

Memories of Thanksgiving

By Tom Caldwell (November 2018)

Good morning (well it was morning when I started), Mary Lynn. Hope this finds you and Dan well and happy.

I've been thinking of Thanksgiving("TG") memories and thought I would share a couple:

Most every TG day our family would go "down" (that was the term we used, as if Charlotte were "up") to grandma Caldwell's where most of the 12 (I wonder if John and Ellie stopped at 12 so the number of their offspring would equal that of the apostolic band) and their families would also gather. I can still smell the aromas wafting from the kitchen.

TG was the opening day of hunting season and like, I assume, most red-blooded men raised in the country in those days, the Caldwell men heeded the call of field and forest and pursued rabbit or quail in order, I assume, to substitute for the turkey they thought the womenfolk might ruin. I doubt that they gave a thought to hunting licenses, though in deference to their law abiding natures, it was probably legal to hunt on your own land without a license.

Dad had a double barreled 16 gauge shotgun and a .22 rifle which he brought for the hunt. I was too young to handle a gun, particularly in range of kinfolk, but I was allowed to tag along. I don't remember who all was in the band of savvy hunters that day, but Uncle Don was along, carrying Dad's .22 rifle which he may never have even shot before. If I remember correctly, we came across a sitting rabbit (he must have been deaf or pretty dumb not to have heard and fled the oncoming brigade) and someone yelled for Don to shoot him. He took aim and pulled the trigger but nothing happened and someone yelled for him to take off the safety but he couldn't find it. The rabbit took off and Don chased after it, trying to take aim while still trying to find the safety. That rabbit lived to run another day but I wonder if Don ever hunted again after being good-naturedly but roundly kidded for trying to shoot a rabbit with a rifle with both running, and with the safety on. A rabbit or two were shot that day because I was either enlisted or volunteered, probably the latter, to carry them home and Mom, rightfully, got mad at me, and probably Dad, for getting blood on my clothes. Thankfully the turkey was ready when we got back to the house and we didn't have to eat rabbit for TG.

The Charlotte Carousel Parade: was it on TG day or the Sat or Sun before or after? I remember going to ya'll's home on East Blvd to watch it. I guess it actually was on Tryon but maybe they lined up down East Blvd. All I remember was that it was a lot of fun and we thought it was so cool having kinfolk living right on, or maybe near, the parade route. That was like being on 5th Ave for the Macy's parade!

Is it possible to share these with our cousins in such a way they any of them can share memories that we all can read? A 21st century Caldwell TG gathering! If too much trouble, don't worry about it.