

THE PILGRIM FATHERS



Pilgrims is a name commonly applied to early settlers of the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts, United States, with the men commonly called Pilgrim Fathers. The Pilgrims came from the religious congregations of dissenters who had fled the political environment in England for the relative calm and tolerance of 16th–17th century Holland in the Netherlands. The Pilgrims shared the same Calvinist religious beliefs as the Puritans but they thought that their congregations needed to be separated from the official Church of England. The group arranged with English investors to establish a new colony in North America. The colony, established in 1620, became the second successful English settlement (after the founding of Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607).

The Pilgrims' modern popular story of seeking "religious freedom" has become a central theme of the history and culture of the United States. As stated above they already had that religious freedom in Netherlands but wanted to maintain their English cultural identity. Indeed, the Netherlands was a land whose culture and language were strange and difficult for the English congregation to understand or learn. They found the Dutch morals much too libertine. Their children were becoming more and more Dutch as the years passed by. The congregation came to believe that they faced eventual extinction if they remained there.

Virginia was an attractive destination because the presence of an older colony might offer better security and trade opportunities. Indeed, the London Company administered a territory of considerable size in the region. It was decided that they would not settle too near since that might duplicate the political environment back in England. The intended settlement location was at the mouth of the Hudson River. This made it possible to settle at a distance that allayed concerns of social, political and religious conflicts, but still provided the military and economic benefits of relative closeness to an established colony. Robert Cushman and John Carver were sent to England to solicit a land patent. Their negotiations were delayed because of conflicts internal to the London Company, but ultimately a patent was secured in the name of John Wincomb on June 9 (Old Style)/June 19 (New Style), 1619.[21] The charter was granted with the king's condition that the Leiden group's religion would not receive official recognition.

New investors who had been brought into the venture wanted the terms altered so that at the end of the seven-year contract, half of the settled land and property would revert to them; and that the provision for each settler to have two days per week to work on personal business was dropped.

Between the landing and March, only 47 colonists had survived the diseases they contracted on the ship.[51] During the worst of the sickness, only six or seven of the group were able and willing to feed and care for the rest. In this time, half the Mayflower crew also died.

Adapted from : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrim_Fathers