

Newsletter



MUNSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Hello All,

First I would like to say the Board Members of the Munster Historical Society would like all the people who were affected by the flood know that our hearts go out to you.

Below is a picture of the new sign in place outside of the 'Munster History Museum', thanks to JoAnne Shafer's input, Chuck Gardiner's expertise, Bob O'Shaughnessy's encouragement and final approval, this joint effort between the Munster Historical Society and Munster Parks made this sign possible.

Thanks to Munster Parks Director Bob O'Shaughnessy, Park Board Member Ken Schoon and the Parks workers the railing at the Kaske House has been replaced and the Junior Historical Time Capsule Plaque is in place (see pictures below).

It is my understanding that the Parks department will start clearing the fallen trees from Heritage Park in November.

Remember the Munster Historical Society meets the fourth Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Kaske house unless otherwise notified.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:	
First Thanksgiving	2
On the subject of ghosts	3
Popcorn Corner con't	3
Popcorn Ball Recipe	3
First Thanksgiving (cont)	4



Len Walavich, President
Munster Historical Society



MICHELE'S POPCORN CORNER

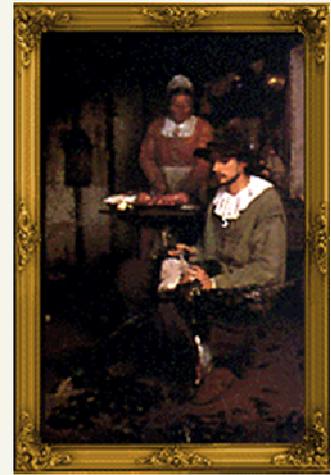
Hello,

With the Holidays fast approaching I thought it would be a good idea to look to the past for ideas using popcorn.

People of all ages ate popcorn and implemented its use in holiday decorations as well. For the home cooking adventurer there were recipes for making popcorn balls, candied popcorn, popcorn garnish for soup, "Pop-Corn" cakes, popcorn pudding, popcorn fritters, popcorn cereal, Cracker Jacks, chocolate covered popcorn and even popcorn brittle. Whew! (continued on page 3)

First Thanksgiving

In 1621, the Plymouth colonists and Wampanoag Indians shared an autumn harvest feast which is acknowledged today as one of the first Thanksgiving celebrations in the colonies. This harvest meal has become a symbol of cooperation and interaction between English colonists and Native Americans. Although this feast is considered by many to be the very first Thanksgiving celebration, it was actually in keeping with a long tradition of celebrating the harvest and giving thanks for a successful bounty of crops. Native American groups throughout the Americas, including the Pueblo, Cherokee, Creek and many others organized harvest festivals, ceremonial dances, and other celebrations of thanks for centuries before the arrival of Europeans in North America.



Food preparation

Historians have also recorded other ceremonies of thanks among European settlers in North America, including British colonists in Berkeley Plantation, Virginia. At this site near the Charles River in December of 1619, a group of British settlers led by Captain John Woodlief knelt in prayer and pledged "Thanksgiving" to God for their healthy arrival after a long voyage across the Atlantic. This event has been acknowledged by some scholars and writers as the official first Thanksgiving among European settlers on record. Whether at Plymouth, Berkeley Plantation, or throughout the Americas, celebrations of thanks have held great meaning and importance over time. The legacy of thanks, and particularly of the feast, have survived the centuries as people throughout the United States gather family, friends, and enormous amounts of food for their yearly Thanksgiving meal.

What Was Actually on the Menu?

What foods topped the table at the first harvest feast? Historians aren't completely certain about the full bounty, but it's safe to say the pilgrims weren't gobbling up pumpkin pie or playing with their mashed potatoes. Following is a list of the foods that were available to the colonists at the time of the 1621 feast. However, the only two items that historians know for sure were on the menu are venison and wild fowl, which are mentioned in primary sources. The most detailed description of the "First Thanksgiving" comes from Edward Winslow from *A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth*, in 1621:

"Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the company almost a week. At which time, among other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed upon our governor, and upon the captain, and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty. (continued on page 4)

The Halloween season has been a good time for fund raising over the past couple years by opening the Kasko House to ghost tours. It started with a few tours for the 'Indiana Ghost Trackers' and has grown to include 'Chaos Tours' which is run by the founder of the 'Indiana Ghost Trackers' Mike McDowell.

The tours are at the house for 20 to 30 minutes and the tour members are very respectful of all our possessions. It is an experience to watch the reactions of people when they listen to the stories connected with the house over the years. Some will then offer to tell of experiences they have had.

Even though some may be a little scared upon entering the house most leave with the feeling we have when in the house, the feeling of being welcome to a part of history.

Aside from the ghost stories a lot of them will ask about the history of the house and the surrounding area once they have seen some of our items on display.

If anyone is curious about the stories connected with the house you can contact me at: mhs.president@yahoo.com and I will send you some of the stories I have heard over the years.

ON THE SUBJECT OF GHOSTS

BY LEN WALAVICH

MICHELE'S POPCORN CORNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

• Popcorn Trivia •

- Sears, Roebuck & Co. sold home corn poppers for 8¢ each and 25lbs. of popping corn still on the cob at 5¢.
- Popcorn balls were among the most popular confections in the late 1800s & early 1900s.
- During the holiday season popcorn made for wonderful decorations from Christmas tree garlands

to fireplace mantel ornaments in Victorian homes. It also made for inexpensive gifts.

- Some of the popcorn flavorings used during the mid 1800s - 1920: orange & lemon juice, rose, peppermint, honey, vanilla, molasses and sugar.
- One could host a "Popcorn Frolic" with the helpful hints from a 1912 party book. The party

room would be decorated in a happy pink and white popcorn theme. Popcorn was not only eaten, but was used for party favors and in the games played - "corn-drop", "popcorn races", "popcorn hunt" and so on.

- An old 19th century method of cooking popcorn: Pour kernels of corn into a kettle full of lard. When the corn popped after heating

it was skimmed off the top as it surfaced!

- The first cookbook to mention popcorn was in 1846.
- One of the largest popcorn balls ever made was 12 feet in diameter in 1996. It used 2000 pounds of popcorn to construct!
- See recipe below.

• 1885 Pop-Corn Ball Recipe •



Popcorn balls could also be tinted with food coloring

and some were even made with chopped nuts and graded cocoanut added to the recipe mixture.

A simple popcorn ball recipe: "To six quarts of pop corn boil one pint of molasses about fifteen minutes; then put the corn into a large pan, pour the boiled molasses over it, and stir it briskly until thoroughly mixed. Then

with clean hands make the balls of the desired size." - recipe from an 1885 book by W. H. Colman.

*Hope this has been interesting.
HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!*



First Thanksgiving

(continued from page 2)

1621 Harvest Feast



Seventeenth Century Table Manners:

The pilgrims didn't use forks; they ate with spoons, knives, and their fingers.

They wiped their hands on large cloth napkins which they also used to pick up hot morsels of food. Salt would have been on the table at the harvest feast, and people would have sprinkled it on their food. Pepper, however, was something that they used for cooking but wasn't available on the table.

In the seventeenth century, a person's social standing determined what he or she ate. The best food was placed next to the most important people. People didn't tend to sample everything that was on the table (as we do today), they just ate what was closest to them.

Serving in the seventeenth century was very different from serving today. People weren't served their meals individually. Foods were served onto the table and then people took the food from the table and ate it. All the servers had to do was move the food from the place where it was cooked onto the table.

Pilgrims didn't eat in courses as we do today. All of the different types of foods were placed on the table at the same time and people ate in any order they chose. Sometimes there were two courses, but each of them would contain both meat dishes, puddings, and sweets.



MUNSTER
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

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Moving Forward to Preserve the Past

The Munster Historical Society has a small but active membership. We welcome anyone who is sincerely interested in preserving the history of Munster. All age groups, whether you are new in town, a former or long-time resident, or you have a special interest in the Town of Munster, we welcome your interest and need your support.