



THANKSGIVING



On September 6, 1620, a group of 102 Pilgrims boarded the *Mayflower* and began their voyage from England to America. Many of them were seeking religious freedom. On December 11, 1620, the Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth and began to settle. The first winter was very hard, and many of the Pilgrims died.

The following spring, an Indian named Squanto, who had learned to speak English, helped the Pilgrims. He taught them about the native plants and introduced them to Indian corn and other crops. By the end of the season, the Pilgrims had enough food, including corn and other vegetables, fruit, fish, and other meats to sustain them through the winter months.

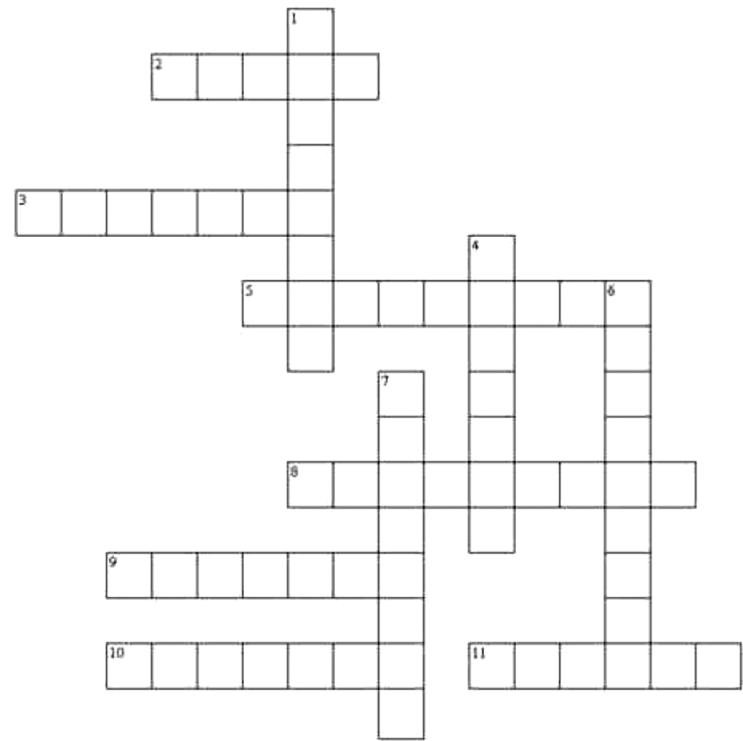
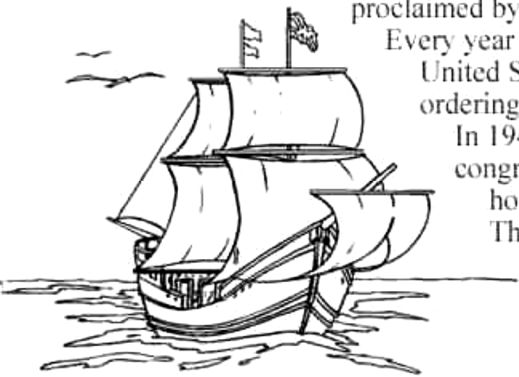
The Pilgrims invited the Indians, including Squanto, to a feast to celebrate their bounteous harvest. The celebration lasted three days. It is unknown exactly which days the festival lasted.

The following year, the festival was not celebrated. But the summer of 1623 was dry and hot. The Pilgrims worried that the terrible drought would destroy all they had worked so hard to build. The governor, William Bradford ordered the Pilgrims to spend a day in fasting and prayer for rain. It was not long before the rain began, and an official day of "Thanksgiving" was proclaimed. Thanksgiving was celebrated on November 29, 1623.

After that time, a Thanksgiving celebration was usually an unofficial part of the harvest. In 1789, President George Washington suggested a day of Thanksgiving nationally. However, there were many people opposed the holiday. It wasn't until 1863 that the Thanksgiving holiday was officially proclaimed by President Abraham Lincoln.

Every year since that time, the President of the United States has issued a proclamation ordering a national day of Thanksgiving.

In 1941, Thanksgiving was given a congressional sanction that made it a legal holiday to be held on the fourth Thursday of November each year.



ACROSS

- 2 How many days did the Pilgrims and Indians celebrate in 1621?
- 3 What was Governor Bradford's first name?
- 5 What type of freedom were the Pilgrims seeking?
- 8 What was the name of the ship the Pilgrims came to America in?
- 9 What was the name of the Indian who helped the Pilgrims with their crops?
- 10 What was it that threatened the crops in 1623?
- 11 On which Thursday in November is Thanksgiving celebrated?

DOWN

- 1 In which month did the Pilgrims arrive in Plymouth?
- 4 Which president issued the first official Thanksgiving proclamation?
- 6 In which month did the Pilgrims leave England?
- 7 Where did the Pilgrims settle?

