

Our Thanksgiving Not Unique



Thanksgiving in New Amsterdam

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON
Drawing by Ray Walters

ALTHOUGH it is true that Thanksgiving day, which we will celebrate on November 27 this year, is "a distinctively American institution" in the way in which it is observed, our celebration of a "Thanksgiving day" is not unique. As a matter of fact, the fundamental idea of the day as a feast day may be traced back to ancient times. Read the Book of Judges in the Old Testament and there you will find this description of a practice of the Canaanites, from whom the Children of Israel derived some of their customs:

"And they went out into the fields and gathered their vineyards, and trode the grass and held festival, and went into the house of their god, and did eat and drink."

This vintage or harvest festival appeared later among the Hebrews as an act of worship to Jehovah and was called the Feast of Tabernacles. In Deuteronomy, Moses gave specific directions for its keeping.

Pagan Greece and Rome, too, had their thanksgiving season in honor of the harvest deities. At Athens, in November, this feast, called Thesmophoria, was celebrated by married women only, and two wealthy and distinguished members of the sex were chosen to prepare the sacred meal, which corresponded to the Thanksgiving dinner of today. The Romans on October 4 worshiped Ceres, their goddess of the harvest, with processions in the fields, music, rustic sports, and a feast at the end of the day, which was called Cerealia.

In the modern world, England for centuries observed an autumnal festival called the Harvest Home, which traces its beginning back to the Saxons. In 1258 A. D., "solemn fasts and general processions" were held in England and were thought to have helped a backward harvest in that year. The Englishman has always followed the custom of setting aside days to commemorate public blessings. The discovery of the Gunpowder Plot was thus observed and Guy Fawkes day was established as a day of "public thanksgiving to Almighty God." This happened only a short time before the Pilgrims left England for Holland, so it is easy to see how they later carried to the New world the idea of a day for giving thanks.

Insofar as all the familiar pictures of the first Thanksgiving day in Plymouth show Indians taking part in the Pilgrim feasting, we have come to associate the red man with this holiday particularly. Few of us realize, perhaps, that the American Indian contributed more to our Thanksgiving day celebration than we realize. For the many American families which will gather around the loaded Thanksgiving day tables this year to enjoy their roast turkey will be observing a custom that prevailed before the Pilgrims landed on the rocky shores of New England.

fore by the cliff dwellers who raised turkeys and when they wanted a nice, fat bird for one of their ceremonial feasts, all they had to do was to go out to a pen where they kept the fowls and get one.

More than that, the Navajo Indians have a November thanksgiving ceremonial which goes back as far as tribal tradition goes. A series of thanksgiving ceremonies begins about November 1 and continues at intervals during the entire month. The Navajo name for these occasions is the Yabichi, which means a thanksgiving for the corn harvest—a general thanksgiving to the sun and rain gods for their respective efforts in aiding the growth of corn and grass.

During the day set aside for the Yabichi the medicine men and designated officials of the locality hold a ceremony in which blessed corn meal, corn pollen and feathers of the rain bird are used. Few outsiders have ever been admitted to these meetings. The same night begins a general good time and feasting for everybody.

Although we look upon the English settlers of New England as the originators of our Thanksgiving day, we should not forget that the Dutch who settled the New Amsterdam which became New York also contributed something to the day. For there is no doubt that the Pilgrims, while they lived in Leyden and observed the manner in which the Dutch celebrated on October 3 the deliverance of their country from Spain with much feasting and in a spirit of thankfulness, were somewhat influenced by the character of this celebration in establishing their own Thanksgiving day after they came to America.

Then, too, Thanksgiving as it is observed in New York city today is in many respects so different from the New England Thanksgiving as to cause the stranger in Gotham to inquire into the Mardi Gras nature of the day, and the answer is that it is a survival of an old Dutch custom. For New York holds a great numbers' show on Thanksgiving, that is to say, juvenile New York does. For while their elders are going to church to acknowledge their blessings and housewives and cooks are busy preparing the Thanksgiving dinner, the youngsters are engaged in blacking their faces and turning their clothes inside out, or converting themselves into clowns and caricatures of movie actors and hobgoblins.

It is a juvenile celebration almost exclusively, though now and then one beholds a bearded adult ingratiatingly trying to come in on the shower of pennies. Mostly the coppers are well earned. To the tune of mouth harps, comb and tissue paper and other childish instruments, or just a whistle, pigeon wings are cut, hand springs are turned, songs are rendered and breakdowns executed, in keen competition for "something for Thanksgiving." The phrase is heard from the time the day's first ring at the doorbell gets one out of bed until the last theater is closed at night. It dings in one's ears all day long, as often repeated as the "Merry Christmas" greeting later in the year.

As a matter of fact not one New York boy or girl in a thousand can tell the stranger in the city the origin of the custom. All that most youngsters seem to know of it is that they "always go out for Thanksgiving." Boys who have grown up in the city will say that they, too, did the same. Some of them add that the sport then

had much more spice than now. Years ago it used to be the thing for house holders to throw hot pennies out of the window to the costumed urchins. Then there was a scramble as never seen in these days of merely dropping cold cash into a cap.

However, the researches of a New York woman, Esther Singleton, into ancient Manhattan history recently disclosed the fact that mumming on Thanksgiving day has been practiced in that city for nearly three centuries. Under the Dutch, the Dutch Reformed church in this colony endeavored to stop popular observance of ancient Catholic festivals by legal interdiction. Shrove Tuesday celebrations—still continued in Holland as "vasten avond"—were found irrepressible mainly because the children liked them.

Children persisted in their pre-Lenten masquerade. "They walked the streets," says Miss Singleton in her "Dutch New York," "carrying the rommel-pot, a pot covered with a tightly stretched bladder. In the center was a hole through which a stick was jammed. When moved up and down the stick would make a dull rumbling noise. Children went from door to door singing (in Dutch):

I've run so long with the rumbling-pot
And have as yet got no money to buy bread.
Herring-packer, herring-packer,
Give me a penny and I'll go by!

"They wore masks and false faces and sometimes a 'devil's suit of clothes.' This masking and dressing up still survives in New York on Thanksgiving day."

Manhattan's Thanksgiving is now one hundred and eighty-six years old. Director General Keift of the Dutch West India company instituted the first on March 4, 1643, as a day of fasting and prayers of thanksgiving for a temporary cessation of Indian outbreaks, excited by tribal resentment against the sale of rum by the Colonists to young braves. Hostilities were soon resumed, lasted till 1645, and then on September 6 came another thanksgiving day for "peace with the savages."

After the surrender of the colony to England a generation later and the final adoption in New York of the Thanksgiving day instituted at Plymouth and Massachusetts bay, the New York children transferred their Shrove Tuesday mumming to the autumn holiday, preserving the custom among themselves even though their elders had long lost track of what it meant and whence it locally derived.

It is also worthy of note that the state of New York saw the first official proclamation of a Thanksgiving day as an annual custom which has been observed without interruption for more than 110 years. In 1817 Gov. Dewitt Clinton officially proclaimed Thanksgiving day, and ever since that time New York governors have followed the precedent. It was also followed by governors of other northern states, but it did not become a general national holiday by Presidential proclamation until 1863. The first Presidential proclamation was issued by George Washington from New York city, then the Capital of the nation in 1789. Several later Presidents issued such proclamations from time to time, but it remained for Abraham Lincoln in 1863 to fix the last Thursday in November as the national day of thanksgiving.

OREGON STATE NEWS OF GENERAL INTEREST

Principal Events of the Week Assembled for Information of Our Readers.

The Independence Corn Show was held recently with a good crowd in attendance.

Plans are being made at Lakeview to heat the city with hot water from a hot spring near the city.

Contractors on the Owyhee project near Vale are taking advantage of favorable fall weather to rush the dam and tunnels.

The Ione hotel burned to the ground recently with all furnishings. The Engelman pool hall was badly damaged by fire and water.

During the next several weeks the state tax commission will be busy listening to representatives of corporations who seek reduced assessments.

A huge meteor exploded over the Deschutes basin recently with a blinding flash which illuminated the countryside, according to widely scattered reports.

The Farmers' bank of Weston, established in 1891, was closed recently by State Superintendent Schreimm. No statement has been made regarding liquidation.

Orchardists and ranchers in The Dalles district characterized the soaking rain recently, as worth thousands of dollars. It was the best fall rain in ten years.

Steelhead trout are now entering the Siuslaw river with a rush, according to reports from that section. Silver-side salmon also are being caught in large numbers.

It's springtime on the farm of Carl Plucker, in the Pendleton district, near Adams. An apple tree and his hollyhocks are in bloom. His garden is yielding ripe strawberries.

Some unusual specimens of potatoes of the Nettle Gem variety are on display at Svensen. The tubers weigh from two and one-half to three pounds each, and are of excellent quality.

The "biggest event" in the history of Washington county was the formal opening and dedication of the Canyon road at Beaverton, where the new highway intersects the Tualatin highway.

The Lakeview municipal waterworks, which was purchased by the city a year ago, made a net profit of \$10,000 during the last 12 months. The profits have been put into new pipe lines.

The state board of control has adopted a resolution granting to the Daughters of the American Revolution grounds surrounding the new building of that organization at Champeog park.

In anticipation of an accident that would threaten its water supply, Seaside has made an agreement with Warrenton whereby the systems of the two cities can be joined in case of an emergency.

Depositors in the commercial department of the defunct Lane County State and Savings bank at Florence will receive 88 per cent and savings depositors will receive 84 per cent in the final liquidation.

The car of fancy No. 1 turkeys shipped from Redmond recently was the first car of first-grade turkeys to be shipped in the United States of the 1930 crop, according to buyers from California, who bought the carload.

Two cars of southern Oregon turkeys, about 50,000 pounds, left Medford recently for the New York markets for the Thanksgiving trade. The shipment was made by the farmers' exchange there, which plans to ship a third car soon. Local turkey growers are guaranteed 29 cents a pound with a return on all over that price for top birds.

THE MARKETS

Portland	
Wheat — Big Bend bluestem, 79½;	soft white, western white, 67½; hard winter, northern spring, western red, 65½c.
Hay—Buying price, f. o. b. Portland:	Alfalfa, \$18@18.50; valley timothy, \$17.50; eastern Oregon timothy, \$20; clover, \$14; oat hay, \$14; oats and vetch, \$14@15.
Butterfat—33@35c.	Eggs—Ranch, 21@25c.
Cattle—Steers, good, \$7.25@8.00	Hogs—Good to choice, \$8.50@9.75.
Lambs—Good to choice, \$6.50@7.00.	
Seattle	
Wheat—Soft white, western white, northern spring, hard winter, western red, 68c; bluestem, 78c.	
Eggs—Ranch, 22@38c.	Butterfat—38c.
Cattle—Choice steers, \$6.75@7.75.	Hogs—Good to choice, \$10@10.15.
Lambs—Choice, \$5.50@6.50.	
Spokane	
Cattle—Steers, good, \$7@7.25.	Hogs—Good to choice, \$9.50.
Lambs—Medium to good, \$6@6.4.	

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provements—plus Screen-Grid, from the manufacturer with longest Screen-Grid experience. We want a really good-looking radio—one we can show with pride when friends come in.

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Earthquake's Heavy Toll
The earthquake in Japan occurred on September 1, 1923. The number of lives lost was 90,831.

Salle Law
The laws of the Salle or Sallan Franks were committed to writing in the Fifth century, before the general introduction of Christianity, and that code is known as the Sallan laws. One chapter of the code is specifically known as the Salle law. It regards the succession to lands and limits such succession to male heirs to the total exclusion of female heirs, chiefly because certain military duties were connected with the holding of land. In the fourteenth century females were excluded from the throne of France by an extension of the Salle law.

SWEETEN ACID STOMACH THIS PLEASANT WAY

When there's distress two hours after eating—heartburn, indigestion, gas—suspect excess acid.

The best way to correct this is with an alkali. Physicians prescribe Phillips' Milk of Magnesia.

A spoonful of Phillips' Milk of Magnesia in a glass of water neutralizes many times its volume in excess acid; and does it at once. To try it is to be through with crude methods forever.

Be sure to get genuine Phillips' Milk of Magnesia. All druggists have the generous 25c and 50c bottles. Full directions in package.

Easily Arranged
Husband—"The potatoes are only half cooked." Bride—"Then eat the half that is cooked."—Buen Humor, Madrid.



HEAD THROB?

The woman who knows, would as soon start out without her purse! She always carries Bayer Aspirin.

When your head fairly throbs from the stores and crowds, reach for that little box. Take two or three tablets, a swallow of water, and resume your shopping—in comfort. Relief is immediate.

Most people use these wonderful tablets for something! But do you know how many, many ways they can spare you needless suffering? From the discomfort—and danger—of a neglected cold. From serious

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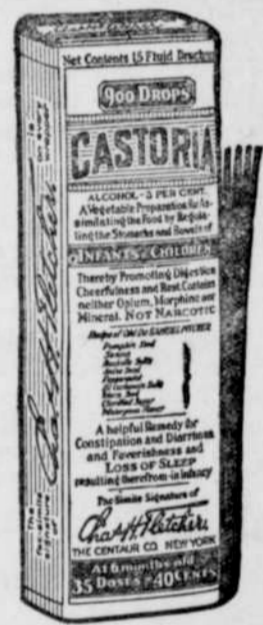
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The covetous man heaps up riches, not to enjoy them, but to have them. —Tillotson.



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