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Posted on 01 March 2018 By William Bradford

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William Bradford was the governor of Plymouth Plantation almost every year from 1621 to 1657 when he died He relates first hand our legends of Squanto, the first Thanksgiving, the

Mayflower compact, etc. Some much beloved words come from his pen. The term Pilgrim coined. So they left that goodly and pleasant city which had been their resting place near twelve years but they knew they were pilgrims, and looked not much on those things, but lift up their eyes to the heavens, their dearest country, and quieted their spirits 50. Private Property established. He also undoes the socialist set up of the group's charter, going to private property instead assigned to every family a parcel of land made all hands very industrious 133. But there were many surprises in the book for me, too. 1 The Arminian theological controversy broke out in the Netherlands while the Pilgrims sojourned there. A couple of them got involved, trying to refute Jacobus Arminius. 2 Bradford says the Indian women are much modest than English women pg 99. I'm sure this evaluation is prejudiced by his greater familiarity with English culture, and the fear or natural shyness Indian women would have encountering white men. But still, an intriguing comment. Immodesty was a big problem in Elizabethan England. 3 As separatists, the group rejected the Church calendar, including the celebration of Christmas. The governor sent everyone out to work on Christmas, and when some less persuaded of the separatist view stayed home or played in the streets, he took away their tools and told them to stay inside. 4 Squanto seems to have gotten greedy, playing English off Indian groups, and vice versa, or at least that's what Bradford thought. Squanto sought his own ends and played his own game, by putting the Indians in fear and drawing gifts from them to enrich himself, making them believe he could stir up war against whom he would, and make peace for whom he would 109. 5 Much of the book is taken up with the colony's financial troubles. Those funding them back in England expected gold and goods to flow back home and enrich them. When this didn't happen, some backed out and those that stayed were less than helpful in supplying the colony. One agent in particular just ripped the Pilgrims off badly. Clarifying accounts across the ocean was tedious and time consuming. The Dutch and French both pressed in, claiming lands and trapping rights, etc. 6 The group had to deal with radical sects that came their way in later years from England. Roger Williams passed through. Groups that rejected the church altogether, sowing the seeds of Familism and Anabaptistry, to the infection of some and danger of others so that we are not willing to join with them in any league or confederacy at all 353. 7 They also had to deal with gross sin. Not every one of them was a dyed in the wool pious separatist. Many servants were at a dead end in England due to their poor moral character, and saw a chance to start over, or exploit new ground in America. Sodomy, rape and bestiality, besides adultery came up, and their adjudicating of these according to Scripture was fascinating, some being executed and others not, depending 354ff. 8 They wanted a minister, but made do with Elder Brewster for several years. Steve Wilkins in his review of the book, in Veritas Press Omnibus III, says this focus on the state to the detriment of the church set America on the path of looking to the state to fix our problems while giving much less respect to the church, comparatively. This may be overstated, but Wilkins is on to something. To their credit, they gave several a try, but they were either

incompetent, poor preachers, too weak willed for the hard country, or had crazy views or just incompatible with the particular Pilgrims.⁹ The Mather family Increase, John, Cotton, etc lived nearby in the Massachusetts Bay Colony that would become Boston and Salem There was a fair bit of correspondence back and forth between the governors and the Pilgrims sought theological advice on a few matters, besides working together against Indian threats Yale College was being formed in the later years of Bradford s writing and governing. The Pilgrims sought to establish a new world, flee persecution, find greater opportunity to provide for their families, and expand the knowledge and kingdom of Christ to new lands We should laud their fortitude and faith, and learn all we can from their experience. Have your high schoolers read this book Of Plymouth Plantation is a chronicle of an early religious colony written by a true believer Keep that in mind It was interesting reading some of the critical reviews I won t comment on them except to point out that there was criticism about the personality and belief system of the author than of the book itself Bradford gives us his personal account of people trying to carve out a living in a far from unspoiled wilderness If one reads the other things that were being written about America at the time, Bradford s efforts might be better appreciated For contrast, read Magnalia Christi Americana by Cotton Mather I almost guarantee that you will prefer Bradford s prose and his story I enjoyed the book as a period piece, and I felt no need to either approve or disapprove of the auhtor s world view It was a harsh time and people were frequently at extremity Rather than wring one s hands at the ethnocentrism of a people who thought they were chosen by Providence, read Bradford s account and try to immerse yourself in the life of the time unlike anything that most of us in the present west have experienced. Perhaps Bradford wasn t telling it like it is, but he was certainly telling it like he saw it His motivation is as clear as his faith No doubt, the native Americans would tell the story differently. Their view of the Puritans was certainly not that they were the Camp of the Saints We can consider Bradford s followers cruel exploiters, and they were It was the times I doubt that you will find a well written and honest account of what the various colonists of the Americas thought about themselves and their struggles. I don t know how to review this exactly, as it s a documentation of the roots of Puritanism, Pilgrims decision to start a colony in North Virginia , their voyage west, their arrival at Cape Cod, their encounters with the people whom we now know as Native Americans, and their establishment of Plymouth Plantation William Bradford supposedly never meant for this to be public record, which is pretty ridiculous It s incredibly thorough, and it s likely the only documentation that took place over almost three decades of Pilgrim Puritan life Perhaps he was being a stereotypically modest Puritan here. The whole thing is pretty straightforward Interesting facts you might not know the Pilgrims totally knew what they were getting into as far as the journey being arduous as fuck goes, but they did it anyway They split from the Church Of England because it wasn t strict enough, and then once they got here and settled for a few years, a bunch of Puritans split from the Plymouth colony and moved to the North Shore because THOSE guys weren

t strict enough Pilgrims were some serious motherfuckers, and that's why you can't buy beer at grocery stores and after 11 PM, Boston True story The most telling and somewhat hilarious part of Of Plymouth Plantation is how every time something good happens, Bradford is absolutely certain that it is divine providence from God Upon landing on Cape Cod, the Pilgrims followed some Native people into the woods and found a bunch of corn they had buried for the winter They dug up the corn for themselves but it wasn't stealing It was DIVINE PROVIDENCE The indigenous people found them a few days later and were rightfully pissed off, so the Pilgrims shot them with their muskets But it wasn't violence, oh no God directed their muskets onto the savages, as Bradford calls them Winter ends and everyone who was sick starts to get well again But this has nothing to do with the changing of the seasons, oh no GOD made everyone healthy again There's no blaming God for all the bad shit that happened, even the drowning death of William Bradford's wife in Provincetown Harbor Oh, no God had nothing to do with that But the good stuff All God, because he's totally on their side.If you liked reading Columbus accounts of annihilating the Taino people of the Caribbean, you'll love William Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation If you're a history nerd, you'll find value in this book as an important documentation of a part of pre American history If you have half a brain, you'll read this and see the Puritan way of life for exactly what it was fundamentalist lunacy. He sure didn't put the Pure in Puritan So, today my classes started back and my first assignment in my American Lit class was to read parts of William Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647 The whole thing is dry as hell and written in 17th century English, so my eyes were pretty heavy there at the end Then we get to the last few pages and we learn about Thomas Grainger NGL, I thought he was Hermione's dad at first, but, no This guy was the first person hanged in the US Which, whatever But why was he hanged Well, 16-17 year old Thomas, who like every 16-17 year old thought it was rad to stick his dick in things, thought it would be super rad to stick his dick in a mare, a cow, two goats, divers sheepe, two calves, and a turkey Yes, a turkey As in gobble gobble The Wikipedia article doesn't mention it, but in the book, they go on to say that per the law, his victims were to be present for his execution, so they gathered up all these animals to watch this guy get hanged And not only that, they made Thomas identify all his victims before he was hanged, but he couldn't be sure about some of them Let that sink in for a second.Why was this in the last part of this story If this had been the first part, I might have actually read it in a timely manner.4 stars because turkey sex should have led the book, not ended it.

Of
Plymouth
Plantation
1620-1647

William
Bradford

Introduction by Francis Murphy



Modern Library College Editions

The story

that is being described is incredible I just found the telling a bit dull Still easier read than most documents of the time, Bradford is a great writer, he just maybe needed an editor to punch things up Maybe because I was under time constraints perhaps I ll return to this when I ve got time on my hands But wow, really, what a fucking story Some of the events which occur are so on the nose, metaphorically speaking, that this could pass as fiction if not for Bradford s emphasis on historiography. Thomas Morton could have been one of the all time greatest antagonists in the history of fiction if he d made his way into a novel instead this great metaphor of struggle between religion and secularism, repression and hedonism, the civilized world and the outside world, our constructed human nature and our fears of what we might truly be when left to our own devices This book has everything Disease Gunfights Death Drama Betrayal Political intrigue Religious and social commentary Incredible cast of characters Huge momentous omens Loss of innocence Sex, drugs, and Puritanism Incredible Story The telling just bored me a little Would, however, make an incredible movie and wouldn t need a single fucking exaggeration by poetic license. This was a huge eye opener for me I was raised with families that thought the pilgrims were some of the most perfect people ever This proves them very much wrong It was hard to read Because of the old English but there is no better book to understand what the pilgrims really believed I found my respect for what they went through rise, but there beliefs fall It made me realize how legalistic they were, as well as how important small things were to them Although I disagree with much of their theology, nothing can take away from the impact they made on our culture, or the bravery they had to face the great unknown. .FREE PDF ? Of Plymouth Plantation ? The Most Important And Influential Source Of Information About The Pilgrims And Plymouth Colony, This Landmark Account Was Written Between And It Vividly Documents The Pilgrims Adventures Their First Stop In Holland, The Harrowing Transatlantic Crossing Aboard The Mayflower, The First Harsh Winter In The New Colony, And The Help From Friendly Native Americans That Saved Their Lives No One Was Better Equipped To Report On The Affairs Of The Plymouth Community Than William Bradford Revered For His Patience, Wisdom, And Courage, Bradford Was Elected To The Office Of Governor In , And He Continued To Serve In That Position For Than Three Decades His Memoirs Of The Colony Remained Virtually Unknown Until The Nineteenth Century Lost During The American Revolution, They Were Discovered Years Later In London And Published After A Protracted Legal Battle The Current Edition Rendered Into Modern English And With An Introduction By Harold Paget, Remains Among The Most Readable Books From Seventeenth Century America Somewhere between an after the fact diary and a modern blog, these reminiscences of the long time governor of the first major English settlement in Massachusetts is a fascinating read, not only for Bradford s own measured comments, but particularly for his inclusion of the numerous letters among the various New World settlements and England The letters remove his assertions from being one sided comments by giving them the backing of the commentators original words. It was

a tough, often harrowing life, especially for the first landers, who lost half their number to disease and privation. The adventurers back home, who financed the Puritans partly for religious reasons but in the hope of profit, prove continually untrustworthy in word and deed though God knows they suffered losses enough in the process. To today's ear, the continual effusions over God's goodness might ring extreme, perhaps hollow, if confined to Bradford, but they round out every one of the letters from any correspondent. After a bit, I found myself ignoring the last two paragraphs of the letters with their perhaps heartfelt but still formulaic religiosity. Altogether, this history reflects a wholly different outlook on what life means, how it is lived and where it appears to be headed. This edition, from 1920, has been modernized in language to some degree, but I didn't feel that that affected the meaning or the sense of time and place in the original. It was a such detailed book recording truthfully what really happened during that tumultuous period of time, which helps us modern people to understand why the things turned out the way they are. With those contents we can slowly connect the dots and let the past come alive again. Of all the aspects of the Pilgrim leader William Bradford that are likely to stand out to as you read *Of Plymouth Plantation*, the one that stands out most may be Bradford's sheer stubbornness. Bradford was a strong-willed, stubborn, even obstinate man and those characteristics may have been exactly what was needed to help the Plymouth Colony beat the odds and survive that first deadly winter in the wilds of what would one day be the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. *Of Plymouth Plantation* is an interesting and important book not just for Thanksgiving week, when I am posting this review, but for any time of year. Bradford, a vigorous and energetic writer, sees the events that befall the Plymouth Colony he leads as part of a Biblical conflict between good and evil, with the Pilgrims as lonely wanderers on a godly path. Bradford's godly path had a high cost: Bradford's first wife fell to her death from the deck of the *Mayflower*, and scholars still wonder if she actually committed suicide after seeing the bleak coast of New England. But the sheer force of will that fills these pages provides a glimpse of the leadership qualities that helped Bradford get the Pilgrims through that first cruel winter of 1620, so that they could celebrate the first Thanksgiving in 1621. I suspect many readers turn to this book around Thanksgiving. I know that is my tendency. So if it's some future Thanksgiving Day, between the Macy's parade and the Detroit Lions football game, and you're looking for the relevant holiday-related passage while the turkey and stuffing send up sweet savors from the oven, here it is: not Bradford's own words, but those of fellow Pilgrim Father Edward Winslow, in a letter from December of 1621: "Our harvest being gotten in, our Governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after a special manner rejoice together, after we had gathered the fruit of our labours. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the Company almost a week. At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and amongst the rest their greatest king, Massasoit with some 90 men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted. And they went out and killed five deer which they brought

to the plantation and bestowed on our Governor and upon the Captain and others⁹⁰ The staples of the modern Thanksgiving table are not specifically mentioned in Winslow's letter, but it is fun to speculate on how Winslow's words may have influenced the festival that Americans look forward to every November. Bradford's belief that he is establishing God's Kingdom on Earth, right there in New England, influences the way he looks at those with whom he interacts throughout his quest. He has little good to say, for example, about Thomas Weston, the merchant adventurer today, we might say venture capitalist who was among the underwriters of the Pilgrims' voyage. In January 1622, when Weston had sent a ship to Plymouth with colonists, but without the food he had promised to send, Bradford dismisses Weston's flowery cover letter as tedious and impertinent and adds that "All this was but cold comfort to fill their hungry bellies, and a slender performance of his former late promise. And well might it make them remember what the Psalmist saith, Psalm cxviii.8, It is better to trust in the Lord than to have confidence in man" p 101. History-minded readers, especially those with ties to New England, should find this book fascinating. Rhode Islanders, for example, might take an interest in Bradford's 1633 description of Roger Williams, the founder of the Rhode Island colony, as a man "godly and zealous, having many precious parts but very unsettled in judgment, someone who began to fall into some strange opinions, and from opinion to practice" p 257. Nowadays, we might tend to look at Williams, in contrast to Bradford, as an American model, because of Williams's championing of pluralism and religious liberty. But it is interesting to see Bradford struggling to balance his disapproval for Williams's theology with his respect for Williams the man, as he praises Williams's gifts and his teaching well approved, for the benefit whereof I still bless God and am thankful to him, but closes his discussion by saying that Williams is to be pitied and prayed for and so I shall leave the matter and desire the Lord to show him his errors and reduce him into the way of truth p 257. Other luminaries of the Plymouth colony are in evidence as well. For example, the famed Native American Squanto, a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation, without whose help the Pilgrims might not have made it through that first bitter winter of 1620. Also making their appearances in these pages are the redoubtable soldier Miles Standish and the cooper John Alden, immortalized in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poetry as rivals for the hand of Priscilla Mullins. It is to Longfellow, not Bradford, that one must look for the moment when John Alden visits Priscilla to court her on Standish's behalf, and the beautiful Priscilla Mullins looks at the handsome young John Alden and says, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John." And one of the most interesting moments in the book occurs when Bradford's Pilgrims come into conflict with Thomas Morton of Merrymount, a curious character whom fans of Nathaniel Hawthorne will know from Hawthorne's story *The Maypole of Merry Mount*. What is known from history is that Morton travelled to New England and set up for himself, leading a settlement whose liberal principles contravened the stern tenets of Separatist and Puritan New England. In Bradford's reading, Morton is a Lord of Misrule, who maintained a

School of Atheism 205 , and the eventual downfall of his relaxed and pleasure oriented regime represents the triumph of God s principles Morton, unsurprisingly, saw things differently. Bradford s readiness to see the Native Americans of Massachusetts as cruel savages is disheartening in the extreme, and some parts of the book therefore make for difficult reading Strangely enough, though, Bradford seems to have seen himself as having established fair and just relations between the Pilgrims and the Indians he takes pains to note that in 1638, when three Englishmen murdered an Indian, the Englishmen were duly tried, convicted, and executed for the crime And some of the Narragansett Indians and of the party s friends were present when it was done, which gave them and all the country good satisfaction p 301 My favorite edition of this book is the one edited by naval historian Samuel Eliot Morison for Alfred A Knopf in 1952 Thorough as always his edition includes 13 appendices of official documents, along with four wonderfully detailed maps , Morison conveys well the energy and determination that underlie Bradford s writings and his approach to life even though a docent at the Leiden American Pilgrim Museum, in the Dutch city where the Pilgrims lived for 12 years after they left England but before they voyaged to America, once told me that he finds some of Morison s editing highly iffy It is fascinating to see Morison apply the insights of Of Plymouth Plantation to the Cold War era in which he edited and published this book Clearly, for example, Morison is thinking of the Soviet Union, Red China, and the Korean conflict when he writes in the preface that In the debates in the New England Confederation over the Narragansetts, we are confronted with the United Nations in miniature shall we start a preventive war now and risk losing all, or wait yet a little while, hoping that we, not they, will grow stronger p xi Perhaps it is for that reason that Morison describes Bradford s work as expressing a set of values that exalts and heartens one in an age of uncertainty, when courage falters and faith grows dim p xii The sources of uncertainty may have changed over the years, but there are always likely to be threats that challenge one s courage and confront one s belief system And I suspect that for many years to come, Of Plymouth Plantation, with its status as the first great book to come directly out of the American experience, will continue to provide comfort to future generations of Americans, facing future threats that we cannot now anticipate.

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