

The men dressed in long, cut-away coats, with long tails, long tight trousers, with buttoned strap under instep, and big roll collar silk and satin vests, and high silk hats. The women wore high peaked bonnets with great wide silk ties. They wore a great many skirts, as high as twelve at a time to make their dress stand out properly below. Grandma had seventeen full dresses and all the skirts, etc that went with them at the time she was married.

Fourth of July was then as now, a big day. At midnight the cannon began to roar, and kept it up till daylight intermittently. Then the small boys and the men too, kept it up with firecrackers. In the evening there would be other fireworks. The militia paraded with the big brass band, and a procession led to the grove outside the town where there was a great deal of speech-making, ending with a reading of the Declaration of Independence. Then the crowd adjourned to the long tables set up amid the trees for the purpose and a big lunch of good things was served. There were pound cakes, jelly cakes, slab gingerbread, small cakes and all the sweets and cold meats of an old-time picnic.

Thanksgiving Day was not so much celebrated then, tho they had turkey roasts and pumpkin pies. Christmas however, was a big event. The children hung up their stockings and set plates. In the morning there would be a tree, and candies of all kinds strung along the mantel. There were the good old toy candies of clear candy, and the sugar fruit, apples and pears, and red raddishes. The small cakes were cut in animal shapes, and the clear candies represented roosters, rabbits, horses and other familiar animals and fowls. Then there were big dinners and church meetings for the devout. Great-grandfather Kiel used to enjoy Christmas, and it was a merry time in the household till after the year when one of the children died the day before Christmas, when Grandmother's mother gave up the celebration in its merry-making features, and kept it only in a sober way for the younger children.

On Halloween the older girls used to collect at some chosen one's house and try all the signs to see who would be their future husbands, etc. The boys then, as now, used to throw corn and cabbages and carry off everything removable. One thing the girls did was to throw a ball of yarn out of an upper window and repeat, "Who holds, I win." Tho' who ever did take hold was indeterminate. One girl however refused to try this mystic sign, saying that she heard it caused the beloved much pain, as he had to come to take up the yarn, no matter where he was. (I suppose his spirit was in attendance when his body was absent on some gate lifting expedition.) Then they used to wrap slips of paper in clay balls, the slips containing the choice of marriage, death and spinster life. The one trying this oracle waited till the first ball dissolved, when that particular slip of paper determined her fate. There was a story that one girl, who got the death writing, took sick and worried herself to death in a short time afterwards.