

OUR NATIONAL HOLIDAY

There are holidays and holidays. Christmas and New Year are a cosmic religion—are the property of no particular people, but yet are joyously observed by many an American holiday. Original in conception and growing in a small beginning until it reached the dignity of a national event. Its first celebration was by the Plymouth colony in 1621—those sturdy pioneers whose piety was as pronounced as their pluck, who honored themselves by honoring their Deity. The custom soon became more general, spreading all over the New England States. After the revolution it gradually extended to the middle states and later into the west, growing more slowly in the south. In 1868 the patriotic Lincoln forever established it in the list of holidays by proclaiming a day of Thanksgiving. His action being promptly followed by the individual proclamations of the governors of the states, who named the same day. Since then, by common consent the first announcement of the day is found in the President's Proclamation, and the day so named is also named by the states.

It is believed by many people that Thanksgiving was invented to give the turkey a distinction and a prestige and to give us a medium through which to offer gratitude while experiencing perennial thrills of pleasure. The selection of the turkey for the star part was happy, because every one likes turkey, be it hot, cold or canned. Unlike veal, canned beef or fish balls, the turkey is a concrete sympathy that causes every soul to ripple in song. Old and young alike are victims of its peerless quality. The young eat it with their first teeth, the middle aged eat it with their second teeth, the third masticate it with their third or store teeth, and it is even more footsome to the toothless. The cranberry's chief distinction is that which it enjoys in being the tail end of the Thanksgiving ticket.

The first Thanksgiving having occurred in 1621 it seems strange that the turkey did not then and there become the national bird. The turkey may not equal the eagle as a Fourth of July mascot, but as a biped calculated to gild the fleeting moments of the Thanksgiving feast, he so far outsoars the eagle that to compare them seriously would be like casting oxalic acid upon the ox.

CHURCH AND SCHOOL ON LITTLE RIVER, PASQUOTANK COUNTY

(Continued from Page Two) self, preached and made a number of converts to the Quaker doctrine. This religious body grew in numbers and influence; and according to Colonial Records at a monthly meeting held at Caleb Bundy's in March 1703 it is agreed by Friends that a meeting house be built at Pasquotank with as much speed as possible. Later, between 1703 and 1706 this plan was carried out and on the banks of Symons Creek, an arm of Little River, between the two ancient settlements of Nixonton and Newbegun Creek, the first Quaker meeting house and (with the exception of the old church in Chowan) the first house of worship in the state, was built rough and crude, was this house of God. Simple and plain, the large majority of the men and women gathered there, to worship in their quite undemonstrative way, the Power who had led them to this land of freedom. But the word preached to the silent listeners in that rude building inspired within them those principles upon which the foundation of the best citizenship of our state was laid.

The church of New England though long neglected of her children in this distant colony, had by this time begun to waken to her duty towards the sheep of her fold in Carolina. Somewhere about 1700 a missionary society sent a clergyman to the settlement, and in 1708 the Rev. James Adams writes to her majesty, secretary in London, that the citizens of Pasquotank have agreed to build a church and two chapels. As to the location of these edifices, history remains silent. But that the church had been sowing good seed in this fertile soil is shown

by the account given by the Rev. James Adams of the people of Pasquotank to whom he had been sent as rector of the Parish in that county.

According to the letter written by Mr. Adams to Her Majesty's Secretary, there had come into the county with the settlers from the West Indies, a learned public spirited layman, named Chas. Griffin, who seeing the crying need of the people, had established by 1705 a school house on Symons Creek for the children of the settlers near by. Being a loyal son of the church of England he insisted upon reading the morning and evening services of the church daily in his school, and he required his young charges to join in the prayers and make the proper responses. So faithful and efficient a teacher did he prove that even the Quakers who had suffered many things from the church of England as well as from their dissenting brethren, were glad to send their children to his school.

The Colonial Records contain many references to the wide and beneficent influence excited by Mr. Griffin, while acting in his two-fold capacity of teacher and lay reader in Pasquotank.

Governor Glover in a letter to the Bishop London in 1708 writes "In Pasquotank, an orderly congregation has been kept together by the industry of a young gentleman whom the parish have employed to read the services of the church of England. This gentleman being a man of unblemished life, by his decent behavior in that office and by apt discourses from house to house, not only kept those he found, but gained many to the Church."

Again and again in the pages of the Colonial Record, Vol. 1, are the praises of Charles Griffin sung though sad to say in the latter days of his life he seems to have fallen from grace and to have become involved in some scandal the particulars of which are not given.

History contains no records



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of the location of Mr. Griffin's school. But some of the old inhabitants of our country declare that it was Symons Creek, not far from the Ancient Quaker Meeting House.

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