

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.