

# William Bradford

1590-1657



# William Bradford

- Born in 1590 in Yorkshire, England.
- Orphaned both from parents and grandparents, he and older sister Alice were raised by their uncle Robert Bradford.



# William Bradford

- Bradford, at the age of 18, joined with the group of Separatists that fled from England in fear of persecution, arriving in Amsterdam in 1608.



# William Bradford

- Bradford migrated to Holland with the rest of the group and lived 11 years in Leiden.





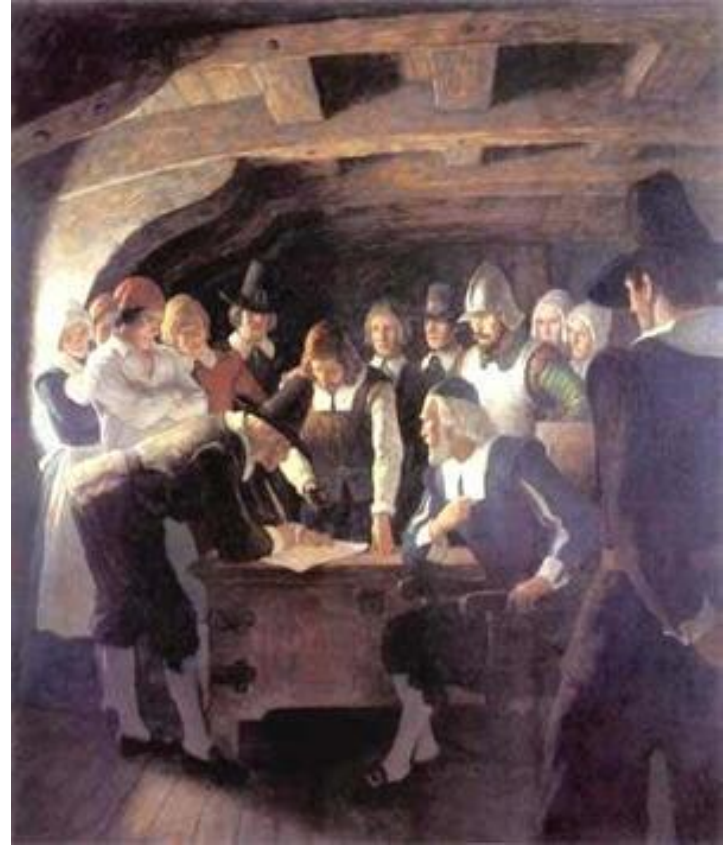


- In 1620 he helped organize the Mayflower's expedition to the New World.



# Plymouth Colony

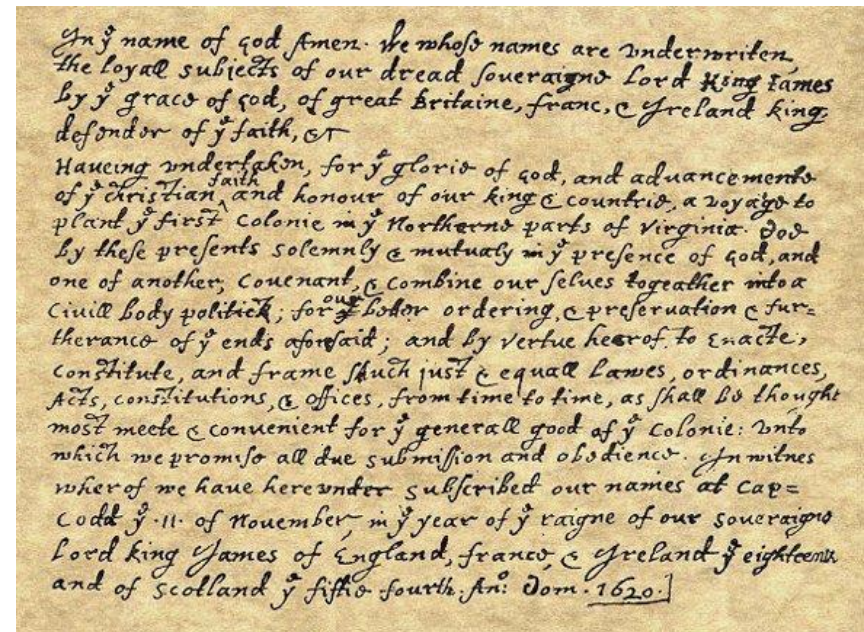
- To bind the group into a political body, Bradford helped draft the important *Mayflower Compact* en route to America.





# Mayflower Compact

- Earliest document of democracy in America.
  - Lays the foundation for direct popular government.
- Drawn up for the general good by mutual agreement of the majority of the people.



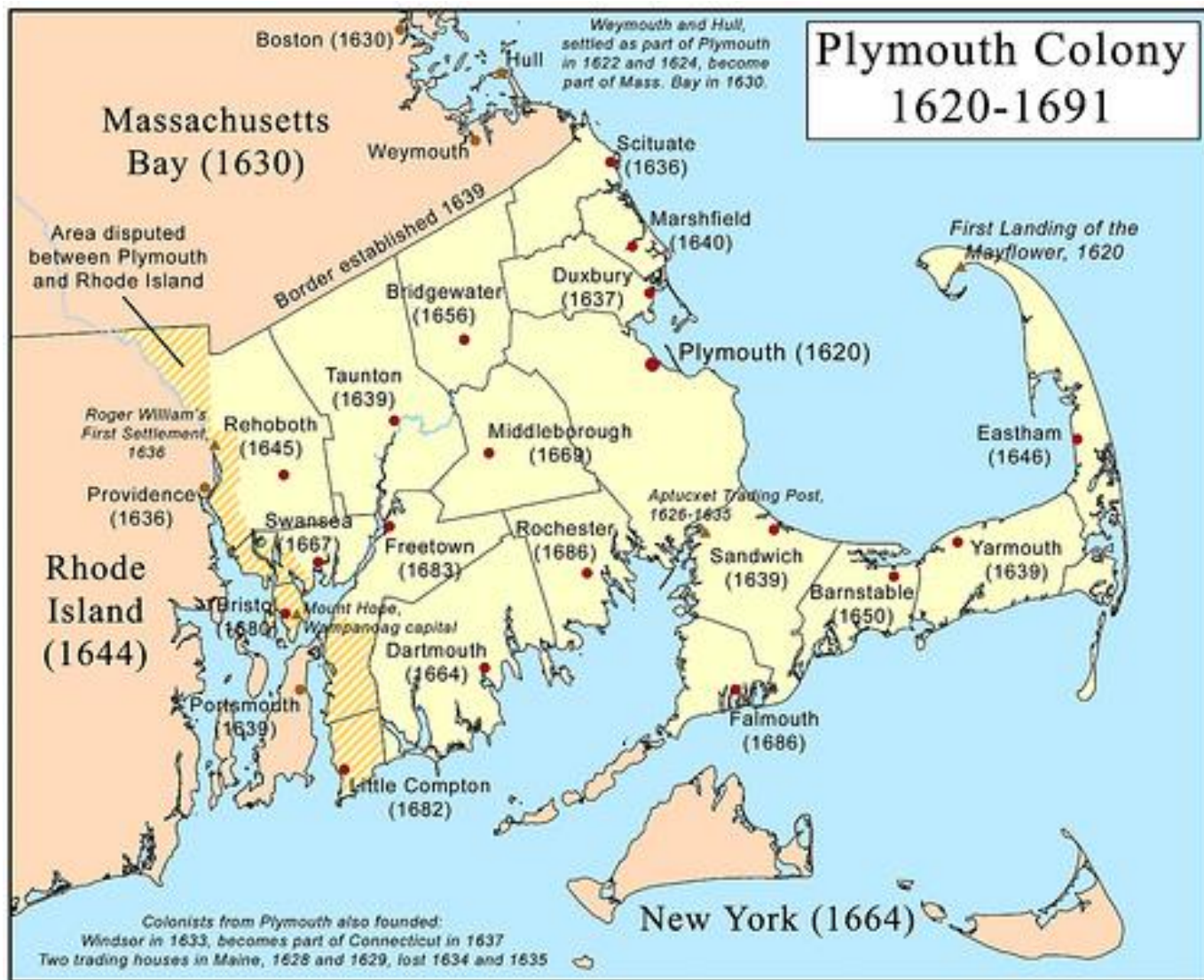
In y<sup>e</sup> name of god Amen. We whose names are Underwritten,  
the loyal subjects of our dread soueraigne Lord King James  
by y<sup>e</sup> graco of god, of great Britaine, franc, & Ireland King,  
defendor of y<sup>e</sup> faith, &c  
Hauing undertaken, for y<sup>e</sup> glorio of god, and aduancement  
of y<sup>e</sup> christian, and honour of our king & countrey, a voyage to  
plant y<sup>e</sup> first Colonie in y<sup>e</sup> Northern parts of Virginia. Do  
by these presents solemnly & mutually in y<sup>e</sup> presence of god, and  
one of another, Couenant, & Combine our selues together into a  
Ciwill body politicke; for y<sup>e</sup> better ordering, & preservation & fur-  
therance of y<sup>e</sup> 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 & conuenient for y<sup>e</sup> generall good of y<sup>e</sup> Colonie: vnto  
which we promise all due submission and obedienc. In witness  
whereof we haue herevnder subscribed our names at Cap-  
Codd y<sup>e</sup> 11. of Nouember, in y<sup>e</sup> year of y<sup>e</sup> raigne of our soueraigne  
Lord King James of England, franc, & Ireland y<sup>e</sup> eighteenth  
and of Scotland y<sup>e</sup> fifth. fourth. An<sup>o</sup>. Dom. 1620.]



# Plymouth Colony (cont.)

- Bradford helped select the site for the new colony.
- In 1621, after the colony's first, disastrous winter, he was unanimously elected governor,
  - served in that position for some 30 years between 1621 and 1656





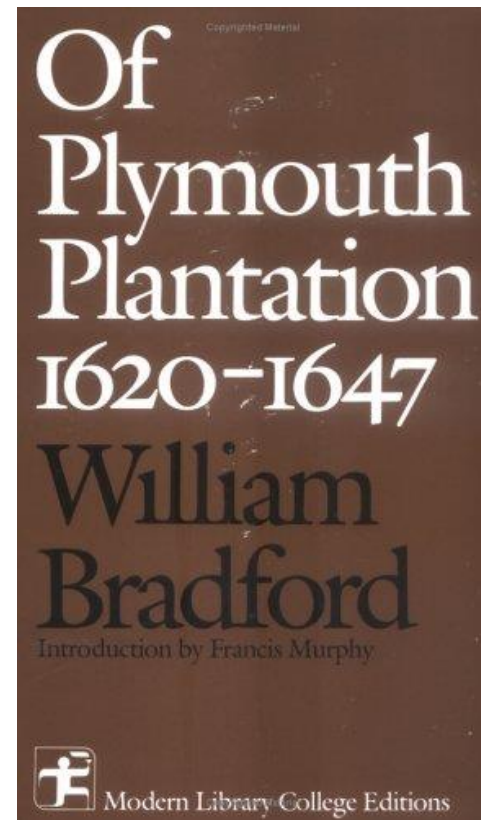
# Of Plymouth Plantation

- Began writing *Of Plymouth Plantation* in 1630 and continued the project until 1647.
  - As an account of the Pilgrims, it is a major historical and literary achievement of the time.
    - Still the primary source of information about the Plymouth settlement.



# Of Plymouth Plantation (cont.)

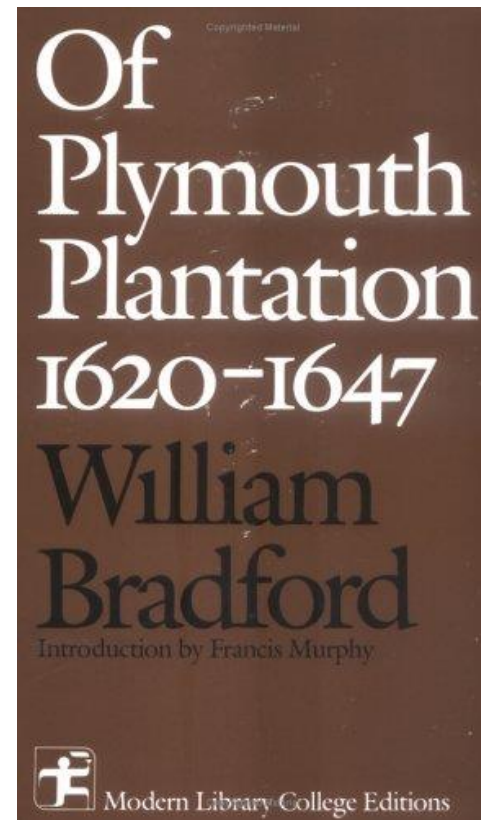
- Eyewitness accounts of happenings.
- Considered to be a trustworthy narrator.
  - Avowed his purpose to write *“in a plain style, with singular regard unto the simple truth in all things.”*





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# Of Plymouth Plantation

- Written in plain, simple style now known as the “Puritan” style.
- Recounts the hardships and triumphs of the Pilgrims in the New World.
- Shows Puritan belief that one should be happy for what one has, regardless of how difficult the circumstances are.

# Themes in OPP

- concept of community pervades the entire text
- relationship between sacred and secular history
- cycles of disappointment and success
- resolve, sadness, and humility



# Of Plymouth Plantation

- Not published in Bradford's lifetime.
  - Passed down through family
  - Lost during Revolutionary War
  - Reappeared nearly a century later in England
  - Published for first time by Massachusetts Historical Society in 1856.