

11-25-94

Thanksgiving Memories

Thanksgiving afternoon, 1994, Paul and I were, of course, watching the Dallas Cowboys play the Green Bay Packers. At halftime, several children were delivering one sentence statements about Thanksgiving dinner and turkey, such things as "You kill it somehow," "Then you put in the oven for three minutes," and "... stuff it with hot dogs." The first statement about killing it somehow reminded me of an early Thanksgiving.

We may have had other live turkeys to prepare for Thanksgiving dinner, but the one I remember vividly was the year I was nine. Daddy had triumphantly brought home a live turkey to live in a make-shift cage in our backyard until the day before Thanksgiving. I had always been fascinated by the antics of chickens whose necks he had wrung. I took a childish, sadistic delight in watching the poor critters running frantically about the yard, headless. So, I was prepared for a big show when Daddy had wrung the turkey's neck. A turkey's neck, and the turkey herself, is a great deal more resistive to having its neck wrung. Daddy finally had to admit defeat after we kids had run the turkey down after several abortive attempts at neck wringing. My tender-hearted little sister was campaigning for keeping the turkey for a pet, especially when Daddy finally got out an axe. Daddy convinced her that Thanksgiving dinner without a turkey was a sad prospect, and she went into the house for the foul act. (No pun intended.) That turkey spoiled my fun by not running about for me.

Bereft of its head, it was time to de-feather the beast. I hated the smell of a bird dunked in boiling water, with the following plucking of the feathers a really unpleasant task. At least I thought plucking chickens was unpleasant; I didn't know how difficult a turkey could be. After the large feathers had been discarded, we were faced with the numerous pin feathers, as well as the remnants of the large feathers which had left behind a shaft filled with a black substance and buried in the flesh. After Mother and whoever was helping her reached the end of their patience in pulling out the pin feathers, she recruited me, armed with a sturdy pair of tweezers, to finish the job. The job was tedious and boring. I cringe today when I think about cleaning a chicken or a turkey. I really appreciate the clean-skinned turkeys we can bring home from Ukrops today. Finally, we were able to proceed to the part of Thanksgiving I looked forward to - stuffing, giblet gravy, brussels sprouts, mashed potatoes, homemade rolls, and two kinds of pies, pumpkin and mince.

Those traditional aspects of Thanksgiving dominated a Thanksgiving feast we enjoyed with friends from southwest Virginia soon after we came to Richmond. We had the dinner at our house, but the Brookes and their boys contributed the items they considered a vital part of Thanksgiving. They always had little green peas, an addition I liked. Frank Brooke made a Sally Lunn, a delicious item I'd never associated with the day. Helen was intrigued with my giblet gravy, made in the traditional way I was accustomed to. When Mother could no longer get turkey hens containing a series of developing eggs, she replaced them with hard cooked hen eggs, sliced into the turkey gravy. That was a new wrinkle to the Brookes, one they vowed to copy. We ended the meal with the Minton

traditional three pies (one added by our particular family): pumpkin, mince, and chocolate meringue, finishing just in time to join the TV broadcast of a professional football game both families wanted to see: the Washington Redskins for the Brookes, the Dallas Cowboys for the Mintons. The Redskins led throughout the game until Roger Staubach, the Dallas quarterback, was injured and replaced in the last few minutes by the unknown rookie Clint Longley. The Redskins allowed as many short passes as the Cowboys wanted to throw, but the inexperienced Longley, forever after known as the "Mad Bomber," instead threw a long "Hail Mary" pass which surprised the Redskins and was caught to win the game for the Cowboys. Needless to say, the Minton contingent went wild. Then, Helen's remark provided a traditional quotation for all future Minton Cowboy games. "I didn't know anyone *ever* rooted against the Redskins!"

Cowboy Bomb Shocks Redskins, 24-23



A Cowboy triumphantly riffs off his knee the helmet in Steve Pearson, after getting behind Redskins defense for game-winning 54-yard pass reception.

Longley, Pearson Switched Pattern

By Kenneth Brinkley
WASHINGTON, Nov. 28—

Steve Pearson, 21, in his debut, if not his last, as a Redskins defensive end, was caught by the Cowboys' rookie quarterback, Clint Longley, in a 24-23 victory for the Cowboys.

The Redskins' defense was out of sync in the third quarter, when Longley threw a 54-yard pass to Pearson, who caught it for a touchdown.

Longley, who was drafted by the Redskins in the first round of the 1974 draft, was the first rookie quarterback to start in the NFL since 1961.

"If you know him (Roger Staubach) and you've got your mind set on him, you'll see it as a risk, it's not a risk at all," Longley said.

—Drew Pearson, recently

Longley, a rookie from Chicago, was making his first appearance as a starter in the NFL when he threw the game-winning pass to Pearson for the winning score with 30 seconds remaining.

The pass was the only play by Steve Pearson, who was drafted by the Redskins in the first round of the 1974 draft, who was the first rookie quarterback to start in the NFL since 1961.

The Redskins, who were leading 23-20 at halftime, were out of sync in the third quarter, when Longley threw a 54-yard pass to Pearson, who caught it for a touchdown.

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