

“DISPLACED CITIZENS”

Marshall knew he was leaving Boston, but it wasn't until shortly after Green Bay captured the NFL crown with a 21-6 win before nearly 30,000 fans that he announced his departure from Beantown. In five seasons in Boston, Marshall had lost approximately \$100,000, and Philadelphia, New York and Washington were on his radar as cities where he could possibly find greener pastures. He chose the nation's capital, also the base for his laundry business.

Marshall's wife knew other reasons to relocate to D.C., where the population was growing as people nationwide sought to work for a federal government burgeoning during the Great Depression. Griffith believed that D.C. stood for “displaced citizens,” newcomers to the area who struggled to find things to do on Sundays. In her book *My Life With The Redskins*, she recounted a conversation with famous sportswriter Damon Runyon, a friend of the couple, on her desire to relocate.

“You see, Damon, there are so many displaced citizens in Washington, from places such as Muleshoe, Texas; Ekalaka, Montana; and even Beverly Hills, California,” she wrote. “Most of these D.C.'s are alone in Washington with nothing to do on Sunday afternoon other than sit in parks and feed the squirrels and pigeons. I am convinced that if the team should move to Washington, it would give these same D.C.'s an opportunity to expend some of their surplus energy.”

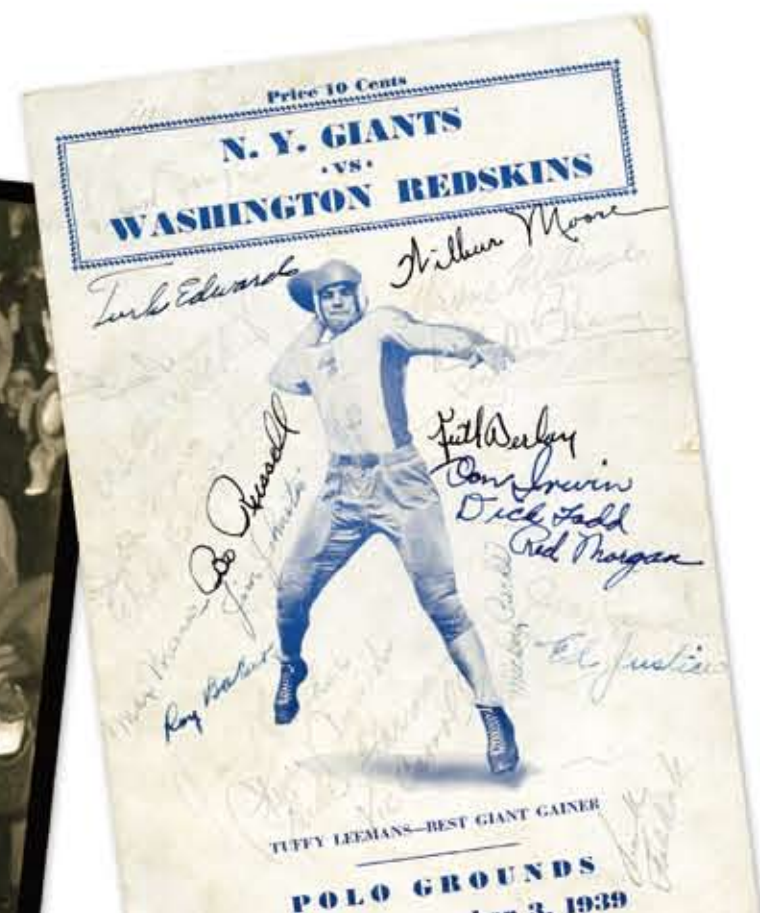
It was a gamble to move to Washington, which was mainly a baseball town. The Senators, World Series winners in 1924, were four years removed from capturing the American League title. The only NFL team to have played in D.C., the Washington Senators, left the league after one season (1921), and semipro teams such as the Washington Passers didn't last long. Maryland, Georgetown, George Washington and Catholic drew modest college football crowds.

“SLINGIN” SAMMY

Marshall signed a lease with Senators owner Clark Griffith (no relation to Corinne Griffith) to play at Griffith Stadium. In the draft, the Redskins' boss pushed his team to use its top pick on a player he was enamored with: Texas Christian University two-time All-American “Slingin” Sammy Baugh.

Baugh, who had led the Horned Frogs to the 1935 national championship and Cotton Bowl and Sugar Bowl wins, was one of the best passers in college football history. He had played in a wide-open passing offense at TCU under coach Dutch Meyer, but renowned sportswriter Grantland Rice told Marshall that he doubted the lanky 6-foot-3, 185-pounder would last more than a season or two in the pros.

Marshall, a showman who constantly tried to popularize his team, figured that a man from Sweetwater, Texas, ought to fit the part. Marshall



10 BIG GAMES REMEMBERED: 1932-1942

Dec. 3, 1939: New York 9, Washington 7, in New York. It was an agonizing loss. With the Giants up 9-7 and less than a minute left, a 15-yard field-goal try by Redskin Bo Russell looked good, but referee Bill Halloran called it wide right. Angry Redskins fans and players chased Halloran after the game. Thousands of people who welcomed the Redskins home that night at Washington's Union Station chanted, “We Wuz Robbed!” For the second straight year, the Giants were off to the championship game, while the Redskins called it a season.

instructed Baugh to wear cowboy clothing on his first flight to Washington, but the rookie was a tad uncomfortable, especially while sporting high-heeled cowboy boots. Upon exiting the plane, he told a throng of reporters, “Mah feet hurt.”

“Mr. Marshall had his own reasons, I guess,” said Baugh. “I came from cowboy country, and he wanted me to dress a little cowboyish. I told him that I had some cowboy stuff but not much. I would never call myself a cowboy.”

Baugh, who signed for an NFL-high \$8,000, was the final piece of a quintet of future Hall of Famers that included Battles, Edwards, and Wayne Millner, who was drafted in 1936 out of Notre Dame, and Flaherty.

Unfortunately, at the 1937 season's start, one of the quintet was missing. The Redskins assembled for their first training camp at Anacostia Park in southeast Washington, but Flaherty was nowhere to be found. *The Washington Post* issued a call Aug. 15, 1937, for the coach:

“Lost, strayed, or having his little joke — one football coach, red hair, athletic build, answers to the name of Ray Flaherty. Finder please return to George Preston Marshall, owner of the Washington Redskins. Flaherty is three days overdue in Washington. He was to report here to General Manager Jack Espy, assist in signing Redskin players and establish a training camp for the team.”

Flaherty, who was scouting at an all-star camp in Chicago and at the Giants' training site, eventually showed up. So did streams of curious fans trying to catch a glimpse of their new pro sports franchise and its assortment of stars. The local fascination with the men in burgundy and gold endures to this day.

(Preceding page) Many Redskins fans, including one in full regalia, traveled to the Polo Grounds to watch the 1938 Eastern Division Championship Game between the Redskins and the Giants. (Above) Boyd Morgan (12), Frank Filchock (30), Pinckert (11) and Farkas (44) get in some practice before the loss to the Giants.