

# BUILDERS' GUIDE

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**PILGRIMS MORE LIBERAL IN VIEWS THAN BELIEVED TO BE**

Thanksgiving always suggests to us that double impulse of respecting Christian ideals and of feasting plentifully. The latter element is quite predominant in the general attitude toward the day.

It would be a good idea to hyphenate the words "Thanks-Giving" for in that way the word "giving" rather than "taking" would be emphasized, and thus be in better accord with the true spirit of the day. In any event, we are all very thankful that in our country we still express our gratitude to the Lord in the same language used by the Pilgrims three hundred years ago in 1621, writes Prof. B. J. Cigrand, member of faculty, University of Illinois, in the Chicago American.

It is to be regretted that so many people use the terms Pilgrim and Puritan interchangeably. In reality they are widely different.

The Pilgrims were liberal-minded people. They were double Protestants, having rebelled against not only the Roman Christian methods, but also against the regal or English government church. In the belief that they could not reform the former and certainly not amend or change the latter, they chose to go to Holland and later to America, there to worship as they pleased.

The Puritans believed they could alter the Episcopal or government church, so they remained faithful to the regal religion and the sovereign. The Pilgrims were liberal minded, far more so than they are given credit for being, while it was the Puritans who were strict. The Pilgrims taught equality. They said, "Love one another" and their cordiality and hospitality toward newcomers is one of the sweetest memories of pioneer America.

They were ever anxious to win people to Christ, without completely making over the new recruit. It is wrong to charge them with even "exactness that all in their midst be of their faith," for of the 102 who came over in the Mayflower, all were not of the same faith.

When the Puritans of Boston (and they came many years subsequent to the Pilgrims) made it so unpleasant for Roger Williams, it was the Pilgrim community of Plymouth which welcomed him and made his trip to Rhode Island safe by insuring kindly treatment from the Indians. Williams was banished by the Puritans for asserting "it was wrong to prevent a man from holding office if he be not a Christian."

The Puritans, too, were aristocratic. They clung to the old English idea that a man was measured by his blue blood—and again some blue—and bloated pocketbook.

But not so with the Pilgrims. They cared nothing about blood and less about the king's metallic picture. The Puritans were the republicans of New England and the Pilgrims were the Democrats.

The former decided they would not associate with the easy-going "equality community," as they called the Pilgrims. Soon after the Lord caused a great sickness to fall upon the Boston colony. Governor Endicott was obliged to beg Governor Bradford of Plymouth to "please come to our rescue and send Doctor Fuller, that famous physician, to take care of the sick colony." This siege of illness united these two colonies and they formed the Congregational church.

The pictures we paint of these people causes the rising generation to shun contact with these well-meaning early Americans. There is more cruelty in the average-sized community today, there is more tyranny in the land this moment among industrial classes, more unreasonable civic taxation, to say nothing of various religious restrictions, than was exacted in those days of the Pilgrims' regime.

There have been more unjust accusations against these "nation founders" than Americans realize.

Those people were not half as "blue" or severe as we have been led to believe. They were human and most charitable. Let us teach and preach to love and revere them.

Arthur Gilman, a great authority on legal affairs in the colonies, writes that "it is almost needless to say that the so-called blue laws, which have been made the butt and joke and object of violent oburgation, were never in existence in that colony, but were manufactured by a writer who desired to hold the colony up to ridicule."

Certified copies of these blue laws fail to materialize. In fact, New Jersey, Virginia, and parts of the South, were by far more strict about the observance of the "First Day," as the Sabbath was called. New Jersey forbade traveling for pleasure, or other similar recreation. Infractions of these rules might be punished by the whipping post, a fine, or imprisonment.

Let us not point our fingers too sharply at the Pilgrims. It may surprise some to read that rum, Madeira wine and punch, with plenty of mule power (kick) could

be obtained in Pilgrim communities. The ordinances specified the prices to be charged.

Ladies often served the drinks at the public taverns, which were under the immediate jurisdiction of the country laws. Those taverns were clean, wholesome places, often serving on the Sabbath as places of religious worship.

We are all glad that the pioneers had good things and knew how to use them.

I have before me a long and well-defined account of a "stag" Pilgrim party. That famed military spirit, Capt. Miles Standish, had a big bowl of punch before him. The account tells of the captain stirring the steaming contents with his sword.

The juice of the grape was used in a sanctified way, not in that reckless, debauching way and unreasonable fashion of the present. The pleasures and merriments, too, were of a sane and profitable character, tending to uplift and make better the entire social fabric.

Let us not find so much fault with our Pilgrim ancestors. The mothers knew how to darn stockings in those days. They do now, only the word has a different meaning.

Give these pioneers of republican institutions and democratic ways a place in your heart. Give credit and honor where it belongs. That form of truth will not only make us free, but will keep us free.

**COMMON TO ALL HUMANITY**

Thanksgiving day did not originate in the United States, but days of thanksgiving were set aside for special purposes many centuries ago. Days set apart for special thanksgiving to the Lord were known to the Israelites and are mentioned throughout the Bible. They were not uncommon in England before the Reformation and among Protestants afterward.

The first thanksgiving held in North America was conducted by an English minister named Wollfall, in 1578, on the shores of Newfoundland. The pastor accompanied the expedition under Frobisher, which brought the first English colony to settle on those shores.

The earliest record of any observance of a similar service within the present territory of the United States was held by the Popham colony settled at Sagadahoc, on the coast of Maine, in August, 1607.

But the real origin of Thanksgiving as a day specially set apart for prayer and rejoicing must be attributed to Governor Bradford, first governor of Massachusetts colony. In gratitude for the plentiful harvest of 1621, following upon a period of great depression, he proclaimed a day of thanksgiving to be observed December 13 (old style) of that year.

In practical furtherance of his proclamation he at once sent out four men in search of game. Thus early in the history of the day does our good friend the turkey make his appearance; for, successful in their quest, the four sportsmen returned, struggling under a burden of wild fowl, principally turkeys, sufficient to meet the wants of the colony for a week.

**HUMILITY GOES WITH THANKS**

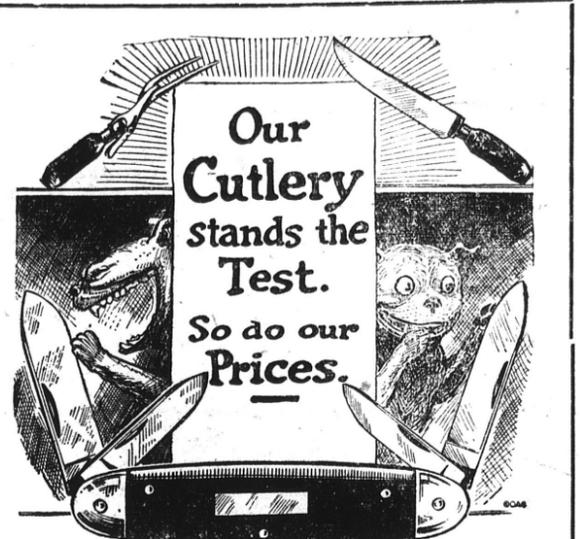
Thanksgiving is essentially a religious holiday. Like Christmas, it has lost something of its significance through the over-emphasizing of its secular features. The other holidays commemorate the birth of the deers of great men or perpetuate the memory of great events. They speak to the mind in its happiest moods, telling over a record of glorious actions and repeating reasons for contentment and love of country. Thanksgiving day ought at least to suggest the virtue of humility.

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