

End of World War I gave Thanksgiving special meaning

"At a called meeting of the Indiana University athletic board last night, it was voted to send the varsity football team to Hattiesburg, Miss., on Thanksgiving Day to play a post-season game for the benefit of the 30,000 soldiers of Indiana, Kentucky and West Virginia at Camp Shelby, providing deans of the university give their consent." *Bloomington Weekly Courier*, Nov. 16, 1917.

Going all the way to Mississippi to play football was a "first" for the varsity team. The *Courier* called it "the first ever intersectional trip ever made by an Indiana football eleven."

The game was intended to be a goodwill gesture, having been prompted by an invitation from the YMCA director at Camp Shelby. He promised to field a team of soldier players.

(Actually, his was not the only post-season invitation IU received.



Looking back

By Rose McIlveen

According to the *Courier*, "Early this week the athletic board turned down an invitation from the Hattiesburg Chamber of Commerce to play the University of Virginia there on Dec. 3 for a commercial guarantee.")

Meanwhile, back in Bloomington, the Thanksgiving holiday had a different flavor from the ones we celebrate today. Store closings for at least part of the day are taken for granted in the 1990s. In 1917 an advertisement in the newspaper announced that the Eagle Clothing Store would be closed all day on Thanksgiving.

Combined holiday church serv-

ices are a long-standing tradition in Bloomington. The *Courier* informed its readers that "The Union Thanksgiving Service will be held tomorrow at 10:30 a.m. at the First Baptist Church. The preacher of the sermon will be the Rev. C.L. Plymate, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church."

Celebration of Thanksgiving in 1918 was not as happy as usual because the flu epidemic that killed thousands of Americans had come to Bloomington, too. The Nov. 29 issue of the *Courier* noted that although the community church service would be held, on the IU campus members of the Student Army Training Corps were confined to barracks.

The order had been signed by Professor W.A. Rawles and stated, "In order that all students may understand the present status of quarantine, the following statement is given: The ban is placed on the SATC men going into the city for

the prompt execution of necessary business. Pool, movies and recreation naturally do not come under this heading. On the campus, dances, movies and large social gatherings are prohibited.

Presumably, one of the places student soldiers would not be permitted to go on Thanksgiving was a local hotel. In a little front-page article that amounted to free advertising, the *Courier* stated, "As usual the Hotel Tourner Cafeteria will serve a special menu tomorrow consisting of all the good things of the Thanksgiving season . . . Ample provision has been made to accommodate all who desire a home-cooked meal that will give you another reason to be thankful."

In a little preview of Thanksgiving 1919, the Nov. 7 *Courier* of that year gave its female readers a look at the cost of necessary holiday purchases to come. Under a headline of "Thanksgiving Bird and Fixtures

Will Come High," the newspaper suggested, "The old Thanksgiving dinner with turkey and fixin's 'n' everything, will cost the happy consumer about the same as last year, and maybe a little less. But at that it will taste like the money."

In a survey of Bloomington stores the reporter found that though turkeys seemed to be more plentiful than in 1918, the price had not come down all that much. A more-or-less prevalent price was 42 cents a pound. Oysters from the Chesapeake Bay were expected to sell for 60 cents to \$1 a quart and nuts, being scarce that year, were going to bring a price of \$2 a pound.

Concluded the *Courier*, "Thanksgiving last year was truly one of thanksgiving, what with the war ended and peace come to the earth . . . but this year, though to be sure there is plenty to be very thankful for, it is not unlikely that some talk about the high cost of living will be heard across the groaning table."