

The Mayflower



Background, Context and Relevance

This summary is the result of a learning experience for me. As a Mayflower descendant (of Myles Standish), I wanted to learn more about the Mayflower, its passengers and their experiences. I prepared this summary as a means to share what I learned.

In an effort to provide a brief, informal background summary of various people, places and events related to the Mayflower, I made this informal compilation from a variety of sources. This is not intended to be a technical reference document, nor an exhaustive review of the subject. Rather, it is an assemblage of information and images from various sources on basic background information.

For ease in informal reading, in many cases, specific quotations and citations and attributions are often not included – however, sources are noted in the ‘References’ portion of this summary.

The images and text are from various sources and are presented for personal, noncommercial and/or educational purposes. I learned a lot; I hope you do, too.

Thanks,
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Wampanoag

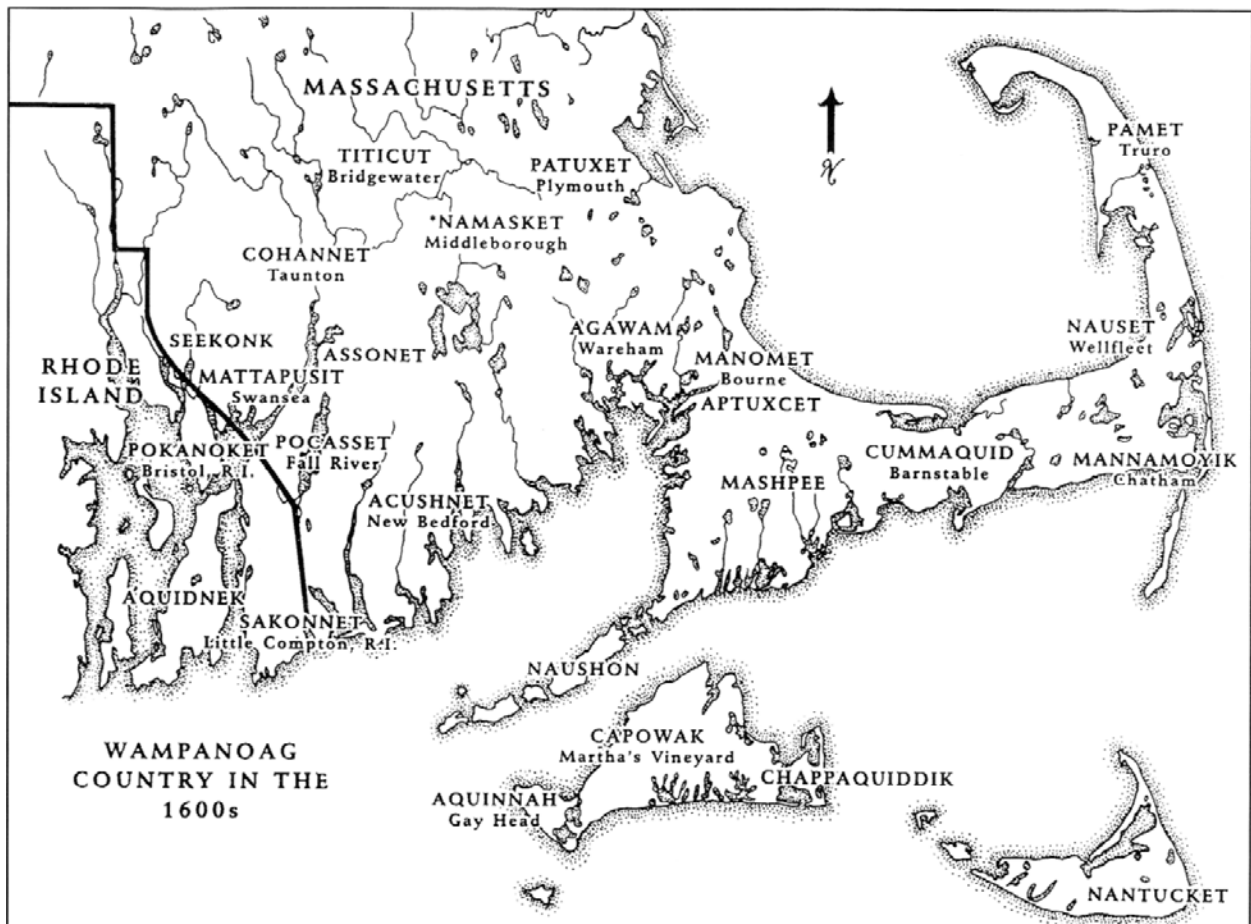
The last great North American glacier (the Wisconsin glaciation) began its retreat some 10,000 years ago, leaving behind the accumulation of boulders, sand, and clay in an area known as Noepe (Martha's Vineyard).

There, it is said, a benevolent being named Moshup roamed the land. One day, Moshup was making his way across the mainland to the headlands of the Aquinnah Cliffs. Weary from his journey, Moshup dragged his foot heavily, leaving a deep track in the mud. At first, only a silver thread of water trickled in the track.

But gradually, the ocean's force of wind and tides broadened and deepened the opening, creating an island named Noepe. The Wampanoag (People of the First Light) were the first people of Noepe. Moshup taught the people how to fish and to catch whales, and still presides over their destinies.

The ancestors of Wampanoag people have lived for at least 10,000 years at Aquinnah (Gay Head) and throughout the island of Noepe, pursuing a traditional economy based on fishing and agriculture.

In the 1600s, there were as many as 40,000 people in the Wampanoag Nation. The Wampanoag Nation once encompassed over 67 distinct tribal communities.



Their villages covered the territory along the east coast as far as Wessagusset (today called Weymouth), all of what is now Cape Cod and the islands of Nantucket (now called Nantucket) and Noepe, and southeast as far as Pokanocket (now Bristol and Warren, Rhode Island). The Wampanoag have been living on this part of 'Turtle Island' (the earth) for over ten thousand years.

The Wampanoag people have undergone a very difficult history ... with the European settlers came much adversity for the tribe - disease that virtually wiped out whole villages, systems of government that bore little resemblance to tribal practices and values, missionaries intent on converting them to Christianity, and private models of land use and ownership that conflicted with the tribe's own communal practices and values.

The vast majority of these tribal communities were killed in battles initiated by colonists to secure land. Today, only six visible tribal communities remain. The Wampanoag is made up of three primary groups – Mashpee, Aquinnah, and Manomet. Mashpee and Aquinnah have maintained physical and cultural presence on their ancestral homelands.

Europeans Coming to America

The first Europeans to arrive in North America were likely the Norse, traveling west from Greenland, where Erik the Red had founded a settlement around the year 985. In 1001 his son Leif is thought to have explored the northeast coast of what is now Canada and spent at least one winter there.

While Norse sagas suggest that Viking sailors explored the Atlantic coast of North America down as far as the Bahamas, such claims remain unproven. In 1963, however, the ruins of some Norse houses dating from that era were discovered at L'Anse-aux-Meadows in northern Newfoundland, thus supporting at least some of the claims the Norse sagas make.

In 1497, just five years after Christopher Columbus landed in the Caribbean looking for a western route to Asia, a Venetian sailor named John Cabot arrived in Newfoundland on a mission for the British king.

Cabot's journey was later to provide the basis for British claims to North America. It also opened the way to the rich fishing grounds off George's Banks, to which European fishermen, particularly the Portuguese, were soon making regular visits.

Columbus (who was looking for a new route to India, China, Japan and the 'Spice Islands' of Indonesia to bring back cargoes of silk and spices (ginger turmeric and cinnamon)) never saw the mainland United States, but the first explorations of the continental United States were launched from the Spanish possessions that he helped establish. The first of these took place in 1513 when a group of men under Juan Ponce de Leon landed on the Florida coast near the present city of St. Augustine.



John Cabot

With the conquest of Mexico in 1522, the Spanish further solidified their position in the Western Hemisphere. The ensuing discoveries added to Europe's knowledge of what was now named America - after the Italian Amerigo Vespucci, who wrote a widely popular account of his voyages to a "New World."

By 1529 reliable maps of the Atlantic coastline from Labrador to Tierra del Fuego had been drawn up, although it would take more than another century before hope of discovering a "Northwest Passage" to Asia would be completely abandoned.

Among the most significant early Spanish explorations was that of Hernando De Soto, a veteran conquistador who had accompanied Francisco Pizarro during the conquest of Peru. Leaving Havana in 1539, De Soto's expedition landed in Florida and ranged through the southeastern United States as far as the Mississippi River in search of riches.

Another Spaniard, Francisco Coronado, set out from Mexico in 1540 in search of the mythical Seven Cities of Cibola. Coronado's travels took him to the Grand Canyon and Kansas, but failed to reveal the gold or treasure his men sought.

However, Coronado's party did leave the peoples of the region a remarkable, if unintended gift: enough horses escaped from his party to transform life on the Great Plains. Within a few generations, the Plains Indians had become masters of horsemanship, greatly expanding the range and scope of their activities.

While the Spanish were pushing up from the south, the northern portion of the present-day United States was slowly being revealed through the journeys of men such as Giovanni da Verrazano. A Florentine who sailed for the French, Verrazano made landfall in North Carolina in 1524, then sailed north along the Atlantic coast past what is now New York harbor.

A decade later, the Frenchman Jacques Cartier set sail with the hope - like the other Europeans before him - of finding a sea passage to Asia. Cartier's expeditions along the St. Lawrence River laid the foundations for the French claims to North America, which were to last until 1763.

Following the collapse of their first Quebec colony in the 1540s, French Huguenots attempted to settle the northern coast of Florida two decades later. The Spanish, viewing the French as a threat to their trade route along the Gulf Stream, destroyed the colony in 1565.

Ironically, the leader of the Spanish forces, Pedro Menendez, would soon establish a town not far away - St. Augustine. It was the first permanent European settlement in what would become the United States.

The great wealth which poured into Spain from the colonies in Mexico, the Caribbean and Peru provoked great interest on the part of the other European powers. With time, emerging maritime nations such as England, drawn in part by Francis Drake's successful raids on Spanish treasure ships, began to take interest in the New World.

In 1578 Humphrey Gilbert, the author of a treatise on the search for the Northwest Passage, received a patent from Queen Elizabeth to colonize the "heathen and barbarous landes" in the New World which other European nations had not yet claimed. It would be five years before his efforts could begin. When he was lost at sea, his half-brother, Walter Raleigh, took up the mission.



1562 Map of America by Diego Gutiérrez

In 1585 Raleigh established the first British colony in North America, on Roanoke Island off the coast of North Carolina. It was later abandoned, and a second effort two years later also proved a failure.

It would be 20 years before the British would try again. This time - at Jamestown in 1607 - the colony would succeed, and North America would enter a new era. (Alonzo L Mamby)

The early 1600s saw the beginning of a great tide of emigration from Europe to North America. Spanning more than three centuries, this movement grew from a trickle of a few hundred English colonists to a flood of millions of newcomers. Impelled by powerful and diverse motivations, they built a new civilization on the northern part of the continent.

The first English immigrants to what is now the United States crossed the Atlantic long after thriving Spanish colonies had been established in Mexico, the West Indies and South America. Like all early travelers to the New World, they came in small, overcrowded ships. During their six- to 12-week voyages, they lived on meager rations. Many died of disease; ships were often battered by storms and some were lost at sea.

Most European emigrants left their homelands to escape political oppression, to seek the freedom to practice their religion, or for adventure and opportunities denied them at home.

Between 1620 and 1635, economic difficulties swept England. Many people could not find work. Even skilled artisans could earn little more than a bare living. Poor crop yields added to the distress. In addition, the Industrial Revolution had created a burgeoning textile industry, which demanded an ever-increasing supply of wool to keep the looms running. Landlords enclosed farmlands and evicted the peasants in favor of sheep cultivation. Colonial expansion became an outlet for this displaced peasant population.

The colonists' first glimpse of the new land was a vista of dense woods. The settlers might not have survived had it not been for the help of friendly Indians, who taught them how to grow native plants - pumpkin, squash, beans and corn.

In addition, the vast, virgin forests, extending nearly 1,300-miles along the Eastern seaboard, proved a rich source of game and firewood. They also provided abundant raw materials used to build houses, furniture, ships and profitable cargoes for export.

Although the new continent was remarkably endowed by nature, trade with Europe was vital for articles the settlers could not produce. The coast served the immigrants well. The whole length of shore provided innumerable inlets and harbors. Only two areas - North Carolina and southern New Jersey - lacked harbors for ocean-going vessels.

Majestic rivers - the Kennebec, Hudson, Delaware, Susquehanna, Potomac and numerous others - linked lands between the coast and the Appalachian Mountains with the sea. Only one river, however, the St. Lawrence - dominated by the French in Canada - offered a water passage to the Great Lakes and into the heart of the continent.

Dense forests, the resistance of some Indian tribes and the formidable barrier of the Appalachian Mountains discouraged settlement beyond the coastal plain. Only trappers and traders ventured into the wilderness. For the first hundred years the colonists built their settlements compactly along the coast.

Political considerations influenced many people to move to America. In the 1630s, arbitrary rule by England's Charles I gave impetus to the migration to the New World. The subsequent revolt and triumph of Charles' opponents under Oliver Cromwell in the 1640s led many cavaliers - "king's men" - to cast their lot in Virginia.

In the German-speaking regions of Europe, the oppressive policies of various petty princes - particularly with regard to religion - and the devastation caused by a long series of wars helped swell the movement to America in the late 17th and 18th centuries.

The coming of colonists in the 17th century entailed careful planning and management, as well as considerable expense and risk. Settlers had to be transported nearly 3,100-miles across the sea. They needed utensils, clothing, seed, tools, building materials, livestock, arms and ammunition.

In contrast to the colonization policies of other countries and other periods, the emigration from England was not directly sponsored by the government but by private groups of individuals whose chief motive was profit. (Alonzo L Mamby)

Why Did the Pilgrims Leave England?

In the 1500s England broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and created a new church called the Church of England (sometimes referred to as the Anglican Church).

Although the new church had been founded by Henry VIII of England (r. 1509-1547 CE) during the Protestant Reformation in opposition to the Catholic Church, it still retained many aspects of Catholicism which some Protestants, derisively known by Anglicans as “Puritans” because they wished to purify the Church, objected to. (Joshua Mark, 2021)



Henry VIII

King James I, the same who commissioned the famous King James Translation of the Bible, was the head of the Anglican Church, interpreted this criticism as treason, and authorized officials to fine, arrest, imprison and even execute dissenters. (Joshua Mark, 2021)

Everyone in England had to belong to the Anglican Church. There was a group of people called Separatists that wanted to separate from that church.

By age 12, William Bradford (later, the Governor of the Plymouth Colony) had read the Geneva Bible, a translation influenced by the theology of the reformer John Calvin (l. 1509-1564 CE), who advocated strict adherence to a literal interpretation of the scriptures which encouraged worship services modeled on the simplicity of the early Christian community.

Bradford was further influenced by a religious movement known as Brownism, founded by a former Anglican priest named Robert Browne (l. 1550-1633 CE) who claimed the Church was too corrupt to be purified and the only course for a true believer was to separate one’s self from it. Bradford found like-minded Christians in a separatist congregation in the village of Scrooby, close to his hometown of Austerfield, England.

In 1607 CE, the Anglican Church became aware of the Scrooby congregation and arrested some, placing others under surveillance, and fining those they could. The congregation, under the leadership of John Robinson (l. 1576-1628 CE) sold their belongings and relocated to Leiden, the Netherlands, where the government practiced a policy of religious tolerance. (Joshua Mark, 2021)



Engraving by Kaspar Merian from Martin Zieler's *Topographia Germaniae Inferioris* (c. 1660), 'View of Leyden' (Leiden)

Between 1607-1618 CE, the congregation lived freely in Leiden. Bradford and Edward Winslow both wrote glowingly of their experience. In Leiden, God had allowed them, in Bradford's estimation, "to come as near the primitive pattern of the first churches as any other church of these later times." God had blessed them with "much peace and liberty," Winslow echoed.

But while they cherished the freedom of conscience they enjoyed in Leiden, the Pilgrims had two major complaints: They found it a hard place to maintain their English identity and an even harder place to make a living. In America, they hoped to live by themselves, enjoy the same degree of religious liberty and earn a "better and easier" living. (Robert Tracy McKenzie)

The English had established the colony of Jamestown in the Virginia Patent of North America in 1607 CE, which, ten years later, was flourishing, and the Leiden congregation were already looking into some means of creating their own colony in Virginia when, in 1618 CE, one of their leading members, William Brewster (l. 1568-1644 CE), published a tract criticizing the Anglican Church and orders were given by the English officials for his arrest.

Brewster was hidden by his friends, but the congregation stepped up their efforts to relocate and contracted with Thomas Weston (l. 1584 - c. 1647 CE), who was a merchant adventurer who matched potential colonists with investors.

By June of 1620 CE, they had two ships, the Speedwell and the Mayflower, and were ready to begin their voyage across the Atlantic Ocean to a new home. (Joshua J Mark) Bradford went to the Virginia Company and asked them for permission to establish a new colony in Virginia.

The Virginia Company of London

By the early 17th century, England was one of the leading European powers involved in trans-oceanic trade and was beginning to build a colonial empire.

The idea of colonization appealed to all classes of English society. Members of the gentry were interested in the glory of having overseas colonies, hoping to spread England's fame abroad and frustrate Spanish ambitions in the New World.

Merchants hoped to develop new industries that would provide essential goods and resources and eliminate England's dependence upon imports from European countries. They also hoped that colonies could provide a market for English goods.

Poorer members of the population hoped to improve their lot, with the possibility of jobs and the opportunity to acquire land.



Coat of Arms of the Virginia Company

In the late 1580s, Sir Walter Raleigh attempted to plant a colony for England in present-day North Carolina. This unsuccessful and expensive settlement, often referred to as The Lost Colony, made the English crown wary of trying again.

It was not until 1606 that the Virginia Company of London (also called the Virginia Company and London Company) received a charter from the newly-crowned King James I.

Following the precedent set by other companies such as the Moscovy Company and East India Company, the Virginia Company was a joint-stock company, which sold shares. All who purchased shares at a cost of £12 10s shared in the success or failure of the venture.

A charter granted land to two branches of the Company - the London branch was to settle a colony near the Chesapeake Bay, while the Plymouth branch was granted land in the New England area. The Company paid all the costs of establishing each colony, and in return controlled all land and resources there and required everyone to work for the Company.

Supplying an overseas colony with food, materials and laborers was an expensive venture for the Virginia Company, and it depended upon the sale of stock to raise money.

Wealthy merchants, eager to find investment opportunities, established a number of companies set up to trade in various parts of the world. Investors, called "adventurers," purchased shares of stock to help finance the costs of establishing overseas settlements. Money from the sale of stock was used to pay for ships and supplies and to recruit and outfit laborers.

Each company, made up of individuals who purchased shares of company stock, was given a monopoly to explore, trade or settle a particular region of the world. Profits were shared among the investors according to the amount of stock they owned.

The Virginia Company promised food, clothes, tools, housing and transportation to Virginia, all at Company expense. However, supplies for the colonists, bought in London and surrounding areas, often were insufficient or of poor quality. The laborers had to work for the Company for up to seven years, and then they would be released from service, with the possibility of acquiring their own land.

Almost 1700 people purchased shares in the Virginia Company, including men of different occupations and classes, wealthy women, and representatives of institutions such as trade guilds, towns and cities. The largest single investor was Thomas West, Lord de la Warr, who served as the first governor of Virginia between 1610 and 1618.

Between 1575 and 1630, more than 6,300 Englishmen and women invested in joint stock companies trading with Russia, Turkey, Africa, the East Indies, the Mediterranean and America. (Archibald Andrews Marks)

The Virginia Company was formed both to bring profit to its shareholders and to establish an English colony in the New World. The Company, under the direction of its treasurer Sir Thomas Smith, was instructed to colonize land between the 34th and 41st northern parallel.

In December 1606, the Virginia Company's three ships, containing 144 men and boys, set sail. On May 13, 1607, these first settlers selected the site of Jamestown Island as the place to build their fort.



Jamestown

In addition to survival, the early colonists had another pressing mission: to make a profit for the stockholders of the Virginia Company.

Although the settlers were disappointed that gold did not wash up on the beach and gems did not grow in the trees, they realized there was great potential for wealth of other kinds in their new home.

Early industries such as glass manufacture, pitch and tar production and beer and wine making took advantage of natural resources and the land's fertility. However, the settlers could not devote as much time as the Virginia Company would have liked to their financial responsibilities. They were too busy trying to survive.

Within the three-sided fort erected on the banks of the James, the settlers quickly discovered that they were, first and foremost, employees of the Virginia Company of London, following instructions of the men appointed by the Company to rule them.

In exchange, the laborers were armed and received clothes and food from the common store. After seven years, they were to receive land of their own. The gentlemen, who provided their own armor and weapons, were to be paid in land, dividends or additional shares of stock.

Initially, the colonists were governed by a president and seven-member council selected by the King. Leadership problems quickly erupted and Jamestown's first two leaders coped with varying degrees of success with sickness, Indian assaults, poor food and water supplies, and class strife.

When Captain John Smith became Virginia's third president, he proved the strong leader that the colony needed. Industry flourished and relations with Chief Powhatan's people improved.

In 1609, the Virginia Company received its Second Charter, which allowed the Company to choose its new governor from amongst its shareholders. Investment boomed as the Company launched an intensive recruitment campaign. Over 600 colonists set sail for Virginia between March 1608 and March 1609.

Unfortunately for these new settlers, Sir Thomas Gates, Virginia's deputy governor, bound for the colony, was shipwrecked in Bermuda and did not assume his new post until 1610. When he arrived, he found only a fraction of the colonists had survived the infamous "Starving Time" of 1609-1610.

All too soon, the Mother Country learned of Virginia's woeful state. The result was predictable: financial catastrophe for the Company.

Many new subscribers reneged payment on their shares, and the Company became entangled in dozens of court cases. On top of these losses, the Company was forced to incur further debt when it sent hundreds more colonists to Virginia.

There was little to counter this crushing debt. No gold had been found in Virginia; trading commodities produced by exploitation of the raw materials found in the New World were minimal. Attempts at producing glass, pitch, tar and potash had been barely profitable and, regrettably, such commodities could be had far more cheaply on the other side of the Atlantic.

Increasingly bad publicity, political infighting and financial woes led the Virginia Company to organize a massive advertising campaign.



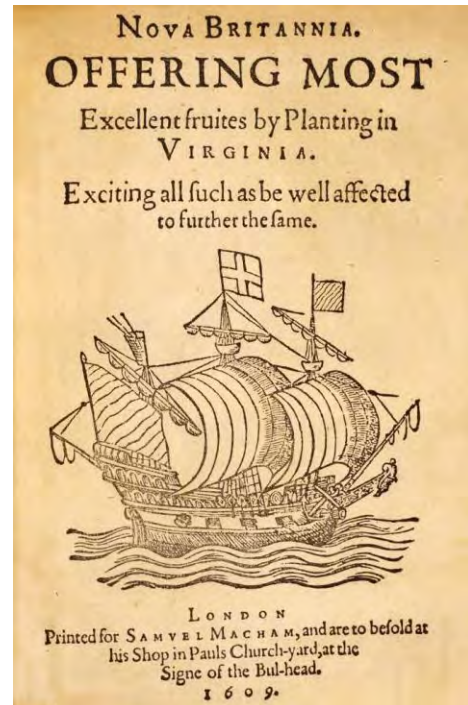
Virginia Company Chart, 1606

The Company plastered street corners with tempting broadsheets, published persuasive articles, and even convinced the clergy to preach of the virtues of supporting colonization.

Before the Company was dissolved, it would publish 27 books and pamphlets promoting the Virginia venture.

To make shares more marketable, the Virginia Company changed its sales pitch. Instead of promising instant returns and vast profits for investors, the Company exploited patriotic sentiment and national pride.

A stockholder was assured that his purchase of shares would help build the might of England, to make her the superpower she deserved to be. The heathen natives would be converted to the proper form of Christianity, the Church of England. People out of work could find employment in the New World. The standard of living would increase across the nation. How could any good, patriotic Englishman resist?



The English rose to the bait. The gentry wished to win favor by proving its loyalty to the crown. The growing middle class also saw stock purchasing as a way to better itself. But the news was not all good. Although the population of Jamestown rose, high settler mortality kept profits unstable. By 1612, the Company's debts had soared to over £1000.

A third charter provided a short-term resolution to the Virginia Company's problems. The Company was permitted to run a lottery as a fundraising venture. Other attractive features of the charter allowed Virginia's assembly to act as the colony's legislature and also added 300 leagues of ocean to the colony's holdings, which would include Bermuda as part of Virginia. But the colony was still on shaky ground until John Rolfe's successful experiment with tobacco as a cash crop provided a way to recoup financially.

Unfortunately by 1616, the Virginia Company suffered further adversity. The original settlers were owed their land and stock shares; initial investors at home were owed their dividends. The Company was forced to renege on its cash promises, instead distributing 50-acre lots in payment. The next year, the Company instituted the headright system, a way to bring more settlers to Virginia. Investors and residents were able to acquire land in paying the passage of new settlers.

In most cases, these newcomers spent a period of time in servitude on the investor's land. Sir Edwin Sandys, a leading force in the Virginia Company, strongly supported the headright system, for his goal was a permanent colony which would enlarge British territory, relieve the nation's overpopulation, and expand the market for English goods.

Sir Thomas Smith, as the Company's Treasurer, had a different dream: the Virginia Company's mission was to trade and to make a profit. In the end, it was Sandys' vision which prevailed. When he became Treasurer of the Company in 1619, he moved forward to populate the colony and earn a protective status for the tobacco crop which had become the cash crop of Virginia. At the same time, he urged colonists to diversify their plantings and thus become less reliant on only one staple. The colonists ignored this advice, to their later dismay.

In 1621, the Company was in trouble; unpaid dividends and increased use of lotteries had made future investors wary. The Company debt was now over £9000. Worried Virginians were hardly reassured by the advice of pragmatic Treasurer Sandys, who warned that the Company “cannot wish you to rely on anything but yourselves.”

In March 1622, the Company’s and the colony’s situation went from dire to disastrous when the Powhatan Indians staged an uprising which wiped out a quarter of the European population of Virginia.

When a fourth charter, severely reducing the Company’s ability to make decisions in the governing of Virginia, was proposed by the Crown, subscribers rejected it.

King James I forthwith changed the status of Virginia in 1624. Virginia was now a royal colony to be administered by a governor appointed by the King. The Virginia Assembly finally received royal approval in 1627 and this form of government, with governor and assembly, would oversee the colony of Virginia until 1776, excepting only the years of the English Commonwealth.

The Virginia Company of London, so far as achieving its aims as a profitable stockholding company, was a dismal failure. Despite numerous creative and desperate attempts to make Virginia stable and financially successful, the investors never achieved a profit, while the colonists suffered from the factionalism and mismanagement by the administration on the other side of the Atlantic.

But other motives for establishing for establishing Virginia were achieved. England’s territory was increased vastly and the new land could be settled and its natural resources harvested.

Spanish colonial enterprise in the New World was challenged. England’s laws, language and religion were transplanted to a new place, laying the foundations for what would become the United States of America.

(The above is primarily from researched and writing by Ted Chaney, Student Intern, Ken Cohen, Student Intern, Lee Pelham Cotton, Park Ranger, as well as writing by Archibald Andrews Marks.)

Voyage of the Mayflower

The Mayflower is one of the most important ships in American history. The captain of the Mayflower was a businessman named Christopher Jones. Jones was born in Harwich, England around 1570 and was the son of a mariner and ship owner, also named Christopher Jones.

Around 1608, Jones purchased the Mayflower and became its Master (what we would call a captain today), but he was only a quarter owner of the ship. The other owners were Robert Childe, Thomas Short and Christopher Nichols.

The Virginia Company agreed with Bradford about forming a colony in America and in May of 1620 the Mayflower was hired in London to take them to the mouth of the Hudson River in North America where they had been granted permission to build the colony.

The Mayflower sailed from London to Southampton in July 1620 to begin loading food and supplies for the voyage-much of which was purchased at Southampton. The Pilgrims were mostly still living in the city of Leiden, in the Netherlands.



Mayflower and the Speedwell (Dartmouth-Elite Titles)

They hired a ship called the Speedwell to take them from Delfshaven, the Netherlands, to Southampton, England, to meet up with the Mayflower. The two ships planned to sail together to Northern Virginia.

The Speedwell departed Delfshaven on July 22, and arrived at Southampton, where they found the Mayflower waiting for them. The Speedwell had been leaking on her voyage from the Netherlands to England, though, so they spent the next week patching her up.

On August 5 (August 15), the two ships finally set sail for America. But the Speedwell began leaking again, so they pulled into the town of Dartmouth for repairs, arriving about August 12 (August 22). The Speedwell was patched up again, and the two ships again set sail for America about August 21 (August 31).

After the two ships had sailed about 300 miles out to sea, the Speedwell again began to leak. Frustrated with the enormous amount of time lost, and their inability to fix the Speedwell so that it could be seaworthy, they returned to Plymouth, England, and made the decision to leave the Speedwell behind.

The Mayflower would go to America alone.

The cargo on the Speedwell was transferred over to the Mayflower; some of the passengers were so tired and disappointed with all the problems that they quit and went home. Others crammed themselves onto the already very crowded Mayflower.

Finally, on September 6 (September 16), the Mayflower departed from Plymouth, England, and headed for America.

By the time the Pilgrims had left England, they had already been living onboard the ships for nearly a month and a half.

The first half of the voyage went fairly smoothly, the only major problem was sea-sickness. But by October, they began encountering a number of Atlantic storms that made the voyage treacherous.

THE MAYFLOWER PASSENGERS

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Several times, the wind was so strong they had to just drift where the weather took them, it was not safe to use the ship's sails. The Pilgrims intended to land in Northern Virginia, which at the time included the region as far north as the Hudson River in the modern State of New York.

The Hudson River, in fact, was their originally intended destination. They had received good reports on this region while in the Netherlands. All things considered, the Mayflower was almost right on target, missing the Hudson River by just a few degrees.

The voyage itself across the Atlantic Ocean took 66 days, from their departure on September 6 (September 16), until Cape Cod was sighted on November 9 (November 19), 1620.

As the Mayflower approached land, the crew spotted Cape Cod just as the sun rose on November 9 (November 19). The Pilgrims decided to head south, to the mouth of the Hudson River in New York, where they intended to make their plantation. However, as the Mayflower headed south, it encountered some very rough seas, and nearly shipwrecked.

The Pilgrims then decided, rather than risk another attempt to go south, they would just stay and explore Cape Cod. They turned back north, rounded the tip, and anchored in what is now Provincetown Harbor. The Pilgrims would spend the next month and a half exploring Cape Cod, trying to decide where they would build their plantation. (All here is from Caleb Johnson's Mayflower History)

The Mayflower Compact Laid the Foundation for the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution

Back in England, the Pilgrims had signed a contract with the Virginia Company to establish a colony near the Hudson River, which at the time was part of Virginia. By its terms, the stockholders who financed the journey would share in the new colony's profits.

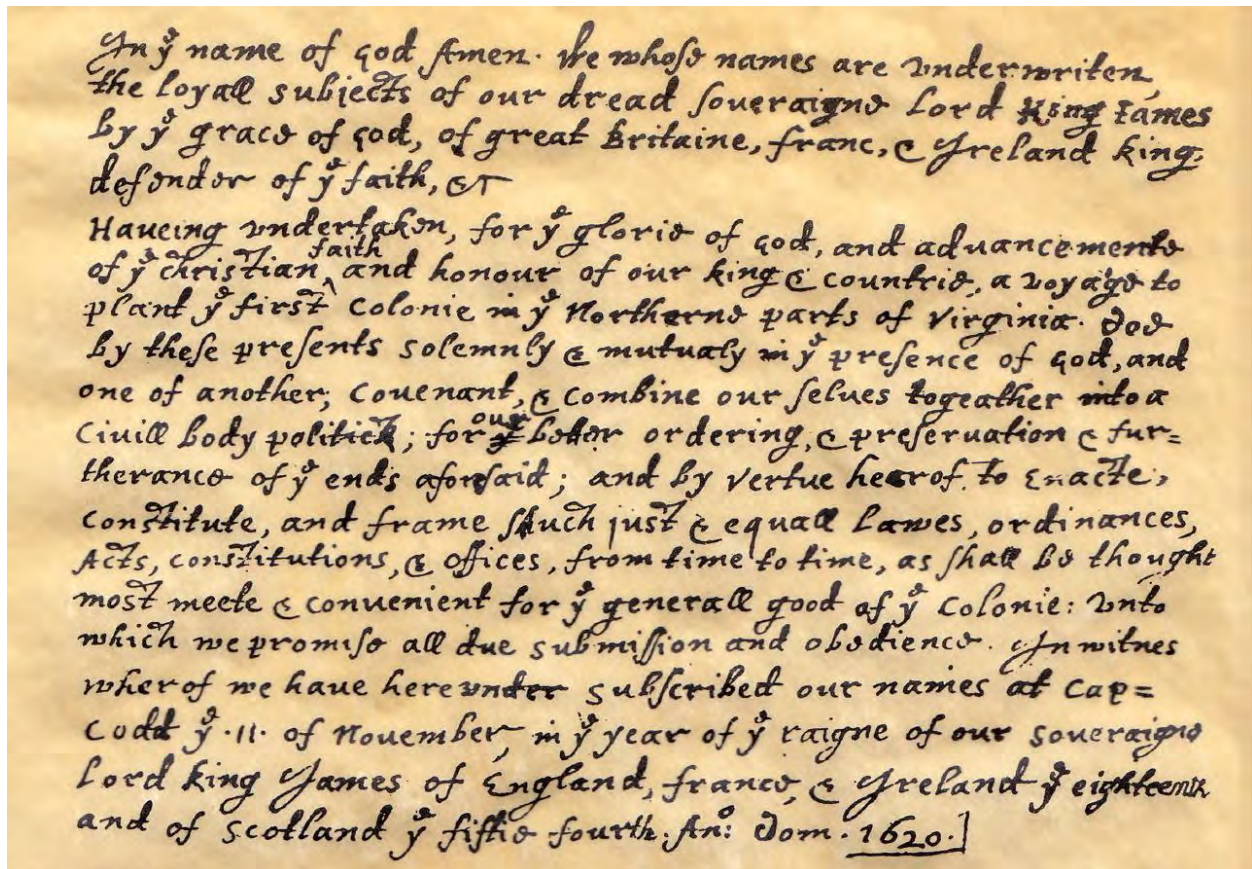
After bad weather during the Atlantic crossing pushed the Mayflower hundreds of miles further north, to Cape Cod, the "strangers" didn't think they should be subject to the contract's provisions anymore. Some of them made "discontented and mutinous speeches" claiming that since they were not in Virginia, "none had power to command them." (William Bradford wrote in his history of Plymouth Plantation)

Before departing the ship, then, the Pilgrims decided to draw up an agreement to bind them and the "strangers" together, and ensure that everyone in the new colony would abide by the same laws. The result, a document drafted and signed aboard the ship by nearly all of the adult male passengers, would become known as the Mayflower Compact. (Of those that did not sign, some had been hired as seamen only for one year and others may have been too ill to write. No women signed it.)

While they intended to form a government for their new colony, the Pilgrims and others aboard the Mayflower were not declaring their independence: The Mayflower Compact (though the Pilgrims never called it that) began with a clear statement of loyalty to King James of England, along with a commitment to God and to Christianity.

In settling the first colony in the "Northern parts of Virginia," the document continued, the Pilgrims and the other Mayflower passengers would "covenant and combine our selves together into a civil body politick." As part of this united body, they pledged to make and abide by the same "laws, ordinances, Acts, constitutions, and offices" in order to further "the general good of the Colony: unto which we promise all due submission and obedience."

In its form and content, the Mayflower Compact echoed that of earlier covenants that Separatist Christian groups had drawn up when they established their churches in England and Holland, to bind them to each other as well as to God.



In y^e name of god Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread Soueraigne Lord King James by y^e grace of god, of great Britaine, France, & Ireland King, Defender of y^e faith, &c
Having undertaken, for y^e glorie of god, and advancement of y^e Christian^{faith}, and honour of our king & countrey, a voyage to plant y^e first^e Colonie in y^e Northern parts of Virginia. Do by these presents solemnly & mutually in y^e presence of god, and one of another, Covenant, & combine our selves together into a Civill body politick; for ^{our} better ordering, & preservation & furtherance of y^e ends aforesaid; and by vertue hereof, to enacte, constitute, and frame such just & equall Lawes, ordinances, Acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for y^e generall good of y^e Colonie: unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cap=
Codd y^e 11. of November, in y^e year of y^e raigne of our soueraigne Lord King James of England, France, & Ireland y^e eighteenth, and of Scotland y^e fiftie fourth. An: Dom. 1620.]

Mayflower Compact in Bradford's Hand

The agreement also drew on the secular tradition of the social contract, the idea of covenants between men themselves, which went back to ancient times. While 400 years earlier, the Magna Carta had established the idea of the rule of law, this had previously meant the king's law. In the Mayflower Compact, the Pilgrims and strangers were pledging their loyalty to laws they would make themselves.

The Mayflower Compact was a first in consensual government between individuals and one another (and not with a monarch) and ensured everyone in the new colony would abide by the same laws.

The Mayflower Compact was not a constitution but rather an adaptation of a Puritan church covenant to a civil situation. Furthermore, as a provisional instrument adopted solely by the colonists, the document did not solve the matter of their questionable legal rights to the land they settled. (A patent was eventually obtained from the Council for New England in June 1621.) Still, the Mayflower Compact became the foundation of Plymouth's government and remained in force until the colony was absorbed into the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1691.

In 1802, the future president John Quincy Adams underscored the lasting importance of the agreement signed aboard the Mayflower, calling it "perhaps the only instance, in human history, of that positive, original social compact, which speculative philosophers have imagined as the only legitimate source of government."

Settling In

After coming to anchor in what is today Provincetown harbor in the Cape Cod region of Massachusetts, a party of armed men under the command of Captain Myles Standish was sent to explore the immediate area and find a location suitable for settlement.

In December, they went ashore in Plymouth, where they found cleared fields and plentiful running water; a few days later the Mayflower came to anchor in Plymouth harbor, and settlement began.

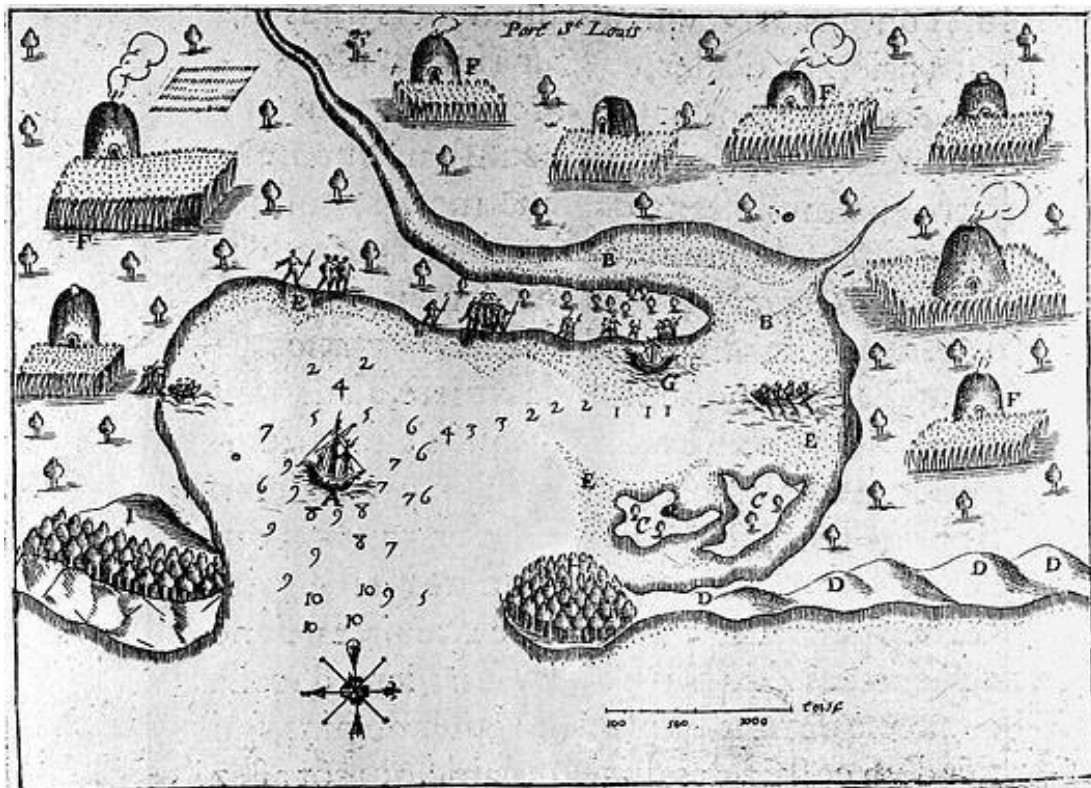
When the Mayflower arrived at Plymouth Harbor on December 16, 1620, the Pilgrims settled in an area that was once Patuxet, a Wampanoag village abandoned four years prior after a deadly outbreak of a plague, brought by European traders who first appeared in the area in 1616. The plague, however, killed thousands, up to two-thirds, of them.

And yet, when the Wampanoag watched the Mayflower's passengers come ashore at Patuxet, they did not see them as a threat.

"The Wampanoag had seen many ships before," explained Tim Turner, Cherokee, manager of Plimoth Plantation's Wampanoag Homesite and co-owner of Native Plymouth Tours.

"They had seen traders and fishermen, but they had not seen women and children before. In the Wampanoag ways, they never would have brought their women and children into harm. So, they saw them as a peaceful people for that reason."

But they did not greet them right away either.



Patuxet Harbor by Samuel de Champlain-1605

The English, in fact, did not see the Wampanoag that first winter at all, according to Turner. "They saw shadows," he said.

The first direct contact was made by Samoset, a Monhegan from Maine, who came to the village on March 16, 1621.



Squanto

The next day, he returned with Tisquantum (Squanto), a Wampanoag who befriended and helped the English that spring, showing them how to plant corn, fish and gather berries and nuts.

On December 25, 1620, they began construction of their first buildings. The men of the colony set to building a common building while the women and children continued their residence on the ship.

The weather was so windy and stormy while the men were trying to build the Common House that it took them twenty-six days to finish it.

After it was finished, the men slept there while the women and children slept on the boat. Because of the storms, Captain Jones had to use two extra anchors in the water to keep the ship from blowing away.

The captain was convinced to stay through to the spring, when the weather would be better for the return crossing. This was fortunate, as the new common house burned to the ground on January 14, 1621 and the ship was the only shelter the colonists had.

The Pilgrims planned to build houses along one main street that ran alongside the town brook. It was the only street in the colony, so it was just named "the Street." The houses were not log cabins, as you might think. They were frame houses just like the ones where the Pilgrims had lived in England. The houses were built close together for safety.

The hall was the main room in the house. It had a very big fireplace where the cooking was done. In this room the Pilgrims cooked, ate, played, and worked. The chamber was a small room in the back of the house for sleeping.

Young children often slept in trundle beds, which slid under the parents' bed during the day. Food was stored in the loft, and older children slept up there. Mattresses were stuffed with straw, corn husks, leaves, or cattails.

There weren't any bathrooms. Chamber pots were used, and they had to be emptied outside. Washing up was done with a bucket of water carried from the brook behind the houses. Their homes had small windows, but there was no glass. Glass was expensive and too fragile to carry across the ocean. So the windows were covered with oiled paper or wooden shutters. This made the houses very dark in the daytime. They had light from the fireplace and candles. The houses had thatched roofs made from bundles of dried grass or reeds.

They ate from wooden plates called trenchers. One side of the plate was flat and one side was hollowed out to hold soup. Children shared trenchers with their brother or sister. Children stood up to eat. It was considered good manners to wear a hat at the table. Clam shells were used like spoons. Since there were no forks, most food was eaten with the fingers.

Everyone shared one bowl for drinking. It might have four handles or none. Each person had his or her own sharp knife to cut meat, cheese, bread, and butter. This same knife was used to cut small pieces of wood. Dirty dishes were usually scraped clean and then washed in hot water without soap. Water for washing, cooking, and drinking had to be carried from the brook that ran behind the houses.



Plimouth Patuxet

The Mayflower returned to England on April 5, 1621.

Not one of the colonists left to go back with it. All through the summer the colony began to rebound, finishing their small encampment, gathering food, and tending crops. The colonists regained their strength and found the land provided them with plenty.

General Sickness

Not long after the common house burned, the “General Sickness” swept through the group, devastating colonists and crew alike. No one knows what this illness was, though it may have been pneumonia. Regardless, it was devastating.

Seven of the company of near 150 remained well enough to tend to the rest, fetching wood for fires, making food, bathing and dressing the sick. Others who were well refused to help, afraid they would catch the disease.

The captain at first ordered all the sick to land and refused to give them beer (the group’s main beverage) - but then his crew came down with the same sickness and began to die. The boatswain, who had always cursed and insulted the Pilgrims, caught sick and was ministered to by those he hated, causing him great shame and bringing him to gratitude.

Another man cursed his wife when he fell ill, saying it was she who had forced him on this journey. Another man paid a companion and offered him all his goods when he died, and the companion complained the man wasn't dying fast enough. In short, the terrifying epidemic brought out the best and worst in human nature.

Of the original 102 Mayflower passengers, four died before reaching Plymouth.

By the summer of 1621 there were another 46 deaths among the passengers, and about 25 deaths among the crew.

After the General Sickness, only 12 of 26 men with families and 4 of the 12 single men and boys survived. Eleven of the thirty-one children died the first winter.

Fewer of the children died because of the good care of their mothers. Although the mothers were weak, sick, and hungry, they gave their children food and medicines they made from herbs. Fourteen of the eighteen adult women died the first winter.

Two baby boys were born on the Mayflower. Oceanus Hopkins was born at sea, just before they reached land. He died at the age of two. Peregrine White was born just nine days after they landed, and he lived to be eighty-three.

William White died in the sickness, though Susanna survived. (Susanna must have been a very strong woman, having survived the ocean crossing while very pregnant, then the General Sickness shortly after giving birth to Peregrine.)

Only four adult women were left alive for the Thanksgiving.

In order to hide the number of deaths from the Native Americans, the Pilgrims buried their dead in the night on what is now called Copt's Hill. (In 1920, the remains of all the buried who could be found were placed inside a monument on top of the hill.) Bradford calls this period "The Starving Time."

Of the 132 Pilgrims and crew who left England, only fifty-three of them survived the first winter.

Wampanoag Relationship with the Pilgrims

Samoset told the Pilgrims that he knew of a Patuxet who could speak better English than he and that he would bring him and others to them.

In the next few days the colonists were visited by several representatives of the Wampanoag, the main Native people in the area.

The Wampanoag returned some tools they had stolen from the Pilgrims and told them their great leader Massasoit was on his way. Several days later, the sachem Massasoit arrived with his brother, sixty warriors, and Squanto, the Patuxet whom Samoset had mentioned.

Squanto was the sole survivor of the Patuxet people, having been abducted by Hunt in 1614 to be sold into slavery in Spain. He had jumped ship and gone to England where he found employment on a trip to Newfoundland and other parts, before returning home in 1618, only to find all his people dead.

Without Squanto's help and guidance, the Plymouth Colony would not have survived.

The English considered him "a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation." He acted as interpreter between the colonists and Massasoit, taught the Pilgrims how to fish and plant corn, how to live in harmony with the land, "and never left them till he died" in 1654.

The Pilgrims would have starved without his help. In addition to Squanto, another Wampanoag named Hobbamock came and lived with the colonists "and was of great assistance to them." Plymouth Colony notes that the Separatists enforced strict sexual morals, including upon the Native Americans who lived with them.

In the spring of 1621, Ousamequin, the Massasoit (a title meaning head chief) of the Wampanoag Indians, made a treaty with the English who settled at Patuxet (in what is now Plymouth, Massachusetts).

Chief Massasoit (ca. 1581- 1661) was born in present-day Rhode Island. As chief sachem of the Wampanoag nation, he befriended the Pilgrims at Plymouth, taught them farming methods, and joined with them in a 1621 thanksgiving feast. He was a cordial host to the original Pilgrim settlers and sheltered Roger Williams during his winter exile in 1636.



Massasoit

Massasoit, who led the Wampanoags for about a half-century, is best remembered for this diplomatic skill and for his successful policy of peaceful co-existence with the English settlers.

Peace Treaty between Wampanoag and the Pilgrims (1621)

The main terms of the treaty: the Wampanoag promised to defend the Plymouth settlers against hostile tribes. The settlers promised to step in if the Wampanoag were attacked.

Three Wampanoag men, who represented Ousamequin, spent much time with the settlers. Tisquantum (also known as Squanto), Samoset, and Hobbamack gave the settlers invaluable tips on survival.

The Plymouth settlers honored the treaty later that summer by coming to Ousamequin's rescue when they thought he had been captured by enemies.

The Pilgrim-Wampanoag Peace Treaty is the document drafted and signed on March 22, 1621 CE between governor John Carver (l. 1584-1621 CE) of the Plymouth Colony and the sachem (chief) Ousamequin (better known by his title Massasoit, l. c. 1581-1661 CE) of the Wampanoag Confederacy.

The treaty established peaceful relations between the two parties and would be honored by both sides from the day of its signage until after the death of Massasoit in 1661 CE.

Although the treaty reads as though it favors the settlers, the provisions were understood as applying to both sides even when not specified.

The account is given below as it appears in the 1622 CE publication with modification only in spelling, paragraph breaks, omission of some lines, and parenthetical commentary for clarification:

Thursday, the 22nd of March [1621], was a very fair warm day. About noon we met again about our public business, but we had scarce been an hour together, but Samoset came again, and Squanto, the only native of Patuxet, where we now inhabit, who was one of the twenty captives that by Hunt were carried away, and had been in England, and dwelt in Cornhill with Master John Slaine, a merchant, and could speak a little English, with three others, and they brought with them some few skins to truck, and some red herrings newly taken and dried, but not salted, and signified unto us that their great sagamore [chief] Massasoit was hard by, with Quadequina his brother, and all their men.

They could not well express in English what they would, but after an hour the king came to the top of a hill over against us, and had in his train sixty men, that we could well behold them and they us.

We were not willing to send our governor to them, and they unwilling to come to us, so Squanto went again unto him, who brought word that we should send one to parley with him, which we did, which was Edward Winslow, to know his mind, and to signify the mind and will of our governor, which was to have trading and peace with him. We sent to the king a pair of knives, and a copper chain with a jewel at it. To Quadequina we sent likewise a knife and a jewel to hang in his ear, and withal a pot of strong water, a good quantity of biscuit, and some butter, which were all willingly accepted.

Our messenger made a speech unto him, that King James saluted him with words of love and peace, and did accept of him as his friend and ally, and that our governor desired to see him and to truck with him, and to confirm a peace with him, as his next neighbor. He liked well of the speech and heard it attentively, though the interpreters did not well express it.

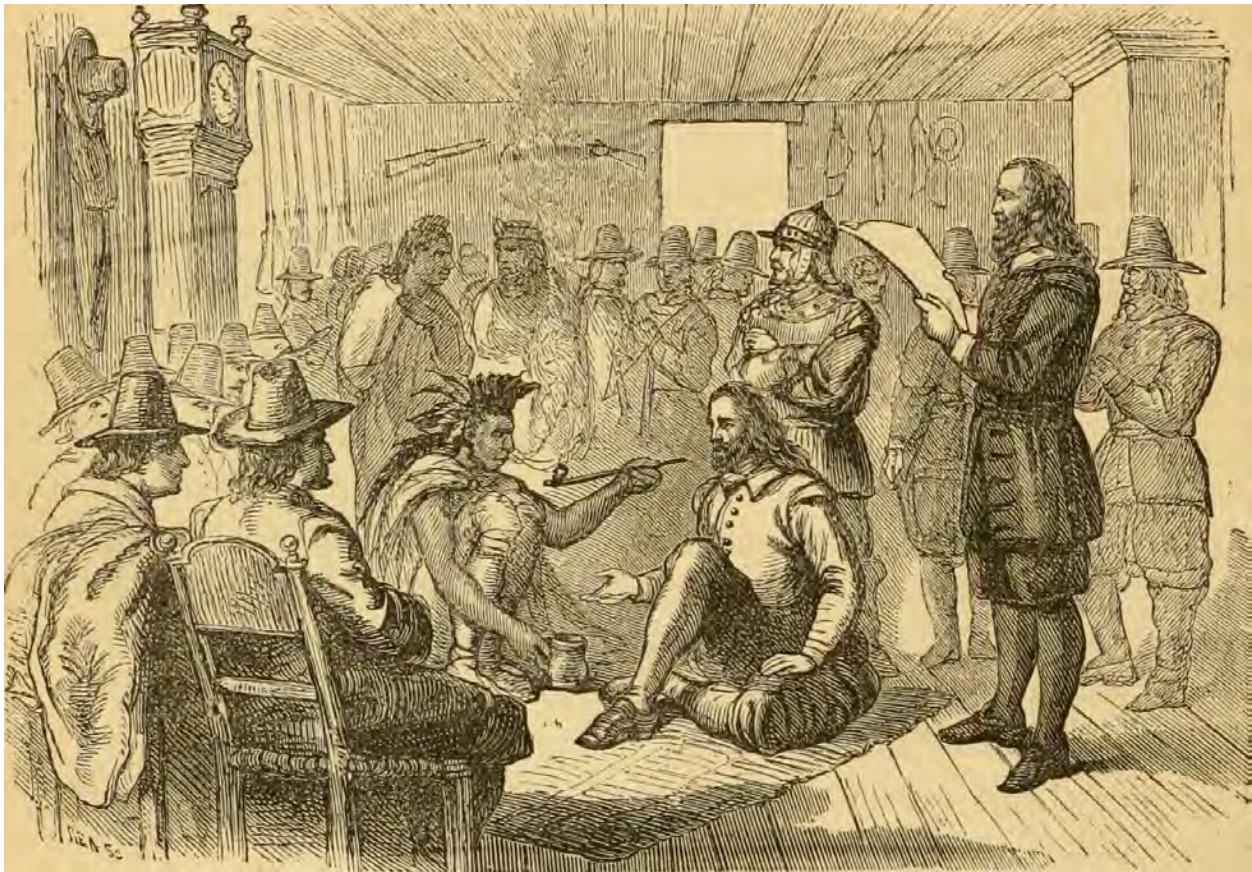
After he had eaten and drunk himself, and given the rest to his company, he looked upon our messenger's sword and armor, which he had on, with intimation of his desire to buy it, but on the other side, our messenger showed his unwillingness to part with it. In the end, he [Massasoit] left him [Winslow] in the custody of Quadequina his brother, and came over the brook, and some twenty men following him, leaving all their bows and arrows behind them.

We kept six or seven as hostages for our messenger; Captain Standish and Master Williamson [a misprint for Thomas Williams, d. March 1621 CE] met the king at the brook with a half dozen musketeers. They saluted him and he them, so one going over, the one on the one side, and the other on the other, conducted him to a house then in building, where we placed a green rug and three or four cushions.

Then instantly came our governor [John Carver] with drum and trumpet after him, and some few musketeers. After salutations, our governor kissing his hand, the king kissed him, and so they sat down. The governor called for some strong water, and drunk to him, and he drunk a great draught that made him sweat all the while after; he [Carver] called for a little fresh meat, which the king did eat willingly, and did give his followers.

Then they treated of peace, which was:

- That neither he nor any of his should injure or do hurt to any of our people.
- And if any of his did hurt to any of ours, he should send the offender, that we might punish him.
- That if any of our tools were taken away when our people were at work, he should cause them to be restored, and if ours did any harm to any of his, we would do the like to them.
- If any did unjustly war against him, we would aid him; if any did war against us, he should aid us.
- He should send to his neighbor confederates, to certify them of this, that they might not wrong us, but might be likewise comprised in the conditions of peace.
- That when their men came to us, they should leave their bows and arrows behind them, as we should do our pieces when we came to them.
- Lastly, that doing thus, King James would esteem of him as his friend and ally.



The Pilgrim-Wampanoag Peace Treaty between Plymouth Colony governor John Carver & Wampanoag chief Massasoit, 1621 CE.

All of which the king seemed to like well, and it was applauded of his followers...So after all was done, the governor conducted him to the brook, and there they embraced each other and he departed; we diligently keeping our hostages, we expected our messenger's coming, but anon, word was brought us that Quadequina was coming, and our messenger was stayed till his return, who presently came a troop with him, so likewise we entertained him, and conveyed him to the place prepared.

He was very fearful of our pieces [muskets], and made signs of dislike, that they should be carried away, whereupon commandment was given they should be laid away. He was a very proper tall young man, of a very modest and seemly countenance, and he did kindly like of our entertainment, so we conveyed him likewise as we did the king, but diverse of their people stayed still. When he was returned, then they dismissed our messenger...

The next morning, diverse of their people came over to us, hoping to get some victuals as we imagined; some of them told us the king would have some of us come see him. Captain Standish and Isaac Allerton went venturously, who were welcomed of him after their manner; he gave them three or four ground-nuts and some tobacco.

We cannot yet conceive but that he is willing to have peace with us, for they have seen our people sometimes alone two or three in the woods at work and fowling, when as they offered them no harm as they might easily have done, and especially because he [Massasoit] hath a potent adversary the Narragansetts, that are at war with him, against whom he thinks we may be some strength to him, for our pieces are terrible unto them. This morning they stayed till ten or eleven of the clock, and our governor bid them send the king's kettle, and filled it full of peas, which pleased them well, and so they went their way. (55-59)

The agreement, in which both parties promised to not "doe hurt" to one another, was the first treaty between a Native American tribe and a group of American colonists. According to the treaty, if a Wampanoag broke the peace, he would be sent to Plymouth for punishment; if a colonist broke the law, he would likewise be sent to the Wampanoags.

The peace treaty lasted for more than 50 years.

Thanksgiving

At the end of the 1621 summer, when harvest was in, Governor John Carver called for a special celebration. The colonists began to gather food for a traditional English "harvest home."

This festival was held throughout England at harvest's end to give thanks for the bounty and celebrate the end of the most intense period of work for farmers. The Pilgrims' celebration had a special poignancy, of course, as a counterpoint to years of terrible hardships and a testament to the creation of the kind of religious environment they desired. The Native Americans traditionally celebrated a harvest festival similar to the harvest home.

Turner said what most people do not know about the first Thanksgiving is that the Wampanoag and Pilgrims did not sit down for a big turkey dinner and it was not an event that the Wampanoag knew about or were invited to in advance. In September/October 1621, the Pilgrims had just harvested their first crops, and they had a good yield.

They "sent four men on fowling," which comes from the one paragraph account by Pilgrim Edward Winslow, one of only two historical sources of this famous harvest feast. Winslow also stated, "we exercised our arms." "Most historians believe what happened was Massasoit got word that there was a tremendous amount of gun fire coming from the Pilgrim village," Turner said. "So he thought they were being attacked and he was going to bear aid."



The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth" (1914) By Jennie A. Brownscombe

When the Wampanoag showed up, they were invited to join the Pilgrims in their feast, but there was not enough food to feed the chief and his 90 warriors.

“He [Massasoit] sends his men out, and they bring back five deer, which they present to the chief of the English town [William Bradford]. So, there is this whole ceremonial gift-giving, as well. When you give it as a gift, it is more than just food,” said Kathleen Wall, a Colonial Foodways Culinarian at Plimoth Plantation.

The harvest feast lasted for three days. What did they eat? Venison, of course, and Wall said, “Not just a lovely roasted joint of venison, but all the parts of the deer were on the table in who knows how many sorts of ways.”

The first Thanksgiving included a blessing on the harvest and thanks to God, but it was also a party rather than a serious religious meditation, with five or six days of recreation.

The invitation of the Wampanoag was not just about being neighborly; it was also to recognize the special role which the Native Americans played in ensuring the Pilgrims' survival.

Was there turkey? “Fowl” is mentioned in Winslow’s account, which puts turkey on Wall’s list of possibilities. She also said there probably would have been a variety of seafood and water fowl along with maize bread, pumpkin and other squashes. “It was nothing at all like a modern Thanksgiving,” she said.

King Philip's (Metacomet) War

The Pilgrim-Wampanoag alliance lasted about 50 years. After the death of Massasoit in 1662, his son Metacomet, who took the name King Philip (he was also called Metacom), began to push back against European encroachment.

New England colonists had lived in peace with the Native Americans. But then Plymouth Colony grabbed too much Indian land, subjected them to a humiliating peace treaty and hanged three Wampanoags.

In the course of King Philip's War (also called the First Indian War and Metacom's War), from 1675 to 1678, Native Americans raided more than half the European settlements from Connecticut to Maine. The colonists responded by forming an armed militia, the first in colonial history.

In the end, the Europeans prevailed. The systematic conquest of America's Indigenous peoples had begun in earnest.

As many as a thousand Indians were sold into slavery, and 5,000 were killed in battle, of sickness or starvation. Another 2,000 fled west or north. At the outset of the war, Indians comprised 30 percent of New England's population; by the end, they were down to 15 percent.

At the outset of King Philip's War, the Narragansetts had signed a treaty of neutrality with Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Knowing this, King Philip sent the women, children and infirm from warring tribes to safety with the Narragansetts.

But a 1,000-man militia from three colonies – Plymouth, Massachusetts and Connecticut – invaded Rhode Island and massacred the Narragansett winter settlement in the Great Swamp, now South Kingstown. Seven hundred Indian men, women and children died in agony. Metacom was killed by militia in 1676.

The Narragansetts had no choice but to go to war. The Narragansett sachem Canonchet assembled an army that attacked towns in Central Massachusetts, Rhode Island and, finally, Providence.

King Philip's War devastated New England. Plymouth Colony lost 8 percent of its adult male population. Compare that to the Civil War, in which less than 5 percent of the country's men died.

The New England economy suffered, and it would take a century before per capita income rose to its level before the war.

Before the bloodshed, there had been about 100 towns in New England; afterward, only about 65, the rest having been burned or abandoned.

No U.S. war was as catastrophic as King Philip's War. That conflict left some 5,000 inhabitants of New England dead, three quarters of those Native Americans.

In terms of percentage of population killed, King Philip's War was more than twice as costly as the American Civil War and seven times more so than the American Revolution.

Pilgrims After the Initial Years

Repressive policies toward religious nonconformists in England under King James I and his successor, Charles I, had driven many men and women to follow the Pilgrims' path to the New World.

Three more ships traveled to Plymouth after the Mayflower, including the Fortune (1621), the Anne and the Little James (both 1623). In 1630, a group of some 1,000 Puritan refugees under Governor John Winthrop settled in Massachusetts according to a charter obtained from King Charles I by the Massachusetts Bay Company.

Winthrop soon established Boston as the capital of Massachusetts Bay Colony, which would become the most populous and prosperous colony in the region.

Compared with later groups who founded colonies in New England, such as the Puritans, the Pilgrims of Plymouth failed to achieve lasting economic success. After the early 1630s, some prominent members of the original group, including Brewster, Winslow and Standish, left the colony to found their own communities.

The cost of fighting King Philip's War further damaged the colony's struggling economy. Less than a decade after the war King James II appointed a colonial governor to rule over New England, and in 1692, Plymouth was absorbed into the larger entity of Massachusetts.

Bradford and the other Plymouth settlers were not originally known as Pilgrims, but as "Old Comers." This changed after the discovery of a manuscript by Bradford in which he called the settlers who left Holland "saints" and "pilgrimes."

In 1820, at a bicentennial celebration of the colony's founding, the orator Daniel Webster referred to "Pilgrim Fathers," and the term stuck.

There are About 35-million Mayflower Descendants

The Mayflower set sail from Plymouth, England, in September 1620 with approximately 130 people on board: 102 passengers, the rest crew. Of the 102 passengers, there were 50 men, 19 women and 33 young adults and children.

Today, we often refer to the colonists who crossed the Atlantic on the Mayflower as "Pilgrims." Just 41 were true Pilgrims, religious separatists seeking freedom from the Church of England.

They called themselves "Saints" - who hoped to establish a new church in the New World. The others were considered common folk and included merchants, craftsmen, indentured servants and orphaned children—the Pilgrims called them "strangers."

These "strangers" had their own reasons for joining the journey, and didn't share the goal of separating from the Church of England.

Most estimates place the number of descendants alive today at around 35-million. By way of comparison, the combined population of the six New England states is just shy of 15-million. The population of the entire United States is a bit more than 328-million.

The General Society of Mayflower Descendants lists 51 possible Mayflower ancestors. All the known Mayflower descendants alive today can trace their lineage to one or more of the following:

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| John Alden | Francis Cooke | Priscilla Mullins |
| Bartholomew Allerton | John Cooke | William Mullins |
| Isaac Allerton | Edward Doty | Degory Priest |
| Mary (Norris) Allerton | Francis Eaton | Joseph Rogers |
| Mary Allerton | Samuel Eaton | Thomas Rogers |
| Remember Allerton | Sarah () Eaton | Henry Samson |
| Elinor Billington | Moses Fletcher | George Soule |
| Francis Billington | Edward Fuller | Myles Standish |
| John Billington | Mrs. Edward Fuller | Elizabeth Tilley |
| William Bradford | Samuel Fuller | John Tilley |
| Love Brewster | Samuel Fuller (son of Edward) | Joan (Hurst) Tilley |
| Mary () Brewster | Constance Hopkins | Richard Warren |
| William Brewster | Elizabeth (Fisher) Hopkins | Peregrine White |
| Peter Browne | Giles Hopkins | Resolved White |
| James Chilton | Stephen Hopkins | Susanna (Jackson) White |
| Mrs. James Chilton | John Howland | William White |
| Mary Chilton | Richard More | Edward Winslow |

Here are some Mayflower descendants: Ulysses S. Grant, James A. Garfield, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Orson Welles, Marilyn Monroe, Hugh Hefner, George W. Bush, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Helen Keller, Robert Frost, Lizzie Borden, Sarah Palin, Ernest Hemingway, General George S. Patton, Barbara Bush, Julia Child, Jesse James, Humphrey Bogart, Jane Fonda, Commodore Matthew Perry, Orville and Wilbur Wright, Alan Shepard, Bette Davis, Grandma Moses, John Adams, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Bing Crosby, Katharine Hepburn, George Eastman, Clint Eastwood, Noah Webster ...

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Changing Time

(Then, they used the Julian Calendar; today, we use the Gregorian Calendar – it is different by 10-days)

Dates matter – and we need to keep in mind that how we measure time, particularly how we note specific dates, changed between the time of the Mayflower and today.

The Pilgrims were using the Julian Calendar, which is 10 days behind the Gregorian Calendar that we use today. So, when they wrote a date down it related to the Julian Calendar, which are not the same dates that we use today (under the Gregorian Calendar).

As an example, the Mayflower Compact was signed on November 11, 1620 under the Julian Calendar (their time), which is now referenced as November 21, 1620 under the Gregorian calendar (our time.)

Calendars

Throughout history there have been numerous attempts to convey time in relation to the sun and moon. Even now the Chinese and Islamic calendars are based on the motion of the moon around the earth, rather than the motion of the earth in relation to the sun, and the Jewish calendar links years to the cycle of the sun and months to the cycle of the moon.

Today, Americans are used to a calendar with a “year” based the earth’s rotation around the sun, with “months” having no relationship to the cycles of the moon and New Year’s Day falling on January 1. However, that system was not adopted in England and its colonies until 1752.

The changes implemented that year have created challenges for historians and genealogists working with early colonial records, since it is sometimes hard to determine whether information was entered according to the then-current English calendar or the “New Style” calendar we use today.

Julian Calendar

In 45 B.C., Julius Caesar ordered a calendar consisting of twelve months based on a solar year. This calendar employed a cycle of three years of 365 days, followed by a year of 366 days (leap year). When first implemented, the ‘Julian Calendar’ also moved the beginning of the year from March 1 to January 1.

However, following the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, the new year was gradually realigned to coincide with Christian festivals until by the seventh century, Christmas Day marked the beginning of the new year in many countries.

By the ninth century, parts of southern Europe began observing first day of the new year on March 25 to coincide with Annunciation Day (the church holiday nine months prior to Christmas celebrating the Angel Gabriel’s revelation to the Virgin Mary that she was to be the mother of the Messiah). The last day of the year was March 24. However, England did not adopt this change in the beginning of the new year until late in the twelfth century.

Because the year began in March, records referring to the “first month” pertain to March; to the second month pertain to April, etc., so that “the 19th of the 12th month” would be February 19.

In fact, in Latin, September means seventh month, October means eighth month, November means ninth month, and December means tenth month. Use of numbers, rather than names, of months was especially prevalent in Quaker records.

Gregorian Calendar

During the Middle Ages, it became apparent that the Julian leap year formula had overcompensated for the actual length of a solar year, having added an extra day every 128 years. However, no adjustments were made to compensate.

By 1582, seasonal equinoxes were falling 10 days “too early,” and some church holidays, such as Easter, did not always fall in the proper seasons. In that year, Pope Gregory XIII authorized, and most Roman Catholic countries adopted, the “Gregorian” or “New Style” Calendar.

As part of the change, ten days were dropped from the month of October, and the formula for determining leap years was revised so that only years divisible by 400 (e.g., 1600, 2000) at the end of a century would be leap years. January 1 was established as the first day of the new year. Protestant countries, including England and its colonies, not recognizing the authority of the Pope, continued to use the Julian Calendar.

Time of Two Calendars and Double Dating

Between 1582 and 1752, not only were two calendars in use in Europe (and in European colonies), but two different starts of the year were in use in England. Although the “Legal” year began on March 25, the use of the Gregorian calendar by other European countries led to January 1 becoming commonly celebrated as “New Year’s Day” and given as the first day of the year in almanacs.

To avoid misinterpretation, both the “Old Style” and “New Style” year was often used in English and colonial records for dates falling between the new New Year (January 1) and old New Year (March 25), a system known as “double dating.”

Such dates are usually identified by a slash mark [/] breaking the “Old Style” and “New Style” year, for example, March 19, 1631/2. Occasionally, writers would express the double date with a hyphen, for example, March 19, 1631-32. In general, double dating was more common in civil than church and ecclesiastical records.

Changes of 1752

In accordance with a 1750 act of Parliament, England and its colonies changed calendars in 1752. By that time, the discrepancy between a solar year and the Julian Calendar had grown by an additional day, so that the calendar used in England and its colonies was 11 days out-of-sync with the Gregorian Calendar in use in most other parts of Europe.

England’s calendar change included three major components. The Julian Calendar was replaced by the Gregorian Calendar, changing the formula for calculating leap years. The beginning of the legal new year was moved from March 25 to January 1. Finally, 11 days were dropped from the month of September 1752. The changeover involved a series of steps:

- December 31, 1750 was followed by January 1, 1750 (under the “Old Style” calendar, December was the 10th month and January the 11th)
- March 24, 1750 was followed by March 25, 1751 (March 25 was the first day of the “Old Style” year)
- December 31, 1751 was followed by January 1, 1752 (the switch from March 25 to January 1 as the first day of the year)
- September 2, 1752 was followed by September 14, 1752 (drop of 11 days to conform to the Gregorian calendar) (CT State Library)