



Informational Texts for November

Five Things You Didn't Know

about

Thanksgiving

by Margaret Whisnant



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Five Things You Didn't Know about Thanksgiving

#1. The Pilgrims Ate with Their Fingers.

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*The First Thanksgiving* Jean Leon Gerome Ferris (1863-1930)

No, the Pilgrims did not have bad table manners. They simply used what they had—knives for carving and cutting and spoons for mushy foods. Forks, as we know them, hadn't been invented.

A type of two-tined instrument was available in England in 1621, but mostly it was used as a companion for a carving knife. The English saw no reason to use it for eating. "Why should a person need a fork," they asked, "when God has given him hands?" Besides, their two prongs couldn't hold on to food like fingers. Even worse, using a fork was just plain sissy!

The Pilgrims and the English weren't the only fork haters. The French were also slow to accept them. In their opinion, using forks for anything besides carving had a snobby, uppity air about it. With such a reputation, it was predictable that forks would slowly become a status symbol for rich people, who used them for sticky foods or dishes that might stain their fingers. Still, food continued to slip through the two tines. The development of a French model with four curved tines solved the spillage problem in the late 1600s. People, rich and common, liked the new design. Finally in the early 1800s, forks were widely accepted and used in Europe. By the time they migrated to America, they were 200 years too late for the first Thanksgiving feast.

The Pilgrims, therefore, are exonerated!

#1. The Pilgrims Ate with Their Fingers.

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Questions

Use the text to answer the following questions. Write the letter of the correct answer in the blank to the left.

- _____ 1. The central idea of this article is
- (A) how forks came to America.
 - (B) why the Pilgrims ate with their fingers.
 - (C) how forks were invented.
 - (D) why rich people liked forks. (5 Questions in full article)