

THE MAYFLOWER

You're crammed in a room, shoulder to shoulder with 100 other passengers. It's dark. It smells. It's wet and very cold. There's no privacy. No bathrooms. Your meals are pitiful — salted meat and a hard, dry biscuit. You, and people around you are sick, because the room is rocking side to side. There's no fresh water and no change of clean clothes. In essence, you're trapped because land is thousands of miles away. These conditions seem inhumane, but this was the Mayflower, the Pilgrims' only means of transportation to a better life in the New Land.

By **JEFF GOERTZEN** | *Southern California News Group*



THE JOURNEY

To pay for the journey to America, the Pilgrims took a loan for 1,700 pounds. This was an astronomical sum of money, considering the average day's wage back then was 10 pence. To repay the loan, the Pilgrims signed a legal contract called an indenture, which obligated them to work for seven years, six days a week, harvesting furs and cod. However, more than half the Pilgrims died from the bitter cold the first winter.



- 1. Aug. 15, 1620:** Two ships (Speedwell and Mayflower) left Southampton. The ships were forced back twice because of leaks in the Speedwell.
- 2. Sept. 16:** The Mayflower left Plymouth carrying 102 passengers from both ships.
- 3. Nov. 11:** The Mayflower Compact was signed aboard the ship at sea. This was the first governing document of the new colony.
- 4. Nov. 21:** The Mayflower anchored at Provincetown. By journey's end, two passengers died and a boy was born.

ON THE SHIP

The Mayflower was originally a merchant ship that transported goods across the English Channel. Its castlelike structures fore and aft of the ship were designed to protect the crew from the elements. This made it very difficult to sail against the North Atlantic westerly winds, which is why it took more than two months to complete the journey. After 1624, the Mayflower disappeared from maritime records. Several places in England claim to have a piece of the original ship, but there is no historical proof to support these claims.



The Bible: Was the primary source of literature for the passengers. Adults read scriptures to the children daily. Worship services lasted all day on Sundays.



Navigation: Was done with a compass and star location. An hourglass was used to keep time.

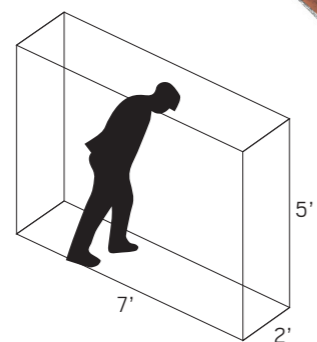


Consumables: Were stored in barrels to keep dry and safe from rodents. Food included:

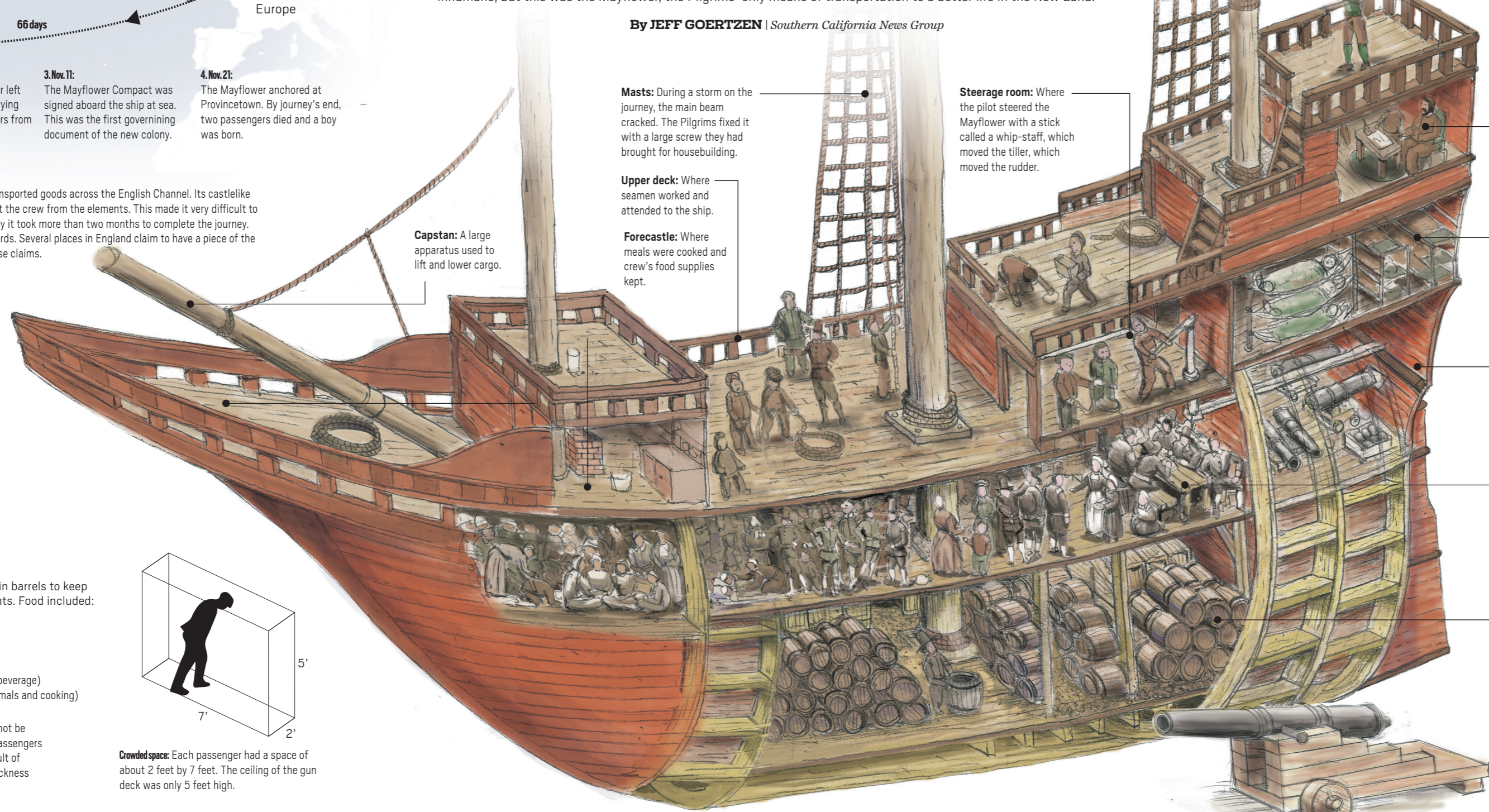
- Salted meats and fish
- Raisins and prunes
- Oatmeal and rice
- Butter
- Beer and wine (primary beverage)
- Water (used only for animals and cooking)



Scurvy: Because fruits could not be transported, many of the passengers suffered from scurvy, a result of vitamin C deficiency. Seasickness was also common.



Crowded space: Each passenger had a space of about 2 feet by 7 feet. The ceiling of the gun deck was only 5 feet high.



Masts: During a storm on the journey, the main beam cracked. The Pilgrims fixed it with a large screw they had brought for housebuilding.

Upper deck: Where seamen worked and attended to the ship.

Forecastle: Where meals were cooked and crew's food supplies kept.

Capstan: A large apparatus used to lift and lower cargo.

Steerage room: Where the pilot steered the Mayflower with a stick called a whip-staff, which moved the tiller, which moved the rudder.

Poop house: Living quarters for the ship's captain and higher ranking crew.

Cabin: General sleeping quarters for the crew members.

Gun room: Where gun powder, shot and other supplies were stored for the ship's cannons.

Gun deck: Where cannons were located and where the passengers lived. It was only 5 feet high.

Cargo hold: Where food, tools and supplies were stored.

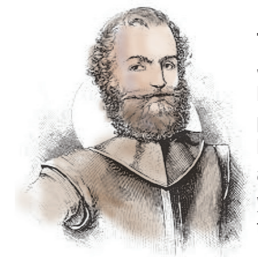
Artillery: The ship carried 12 cannons to defend itself against pirates. Eight were Minion cannons that weighed 1,200 pounds and could shoot a cannonball over a mile.



72 passengers



132 crew and passengers*



The captain: Christopher Jones, born in Harwich, Essex, about 1570, was partial owner of the Mayflower and had served as captain of the ship for 12 years prior to the voyage to the New Land.

Crew 30*



Men 40



Boys 31 (Under age 21)



Women 19



Girls 10 (Under age 21)



Undetermined 2

■ English
■ Dutch
● Servants

THE PILGRIMS



Men: Most of the men had been farmers and were used to working long, hard hours. But on the ship, they spent most of their time reading or playing board games. The men also met to talk about the journey and plans for their new home.

Women: On the ship, women cared for the children, prepared the meals, and sewed clothes. Women were expected to obey their husbands, so they never questioned their decision to go to the New World.

Children: There were 41 minors on board the Mayflower. Only 10 were girls. The older girls helped care for the younger children. There was no place for them to play.

*Depending on sources
Sources: mayflowerhistory.com; National Geographic; Teaching & Learning Co.; geni.com; History Channel; wikipedia.org; plimothplantation.org; gosocialstudies.go.wix.com