

# A History Of Thanksgiving

Compiled by  
Wade Hawkins, Pastor  
Rich Square United Methodist Church  
Pokeoket — does this name mean anything to you?

Though Thanksgiving this year will be the 352nd one, few people really know the delightful story of how the holiday has evolved.

Did you know, for instance, that the first Thanksgiving proclamation was signed by Abraham Lincoln? Or the role that Sara Josepha Hale played in making Thanksgiving what it is today? Or that the first Thanksgiving lasted three days?

The first Thanksgiving was held in December of 1621, when Gov. William Bradford of the Plymouth Colony appointed a day of celebration and sent four men out to shoot turkeys and other fowl.

The Pilgrims had come ashore from the Mayflower on December 21, 1620. The winter that followed was heartbreaking; half of the Pilgrims died of disease, hunger and exposure.

But the following March, two Indians befriended the remaining group and gave them

Indian corn seed — telling them to plant "when the oak leaves are as big as mouseears" and to catch fish to fertilize the soil. Thus the seeds were sown for the first Thanksgiving harvest.

It was a warm and bright summer, and the crops thrived. When autumn arrived, three log warehouses were filled with provisions — the harvest of 20 acres of corn, and six acres of wheat, rye, barley and peas.

Governor Bradford thought it fitting to celebrate and give thanks for their good fortune and a formal invitation was issued to Massasoit, leader of the Pokanoket Indians, to join them in a feast of Thanksgiving. Massasoit arrived with 90 of his followers and stayed for three days of feasting.

Thanksgiving days following harvests later came to be celebrated throughout the New England Colonies but on different days. George Washington named November 26, 1789, as a national thanksgiving day in honor of the new constitution; but the custom continued to vary widely among the states — kept alive only by the proclamations of local governors.

It was a woman, Sarah Josepha Hale, however, who first suggested that Thanksgiving should be a

national patriotic holiday. She was the editor of the popular woman's magazine called *Godey's Lady's Book*, and for almost 20 years she campaigned through editorials and letters to the president, state governors and other influential persons.

Finally, Sarah Hale was able to win support on behalf of Pres. Abraham Lincoln. In the third year of the War Between the States, he believed that the Union had been saved; he therefore proclaimed a national day of thanksgiving to be celebrated on Thursday, November 26 — naming the last Thursday in November as the day to be observed each year.

While turkey is traditional in the United States for Thanksgiving, in Japan a similar holiday of thanks is celebrated each year on November 23 with visits to shrines, with candy and pots of hot ceremonial tea.

The colorfully-clad natives on the island of Sardinia, on the other hand, meet the end of the harvest season in August to offer their thanks in the Festival of the Savior. At sundown a solemn procession of people proceed to church for prayer and to give thanks. Within a few days after the

festival, the hunting season starts!

In Bavaria at the thanksgiving festivals, which take place each year at the end of the harvest season, natives dress in traditional attire and perform folk dances which go back to the 13th and 14th centuries.

Youngsters in Metropolitan New York and in surrounding areas, do not mask or dress in various costumes at the Halloween season of the year and go "trick or treating," but on Thanksgiving day dress in all kinds of costumes and roam the streets decorating shop windows with soap as crayons and fill the foot of a stocking with flour to be used as a "combat weapon." It is thought that this tradition sprang up as a result of the long standing cartoon studded Macy's Parade down Fifth Avenue in New York.

Whether you celebrate Thanksgiving this year with a big turkey dinner, or with hot ceremonial tea, or with a stocking filled with flour, or with prayer — give a kind thought to a man name Massasoit and a tribe named Pokanoket. We have their corn and their land and the custom they have helped make popular, but you don't hear much about the Pokanoket any more.

## THE Northampton County TIMES-NEWS

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"TURKEY ON THE HOOF" will soon be turkey on the table if this gentleman has his way. The turkey is only a symbolic reminder that freedom and abundance are part of this hard-won heritage...ours as long as we are prepared to work for

them and, if necessary, fight for them. Let us give thanks for what we have...to re-affirm our faith in freedom and our determination to preserve and cherish it. That is the true meaning of Thanksgiving.

## Wet Ground Is Farmers Worry

JACKSON — We're really concerned about getting the heavy machinery cotton pickers in the fields, as the land dries so very slowly this time of year," said Northampton County Agricultural Extension Chairman B. H. Harrell Monday.

"All this rain is mighty bad for Northampton County farmers with 55 to 60 per cent of the cotton acreage still in the field, he continued.

"Other crops are also cause of some concern," Harrell reported. "We still have a few peanuts in the field scattered over the county, but it's only about one per cent of the

total. "As for our soybean crop, there's still a lot of soybeans in the field. The crop is a little better than we thought it would be, if we can just get it out of the fields."

Reviewing the plight of the farmers, he said, "This is the second year in a row for our crops to fail. This time the dry weather took its toll, along with the fact that many of the peanuts were planted late.

"Coupled with the October 20 freeze, it just did not allow us to have enough heat units to mature the peanut crop," he explained.

## Commissioners Name Health Administrator

JACKSON — New Health Department Administrator for Northampton County is Mrs. Norma B. Carroll of Wise. She will be moving to Northampton shortly.

Mrs. Carroll, who retired in January after 32 years with the N. C. State Board of Health, was approved for her new position by the Board of County Commissioners Monday.

Lacking only her thesis for her masters degree, Commissioner John H. Liverman explained that Mrs. Carroll would complete this in the near future in order to secure her masters degree and fully meet all qualifications as Health Department administrator.

A plan for a soil survey of Northampton County, to be completed over a six year period at a cost of \$75,000 to the county, was presented as requested by the board by Soil Conservationist John Litch-

field. In other actions: —Dr. John Stanley appeared before the Board to ask their help in the Region L or Q as the proper place for

**Bomb Hoax At Gaston**

GASTON — An investigation is underway here by the Northampton Sheriff's Department into a telephoned bomb threat at Gaston High School.

The school's principal received a call at 8 a.m. Thursday notifying him that a bomb was set to go off in the school. The buildings were emptied of students and a search was made. No explosive devices were located.

Wednesday afternoon the Sheriff's department reported that the investigation was still underway.

Mental Health. With Region L, Northampton will join Halifax in its Mental Health setup. With Region Q, Dr. Stanley would make plans for a new building in the region of Tri-County airport.

The commissioners decided they were in a state of limbo and took the matter under advisement for the December meeting for consideration.

—Voted to write letters to the banks of the county advising them that no action would be taken, if taken then, until June 30 as to the moving of county funds from the Farmers Bank of Woodland to other county banks.

—Voted to pay Phillips Construction Company an additional \$2,400 over on the sanitary landfill project. This was added to the original cost of \$7,214.

—Voted to pay \$405 each to the elections board chairman and secretary for overtime

(See HEALTH, Page 5)

## EAS Study Getting Support In County

JACKSON — When decision time arrives to accept Extended Area Service (EAS) in Northampton County, more than 3,300 telephone subscribers will have a vote. Just how many will cast a vote for this much needed step in the direction of progress is anybody's guess.

The position taken by the Board of County Commissioners, as well as many other governmental and civic leaders, is that EAS is needed here. The service, when approved, will connect five of the major towns within

the county with toll-free telephone service. They are Jackson, Conway, Seaboard, Woodland, and Rich Square.

At present, Rich Square and Woodland enjoy this service. "At present we are just looking for interest in EAS to see if it would be feasible to conduct a survey to establish actual costs. The survey would be made by Carolina Telephone and Telegraph and then, if enough support for EAS was found it would then be put to a vote," said County Accountant Tim Ellen.

To date some 26 civic

organizations, clubs, companies, and cooperations have endorsed EAS. They include:

Jackson ASCS Office, Antioch Baptist Church, Jackson Elementary School, Industrial Development Commission Northampton County Department of Social Services, Northampton County Dept. of Health, Northampton County Register of Deeds, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, Jackson Funeral Home (See EAS, Page 5)

## Tax Time Again

JACKSON — "Northampton taxpayers have paid \$336,409.13 since the start of this fiscal year (July 1) and over \$60,000 so far this month." This statement was made Wednesday by Northampton Tax Collector Mrs. Elizabeth G. Hughes.

"Taxes paid after December 31 will have interest added to the bill. The interest rate will be two per cent in January and three-fourths of one per cent per month thereafter," Mrs. Hughes said. "This could add up to 10 1/4 per cent the first year and nine per cent per year for each following year."

Total personal and real tax in Northampton County for 1972, based on 50 per cent of assessed tax value, is set at just over \$75 million. Taxes levied for this year are \$1,167,383.19.

"We expect to have around 85 per cent of the tax bills paid by the end of December," Mrs. Hughes concluded.

## Gaston Commissioners Pass Trash Ordinance

GASTON — The Board of Commissioners has moved to regulate sizes on all garbage cans after having difficulty with business establishments which did not comply.

The new ordinance will require use of garbage cans of not more than 32 gallon capacity by all residents, private and commercial.

The Commissioners also voted to consult the Northampton County Health Department regarding certain business establishments whose handling of garbage and related sanitary problems do not meet existing requirements.

In other business the board: —Voted a mandatory ordinance requiring all persons on the town water

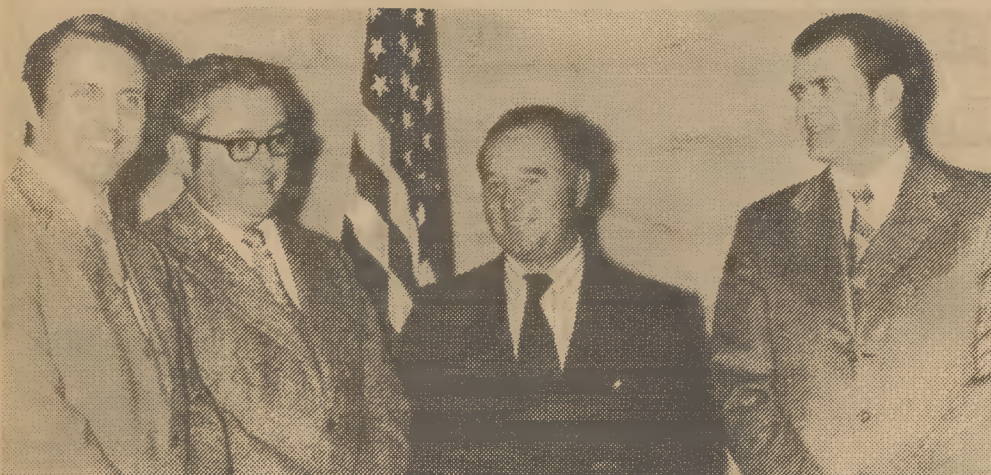
lines to hook into them.

—Heard a complaint from residents about dogs running loose in town and resolved to consult the Northampton County dog warden on this problem.

—Agreed to set up a January meeting with Robert E. Hinshaw of the Division of Community Services. This was suggested by Tom Willey, Gaston planning committee chairman.

—Heard a proposal for a preliminary survey on a sewage system from Robert E. Pittman, consulting engineer with Rivers Associates of Greenville.

—Passed an ordinance defining and limiting the conduct of auxiliary police.



CONWAY RURITAN CLUB'S annual ladies Night banquet speaker, Judge Perry Martin, second from right, chose as his topic, "Law and Order," with Judge Martin, from left, are Fred Carroll, vice president; Sterling Hamilton, president; and Bruce Johnson, program chairman. The Ruritans presented Dr. Joe Fleetwood Sr.'s family its first "Family of the Year" plaque at Monday night's event.



SHERIFF E. FRANK OUTLAND looks over the latest addition of equipment to his office, a Univac Police Investigation Network set, one of 100 sets to be in use in North Carolina very shortly. Information can be sent and received on the PIN set in a matter of seconds. Available information at present is generally limited to vehicles and driving records but after January 1 it will be increased to include criminal histories. PIN information will be used in conjunction with the National Crime Investigation Center (NCIC).