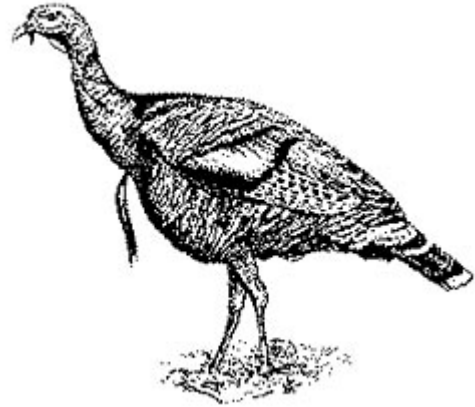


The Turkey's Tale

Despite the sobriety and strictures of the Sabbath day, services for our New England ancestors had some surprising informalities. At that time, Shrewsbury was largely agricultural, and you could find animals everywhere, including in the meetinghouse. Dogs often followed their owners right into the church itself, causing such mischief that one of our early ministers, George Allen, made a point of banning them from being in the service.



Perhaps one of the most amusing anecdotes comes from a Shrewsbury diary, recorded in August of 1815:

“This day in the afternoon a young turkey was driven into the church, and it by degrees flew on to the pulpit beside Dr. Sumner while he was at prayer, and without any noise stood upon the Bible with as little concern as it would have done on the ground.... When we sat down to sing the last tune it left the pulpit and went on to the beam over Dea. Goddard's pew, all this, except when he first came in the house, and until we were dismissed, was without one peep or noise from the turkey.” *

* Sourced from *Teach US History.org*