

Title:

The REAL Thanksgiving

Word Count:

393

Summary:

Read about what really happened on the first Thanksgiving and the years leading to it and beyond.

Keywords:

thanksgiving,history,real thanksgiving,pilgrims,turkey,squanto,natives

Article Body:

The legend of Thanksgiving goes back more than 350 years. We have all heard the story about how the Pilgrims spent Thanksgiving with the Natives and ate fully, but is this what really happened?

The Wampanoag Indians were descendants of the Iroquois who had spent their time in New England for thousands of years. The tribe lived off the land by hunting deer and other animals in the summer and early fall, fishing salmon and herring in the spring and then moved farther inland during the winter to seek shelter from the storms.

The group lived along the coastal region in round-roofed houses called 'wigwams' unlike the Midwest Indians who used teepees in order to travel quickly.

The people were friendly and hospitable towards strangers. However a group of English travelers had saddened villages across the region by bringing disease and capturing many to be sold on the slave market. One of the villages, Patuxet, demolished by the English was one of a famous Native American, Squanto.

Squanto was a Native American who befriended John Weymouth (an English Explorer) and headed back to England in order to learn their customs speak English and become Christian. During his stay, a British Slaver captured Squanto and sold him to the Spanish in the Caribbean. Luckily a Spanish Franciscan priest helped Squanto back to England where he would pay Weymouth to bring him back to his homeland.

On his return home Squanto had realized his village was deserted and left with skeletons. The neighboring tribe of Wampanoag took Squanto in and treated him as

their own.

As the year went on the neighboring Pilgrims grew weaker and couldn't survive much longer. Luckily, the Wampanoag came to the rescue. The Wampanoag brought food hospitality towards the people. Since Squanto spoke English he could easily communicate with the Pilgrims and show them how to grow crops and survive off the land. The two groups then spent three days together talking about the land and eating food.

As the years passed, more Pilgrims came and forgot about the friendly Natives. They stole land, tortured and enslaved the Wampanoag while the rest were left foodless and with disease.

For many, Thanksgiving is a time for rejoice and thankfulness for what our ancestors had endured during the early years, but for the Wampanoag it is a time left hard to forget.