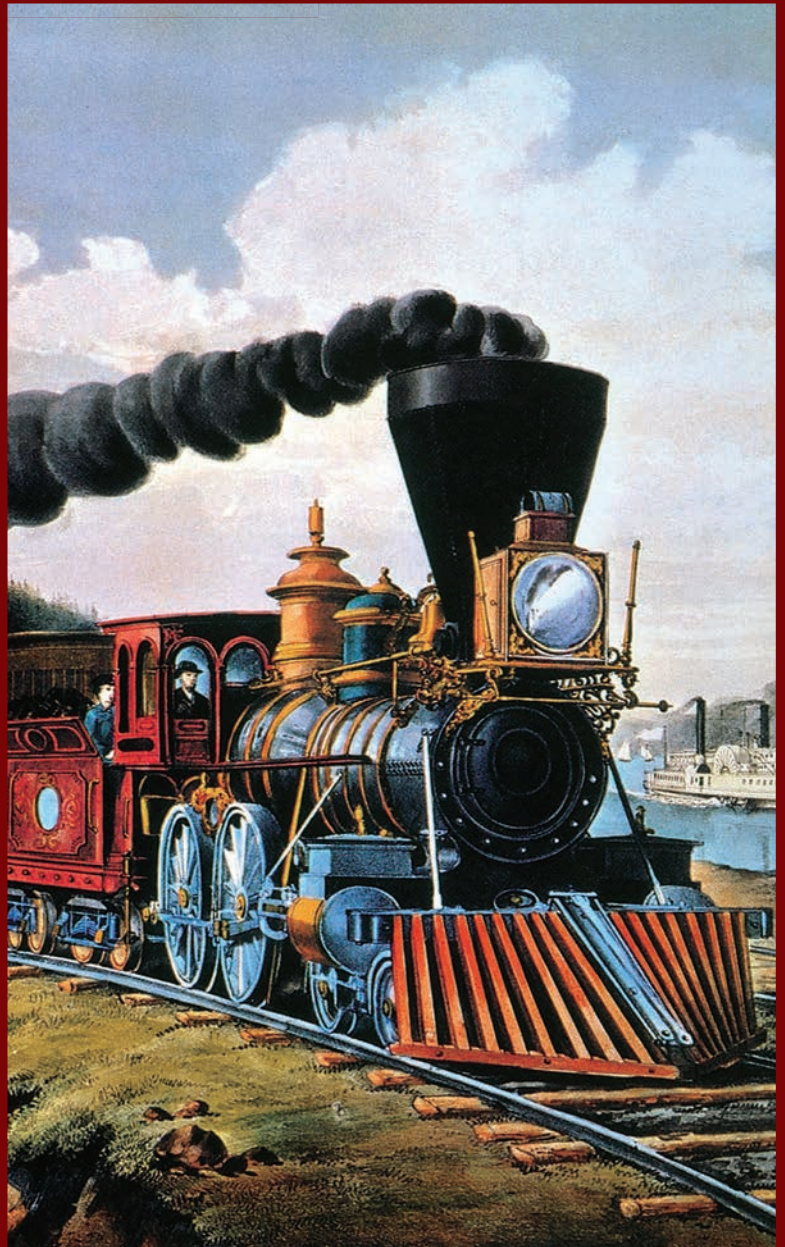


FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

THE LANDMARK HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

From Plymouth to the West

Volume I



By Daniel J. Boorstin with Ruth F. Boorstin



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The *Mayflower* had been traveling from England for more than two months. It dropped anchor at the tip of Cape Cod, in what we now know as Massachusetts, in late November of 1620. It was rainy and temperatures soon fell below freezing. Cape Cod was soon covered in snow. Despite the cold and damp, several women determined to do their laundry on land. In this hand-colored wood engraving, made more than 200 years after the event, the artist seems to have portrayed the weather as far more pleasant than it was.

No passengers actually moved ashore from the *Mayflower* until the end of March 1621—four months after they first landed. By that time, almost half of those who had boarded in England—49 of 102 passengers—had died.

Would the 53 surviving passengers make it through their first summer in the new land . . . and a second winter?

Part 1

An Assortment of Plantations

Some of the first colonists came to America to build a bright future for their children and their children's children. Others came simply to escape trouble. Some poor people came because a few rich men in London thought the new country would do them good. Some colonists hoped to become wealthy. Others hoped to find protection from harm. All of them eventually called themselves Americans.

In the earliest days, settlers called the places they lived "plantations." That made sense. A "plant" was a shoot that had been cut from a growing shrub or tree. A farmer would take that shoot, stick it in the ground somewhere else, and hope it would grow. The American plantations were European cuttings. They were set to grow in soil 3,000 miles away from Europe across the Atlantic Ocean.

The English planted people all over the world. They planted people in America, of course. But they also planted people in India, Asia, Africa, and Australia, too. Just as with farmers' plants, these English plantations did not always thrive.



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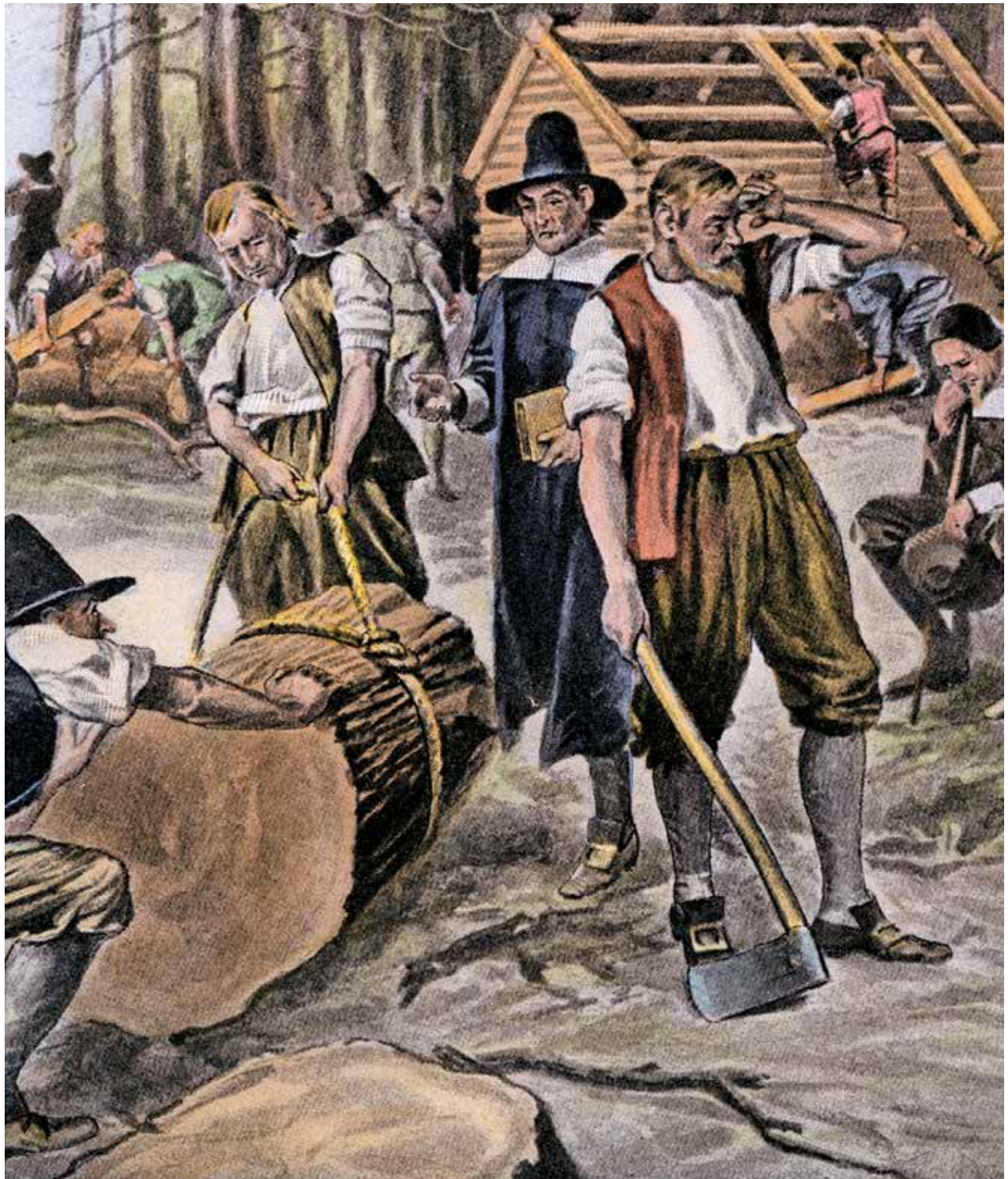
How well a plantation grew depended on many things. The climate, soil, animals and native peoples affected them. But the biggest impact came from how the settlers planned. What did they plan? And how quickly did they learn what they needed to survive?

How well a plantation grew also depended on good old-fashioned luck . . . or providence.

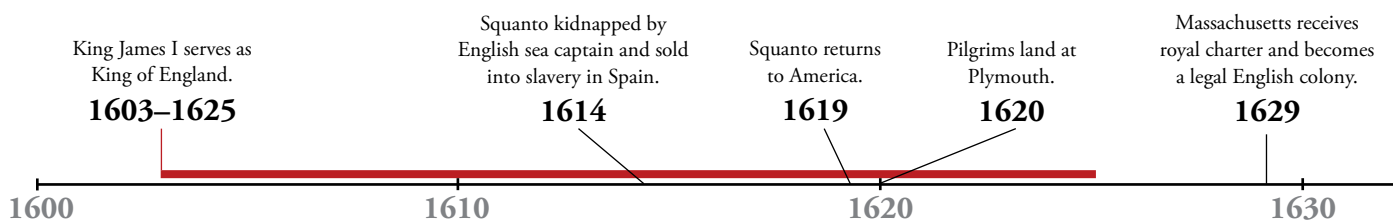
In America, most people made plans to stay and to succeed. They learned what they needed to survive. And they enjoyed some very good luck, indeed.



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Pilgrims cutting forests and building houses at Plymouth Colony.



Chapter 1

Massachusetts—The Puritans: Love God and Fight the Devil

In the early 1600s, America was a land of mystery. And the mystery was greater than most people knew. Many people's ideas about America came from advertisements. And the men who wrote the advertisements were usually more interested in making money than in telling the truth.

The advertisers had bought land in America. The land cost them very little. But they knew that if they could get people to come to America, the newcomers would create cities. They would build roads. They would develop farms and mines. And as they did all of these things, more people would likely come. And as all of these people came to America, the investors' wilderness properties would become very valuable. And then the investors would become rich.

There was just one problem.



Massachusetts Colony.



In this picture from the 1600s, Virginia was an earthly paradise. Finding fish and game for your table was not hard work. It was simply good sport.

To sell their land, the promoters had to give people reasons to move. But the investors themselves had never been to America. And they didn't know the facts. So they made up stories.

Come to the American Paradise!

The weather in America is always sunny.

The oranges, lemons, apples, pears, peaches, and apricots are "so delicious that whoever tastes them will despise the . . . watery taste of those we have in England."

The meat of American animals is so juicy, you will barely recognize it.

The fish are large and easy to catch.

In America, there are no diseases and no crowds.

Everybody stays young.

Everybody can live like a king.

If people asked whether these claims were true, no one could say. People heard of strange animals in

Harvard College, first North American college, founded.

1636

Pequot attack and retribution. More than 500 Pequot die.

1636

Puritan John Eliot finishes Algonquian translation of Bible.

1661

1640

1650

1660

1670

America—animals like the raccoon, the opossum, and the cougar. These animals seemed so strange that many people figured they must be like unicorns, dragons and other mythical beasts. They figured the animals couldn't possibly be real. When Europeans heard about "red-skinned" men and women, they figured these people's skin must be red because of sunburn or dyes.

Potential travelers to America wanted to know what these Indians were like. Were they friendly? Would they be helpful? The stories they heard were not encouraging. "They're savages," some people said. "They don't just kill their enemies. They torture, skin and eat them."¹ So, people heard stories of a wonderful land that offered riches and pleasures beyond imagination. But they also heard horrifying stories about life in America.

No one even had a good idea how North America was shaped. Maps had few details—fewer than we have today about the planet Mars. And the details the maps included were often wrong.

No one even knew how wide the American continent was. Some early explorers thought the rivers and lakes

1) No one has been able to confirm any of the stories about native tribes in North America skinning and eating victims. A few tribes did torture enemy prisoners, but these tribes were in the plains region; they did not live near the coast—which was where colonists remained for well over a hundred years.



The European view of how they would be welcomed by native Americans.

near the Atlantic seacoast might lead to China and India.

With all the confusion and bad information, it was difficult to imagine emigrating to America. You needed strong dreams and goals to encourage you when times got tough. And you needed unending self-confidence, too. You needed a sense that you could succeed no matter what.

In the late 1500s and early 1600s, a group of people in England read the Bible and decided that God was talking to them. He was telling them to practice a purer form of religion than what the national church taught. The national religious leaders persecuted them for their beliefs. The leaders mocked these people with names like "Puritan." ("You are trying to be *too* pure!") They also called them "Separatists." ("You are being foolish when you try so hard to 'separate' yourselves from the world.")

As the persecution increased, a small group of Puritans decided to leave England. They made an agreement with the king of England to let them move to Virginia. Then, in September 1620, they boarded a ship to take them. Their ship was called the *Mayflower*.



According to this 1651 map, the great "Sea of China and the Indies" was just over the first range of mountains from the Atlantic Coast. (The West is at the top.)



Forty-one passengers onboard the *Mayflower* signed the Mayflower Compact. By doing so, they created the foundation for the government of Massachusetts.

The Puritans who moved to America aboard the *Mayflower* called themselves Pilgrims. They were people on a journey to a holy place. They seemed to have exactly the kind of dreams, goals, and courage someone needed to survive in America.

After over seven weeks on the ocean, the *Mayflower* landed far north of Virginia. The Pilgrims were outside the area the king had given the Pilgrims permission to settle.

Some unruly passengers realized the ship was in the wrong place. And they knew the king would not protect the Pilgrims if they got off the boat in that place. So they threatened the Pilgrims that, when they came ashore, they would “use their own liberty” to do what they wanted.

The Pilgrim leaders were anxious to get off the boat. And they wanted to be sure their new community would enjoy peace. So while still onboard the *Mayflower*, they decided to create a new government.

They wrote an agreement. They called it the Mayflower Compact.² It says:

In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, . . . do . . . solemnly and mutually . . . combine ourselves . . . to enact . . . such . . . laws . . . as shall be thought most [appropriate] for the general good of the colony: unto which we promise all due . . . obedience.

Forty-one of the 101 passengers onboard signed the document. And when they signed the document, they created a government. Their new government worked. It worked very well. Many years later, it became the foundation of the government of the State of Massachusetts.

The Pilgrims—and the other Puritans who followed them—came to America with a great purpose. While

2) Compact means agreement.