

I just love a holiday

BY AMOS ARTHUR HOLMES

I just love a holiday. I'm not really overly impressed with Groundhog Day but the other holidays just fill my heart with happiness. I honestly think that if I were forced to choose my favorite holiday it would have to be Thanksgiving.

When I was young we always spent this day with my Grandmother and Grandfather. Their small farmhouse was filled to the rafters with sons and daughters, aunts and uncles, grandchildren, and total strangers who claimed vague family relationships.

The women never left the kitchen. They rolled out biscuits and basted the turkey. They pared apples for the salad and worked artistically on the pumpkin pies. There arose from that kitchen a smell that made one dizzy. It was a smell of cinnamon and hot bread, of buttered potatoes and brown gravy, and it blended so well with the laughter and love that filled that room.

The men sat in the living room and talked about crops and hunting. I would sit on the floor and listen to those strong, honest farmers tell about their experiences in forest and field. Each man out did the other in some marvelous feat of marksmanship. I was too young to know that it was actually a marvelous feat of lying. My hair stood on end as Uncle Charlie told about the

bear that grabbed him one day as he was going to milk the cows. I felt a little sad for the bear because Uncle Charlie killed him with his bare hands. I could never understand why the other men laughed uproariously at Uncle Charlie's act of bravery.

Grandmother had decorated her house with pumpkins and apples and fall flowers. Just before dinner we all gathered together with glasses of cold apple cider. The room would become quiet as Grandmother raised her glass, and said, "Let us thank God for the love we share in this room today."

And then we sat down to a table that was just unbelievable. Every inch of that tablecloth was covered by bowls and platters filled with delicious foods. I ate until my tiny stomach stretched and protested and yet my Grandmother would always say, "Amos, you had better eat something. You are way too thin."

And finally the day was ended. There were a million farewells and two million hugs and kisses. When I got home, tired and satisfied, I would kneel beside my bed and say a childish prayer that always ended with, "And thank you God for Grandmother. And thank you God for Thanksgiving."

Well, I could just cry when I think about what has happened to this

glorious holiday. To give you some idea as to how this day has deteriorated let me relate to you my experiences this past Thanksgiving.

Two days before the holiday I said to my wife, "Honey, call Ethel and Amy and tell them to get here early on Thanksgiving. And be sure to tell them that we have plenty of apples and candy for the children."

"They're not coming."

"WHAT?" I screamed. "My own kids not coming to spend Thanksgiving with me? What terrible thing has happened to keep them away?"

"They're going to a Rock Concert."

"A ROCK CONCERT?"

"Yes. They said to tell you they couldn't stand another Thanksgiving Day where you did nothing but tell about the time you killed the bear with your bare hands."

I felt just awful. What was Thanksgiving without your children? Oh well, I wouldn't let it ruin my day. I still had my wife and one daughter to help me celebrate.

"Baby," I said to my wife, "Let's go to a farm this year and get a fresh killed turkey. It will make it a really old-fashioned Thanksgiving."

My wife laughed. "Look, dreamer....if you think we can afford a



turkey this year on your salary you are more insane than I thought."

She was probably right. There wasn't much sense in going into debt just to uphold a stupid old tradition. I began to cry.

On Thanksgiving Day we had hot dogs for dinner. Right after dinner, while I did the dishes, my wife and daughter went into town to see a movie called, "Wolfman Meets Dracula's Daughter." Alone, I raised my glass of water, and sarcastically said, "Let us thank God for the love we share in this room today."

I thought about my youth and the Thanksgiving that had filled my young heart with such bountiful joy. I thought of wrinkled faces and youthful faces, of smiling faces and laughter, and family, and love.

And I was wondering if there isn't one of my readers out there who still thinks of Thanksgiving as a rich and noble holiday, and who might, in Christian fellowship, set an extra plate this year for Amos Arthur Holmes.