

BUCKWHEAT COUNTY BARBECUE SCRAPBOOK by Tim Mack
"MY NAME'S SAM, AND I'M A SINGER"



Although it was only the middle of June, it felt like the dog-days of August in my small, cramped, office. Located above the hot kitchen of the Backwoods Inn and just below a flat, black roof, the office was stifling. I figured it must be getting close to the cocktail hour so I could adjourn to the air-conditioned bar. It was Friday. I knew the hot and thirsty loggers of Lone would soon be making their way back to town.

Just about the time I reasoned it was the cocktail hour, regardless of the time, there was a rapping on the door. Thinking it was one of my employees I yelled "come-on in, it's open". However, it wasn't an employee. Standing at the door was a stranger in a dirty, rumpled ol' cowboy hat. Below his glasses he had several days' growth on his face. His old tattered cowboy shirt was stretched taunt around his stomach and his cowboy boots were very well broken-in.

He introduced himself, "Hi, my name's Sam, and I'm a singer." Right I thought, and I'm Buckwheats, the Pope of Pend Oreille County. Well Sam sat down and we had a good chit chat. He proposed a deal that I couldn't pass up. Sam would sing in my bar that night. If I liked his music I was to give him fifty-bucks. If I didn't like his music I would pay him nothing. Such a deal, I couldn't lose. "Oh, by the way", he said as he was leaving, "could I borrow a couple bucks to get a shower?"

A few hours later, my bartender Barb and I were pleasantly surprised to see a different Sam come through the front door. He was looking good - clean shaven and clean clothes topped off by a real stylish cowboy hat. Though somewhat encouraged, I was still leery, so I stationed myself by the side of the stage with the proverbial hook - ready to yank him off the stage if his performance was as bad as I feared.

But what came out of his mouth blew me away. His voice was pure velvet. This guy had a voice that although it didn't match his physical appearance, was out of this world. Needless to say, Sam got his fifty bucks, and ended up playing music entertaining customers of the Backwoods for many years.

This guy was a worker! He had a repertoire of some 250 songs that he could sing on request. And he sang over 20 songs per hour. Sam's idol was Roy Orbison and when he did one of Roy's songs, folks'd often say that he sounded more like Roy than Roy himself. And that's a fact Jack!

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Alright, you're thinking, neat story Tim, but what has this to do with barbecue? Very little, I say to you. But it does have a lot to do with food. You see, Sam loved to eat as evidenced by the part of his anatomy just north of his belt buckle.

Fridays was clam chowder day at the Backwoods and Sam had a standing order for 1/2 gallon of chowder. Wanda, my cook at the time, made just about the finest clam chowder west of the Pend Oreille River and she saw to it that Sam was well taken care of. He'd take his chowder back to his truck and camper and eat it for a week. So now you know my reason for telling this story. How else could I get away with a clam chowder recipe in a barbecue book?

Wanda's Clam Chowder

3 or 4 stalks celery, diced	2 cups dry coffee creamer
1 1/2 cups onions, diced	1 cup butter, melted
1 Tbsp ham soup base	1 3/4 cup flour
3 or 4 cups potatoes, diced	2-6.5 oz cans clams, chop
3 quarts water, boiling hot	Salt & pepper to taste
Garlic powder to taste	

Boil diced potatoes, onions and celery till done. Add creamer to water and vegetables and thicken with melted butter and flour. Add remaining ingredients and simmer. To quote Sam "this stuff is damn fine".