Sheffield Historical Society

A Thanksgiving History

hile the tradition of Thanksgiving originated in the earliest days of the Massachusetts colony, it was not until President Lincoln declarated it a national holiday in 1864 that the fourth Thursday in November came to be the holiday that we recognize today. Ministers, governors

and presidents had made Thanksgiving Day declarations before, but the date and the purpose varied year-to-year. It did not neccessarily align with annual harvest festivals that were popular in co-Ionial New England. Often it was a day marked by solemnity, humility and reflection, in keeping with its Puritan origins. George Washington notably deemed Novem-

ber 26, 1789, "as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favours of Almighty God."

y the early 19th century the tradition was gaining a foothold, especially in New England. Thansksgiving day was, for the most part, not celebrated in the South, until the close of that century. In 1817 New York was the first state to make Thanksgiving an offical annual holiday. We know from the "History of the County of Berkshire, Massachusetts, in Two Parts," writ-

ten in 1829, that Thanksgiving here in Sheffield was a day of prayer, with the day following it one of relaxation and leisure.

In 1827 Sarah Josepha Hale, an influential women's magazine editor and author of the nursery rhyme "Mary Had a Little Lamb" began petitioning presidents to make Thanksgiving a national holiday. Numerous years and presidents later she fi-



turkeys, Maple Ave. c. 1910

nally convinced Lincoln to do so, arguing that it would help unite the war-torn nation. The holiday did not become a fixed annual event, though. Presidents still had to proclaim Thanksgiving each year, and the last Thursday in November became the customary date. After FDR controversially bumped the date back one week to bolster Chirstmas shopping, in 1941 Congress permanently established the holiday as the fourth Thursday in the month.

Pineapple Pie

Sheffield bakers of the 1970's were not afraid to be a little daring in their recipes.

From: "Cooking Favorites of Sheffield" Sheffield Grange No. 224



PINEAPPLE PIE

1 beaten egg 1/2 c. sugar 1 large Tbsp. flour Mrs. Edwin S. LeGeyt

1 c. undrained crushed pineapple 1/2 c. hot water 1/4 tsp. salt

Mix in order given. Pour into crust - lined pie plate. Cover with top crust. It thickens in baking. (I usually double the recipe.) Bake 15 minutes at 425 degrees, then lower to 350 degrees and bake 30 minutes or until done.



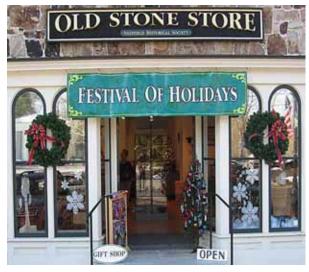
Antique pie making tools from the Milt Barnum Tool Collection



This ingenious pie lifter let a baker lift and remove a hot pie from the oven without burning herself

Society Events









Member's Holiday Party

Please join us on
Sunday, December 13 at the
Dan Raymond House
159 Main St.
4 pm -6 pm