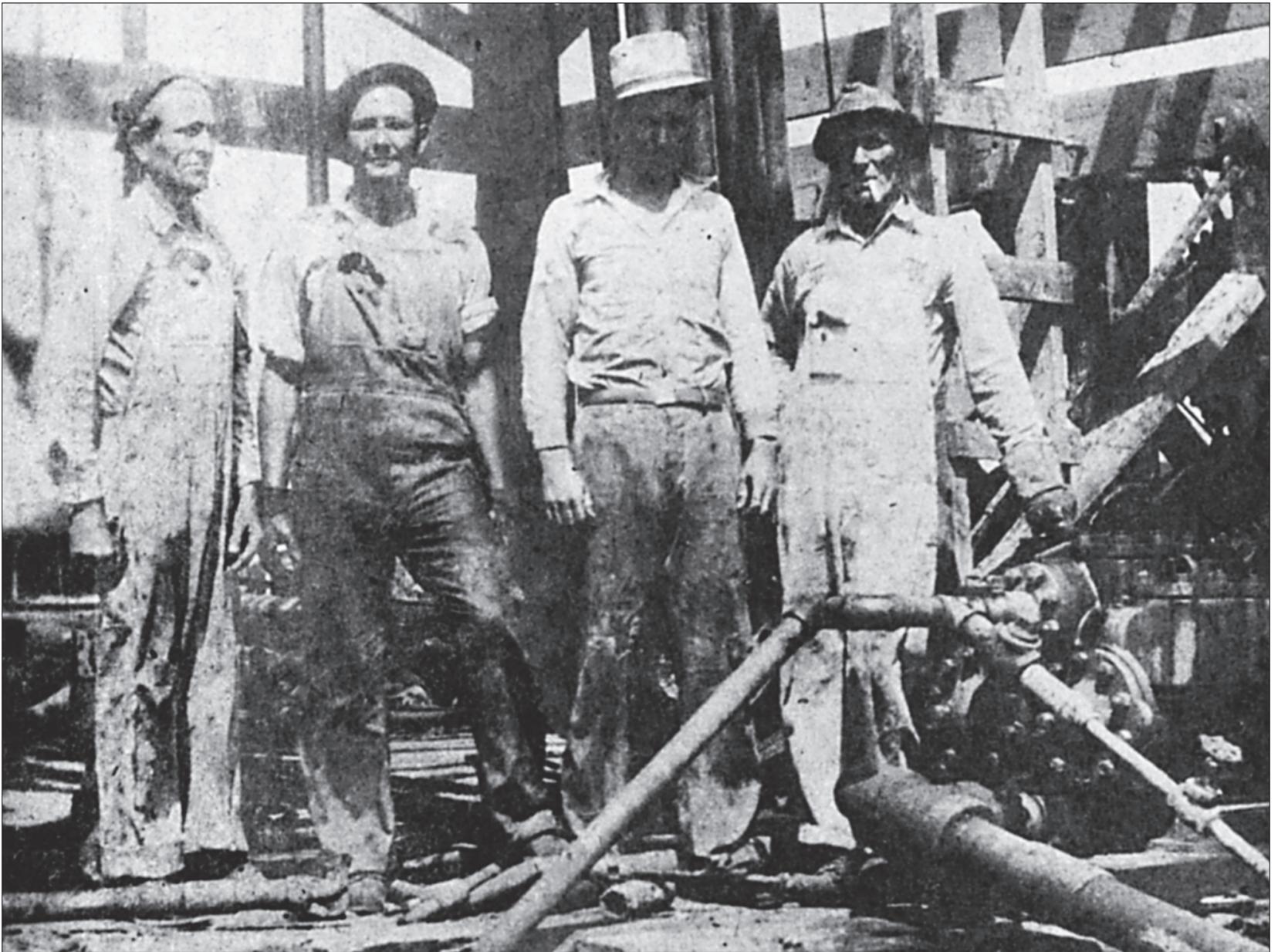


# HISTORY & FOLKLORE



**From Illustrated Press of Liberty County, Thursday, April 4, 1963 – 1927 oil boom picture made in Daisetta shows Cowboy Young, now deceased, Earl Boudreau, Ellis Speed and C.B. Holder, also deceased.**

From Texas Illustrated, October 27, 1977 –

## Hog-Hunting Tales from the River Bottom

by Kevin Ladd

J. Frank Dobie once claimed that the razorback hogs of this area could outfight a bear and outrun a man. Whether Dobie was right or merely engaging in some myth building, these wild hogs are rapidly becoming a thing of the past. They are especially on the wane in the Hardin and Moss Hill area, although people still occasionally sight a few near Moss Hill.

The passage of a stock law did much to curb the hogs. Prior to that, the river bottomland between Hardin and Moss Hill, as well as elsewhere in this area, was open and unfenced. A man could ride forever and a day without having to negotiate his way across a fence.

Several dedicated hog hunters from the Hardin and Lakeland area decided around 1900 to build a camp house for their own use while on some of their hunts. They built their camp between the Trinity River and Green's Bayou out of split cypress pews or posts and added some hog pens.

The building served their purposes admirably for 20 years or better, until some so-called "city-dudes" from Liberty discovered the place one summer. They took to using it as a base of operations for their fishing trips and, more or less, took the place over.

The hunters decided to build themselves a new cabin

closer to Green's Bayou, and let the invaders have the old one. Mr. Jeff Green donated all of the lumber for the structure and the other men of the community pitched in and built it in 1928.

Mr. Tom Key of Hardin, who helped in the construction, recalled that the men got off down there without a compass. They wanted the building to face directly into the south, which would put the cold north wind out of the building's front door. Green carefully studied the sun and the land before announcing what he judged to be due south. Mr. Tom said he went back years later with a compass to measure the building and found that Green had been only a few degrees off course.

The cabin, though quite simple, was a monument to rural ingenuity. Not a single window graced the structure, as windows allowed too much cold air in during the winter. The floor was built of boards and raised off the ground, while the porch had only a dirt floor. This allowed the men to cook under it regardless of the weather. A smoldering fire could also discourage many a mosquito from entering into the cabin while the hunters slept. The porch was also walled in at about waist-high to keep out hogs, with a gate providing the men access to the building.

Food at the camp was fairly predictable. The men would usually kill themselves a hog upon arriving at camp, dress it, and hang it by its snout from a nearby tree. The men could then cut off whatever meat they desired when they desired, the cold weather providing natural refrigeration. However, on those occasions when insects did come around, the hog would be covered by a flour sack.

The gentlemen would sometimes kill a few squirrels with which they would make mulligan stew, squirrel and rice, or some such culinary delight. The cabin was usually well stocked with canned vegetables, jams, jellies, and preserves. Liquid refreshment was confined, of course, to coffee.

Rounding up hogs could be an all-day task, and whether the men drove them to the camp or on home depended on the weather. If the weather was too bad or the way too muddy, the hogs would be driven to the pens near the camp house and kept there until such time as they were loaded into wagons and carried out. Thanks to Henry Ford, the men later started taking the hogs out by truck.

The most important part in the process of penning hogs was the dog, often called a "hog dog." The purpose of the dog was to rout the hogs from such places as briar patches and thickets, or failing that, to at least bay them there. Several men have said that a good dog was worth three or four men on horseback.

The dogs also kept the hogs together as they were driven back to camp. It was not all glory and bravado

for them, though, for the hogs could be quite fierce and would often cut the dogs.

Wallace Rives and Perry and Robert Cessna were once penning hogs when a hog got out of the pen and headed back to the river. A dog of Robert's, named Nap, gave chase and was cut in the neck by the hog's tucks. Most hunters always carried, in the saddle pocket of their horse, a large needle and some heavy sewing thread coated with beeswax for makeshift surgery on their dogs or horses.

The wound was stitched up on the dog, which was then carried out by the men and back to the house. Wallace carried it in his arms the whole time, all the while holding a finger over the wound and complaining loudly over how tired his hand was getting. The dog survived and lived happily ever after.

The families that did most of the hunting in the river bottom were the Rives, the Cessnas, the Berryhills, and some of the Keys. Mr. Elmer Van Deventer, Pete Miller, Jim Coons, and "Old Man Tom Barrett" also had some hogs in the area and hunted down there.

Doug Berryhill was once in the bottom with several other men when the dogs bayed some hogs in a briar patch, from which the hogs did not care to leave. An impasse of major proportions developed with dogs barking, the men trying various time-proven techniques for such a situation, and the hogs staying put.

Berryhill decided to go in there himself and handle the diplomatic relations. He burrowed his way into the patch and came face-to-face with the hogs, which immediately sent him out of there in something of a backward run.

Perry Cessna of Hardin remembers one particular group of hogs that were the worst he ever saw – just a

*(Continued next page)*

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