



HISTORIC BELLE GROVE SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD

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**Saturday
Nov. 28, 2009
at 5:00pm**

**at Locust Lane
and Main Street**

Join us, meet your great Belle Grove Square neighbors and enjoy the holiday!

A Victorian Thanksgiving

In 1863, Thanksgiving Day became an American holiday, to honor the Pilgrims. As you will read, the major concern for Thanksgiving is the menu, which has not changed since the first holiday. The women in the family would plan days in advance for the upcoming Thanksgiving meal. Some of the foods would be well beforehand - one such food was the mincemeat pies which were made 3 - 4 weeks before the holiday.

The women often worked together cooking, since their workload for the holiday was increased enormously. Of course, the house cleaning was also increased because it was customary to give the servants the day off. The menu for Thanksgiving usually consisted of the following: roast turkey, cranberry sauce, chicken salad, onions and potatoes, mince pie and cider. The menu has not changed much over the years. We all know, the most important custom on

Thanksgiving is the gathering of family and friends, and being thankful for the togetherness the holiday brings.

Various customs have through the years become associated with Thanksgiving Day. Some have

died out while others flourished. In New England in the nineteenth century a raffle of fowls was traditionally held on Thanksgiving Eve and there was a shooting match on Thanksgiving morning. Also in the nineteenth century, in the large cities, poor children would go about the streets in costume begging fruit, vegetables, and money.

The playing of sports has been a Thanksgiving custom from the beginning. From the stool ball of the Pilgrims, to the bicycle races of the past century, to the football games of the present, Thanksgiving has been a continuously active holiday. Schools and church classes around the country also use the Thanksgiving theme as a basis for plays to educate children in American history. Some cities hold parades to portray the spirit of Thanksgiving and to welcome in the new holiday season.

Happy Thanksgiving!



The Philadelphia Spirit Behind Thanksgiving

by Gloria T. Delamar

Obscured amidst the traditional celebrations of Thanksgiving is the fact that the official adoption of the observance was instigated by the ardent efforts of an early feminist - through the medium of a Philadelphia-based lady's magazine. When Sarah Josepha Hale took up the cause in her Godey's Lady's Book, she reached so many readers, and wrote so eloquently, that her crusade finally moved President Abraham Lincoln to action.

Before then, primarily unofficial celebrations had taken place. The Pilgrims held a "Thanks-Giving" feast in 1621 that lasted three days. For the next century and a half, the celebration occurred only sporadically. It wasn't until 1789 that the new president, George Washington, issued the first national proclamation of a "Thanksgiving." It took him until 1795 to repeat the proclamation. Following presidents, including the Adamses, Jefferson, and Pennsylvania's Buchanan, as well as numerous state governments, viewed the concept as being a governmental interference with religion.

Mrs. Hale, however, was a forceful and determined woman. She had first taken up the crusade for a national thanksgiving observance in 1827 as editor of Boston's Ladies' Magazine. That same year, she published *Northwood*, the first novel ever to mention slavery, her stance being one of sympathy for the concerns of both the North and the South. In *Northwood*, she stated, "We have too few holidays. Thanksgiving, like the Fourth of July, should be considered a national festival and observed by all people."

Each November, she wrote articles advocating the observance of family gatherings and feasts. She printed her favorite mouth-watering recipes, gave directions for autumn table decorations, and even suggested games, songs, and recitations that would make the day a memorable family gathering as well as a national observance. In addition to recognition as the author of poems for children, including "Mary Had a Little Lamb," Sarah Hale became known for her common sense and for her stand on many social causes. She attracted the attention of Philadelphia publisher, Louis Godey, who bought Ladies Magazine so he could merge it with his Godey's Lady's Book and bring the widowed Mrs. Hale to Philadelphia in 1841 to take over the helm as editor.

As Mrs. Hale's influence grew, she became more assertive in her crusade for an official thanksgiving date. She wrote to the governors of every state and territory, to leading businessmen, industrialists, and editors, to Congressmen, and for sixteen years straight, to the Presidents in office. (Polk, Taylor, Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan, and Lincoln.)

Her Godey's Lady's Book editorials, urging a national thanksgiving observance, started early in the year and continued to November. By 1851, all but two states were having some kind of thanksgiving observance. She did not hesitate to list the names of all the governors who issued thanksgiving proclamations, and in 1852 took the governors of Virginia and Vermont to task, urging that all the states and territories be united in the festival and asking for the fourth Thursday of November as a day with "twenty-three millions of

people sitting down, as it were, to a feast of joy and thankfulness." She continued to print suitable menus for the celebration of the feast.

After the battle of Gettysburg, with renewed hopes of the end of the Civil War, she wrote her third letter to Abraham Lincoln. Her editorials had gained widespread acceptance among citizens for a national observance of thanksgiving. When her letter reached him this time, her eloquence had its effect. Two days before the official proclamation, she was informed by Secretary of State, William Seward, that Lincoln was giving her suggestion consideration.

On October 3, 1863, while the country was suffering the separations of the Civil War, President Lincoln was moved to declare the fourth Thursday of November "a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens."

In 1939 and 1940, merchants convinced President Franklin D. Roosevelt to move the celebration up to the third Thursday of November to establish a longer between-holiday time for Christmas shopping. But national sentiment reigned and the observance was returned to the day first suggested by George Washington and advocated by Sarah Josepha Hale over a 36-year crusade - the fourth Thursday of November.

Obsessive determination doesn't always come to fruition - but if the cause is something that strikes the emotions - like Mother's and Father's Days, and now Thanksgiving - championing observances that eschew religious and political lines can create universal celebrations that bind us together, as families and as a nation.

Thanks to a spirited lady, and the influence of a Philadelphia-published magazine, for almost a

century and a half now, Americans have officially taken time to be thankful for their blessings, and have had a grand and glorious excuse to stuff themselves

Belle Grove Square

On October 15th neighborhood residents gathered for our quarterly board meeting. At this meeting we had a special guest from the City of Westminster - Tim Rogers came to answer questions and to determine if the residents of Historic Belle Grove Square would be interested in hosting the 2010 Holiday Home Tour. After answering questions from attendees, many residents indicated that they were interested in having their homes included in the tour. Because of the interest expressed at the meeting, it looks like our neighborhood will be hosting the tour. If you were not able to attend the meeting but would be interested in including your home on the tour, please contact Tim at 410-848-9000.

In other board news, Mitchell Edmondson proposed pursuing the possibility of having our neighborhood park declared a Monarch Butterfly Waystation. After the wonderful article in our last newsletter, several residents have expressed an interest in planting milkweed and other plants that attract and nurture



Halloween spookiness abounds on E

with turkey, potatoes, maize, yams, creamed onions, relishes, cranberries, mince pies, pumpkin pies, and as if it were necessary, more savory stuffing.

Square News

Monarch butterflies. The motion was approved and Mitchell will work to make sure our site meets the required criteria and complete the certification application with the Monarch Waystation Program. Once our neighborhood is accepted, we will receive a certificate with our organizations name and unique Monarch Waystation ID for our site. We will also receive a sign we can display in the park.

The board also agreed to continue working towards the installation of historic street signs for our neighborhood. It is hoped that we will have our signs installed before the home tour in December 2010. We will have to rely on contributions from neighborhood residents to pay for the signs. The City of Westminster will install and maintain the signs. We may have to organize some fundraisers next year to pay for them. If you have any ideas on how we can raise money for the neighborhood group, please come to our next board meeting or give us a call anytime at 443-293-7203.



Belle Grove Square this year.

A Thanksgiving Day History Quiz

by Jay A. Graybeal

Have you ever wondered about the origin of Thanksgiving Day or want to know when the first Thanksgiving was celebrated in Maryland?

You will find the answers to these questions and 48 others in a quiz that appeared in the November 17, 1940 issue of The Baltimore Sunday American newspaper:

1. What is the origin of Thanksgiving Days celebrated in various parts of the world, before the beginning of the American Thanksgiving Day?

2. How does the Hebrew Feast of the Tabernacles figure in the American Thanksgiving Day?

3. What special days of Thanksgiving have been kept in England?

4. When was the first New England day of thanks, who proclaimed it, and what was it for?

5. How was this day observed?

6. What huge bird, now extinct, is rated as the ancestor of the Thanksgiving Day turkey?

7. Who was the first white man to offer a prayer of thanks on American soil?

8. To what family does the Thanksgiving turkey belong?

9. From what variety is the domesticated turkey in the United States derived?

10. Is the turkey a fowl peculiar to the Americas?

11. Was it a man or a woman who started Thanksgiving Day as a religious festival, celebrated on the same day throughout the country?

12. How was this done?

13. When was the first national celebration of Thanksgiving Day held?

14. What were the circumstances?

15. When was the first international Thanksgiving Day celebration, and who conceived it?

16. Was Thanksgiving observed in any manner during the Revolutionary War?

17. Who issued the first Thanksgiving

Day proclamation made by any President?

18. Following that edict, what was the procedure as to Thanksgiving proclamations?

19. When did Marylanders first observe Thanksgiving Day?

20. What was the date of the first official Thanksgiving Day celebration in Baltimore Town?

21. What did they have to eat and drink?

22. By whom and why was the first Thanksgiving Day proclamation issued in New York State?

23. What was the one great social custom on Thanksgiving Day during the last century?

24. In what large Eastern city is the custom of masquerading on the streets by children observed on Thanksgiving Day, and what is its supposed origin?

25. When did the State of Virginia first recognize Thanksgiving Day?

26. What was the equivalent of Thanksgiving Day in ancient Greece and Rome?

27. What was the early English equivalent of Thanksgiving Day?

28. Who originated the custom, common in Maryland, of serving sauerkraut with turkey?

29. When did President Roosevelt issue his proclamation for 1940, setting November 21 as Thanksgiving Day?

30. Is it mandatory to observe this date in every State?

31. How many States refused to accept President Roosevelt's 1939 proclamation setting Thanksgiving Day as November 23, one week ahead of the date commonly set?

32. What three States observed both days in 1939?

33. What date for Thanksgiving Day in Maryland did Governor O'Connor set in 1939, and why?

34. What is the derivation of the word "cranberry"?

35. What is the annual crop of

cranberries in the U.S.?

36. In what States are cranberries mainly produced?

37. Do cranberries grow on bushes or on vines?

38. What is the idea of the "streamlined" turkey the U. S. Bureau of Animal Industry has been cultivating for four years?

39. What is the origin of the name "turkey" as applied to the thanksgiving Day bird?

40. When was turkey referred to as "the Christmas fare of the sturdy British yeomanry"?

41. In what year were turkeys transported to the West Indies and the Spanish Main?

42. What great monarch of Aztecs was said to have kept turkeys in his magnificent collection of birds and animals?

43. What bird did the Spanish conquistadors and writers believe the turkey to be?

44. How many turkeys, according to estimates, were consumed in Baltimore and vicinity last Thanksgiving Day?

45. Of turkeys raised in various States, which is considered the best for Thanksgiving Day?

46. What is the best market for Maryland turkeys?

47. What are the big turkey States? (Meaning numbers, not quality, Maryland leading in the latter.)

48. What was the 1939 turkey crop, as estimated by the Government?

49. Where and when was Virginia's first "Turkey Festival" held?

50. Who wrote:

"Thanksgiving Day, I fear,
If one the solemn truth must touch,
Is celebrated, not so much
To thank the Lord for blessings o'er.
As for the sake of getting more."

Author's note: this writer is thankful that he wasn't graded on this test. For answers, see next page. The Board and Staff of the Historical Society hope you had a happy Thanksgiving.



Thanksgiving Day History - Answers

1. Observance goes back to primitive times, when human beings gave thanks for earthly blessings bestowed on the.

2. Some students maintain our Thanksgiving an outcome of this feast and that, therefore, Thanksgiving in America is of Old Testament origin.

3. Defeat of the French at Poltiers, 1356; defeat of the Spanish Armada, 1588; national Thanksgiving Day established for more than 200 years for failure of gunpowder plot, November 5, 1605.

4. Autumn of 1621. Proclaimed by Governor Bradford. Observed in thanks for the harvest.

5. Colonists shot wild turkeys; friendly Indians under "King" Massassolt brought in deer and all feasted together.

6. The Moa, according to some scientists at the American Museum of Natural History.

7. Christopher Columbus. On his first landing he threw himself on his knees and kissed the earth, giving thanks to God.

8. Pheasant. Genus Meleagris.

9. Mexican

10. Yes

11. A woman, Mrs. Sarah J. Hale, editor of the Ladies Magazine in Boston and later of Godey's Lady's Book, in Philadelphia.

12. By writing to the governors of all the States and the President and persuading many governors to fix the last Thursday in November as a day of Thanksgiving.

13. In Washington, August 6, 1863.

14. Mrs. Hale wrote to President Lincoln following the Battle of Gettysburg urging that he proclaim a day of national thanksgiving. He did.

15. In Washington 1909, conceived by the Rev. William T. Russell, pastor of St. Patrick's Catholic Church, and held in obedience to a request from Cardinal Gibbons.

16. It was annually recommended by Congress, but after the peace of 1784 there was no national call for thankfulness.

17. Washington in 1789, in honor of the adoption of the Constitution.

18. Several were made by Presidents, but usually it was left to the governors of the States.

19. In 1608 at the conclusion of a mysterious plague which had taken hundreds of lives in the Southern portion of the State.

20. December 13, 1781, just after Washington and his wife passed through Baltimore on their way to Philadelphia.

21. Venison, goose, turkey, roasted or boiled wild or tame fowl, decanters of Madeira, Holland gin, Jamaica rum and cognac. In humbler dwellings, Maryland punch, persimmon beer, hominy, molasses, wild fowl and fish.

22. Gov. John Jay in 1795, as an expression of gratitude for the cessation of the yellow fever plague. He was severely criticized for this.

23. Making calls. Thanksgiving rivaled New Year's Day in that respect.

24. New York. Believed to have descended from Guy Fawkes Day in England.

25. In 1855, when Governor Johns sent a message to the Legislature. In 1857 Governor Wise issued Virginia's first Thanksgiving Day proclamation.

26. In Greece, a harvest festival called Thesmophoria, or the Fest of Demeter, observed in November. In Rome, the festival of Ceres, goddess of the Harvest, celebrated annually October 4.

27. Harvest Festival.

28. Pennsylvania Dutch.

29. Saturday, November 9.

30. No. The governors of the various States may set their own dates.

31. Twenty-six.

32. Colorado, Mississippi and Texas.

33. November 23, because he thought every State should follow the President's edict.

34. Crane-berry - the neck of a crane, suggested by shape of slender, curved stalks, on which the fruits are borne.

35. Approximately 500,000 barrels.

36. Massachusetts, New Jersey and Wisconsin.

37. Trailing vines, bearing evergreen leaves, except the low bush cranberry, which is not cultivated.

38. The bird is white and weighs about eight pounds. It is intended for small families.

39. When introduced into England in 1541, the supposition was that it came from Turkey, hence the name

applied to it.

40. As far back as 1573.

41. 1526.

42. Montezuma.

43. A sort of peacock.

44. 90,232.

45. Maryland turkey, according to Prof. James Gwin of the poultry department of the University of Maryland.

46. New York City - consumes 27 percent of output.

47. California, Colorado, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Virginia, Texas, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Minnesota.

48. 32,000,000 pounds.

49. Harrisonburg, last September.

50. Will Carleton - "Captain Young's Thanksgiving."

Editor's note: this article originally appeared in the Carrol County Times, 26 November 1995.



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Letters to the editor are welcomed. Letters submitted may be edited for space or clarity.

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