



# What's in a Name?

Pilgrims, Saints, Puritans...

The original Plymouth colonists were called many things, but they never called themselves “Pilgrims”.

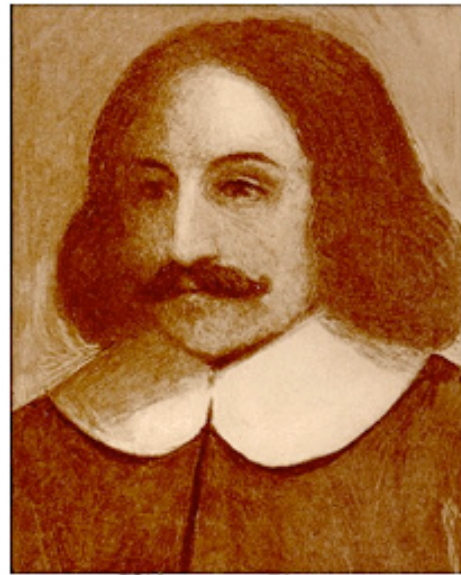


Originally, the people we call Pilgrims were known as Saints, Strangers, Old Comers, Planters, Brownists, and Adventurers.

It was much later that they were called  
Pilgrims

So why do we call them  
Pilgrims?

The name “Pilgrim” came from a letter written by William Bradford who was one of the first Plymouth residents.



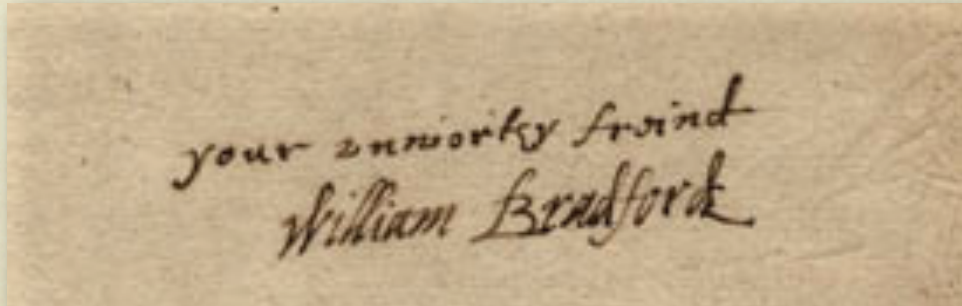
*William Bradford*

While writing a letter to a friend back in England, William Bradford was inspired by a quote from the Bible (Hebrews, 11:13-16) which describes “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” as those who had the opportunity to return to their old country but instead longed for a better, heavenly country.

This seemed to be a very good analogy for the Separatists (Pilgrims) who were leaving Holland for America.

William Bradford wrote:

*“So they lefte [that] goodly & pleasante citie, which had been ther resting place, nere 12 years; but they knew they were pilgrimes, & looked not much on these things; but lift up their eyes to y heavens...”*



*your unworthy friend  
William Bradford*

Over 150 years later during Forefathers' Day in Boston, a song composed for the occasion used the word "Pilgrims" and the participants drank a toast to "The Pilgrims of Leyden." The term then became common in future Forefathers' Day celebrations.





In 1820, Daniel Webster referred to “the Pilgrims” several times in his speech at the bicentennial in Plymouth, Massachusetts commemorating the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock.



In 1825 the term Pilgrim gained even more popularity in a poem by Felicia Hemans “The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers”.

The term “Pilgrims” is still in use today even though the original passengers on the Mayflower wouldn’t know who we were talking about.

Moving onward... what is a  
Separatist, what is a Saint and  
what is a Stranger?

# The Separatists

The “Separatists” wanted separation from the Church of England. They believed that the Church had strayed beyond Christ's teachings and went against the writings in the Bible. Because of this, they separated themselves from the religious community and refused to participate in church rituals, including Christmas and Easter. As a consequence they suffered severe persecution under English law.

A group of Separatists fled to Holland as political exiles, later immigrating to North America on the Mayflower. These are the people we know as Pilgrims.



# Saints and Strangers

The terms Saints and Strangers were used to describe religious differences in Plymouth between those who separated from the Church of England the Saints (Pilgrims) and those who remained loyal to the Church who were called Strangers. Strangers could also be a term for anyone other than the Pilgrim group from Leiden.

GEORGE F. WILLISON

*SAINTS*  
AND  
*STRANGERS*

*Being the Lives  
of the Pilgrim Fathers & Their Families,  
with Their Friends & Foes; & an Account of  
Their Posthumous Wanderings in Limbo,  
Their Final Resurrection & Rise  
to Glory, & the Strange Pilgrimages  
of Plymouth Rock*

REYNAL & HITCHCOCK, NEW YORK

Later in 1945, the terms became well-known to the general population from a book by George Willison titled “Saints and Strangers”.

Why were the Separatists  
persecuted?





King James

The problem with being a separatist in England in the 1600's was that there was no division between church and state. To criticize the Church of England was to challenge the king.

When the Separatists challenged the Church and thus challenged the King they were severely persecuted.



In the words of William Bradford, the Separatists (Pilgrims) were:

*“...hunted and persecuted on every side... Some were... clapped up in prison, others had their houses... watched day and night... and the most were [obliged] to flee and leave their houses, habitations, and the means of their livelihood.”*

But who were the  
Puritans?

In common terminology and many history books, Pilgrims are confused with Puritans. But they are very different.



A classic example of this confusion is during Thanksgiving when the Puritan black buckle hat and large white collar over dark clothes is commonly depicted on Pilgrims.

In reality the Pilgrims did not wear buckles on black hats nor did they wear big white collars or dark clothing.

For hats they wore many different kinds as you can see below.



For clothing black might be worn on Sundays when attending church service. Black dye was expensive so it was reserved for more formal occasions. In their daily life their clothing was usually colorful.





Other than hats and clothes, we also need to consider that the Puritans didn't arrive in America for quite awhile after the Pilgrims.

In general, the Puritans considered themselves to have a “pure” understanding of the Bible and wanted to “purify” the Church of England.

Rather than separate from the Church as the Separatists did, they wanted to change the Church from within. Because of this, they were sometimes called “Reformists”.

The most noted difference between Pilgrims and Puritans was the Puritan intolerance of not only other religions, but of any religious views other than their own and the severity of their laws reflected this.

As the Puritan communities grew in strength so did the rigidity in their laws. The most famous example is the Salem Witch trials.



There is much more to be said of the Puritans and their place American history. But since this presentation is about names we'll continue with that topic.

Now that we know who everyone  
else was...  
who were the Old Comers,  
Planters, Brownists, and  
Adventurers?

## Old Comers and Planters

The Old Comers and Planters were the original Mayflower passengers who came before the other ships arriving in 1623 and after.

Both of these terms came into use during the 1627 Division of Cattle to distinguish between the original settlers who were farmers and the later settlers who were not farmers and had different intentions for immigrating to America.



# The Brownists

A Brownist is just another name for the Separatists whom we commonly call Pilgrims.

The Brownists originated from the religious congregation of the “Brownist English Dissenters”. The congregation was named after Robert Browne, an Anglican priest.

# The Adventurers

The Adventurers were English merchants and their representatives who were willing to “adventure” or risk their money in speculative ventures such as the colonization of North America.

The London Merchant Adventurers financed the Pilgrims on the Mayflower.

So what were the remaining  
passengers on the *Mayflower*  
called?

They were called “Strangers”. They were English people who wanted to improve their life. In England they suffered unemployment, shortage of land and many other economic and social difficulties. These “Strangers” also included the Captain and his crew and the servants to the passengers.

We hope this presentation has helped in  
understanding the many names in  
Thanksgiving history.

For more information  
please see our website:  
at [http://](http://www.ManyHoops.com)  
[www.ManyHoops.com](http://www.ManyHoops.com)