



*The 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fortune:  
The Forgotten Tale of the Second Ship to Arrive at  
Plymouth*

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# *Background: November 1620 - November 1621*

- November 1620: the Mayflower arrives in Plymouth Bay
- Winter 1620-21: half of the Mayflower passengers die
- Lands and dwelling houses are precious commodities
- Communal efforts to provide food are not successful; the colony significantly relies on help from the Wampanoags
- Fall 1621: a decent harvest; "Thanksgiving" celebrated
- November 1621: the *Fortune* arrives, *unexpectedly*

# *The Ship*



- The *Fortune* was a third the size of the *Mayflower*
- Fall 1621: approximately 34-35 passengers depart from London
  - 18 passengers are known to have been unmarried, 8 were married
  - 16 passengers are known to have been from London, only 3 from Leiden
  - Just 2 or 3 women
- Arrived Nov. 9, 1621 off the coast of Cape Cod; did not reach Plymouth for @ 2 weeks
- Returned to London Dec 13, 1621

# *Thomas Weston: Controversial “Merchant Adventurer”*

- Began his trading career as an importer of products to the Netherlands; after failing to pay customs duties, he was sanctioned by the English government.
- Weston financed the *Mayflower* voyage, but provoked bitter feelings as he pushed for recompenses while the colonists were struggling to survive; after continued poor returns, Weston abandoned the effort
- Weston’s later settlement at Wessagusset (Weymouth MA) failed
- Weston finally went to Virginia, where he was arrested for violating the Colony’s laws

## *August 1621: Weston Launches the Fortune*

Writing to Plymouth's Governor John Carver (who unbeknownst to Weston was already dead):

*"Mr. Beauchamp and myself bought this little ship and have set her out, partly, if it may be to uphold the plantation as well to doe others good as ourselves; this is the occasion we have sent this ship and these passengers, on our own accounte."*

# *William Bradford's First-Person Account*

From Bradford's "On Plymouth Plantation:"

*"For most of them were lusty yonge men, and many of them wild enough, who little considered wither or aboute what then wente"*

**"In November, about ye time twelwe month that themselves came, ther came in a small ship to them unexpected or looked for (she came ye 9 to ye Cap) in which came Mr Cushman (so much spoken of before) and with him 35 persons to remaine & live in ye plantation; which did not a little rejoyce them. And they when they came ashore and found all well, and saw plenty of vitails in every house were no less glade. For most of them were lusty yonge men, and many of them wild enough, who little considered whither or aboute what they wente, till they came unto ye harbore at Cape-Codd, and ther saw nothing but a naked and barren place. . . . So they were all landed; but there was not as much as biscuit-cake or any other victialls for them neither had they any beding, but some sorry things they had in their cabins, nor pot, nor pan, to dress any meate in; nor over many cloathes, for many of them had brusht away their coats & cloaks at Plimoth as they came. But ther was sent over some burching lane suits in ye ship, out of which they were supplied. The plantation was glad of this addition of strength but could have wished that many of them had been of beter condition, and all of them beter furnished with provissions."**

# *The Passengers\**

John Adams#	Stephen Deane	Thomas Morton#
William Bassett#	Philip Delano#	Austin Nicholas
Eliz Bassett (wife)	Thomas Flavel	William Palmer#
William Beale	_____ Flavel (son)	William Palmer (son)
Jonathan Brewster#	_____ Ford	William Pitt
Clement Briggs#	Martha Ford (wife)	Thomas Prence#
Edward Bumpas#	Martha Ford (daughter)	Moses Simmons#
John Cannon	John Ford (born after arrival)	Hugh Stacie
William Conner	Robert Hicks#	James Steward
Robert Cushman	William Hilton	William Tench
Thomas Cushman (son)#	Benedict Morgan	John Winslow#
		William Wright#

\*based on 1623 Division of Land

# members of the 1626 Purchaser group (14 of the 53 Purchasers)

# *On the Fortune: Mayflower Family Members*

- Jonathan Brewster, son of **William Brewster**
- John Winslow, brother of Edward Winslow; later married **Mary Chilton**, daughter of **James Chilton**
- Thomas Prence, who later married Patience Brewster, daughter of **William Brewster**
- Martha Ford, who gave birth the day after arrival at Plymouth; later married **Peter Browne**
- John Adams, whose widow later married Kenelm Winslow, brother of **Edward Winslow**
- Philip Delano, whose aunt Hester Mahieu was married to **Francis Cooke**
- Moses Simmons, whose son married Elizabeth Alden, granddaughter of **John Alden**
- Thomas Cushman, son of Robert Cushman, who later married the daughter of **Isaac Allerton**; lived with William Bradford at Plymouth; became Ruling Elder
- William Wright, whose sister-in-law Alice Carpenter married **William Bradford**



# William Hilton's First-Person Account

Loving Cousin,

*At our arrival in New Plymouth, in New England, we found all our friends and planters in good health, though they were left sick and weak, with very small means; the Indians round about us peaceable and friendly; the country very pleasant and temperate, yielding naturally, of itself, great store of fruits, as vines of divers sorts in great abundance. There is likewise walnuts, chestnuts, small nuts and plums, with much variety of flowers, roots and herbs, no less pleasant than wholesome and profitable. No place hath more gooseberrries and strawberries, nor better. Timber of all sorts you have in England doth cover the land, that affords beasts of divers sorts, and great flocks of turkey, quails, pigeons and partridges; many great lakes abounding with fish, fowl, beavers, and otters. The sea affords us great plenty of all excellent sorts of sea-fish, as the rivers and isles doth variety of wild fowl of most useful sorts. Mines we find, to our thinking; but neither the goodness nor quality we know. Better grain cannot be than the Indian corn, if we will plant it upon as good ground as a man need desire. We are all freeholders; the rent-day doth not trouble us; and all those good blessings we have, of which and what we list in their seasons for taking. Our company are, for most part, very religious, honest people; the word of God sincerely taught us every Sabbath; so that I know not any thing a contented mind can here want. I desire your friendly care to send my wife and children to me, where I wish all the friends I have in England; and so I rest*

Your loving kinsman,

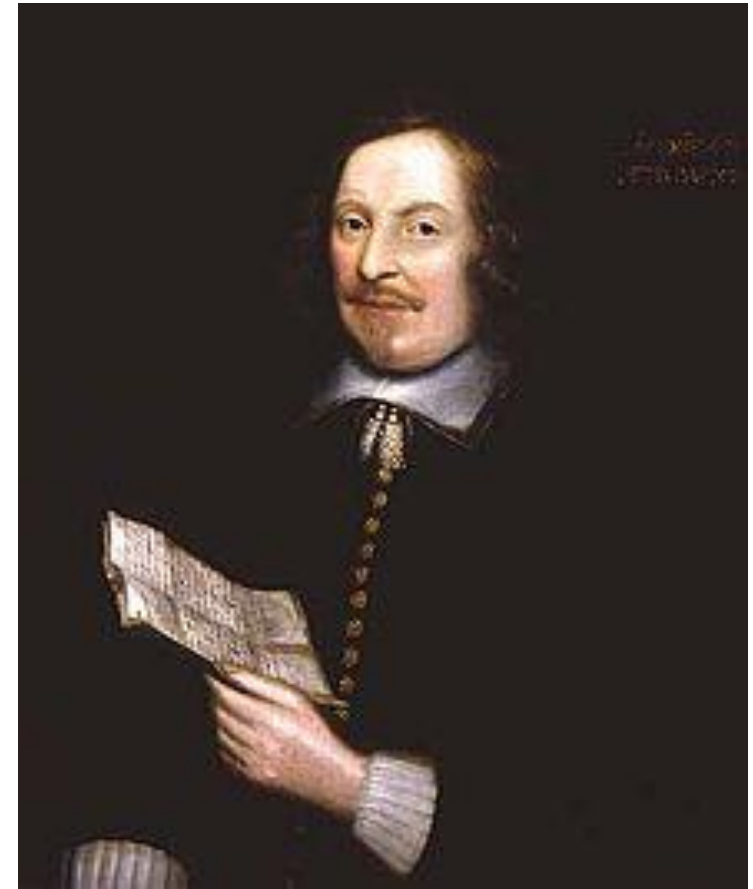
William Hilton

# *“Mort’s Relation”– Edward Winslow’s Report*

Winslow’s Dec 11, 1621 letter to London:

*“Amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king, Massasoyt, with some ninety 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 others.”*

This passage was the basis for the story of the first *Thanksgiving* [published annually by the *Wall Street Journal*]



# *The Reality: Hardships Aplenty*

- The *Fortune* brought passengers, *but no provisions*
- The *Fortune's* passengers were dismayed upon arrival at Cape Cod; Bradford: "***they saw nothing but a naked and barren place***"; some passengers wanted to return to England immediately
- Plymouth was suffering from a severe food shortage; Bradford: "***there was not so much as a biscuit-cake or any other victuals for them***"
- There were no houses or other shelter for the newly arrived settlers, nor any other provisions; only seven separate dwellings and four communal buildings had been erected. Bradford: "***neither had they any bedding, but some sorry things they had in their cabins, nor pot, nor pan, to dress any meate in; nor over many cloathes.***"

# *On the Fortune: Robert Cushman*

- Heavily involved in the Separatist movement in England and Holland; served as the London agent for the settlers in negotiations in London with the Merchant Adventurers
- His initial agreement with the Merchant Adventurers was rejected by Bradford and others while still in England
- Cushman came to Plymouth to try to convince the Plymouth settlers to sign the agreement, after threats from Weston
- He delivered his sermon “The Danger of Self Love” in an attempt to reduce discord among the colonists
- Cushman returned to England on the *Fortune* a few weeks later; he died in 1625 at age 47



# *On The Fortune: Key Correspondence*

- The “Second Peirce Patent,” named for John Peirce
- Correspondence from Thomas Weston, criticizing the settlers for their laziness, and demanding more from the Colony in order to satisfy the expectations of the Merchant Adventurers:

*“I know your **weakness** was the cause of [the lack of cargo], and I believe more weakness of judgment than weakness of hands. A quarter of the time you have spent in discoursing, arguing and consulting, would have done much better.” \**

\* A pointed reply from William Bradford was sent to Weston on the *Fortune's* return voyage

# *On the Fortune: Thomas Prence*

- Future governor of Plymouth Colony, 1634-35, 1638-39, 1657-73; also served as the Colony's Treasurer, president of the Council of War, etc.
- One of the six "Undertakers" in 1627; became one of the wealthiest members of the Colony
- Moved to Duxbury in 1632 with William Brewster
- 1638: led Plymouth troops alongside Mass Bay Colony troops in the Pequot War
- Presided over the first *witch trial* in Plymouth in 1665
- Succeeded in 1673 by Gov. Josiah Winslow, who gave us King Philip's War the following year



# *On the Fortune: Philip Delano*

- Son of French Huguenots who fled France; resided in Leiden
- In Plymouth, Philip lived with Francis Cooke and his son John; Philip became a leading figure in the Colony
- Moved to Duxbury in 1634
- Led effort to build highways and bridges in and around Duxbury
- The first Delano descendants were mariners, whalers and shipbuilders; the family became part of the Massachusetts aristocracy
- Partial list of famous descendants:
  - Franklin Delano Roosevelt      Alan Shepard
  - Ulysses S. Grant                      Martina McBride
  - Calvin Coolidge                      Hunter S. Thompson

# *The Fate of the Fortune*

- On its return voyage in Dec 1621, the ship was loaded with beaver skins, otter skins, sassafras, clapboards, and other valuable cargo, intended for the Merchant Adventurers
- Robert Cushman was carrying the manuscript of *Mourt's Relation*
- William Bradford's letter defending the Colony against Weston's criticisms also was on board
- After a navigational error, the ship strayed into French waters; the ship was seized, and the ship's guns, cargo and riggings were confiscated— a huge loss for the Merchant Adventurers



# *Impacts on the Colony*

- The financial losses from the seizing of the *Fortune* led to a complete restructuring of the financial arrangements between the Merchant Adventurers and the Colony
- Weston abandoned his role as the principal Merchant Adventurer overseeing the affairs of the Colony
- By 1626/27, the Merchant Adventurers' investment in the Colony had come to naught; they sold their shares to 53 "Purchasers"; each head of household could acquire 20 acres of land; animals were divided up amongst groups of settlers; and six "Undertakers" assumed the debts of the Merchant Adventurers
- Biggest impact: *the Plymouth settlers began to control their own destiny*

# *Postscript*

- Severe drought in 1623; crops ruined. Winslow: “***But it pleased GOD, for our further chastisement, to send a great drought.***”
- A supply ship, the *Paragon*, never arrives. Winslow: “***GOD seemed to deprive us of all future hopes.***”
- July 1623: after a public day of prayer, a miracle rainstorm
- A few ships arrive in August 1623, bringing needed provisions and people: the *Anne* and the *Little James*, carrying over 60 passengers
- 1624: Winslow’s “*Good News From New England*” is published in London. “***How few, weak and raw were we at our first beginning... yet GOD wrought our peace for us.***”

# *Questions and Answers*