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Austin, Texas

December 13, 1941

Dear Mary:

The destiny of the world depends to a large extent upon the habits of men and the other inhabitants of it. General Sam Houston knew the habits of the Mexican, one of which was the afternoon siesta which they took. With this knowledge he made his plans and attacked while the "Mexicanos" were sleeping peacefully in the shade and mostly with their boots and shoes off.

The Japs evidently used this same method in their knowledge of the American habit to take Saturday night off for bridge, poker and cocktail parties, when they so nefariously attacked Pearl Harbor without warning early Sunday morning before the effects of the weekend parties had worn off.

Now comes the lowly but vain turkey with his habits and his fate. The female lays her eggs in February of each year and hatches her young in March and April. Seven months later these children have grown to juicy and delicious maturity and are ready to be eaten. What more could one ask for if there is to be a feast of happiness and Thanksgiving than to have roast turkey upon the table? Such a delicacy alone would be enough to make one thankful, but when one is already counting his blessings a fat and juicy morsel of roast turkey would make him doubly so.

And so it was in the days of the Pilgrim Fathers. Thanksgiving was ordered on the last Thursday of November because the Lord had been kind to them and given them life, food and plenty after hardship. Instead of killing the "fatted calf" as did the father of the Prodigal Son, the Pilgrims killed the fatted turkey and feasted themselves in joy and contentment. They had many things to be thankful for. They had departed Europe with all its intrigue, hatreds, immorality, wars and sinfulness. They were now in a new country which they could fashion to their own ideas and likings. What a place to be thankful for and in.

And so the custom has come down to this good day. But in those days of the early settlers the vain and beautiful, but stupid bird ran wild over the landscape and was free to anyone who was unscrupulous enough to think of killing him and roasting him in an oven. But as the customs grew in common usage there were not enough turkeys to

supply the feasters, because it was found they tasted just as good on the Christmas and New Years days. It then became necessary to domesticate the bird and raise him in greater quantities than nature provided without the aid of human hands. The warm and salubrious climate of South Texas was found to be most excellent for this industry and the farmers found they could sell the birds to the town and city folks after they had more than they could eat themselves.

These turkeys were brought to the local grocery stores and sold to their customers for \$1.00 / a pair, 65 cents for the gobbler, the male, and 35 cents for the hen. But some enterprising northerner, a native of Philadelphia, found that he could pay more than this for the birds and ship them north and sell them at a profit. This extra price stimulated production and the industry grew by leaps and bounds. The farmers prospered, the packing industry prospered and the “yankees” had plenty to be thankful for and over with their \$5 and \$10 turkeys that formerly had cost just 75 cents back home in the good old days, before bath tubs, washing machines, radios and the Japs.

But to return to customs it becomes necessary to mention the custom of dancing. Salome danced before the king and demanded the Head of John the Baptist. Since time in the beginning preachers have been decrying the sinfulness of dancing and so it was in 1911 Annodomini. The young people were doing a dance called the “Turkey Trot.” While there was nothing to it whatsoever that was immoral nor suggestive, it was considered advanced by the old fogies and there was considerable and extensive talk about the young people and the Turkey Trot they were doing.

It was that time too that the turkey shipping industry had come into full bloom in Cuero, Texas, the then largest shipping point for turkeys, to the northern markets, in the world. Now it is the custom of a turkey boggler to boggle in a loud and noisy manner, upon the slightest provocation. While the human race does not gobble, its members like to advertise and brag. Cuero was the largest turkey shipping point in the world so the world must be told about it. A celebration was scheduled for the fall of 1912 and 20,000 turkeys were to parade the streets of this prosperous thriving little town before their final journey to the cold, icy climates of the North.

What should the celebration be called? The “Turkey Trot” of course. The young people were doing it, in fact there was a song called, “Everyone’s Doing It, Doing It.” So if everybody was doing it and it was considered modern to do it then why take the credit away from the turkeys themselves which really could do the turkey trot as none other could? So the “Turkey Trot” it was, November 11 or thereabouts 1912.

Twenty thousand turkeys strutted their stuff on the streets of Cuero that day. But there was not only single turkey that strutted his stuff half so well as the Governor of the State of Texas who led the parade with his Staff and all bedecked in uniforms and gold braid. There were ?? floats, potentates, horseback riders, carnival, and beauties. Nothing was left undone. Crowds came from far and wide to witness this strange and interesting spectacle. The streets were thronged, packed and jammed with happy joyous tumult. The whole thing was a gigantic success. It was stupendous, colossal.

But out of the wilderness of joy came a weak faint cry from the packing house which had loaned the turkey for the parade. Each bird had walked off a pound or more of its weight and that was some 20,000 pounds and 20,000 pounds at a dime a pound was \$2,000 loss and at 20 cents a pound was \$4,000. Oh me, why does so practical person always have to be taking the joy out of life by talking money and profits and losses right in the midst of Thanksgiving and success and joyousness? Too bad, is it not?

So the whole thing was a great success and became a custom year after year. It advertised Cuero turkey. It placed it by name on the tables of the finest hotels in New York. It placed a messenger on the table of the President of the United States. Senator Tom Connally came to it one year and made a speech and was presented a turkey caught by the writer before a news real camera. (remember that Mary?)

Such an affair should have a King or an emperor. They were called the Sultan and Sultana because it was all turkey stuff. The Sultan was called Yekrut, which is turkey backwards. A special messenger was sent to invite the Ambassador from Turkey to attend, but unfortunately he did not see the importance of the occasion and rather resented the invitation saying his country was then modern and did not have a sultan nor a sultana and did not approved of veiled women.

But such a set back as that was just a little thing. The Shriners from Alzafar Temple in San Antonio were invited down to eat turkey at the expense of the local Masonic Temple. They came 400 strong, by the train loads and by Pullman. My uncle had charge of baking the turkeys for this mob, forth of them, the turkeys of course. Potatoes were cooked by the tubs and barrels full. Bootleg liquor flowed by the gallon.

That was the occasion when the Sultan came up missing for the parade and the crowning of the Sultana. He had partaken too freely of his cups and slept soundly and sonorously throughout the crowning. The Sultana sat upon the thrown by herself and reigned without the male of the species. Women alway did have more sense than men.

And so the Turkey Trot came to pass and has survived to this good day. When turkeys are plentiful we eat them in Cuero, but when they are scarce and high in price we ship them up north and let the northerns eat them.

There were several breeds of turkeys, the main breed and the kind nearest to the native bird that ran wild is the Bronze. Then come White, Black, Bourbon Reds, Narragassets, Blue, and last, the Baby Beef Type.

The bulk of the turkeys are raised by farmers wives in flocks ranging from 25 to 50 to 500 or more. It appears difficult to raise more than 500 in one flock as they are subject to disease, the vicissitudes of the weather and varmints. Some farmers specialize in raising and selling breeding stock while others sell only the eggs to northern turkey raisers who hatch them and raise them to maturity.

I hope this is what you want.

Your loving Uncle Roy.