

THE FIRST THANKSGIVING

A legendary Thanksgiving celebration was held in 1621. The terrible winter of the previous year had been difficult for the Pilgrims. Many of the Pilgrims had died because of illness and lack of shelter. The Thanksgiving celebration was held after the Pilgrims had their first **harvest**—after they had gathered their first crops. The writings of the Pilgrims tell us that about 140 people attended the three-day celebration. Ninety of the people were Wampanoag men. About 50 people were Pilgrims. Only four of the Pilgrims at the party were women. The feast was held outside because the Pilgrims did not have a building large enough to hold so many people. The Pilgrims were thankful for the harvest and for the help of the Wampanoag in teaching them to grow crops in America. Without their help, the Pilgrims would have had little to eat. The menu for the first Thanksgiving included **venison**, or deer meat, and **fowl**, which included ducks, geese, and turkeys. Sea bass, cod fish, cornmeal, fruits and vegetables were also served. Games were played, and singing and dancing were also part of the celebration. Praises were given to God for the harvest and for the Pilgrims that survived the harsh winter. Thanksgiving in America is now celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. Families prepare a meal similar to the meal prepared by the Pilgrims and Wampanoag 400 years ago. It is a time for counting the blessings we have received during the year and for spending time with family and friends.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FIRST THANKSGIVING

1. The Pilgrims and Wampanoag celebrated their Thanksgiving _____.
 - a. in Texas
 - b. after the harvest
 - c. in the spring
 - d. on December 25th
2. Which of the following is NOT fowl?
 - a. deer
 - b. turkey
 - c. geese
 - d. ducks
3. Which of the following was on the menu at the first Thanksgiving?
 - a. vegetables
 - b. cornmeal
 - c. fruit
 - d. all of these
4. How many people attended the Thanksgiving celebration in 1621?
 - a. forty

- b. ninety
- c. one hundred ten
- d. one hundred forty

5. What is venison?

- a. geese
- b. deer meat
- c. ducks
- d. turkey

6. Why was the Thanksgiving celebration in 1621 held outside?

- a. The weather was nice.
- b. The buildings were too small.
- c. They liked outside.
- d. none of these

7. Which of the following is NOT true?

- a. Many Pilgrims died during the harsh winter.
- b. The Wampanoag taught the Pilgrims to grow crops.
- c. Seventeen women attended the first Thanksgiving.
- d. The Pilgrims were thankful for their harvest.

8. Why was the Thanksgiving celebration held in 1621?

- a. to give thanks for their many blessings
- b. because everybody was hungry
- c. to have a cooking contest
- d. so the Pilgrims could invite their friends to their new homes

9. Why did so many Pilgrims die during their first year in America?

- a. illness
- b. they were killed
- c. lack of shelter
- d. both a and c

10. When do Americans celebrate Thanksgiving in the United States?

- a. second Tuesday in August
- b. first Monday in April
- c. third Wednesday in March
- d. fourth Thursday in Nov.

11. Would you have liked to attend the 1621 Thanksgiving?

Why or why not?
