

2b – Barbecue at the Wilkes

The barbecue pits, which had been slowly burning since last night, would now be long troughs of rose-red embers, with the meats turning on spits above them and the juices trickling down and hissing into the coals. Scarlett knew that the fragrance carried on the faint breeze came from the grove of great oaks in the rear of the big house. John Wilkes always held his barbecues there, on the gentle slope leading down to the rose garden, a pleasant shady place [...] John Wilkes, famed throughout the state for his hospitality, really knew how to give a barbecue.

The long trestled picnic tables, covered with the finest of the Wilkeses' linen, always stood under the thickest shade, with backless benches on either side; and chairs, hassocks and cushions from the house were scattered about the glade for those who did not fancy the benches. At a distance great enough to keep the smoke away from the guests were the long pits where the meats cooked and the huge iron wash-pots from which the succulent odors of barbecue sauce and Brunswick stew floated. Mr. Wilkes always had at least a dozen darkies busy running back and forth with trays to serve the guests. Over behind the barns there was always another barbecue pit, where the house servants and the coachmen and maids of the guests had their own feast of hoecakes and yams and chitterlings, that dish of hog entrails so dear to negro hearts, and, in season, watermelons enough to satiate.

As the smell of crisp fresh pork came to her, Scarlett wrinkled her nose appreciatively.

Margaret Mitchel, *Gone With the Wind*, 1936