

Oct 1979

# Forget the H-bomb. H

*Wish I had time for just one more bowl of chill. — The dying words of Kit Carson.*

**UP IN THE** Texas Panhandle there used to be a great old black cowboy and range cook by the name of Mathew "Bones" Hooks.

Hooks made some of the best chili in the Lone Star State and out under our wide and beautiful skies would have folks — black, brown, and white — flock to the chuck wagon to partake of the delectable fiery food.

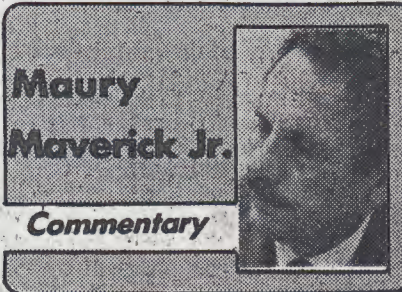
As Bones would dish out the good food, he had all his admirers gather 'round first so he could give his chili prayer. Here it is:

*Lord, you know us old cowhands is forgetful. Sometimes I can't even recollect what happened yesterday... But I sure hope that we don't never forget to thank you before eatin' a mess of good chili. The Chinese don't have no chili, ever. The Russians don't know no more about chili than a hog does about a side saddle. Even the Mexicans don't get a good wiff of it unless they stay around Texas... Chili eaters is some of your chosen people. We don't know why you are so doggone good to us. But, Lord, don't ever think we ain't grateful for this chili we are about to eat. Amen.*

A **BRACKENRIDGE** High School queen — a queen again at Trinity University with top grades to go with it — her name was Loretta Utterback, a South Side girl, in 1956 crossed Houston Street, made the great leap to the North Side, and married Herschel (Herkey) Bernard, the grandson of Rabbi Solomon Solomon. (The rabbi's parents liked the name so much they gave it to him twice.)

**CHARLES RAMSDELL**, once editor of the weekly magazine of this newspaper and one of the best fellows you ever saw — he too up there now with the ghost writers — put all doubt to rest as to the origin of chili when he wrote, "The one thing that comes from San Antonio, Texas — and nowhere else — is chili con carne."

William Porter (O. Henry) knew our San Antonio chili, which he described as "the titillating odor of this concoction" in his short story "The Enchanted Kiss." Will Rogers walked away from some San Antonio chili and called it "this bowl of blessedness." As U.S. Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez once told me, primitive chili probably originated when some old range cook had a tasteless stew and in desperation threw some chilipiquines into the pot. But Henry really doesn't know because his



Finding herself married to a matzo ball gourmet, Loretta ever so slowly, patiently, and with Presbyterian love, weaned her husband away from the delicacies of the Old Testament.

This devoted couple, then young and starry-eyed, spent years experimenting on ways to make chili, and at last came up with a concoction not heretofore given the general public. My presenting this recipe to you, as I am now about to do, is like publishing the secret of the H-bomb in Progressive Magazine. But nothing is too good for you, gentle reader. Here goes.

- 3 lbs meat, cubed (not ground)
- 1/4 teaspoon cayene
- 2 tablespoons cumin
- 5 tablespoons chili powder
- 8-ounce can tomato sauce
- 3 cloves garlic, pressed
- 2 teaspoon sugar
- 3 tablespoons paprika
- 4 cups water
- Salt as needed

Cook meat with two tablespoons vegetable or olive oil until grey in color. Add water. Simmer for three minutes. Then add remaining ingredients. Mix well. Let simmer for about two hours or until meat is tender. If you wish to thicken, add masa harina during the last 10 minutes of cooking.

You may think I am as ignorant about chili as I am about everything else, but you are wrong. No less a figure

people came here from Mexico around the time of Madero and nobody knows anything in Mexico about chili con carne.

**REFINED CHILI** has international touches to it. Take the herb cumin and the words of Isaiah of the Old Testament, "For the plowman doth scatter the cumin." References to the tithing of grain in Deuteronomy 14 and Leviticus 27 are interpreted by the Mishna, the written codification of the Judaic oral law, to include cumin. In many ways, refined chili con carne is a Jewish dish. Jews are into everything, you know.

And take the Texas Germans. How could there have been modern chili without the Teutonic efficiency of William Gebhardt?

And take my friend state Rep. Lou

than the late H. Allen Smith had this to write about me in a 1967 issue of Holiday Magazine:

"Maury Maverick, Jr. is a true chili man in one respect — he speaks out against other chili cooks" saying for example, of California chili, "with all that damn sweet stuff in it, it's like eating a strawberry sundae."

**ON THE WEEKEND** of Oct. 21, 1967, just west of Big Bend National Park, at Terlingua, I acted as one of the judges in the first international chili cooking contest, between two of the great chili cooks of the world: H. Allen Smith and Wick Fowler.

Both are among the ghost riders in the sky now, but while with us made an impact on their fellow earthlings surpassed only by Loretta Utterback Bernard.

Wick was an old newspaper man and president of the 2 Alarm Chili Co. That company makes a pre-packaged chili con carne mix which you can buy anywhere around town, and next to Loretta's chili it's the best thing going.

H. Allen Smith was author of such literary gems as "Low Man On The Totem Pole," "Life in a Putty Knife Factory," and "The Pig in the Barbershop."

The referee in the contest at Terlingua that weekend was Frank S. Tolbert of the Dallas Morning News. Frank now owns one of the best chili joints in the Lone Star State, which you can find at 802 Main St. in Dallas.

After the great chili prayer by Bones Hooks, we sang a song to the tune of "Hello Dolly," "Hello, Terlingua; yes, hello, Terlingua. If you need a smile from a large reptile, Terlingua is the place for you."

Our official bird was the buzzard, our flower was a marijuana leaf, and we had a cross-section of all religions as evidenced by the attendance of some superior ladies from the Tarantula Chapter of Hadassah.

Nell Sutton. She told me one time, "Everybody on the East Side knows that white folks can't make chili." The uppity woman thinks blacks make the best chili.

And last, but not least, take the Irish. The Tobin family opened the first chili canning company in the town in 1884. Chili is a United Nations dish.

The truth of the matter is that chili did originate in San Antonio, and we all had a hand in it, except the Mexicans. People of San Antonio, devoted readers, to this column, congratulate yourselves. Now you go try Loretta's recipe. You hear?

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