



Peter Brown(e): Mayflower Passenger

"The names of those which came over first, in the year 1620, and were by the blessing of God the first beginners, and in a sort the foundation of all the Plantations and Colonies in New England; and their families...

"Peter Browne..."

William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647, ed.
Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 441-3.

Peter Brown(e): Signer of the Mayflower Compact

"I shall ... begin with a combination made by them before they came ashore; being the first foundation of their government in this place. Occasioned partly by the discontented and mutinous speeches that some of the strangers amongst them had let fall from them in the ship: That when they came ashore they would use their own liberty, for none had power to command them, the patent they had being for Virginia and not for New England... And partly that such an act by them done, this their condition considered, might be as firm as any patent, and in some respects more sure.

"The form was as followeth: IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN. We whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, etc. Having undertaken, for the Glory of God and advancement of the Christian Faith and Honour of our King and Country, a Voyage to plant the First Colony in the Northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, Covenant and Combine ourselves together into a Civil Body Politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the 11th of November, in the year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King James, of England, France and Ireland the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini 1620."

William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647, ed.
Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 75-76.

Peter Brown(e) & the 1623 Division of Land

The 1623 Division of Land marked the end of the Pilgrims' earliest system of land held in common by all. Governor Bradford explains it in this way:

"And so assigned to every family a parcel of land, according to the proportion of their number, for that

end, only for present use (but made no division for inheritance) and ranged all boys and youth under some family. This had very good success, for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been by any means the Governor or any other could use, and saved him a great deal of trouble, and gave far better content. The women now went willingly into the field, and took their little ones with them to set corn; which before would allege weakness and inability; whom to have compelled would have been thought great tyranny and oppression."

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647*, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 120.

Plymouth Colony Records, Deeds, &c, Vol. I 1627-1651 is the oldest record book of the Plymouth settlement. It begins with the 1623 Division of Land, recorded in the handwriting of Governor William Bradford. The lands of Peter Brown were among those designated as "their grounds which came first over in the May Floure, according as thier lotes were case" and described in this way "these lye on the South side of the brooke to the baywards."

Peter Brown(e) & the 1627 Division of Cattle

Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. I also tells of the 1627 Division of Cattle:

"At a publique court held the 22th of May it was concluded by the whole Companie, that the cattell wch were the Companies, to wit, the Cowes & the Goates should be equally devided to all the psonts of the same company ... & so the lotts fell as followeth, thirteene psonts being pportioned to one lot...

"The eaight lot fell to Samuell ffuller & his company Joyned to him his wife (2) Bridgett ffuller (3) Samuell ffuller Junior (4) Peeter Browne (5) Martha Browne (6) Mary Browne (7) John fford (8) Martha fford (9) Anthony Anable (10) Jane Anable (11) Sara Anable (12) hanah Anable (13) Thom Morton Senor (14) Damaris Hopkins.

"To this lott fell A Red [h]eyfer Came of the Cow wch belongeth to the poore of the Colony & so is of that Consideration. (viz) thes psonts nominated, to haue half the Inceace, the other halfe, with the ould stock, to remain for the vse of the poore.

"To this lott also two shee goats."

Peter Brown(e): a 1626 Purchaser

In 1621, King James I authorized the Council for New England to plant and govern land in this area. This Council granted the Peirce Patent, confirming the Pilgrims' settlement and governance of Plymouth. Peirce and his associates, the merchant adventurers, were allotted 100 acres for each settler the Company transported. The Pilgrims had a contract with the Company stating all land and profits would accrue to the Company for 7 years at which time the assets would be divided among the shareholders. Most of the Pilgrims held some stock.

The Pilgrims negotiated a more favorable contract with the Company in 1626. In 1627, 53 Plymouth freemen, known as "The Purchasers," agreed to buy out the Company over a period of years. In turn, 12 "Undertakers" (8 from Plymouth and 4 from London) agreed to pay off Plymouth's debts in return for trade benefits.

The list we have of the 1626 Purchasers comes from the Plymouth Colony Records. It lists the name of "Peter Browne."

Peter Brown(e) & the Plymouth Records

22 January 1621: "Friday the 12th we went to work; but about noon it began to rain, that it forced us to give over our work.

"This day two of our people put us in great sorrow and care. There was four sent to gather and cut thatch in the morning; and two of them John Goodman and Peter Browne, having cut thatch all the forenoon, went to a further place, and willed the other two to bind up that which was cut, and to follow them. So they did, being about a mile and a half from our plantation. But when the two came after, they could not find them, nor hear any thing of them at all, though they hallooted and shouted as loud as they could. So they returned to the company, and told them of it. Whereupon master Carver and three or four more went to seek them; but could hear nothing of them. So they returning, sent more; but that night they could hear nothing at all of them. The next day they armed ten or twelve men out, verily thinking the Indians had surprised them. They went seeking seven or eight miles; but could neither see nor hear anything at all. So they returned, with much discomfort to us all.

"These two that were missed at dinner time, took their meats in their hands, and would go walk and refresh themselves. So going a little off, they find a lake of water, and having a great mastiff bitch with them and a spaniel, by the water side they found a great deer. The dogs chased him; and they followed so far as they lost themselves, and they could not find the way back. they wandered all that afternoon, being wet and at night it did freeze and snow. they were slenderly appareled, and had no weapons but each one his sickle, nor any victuals, they ranged up and down and could find none of the savages' habitations. When it drew to night, they were much perplexed; for they could find neither harbor nor meat; but, in frost and snow, were forced to make the earth their bed and the element their covering. And another thing did very much terrify them; they heard, as they thought, two lions roaring exceedingly for a long time together, and a third that they thought was very near them. So not knowing what to do, they resolved to climb up into a tree, as their safest refuge, though that would prove an intolerable cold lodging. So they stood at the tree's root, that when the lions came, they might take their opportunity of climbing up. The bitch they were fain to hold by the neck, for she would have been gone to the lion. But it pleased God so to dispose, that the wild beasts came not. So they walked up and down under the tree all night. It was an extreme cold night. So soon as it was light, they traveled again, passing by many lakes and brooks and woods, and in one place where the savages had burnt the space of five miles in length, which is a fine champaign country, and even. In the afternoon, it pleased God from a high hill they discovered the two isles in the bay, and so that night got to the plantation, being ready to faint with travail and want of victuals, and almost famished with cold. John Goodman was fain to have his shoes cut off his feet, they were so swelled with cold; and it was a long while after ere he was able to go. Those on the shore were much comforted at their return, they on shipboard were grieved at deeming them lost."

Mourt's Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims of Plymouth, Ed. Jordan D. Fiore, (Plymouth, Mass.: Plymouth Rock Foundation, 1985), p. 41-42.

1 January 1632: "At a Court held the first of January, 1632, in the eighth year of the Raigne of our Sovereigne Lord, Charles, by the Grace of God, King of Engl., Scot., Fr., & Ire., Defender of the Faith, &c...

"Peeter Browne was amerced in 3ss fine for not apearng at the same Court."

Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 5.

& January 1632: "The Acts of the Cowncell between the Court held the 2d of Jan., 1632, & the – of April 1633...

"Whereas there were divers account between Samuell fuller, the elder, & Peter Browne, wherein they differ, the said Samuel being plaintiffe, upon the examining of things, they agreed to refer their cause of Robt Heeks and Franc Cooks, & to haue the hearing of their recconing, and according as they shall

thinke meete & just to make even & sett streight the same at or before the last of this prnt month; and if either party shall fayle to stand to their arbiterm, then to forfeit the full sum of fiue pound starling."
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 7-8.

1633: "The Names of the Freemen of the Incorporacon of Plymouth in New England, An: 1633. Edward Wynslow, Govr. Capt. Myles Standish, William Bradford ... Phineas Prat, Peter Browne, George Sowle..."
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 3-4.

25 March 1633: "According to an order in Court held the 2d of January, in the seaventh yeare of the raigne of our soveraigne lord, Charles, by the grace of God King of Engl., Scot., France, & Irel., defendor of the faith, &c, the psons heere under menconed were rated for publike use by the Govr, mr Will Bradford, Capt Myles Standish, Joh Alden, Joh Howland, John done, Stephen Hopkins, Will Gilson, Sam fuller, Senior, John Genny, Godbert Godbertson, & Jonathan brewster, to be brought in by each pson as they are heere under written, rated in corne at vi s per bushel, at or before the last of November next ensuing, to such place as shall be heerafter appointed to receiue the same. And for default heereof, the value to be doubled & accordingly leaved by the publick officer for yt ent... Peter Browne 00 [pounds], 18 [shillings], 00 [pence].
(by comparison, Governor Edward Winslow was rated 2 pounds, 5 shillings; Edward Doty was rated 1 pound, 7 shillings; and Humphrey Turner was rated 9 shillings.)
Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. 1, p. 9-10

Peter Brown(e): 1650

"And seeing it hath pleased Him to give me [William Bradford] to see thirty years completed since these beginning, and that the great works of His providence are to be observed, I have thought it not unworthy my pains to take a view of the decreasings and increasings of these persons and such changes as hath passed over them and theirs in this thirty years...

"Peter Browne married twice. By his first wife he had two children who are living and both of them married; and the one of them hath two children. By his second wife he had two more. He died about sixteen years since."

William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647, ed.
Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Knopf, 1991), p. 443-7.