

By our senior chronicler
in Plymouth Colony
March 19, 1621

THANKS TO GOD'S mercy, our colony has survived the last winter in the fellowship of the Gospel, free to worship as we wish. Since arriving off Cape Cod from England, death has been everywhere, claiming the lives of about half the 102 souls who completed the voyage on our sailing ship, *Mayflower*. The wife of William Bradford, one of our leaders, was among them. Mercifully, others—including some women and most children—have been left untouched by illness.

We have chosen to make Plymouth our new coastal home. Exhausted and desperate, we found it impossible to continue our search for a better place to settle. Although the harbor is shallow, there is plentiful clean spring water.

It was not our plan to make for Cape Cod Bay, where Plymouth is located, as it was north of our intended destination.

Plymouth is named on a map, recently published by Captain John Smith, who explored the New England coast. It is coincidence that it is also the name of the English port from where we set sail for North America. Our new home is on the site of the former Wampanoag village of Patuxet. The Native people of Patuxet and other nearby villages were wiped out by an epidemic known as “the great dying.”

We have erected wooden dwellings for shelter against the winter. For now, we are farming in common, but we know we will receive land eventually.

We have use of the land but do not fully own it. Our colony is co-owned by merchants in London, and we must wait seven years and pay off our debts before we can be sole owners and expand to settle other places.

Each of us has brought enough supplies to survive for a year, including clothing, tools,

ENGLISH PLANT COLONY, CLEARLY MEAN TO STAY...



household implements, and food. The men have muskets and swords.

We are concerned about threats from Native people, and have built a fort on a hill for our guns. With commanding views across the plain

and the bay, it provides some basic protection.

Despite our fears, we are not without Native allies. A few days ago, a Native man called Samoset marched into the settlement and bade us welcome in English!

FOUNDED IN 1947 by Boston financier and archeologist Henry Hornblower II, Plimoth Plantation is a “living history” museum. The Wampanoag Homesite focuses on the ancient traditions and cultural survival of the region’s Native people. In the 17th-century English Village, role-players represent the lives of actual residents of early Plymouth by speaking, acting, and dressing in the style of the 1620s. Museum exhibits also include *Mayflower*, a full-scale reproduction of the ship that brought the Pilgrims in 1620, and the Plimoth Grist Mill, a working, water-powered mill.