

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 Cerelia.

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.

The records of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, records which bridge the gap between the aboriginal civilization of thousands of years ago and ours today, show that the Indians of the Southwest domesticated turkeys and fattened them for the choice morsels at their ceremonial feasts. The practice of such feasts, however, had been established long be-

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 thing 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 mummery 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 bedecked 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 dins 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 mummies 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 householders to throw hot pennies out of the window to the costumed urchins. Then there was a scramble as never is 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 mummum in 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 mummum 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 1780. 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.

(By Western Newspaper Union.)

Go to Your Dealer
and Ask Him to
Show You the
Remington

Standard American
**DOLLAR
POCKET KNIFE**
THE GREATEST VALUE EVER OFFERED

If your dealer hasn't this knife in stock, send his name and a dollar. The knife will be mailed at once. If you don't think this is the biggest value you ever had for \$1., return the knife and your money will be refunded. Address: Remington Cutlery Works, 951 Barnum Avenue, Bridgeport, Conn.

© 1930 R. A. Co.

REMINGTON ARMS COMPANY, Inc.

4043

Modern Mechanics
"Conscience is a still, small voice. Wife is the amplifier."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Relieve COUGHS Quickly with Boschee's Syrup
First dose soothes instantly. Relief GUARANTEED.
At all druggists

Men, Women, \$2.50 starts you in business. Make \$21 or more per week. Write for sample, 1728 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif.

The Ideal Vacation Land
Sunshine All Winter Long
Splendid roads—towering mountain ranges—Highest type hotels—dry invigorating air—clear starlit nights—California's Foremost Desert Playground
Write Geo & Chaffey
Palm Springs CALIFORNIA

Cursed Weather
"What kind of a climate have you here?" asked the traveling man.
"Wal," replied the native, "it's good for the fellers that sell umbrellas and overshoes, but all that it's good for otherwise is to cuss at."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Small Girl Probably Right, but Not Polite

"We need have no fear for the future of America as long as our young folks remain normal," says Judge Lindsey. "We criticize our so-called 'flaming youth' and justly so, but the kiddies are just as wholesome and as natural as they ever were."

"A fashionable Denver woman gave what she intended to be a very select party for her five-year-old daughter. It wasn't to be a children's party, but a gathering of little men and women."

"But the children wouldn't have it that way. They laughed and fought and romped just like ordinary children. Finally one little chap went up to his equally small hostess and said:

"Gee whiz! My mother has telephoned three times for me to come home. What do you suppose is the matter? And to the fashionable mother's consternation her tiny superdaughter replied:
"I guess she wants you to get home before you bust."

Boiling Water
While water is being boiled it is in motion caused by the expansion of the water nearest the source of heat. These particles rise, and the cooler and heavier particles from above move into their place, setting up what are called convection currents through the water. This process continues until all the water is at a uniform temperature.

So soon as you begin to sell books, you find what a lot of people know about books.

MAKE MONEY. SELL WORLD EDUCATION. one dollar. Full of wit, wisdom, wonder. Sells easily. Sample fifty cents. **REED TOY COMPANY**, Leominster, Mass.

Men, Women, Beautiful Metal Art Pictures! everybody wants. No competition. Wonderful Christmas gifts. Big commission. Write **Louis Beck**, Jackson Ave., Ann Arbor, Mich.

Stop Old Age. Keep kidneys and bladder clean. **JK Tablets** help nature control urinary system. Avoid sickness. One dollar. **Jefferson Laboratories**, Trenton, N. J.

Florida's Choice Grapefruit, Oranges. \$7.00 box 24.00 half box delivered. Xmas special. Remit money order. **G.C. Myers, Dundee, Fla.**

YOUR NAME on rubber 25c
Each additional line 15c.
Duro Rubber Stamp Co., Erie, Penna.

SALESMAN, Eldorado, to sell high grade Holiday confection, consisting of California Chocolate Coated Stuffed Fruit, put up in California redwood boxes. Big commission to producers. Send \$1 for sample box, money refunded on first order. Address **Merini's, Casino Bldg., Santa Cruz, Calif.**

FRECKLES Go Quickly...
From the time you make the first application they begin to fade like MAGIC. At all drug and dept. stores or by mail postpaid \$1.25 and 65c. A copy of Beauty Secrets FREE.
DR. C. H. BERRY CO.
2973-5 Michigan Ave. Chicago

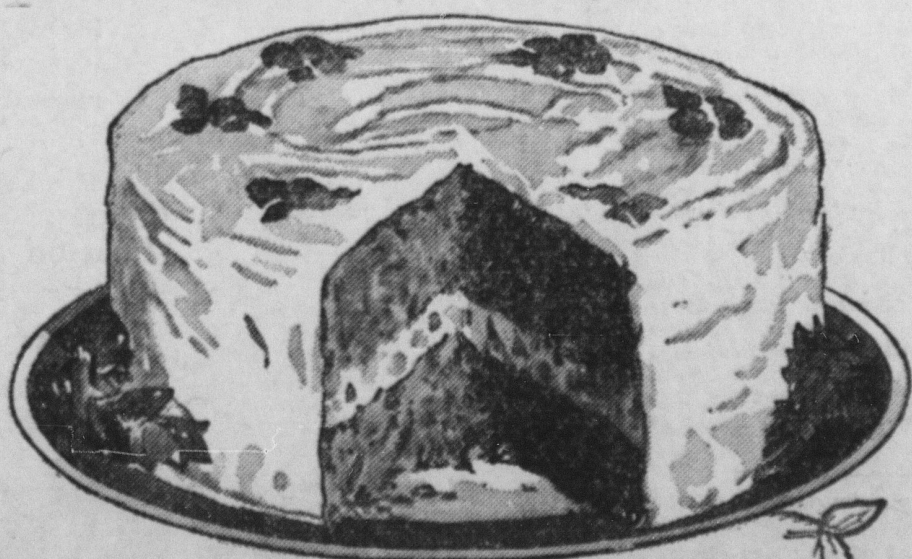
PARKER'S HAIR BALM
Removes Dandruff Stops Hair Falling Imparts Color and Beauty to Gray and Faded Hair Sold in all Druggists.
FLORESTON SHAMPOO—Ideal for use in connection with Parker's Hair Balm. Makes the hair soft and fluffy. 50 cents by mail or at drug-gists. **Hiscox Chemical Works, Pathecoque, N.Y.**

W. N. U., BALTIMORE, NO. 46-1930.

Explanation
"Briggs is dressing better and living better than he ever did before."
"Yes. His new valet has very expensive tastes."

The ALL-STAR "Kitchen-tested" Recipe for JAM CAKE

As prepared by Betty Crocker, noted expert



Eventually why not now?

All-Star "Kitchen-tested" Recipe by Betty Crocker, noted Cooking Expert.

Free This and 14 other ALL-STAR Betty Crocker "Kitchen-tested" Recipes inside every sack of **GOLD MEDAL "Kitchen-tested" FLOUR**



TODAY THE BEST BAKERS ARE MAKING A VARIETY OF DELICIOUS CAKES—HAVE YOU TRIED THEM?