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My First Thanksgiving In America

The Homemaker asked Augusto Utrera, a foreign student on campus to share his first Thanksgiving impressions with you. Last year was Augusto's first year in America. Along with other foreign students, Augusto who is from Guatemala, was invited by the Rotary Club to spend his Thanksgiving in Garner.

by Agusto Utero

A few weeks after I started studying at Iowa State College, I received an invitation to be guest for Thanksgiving dinner in Garner. This dinner is sponsored by the Rotary Club which, through Maxwell D. Epstein, send invitations to the foreign students.

I have received several invitations before but, because of the difficulty that I was having with the language, I did not have time for any extra-curricular activity.

In Guatemala we do not celebrate Thanksgiving Day. We thank God for everything we get, but we do not have a special day to do so. In some way, I thought maybe at the Thanksgiving Day a harvest would be acted out.

I asked some friends about Thanksgiving, how it began. They explained me that, when the settlers came to the United States, they received a lot of help from the Indians—food, seeds, etc., which enabled them to raise their first crop. That crop was abundant, greater than they used to have in the tired and depleted soils of Europe. So they all got together after the harvest and thanked God. They continued doing the same year after year and it became established custom.

Before we start eating, they all pray and thank God, they accomplish the thanksgiving part. The dinner was splendid. That was my first contact with "Tom the Turkey." We men don't take too much notice of things like the food. Many of the new dishes were very strange to me. Mincemeat pie I really didn't like but I say that I did. It's not that I didn't like it, but in Guatemala, we aren't used to eating something sweet with meat, porkchops with applesauce, for instance.

I never ate breakfast in Guatemala but while I was in Garner for the three days, I did. They fed me something new, oranges and grapefruit sections. I like this so well that it became my custom.

We spent almost three days in Garner. Three days that I felt I was at home—maybe even better than home. I felt that in Garner there are not different families in each house, but just a big family spread in several houses.

I wondered if what I noticed in all the homes I visited is the same in all the town?