

PILGRIM WILLIAM BRADFORD

THANK YOU GOVERNOR AND GOOD AFTERNOON TO ALL. AFTER SUCH AN INTRODUCTION I CAN HARDLY WAIT TO HEAR WHAT I HAVE TO SAY ABOUT WILLIAM BRADFORD WHO WAS ALWAYS SILENT ON THE SUBJECT OF HIS OWN FAMILY. HOWEVER, RESEARCH REVEALED TO ME THAT IN 1575, THERE LIVED IN AUSTERFIELD, YORKSHIRE COUNTY, ENGLAND, A WILLIAM BRADFORD. TO DATE, IT HAS BEEN FOUND IMPOSSIBLE TO TRACE HIS FAMILY BEYOND THIS POINT, BUT THERE IS STRONG PROBABILITY THAT THIS WILLIAM BRADFORD WAS A RELATIVE OF THE CELEBRATED PREACHER MARTYR, JOHN BRADFORD, WHO WAS BURNED AT THE STAKE AT SMITHFIELD, ENGLAND ON 31 JANUARY 1555 FOR HIS OPPOSITION TO PAPACY -- THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, HEADED BY THE POPE. IT HAS ALSO BEEN SUPPOSED THAT THIS WILLIAM BRADFORD WAS A RELATIVE OF A BRADFORD WHO PARTICIPATED IN CONNECTION WITH THOMAS STAFFORD, SON OF LORD STAFFORD, IN A REBELLION AGAINST THE HATED QUEEN MARY, FOR WHICH HE WAS EXECUTED AT TYBURN, ENGLAND, ON 29 MAY 1557. THERE IS EVIDENTLY SOME REASON WHY THE FOUNDER OF THE BRADFORD FAMILY IN THIS COUNTRY, THE CELEBRATED PILGRIM, WHO WILL HEREAFTER BE KNOWN AS GOVERNOR WILLIAM, WAS, AS I MENTIONED BEFORE, SILENT ON THE SUBJECT OF HIS OWN FAMILY -- DO YOU BLAME HIM?? HOWEVER, HE WROTE NUMEROUS WRITINGS ON THE OTHER PILGRIM FAMILIES.

IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THE NAME OF BRADFORD PROBABLY ORIGINATED AT A TIME WHEN FAMILIES WERE FREQUENTLY CALLED AFTER PLACES NEAR THEIR HOMES, AND THAT THE FIRST FAMILY OF THIS NAME LIVED NEAR A "BROAD FORD" WHICH WAS PROBABLY A WIDE SHALLOW STREAM OF WATER THAT COULD BE CROSSED BY WADING OR BY HORSEBACK. THE NAME IS FREQUENTLY SPELLED "BRADFURTH" AND "BRADFURTH", IN THE CHURCH RECORDS OF ENGLAND. THE

FAMILY OF WILLIAM BRADFORD , OF AUSTERFIELD, BELONGED TO A CLASS CALLED YEONANRY, A CEREMONIAL GUARD FOR THE ENGLISH ROYAL FAMILY WHICH WAS AT THAT TIME NEXT TO THE GENTRY, AND HAD THE RIGHT TO USE COATS-OF -ARMS. THEY USUALLY OWNED THE LANDS THEY OCCUPIED, AND WERE FARMERS OF LARGE ESTATES. THIS WILLIAM BRADFORD, GOVERNOR BRADFORD'S GRANDFATHER, HAD FOUR CHILDREN, WILLIAM, THOMAS, ROBERT, AND ELIZABETH. THE DATES OF THEIR BIRTH ARE NOT KNOWN, BUT ROBERT WAS BAPTIZED 25 JUNE 1561 AND ELIZABETH 16 JULY 1570. THE OLDEST SON, WILLIAM -- GUESS WHO! THAT'S RIGHT, HE WAS GOVERNOR BRADFORD'S FATHER. ANYWAY, HE MARRIED ALICE HANSON ON 21 JUNE 1584. SHE WAS THE DAUGHTER OF JOHN HANSON, THE ONLY MAN IN AUSTRFIELD AT THAT TIME BESIDES WILLIAM BRADFORD WHO PAID TAXES TO THE CROWN. WILLIAM BRADFORD AND ALICE HANSON HAD THREE CHILDREN: MARGARET, BORN 08 MARCH 1585: ALICE, BORN 30 OCTOBER 1587: AND GOVERNOR BRADFORD, WHO WAS BORN IN 1588 AND WAS BAPTIZED ON 19 MARCH 1590. THE PILGRIM, WILLIAM BRADFORD'S LIFE WAS A KIND OF ALLEGORY, AND IT IS BELIEVED THAT HIS PASSION FOR ORDER IS THE DIRECT RESULT OF HIS RESTLESS AND TROUBLED LIFE. THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT AS A CHILD HE WAS SHUTTLED FROM "PILLAR TO POST". I SAY THIS BECAUSE HIS PARENT'S STATION IN LIFE WAS MODEST. HIS FATHER DIED JULY 1591 WHEN HE WAS ONLY A YEAR OLD, AND WHEN HIS MOTHER REMARRIED THREE YEARS LATER HE WAS SENT TO LIVE WITH HIS GRANDFATHER. WHAT HAPPENED THEN? OH YEAH, I REMEMBER NOW -- HE LIVED WITH HIS GRANDFATHER FOR TWO YEARS, THEN HIS GRANDFATHER DIED! HE WAS THEN REASSIGNED TO HIS MOTHER'S AND STEPFATHER'S HOME. HIS MOTHER DIED SHORTLY THEREAFTER, AND ONCE AGAIN HE WAS SENT TO LIVE WITH HIS FATHER'S PEOPLE -- UNCLE THOMAS, UNCLE RICHARD, AND UNCLE ROBERT. THESE UNCLES ASSUMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIM, BUT FROM WHOM IT IS DOUBTFUL HE RECEIVED MUCH LOVE. IN ADDITION, THE TOWNSFOLK OF

AUSTERFIELD WERE “UNACQUAINTED WITH THE BIBLE”, AND WERE A MOST IGNORANT AND LICENTIOUS PEOPLE, BUT GOVERNOR BRADFORD HIMSELF NEVER MADE ANY CLAIM QUITE SO DRAMATIC. THESE PEOPLE WERE HARD-WORKING FARMERS, NO BETTER OR WORSE THAN MOST, AND PROBABLY COMPLACENT IN THEIR CHURCH GOING . WHEN I SAY THEY WERE UNACQUAINTED WITH THE BIBLE, I MEANT THAT THEY WERE FAITHFUL SUPPORTERS OF THE NATIONAL CHURCH OF ENGLAND; THEY ACCEPTED A MEDIEVAL ORDER IN THEIR CLERGY AND WERE NOT INTERESTED IN THE EARLY CHURCH FATHERS.

ALTHOUGH HE CAME FROM A FAMILY OF PROSPEROUS, LAND-ROOTED FARMERS, BRADFORD HAD EXPERIENCED MORE THAN HIS SHARE OF DISLOCATION AND LOSS. SOON AFTER MOVING IN WITH HIS UNCLES, HE WAS STRUCK WITH A MYSTERIOUS AILMENT THAT PREVENTED HIM FROM WORKING IN THE FIELDS. BRADFORD LATER CLAIMED THAT HIS “LONG SICKNESS HAD SAVED HIM FROM THE VANITIES OF YOUTH, AND MADE FOR WHAT HE WAS AFTERWARDS TO UNDERGO.” MOST IMPORTANT, HIS ILLNESS GAVE HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ. LONELY AND INTELLIGENT, HE LOOKED TO THE BIBLE FOR COMFORT AND GUIDANCE. FOR A BOY IN NEED OF INSTRUCTION, THE GENEVA BIBLE, TRANSLATED IN THE PREVIOUS CENTURY BY A SMALL TEAM OF MINISTERS AND EQUIPPED WITH HELPFUL NOTES AND APPENDICES WAS JUST THE THING TO START PILGRIM WILLIAM TO BECOMING A SELF-EDUCATED MAN. HE EDUCATED HIMSELF SO AS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HIS DEITY, TEACHING HIMSELF, OVER THE YEARS, SEVERAL LANGUAGES, ANCIENT HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, ETC..

GOVERNOR WILLIAM, IN HIS YOUNGER DAYS, WAS PREVENTED FROM ENTERING INTO THE PURSUITS OF HIS RELATIVES BY THE STATE OF HIS HEALTH, BUT HAVING INHERITED A COMFORTABLE ESTATE, HE WAS WELL PROVIDED FOR. WHEN 12 YEARS OLD, HE MANIFESTED GREAT INTEREST IN THE SCRIPTURES AND SOUGHT

THE COMPANY OF RICHARD CLIFTON AND OTHER PREACHERS OF THE "PRIMITIVE" CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN NEARBY SCROOBY. PROFITING BY THEIR TEACHINGS, HE SOON EMBRACED THE "SEPARATIST" CHURCH WHOSE MEMBERS WANTED TO SEPARATE FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. IN 1607 GOVERNOR WILLIAM, IN COMPANY WITH OTHER "SEPARATIST" MOVED TO HOLLAND, IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO ENJOY FREEDOM OF WORSHIP. WHILE ON HIS WAY, HE AND OTHERS WERE IMPRISONED IN BOSTON, ENGLAND, FOR A TIME BECAUSE OF THEIR RELIGIOUS BELIEF. THEY FIRST WENT TO AMSTERDAM, BUT SOON MOVED TO LYDEN. IN LYDEN, GOVERNOR WILLIAM LEARNED THE ART OF DYING SILK, AND WHEN HE CAME OF AGE, HE SOLD HIS ESTATE IN ENGLAND AND ENGAGED IN COMMERCE, BUT HE WAS NOT SUCCESSFUL AND WENT BANKRUPT. IN ADDITION, LIFE IN THE OLD UNIVERSITY TOWN OF LEIDEN WAS DIFFICULT. MANY OF THE REFUGEES, INCLUDING BRADFORD, FOR 12 YEARS HAD EKED OUT A BARE LIVING AS TEXTILE WORKERS. THE CHURCH, NOW LED BY THE CHARISMATIC JOHN ROBINSON, FACED OTHER PROBLEMS. NETHERLANDS TEETERED ON THE BRICK OF WAR WITH CATHOLIC SPAIN AND THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT, PRESSURED BY THE ENGLISH ALLY, KING JAMES, HARASSED THE REFUGEES. PRESSES THAT PRINTED SEPARATIST TRACTS WERE SMASHED AND SOME OF THE ENGLISH HAD ROCKS THROWN AT THEM. HOWEVER THE CHIEF WORRY INVOLVED THEIR CHILDREN -- GRADUALLY THEY WERE BECOMING DUTCH. IT WAS TIME TO LEAVE HOLLAND, BUT TO WHERE? SOMEONE SUGGESTED THE NEW WORLD WHERE THEY COULD RE-CREATE THE ENGLISH VILLAGE LIFE THEY SO DEARLY MISSED. IN ADDITION, THEY WOULD BE FURTHER BEYOND THE MEDDLESOME REACH OF KING JAMES AND HIS BISHOPS. AFTER ALL WAS SAID AND DONE, ALL ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST GOING TO AMERICA ENDED WITH THE STRONG BELIEF THAT GOD WANTED THEM TO GO, AND THAT THEIR TIME IN LEIDEN HAD BEEN A MERE REHEARSAL FOR THE REAL ADVENTURE. MOST IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, THEY REALIZED THAT THEY WERE "KNIT TOGETHER AS A BODY IN A MOST STRICT

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GOING TO AMERICA CREATED PROBLEMS -- MONEY AND TRANSPORTATION. HOWEVER, SOME HOLLAND REPRESENTATIVES HEARD OF THE PILGRIM’S INTENTION TO RELOCATE TO AMERICA “MADE THEM FAIR OFFERS” CONCERNING A POSSIBLE SETTLEMENT, BUT THE PILGRIMS DECLINED, AS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE TO REASSERT THEIR ENGLISH IDENTITY IN A DUTCH COLONY. INSTEAD OF LOOKING TO HOLLAND, THE PILGRIMS THREW IN THEIR LOT WITH A SMOOTH-TALKING MERCHANT NAMED THOMAS WESTON WHO REPRESENTED A GROUP KNOWN AS THE MERCHANT ADVENTURES -- ABOUT SEVENTY LONDON MERCHANTS WHO VIEWED THE COLONIZATION OF AMERICA AS BOTH AS AN INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY AND A WAY TO “PLANT RELIGION.” THE PILGRIMS CHOSE JOHN CARVER AND ROBERT CUSHMAN TO CARRY-ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE APPROPRIATE OFFICIALS IN LONDON AND WERE SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING A PATENT, BUT HOW WAS THE ENDEAVOR TO BE FINANCED? BRADFORD’S FAITH IN THE UNDERTAKING WAS SO STRONG THAT HE SOLD HIS HOME IN THE SPRING OF 1619 TO HELP IN FINANCES. WESTON AND THE MERCHANT ADVENTURES GROUP MADE A DEAL WITH THE PILGRIMS. WESTON PROPOSED THAT THEY ENTER INTO A JOINT STOCK COMPANY. THE ADVENTURES WOULD PUT UP MOST OF THE CAPITAL WITH THE EXPECTATION THAT, ONCE THEY WERE SETTLED IN AMERICA, THE PILGRIMS WOULD QUICKLY BEGIN TO GENERATE CONSIDERABLE PROFITS, PRIMARILY THROUGH COD FISHING AND FUR TRADE. THE PILGRIMS WOULD EACH BE GIVEN A SHARE IN THE COMPANY VALUED AT 10 POUNDS. FOR THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS THEY WOULD WORK FOUR DAYS A WEEK FOR THE

COMPANY AND TWO DAYS A WEEK FOR THEMSELVES, WITH THE SABBATH RESERVED FOR WORSHIP. AT THE END OF THE SEVEN YEARS, THE CAPITAL AND PROFITS WOULD BE DIVIDED AMONG ALL OF THEM, WITH THE PILGRIMS OWNING THEIR HOUSES AND HOME LOTS FREE AND CLEAR.

AS THE PILGRIMS PREPARED TO DEPART IN THE SPRING OF 1620, WESTON'S TRUE NATURE BEGAN TO REVEAL ITSELF. HE NOW CLAIMED THAT ADJUSTMENTS OF THE ORIGINAL AGREEMENT HAD TO BE CHANGED AS HE WAS UNABLE TO OBTAIN A FISHING MONOPOLY FOR THE SETTLEMENT AND THAT MANY OF HIS FELLOW ADVENTURERS WERE INCLINED TO BACK OUT, IF THE MERCHANTS IN LONDON FURNISHED THE NECESSARY FUNDS, THE PILGRIMS MUST AGREE TO DEDICATE ALL THEIR TIME TO WORKING FOR THE COMPANY. THE PILGRIMS OBJECTED, CLAIMING THAT THE NEW TERMS WERE "FITTER FOR THIEVES AND BONDSLAVES THAN HONEST MEN." TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, WAS THAT THE PILGRIMS NEGOTIATOR, ROBERT CUSHMAN, HAD ALREADY AGREED TO WESTON'S NEW TERMS WITHOUT CONSULTING HIS FELLOW PILGRIMS.

IN JUNE OF 1620 THE PILGRIMS DISCOVERED THAT WESTON HAD NOT ARRANGED ANY TRANSPORTATION TO AMERICA AND DEMANDED THAT HE DO SO. WHILE WESTON HUNTED FOR A SHIP IN LONDON, THE PILGRIMS IN LEDEN DECIDED TO PURCHASE A SIXTY TON VESSEL NAMED THE SPEEDWELL. THE SEPEEDWELL, AS YOU ALL KNOW, HAD A DISASTROUS IMPACT ON THE VOVAGE AHEAD. BY THE END OF JULY, THE PILGRIMS BOARDED THE SPEEDWELL AT DELFSHAVEN, HOLLAND, AND WITH MASTER REYNOLDS IN COMMAND, SAILED TO SOUTHAMPTON, WHERE THEY WOULD REDEZVOUS WITH WHATEVER SHIP WESTON HAD SECURED IN LONDON. BRADFORD WROTE, "WHERE TRULY DOLEFUL WAS THE SIGHT OF THAT SAD AND MOURNFUL PARTING, TO SEE WHAT SIGHS AND SOBS AND PRAYERS AMONGST THEM, WHAT TEARS DID GUSH FROM EVERY EYE, AND PITHY SPEECHS

PIERCED EACH HEART.” FOR BRADFORD AND HIS WIFE, DOROTHY, THE PARTING IN DELFHAVEN WAS PARTICULARLY PAINFUL. THEY HAD DECIDED TO LEAVE THEIR THREE-YEAR-SON, JOHN BEHIND IN HOLLAND, PERHAPS WITH DOROTHY’S PARENTS IN AMSTERDAM. IT WAS CERTAINLY SAFER FOR THE CHILD, BUT THE EMOTIONAL COST, ESPECIALLY FOR THE BOY’S MOTHER, WOULD BECOME INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO BEAR. WHETHER HE REALIZED OR NOT, BRADFORD WAS INFLICTING HIS OWN CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE ON HIS SON: FOR A TIME, AT LEAST, JOHN WOULD BE FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, AN ORPHAN.

MEANWHILE, WESTON HAD HIRED AN OLD AND RELIABLE SHIP NAMED THE MAYFLOWER WHICH WAS SAILED FROM LONDON TO SOUTHAMPTON TO RENDEZVOU WITH THE SPEEDWELL. THE MAYFLOWER WAS A TYPICAL MERCHANT VESSEL OF HER DAY AND KNOWN AS A”SWEET SHIP” BECAUSE HER CARGO WAS USUALLY SWEET WINE AND HER HOLD WAS CAPABLE OF ACCOMMDATING 180 TONS OF WINE. BOTH SHIPS LEFT SOUTHAMTON TO BE ON THEIR WAY BUT THE SPEEDWELL SPRANG A LEAK AND NEEDED REPAIRS, SO BOTH SHIPS SAILED FOR DARTMOUTH WHERE THE NECESSARY REPAIRS WERE QUICKLY MADE. THEY DEPARTED DARTMOUTH AND WERE APPROXIMATELY 200 MILES OUT TO SEA WHEN THE SPEEDWELL SPRANG ANOTHER LEAK. IT WAS NOW EARLY SEPTEMBER AND THEY HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO GIVE UP ON THE SPEEDWELL. IT WAS LATER LEARNED THAT THE SPEEDWELL’S MASTER, MR. REYNOLDS, HAD BEEN SECRETLY WORKING AGAINST THEM, AS HE ALLOWED THE VESSEL TO BE FITTED WITH NEW AND LARGER MASTS WHICH ALLOWED THE MASTS TO BE CROWDED WITH SAIL WHICH ACTED AS A LEVER THAT APPLIES TORQUE TO THE HULL AND CAUSES EXCESS STRAIN AND OPENED UP THE SEAMS BETWEEN THE PLANKS , CAUSING THE HULL TO LEAK. SOON AFTER THE MAYFLOWER SET OUT ACROSS THE ATLANTIC, THE SPEEDWELL WAS SOLD, REFITTED, AND ACCORDING TO BRADFORD, “MADE MANY VOYAGES TO THE GREAT PROFIT OF HER OWNERS.”

ON THE MAYFLOWER, THE PROVISIONS WERE ALREADY LOW WHEN THEY FIRST SET OUT FROM SOUTHAMPTON, HAD BEEN ERODED EVEN FURTHER BY MORE THAN A MONTH OF DELAYS. THE PASSENGERS, COOPED UP ABOARD FOR ALL THIS TIME, WERE IN NO SHAPE FOR AN EXTENDED PASSAGE. HOWEVER, ON 06 SEPTEMBER 1620, THE MAYFLOWER SET OUT FROM PLYMOUTH WITH WHAT BRADFORD CALLED “A PROSPEROUS WIND”.

BRADFORD DID NOT SAY TOO MUCH ABOUT THE MORE THAN TWO MONTH VOYAGE ON THE MAYFLOWER ENROUTE TO AMERICA. HOWEVER, HE DID MENTION THE FACT THAT THE PASSENGERS SUFFERED THE EFFECTS OF SEASICKNESS AND THAT THE MAYFLOWER WAS NO LONGER A “SWEET SHIP.” THE SAILORS TOOK GREAT DELIGHT IN MOCKING THE SUFFERING POOR SOULS. ONE SAILOR IN PARTICULAR “A PROUD AND VERY PROFANE YOUNG MAN”, BRADFORD REMEMBERED, WHO WOULD ALWAYS BE CONDEMNING THE POOR PEOPLE IN THEIR SICKNESS AND CURSING THEM DAILY WITH GREIVIOUS EXCRATIONS.. THE SAILOR EVEN HAD THE AUDACITY TO SAY, THAT HE HOPED “TO HELP TO CAST HALF OF THEM OVERBOARD BEFORE THEY CAME TO THEIR JOURNEY’S END”. AS IT TURNED OUT, HOWEVER, THIS STONG AND ARROGANT SAILOR WAS THE FIRST TO DIE. “BUT IT PLEASED GOD” BRADFORD WROTE “BEFORE THEY CAME HALF SEAS OVER, TO SMITE THIS YOUNG MAN WITH A GREIVIOUS DISEASE OF WHICH HE DIED IN A DESPERATE MANNER, AND SO WAS HIMSELF THE FIRST THAT WAS CAST OVERBOARD”. BRADFORD CLAIMED “IT WAS AN ASTONISHMENT TO ALL HIS FELLOWS FOR THEY NOTED IT TO BE THE JUST HAND OF GOD UPON HIM.”

A SUCCESSION OF WESTERLY GALES REQUIRD MASTER JONES TO WORK HIS SHIP, AS BEST HE COULD, AGAINST THE WIND AND WAVES. SEVERAL TIMES DURING THE PASSAGE, THE CONDITIONS GREW SO SEVERE THAT EVEN THOUGH IT MEANT THAT HE MUST LOSE MANY HARD-WON MILES, JONES WAS FORCED TO “LIE A

HULL”-- TO FURL THE SAILS AND WITHOUT A STICH OF CANVAS SET, TO SECURE THE HELM TO LEEWARD AND SURRENDER HIS 180-TON SHIP TO THE ELEMENTS. DURING ONE OF THE “LIE AHULL” SITUATIONS, JOHN HOWLAND DECIDED HE WANTED SOME FRESH AIR SO HE WENT TOPSIDE AND STEPPED ONTO THE DECK. JOHN SOON FOUND THAT THE DECK OF A TEMPEST--TOSSED SHIP WAS NO PLACE FOR A LANDSMAN. THE MAYFLOWER LURCHED SUDDENLY TO LEEWARD. HOWLAND STAGGERED TO THE SHIPS RAIL AND TUMBLED INTO THE SEA. THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE END OF HIM, BUT DANGLING OVER THE SIDE AND TRAILING BEHIND THE SHIP WAS THE TOPSIDE HALYARD, THE ROPE USED TO RAISE AND LOWER THE UPPER SAIL. WELL, HOWLAND’S HAND FOUND THE HALYARD AND HE HUNG ON EVEN THO’ HE WAS PULLED DOWN MORE THAN TEN FEET BELOW THE OCEAN’S SURFACE. SEVERAL SILORS TOOK UP THE HALYARD AND HAULED HOWLAND BACK IN, FINALLY SNAGGING HIM ONTO THE DECK. WHEN BRADFORD WROTE ABOUT THIS INCIDENT MORE THAN A DECADE LATER, JOHN HOWLAND WAS NOT ONLY ALIVE AND WELL, BUT HE AND HIS WIFE ELIZABETH, WERE ON THEIR WAY TO RAISING TEN CHILDREN, WHO WOULD, IN TURN, PRODUCE 88 GRANDCHILDREN.

MASTER JONES KNEW THE MAYFLOWER WAS WELL NORTH OF HER ULTIMATE DESTINATION, BUT AT THIS LATE STAGE IN THE VOYAGE, WITH DISEASE BEGINNING TO APPEAR AMONG THE PASSENGERS AND CREW, HE NEEDED TO FIND HIS WAY TO THE COAST AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, SO HE MADE A RUN FOR IT. HE SAILED WEST ALONG A LATITUDE THAT WOULD LEAD TO THE SANDY PENNSULA KNOWN TO MOST MARINERS OF THE TIME AS CAPE COD. THE MAYFLOWER PUSHED ON UNTIL THEY WERE IN SMELLING DISTANCE OF THE CONTINENT. SEAGULLS BEGAN TO APPEAR IN THE SKY AND THE COLOR OF THE WATER CHANGED FROM DEEP BLUE TO PALE GREEN. AT DAY BREAK ON THURSDAY 09 NOVEMBER 1620 , AFTER 65 DAYS AT SEA, THEY SAW LAND. HAVING ARRIVED IN A GOOD HARBOR AND SIGHTING LAND AGAIN,

THEY FELL UPON THEIR KNEES AND BLESSED AND THANKED GOD FOR BRINGING THEM SAFELY OVER THE FURIOUS OCEAN, AND FOR DELIVERING THEM FROM ALL THE PERILS AND MISERIES THEREOF. HOWEVER, SOME OF THE STRANGERS BEGIN TO MUTTER IF A PLACE WASN'T FOUND SOON THEY WOULD GATHER UP THEIR BELONGINGS AND LEAVE THE SHIP. BRADFORD AND OTHER PILGRIM LEADERS RECOGNIZED THE TRUTH OF THIS. THEY NOW KNEW THAT THEY HAD NOT ARRIVED AT THE LEGALLY DESIGNATED DESTINATION OF NORTH VIRGINIA BUT IN NEW ENGLAND AND WINTER WAS UPON THEM. AFTER 65 DAYS AT SEA THE EXHAUSTED PEOPLE COULD GO NO FURTHER. THEY REALIZED THAT THEY HAD TO "STAY PUT" AND THAT THEY MUST STAY TOGETHER IN ORDER TO SURVIVE. A MEETING WAS CALLED AND NEARLY ALL THE ADULT MAIE PASSENGERS, BOTH "SAINTS" AND "STRANGERS" RECOGNIZED THAT PRESERVATION WAS THEIR PARAMONT NECESSITY. THIS DOCUMENT BINDING THEM INTO A "CIVIL BODY POLIC" IS WHAT WE KNOW AS THE "MAYFLOWER COMPACT." THE ORIGINAL COMPACT HAS NOT SURVIVED. HOWEVER, THE RELIABLE BRADFORD, MADE A TRUE COPY, TERSE AND SPECIFIC. THIS AGREEMENT HAD RAMIFICATION FAR BEYOND THE PILGRIMS' IMMEDIATE NECESSITY. IT PROVIDED BASIS FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT BASED ON THE GENERAL GOOD, TENETS WHICH WOULD REAPPEAR MANY TIMES IN THE FUTURE. 41 OF THE 102 PASSENGERS , 37 OF WHOM WERE MEMBERS OF THE "SEPERATISTS" SIGNED IT. THIS COMPACT ESTABLISHED THE FIRST BASIS IN THE NEW WORLD FOR WRITTEN LAWS. HALF OF THE COLONY FAILED TO SURVIVE THE FIRST WINTER, BUT THE REMAINDER LIVED ON AND PROSPERED.

THE PILGRIMS HAD A COUPLE OF FRIGHTING ENCOUNTERS WITH THE NATIVE PEOPLE WHICH CONVINCED THEM THAT THEY NEEDED TO FIND A GOOD LOCATION TO SETTLE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. BRADFORD, WITH A HANDFULL OF MEN SET FORTH IN A SMALL SHALLOP AND AS THEY SAILED NORTH ALONG THE COAST, THEY FOUND A HARBOR "FIT FOR SHIPPING." BEHIND IT WAS

CLEARED LAND -- A DESERTED INDIAN SETTLEMENT WITH SEVERAL CORNFIELDS AND SMALL RUNNING STREAMS. THIS WAS IT!! THEIR FINAL DESTINATION. SEVERAL DAYS LATER, PILGRIM MEN WENT ASHORE TO BUILD THE FIRST HOUSE FOR "COMMON" USE." IN THE MEANTIME, ON 07 DECEMBER 1620 BRADFORD'S WIFE, DOROTHY, FELL FROM THE MAYFLOWER'S DECK AND DROWNED. BRADFORD MADE ONLY A BRIEF MENTION OF HER PASSING AWAY. HOWEVER THERE IS A WIDELY CIRCULATED STORY THAT SHE COMMITTED SUICIDE, BUT THAT IS DERIVED FROM A WORLD OF FICTION PUBLISHED IN THE JUNE 1869 ISSUE OF HARPER'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

THE FIRST WINTER IN THE NEW COLONY WAS A TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE. HALF OF THE COLONISTS PERISHED, INCLUDING THE COLONY'S LEADER, JOHN CARVER. BRADFORD WAS CHOSEN AS HIS REPLACEMENT IN THE SPRING OF 1621. HE SERVED AS GOVERNOR FOR A TOTAL OF THIRTY-THREE YEARS. HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS GOVERNOR WERE FAR MORE EXTENSIVE THAN ANYTHING THE WORLD IMPLIES TODAY. HE WAS THE PRINCIPLE JUDGE AND TREASURER OF THE COLONY, CHIEF BUSINESS MANAGER AND SECRETARY OF STATE. HE ASSIGNED ALL DISPUTES EITHER TO THE CHURCH OR THE COURT, AND ALL STRANGERS HAD TO RECEIVE HIS PERMISSION TO TRAVEL WITHIN THE BORDERS OF PLYMOUTH. HE COVERED MANY OF THE EXPENSES OF OFFICE HIMSELF. WHEN HE TOOK OFFICE HE WAS JUST RECOVERING FROM AN ILLNESS THAT HAD BROUGHT HIM "NEAR THE POINT OF DEATH." ALMOST NO ONE WAS LEFT UNSCARRED : IN TWO TO THREE MONTHS, BRADFORD WRITES: "HALF OF THEIR COMPANY DIED." SIX MONTHS AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL THE SITUATION IN PLYMOUTH WAS DESPERATE: THERE WOULD BE NO HARVEST FOR FOUR MONTHS, THERE WERE NO CATTLE, AND ALTHOUGH THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO MAKE THEIR LIVING BY DEEP-SEA FISHING AND FUR TRADING, THEY LACKED THE NECESSARY SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE.

WILLIAM BRADFORD'S SECOND WIFE, THE WIDOWED ALICE CARPENTER SOUTHWORTH, CAME TO PLYMOUTH ABOARD THE SHIP "ANNE" IN JULY 1623 AND MARRIED GOVERNOR BRADFORD ON 04 AUGUST 1623 AT PLYMOUTH. THEY HAD THREE CHILDREN. ALICE ALSO HAD TWO BOYS FROM HER FIRST MARRIAGE AND SHE HELPED RAISE JOHN, THE SON OF HIS FIRST MARRIAGE.

GOVERNOR BRADFORD DIED AT PLYMOUTH ON 09 MAY 1657. HIS WIFE, ALICE DIED AT THE SAME PLACE 26 MARCH 1670.