

Thanksgiving By Shanna Smith

Thanksgiving means many things to Americans today: football games, a four-day weekend, family, delicious meals, and, most importantly, being thankful. One remarkable aspect of Thanksgiving in my opinion is that even after almost four hundred years of its initial celebration, Thanksgiving never lost its meaning.

One unfortunate consequence of many holidays, especially those pertaining to religion, is that modern families have forgotten why they are celebrated. Instead, many families focus on the festivities of the holidays, such as meals, decorations, and parties. This demonstrates the celebration of holidays being integrated into American culture, while the purpose of these holidays was left behind. Of course, excitement for the celebration of a holiday is not a bad thing, however, this often leads to families ignoring why the holiday was celebrated in the first place.

I have found that this is almost never true for Thanksgiving. The First Thanksgiving was celebrated by the surviving Pilgrims in 1621 to thank God for their first successful harvest. This festival that originally began as a religious holiday slowly formed into the national holiday many Americans look forward to all year: Thanksgiving.

Americans continued to celebrate this holiday with a thankful attitude similar to that of the pilgrims. Yes, Thanksgiving was initially a religious holiday. While it has lost its religious aspect, its meaning has remained fully intact: it is a time to display one's thankfulness for everything he or she has. In the majority of households, individuals state what they are thankful for during dinner as a way to keep the purpose of the holiday alive.

Movies and television shows also keep Thanksgiving's purpose alive by dedicating episodes to Thanksgiving in which everyone in the family often gets a turn to state what their thankful for. Most of the time, these episodes are centered on preparing a Thanksgiving feast with family with a sense of gratitude in the air. This contrasts a lot to episodes dedicated to other holidays such as Christmas, which mainly concentrate on Santa Clause.

Even in 2012, Americans don't cease to forget the true purpose of this holiday. This shows that the purpose of Thanksgiving was never lost during its integration into American culture. Americans still view this day as a way to cherish everything they take for granted, praise others for sacrifices, and notice how fortunate they are to be surrounded by the people they love. I hope Thanksgiving continues to maintain its integrity in years to come.

Source: http://www.pilgrimhall.org/f_thanks.htm