

## Are We Thankful?

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By W.H. Lamb

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"The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth," painted by Jennie Brownscombe in 1914. Attended by around 90 native people and perhaps 50 Pilgrims. It was not called "Thanksgiving" by the Pilgrims in 1621. It was a celebration of their harvest and a time to praise God for His Blessings.

It is sad that so much of true American history is being forgotten, consigned to the memory hole of left wing political correctness that infests what passes for public "education" in our country. A case in point is the true story of the "first Thanksgiving" (the one in Plymouth, Massachusetts, not the probable real "first" thanksgiving that was held in Jamestown, Virginia). The coming of the "Saints and Strangers", or the people known to history as "the Pilgrims", to the bleak shores of Massachusetts in December, 1620 should be as well known to our people—young and old—as is the story of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, but sadly Rudolph wins out every time.

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The coming of our spiritual Forefathers and Mothers, the Pilgrims, to what is now known as New England in 1620 is a unique chapter in American history. What Americans of today ignore, overlook, or as is most likely, are completely unaware of thanks to the dismal lack of real education in our government "schools", is that this Pilgrim settlement at Plymouth marked **THE FIRST SOCIALIST SETTLEMENT IN THE NEW WORLD**. The lesson we should all remember, but that has been conveniently forgotten for us, is that **this early experiment in socialism failed within the first three years of the colony's existence and that, for their very survival, the Pilgrims turned to what we know today as the free enterprise system, and that assured their survival.**

While still anchored off the tip of Cape Cod, at what today is Provincetown, Massachusetts, (beginning on November 21, 1620), the Pilgrims entered into what is now known as **The Mayflower Compact**. They "*covenant(ed) and combine(d) (them)selves together into a civil body politic, for (their) better ordering and preservation...*" Unfortunately for this stalwart band, they had previously agreed, while still in England, to set up their new colony as a "share-the-wealth" community. Nobody owned anything. That which was grown or produced (except for the minimum required to keep them functioning) belonged to the community as a whole in order to raise the funds to pay back the "Merchant Adventurers" (their financial backers) in England, who had loaned the Pilgrims what was then a fairly large amount of money to establish their colony. They euphemistically called their system the "**common course and condition**". They struggled under this system from the horribly difficult and disease-ridden first winter of 1620/21 until their hungry spring of 1623. Then, by majority consent, they changed their economic system to what we call "free enterprise", after which they prospered.

William Bradford, the long time Governor of Plymouth Colony, tells us why they changed in his book, "**Of Plimouth Plantation**" (modern English substituted for Elizabethan English):

***"The Pilgrims weren't long under this 'common course and condition' until it was found to breed much confusion & discontent, & retard employment that would have been to their benefit and comfort. For young men that were most able and fit for labor and service did repine that they should spend their time & strength to work for other men's wives and children, without any recompense. The strong...had no more in division of food & clothes than he that was weak. Upon the point all being to have alike, and all to do alike, they thought themselves in the like condition, and one as good as another. And so, if it did not cut off those relations that God has set among men, yet it did at least diminish and take of the mutual respects that should be preserved among them."***

The Pilgrims did have a "harvest celebration" with their Native People neighbors sometime in the fall of 1621 (the actual date is unknown). **Great Chief Massasoit** brought around ninety of his people to this celebration, and the Pilgrims were hard-pressed to provide adequate food for the three days of feasting. Fortunately their Native People neighbors brought deer and wild game, which helped greatly, for up to that point, and for the next year or so afterwards, there was much hunger (virtually starvation, in fact) and extremely low morale. Continuing from Governor Bradford's book:

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***“They began to think how they might raise as much corn as they could...that they might not still languish in misery. At last, after much debate...the Governor (Bradford) gave way that they should set corn every man for his own particular....And so assigned to every family a parcel of land.... This had very good success for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been.”***

Finally, in the fall of 1623, the Pilgrims offered thanks for being delivered from socialism **WITH THE FEAST THAT IS CELEBRATED TO THIS DAY!** Governor Bradford has always been one of my heroes, for he was honest and humble enough to admit that the early experiment in socialism (their “*common course and condition*”) was a dismal failure. He wrote:

***“The experience that was had in this common course and condition, tried sundry years, and that amongst Godly and sober men, may well evince the vanity of that conceit of Plato’s and other ancients, applauded by some of later times...that the taking away of property, and bringing in community into a common wealth would make them happy and flourishing...as if they were wiser than God!”***

The inspiring, and sobering, story of the difficult first years of the Pilgrim settlement at Plymouth should be taught in all our schools, because “*that conceit of Plato’s and other ancients*” is still being applauded by many people in these, our “later” times. Do-gooders, leftists, liberals, moonbats, and other worshippers of governmental power and proponents of that negative institution called “socialism” still have the always-wrong idea that “*the taking away of property, and bringing in community (Marxism or socialism) into a common wealth*” would make our country happy and flourishing. **Exactly the opposite ALWAYS happens.** Socialism has been tried many times before Plymouth Colony and many times since. It has ALWAYS failed to deliver its siren song of a utopian society. It has ALWAYS produced a dystopian society. It is ALWAYS destined to fail, because it violates fundamental economic and moral laws that simply will not be violated.

At this Thanksgiving celebration, and at each one in the future, let’s first thank God for the gift of His Son, our Savior Jesus, and then for the wisdom exhibited by Governor William Bradford and the surviving Pilgrim Forefathers and mothers (very few mothers survived that first winter) **for having the courage to dismantle a system of economic injustice and giving us a system where ALL can prosper as our skills and determination lead us.** That’s the “Thanksgiving” we should really be celebrating.