

It had been a terrible first year. The Pilgrims had suffered a great deal.

First there was the crowded, dirty trip on the *Mayflower*. Then came the bitter winter.

Always there was fear of the unfriendly Indians. Hunger was everywhere; sickness followed it. By the summer of 1621, half of the group's hundred people were dead.

But things were better by autumn. They had made friends of the Indians. They had learned from them how to raise corn and other crops. There had been plenty of food that summer. And the fall harvest was good. The hard work was done. It was time to have fun.

The Pilgrims really had a party. They invited ninety of the Indians. The feast went on for three full days.

First, four men went out to hunt. They came back with their arms full of wild ducks and geese. There were enough to feed the crowd for a week.

The Indians did their part, too. They killed five deer. Some say they also brought the first Thanksgiving turkey.

Both Indians and Pilgrims loved seafood. They cooked huge pots of juicy red lobsters. They steamed clams until they popped open, ready to eat.

There was corn bread and white bread.

There were wild plums and dried berries. There was Indian corn and Indian pudding.

About the only thing missing was cranberry jelly. It wasn't that the Pilgrims didn't have the berries. Plenty of them grew all around. But they didn't know how to fix the sour red fruit.

Only five Pilgrim women were still alive. (At the start there had been eighteen. But thirteen had died during the spring.) The five women did all the cooking. And they did it outdoors. Their great iron kettles bubbled day and night.

While the women cooked, the men played. Between meals they had sports, games, and music. The white men marched like soldiers. They blew their hunting horns. The Indians then showed how well they shot with bow and arrow. There were running and jumping contests, songs, and dances. It was a time of great friendship and fun.

But it was also a time of prayer. The Pilgrims were religious people. They offered many prayers of thanks for their good fortune.

After three days the Indians left. The Pilgrims were sorry to see them go. It had been such a grand thanksgiving feast. If only there could be one every year! They could not know that more than three hundred years later, there still would be.

CHECK YOUR READING

1. The Pilgrims did *not* actually suffer from
 - A Indian attacks
 - B lack of food
 - C sickness

2. How many of the Pilgrims died during their first year?
 - A One out of ten
 - B One-fifth
 - C About half

3. The Indians taught the Pilgrims how to
 - A treat sickness
 - B raise corn
 - C build homes

4. How many Indians came to the thanksgiving feast?
 - A Twenty
 - B Ninety
 - C Three hundred

5. It is known that the Indians brought
 - A some deer
 - B wild ducks
 - C a turkey

6. One kind of seafood the Pilgrims did *not* have was
 - A red lobster
 - B northern whale
 - C steamed clams

7. The Pilgrims had no cranberry jelly because they didn't
 - A remember to make it
 - B like the taste of it
 - C know how to prepare it

8. How many women acted as cooks?
 - A Five
 - B Thirteen
 - C Eighteen

9. The Indians showed the Pilgrims how well they could
 - A march
 - B blow horns
 - C shoot arrows

10. The feasting lasted for
 - A three days
 - B a week
 - C three weeks