

What's for Thanksgiving Dinner?

by Leo Copeland

Are you and yours planning to sit down to a good, old fashion Thanksgiving dinner? Okay, but exactly what does an "Old Fashion Thanksgiving Dinner" consist of?

Well, Turkey of course! Will it be a tame turkey or a wild turkey? They say the pilgrims ate wild turkey, you know.

How will this turkey be cooked? Will it be roasted, fried, smoked, steamed, grilled or barbecued, Rotiseried, Marinated, Ovenbagged, brined or Microwaved?

And there will certainly be pumpkin pie to go with the turkey, correct? Will it be fresh pumpkin or canned pumpkin? Will it be baked into a pie crust, made into a bar, put on a popcicle stick, served as a smoothy, fried or made into a vegan coconut pie?

Okay, Okay, enough of this nonsense! Lets get to the real purpose of this article.

We are told on the internet, "The arrival of the Pilgrims and Puritans brought new Thanksgiving traditions to the American scene. Today's national Thanksgiving celebration is a blend of two traditions: the New England custom of rejoicing after a successful harvest, based on ancient English harvest festivals; and the Puritan Thanksgiving, a solemn religious observance combining prayer and feasting.

Florida, Texas, Maine and Virginia each declare itself the site of

the first Thanksgiving and historical documents support the various claims. Spanish explorers and other English Colonists celebrated religious services of thanksgiving years before Mayflower arrived. However, few people knew about these events until the 20th century. They were isolated celebrations, forgotten long before the establishment of the American holiday, and they played no role in the evolution of Thanksgiving. But as James W. Baker states in his book, *Thanksgiving: The biology of an American Holiday*, "despite disagreements over the details, the 3-day event in Plymouth in the fall of 1621 was "the historical birth of the American Thanksgiving holiday." (Quoted from Thanksgiving History/

nesota, the turkey might be stuffed with wild rice and in Washington State, locally grown hazelnuts are featured stuffing and desserts. In Indiana, persimmon puddings are a favorite Thanksgiving dessert, and in Key West key Lime pie joins pumpkin pie on the holiday table. Some specialties have even become ubiquitous regional additions to local Thanksgiving menus; in Baltimore, for instance, it is common to find sauerkraut alongside the Thanksgiving turkey. (William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*; S.E. Morison, ed. Knopf. N.Y., 1952. p 90).

Now, you want your Thanksgiving Dinner to be traditional, the way grandma used to make it, right? Well, what this article is pointing out is there is no universal traditional Thanksgiving meals, and your grandmother's tradition may not be like somebody else's grandmother's tradition. At our house a common dessert was raisin pie, Mincemeat pie, grape-juice cobbler and Coconut cake, but the one dessert prompting the most thanksgiving was chocolate meringue pie.

The pilgrims were thankful for their blessings which by our standards would be considered meager. It is said they built more graves than huts, but they still took time out for a feast of thanksgiving which lasted three days. So, we should be Thankful for what we have and lift up our voices in praise of the One who gives all good blessings. This is the American Tradition.



Plimoth Plantation online).

"The classic Thanksgiving menu of turkey, cranberries, pumpkin pie and root vegetables is based on the New England fall harvests. In the 19th century, as the holiday spread across the country, local cooks modified the menu both by choice ("This is what we like to eat") and by necessity ("This is what we have to eat"). Today, many Americans delight in giving regional produce, recipes and seasoning a place on the thanksgiving table. In New Mexico, chiles and other southwestern flavors are used in stuffing, while on the Chesapeake Bay, the local favorite, crab, often shows up as a holiday appetizer or as an ingredient in dressing. In Min-

Thanksgiving Day 2012

Leo Copeland

The Idea of Thanksgiving has a beautiful connotation doesn't it? It evokes a warm feeling within. Most of us like to hear the words, "Thank you," because it means your expression of kindness is acknowledged and the recipient of your goodwill is grateful.

With Thanksgiving Day looming in the near future, what to write in this article became an issue. Should we go with tradition of the first Thanksgiving at Plymouth Rock, and tell about the Pilgrims and the Indians sitting down to eat together with the Indians bringing the turkeys and the Pilgrims providing the cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie?

That story is so steeped in tradition one can't tell what is truth and what is fiction. The plot becomes so complicated you can hardly see through the fog. We don't know much about Pocahontas, or about her relationship with John Smith if there was one.

We aren't even sure of her name. Was it Matoaka or Pocahontas or Rebecca Rolf? So we dropped this approach.

We thought then about how and when Thanksgiving Day became an official American holiday. It is strictly an American holiday, you know. But this approach is kind-of boring.

We turned to the internet for

some ideas and are indebted to a program entitled Thanksgiving Quotations - BrainyQuotes for at least the basic thoughts of what follows.

The first thing which caught our eye was a quote from Erma Bombeck. "Thanksgiving dinners take eighteen hours to prepare. They are consumed in twelve minutes. Half-times take twelve minutes. This in not coincidence."

Mrs. Bombeck put her finger on one thing not ordinarily mentioned in connection with Thanksgiving day, "football." She got her facts a little mixed up because most folks, especially men folks don't try to get our meal eaten during half-time we prefer to string it out through the whole game. When the whistle blows for a time-out, there is a mad rush to the kitchen for a refill of turkey and dressing or for a piece of pumpkin pie or some more fruit salad or dressing and giblet gravy. And don't forget to grab a slice of the chocolate pie before someone beats you to it and it is all gone. But you have to hurry back to your place in front of the TV before someone gets your chair or you miss a play.

If the game is exciting, as they all tend to be, you will likely forget how many helpings you have gotten, and soon your belt becomes too tight and you have to loosen it.

A quote from Marilu Henner says, "It is now common knowl-

edge that the average American gains seven pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day."

Ted Allen admitted, "My whole problem is that all of my favorite things at Thanksgiving are the starches, and everyone is trying to go low-carb this year, even a green vegetable has carbs in it.

If you have a good cook you have reason to be especially thankful. You could be like Phillis Diller's kids. She said, "My cooking is so bad my kids thought Thanksgiving was to commemorate Pearl Harbor."

A quote from John Clayton was profoundly appropriate. He said, "Thanksgiving is a time when the world gets to see just how blessed and how workable the Christian system is. The emphasis is not on giving or buying, but on being thankful and expressing that appreciation to God and to one another."

The original thought behind a Day of Thanksgiving was being grateful for what we have. That gratefulness was unabashedly directed toward the creator God in Heaven and his son Jesus Christ through whom all good blessings flow, and then gratitude for others. May we never lose sight of this thought.

Another online quote from Erma Bombeck should cap this discussion. She said, "No one diets on Thanksgiving. What we're really talking about is a wonderful

day set aside on the 4th Thursday of November when no one diets. I mean why else would they call it Thanksgiving?"

Happy Thanksgiving from your grateful friends at the Seminole Sentinel!