

Pilgrim Honor Shared by Cape

First Landing Made At Provincetown and Monument Proves It

PROVINCETOWN, May 31—Selectmen and school officials here have launched a campaign that, within the next five years, may result in a revision of public school textbooks to give Provincetown due credit as the landing place of the Pilgrims.

Considerable controversy between this town and Plymouth for historical honors has been waged in recent years, yet the facts are clear and uncontradictory.

Provincetown was the first landing place of the Pilgrims, the site of the drawing up of the Mayflower Compact and of the first birth and death and—most important to the Pilgrims at that time—the scene of the first washday. The first permanent settlement was at Plymouth.

Compact First Of Kind

Some historians regard the compact as a deliberately conceived and drawn up cornerstone of American Democracy. Others more matter-of-factly record that the compact was an instrument drawn up by the majority to serve as a check rein on some of the more lawless members of the party.

During his address at the laying of the cornerstone of the Pilgrim Monument President Theodore Roosevelt declared that it was "the first in the long line of written constitutions with which modern times have become familiar."

More lower Cape residents today can trace their lineage back to Stephen Hopkins than to any other member of the Pilgrim company. Research now being completed by two young Provincetown writers is expected to disclose that Stephen Hopkins not only was a first comer, but alone among the Pilgrim Fathers a first-first comer. It is also possible that he had more to do with the forming of the Mayflower Compact than any other member of the company.

Hopkins Was A Sailor

According to the story, Stephen Hopkins was a sailor on one of a fleet of seven small English vessels that was overtaken by a storm off the Bermudas on July 24, 1609. The fleet in command of Sir Thomas Gotes was en route to Virginia, to "plant a nation where none before hath stood," when it was overtaken by the almost fabulous storm, this "taile of the West Indian Horacano," which was so fierce that "the Sea swelled above the clouds and gave battle unto Heaven," producing a state of affairs in which "waters like whole rivers did flood

in the ayrs."

The Hopkins ship was driven ashore but all members of the crew reached safety. Here they built another ship and eventually Hopkins returned to England where he resumed his normal existence for several years and then leaped at the chance to come to America on the Mayflower. It is highly possible that the ideas of freedom and equality that came to him during the Bermuda escapade were part of the inspiration for the Mayflower Compact.

The Pilgrims or Separatists suffered many years of persecution in England and Holland before they came to this country. Forbidden to hold services in England, they fled to Holland where they were free to worship as they pleased, but even here they were not wholly satisfied.

According to William Bradford, later Governor of the Plymouth Colony, they had a "great hope and inward zeal of laying some good foundation, or at least to make some way thereunto, for the propagation and advancing of the gospel of Christ in those remote parts of the world; yea, though they should be but even as stepping stones, unto others for the performing of so great a work."

One Ship Turns Back

The Pilgrims first set out for America in two ships, the Mayflower and the Speedwell. Twice the Speedwell was forced to turn back for repairs and when it was finally condemned those on board who had not given up hope of making the trip were taken aboard the Mayflower.

When the little ship finally arrived in Provincetown harbor after the oft-told stormy crossing the little band of pioneers was in dire straits. Nothing daunted they immediately set out on the first of three exploratory trips they took while the Mayflower was anchored in Provincetown Harbor.

Descriptions from Bradford's "Plymouth Plantations" indicate that the Cape-tip was much more heavily wooded then than at present. The first trip occupied two days and the little band marched as far inland as Corn Hill, Truro. They first saw the Indians at North-Truro but the startled "savages" turned and ran when approached. At Corn Hill the Pilgrims discovered the burying ground, the corn that later saved them, and an iron kettle.

More Corn Taken

On a second trip to this region some 12 days later they discovered more Indian graves and dwellings and enriched themselves to the extent of 10 more bushels of corn.

On the third trip the party, with Myles Standish in charge, sailed across Cape Cod Bay from Provincetown to Wellfleet in a shallop. They camped one night near the entrance to the harbor and the next morning split up with one group pushing south overland and

the other skirting the shore line in the shallop. By nightfall both groups had arrived at what is now Eastham and a second camping site was chosen on the beach.

During the night strange noises were heard and in the morning the party was attacked by a band of Indians. A few rounds of musket fire routed the attackers. This was the historic first encounter.

The part continued along the shore and eventually to Plymouth. After successfully riding out a storm in the shelter of an island the shallop returned to Provincetown.

The Mayflower left Provincetown harbor Dec. 15, 35 days after its arrival.

Standish Unreasonable

The Pilgrims' relations with Cape Cod during the next 20 years accounted for much of the criticism that has been leveled at them. Time after time the Cape Indians furnished food that saved the Plymouth settlers from starvation and almost invariably the Pilgrims "bit the hand that fed them."

According to most histories Myles Standish was an unreasonable and

hot-tempered man, and it was little short of a miracle that the outrages he perpetrated did not result in annihilation of the colony.

The colonization of the Cape began in 1637 at Sandwich.

During the year 1640 many of the Pilgrims expressed dissatisfaction with their homes at Plymouth and a committee set out to explore the Cape with a view to moving the entire settlement here. The committee recommended the purchase of a tract at what is now Eastham from the Nausets and immediately part of the Plymouth colony moved

there.

A favorite sport of pseudo-intellectuals now is tearing down the character and minimizing the accomplishments of the Pilgrims and Puritans. They were human beings and as such undoubtedly had their weaknesses but there can be no doubt as to their courage, rugged determination and general character.

Speaking at the exercises marking the laying of the cornerstone for the Pilgrim Monument in Provincetown Aug. 20, 1907 President Theodore Roosevelt during a two-

President Taft Dedicates Pilgrim Monument



Styles of 1910 are in evidence in this photograph, taken at dedication exercises for the Pilgrim Monument in Provincetown on Aug. 5 of that year. President William Howard Taft gave the dedicatory address. The crowds and specially constructed bleachers on High Pole Hill at the base of the monument are shown.