

Thanksgiving in the 19th Century



Harriet Beecher Stowe, best known as the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, wrote another novel in 1869 called *Oldtown Folks*. She tells about life in a New England village called Oldtown. The passage below tells about Thanksgiving preparations in this Massachusetts town.

Chapter XXVII

How We Kept Thanksgiving at Oldtown

The making of pies at this period assumed vast proportions that verged upon the sublime. Pies were made by forties and fifties and hundreds, and made of everything on the earth and under the earth.

The pie is an English institution, which, planted on American soil, forthwith ran rampant and burst forth into an untold variety of genera and species. Not merely the old traditional mince pie, but a thousand strictly American seedlings from that main stock, evinced the power of American housewives to adapt old institutions to new uses. Pumpkin pies, cranberry pies, huckleberry pies, cherry pies, green-currant pies, peach, pear, and plum pies, custard pies, apple pies, Marlborough-pudding pies – pies with top crusts, and pies without, – pies adorned with all sorts of fanciful flutings and architectural strips laid across and around, and otherwise varied, attested the boundless fertility of the feminine mind, when once let loose in a given direction.

Fancy the heat and vigor of the great pan-formation, when Aunt Lois and Aunt Keziah, and my mother and grandmother, all in ecstasies of creative inspiration, ran, bustled, and hurried, – mixing, rolling, tasting, consulting, – alternately setting us children to work when anything could be made of us, and then chasing us all out of the kitchen when our misinformed childhood ventured to take too many liberties with sacred mysteries. Then out we would all fly at the kitchen door, like sparks from a blacksmith's window.

Vocabulary

For each word below, write a definition based on the word's usage in the text.

Explain the simile "like sparks from a blacksmith's window."

rampant _____

genera _____

evinced _____

flutings _____

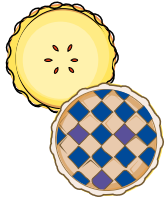
attested _____

boundless _____

vigor _____

ecstasies _____

liberties _____



Thanksgiving in the 19th Century



Harriet Beecher Stowe, best known as the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, wrote another novel in 1869 called *Oldtown Folks*. She tells about life in a New England village called Oldtown. The passage below tells about Thanksgiving preparations in this Massachusetts town.

Chapter XXVII

How We Kept Thanksgiving at Oldtown

The making of pies at this period assumed vast proportions that verged upon the sublime. Pies were made by forties and fifties and hundreds, and made of everything on the earth and under the earth.

The pie is an English institution, which, planted on American soil, forthwith ran rampant and burst forth into an untold variety of genera and species. Not merely the old traditional mince pie, but a thousand strictly American seedlings from that main stock, evinced the power of American housewives to adapt old institutions to new uses. Pumpkin pies, cranberry pies, huckleberry pies, cherry pies, green-currant pies, peach, pear, and plum pies, custard pies, apple pies, Marlborough-pudding pies – pies with top crusts, and pies without, – pies adorned with all sorts of fanciful flutings and architectural strips laid across and around, and otherwise varied, attested the boundless fertility of the feminine mind, when once let loose in a given direction.

Fancy the heat and vigor of the great pan-formation, when Aunt Lois and Aunt Keziah, and my mother and grandmother, all in ecstasies of creative inspiration, ran, bustled, and hurried, – mixing, rolling, tasting, consulting, – alternately setting us children to work when anything could be made of us, and then chasing us all out of the kitchen when our misinformed childhood ventured to take too many liberties with sacred mysteries. Then out we would all fly at the kitchen door, like sparks from a blacksmith's window.

Vocabulary

For each word below, write a definition based on the word's usage in the text. **Actual student answers will vary.**

Example of correct answers:

rampant rampant - without restraint

genera genera - plural of genus, a category of plants

evinced evinced - showed

flutings flutings - ruffles or grooves

attested attested - gave evidence

boundless boundless - infinite, without limits

vigor vigor - energy

ecstasies ecstasies - great joy

liberties liberties - actions that overstep boundaries

Explain the simile "like sparks from a blacksmith's window."

Student's answer will vary but should

include a reference to rapid movements in
different directions.