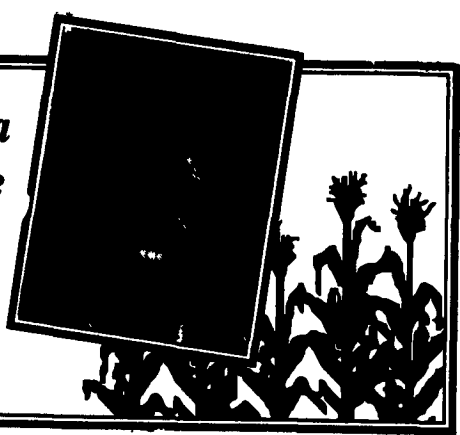


See German Farm Christmas Portrayal

On Being a Farm Wife
(and other hazards)
Joyce Bupp



"I sure didn't like that turkey." This from a fellow meeting-attende in a distant state, who had shared with several dozen of us a hot buffet luncheon featuring turkey and ham as the meats. Both were of the boneless, "pressed" type, heated and served in typical institution, large stainless pan over heated water on a decorated buffet table. Potatoes and a winter vegetable medley - broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, carrots, etc. - rounded out the entree. And the desserts featured a personal favorite - chocolate.

My mom raised no "finicky" eaters. If you didn't like what was on the table, you had a couple of options. Butter bread was one. Going hungry was the other.

Frankly, if I don't have to cook it ... serve it ... and clean it up afterward, I like just about anything.

So, alright already, what's wrong with the turkey?

"Well, it was that pressed stuff. I like real turkey."

Real turkey? This was fiber-board or something? I changed the subject. It was safer. Because people who are so "picky" about their food irritate me. They're spoiled.

Here's another one that irritates me.

"I hate to grocery shop." Well, grocery shopping certainly doesn't always fit into my schedule, and there are lots more "fun" things to do, like putter around the yard or the garden, read a book, watch birds. (But, we save blue jeans mending for the "hate to do" list around here.)

We are picky. We hate to shop for food.

We have had so much ... for so long ... that we are soooo spoiled. As it does on a far-too regular basis, the prospect of starvation once again raises its ugly head in troubled spots around the world and assaults our sense in daily doses of news media.

This ethnic group in this spot in the world killing off that ethnic group trying to share its space. This political group trying to wrench control from that political group over some area's governmental affairs. This dictator waging war against that dictator in an endless struggle of power and egos.

And those who suffer are the young, the old, the sick, the poor. The hungry.

Meanwhile, we lament the problems caused by the full bellies of our prosperity. We complain about waiting in the checkout

LANDISVILLE (Lancaster Co.) — Preparations for the Christmas holiday on a Pennsylvania German farm in the late 1800s were vastly different from the Victorian customs of the era which have been immortalized in

lines and the dueling carts of shoppers headed the other direction in our aisles.

We fret over which of dozens of sorts of meats and poultry products to choose from, hassle over which of chilled and mist-freshened fruits and vegetables to select, what kinds of the six or eight varieties of milk and array of juices to plunk in our carts. We load up with nutritionless junk foods for ourselves and pet food for the critters — that probably has more real food value.

We bellyache about how "expensive" food is and then turn around and brag about how much our new motorcycle or four-by-four vehicle or satellite dish or big-screen TV blew our budget to bits.

Once again, this week, we Americans celebrate Thanksgiving. We will remember and return thanks for the bounty under which this nation's table groans. And, hopefully, we'll recognize and be grateful for how little effort it takes most of us to partake in it.

And, if we're served "pressed" turkey, or "pressed" ham, or even just a hot dog, for Thanksgiving, we need to remember to be appreciative.

For, had Fate placed us elsewhere in the world, we could instead be battling over a bite of stale bread.

art, literature, and song. Visitors to the sixth annual Christmas Tour at the Amos Herr Homestead, Landisville, on November 30 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on December 1 from noon to 5 p.m. will experience this difference first hand.

Whereas, in past years, the 10-room farmhouse, was decked in a portrayal of the most elaborate Victorian decorating customs of the day, this year's offering marks a return to the roots and lifestyle of the family that occupied this land for 133 years.

Founded in 1990, the Amos Herr House Foundation, spent its first five years renovating the 1852 farmhouse. In the summer of 1996, the entire homestead, house and barns, were deemed eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under the designation of a Pennsylvania German farm.

This designation, along with the plans to prepare the C. 1830 barn for tours in 1997, was the determining factor for the theme of this year's Christmas portrayal. The first stop for visitors will be the barn yard, stable, and carriage shed where they will begin their visit much as they would have over 100 years ago. Here they will meet and talk with farm hands, view displays of farm tools and machinery from times past, and taste and see the harvest of the fields.

The farmhouse will literally be bursting at the seams with activity, as children, visiting relatives, and the women of the house prepare for Christmas Day. Since the Christmas Day meal was the highlight and often the only form of

holiday entertaining on the Pennsylvania German farm, the kitchen will present an authentic portrayal of the hustle and bustle of the day before Christmas. Tour goers will be able to sample the old fashioned molasses cookies and peppernuts being baked by costumed reenactors.

The Herr Foundation has kept the decorations throughout the farmhouse as close as possible to what a non-Plain family would have used in the late 1800s. A special feature is the Pennsylvania German tradition of using a sassafras tree which they wrapped with cotton and then hung simple ornaments from the branches. The parlor tree will be a cedar tree, which used to be prevalent in the meadows and fence rows of early Lancaster County farms.

Perhaps nothing so characterizes a 19th century Lancaster County Christmas as the sights and smells of the traditional foods being prepared over a wood burning cook stove. Walnut taffy, snitz pies, clear toy candies, black walnut cakes, dried corn, and many more delicacies are all a visual part of this authentic portrayal of early farm life.

The Keeping Room gift shop will be open in the cellar area for shopping while visitors enjoy complimentary cider and pretzels. Admission is \$5 for adults, children under 12 free, students \$1.

Visitors are reminded to wear comfortable shoes for touring. For additional information call (717) 898-8522 or (717) 394-5882.

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