

## 4-6 ★ NEW ENGLAND: PLYMOUTH COLONY PILGRIMS, 1620

*pilgrim*—one who makes a religious journey

"They knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on those things, but lift up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country."—William Bradford, second governor of Plymouth Present

1492

1620

In contrast to Jamestown, a business venture, Plymouth Colony was founded for religious reasons. September 6, 1620, the Mayflower sailed from Plymouth, England, bringing 102 English men, women, and children to found Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts, the second permanent English colony in America.



About 35 were Puritan Pilgrims from Scrooby, England, who—after a decade in Holland—were seeking religious freedom in America. These Puritans are called Pilgrims because of their religious journey. They also are called Separatists because they were separating from the Anglican Church.



The rest on board were Anglicans (including John Alden, Priscilla Mullins, and Miles Standish) seeking economic opportunity.

Financed by 70 London merchants, the group had obtained a land grant from the Virginia Company. But a storm blew them off course—to Massachusetts instead of northern Virginia. They anchored off Cape Cod on November 10, 1620.



A problem arose. The Pilgrims were outside the Virginia Company's jurisdiction, so they had no government or laws. And the Anglicans (upset at missing Virginia) threatened mutiny against the Pilgrims.



So, still aboard ship, Pilgrim leaders William Bradford and William Brewster invited all 41 males—Puritan Pilgrims and Anglicans alike, regardless of religious and class differences—to sign the Mayflower Compact.



### THE MAYFLOW COMPACT

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN, WE WHOSE NAMES ARE UNDERWRITTEN, THE LOYALL SUBJECTS OF OUR DREAD SOVERAIGNE LORD KING JAMES, HAVING UNDERTAKEN FOR YE GLORIE OF GOD, AND ADVANCEMENT OF YE CHRISTIAN FAITH, AND YE HONOUR OF OUR KING AND COUNTRIE, A VOYAGE TO PLANT YE FIRST COLONIE IN YE NORTHERN PARTS OF VIRGINIA, DOE... SOLEMNLY & MUTUALLY IN YE PRESENCE OF GOD, AND ONE OF ANOTHER, COVENANT & COMBINE OURSELVES TOGETHER INTO A CIVILL BODY POLITICK... TO ENACTE, CONSTITUTE, AND FRAME SUCH JUST & EQUALL LAWS, ORDINANCES, ACTS, CONSTITUTIONS, & OFFICES FOR YE GENERALL GOOD OF YE COLONIE, UNTO WHICH WE PROMISE ALL DUE SUBMISSION AND OBEDIENCE.

The Pilgrims signed first—and waited. Would the Anglicans sign or mutiny? Finally, Captain



Miles Standish, in charge of military defense, led the other Anglicans in signing.

America's first adventure in democracy had begun. The men immediately elected John Carver governor, the first democratically elected governor in America.

**THE MYSTERY OF PLYMOUTH**

The Pilgrims went ashore to explore Plymouth and found the Indian village deserted. WHERE WERE THE INDIANS? Only their drying corn fields remained.

WE MIGHT AS WELL SETTLE HERE AND HELP OURSELVES TO THESE CROPS. LOOK'S LIKE IT'S MEANT TO BE.



On Christmas day, 1620, the Pilgrims began building their settlement of rude huts. Sleet and snow and disease took their toll. About half the group died that winter.

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, PRUDENCE, BUT I'M GETTING DISCOURAGED. — ME TOO.



Then on March 16, 1621, an astonishing event occurred that helped save the colony: Samoset, an Abnaki Indian from Maine, strolled into Plymouth and welcomed the settlers in English.



Samoset had learned English while sailing the Maine coast with English captains. He now revealed the mystery of Plymouth.

Plymouth was once an Indian village of about 2,000, named Pawtuxet. In 1617 a great plague [perhaps smallpox] killed all its people—except my friend Squanto, who earlier had been captured by an English sea captain and sold as a slave in Spain. He escaped and went to England, where he learned English. In 1619 he sailed back to America, only to find his people gone and his village Pawtuxet deserted. He was grief-stricken. Squanto now lives with Chief Massasoit and the Wampanoag Indians on Narragansett Bay. I will bring him to see you.



Millions of Native Americans were killed by European diseases, brought on by the white man, for which they had no immunity.

When Squanto arrived, he befriended the Pilgrims. He taught them survival skills, such as how to plant corn (a New World plant) and to trap game.

He lived with them and even adopted their religion.

HERE'S MY NEW CASSETTE ON HOW TO FARM IN AMERICA.



They were amazed that Squanto had lived in their homeland and spoke English. He became their interpreter and arranged a peace treaty with the Wampanoag Indians.

**THANKSGIVING**

The New England autumn brought a good 210-acre corn harvest, so the grateful Pilgrims (about sixty by then) set aside a day for feasting and giving thanks to God.

They invited the Wampanoags, and Chief Massasoit arrived with 90 hungry Indians!



(In 1863 President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed Thanksgiving a national holiday.)



★ NEW ENGLAND: PLYMOUTH COLONY PILGRIMS

Chief Massasoit and the 90 Wampanoags had such a good time that they stayed on for three days of feasting and games of skill and chance.

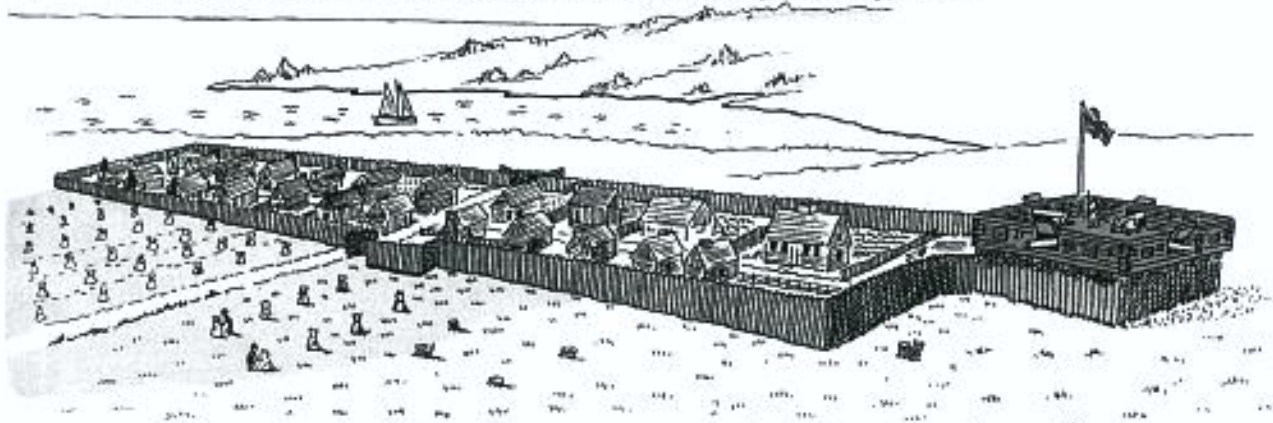


THEY'RE HAVING A THANKSGIVING FEAST. (GULP) NOW WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO UNCLE LOUIE....



**PLYMOUTH VILLAGE: A FREE ENTERPRISE ADVENTURE**

By 1627 Plymouth was a thriving village of about 200. At first the settlers had owned land collectively, but when complaints arose because some worked harder than others, private ownership of land was allowed (1623), making all hands very industrious. Plymouth had learned the lesson of Jamestown: people work harder when they own their own property. By working hard at farming, fishing, and fur trading, the Pilgrims earned enough money to buy out their London investors (1627). They became self-supporting and independent.



In 1622 the Pilgrims heard of the Virginia massacre by Powhatan Indians. They decided to build a fort around the village.

**A SELF-GOVERNING CHURCH**

**CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**—Based on the democratic Reformation doctrine "priesthood of every believer," each church **congregation** was independent, holding yearly elections to choose its pastor and other officers.



This democratic practice in church government became the model for New England's local civil government, the town meeting.

**A SELF-GOVERNING COMMONWEALTH**

**TOWN MEETINGS**—By 1643 Plymouth Colony had ten towns. Each elected two representatives to a legislature, called the General Court, which enacted colonial laws. And each held democratic town meetings, where all freemen could discuss and vote on local affairs.

In 1621 Plymouth Colony elected 32-year old William Bradford as governor. A man of energy, courage, and wit, he served for 30 years.

