

Blue Mud Chronicles

November 15, 2008

Happy Thanksgiving



Good news! A chapter from Blue Mud, "You shoot for a while, I'm tired," has been excerpted online [here](http://www.freebookexcerpts.com/2008/10/13/blue-mud-the-story-of-a-town-by-james-deaton/). <

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It's that time of year again; it's getting colder; you're getting ready for family get-togethers; the stores are already pushing the Christmas goodies [wasn't it comedian Lewis Black complaining that Halloween and Thanksgiving used to be their own, separate holidays and Santa wasn't "sticking his nose" into them?].

Ever had Fried Okra, Fried Corn, Sweet Potato Pudding, Sweet ("Regular") Tea, Tomato Gravy, Grits, Spoon Bread, Catfish Stew, Seafood Etouffee, Fried Quail, Mountain Oysters, Frog Legs, Pickled Pigs' Feet, Sweet Milk or Cornbread Dressing? Chances are pretty good that if you some evening sit down for dinner in Maine 1) it won't be called dinner, instead, supper and 2) none of the items above will be on the menu. [Without getting too involved, in the South, it's generally Breakfast, Supper

& Dinner (in that order). It's a holdover from earlier days before microwaves and modern appliances, when the wife cooked meals using the fireplace and the coals were already hot after breakfast so the "big" meal followed breakfast and the evening meal was a cold, small one. Then "lunch" nudged its way in, "supper" and "dinner" became for the most part interchangeable and the rest is history.]

There was usually one or two things that "nobody could cook better than Grandma" but it was worth all the sweaty kisses, flabby upper arms and "*You look just like...*" The food was that good. Often, because it involved something called "mountain measures" where you ponder directions like "pinch," "splash" and "smidgen." (Although, Grandma never once consulted a recipe; it was all from memory.)

You're be-boppin' along, making homemade biscuits, egg noodles or pie crust, then there's a direction, "*Add flour until it won't take any more.*" What does that mean? Is that one cup? Two? Three? There's really no answer – the flour amount depends on what went in first. (If you've been there, you already know; if you haven't...well...good luck.)

Your grandmother was also "The Queen of Shortcuts." After she put the turkey in the oven, everything else that would be giblet gravy was tossed in a pan and slow-boiled on top the stove. (How many, when Grandma was pulling the neck out of the cavity of a store-bought bird, had her say, "*Oh, it was a little boy turkey*" [Grandmothers aren't supposed to say such things!].)

For Thanksgiving dinner (supper), when the giblets were cooked enough, they were cut up, pulled or deboned, transferred to a large pot, water added, then her noodles were cooked in the same pot. When the noodles were done, they were put in a serving crock and the giblet gravy was left., thickened by the flour from the noodles; no making a separate time for cooking gravy.

Somehow, and it didn't matter how many things were cooking, they all finished at the same time.

And you never ever came right out and asked for a recipe (how rude!). You simply let it be known that a particular recipe was something in which

you'd be interested. Let Grandma decide. If you were so crass as to actually request a recipe, you'd get one but one thing would be missing. Like, for her egg noodles, she'd "forget" about the tablespoon of white vinegar (to keep the noodles from sticking together when cooking). She liked almost nothing more than *"Mabel, I made the noodles but they weren't like yours."*

"A bird in the hand is useless if you have to blow your nose."

"A farmer escaped serious injury today when he was killed."



"Hey Grandpa! What's for supper?"



"Just call BR-549."



"I'm a-pickin' and I'm a-grinnin'."



Cry to Heaven

Southern Speak

"Up a level",
"He was grinnin' ear to ear; a smile with *a tail on it.*"

Positive,
"It might look it, but *I'm here to tell ya*, it's not easy."

Self-important,

“She’s way too *high-falutin’*.”

Snooty,

“She’ so high-falutin’ and stuck-up, I think *she'd drown in a rainstorm.*”

Useless,

“Don’t make much sense at this point; it’s just *throwin’ good money after bad.*”

A response to “*You don’t know what you’re doing*”,

“I know but you want me to do it faster.”

Callous of feeling,

“I sometimes think he’s got a *thumpin’ gizzard* where his heart oughta be.”

Threat,

“I might oughta *knock you into the middle of next week lookin’ both ways for Sunday.*”

Defiant,

“I tell ya, ain’t *nobody gonna mess on me and call it apple butter.*”

“Get over it”,

“Well, now he can just *get glad the same way he got mad, or else he's gonna die unhappy.*”

Most assuredly,

“I’ll bet *dollars to doughnuts.*”

(Wagering something of value against something worthless.)

One of the best sites on the web covering all things Southern:
[USADEEPSOUTH http://usadeepsouth.ms11.net/index.html](http://usadeepsouth.ms11.net/index.html)

THE BLUE MUD CHRONICLES

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All original artwork in *The Blue Mud Chronicles* is by Jeffrey Unthank. See more of his work at:



(<http://www.blue-mud.net/ARTthankMain.html>)

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< james_deaton@bellsouth.net > , and put "The Blue Mud Chronicles Mailing List" in the subject line with the new recipient's eMail address in the body.