong to the remaining pecans can be shot by anyone having a turn. Once the game is underway, the players can shoot any pecans on the ground. This is how the game is won or lost.

But often winners and losers are not decided by the number of pecans they return home with. For if one has managed to exchange some small hard pecans for some large soft-shelled ones, numbers are rather irrelevant. However, if one started with some good eating pecans and leaves with some old “hog pecans,” he definitely comes out a loser.