

Pilgrims



Voyage

- The story begins with a group of religious dissidents who believed it was necessary to separate from the Church of England.
- Persecuted in England, these "Separatists" moved to Holland in 1607/1608.
- The group found financial backers, began the move to America in 1620.
- They came in 4 ships were the *Mayflower* (1620), the *Fortune* (1621) the *Anne* and the *Little James* (1623).
- John Holloway fell overboard and was saved with a sail fell for him to catch onto. He was the ancestor of Benjamin Franklin.



Common House

- The Pilgrims built a Common House.
- When it was nearly finished the group for the first time came ashore and had a church service.
- The very first thing the Pilgrims did was to pray and sing. This was the first act of the first true committed settlers in America.



In 1621 Many Die

- Weakened by scurvy, almost everyone was sick and many died.
- In February, one or more died every day. They quietly buried the dead at night and made flat graves so the Indians would not see so many graves and attack.
- By spring nearly half of the 102 passengers were dead.
- Lacking fresh fruits and vegetables scurvy spread and chills turned to pneumonia.
- Entire families had been wiped out. Of the married couples, only three remained unbroken. Fourteen out of eighteen women were dead.

Bradford records of how those Pilgrims who were healthy served those who were ill :

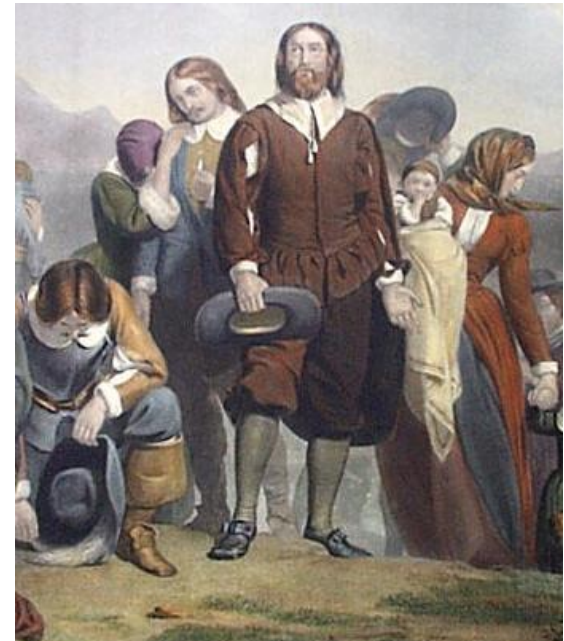
"There was but six or seven sound persons who to their great commendations be it spoken, spared no pains night nor day, but with abundance of toil and hazard of their own health, fetched them wood, made them fires, dressed them meat, made their beds, washed their loathsome clothes, clothed and unclothed them. In a word, did all the homely and necessary offices for them which dainty and queasy stomachs cannot endure to hear named; and all this willingly and cheerfully, without any grudging in the least, showing herein their true love unto their friends and brethren; a rare example and worthy to be remembered."

- The crew members were callous and didn't help anyone who was sick.
- One of the crew of the ship cursed at the Pilgrims, but he had a change of heart when they took care of him when he got sick.

"Oh, you, I now see, show your love like Christians indeed one to another, but we let one another lie and die like dogs."

Young Only

- By spring over half of the 102 settlers had died. Most of the survivors were young people.
- **Half of all those who survived the first year were under 16.**



Leadership

- They had heard of massacres in Virginia. Even though they were weakened they worked on building a fort. It was also to be their church.
- Bradford was chosen as the leader. He was 30 years old.
- He is the first true American and as Emerson would call him – a representative man.
- He is one of the greatest heroes of America and of all times. School children should study him.

Bradford

- Bradford was a strong leader. Bradford was never moved by personal power.
- He was humble with everyone
- , he sold his own house to help pay the colony's final debts in 1648. He governed for 33 years.
- Pilgrims wrote about him "He had more than ordinary piety, wisdom and courage".
- God sends strong leadership in hard times.

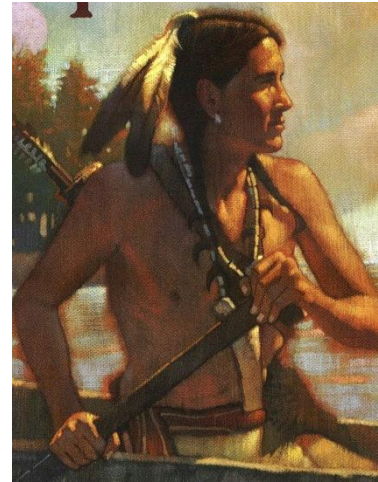


Meet the Indians

- At the end of March 1621 a came to their settlement. Indian walked out of the forest and up to them. To their surprise he spoke to them in English, "Welcome. I am Samoset."
- He explained to them how he had learned English while sailing on British ships. He also explained why there were no Indians at Plymouth all had died from disease in 1617.
- Samoset was from Maine and was visiting a tribe called the Wampanoag who lived about 40 miles away.
- Samoset explained that it was led by a friend of his, Chief Massasoit.
- Before he would answer their flood of questions, he asked for some food. They gave him some and also gave him a long red coat to wear.

Story of Squanto

- A few days later he brought an Indian named Squanto, saying that he "had been in England and could speak better English than himself."
- Squanto had been captured six years earlier by a captain of a trading ship who took him to Spain. Squanto escaped to England and came back. He was the only one of his whole tribe to survive.
- Brewster said of the death of the Indians and the corn: "It must have been the hand of God that guided our steps toward Plymouth."
- Squanto taught them how to plant and fertilize the seeds with fish. Their seeds that they brought over did not grow but the corn did.



- Bradford said Squanto was, "a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectations."
- In the book *Stepping Stones* we read,

"He taught them where and how to catch fish, how to find game, how to plant and tend their corn. This was highly important that first year."
- None of them had grown corn; it was an Indian grain.

"Without this knowledge there might have been a meager crop and the second winter could have been worse than the first. With their home supplies now virtually depleted, they were largely dependent on the corn."

35 More

- 35 more settlers on the *Fortune* joined them at the end of November.
- Here were 35 more mouths to feed.
- They colonists existed on half rations.

Without a good crop of corn, there would have been starvation.



Total Commitment

- In April the following Spring Captain Jones of the Mayflower told them that he would take any of them who wanted to go back with him. No one returned.
- No one asked to go back after all this death and suffering. They could have given up.
- The captain of the Mayflower thought they had the "hearts of lions", and indeed they did.
- As Bradford says, "as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone to many, yea in some sort to our whole nation."

First Thanksgiving



- After the first harvest in 1621 they celebrated their first Thanksgiving with the Indians.
- The first thanksgiving was probably in October instead of the November. There were 140 people – 90 Indians and 50 settlers.
- They had a large meal with vegetables and meat.

Their Lives

- Everyone worked from sunup to sunset. At sunset the children were taught their ABC's and religion. After the meal they read a chapter of the Bible and prayed together.
- They taught their children that the hardships in the New World was a test of their faith. Every morning the head of the household read a chapter of the Bible.
- The Pilgrims slept on the floor. Every morning they rolled up their sleeping bags.
- They wore russet or deep green. Many women had dark blue dresses with wide white collars. Brewster had a violet coat and a red cap.
- They had to tend to the corn constantly. At night they had to build huge bonfires and keep watch for animals to eat the plants. Boys spent days chasing away blackbirds and crows.
- Squanto taught the children how to dig around the roots and find the cutworms and kill them.

Remarried

in the book *Stepping Stones* we read,

"One of the canards hung on the Pilgrims was that they were opposed to sex and repressed it sternly. Hardly an accurate reflection of fact.

They had large families. Widowers and widows remarried quickly, sometimes within weeks after the death of a spouse. They did oppose and punish both illicit sex and perversion."

Traditional Roles for Men and Women

- In the book, *A Little Commonwealth*, we read,
"We know in a general way that male dominance was an accepted principle all over the Western World in the seventeenth century. The fundamental Puritan sentiment on this matter was expressed by Milton in a famous line in *Paradise Lost*: 'he for God only, she for God in him;' and there is no reason to suspect that the people of Plymouth would have put it any differently...Within the family the husband was always regarded as the 'head'".
- Marriage was a very serious commitment. Young people went through courtship with parental approval.
"Marriage came somewhat later than it does now and needed at the outset substantial gifts of property from both sets of parents."
- Men usually did not gain positions of prestige until they were older.

Family Business

- The book *A Little Commonwealth* explains that the Pilgrim family was center of the community and had many functions. It was a family business.
- The family had the responsibility to teach their children. The family was also the school.
- Young men were apprentices.
- "The family was a 'house of correction.' Idle or law breakers were sentenced by the Court to live as servants in reputable families.

Plot of Land

- Each household could keep all the corn and other produce they managed to grow on its own plot.
- Bradford writes:

"So they began to think how they might raise as much corn as they could, and obtain a better crop than they had done, that they might not still thus languish in misery. At length, after much debate of things, the Governor (with the advice of the chiefest amongst them) gave way that they should set corn every man for his own particular, and in that regard trust to themselves; in all other things to go on in the general way as before.

And so assigned to every family a parcel of land, according to the proportion of their number, for that end, only for present use (but made no division for inheritance) and ranged all boys and youth under some family. This had very good success, for it made all hands very industrious so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would be by any means the Governor or any other could use, and saved him a great deal of trouble, and gave far better content. The women now went willingly into the field, and took their little ones with them to set corn; which before would allege weakness and inability; whom to have compelled would have been thought great tyranny and oppression."

DROUGHT 1623

- There was a drought of 7 weeks starting in June of 1623. They lived barely day to day from fishing. No rain fell for weeks. The cornstalks and bean vines turned brown and dry.
- Governor Bradford and Elder Brewster called a day of Fasting.
 - " The bedraggled Pilgrims marched solemnly up the hill to the fort dressed in their best clothes. All day long they fasted and prayed.
- Edward Winslow wrote,
 - " They prayed for eight hours straight on that sizzling, cloudless day and then, very late in the afternoon, the sky became overcast, and Winslow writes: "the clouds gathered together on all sides."
- The next morning, the Pilgrims woke to the sound of a soft, gentle rain falling on their roofs. It rained for 14 days, and the crops turned green again.

Trouble with the Indians

- When Bradford heard that a tribe of Indians were attacking a settlers near Plymouth, he sent Myles Standish to kill the Indians.
- The leader of the Indians was 6'2" and Myles was 5'2". The Indian threatened to kill him with a knife.
- Standish managed to get the warrior and the others into a house. The Pilgrims quickly closed and barred the door. Standish grabbed the knife and stabbed him in the heart.
- Those Indians who were planning to attack the Pilgrims gave up.

Betrayal

- In August 1623 two ships came bringing 60 passengers. One was John Oldham who was not a Pilgrim. He and others began to write back complaining with false statements of Plymouth. One of their complaints was true – there was no ordained minister. Bradford and the others wanted one too. In 1624 one came, or so they thought. Rev. John Lyford arrived. He said he was a Pilgrim, but he was really lying. He had been fired from an Episcopal parish in Ireland for sexual harassment. The Pilgrims were delighted to have a "reverend" at last. They were generous and gave him a house and double-rations for his family of five.
- Bradford, as the historian Samuel Eliot Morrison wrote,

"Bradford and his friends went on board that ship the day she sailed, opened and read a batch of Lyford's letters. They found plenty of evidence that the conspirators were about to pull off a revolution at Plymouth and were preparing the London Adventurers to accept it by telling a pack of lies about the Pilgrims."
- Bradford wrote about this episode.

"The Governor and some other of his friends, knowing how things stood in England and what hurt these things might do, took a shallop and went out with the ship a league or two to sea, and called for all Lyford's and Oldham's letters. Mr. William Peirce being master of the ship afforded him all the assistance he could. Most of the letters they let pass, only took copies of them;" but Bradford sent copies of some of the letters and "kept the originals lest he should deny them."
- Bradford then made his move. He and five other Pilgrims brought them to trial. They denied everything. Bradford then began to read Lyford's letters. Lyford then broke down and confessed everything. They were sentenced to leave the colony. Lyford then put on an act and promised to be loyal. They revoked his sentence. But soon Lyford wrote another slanderous letter. Lyford's wife came forward and explained in detail all of her husband's evil doings. After this he was forced to leave.

New Exodus of People

- They learned by trial and error but within 3 years they had established themselves. They received no aid for 3 years. Their clothes were faded and in rags.
- Eight years later, a new exodus of Pilgrims arrived.
- They were young – in their 20's and 30's, and like the youth who went into Canaan led by Joshua, the Pilgrims were "bold and of good courage."

John Adams in 1765 wrote:

"I always consider the settlement of
America with reverence and
wonder."