

The Day the Catholics Almost Killed the Methodists

The infamous chicken dinner of Sacred Heart parish which "nearly killed" those partaking of it took place on St. Patrick's Day, 17 March 1929, and is believed to have been served in the Edwards Grange Hall.

The event was scheduled to be held on a Sunday. At that time the Methodist church had a fiery, young minister and when he learned the dinner was to be on a Sunday, he forbade his parishioners to attend.

Of course, this didn't set well with a number of Methodists - to have the young minister tell them what they could and could not do - so they went anyway!

In 1929 refrigeration was not the refrigeration of the 21st century, but was the ice box or a cool cellar. Apparently the chickens were cooked many hours before, cooled and reheated at the time of the dinner on Sunday. This method, although the dinner was delicious, allowed bacteria to grow causing a number of the diners to become violently ill with food poisoning and affected some of them even through Monday.

As had to be, the Methodists were among those taken sick. This included the postmistress, Mrs. May Ferry, who, although she managed to go to work the next day, had to leave her post a number of times on Monday for emergency purposes!

Story as told on 2 Aug 1997 to LaVerne H. Freeman by Katheryn Freeman Fuller, who remembered the incident.

The correct date from Velma Hall's diary, property of Edwards History Center.

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