



## **Plymouth Succotash** traditionally served on Forefathers Day

For 100 people or 150 as a first course

25 lbs. gray corned beef  
5 5-lb. fowl  
5 lbs. lean salt pork  
6 lbs. dry white navy beans  
10 lbs. boiling potatoes  
10 lbs. white green-top turnips  
20 15-oz. cans whole hominy

Put all the meats in cold water and boil until tender, then drain, reserving the skimmed broth as stock to cook the vegetables. Bone and dice the meats, and reserve. The beans take a long, slow cooking in some of the fat broth until they can be pureed in the food processor. The puree is then reserved, and care must be taken to cool both beans and broth lest they sour, which is a frequent disaster with this dish. The potatoes, white turnip and hulled corn should be cooked in the broth. Before serving, mix meat and vegetables together and add the bean puree as it is heated. Be careful it neither burns nor sours - small batches help. If it comes out well, the diners will usually ask to buy the remainder by the quart. It reheats particularly well and can be frozen.

## **Thanksgiving belongs to America, but Forefathers Day is ours alone** by Richmond Talbot

**We who celebrate Forefathers Day** have a kinship one to another. For some of us its blood, but for the rest of us it's a kinship of cause. Who but we would come out four days before Christmas to celebrate a completely unrelated event?

Not only was the landing of the Pilgrims not Christmassy, but the Pilgrims didn't even believe in Christmas. Unlike Williamsburg we can't stick fancy fruit above the doors of the Pilgrim Village and decorate the Fort-Meeting House with laurel and pine. The best we could do is reenact the event when Governor Bradford found some of the strangers playing a game on Christmas day and took away their ball.

**Our lives are different** from the Pilgrims' lives, and for us the countdown is on. Yet we

interrupt the shopping, the baking, the decorating and all the other top priority tasks and errands we've got to finish before Christmas can come. We don't do it because we lack for festivity. There are parties, carol sings, church services and other get-together, large and small, all through the month, and the wave of jollity is about to crest.

**It's a cross to bear for the promoters** of Plymouth tourism that the Pilgrims landed in the winter. Actually the Pilgrims weren't too happy about it either. They tried to get here at least for the shoulder season, but the Speedwell kept leaking, and they kept having to go back and start again. By the time they got everybody crowded on the Mayflower and took the long voyage over here against those prevailing westerly winds, it was too late to expect a tourist to go anywhere north of the Bahamas.

**I offer due respect** to the people who do the job promoting the town and bringing in the people whose cash not only fuels the hospitality industry, but gives us the wherewithal to keep the lights on and the lawn mowed. The families they attract are the people to whom we spread the Pilgrim story. We're always glad to see them come, and sometimes we're glad to see them go. Now, if we want to sneak down Water Street to get discount bread from Pepperidge Farm, we can slip by the crosswalks unimpeded and actually find a place to park. Despite that respect I mentioned, we don't need another festival. We don't really want Thanksgiving all over again.

**Thanksgiving belongs to America** - Forefathers Day is ours. It's so well hidden that even many Plimothians don't know about it. They can live in the town and drink that South Pond water that Peter Gomes is always talking about and still think succotash is corn and lima beans. We may deplore their ignorance, but Forefather Day has not been engulfed by the mass culture.

**There are no Forefathers Day specials** on television, and the only parade (by the members of Plymouth's Old Colony Club who march at dawn, wearing top hats, with a cannon) occurs on December 22 before it even gets light. I saw Charlie Matthewson from the Old Colony Memorial on the sidewalk as it went by, but other than that the media left it alone. If the cannon had blown us all up, Charlie's Pulitzer would have been in the bag.

**So it's we who tend the flame** - we who come out during this stressful time and gather together to sing a song (*words to "The Breaking Waves Dashed High"*) that's on no album of holiday music. We educators (and that's largely what we are in the Pilgrim Society, educators) have to settle for limited results. Maybe a visitor can take away two or three facts and ideas from Pilgrim Hall that he didn't have when he came in. We try to make the facts and ideas meaningful, but few lives are changed. The people we really educate are ourselves. We're the ones who take our copy of Bradford down from the shelf and reread a chapter now and then. We're the market for each new Pilgrim book that comes out. Only we get mad if some debunker challenges a pet notion that isn't bunk at all.

**Only we would sit still** for an after-dinner talk, when we could have an hour before bedtime to wrap presents or maybe just put our feet up and watch Jimmy Stewart running through the snow on TV. Maybe we'll learn something we didn't know, but even if it's one of those years when we don't, we get to be together, to mingle with others who care. "What sought they thus afar? Bright jewels from the mine? The wealth of seas, the spoils of war? They sought a faith's true shrine."

**It's still here, that shrine.** We're of the Pilgrim faith - not the actual religion perhaps but

the faith. We think what they did was worth doing and worth remembering too. We look at the cold waters of the harbor on Forefathers Day and think of them in an open boat heading toward land. It's worth the effort to get together with others who care about the Pilgrims.