

Carroll County Times "Carroll's Yesteryears" Articles

"A Thanksgiving Day History Quiz"

Carroll County Times Article for 26 November 1995

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"?

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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."

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.

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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. Montesuma.
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.

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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."

This writer is thankful that he wasn't graded on this test. The Board and Staff of the Historical Society hope you had a happy Thanksgiving.

Photo Caption: This Thanksgiving Day post card was given to Erma Louise King, 36 Carroll St., Westminster, from the Church of God Cradle Roll in 1915. It featured embossed items for a "Grand Dinner in Honor of Thanksgiving" and a holiday toast, "Let formality be the least In the joys of this feast." Historical Society of Carroll County collection.