

Sausage Making Time

For the families that lived in the Sterling Township area, spring (sometimes fall of the year) was time to butcher the hogs they were fattening all winter and process the meat. It was quite a production. Grandma Doebler and Aunt Agnes Boening would come over to our house along with my mother and dad and we would begin to make sausage. My mother would clean the innards casings for the sausage and cut them to length. Dad would carve the pieces from the pig to be ground at Merkle and Neumeier Butcher Shop. They would also add some ground beef, which they bought from the butcher shop. Into the washtub it would go. They would put the wash tub on a bench so two people could mix and knead the ground beef and pork with their hands and add the various spices that Grandma Doebler prepared for them.

After they thought they had the beef and pork mixed thoroughly, grandma Doebler would prepare a sample to see if the taste was OK with all of us. Grandma would take out a little meat and put it in the small 9-inch black iron frying pan to cook. When it had been cooked, they would cut it into pie-shaped pieces and every one, including me, would get a taste. Everyone had input. Not salty enough, a little more sage, too much or too little beef. They would come to a conclusion and the ingredients were added to suit the taste.

My job was to get the vouch (sausage preen) to put on the end of the casings. They were the thorns on the crab apple tree. I would break the thorns off and bring them into the house. We had a sausage machine. A vouch preen would be put on the end of the casing and the rest of the casing would be slipped over the spout. Then you started to crank the handle of the sausage machine and the ground meat would come out of the spout into the casing. When the casing was full, you put another preen on the end, took binder twine, tied it around both ends, made a loop to hang on a broom handle and laid the broom handle over the back of two chairs. You also made a few samplers. They would be about 6 to 8 inches long and Dad and Mom would take them with them as we visited friends or relatives on the weekends.

On these weekend visits, cards and local gossip would be the entertainment. The host would always serve lunch, which would be their homemade bread and coffee cakes and sausage. Each person had their own method of smoking their sausage. Grandma Doebler had a smokehouse and Dad, Aunt Agnes Boening and Aunt Ada Glawe used it to smoke their sausage. Dad liked his sausage smoked so there was little pink in the middle and not too hard. Uncle Louie Bloss liked his sausage smoked through and quite hard. All were good.