

# Thanksgiving In Fulton Through The Years

By Barbara Mask

The earliest printed notice of a Thanksgiving Day in Fulton appeared in the 'Whiteside Investigator,' the forerunner of the Fulton Journal, on November 22, 1854. It was the first newspaper published in Fulton and in Whiteside County beginning in March, 1854. Those early editions are included in the microfilm collection in the Resource Room at the Fulton (Martin House) Museum.

The Fulton Courier, another name for the early Fulton Journal, on November 23, 1860, announced that, "The annual Thanksgiving services will be held this year at the Methodist Church—Sermon by the Rev. W. H. Smith, Pastor of the Church. Services commence at 11 o'clock a.m." Reverend William Hutchinson Smith served as the chaplain for the 75th Illinois Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. An interesting and insightful book, REMINISCENCES OF THE CIVIL WAR, written by Smith can be found in the Fulton Museum.

Another announcement in that issue stated, "there will be a Thanksgiving Eve Ball in the Dement House" (Fulton's luxury hotel on the current site of the Post Office). "Judging from the arrangements, we infer it will be the Dance of the season, and a pleasant time is promised. Music by the Zouave Quadrille Band." There was another Thanksgiving Ball in Mitchell's Hall in 1882 when over fifty couples were in attendance, including many from abroad (in the 1800s, abroad referred to anyone coming from out of town). Also, in 1882, a family reunion was held in the home of Oscar Summers when his wife and five of her sisters and families gathered together for the Thanksgiving meal.

In 1861, during the Civil War, Thanksgiving Day was on November 28 and a public church service was held in the Congregational Church on Broadway Street (current 11th Avenue). The church, later converted to an apartment building, was destroyed by fire in 2004. Pastor McClure's sermon was based on the Bible verse, Isaiah 60:12. A news item in the same issue reported that the Estabrook family, owners of a livery stable in Fulton, went sleighing. There was little snow, but they traversed over sandy streets.

Thanksgiving Day was celebrated on December 7 in 1865. The editor reported that turkies (sic) and pumpkin pies graced the tables. The stores and offices on Main Street closed during the day, but opened for business at 4:00 p.m.

By 1916, those turkeys mentioned in 1865, were considered very expensive. The early settlers took down their shotguns, went out into the woods and could return with a couple of big birds. But after the turn of the century, turkeys cost twenty-two to twenty-four cents a pound live weight and dressed ones cost thirty-five cents a pound. The news item stated, "For an ordinary family if there is turkey meat, a five-dollar bill disappears."

A family gathering in 1901 was held in the home of Dr. George Clendenen, (current site of an apartment building at 710 11th Avenue) founder of the Mystic Workers of the World; later named Fidelity Life Association. Four brothers, three of them physicians, and according to the Journal, "were intelligent, progressive and well informed citizens," all enjoyed Thanksgiving Day in Fulton and returned to their respective homes over the Northwestern Railroad.

In scrolling through the years of newspapers, the public church service, later, called the union service was always held in our community. And in this year, 2012, the union Thanksgiving Service will be held in the First Reformed Church and with a shared commonality with our ancestors, citizens will gather and be thankful for the many blessings in our lives.

**SUGGESTIONS FOR THAT**  
**Thanksgiving Dinner**

We are now entering upon the eve of the great Thanksgiving feast. Among the people of this country the advent of this day is watched with more interest than any other day in the entire year. It marks a home coming event, or functions pertaining to family re-unions.

The family dinner on that day is not only prepared from the choicest meats but includes the best in groceries, fruits and vegetables such as are found at our store.

**Here Are a Few Items:**

CRANBERRIES	MINCE MEAT
APPLES	HOMINY
ORANGES	CRISP CRACKERS
GRAPE FRUIT	CAKES
BANANAS	BUTTER
BRAZIL AND JAVA COFFEE	CANNED FRUITS
CHEESE	CANNED VEGETABLES
CONDENSED MILK	SWEET POTATOES
FRESH EGGS	PUMPKINS
DELIGHTFUL TEA	CARROTS

In the grocery line our stock includes such goods as will satisfy the most discriminating taste because it is carefully selected both for quality and richness in appetizing flavors.

Always come to us for the best staple and fancy groceries. Our Motto:

**"COURTESY, CLEANLINESS HONESTY AND SERVICE"**

**R. GREEN & SONS**

FULTON, "Fulton's Pioneer Merchants" ILLINOIS

### Home Baking

The ladies of the Welfare association will hold a bakery sale at J. M. Fay's store next Saturday. Please call if you wish something good. (11-28-16)

### Notice to Thanksgiving Shoppers

In observance of the annual Thanksgiving feast, my store will close promptly at nine o'clock sharp Thursday morning, November 30. The delivery wagon will leave the store that morning at 8:30 prompt, so place your orders Wednesday so as to avoid all disappointments. F. KADYK (11-28-16)

### Thanksgiving Dinner

Hotel Martin will serve a special Thanksgiving dinner from 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. next Thursday. Those ordering dinner will please hand in orders by Wednesday noon. The regular price is seventy-five cents a plate. (11-28-16)

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