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Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation

William Bradford (1590 - 1657)

Read by: David Leeson Language: English
 Length: 11 hours 14 minutes Style: Solo
 Genre: Non-Fiction, History, Memoir

Product Formats and Options

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Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation is a journal written by William Bradford between 1630 and 1651 that tells the history of the pilgrims from when they left England in 1608 and settled in the Dutch Republic through the year 1647. The document goes by several names: most commonly it is named *Bradford's History Of Plymouth Plantation* but is also been called *William Bradford's Journal*. The journal was not intended for publication; Bradford wrote that he hoped that "their children may see with what difficulties their fathers wrestled in going through these things in their first beginnings, and how God brought them along notwithstanding all their weaknesses and infirmities". The document has a dramatic history: it disappeared from the Old South Meeting House in Boston during the Revolutionary War and was lost until discovered in the Bishop of London's library in 1856 and brought

back into print. After some years of controversy, the document was returned to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1897 and is now deposited in the State Library of Massachusetts. The Bradford journal is regarded by historians as the preeminent work of 17th century America. Samuel Elliot Morrison wrote that Bradford's simple, yet vivid account made the pilgrims the "spiritual ancestors of all Americans".

William Bradford (March 19, 1590-May 9, 1657) was an English Puritan separatist best known as one of the group of pilgrims that established Plymouth colony in 1620 and as governor of the Plymouth colony in its first decades. Bradford was born in Yorkshire to a well-to-do family. Orphaned at age 7, he spent much time reading as a child due to "a long sickness". At 12 years old he joined the Scrooby congregation, a reformist church group. King James I ascension to the throne in 1603 signaled the end of church reform, and Bradford left England with the congregation to settle in the Dutch Republic in 1607. After 10 years the group negotiated with England for permission to settle in the colony of Virginia, and with the Merchant Adventurers, a group of London financial backers. In July 1620 fifty separatists left for England and joined another fifty non-separatist colonists recruited by the Merchant Adventurers. They dropped anchor in Provincetown on November 11, 1620. That day the Mayflower compact was signed, with Bradford being the first to sign. Tragedy struck when Bradford's wife Dorothy fell overboard and drowned, and then during a widespread sickness that felled half of the settlers in the first winter. On March 21, 1621, the settlers signed a treaty with Massasoit, sachem of the Pokanokets, that called for mutual aid and defense. A month later Governor John Carver died and was succeeded by Bradford. Bradford went on to serve five terms as governor of the Plymouth colony, with the longest between 1621-1632 and 1645-1656.