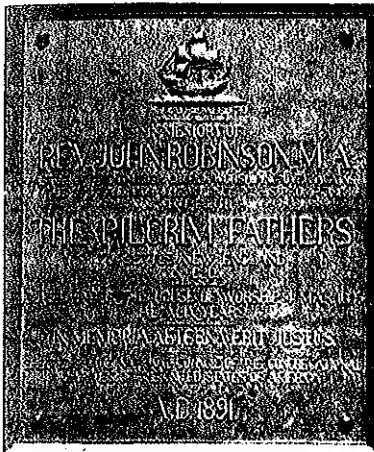


# 13 The Mayflower: Saints and Strangers



The plaque at St. Peter's Church in Leyden, Holland, put up in memory of the *Mayflower* Pilgrims who once worshiped there.

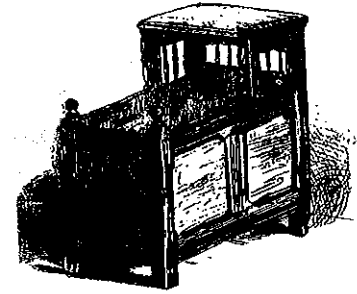
The times were religious—and angry. To understand them we need to review some English history. Remember King Henry VIII? He was the father of Queen Elizabeth. King Henry tossed the Catholic Church out of England long before Jamestown got started. Why Henry did that is an interesting story, but you'll have to look up the details yourself. It had something to do with King Henry's wanting to get married again, and again, and again, and—whew—he had a lot of energy.

The head of the Catholic Church, the Pope, didn't approve of all that marrying. So King Henry founded the Church of England (which is sometimes called the Anglican Church) and made himself its leader.

By the 17th century most English men and women belonged to that church. (As they still do.) It was called the "established church" because it was linked to the government. Since he was king, James was head of the Church of England. The man who actually ran the church was called the Archbishop of Canterbury, and he was appointed by the king.

The Pope lived in Rome in a great palace called the Vatican. That was, and is, the control center for the entire Roman Catholic Church. The Pope is elected by bishops of the Catholic Church.

Except for that matter of control and leadership, the Anglicans and Catholics were much alike, although they didn't think so and often hated and persecuted each other. As I said, the times were



In December 1620 the *Mayflower* was anchored in Cape Cod harbor. Before the Pilgrims disembarked for good at Plymouth, Mistress Susanna White gave birth on board the ship to the first English baby born in New England, a boy whom she named Peregrine (PAIR-uh-grin). Here is his cradle.

**John Smith** offered to hire himself out to the Pilgrims as their guide. They told him his book was "better cheap" than he was.

### Changing Times

**J**ames I brought "new ideas, new goings, new measures, new paces, new heads for your men, for women new faces," according to a poem of the times. It was a time of increasing lawlessness, of new riches for some, of poverty for others. There was growing interest in individual rights; less in community values. People began to focus on material riches rather than religion. All that was confusing and disturbing to many. Have you heard people you know complain about politics and government and the times? The Pilgrims didn't like the politics of their England, so they left.

not only religious, but also intolerant. People took their differences very seriously. Wars were fought over them.

Some Englishmen wanted the differences between Catholics and Protestants to be greater. They felt that King Henry VIII didn't go far enough when he outlawed the Catholic Church. They didn't want the Anglican church service to be at all like the Catholic service. They said they wanted to "purify" the Church of England, so they were called Puritans.

Others wanted to go even further. They believed people could speak directly to God without a priest or bishop at all. They wanted to separate themselves from the Church of England and form congregations of their own. They called themselves "Saints." Other people called them "Separatists." Some people called them troublemakers.

King James would not let the Separatists practice their religion. They had to go to the Church of England or go to jail. Their religion was more important to them than their homes—and sometimes than life itself. Some of the Separatists, especially a group from a village in northeast England called Scrooby, decided to move to Holland, where they were promised religious freedom.

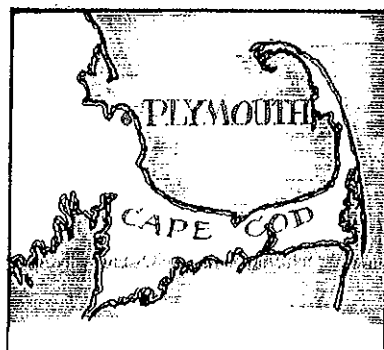
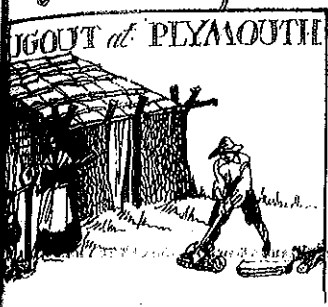
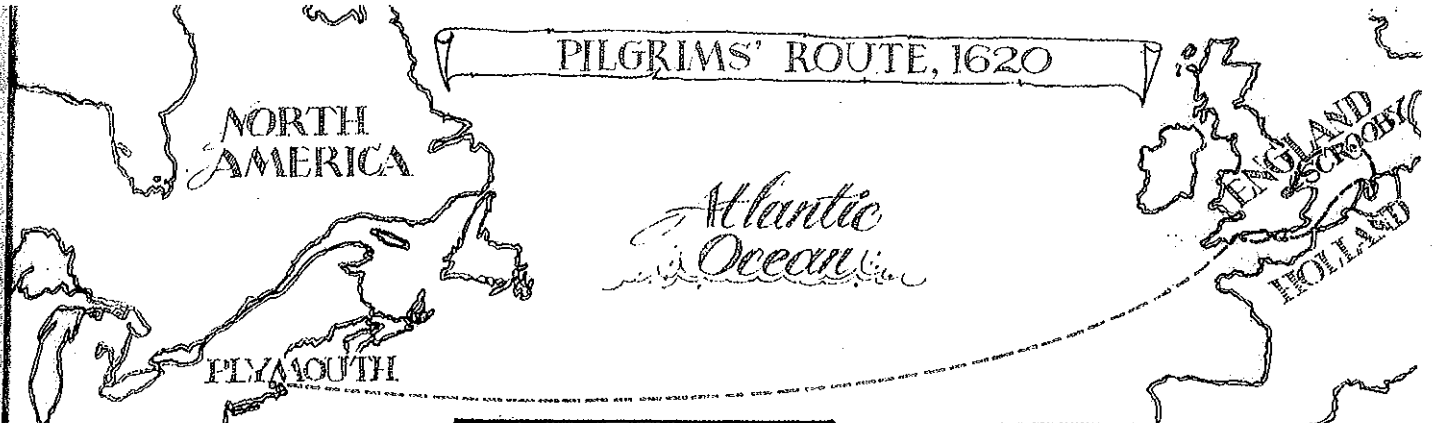
And they got religious freedom in Holland—but they didn't feel at home with the Dutch. They were English, and they liked their own customs and language and villages. When their children started

speaking Dutch and forgetting English ways, the people from Scrooby decided it was time to move again. They read John Smith's book, *Description of New England*, and they said, "This time to America."

Anyone who takes a trip for religious purposes is a *pilgrim*. So now these Scrooby people who were called Separatists or Saints had a new name: Pilgrims. They were the first of many, many boatloads of pilgrims who would

**The Pilgrims in Holland board ship at Leyden for the first leg of their journey to religious freedom in the New World.**





come to America to be free to believe whatever they wanted to believe. They, however, were pilgrims with a capital P: *the Pilgrims*.

The year is 1620. The boat they take is named the *Mayflower*. Of the 102 on board, only about half are Saints; the Scrooby people call the others "Strangers." The Strangers are leaving England for adventure, or because they are unhappy or in trouble. Saints and Strangers have many things in common. Most are from the lower classes; most have a trade; they expect to work hard; they are ambitious; and they can't stand the new ideas that are changing England. All want a better life, but the Saints hope to build a society more perfect than any on earth.

Among the Strangers are 10 indentured servants, a professional soldier, a barrelmaker, four orphans indentured, or "bound," to work without pay until they are 21, and a man soon to be convicted of murder.

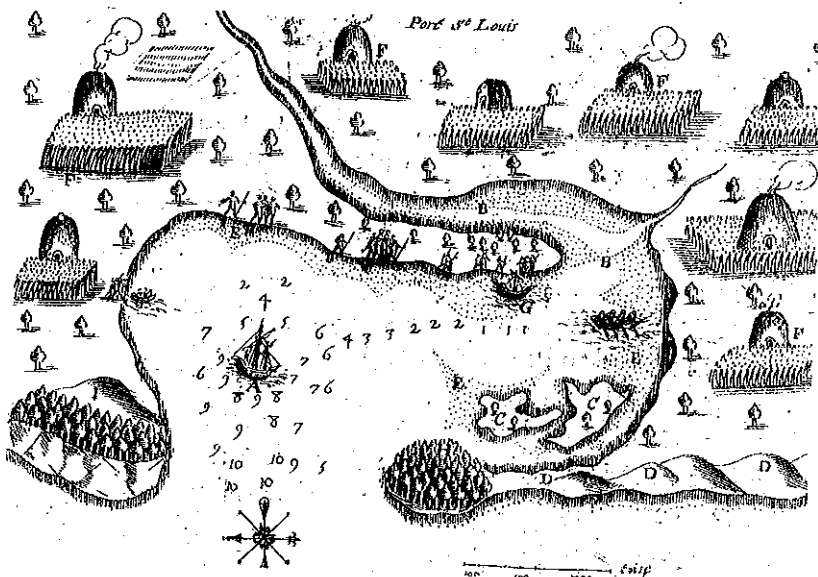
Among the Saints is William Bradford, who will be elected as the colony's second governor and will write their story.

It is a terrible voyage, taking 66 days. The ship is small, wet, and foul. The smells are horrid. There is no place to change or wash clothes. Each adult is assigned a space below deck measuring seven by two and a half feet. Children get even less room. None of the passengers is allowed on deck; there is little fresh air below and many are sick. Fresh food soon runs out and then there is hard bread and dried meat that is wet and moldy. But the Pilgrims have onions, lemon juice, and beer to keep them from getting the dreaded scurvy. Amazingly, only one person dies. He is replaced on the roster by a

**The word** *indentured* originally came from the paper that the contract between master and servant was written on. After they signed it, the paper was torn in half, so that each piece had an *indentation* that fitted into the other piece. The master kept one piece and the servant kept the other. That was the proof of their agreement.

*Scurvy* is a disease resulting from lack of vitamin C. It makes people bleed easily and causes their teeth to fall out.

## A HISTORY OF US



The Pilgrims weren't the first Europeans to land at Plymouth Bay. Fishermen, trappers, and explorers, such as the Frenchman Samuel de Champlain, had been there before. Champlain drew this map, showing the Patuxet Indians' villages, in 1605.

**Although** the *Mayflower* was cramped and uncomfortable, one thing about it was an improvement over many ships. The *Mayflower* had carried wine barrels, and the hold smelled of the wine that had leaked out. Most 17th-century ships stank of garbage.

there are matters to attend to. There has been trouble between Saints and Strangers, and it needs to be settled. They must live together peacefully. They need rules and laws and leaders. So they draw up a plan of government, the Mayflower Compact, which establishes a governing body:

*to enact, constitute, and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, offices...for the general good of the Colony; unto which, we promise all due submission and obedience.*

That Mayflower Compact is one of the great documents of American history. Here is a group of settlers able to govern themselves; reasonable people who agree to live together under a government of laws. The king doesn't realize what is in the future. This breed of people will not allow others to rule them for long.

Then, wrote Bradford, "being thus arrived in a good harbor, and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven who had brought them over the vast and furious ocean."

When they land, they find empty fields cleared for planting. They will learn that smallpox, caught from white fishermen, has wiped out many of New England's Indians. The Pilgrims believe that God has made the land theirs for the taking.

But it is December—too late to plant crops. Many will hunger and die before spring comes. Fewer than half of the 102 who land will survive the first winter. But no one wants to return to England. These are sturdy folk who intend to start a nation. William Bradford writes of the colony "as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many, yea in some sort to our whole nation."

baby born at sea, Oceanus (oh-shee-ANN-us) Hopkins. Another child, Peregrine White, is born just before they dock.

When they first sight American land, it is at Cape Cod. They planned to go to Virginia, but they are exhausted. Bradford describes Cape Cod as a "hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and men." They sail around the cape to a place they see on Smith's map. He has called it Plymouth, after a town in England.

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