



BREAKING THE THANKSGIVING MYTH

DESPERATE CROSSING: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE MAYFLOWER

Planning the voyage took several years, and for some of the passengers sailing to America took their entire life savings. By the time the Mayflower landed in Plymouth harbor after two months of travel, a Pilgrim scouting party had already committed grave-robbing and theft. The settlers disembarked riddled with scurvy, and weakened by the miserable shipboard conditions. Half would die in the next four months. The feast we know as the first Thanksgiving lasted over three days and it depleted the settlement's marginal food supply as winter was closing in.

As explored in the upcoming History Channel documentary **Desperate Crossing: the Untold Story of the Mayflower**, making its debut Sunday, November 19th at 8 P.M. ET/PT, so much more lies between the broad strokes we've been taught in school about the Pilgrims. Here, we learn that the Mayflower had been designed only for cargo. Passengers were stuffed into the cave-like, windowless area between decks with all of their possessions and various livestock, and there was barely any room to move, for many weeks on end. Voyagers encountered Atlantic storms so bad that the ship was

forced to drift where the winds would take it. Worse, the Mayflower developed leaks. During one storm, a main beam in its midsection cracked, causing many to wonder if the ship would make it.

Going deeper into the facts than any previous documentary, "Desperate Crossing" is based on meticulous historical research and original source material, including diaries and firsthand accounts, to recreate the pilgrims' lives in all their complexity. "Desperate Crossing" explodes time-honored myths about this determined band, including their relationship with the Native Americans, once they landed at Plymouth. Inflamed by years of violent discrimination, the Pilgrims came to New England armed and ready for a hostile reception.

Beyond the traditional stories of Squanto and Massasoit sharing in the bounty of the first Thanksgiving is a far more ambivalent relationship that required a great deal of diplomacy and mutual self-interest. It's all detailed here for the first time—with the excitement and suspense of a feature film.