

**SOME OF THE
HOMELY FEATURES
OF
THANKSGIVING
FESTIVITIES**
PHOTOS BY A STAFF ARTIST



Thanksgiving Baked Meats and the Day

IN the early years of the seventeenth century almost every successive festival was in honor of a different achievement or principle. Yet it is difficult today for those who are confronted with a succulent repast, which itself constitutes their chief cause for thankfulness, to realize that in the days of yore the occasion was one of fervid and heartfelt gratitude to God for blessings ranging from a good harvest to the discomfiture of a foe, and from the timely discovery of a plot against the life of a British ruler to the successful landing of a fresh boatload of pioneers on the rocky eastern coast of New England.

The first festival of this nature held in America occurred several years previous even to what is commonly understood as the date of its birth. It was on August 9, 1607, old style, that the Popham colonists, Church of England men, landed upon Mohegan, near the Kennebec river, and, under the shadow of a high cross, listened to a sermon by Chaplain Seymour, in which thanks were extended to God for "our happy meetings and safe arival into the contry." Good cheer followed.

It was not till fourteen years later, in 1621, that the people of the Plymouth col-

ony held their first Thanksgiving ceremonies and feast. This was in the autumn, in the year after their arrival, and the affair was purely a celebration of a good harvest. From that time till the merging of the Plymouth colony with Massachusetts in 1691 these festivals were of irregular occurrence. They were held as late as December and as early as June, and, while sometimes it was for a good harvest that the people thanked and ate, in 1623 the safe arrival of some provisions from England was the cause of the festivity, and in 1689 the accession to the throne of William and Mary proved an equal impetus.

Growth of the Idea.

A century later, however, the custom had spread well over the country and the harvest idea had become indissolubly connected with it. For this reason the late autumn had grown to be the accepted time of observance, and with both these codicils of precedent attached the festival has come down to the present time.

That a holiday which dates back but a trifle more than two centuries and a half should give historians so much trouble to ascertain its exact origin is extremely curious and also unfortunate. With the history and lineage of the traditional

Thanksgiving edibles no such difficulty is encountered. From the first, or very near it, ironbound precedent has dictated the essential features of such a feast. Additions to the potent menu have occurred from time to time, but no omissions are noted. The same cakes which tickled the palate of Americans for centuries are still served.

First of all, from the time of the initial feast of the Plymouth colonists in 1621 till today, the piece de resistance of the entire collation has been turkey. On that day in December 280 years ago Governor Bradford sent four hunters out to secure game for the feast then being planned and they returned with scores of wild turkeys. This was the principal dish, not being displaced by the venison which was the contribution of the great Indian chief, Massasoit, and his ninety Indian braves, who were guests of honor on this occasion.

From that day on, then, turkey has been the central figure in the festal ambrosia. And there are other portions of a real Thanksgiving repast that are nearly as indispensable. These are cider and doughnuts, apples, mince and pumpkin pies, cranberry sauce and celery and Hubbard squash with mashed potatoes of the Irish order. The style of preparation of all the

cooked foods, too, is still much the same as at first. When Governor Bradford's four hunters returned many willing hands of the Puritan women were outstretched to receive the wild fowl they had brought. But these birds were not plucked, not singed, not dressed, not cut apart at the joints and fried or stewed. Not they. Instead a bed of soft, moist clay furnished at once their cleaning and their dripping pan, while a burrow deep down in the livid embers of a huge open fire was their oven.

Thickly basted, feathers and all, with the clay till they were mere pear-shaped balls of smooth marl, the birds were roasted in their own essence till the muculent covering grew hard and finally cracked. Then they were removed, the crust encasing them broken off and with it came every feather, leaving a juicy roast turkey. And they still roast them today.

Others of the creature comforts that are now indissolubly connected with the Thanksgiving dinner have become so by gradual stages since the turkey made its advent and they all cling about it as the keystone of the dietetic portion of the festival.

Some Cause for Trepidation.

Because of this very diversity of the recognized feshspots essential to a Thanksgiv-

ing feast, some persons of ill-advised dispositions, allowing their fears of finance to take precedence of their honest appetites, are already wondering whether or not they should really contemplate with any semblance of joy the approach of the harvest festival. For along certain lines Thanksgiving viands are as much as 100 per cent higher this November than they were last, and such exorbitant results of divers "corners" on the different markets are of sufficient importance to place at a considerable discount the simple thankfulness in the hearts of many of the humbler ones who contemplate the preparation of a holiday feast of a richness fitting for the occasion.

Luckily, however, investigation discloses that it is only in a very few departments of the extensive Thanksgiving market that any excess in prices obtains now. Potatoes, probably, show the greatest advance. "Spuds," which last year could be purchased for 50 cents a bushel, now cost from \$1.25 to \$1.35, a rise of more than 150 per cent.

Apples, too, are very high, ranging from \$4 a barrel for the Ben Davis variety up to \$5.50 for Jonathans and others of a similar stripe and fiber. This fruit, by the way, is one of the most ancient accompaniments of a Thanksgiving dinner and the same va-

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