

NAME:

DATE:

HISTORY AND HARVEST

Directions: Read each question carefully and write your answer on the lines provided.

In the autumn of 1621, early European settlers known as Pilgrims celebrated a successful harvest in Plymouth, Massachusetts. The year before had been extremely difficult for the Pilgrims. Many had fallen ill during the cold winter, and they struggled to find enough food to survive.

Thankfully, the native Wampanoag (wahm-puh-NO-ag) people helped the settlers. A Wampanoag man named Squanto taught the Pilgrims how to plant corn using fish as fertilizer, how to catch eel, and how to extract sap from maple trees. With hard work and guidance from their native neighbors, the Pilgrims gathered a rich harvest of corn, squash, and beans in the fall.

To celebrate, the Pilgrims held a three-day harvest feast. They invited the leader of the Wampanoag, Chief Massasoit, along with about ninety of his people. The feast featured wild turkey, deer, waterfowl, corn, and berries. While this event is often remembered as the "First Thanksgiving," harvest celebrations were already a traditional practice for both Native American tribes and European cultures long before 1621.

For over two hundred years, Thanksgiving was celebrated at different times by different states. That changed during the American Civil War when a magazine editor named Sarah Josepha Hale wrote letters to government leaders urging them to establish a single national holiday. Moved by her efforts, President Abraham Lincoln officially declared Thanksgiving a national holiday in 1863, hoping it would help unite a divided nation. Today, families across the United States gather on the fourth Thursday of November to share a meal and express gratitude.

QUESTIONS:

- 1.) Where and when did the Pilgrims celebrate their first successful harvest?

- 2.) What specific farming technique did Squanto teach the Pilgrims?

- 3.) Name two foods that were served at the 1621 harvest feast.

- 4.) Who wrote letters for years asking government leaders to create a national Thanksgiving holiday?

- 5.) In what year and during which war did President Lincoln declare Thanksgiving a national holiday?

