

THANKSGIVING MYTH-BUSTER WEB TREK

A. INTRODUCTION

What do we know for sure about the first Thanksgiving? It turns out we really have only two sources, one from Edward Winslow's "Mourt's Relation" in 1621, and one about 20 years later, written by William Bradford in "Of Plymouth Plantation". We have a lot of myths about Thanksgiving however, which you will learn about with this web trek. Answer the student questions below in complete sentences, and stay with the two resources listed.

B. ONLINE RESOURCES

Mayflower Myths:

<http://www.history.com/content/thanksgiving/mayflower-myths>

The First Thanksgiving?

<http://www.history.com/content/thanksgiving/the-first-thanksgiving>

C. STUDENT QUESTIONS

1. Was the 1st Thanksgiving celebrated in 1621? Explain your answer.

Since no tradition was established and the participants did not label their feast "Thanksgiving", it's a myth even to suggest that 1621 was the first Thanksgiving.

2. When did the feast we remember between the pilgrims and the natives actually take place? How long did it last?

It's thought to have occurred sometime between Sept. 21st and November 11th, 1621. It lasted for 3 days.

3. We have a particular image of pilgrims. What is our image? How does it differ from what they actually may have worn?

Pilgrims probably did not have buckles, as they weren't generally worn until late 17th century. Both men and women wore different colors, with black and white reserved for Sundays.

4. Who set the date for the current celebration of Thanksgiving? When is it celebrated in the United States?

While many Thanksgiving celebrations were named, it was President Franklin Roosevelt who proclaimed the 4th Thursday of every November to be an annual Thanksgiving holiday. He issued his proclamation in 1939, and it was approved by Congress in 1941.

5. Where did the pilgrims originally hope to settle in America? Why did they change their plans?

They were aiming for the Hudson River area, but because of high seas, they made landing in the Cape Cod area.

6. In Edward Winslow's journal from 1621, a large amount of "fowl" was killed. How long did he estimate it would last? How many deer did the "Indians" kill and bring to the feast?

How many men accompanied Massasoit?

Enough fowl to serve everyone for a week; 5 deer; 90 men.

7. Another Thanksgiving has sometimes been acknowledged as the first European Thanksgiving in America. Where was this? When? Describe it.

In December, 1619, British settlers under Captain John Woodlief prayed and pledged their Thanksgiving near the Charles River by Berkeley Plantation, Virginia, for having survived the ocean voyage.

8. Did the pilgrims eat pumpkin pie and mashed potatoes with gravy at their feast with the Wampanoag in 1621? What were some items that were definitely on their menu? Hardly likely; we only know that deer and fowl were on the menu for sure.

9. What kinds of spices did pilgrims use in their cooking? What was the most common method of cooking? What other method(s) did they use, and what kinds of foods were they able to preserve?

Cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, salt, and pepper were all used. Cooking was done by roasting items on a spit, that would be tended and turned for hours. They also dried a lot of their foods in order to preserve them, including ham, fish, corn, and herbs.

10. When did the pilgrims have their big daily meal? What was it called? What was breakfast generally like?

It was called noonmeat or dinner, eaten at noon. Breakfast was generally leftovers from this meal.

D. EXTENSIONS

1. Discover more of what might have been on the pilgrims' menu in 1621:

<http://www.history.com/content/thanksgiving/the-first-thanksgiving/the-pilgrims-menu>

2. Create a 1621 menu on a scroll. Compare it with a modern menu, created by your students of course.

3. Create a Thanksgiving cookbook, complete with recipes contributed from your students' families.

4. Use the following resources to learn more about the history, traditions, and events of Thanksgiving:

<http://www.history.com/minisites/thanksgiving/viewPage?pagelid=872>

<http://www.cnn.com/EVENTS/1996/thanksgiving/food.history/>

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/1127/p13s02-lign.html>

<http://www.mayflowerhistory.com/History/thanksgiving.php>

http://memory.loc.gov/learn//community/EA_toolkit/first_thanksgiving.pdf

http://memory.loc.gov/learn//community/EA_toolkit/hale_lincoln.pdf

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mosmd/>

©realmworkscommunications: <http://www.everydayteaching.com>

