

“Thanksgiving”,
Twelve minute talk for Sacrament Meeting,
Sunday, November 24, 1996
Pleasant View First Ward

I appreciate the opportunity for being asked to give a talk concerning Thanksgiving. Researching the subject became a spritual experience for me as I was led to more fully understand the extraordinary faith of the Puritins, Pilgims, and Separatists. The Pilgrims wanted a new Zion in another land. The Puritans wished to reform the English Church, while the Separatists wanted no part of that church. None of these goals were contradictory, so somtimes the three names were used interchangeably

It may have been some time since you have read the title page of our Bible so I will tell you some of what it says :

TO THE MOST HIGH AND MIGHTY PRINCE
JAMES
BY THE GRACE OF GOD
KING OF GREAT BRITTAIN, FRANCE, AND IRELAND,
DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, ETC.
The translators of the Bible wish Grace, Mercy, and Peace,
through JESUS CHRIST our LORD
James reigned 1509-1547

Henry the eighth was responsible for having the bible published in the native English tongue which opened the the doors to widespread study of the bible by scholars of that time.

As the English Church evolved, it was made a department of state.

Queen Elizabeth I loved pomp and power more than the Christian Faith and named herself the “Supreme Governor of the Church” .

A basic concern of the Puritans was reform of the anglican ministry. The queen and her archbishop resisted efforts of reformers to worship on their own. Worse still, George Cotton was cast into prison without trial for twenty-seven months because he listened to a reading from the Bible by the Puritan John Greenwood in the home of a friend. The established church was still resisting any form of worship by the Puritans.

A law was passed in 1593 that any person who tried to dissuade anyone from attending the Established church would be committed to prison . Intellectuals John Greenwood and Henry Barrowe, who dared to separate from the Established Church, were hunted down and locked up for years until they were finally hanged on April 6, 1593. John Penry another Separatist, was arrested by Archbishop Whitgift. A few days after the execution of Barrowe and Greenwood, Penry was hanged, drawn, and quartered.

Spies were employed by the Crown to trick Separatist citizens into saying somthing that could be of evidence against them and arrest them for it.

A party of Separatists decided that they needed to leave England and flee to Holland. The first effort to escape was attempted in 1607 from the port of Boston (in England) but the attempt failed and their leaders were locked up for a month. A second attempt to flee (in 1608) from the Humber River in the north succeeded and took them to Amsterdam.

They accepted no aid from the Dutch, insisting that they would support themselves with whatever jobs that they could find. They made friendly contact with a Separatist church led by Francis Johnson, a fiery reformer, but they were disappointed by the controversy in his flock. Unhappy over the theological discord, they loaded their scant possessions on barges and moved on to Leyden where they were welcomed by the magistrates of that city.

They were pleased with the friendship of the Dutch, who praised them for their diligence and honesty but they wanted a land of their own where they could preserve their native tongue, culture and beliefs.

Their own King (James I) looked upon them as heretics and they could not expect to have any subsidy from the homeland as was given to the Virginia Colony.

Then came the London Merchant Adventurers who offered funds at high interest and required the settlers to work on a communal nonprofit basis for seven years until they had paid their debt.

Through private enterprise they purchased the "Speedwell". This ship was to accompany the ancient wine ship called the Mayflower across the Atlantic Ocean. However, the speedwell leaked badly and it was determined that this ship was not sea worthy and should not attempt the crossing. So the Mayflower, which was a rented vessel, would cross the ocean alone. Imagine, the anxiety that the passengers must have felt at this news, so some deigned not to go. But the faith of 102 of them caused them to take the voyage.

The little 90 foot two masted square-rigger had a lading of about 100 tons and a crew of thirty. The ship also had ordnance of about eight heavy guns and some lesser guns. There was also a powder magazine. A small fire erupted during the handling of some powder taken from the magazine but, fortunately, was quickly extinguished.

The ship also carried a 20 foot twin-masted Long boat and one or more Shalots (sloops). These would be used in scouting shallow waters at their unknown destination.

They did not trouble to caulk above deck. Consequently, high waves crashing on and over the upper timbers allowed water to go through into the ships interior as the raging storms rocked the ship from side to side and end to end. The passengers hardly ever had a chance to dry out and were miserably cold and wet with raging scurvy and sea-sickness. After these things, they could not long continue in any peaceable condition, but were hunted and persecuted on every side. Some were put into prison, others had their houses watched day and night and forced to flee and leave their homes and the means of their livelihood.

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One could well imagine the inherent dangers of using a single ship. Remember: Columbus used three ships, the Santa Maria, the Pinto, and the Nina.

Cooking facilities were minimal. A sand hearth was used. The only cooking utensils were a tripod pot and a frying pan. Their fuel was wood. Cooking for the 102 persons on board was impossible so most of the food was eaten uncooked.

A point to remember at this juncture is that the ship was carrying food for one year for each immigrant person. They did not know what would be available when they finally went ashore.

A small sampling of food and drink follows:

“Strong Waters”, Whatever that is
Holland Gin, brandy, beer, wine, and spirits

biscuits (hard bread)

butter

Holland cheese, a chief staple

various salted meats and spiced meats

sausages and smoked meats, including ham and bacon

vegetables and dried fruits, limes, cabbages, onions and turnips.

~~various smoked meats, including ham and bacon~~

various vegetables including cabbages, onions, and turnips

lime juice and limes, dried fruits, and vinegar

peaseporridge

and, of course, many barrels of fresh drinking water.

Livestock was also carried on the ship but only poultry and rabbits were mentioned, so they had to carry food for the animals.

All of what I have said concerning the Pilgrim Fathers reminds me of our own heritage in the true gospel of Jesus Christ and our own faithful pioneers who also struggled against great odds to establish His Church in our Lovely Deseret

I thank our Father in Heaven daily for the blessings we reap from our pioneer ancestors in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.