

**HAPPY  
THANKSGIVING  
2018**



**FROM . . . PVGS**

### ***Thanksgiving in Hard Times***

Thanksgiving came on Thursday November 27th in 1930. Those were very difficult times, but our families persevered and met life's difficult challenges head on. Even with all of the difficulties, they gathered together to give thanks for the harvest, because they knew they were much more blessed than many in our country.

In 1930, the cost of Thanksgiving for a city family of six was about \$5.50, equivalent to about \$71.20 in today's dollars.

Farms in the 1930s were diversified, growing a variety of crops in the fields, vegetables in the garden and fruit in the orchard. Small farms usually raised chickens, eggs, hogs, and cattle, as well as keeping horses and mules for work, and sometimes sheep for wool and meat. Some farmers kept bees and harvested the honey. Women baked their own bread.

During the Depression, this self-sufficiency carried over into their social life. One-dish suppers and church potlucks were important ways to have fun and share food. On radio and in women's magazines, home economists taught women how to stretch their food budget with casseroles and meals like creamed chipped beef on toast or waffles. Chili, macaroni and cheese, soups, and creamed chicken on biscuits were popular meals.

Across the nation, hungry people waited in “soup lines” for a free meal, especially in larger cities. On the farm, growing, tending, preparing, and preserving food took many hours of work. There was no electricity to power refrigerators, so it was difficult to keep milk and other foods fresh, especially during the summer heat.

Yet even during the Depression, many new foods were invented or introduced including:

- Spam
- Kraft macaroni and cheese
- Bisquick
- Krispy Kreme doughnuts
- Ritz Crackers
- Nestle’s chocolate chips
- Kool-Aid was invented in the late 20s and became a national brand in the 30s.

Also, during the 1930s, Colonel Harland Sanders developed a secret formula of spices to flavor the fried chicken at his Sanders Court and Café (motel and restaurant) in Corbin, Kentucky. Later to gain fame with “Kentucky Fried Chicken Stores”, nationwide.

The Great Depression changed the lives of people who lived and farmed on the Great Plains and in turn, changed America. The government programs that helped them to live through the 1930s changed the future of agriculture forever. Weather touched every part of life in the “Dirty 30s”: dust, insects, summer heat and winter cold. Many county farm families didn’t have heat, light or indoor bathrooms like people who lived in town. Many farm families raised most of their own food – eggs and chickens, milk and beef from their own cows, and vegetables from their gardens.

People who grew up during the Depression said, “No one had any money. We were all poor, we just didn’t know it.” Neighbors helped each other through hard times, sickness, and accidents. Farm families got together with neighbors at school programs, church dinners, or dances. Children and adults found ways to have fun for free – playing board games, listening to the radio, or going to outdoor movies in town. But even in these difficult times, families, friends and neighbors gathered together to offer what they had for a Thanksgiving meal. One family might have a turkey or fat hen to offer for the meal. Another might have milk, cream and butter to offer. Others would

bring cornmeal to make cornbread for stuffing the turkey. Harvest time allowed some to bring pumpkins, pecans, apples, wheat flour and lard for cakes and pastries. Although all had very little, together pooling their meager donations, yielded a true feast for all to enjoy. And thanks offered up, were freely given and heartfelt.

When the dryness, heat, and grasshoppers destroyed the crops, farmers were left with no money to buy groceries or make farm payments. Some people lost hope and moved away, but most maintained hope for the future and toughed it out.

Many young men took government jobs building roads and bridges. By 1940, normal rainfall returned, and federal programs helped to boost farm prices and improve the soil. About the same time, a new government program started to hook up farmhouses to electricity, making farm life easier, safer and the farms more productive.

It is through such strong and generous parents, grandparents and ancestors, we have inherited our morals and values. This is why we stop and give thanks, not only for the bounty and harvest from the soil, but for the older generations that forged the way and led by example.

We wish all of you a blessed and bountiful Thanksgiving, with time with family and friends, and If you are fortunate, with a stranger that has none.