

AMST 335
New England
Roger Williams University
2:00-3:20
CAS 228
Fall Semester, 2006

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Week of November 21, 2006

For Tuesday, November 21 in *Nylander*,

Chapter VIII. *A Comfortable Sufficiency: Food and the New England Kitchen*
pp. 183 - 220
Chapter X. *The One Day Above All Others: New England Thanksgiving.*
pp. 261 - 282.

I'm hungry, and writing about food doesn't help. Read these chapters after eating and you won't be so tempted to snack. It seems quite natural to pair this chapter with Chapter X. Two important things to note. First, be aware of the transition between the days when most foodstuffs were home-raised and the days when victuals were purchased through intermediaries. What sorts of supplies become store-bought first? Second, take note of the typical New England Diet, especially its relationship to the seasons of the year. Modern transportation has led us to *expect* to find strawberries available any time of the year. Does this have any effect on our appreciation of strawberries?

It is fitting, somehow, that we conclude our look at the idea of community in New England by studying the most universal American holiday. This chapter will give us a sense of the origins of this holiday, which in one form or other stretches back to the days of the Pilgrims and Puritans. It will be important to note that the National idea was first proposed by Abraham Lincoln, and that he proposed it on the New England model. The date of the National holiday didn't stabilize to the last Thursday in November until the middle of the twentieth century. Today we celebrate with football, parades, and the great American pig-out. It is probably a good idea to think a little about its original intent. Samuel Lane's prayer of 1793 is worth quoting in full:

As I was Musing on my Bed being awake as Usual before Daylight; recollecting the Many Mercies and good things I enjoy for which I ought to be thankful this Day; some of which I have Noted after rising as follows viz:

The Life & health of myself and family, and also of so many of my Children, grand Children and great grand-children' also of my other Relations and friends & Neighbors, for Health peace and plenty amongst us

For my Bible and Many other good and Useful Books, Civil & Religious Priviledges, for the ordinances of the gospel; and for my Minister.

For my Land, House and Barn and other Buildings, & that they are preserv'd from fire & other accidents.

For my wearing Clothes to keep me warm, my Bed and Beding to rest upon.

For my Cattle, Sheep, and Swine & other Creatures, for my support.

For my Corn, Wheat, Rye Grass and Hay; Wool, Flax, Syder, Apples. Pumpkins, Potatoes, Cabages, tirnips, Carrots, Beets, peaches and other fruits.

For my Clock and Watch to measure my passing time by Day and by Night.

Wood, Water, Butter, Cheese, Milk, Pork, Beefe, & fish, &c.

For Tea, Sugar, Rum, Wine, Gin, Molasses, peper, Spice and Money for to bye other Necessaries and to pay my Depts & Taxes &c.

For my Lether, Lamp oyl & Candles, Husbandry Utensils, & other tools of very sort &c &c &c.

Bless the Lord O my Soul and all that is within me Bless his holy Name. Bless the Lord O my Soul and forget not all his benefits, who Satisfieth thy mouth with good things, &c.

For *Friday, November 24*

Happy Thanksgiving.

Looking Ahead. We've just a little more of Hanson to consider, and then we'll finish off the year with a brief look at the folklore which is created by the culture which creates the New England Town and Social order which we've looked at this semester. I'm going to modify the assignments listed on the original syllabus, which seem to have been a bit too ambitious for us. There will be only one more paper. Following your return, we have four class sessions in which to accomplish this. I'd like to polish off Hanson in the first two of these, and then I'd like to have us use the last week of the semester on the folklore. More about what I'd like to do with the folklore will follow shortly. The Final Paper will be due on the day of the Final Examination period scheduled for us: Thursday, December 14. I'm posting concurrently with this syllabus.