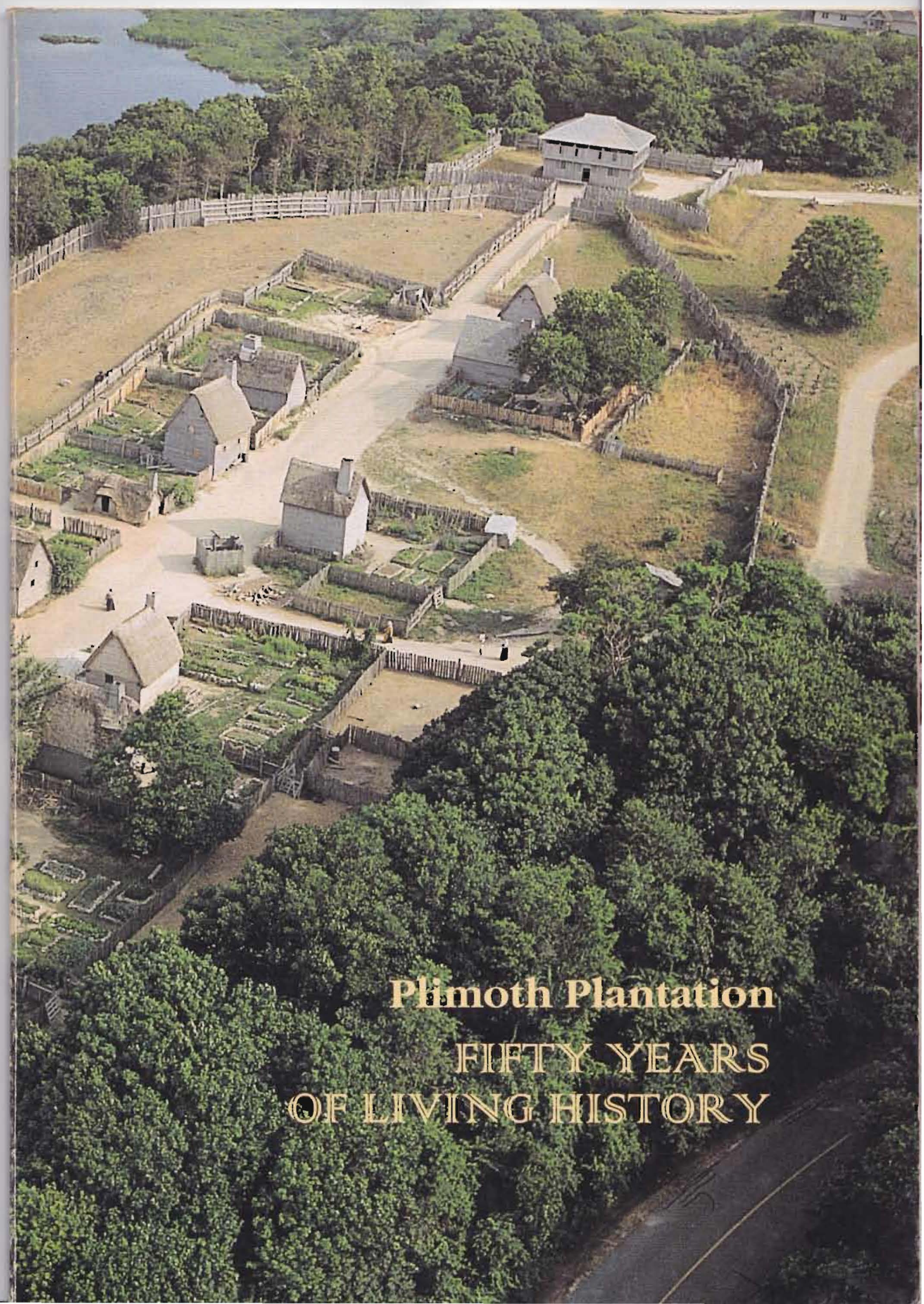
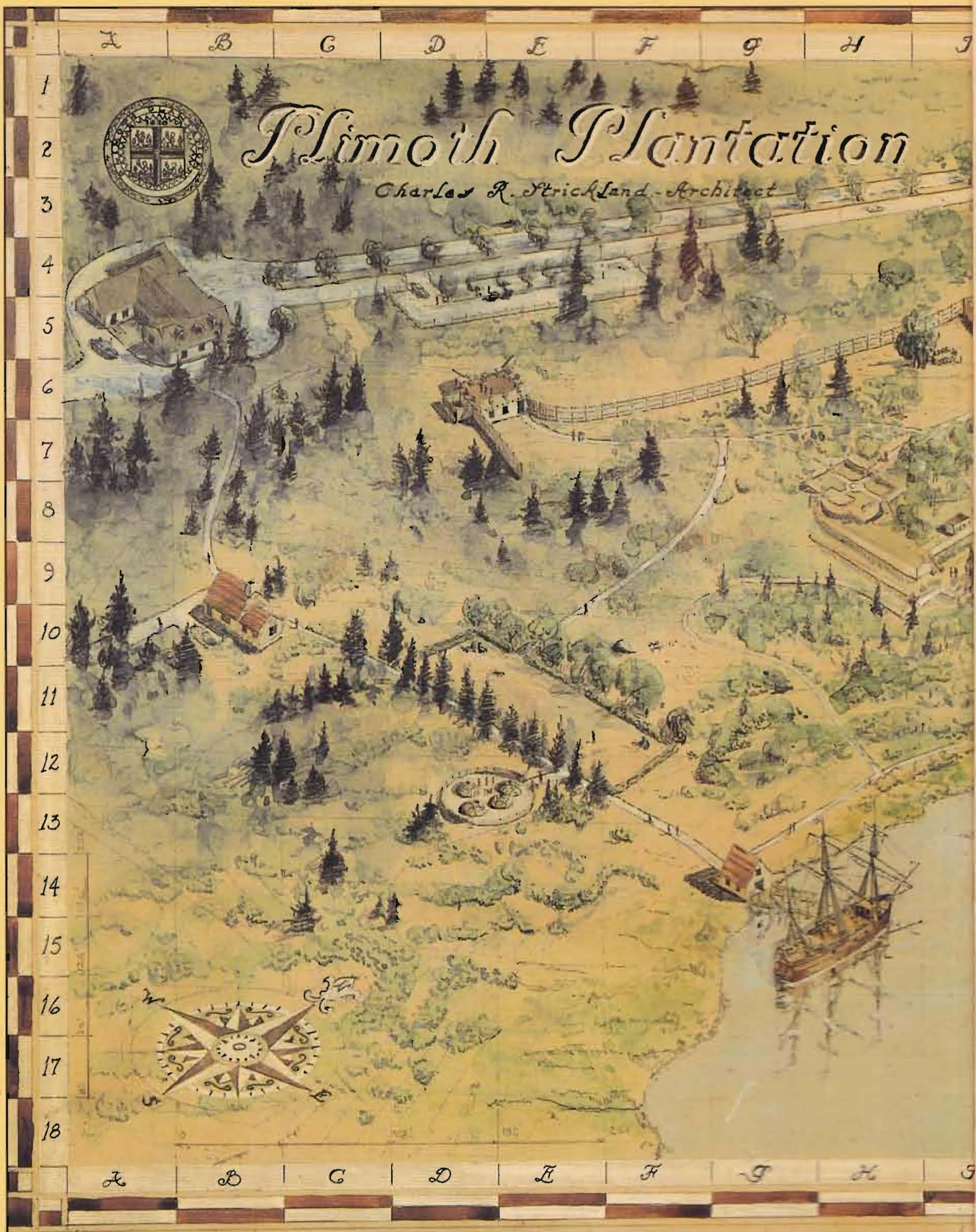


Plimoth Plantation

FIFTY YEARS OF LIVING HISTORY

PLIMOTH PLANTATION

FIFTY YEARS OF LIVING HISTORY



Charles Strickland's 1956 plans for Plimoth Plantation

Henry Hornblower II
PAINTED BY PETER BLOS, 1940

This book is dedicated to all those individuals whose selfless devotion to Plimoth Plantation over the past fifty years has created a unique museum of living history.

Plimoth Plantation

Fifty Years of Living History

by James W. Baker

A PLIMOTH PLANTATION PUBLICATION

© Copyright 1997 Plimoth Plantation, Inc., Plymouth, MA 02362

PLIMOTH PLANTATION AT MID-CENTURY

At Plimoth Plantation in 1997, traveling to another age has become as natural as traveling to another town. Once we stroll by a sign marking the line between the 20th and 17th centuries, the past comes alive with a vibrant clarity. Every sense is engaged. The earthy tones of the little village, set off against the deep blue of the ocean, bewitch the eye. Each fence post we touch, or fabric of a bed curtain we feel deepens our awareness of the year 1627. Pilgrim-era accents tell us that we have left the 20th century. The sense of the past is heightened by the sounds of bygone colonial life: the bite of the ax, the report of a musket, the lowing, clucking and bleating of farm animals. It is very human with all the authentic smells of the pen and cow-yard which, combined with the pervasive tang of wood smoke and the scents of the ripening fields and gardens, evoke the tangible presence of another era.

We enter the settlement through a rough, massive wooden "palisade" or fence. The only 20th-century intrusions are ourselves and our fellow visitors. There are no signs or labels, no velvet ropes or Plexiglas barriers. No educational messages are spelled out in static displays or with the arrangement of mannequins. Each house has a "lived-in" quality; the worn appearance and artless clutter we notice in the small, dark, daub-paneled rooms are more like that achieved by an active household than a museum installation. Our conversation with the housewife who is preparing her mid-day meal is marked by the same sort of little misunderstandings and delightful surprises one expects from someone of another culture — or time.

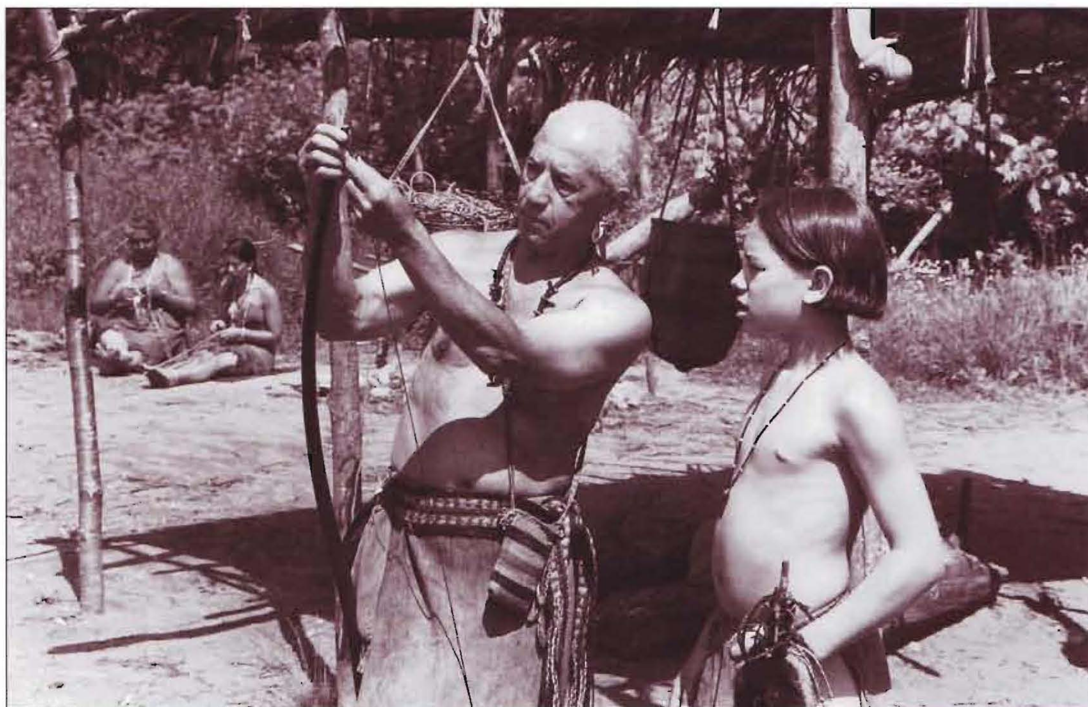
Near the houses are kitchen gardens. There are colorful flowers and fragrant herbs, but beds of carrots, turnips, spinach and onions dominate the scene, not quaintly decorative plants. Further down the village street, a new house is being built. There are no modern workmen with modern machinery, nor are there any surreptitious tape measures or electric saws. Everything about the process, from the tools used on the newly-hewn timbers to the accents and attitudes of the house builders, is representative of the 17th century.

Leaving this "Pilgrim Village," we find the same atmosphere in "Hobbamock's Homesite." This single Native household with its two bark-and-mat-covered structures and flourishing planted fields, is also a multi-dimensional image of the original. Although the Homesite staff does not assume roles as the Pilgrim villagers do, anyone who is in period Native costume is actually a Native American,

carefully re-creating the daily life of the 17th-century Wampanoag People. The past has indeed come alive at Plimoth Plantation.

This is a magnificent and intriguing way to learn about the past, but it took many years to achieve. Fifty years ago in September 1947, Harry Hornblower's determination to tell the Pilgrim Story in a new and engaging fashion resulted in the incorporation of Plimoth Plantation. Twenty years later, a Pilgrim Village replete with a Fort/ Meetinghouse, eleven dwellings and a surrounding palisade, and an Indian Village of a half-dozen native homes had been erected. A spacious Reception Center catered to visitor needs. Two miles north, in downtown Plymouth, the ship *Mayflower II* and two waterfront houses offered extended Plantation programs to the public. Steadily increasing attendance figures attested to the museum's popularity.

The Plimoth Plantation of the 1960s was a successful and well-regarded historical exhibit. However, despite superficial similarities, a visit to Plimoth Plantation in 1997 is worlds apart from a visit in 1967. Dramatic changes occurred at Plimoth Plantation in the late 1960s and after which totally transformed the museum. Innovations in "living history" and "first-person interpretation" propelled what had been a modest regional institution to one with international recognition and acclaim. The Plantation's program has become a standard by which other open air museums are judged. How this came about is part of the engrossing history of Plimoth Plantation.



Pilgrim Dreams: 1945

Plimoth Plantation began when a dream shared by a group of Pilgrim enthusiasts became a reality through the efforts of one man, Henry (Harry) Hornblower II. In 1967, he stated:

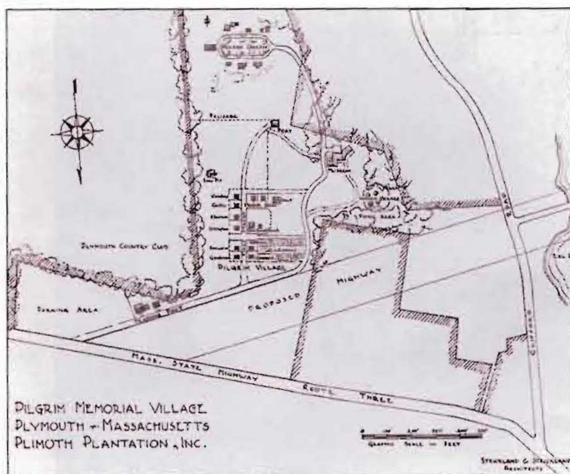
> *Any presentation by me as to how Plimoth Plantation started and has carried on during its first twenty years must by its very nature be somewhat autobiographical, because what you see here today is the outgrowth of my teen-age dream to create an exhibit which would show the visitor to Plymouth the life and times of the early Plymouth settlers . . . My main interest was trending toward archaeological work at important historical sites and to ultimately rebuild the site as it might have appeared in earlier times as an exhibit for public exhibition.*

Ralph Hornblower, ca.1957.
Harry Hornblower's father and Plimoth Plantation's first benefactor. His 1945 gift of $20,000 provided the foundation for the museum.

Harry Hornblower, a Bostonian by birth, had spent his boyhood summers at his family's summer house in Plymouth. Although not of Pilgrim descent, he became fascinated by the story of the Pilgrims and their Native American neighbors. Not satisfied with learning about the town's history through books and the various local historical exhibits, he carried out a number of archaeological excavations around the town. It became Harry's ambition to bring the remarkable story of Plymouth Colony and the Pilgrims' struggle for survival to the people of America in the most effective way possible.

Unfortunately for Harry there was nothing surviving to show what the actual Pilgrim experience had been. Plymouth Rock, a national symbol dedicated to the first settlers, might be a fine memorial, but it required considerable imagination to connect this venerable icon to their dramatic story. Challenged, Harry explored various means for increasing Pilgrim recognition. Ideas such as a memorial highway linking known 17th-century sites and surviving houses was considered only to be rejected. Finally it was the concept of a recreated Pilgrim Village, the "Plymouth Plantation" of Pilgrim Governor William Bradford's history *Of Plimmoth Plantation* on which he eventually focused. Inspired by the restoration of several early Plymouth structures — in particular the 1640 Sparrow House in 1938, and the 1667 Howland House in 1940/41 — by Boston architects Sidney Strickland and his son, Charles, Harry managed in 1945 to convince his father, Ralph Hornblower, to make a donation of $20,000 to Plymouth's Pilgrim Society as the foundation for a future open air museum. The plan was presented to the Society by its president, Ellis Brewster, himself a Pilgrim descendent, in a letter on Dec. 3, 1945:

> *The thought is to begin the erection of a Pilgrim and Indian Village, which would include not only replicas of Pilgrim houses and of Indian tepees [sic], but also a museum where Indian relics might be displayed. Mr. [Ralph] Hornblower thinks too that some kind of an appropriate 'trading post' should be provided where handicrafts, pictures and other suitable things, especially of a Plymouth flavor could be sold.*



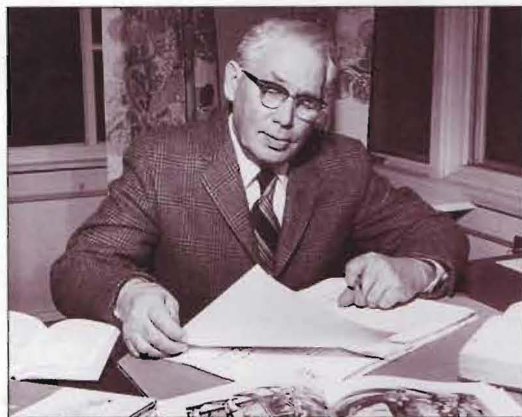
Pilgrim Memorial Village, 1948.
The original design for Plimoth Plantation from the 1948 propectus for the museum.

A Pilgrim Village Committee was formed with Harry Hornblower as chairman. It commissioned the architectural firm of Strickland & Strickland to draw up plans, and it bought 30 acres in Chiltonville, a neighborhood south of Plymouth center, for the pending museum. The Strickland drawings comprised a "1623 Pilgrim Village:" 10 "typical" houses, a fort within a palisade, a windmill, what was termed an "Indian Village" of four huts and a fence, an archaeological exhibit center and a "Trading Post" gift shop. The estimated cost for these structures along with the property and furnishings was anticipated to be $250,000. Additional exhibits to be added later included a replica of the ship *Mayflower*, a later colonial "Village Green" to be created with historical buildings salvaged and moved to the site, and an amphitheater. The total fund raising goal for the project was set at $1,500,000.

It only took two years to recognize that the Pilgrim Village project was beyond the scope of its parent organization. It was decided by the Trustees of the Pilgrim Society that an independent corporation should be created. An agreement was signed by the principles on September 21, 1947, and on October 2nd, Plimoth Plantation Inc. was legally incorporated to serve as a "*memorial to the Pilgrim Fathers... [to further] the historical education of the public with respect to the struggles of the early settlers in the Town of Plymouth, with the expansion of that settlement and the influence of the Pilgrim Fathers throughout the world . . .* " The officers of the corporation, the "Governors," Harry Hornblower, George C. P. Olssen (President, Ocean Spray), Walder J. Engstrom (President, Plymouth Federal Savings and Loan), Henry W. Barnes, (President, Plymouth National Bank) and Ellis W. Brewster (also president of Plymouth Cordage Co.), were all local men who shared a common interest in Plymouth and its historical significance for the nation.

Small Beginnings

At first, events did not progress smoothly for the Governors. The State foiled their first plan by claiming the central section of the Chiltonville property for the construction of a highway link. Not to be discouraged, the Governors decided that a representative "Pilgrim dwelling" should be erected as an interim measure near Plymouth Rock to serve as an information center for tourists and to gauge public interest in the project. This "First House" was built for $3,771 and opened to the public on May 15, 1949. It was put under the charge of the Plantation's first employee,



Arthur Pyle, 1965.
Plimoth Plantation's first employee who became Education Director and Secretary of the Corporation.

A Pilgrim Father Brings Home the Turkey, 1949.
The First House combined new architectural concepts with a traditional view of the Pilgrim story.

Arthur Pyle, and it enjoyed a considerable success in its initial season, attracting over 300,000 visitors. On Thanksgiving Day alone it served some 3,700 people cider and donuts provided free by the Town of Plymouth.

The "First House" had been designed by Charles Strickland and embodied the latest theories about early New England architecture. As he conceived it, the building was a timber-framed, thatched, one-room structure with a large fieldstone fireplace. Its outside was clad with vertical sawn boards. Although this last feature was characteristic of the earliest surviving houses in Plymouth Colony, it aroused strong objections from traditionalists who were used to thinking that the Pilgrims built log cabins just like those of the "Dan'l Boone" era. One critic in particular initiated a controversy in the news media in which he attempted to prove that it was impossible for the Pilgrims to have built anything *but* log cabins. However, since the Strickland designs enjoyed

the support of noted historian Samuel Eliot Morison and other experts in the field, the log-less First House became the model not only for future Plimoth Plantation houses but also the popular conception of Pilgrim housing in American culture.

The Fort/Meetinghouse, 1953.
The building at its location south of Plymouth Rock.

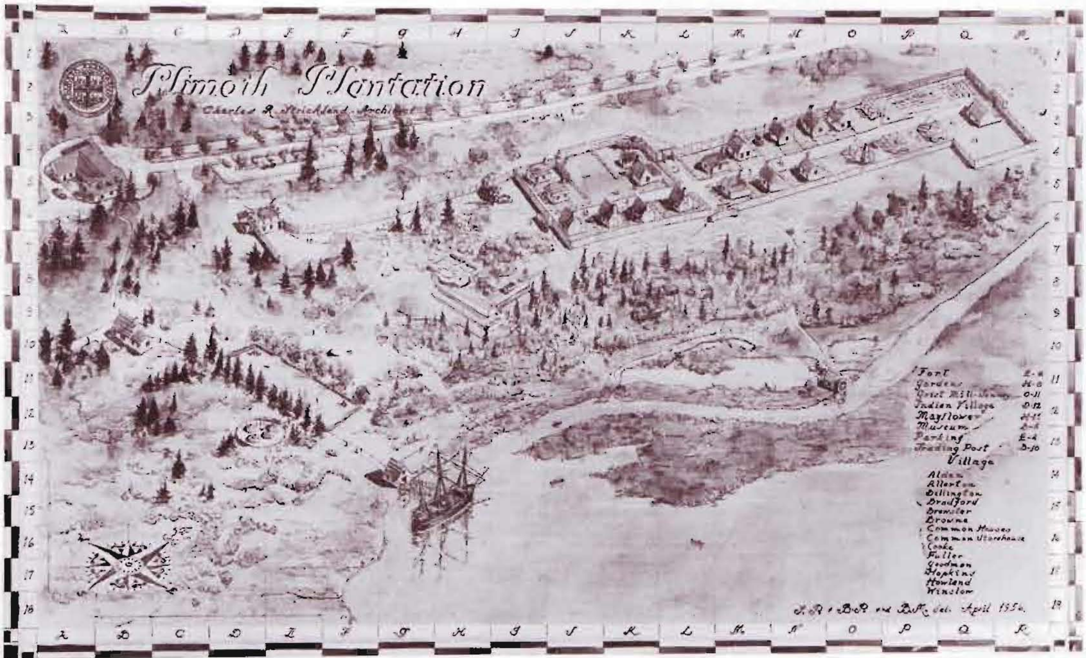
Over the next few years, the work of establishing the new museum continued to progress slowly. A search was begun to locate another site for the Pilgrim Village, while at the same time, naval architect and historian William A. Baker was commissioned to develop plans for a full-size waterline model of the ship *Mayflower*. A second Plimoth Plantation building, the "Fort/Meetinghouse," was erected near the waterfront just south of Plymouth Rock, and was dedicated in a televised ceremony on June 27, 1953. The interior exhibit included antique arms and armor, and the depiction of a church service using store-type mannequins clothed in Pilgrim costumes. In the background, a recording of religious music played continuously during the day.

Cyril Marshall, 1972.
Plimoth Plantation's first exhibit director in his mannequin workshop.

The Hattie Hornblower Property, 1956.
Aerial view of the Hornblower property. The 1627 Pilgrim Village is located in the outlined area, upper right.

Although Plimoth Plantation was well established on the Plymouth waterfront by the mid-1950s, the location of a permanent site for the village settlement had not been resolved. Fate stepped in in the person of Harry's grandmother, Hattie F. Hornblower, who left a bequest to the Plantation of a piece of family property located two and a half miles south of town on the north bank of Eel River in 1955. Strickland & Strickland was commissioned to revise their plans for the Pilgrim and Indian Villages to accommodate the newly acquired property, and preliminary designs were shown to the Governors in the summer of 1956.

Charles Strickland, 1957.
Architect of Plimoth Plantation's original open air exhibits.



The Design for the New Pilgrim Village, 1956. Charles Strickland's concept for the Plimoth Plantation site. Note *Mayflower II's* mooring in the Eel River and a Grist Mill, neither of which were ever implemented.

A Village Arises from the Past

The revised Strickland plans for the new site included the relocation of the Fort/Meetinghouse from the waterfront, thirteen dwellings, six other structures such as sheds and storehouses, a Grist Mill, a Trading Post, and a Reception Center. It was estimated that at least $1 million would be needed to execute this very ambitious plan, and, recognizing that Plimoth Plantation was growing too quickly to be effectively managed by The Board of Governors themselves, David B. Freeman, then Assistant Director of the Museum of Science in Boston, was appointed Executive Director at the end of that year. A Board of Trustees of 10 to 30 members was added to the six Governors and the wording of the purpose of the organization was modified to read:

The purpose of the Corporation shall be to foster public understanding of the Pilgrims of Plymouth whose courage, faith and devotion to freedom has given inspiration to the many other pilgrims who have followed them to a new life in the New World . . . and to carry out other related purposes as set forth in the Corporation's Agreement of Association.

The Eel River site was particularly suitable for the Pilgrim Village as its configuration was remarkably similar to the land in the town where the original Pilgrims had settled. It included a steeply sloping hillside beside a brook with the ocean a dominant factor in the background. Nineteen lots were staked out on the "First Street" for the eventual erection of houses but, to accommodate them, two Hornblower family houses that had come with the property had to be demolished. An old dairy barn was renovated for offices and support functions, and Cyril Marshall, an artist and craftsman who had installed exhibits in museums in the Virgin Islands and Key West, Florida, was hired to create displays.

Finally building began, and the construction of Plimoth Plantation was, at long last,

under way. On May 4, 1957, grappling with a large bulldozer, Harry Hornblower broke ground in a ceremony held on the grounds of the Plantation. Work progressed rapidly and the foundations of the Bradford, Brewster, Howland and Warren houses were laid by August of that year.

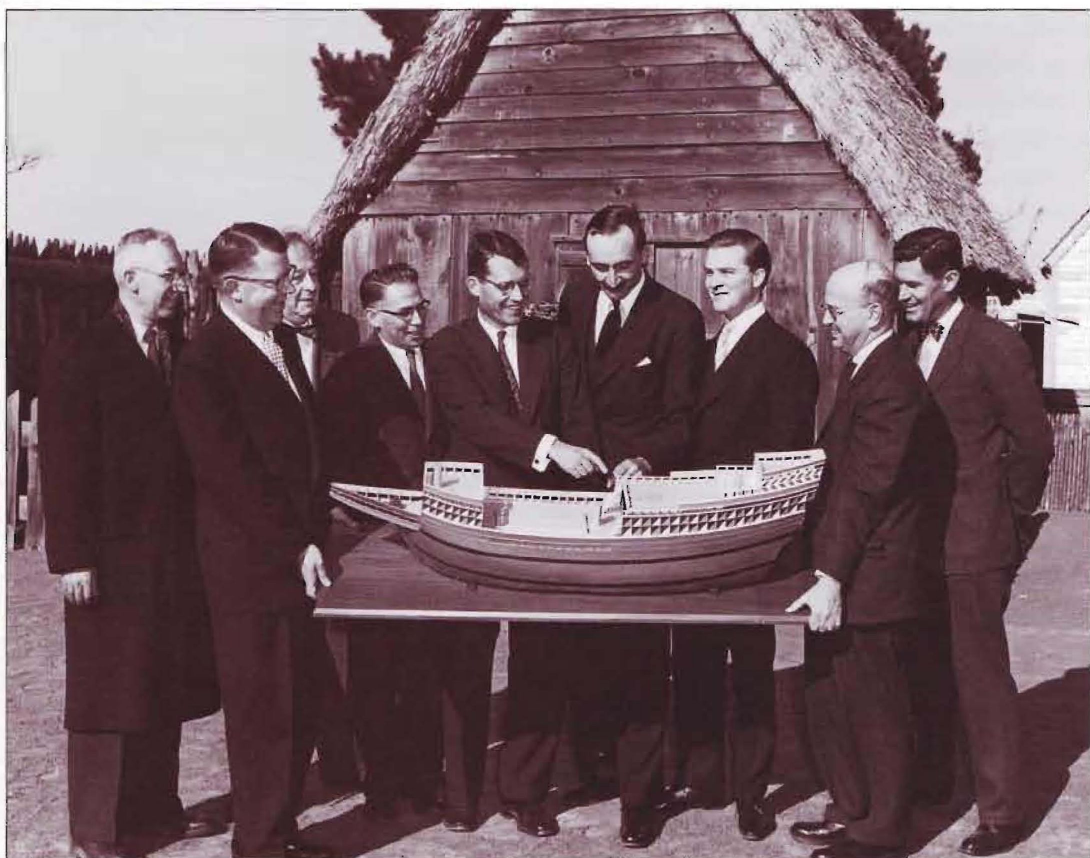
Simultaneously, unexpected and exciting events were occurring across the Atlantic. "Project Mayflower, Ltd." had been established by Warwick Charlton, a public relations man who had his own dreams about the Pilgrims. In recognition of the friendship established between the United States and Great Britain during World War II, it was Warwick's dream to build a full size reproduction of the 16th-century ship and sail it, like the original, to America. Having learned of William A. Baker's research, Project Mayflower inquired in August of '54 whether his plans for the *Mayflower* replica could be made available to them. Furthermore, they informed the Governors that they needed an organization such as the Plantation to berth and maintain the vessel once it arrived. After much negotiation, an agreement was reached whereby Project Mayflower, Ltd. would construct and sail the newly built *Mayflower II* to America, whereupon Plimoth Plantation would take possession of the ship, and maintain and exhibit her to the public.

The Plantation's intentions to create a *Mayflower* replica were abruptly scrapped.

Mayflower Sails Again

The construction of *Mayflower II* began at the Upham shipyard in Brixham, Devonshire, amid a flurry of publicity. Her keel was laid on July 28, 1955. Baker was sent over by Plimoth Plantation to advise the builders and observe the progress of the ship's construction. From the very first, it was given wide coverage in the media. No pains were

Harry Hornblower Breaks Ground at Plimoth Plantation, 1957. The president of Plimoth Plantation maneuvers a large bulldozer to begin construction on the Pilgrim Village.



The *Mayflower II* Agreement, 1955.
Some of the principle actors in the agreement between Project Mayflower, Ltd., and Plimoth Plantation. *Left to right*: Amedeo Sgarzi, George Olsson, Walter Neaves, Arthur Pyle, and Harry Hornblower—from Plimoth Plantation; John Lowe, Dominick Elwes—both from Project Mayflower; marine architect, William A. Baker; William Brewster—Plimoth Plantation.

spared to make the ship as accurate as possible, from the carefully selected timbers of the best English oak to the hand-sewn linen canvas sails and true hemp cordage. Skilled workmen, often elderly men who had worked on the last of the great sailing ships, were hired to build a vessel that would not only reflect Baker's painstaking research, but also be able to sail across the Atlantic as successfully as the original Pilgrim ship.

Mayflower II was launched on Sept. 22, 1956, at a rainy ceremony reflecting the traditional christenings of 17th-century vessels. William S. Brewster, who had become a Governor after his father's retirement from the Plantation's board, was present at the launch. Instead of having a bottle of champagne broken over her bows, *Mayflower II* was toasted

Departure Ceremonies, Plymouth, England, 1957.
Alan Villiers toasts the Atlantic voyage with the Lord Mayor and other officials.

***Mayflower II* at Sea, 1957.**
Mayflower II leaves Plymouth, England. Photo taken by President Harry Hornblower in April, 1957.

with a golden loving cup passed among those VIPs and officials present. The ship slid gracefully down the ways and entered Brixham harbor with a great splash. Alan Villiers, a well-known marine author and sailing master, had been chosen by Project Mayflower early in 1956 to captain the ship on its transatlantic voyage, and he stood proudly at the helm. The *Mayflower II* adventure was under way.

The voyage of *Mayflower II* aroused international interest and excitement. The public was intrigued by gloomy predictions that the little ship wouldn't be able to withstand the rigors of the voyage. However, all the rumors and skepticism only made her the more popular, and daily bits of information kept appearing in newspapers and magazines. *Life* magazine devoted an entire issue to her crossing, having secured a writer, Maitland Edey, on board the ship to write a first-hand account.

On April 20, 1957, *Mayflower II* began her solitary voyage across the Atlantic. In interests of time and safety, she took a more southerly route than that of the original ship but otherwise the voyage was as accurate a replication of a period crossing as possible. Nature cooperated in the search for authenticity. *Mayflower II* — as countless ships before and after her — ex-

Mayflower II Arrives at Plymouth, Mass., 1957.
Mayflower II remained in Plymouth harbor from June 13 until her departure to Newport, RI, on June 17.

perienced both the frustrations of being becalmed, her six sails empty of wind, and then, off Bermuda, the terrors of a violent gale, with giant waves crashing over her hull and relentless winds tearing at her masts.

Mayflower II sailed safely by Nantucket Lightship on June 11, 1957, and arrived at Provincetown on the tip of Cape Cod the following day, not far from where the original *Mayflower* had first landed in 1620 before continuing on to Plymouth Harbor a month later. *Mayflower II*, on the other hand, stayed only two days in Provincetown and arrived at Plymouth just before noon on the 13th to the vast excitement of the assembled media and crowd of eager spectators. The historic 55 day voyage was over. The entire crossing had been accomplished without any modern power or assistance, although a modern wheel, binnacle, gen-

First Aerial View of the First Street, 1959.
The earliest Plantation buildings including the Fort/Meetinghouse, Indian Wigwam—outlined at upper left—Bradford, Brewster, Howland, Fuller and Warren Houses.

erator and radio had been required by law.

The financing of the voyage had run into problems, and the vessel arrived owing almost $200,000 to her creditors. Project Mayflower decided to take *Mayflower II* on tour to earn revenue, and on June 27, *Mayflower II* went on to New York City where she was given a traditional welcome replete with fire boats spraying jets of water and blimps hovering overhead. She spent her entire winter in America on exhibit in Miami, Florida but in the fall of 1958 returned to her permanent berth on the Plymouth waterfront, where she remains today.

Back on land, Plimoth Plantation continued to grow under Freeman's leadership. The Fort/Meetinghouse was moved to the Eel River site in 1958 and opened to the public. The first four houses were completed and dedicated, the construction of others begun, and timber acquired for the Standish house. Additional staff was hired to handle such necessary tasks as marketing and promotion or the creation of the Plantation herb gardens. James Deetz, who would later become Assistant Director at the Plantation, was a young graduate student in anthropology at Harvard and was hired part-time to design and install a single Native "wigwam" at the Indian Camp exhibit—located at the top of the First Street. A local Plymouth physician was instrumental in collecting medical tools, both reproduction as well as antique, as props in the new Fuller House, home of the colony's self-taught physician.

A New Decade Opens with Optimism

The 1960s began auspiciously. Plimoth Plantation was growing steadily towards the fulfillment of Harry's dream and the Strickland plan. The *Mayflower II* debt situation had been resolved. Foundations of additional Pilgrim Village houses (Alden, Cooke, Hopkins, Eaton and Soule) were added in 1964, and the Indian Village was moved from its position at the top of First Street to one behind the Brewster house. Here an expert in the shaping and honing of certain stone tools and projectile points used by the Natives demonstrated this special craft. Money donated by the individual kindred organizations within the Mayflower Descendants' ranks (such as the "Alden Kindred," the "Soule Kindred in America" or the "Gov. William Bradford Compact") established funds to pay for the house of each appropriate ancestor. Lastly, the effectiveness of pre-recorded devices as information sources for the public, both fixed and portable, was experimented with in the Pilgrim Village and aboard *Mayflower II*.

Don Viera, 1961.
Plimoth Plantation's expert arrowhead-flaker displays his skills to students. At this time there were no Native Americans on the staff.

By degrees, Dr. Deetz came to have a greater role at the Plantation as archaeologist and advisor, and joined the staff in July, 1967. He lectured on archaeology, citing the pioneering efforts in historical archaeology carried out by Harry Hornblower and Sidney Strickland as well as his own recent excavations on the grounds of the Plymouth Country Club and on the Howland site at Rocky Nook in nearby Kingston. Cyril Marshall, now Director of Exhibits, arranged mannequins in the Bradford house to depict the 1621 treaty between the

Standish House Interior, 1964.
Hobbamock visits the Standish family in a mannequin display.

Pilgrims and the Wampanoag Indians, and in the Fuller House to show Deacon Fuller and his wife attending to a man with a virulent swelling on his leg. Harry Hornblower accompanied Charles Strickland on an antiques acquisition trip to England, where a number of tools, household furnishings and other period artifacts were bought as furnishings for the various houses.

The most significant of the Plimoth Plantation physical improvements was the erection of a Reception Center in 1964. Attendance increases had seriously taxed available services in the former Hornblower Carriage House, so a $140,000 Reception Center was built to supplant the older building. The modern dark wood and glass structure with its orientation exhibits, museum shop and food services greatly improved the Plantation's ability to handle the increasing numbers of visitors. By 1966, Harry Hornblower could state in the Annual Report that the Plantation had attained sufficient outdoor exhibits to become almost exactly what had been envisioned from its inception. It was expected that the Pilgrim Village exhibit would be completed by 1970, when attention could be turned to other major projects such as an auditorium, an exhibition hall and the berthing of *Mayflower II* at an Eel River location.

The Reception Center, 1964.
The first building specifically constructed for public services contained an orientation exhibit, a gift shop and vending machines for snacks.

Review & Revolution

Once again events were in motion that would dramatically affect the Plantation, this time in its fundamental attitude towards re-creating history. Throughout the '60s many eminent scholars had shifted from a traditional "political" interpretation of the past to one which focused on the lives and experiences of common people. In other words, history with a "social" perspective. The new theories were enthusiastically adopted by the professional staff at Plimoth Plantation, such as Research Associate Catherine Gates, who had been questioning the old platitudes about the significance of the Pilgrim venture. They argued for a greater exhibit emphasis on the everyday culture of the 17th century, both Native and Colonial:

> *Our methods and media of presentation are sound and comprehensive. Improvement would lie mainly in seeking to heighten the sense of reality throughout, for instance the use of live animals and more representation of the daily life of the people.*

—Plimoth Plantation Review and Re-evaluation of Plans: An Interim Report 12/20/65

The new staff was of the opinion that the exhibition of tangible reproductions in the re-created Pilgrim Village and aboard *Mayflower II* was much more professionally important than interpreting the virtues and sufferings of the "Pilgrim Story." With this in mind, Freeman and Deetz made a proposal on August 10, 1965 to the Board of Governors to appoint a Review Study Committee to reexamine Plimoth Plantation's organization, goals, programs and financial condition. The proposal was approved and the interim report of December 20, 1965 reaffirmed the original intention to interpret both "*a material culture and a people about whom there is something notable and worth memorializing.*" However fine it sounded, the uneasy alliance between the traditional historical

Sawpit Demonstration, ca. 1960.
Plimoth Plantation's early demonstrations were mostly platforms from which to speak.

interpretation of the Pilgrim Story and the new emphasis on the material and social culture would soon break down because of the professional staff's rejection of inspirational history.

The review process brought the fundamental concept of Plimoth Plantation into question, from the manner in which the Plymouth colonists and the Wampanoag were interpreted to the Strickland designs for the Pilgrim dwellings. Graduate students Richard Candee and Cary Carson were hired in 1966 to assess the accuracy of the house plans. The study of early vernacular architecture was expanding rapidly, and new information showed that the Strickland designs, while advanced for their time, were in effect obsolete. The Board of Governors decided to draft a new master plan in April, 1966, and hired the firm of Johnson, Hotvedt & Associates of Boston to undertake the project. The cost of developing the plans was not to exceed $12,000, with an additional $1,000 set aside for an architectural model.

In 1967, a conceptual framework for presentation of the Pilgrim story in four basic Exhibits Series was developed by the consultants in conjunction with the staff. Series I portrayed the Pilgrims' European backgrounds solely with indoor exhibits and concluded with the first *Mayflower*'s arrival at Cape Cod. The other three Exhibit Series took up successively

The Master Plan, 1968.
Architect Robert Hodvedt presents the "future of Plimoth Plantation" to museum trustees and staff.

the Indians, the dramatic first decade of the Pilgrim colony 1620-30 and, finally, the colony's development and expansion through the remainder of the century until its absorption by Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1692. Full scale, outdoor exhibits — an Indian camp, the Pilgrim Village and a living, mid-17th-century farm — would present life in the colony at given points in time at each site. Intensive expansion was proposed for the museum.

The plans, as is so often the case, were too ambitious. Echoing the heady optimism of the time, the staff and the consultants had proposed a far more elaborate museum facility than was economically feasible. The designers had visualized a sophisticated underground exhibit space of 85,000 square feet using all the latest museum technology available. In addition to the expanded outdoor exhibits, several other entirely new buildings were proposed. The estimated costs of the facilities described in the 1968 Final Report were placed at almost $6,000,000, a figure which was later raised to $8,600,000. $335,000 was needed immediately to develop the preliminary plans and working drawings so that construction of "Building A," the underground exhibition hall, could be in operation by May, 1972.

Plantation Leadership, 1968.
Harry Hornblower; trustee, Andrew Anderson Bell; James Deetz and David Freeman listen to the Master Plan proposal.

The Board of Governors voted to accept the final report but chose not to proceed any further with the plan, acknowledging the difficulties in raising the money. Although few of the physical elements of the 1968 Master Plan were ever realized, the time and money spent was not wasted. The museum had gained a better understanding of both the problems and opportunities of interpreting Plymouth Colony history. Encouraged by the flow of ideas and new perspectives, the Plantation approached the future in a spirit of purpose and enthusiasm.

Plimoth Plantation's Professional Thatcher, 1967. Peter Slevin, an expert Irish thatcher and raconteur, was one of the Plantation's most popular attractions for over twenty years.

Future Shock 1969

The Pilgrim Village was the first segment of the Plantation affected by the new ideas. The Hopkins House, built in 1969 and using Carson and Candee's modifications of the Strickland plan, was heralded as the most accurate of the Village houses. Its roof was thatched by master thatcher, Peter Slevin, an Irishman recruited by Marshall. A new design was developed by Curator Richard Humphrey for the palisade surrounding the Village to reflect 17th-century principles of defense. Also in 1969, an orientation exhibit was installed in the Reception Center to serve as a model "in a small way . . . for the future [exhibition] hall" by covering the European background of the Pilgrim Story.

However, it was the introduction of "living history" programming that year which most profoundly influenced the future of the museum. It began as an effort to test some of the low cost proposals in the Master Plan and to make the Pilgrim Village more nearly resemble a living community but it developed into a long-term controversy that set the stage for the entire next decade.

To be 'live,' a museum is not simply operating, with someone spinning in the corner or splitting shingles in the yard," Deetz proclaimed, *"a live museum should convey the sense of a different reality—the reality of another time.*

By pursuing this concept of "reality of another time," the new living history theory sought to create for visitors the illusion of embarking into a different time frame. Like a theatrical production, living history made one single comprehensive and cohesive exhibit out of the entire Village, supplanting the former individual exhibits and displays.

A controversial auction in which many of the antiques previously displayed in the Pilgrim Village were sold to provide money for needed reproductions was held in 1972. None of the items were Pilgrim possessions, and many were not even of the correct time period, but the event bothered many original Plantation supporters.

ANTIQUES
at
PLIMOTH PLANTATION

AT UNRESERVED PUBLIC AUCTION
ON
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1972
AT [illegible]
ON VIEW FROM SEPTEMBER 12

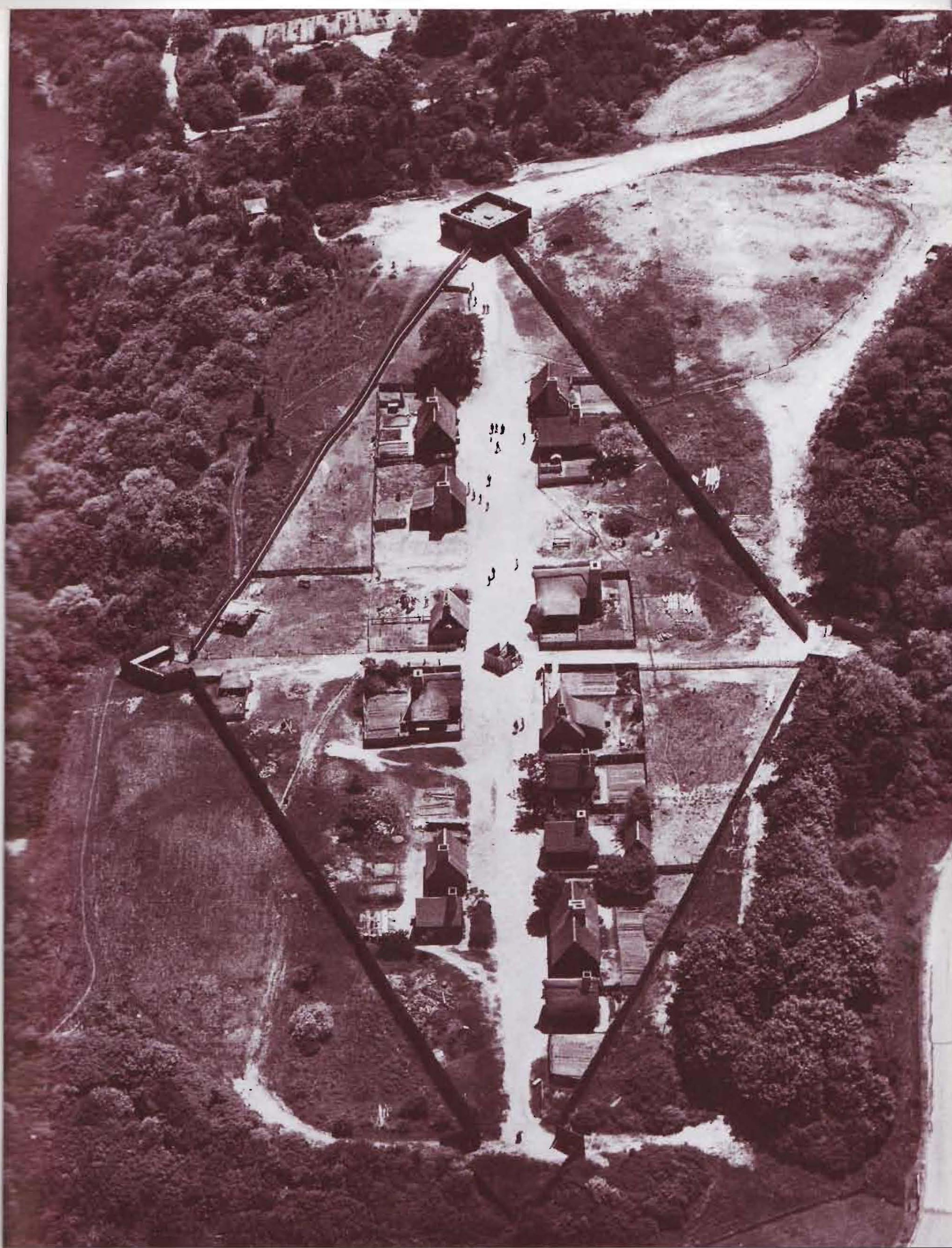
AT
PLIMOTH PLANTATION
PLYMOUTH, MASS.

Auction Catalog, 1972.
Traditionalists deplored the loss of "authentic" artifacts, while others faulted the Plantation for failing to obtain sufficient income from the sale.

Unlike the theater, though, there was no distance between the stage and the audience. Consequently everything had to stand up to close and continual scrutiny. Every element of the exhibit — each house, tool, plant or animal — was intended to be an appropriate and accurate recreation of what was probably present at a specific time in the past. The effort to construct a thoroughly convincing and effective "working copy" of the year 1627 made many of the standard museum techniques, such as signs, antique artifacts, and mannequins into incongruous modern intrusions. The Pilgrims didn't have antiques and mannequins in their houses — therefore the Plantation wouldn't have them either.

This new face on the Plantation did not please all members of the national community who revered the old, familiar image of the Pilgrims. Three years earlier, in 1967, the "old" Pilgrim Village had presented the Triennial Congress of the General Society of Mayflower Descendants with a comfortably familiar impression of the Pilgrim Story. The two rows of neat clapboard and plank-sided houses had an almost suburban air with their trim lawns, decorative herb gardens, foundation plantings and neat fencing. Inside, displays used mannequins to illustrate significant themes or moments in history — such as the Treaty with Massasoit or a Sabbath meeting in the Fort/Meetinghouse — complete with recorded music. Men and women known as "guides" and "hostesses" demonstrated musket firing and timber-sawing, or candle-dipping and traditional colonial chores. Signs and labels provided information about the houses, gardens and many artifacts.

In 1969 the "new" Plantation had emerged — and it shocked and dismayed many. Labels, antiques, displays and mannequins (except in the Fort/Meetinghouse) had vanished. The houses appeared bare and spartan. Kitchen gardens full of vegetables replaced the herb gardens, the split-rail fences which were proving ineffectual in preventing newly-acquired sheep and chickens from pillaging household plots were replaced by animal-proof board fences. The familiar presentation of the Pilgrim Story had been superseded by something called "living history." Traditionalists rebelled, deploring the "*removal of the furniture and mannequins from the houses. Everything looks run down and shabby including* the *hostesses and guides*," reported a Mayflower Descendant. It was like "*a hippy village of today*," one critic felt, and another demanded "*Get rid of the 'realism' so called, and give people some ideals to live up to. Clear out the radicals in command and get some 100% Americans.*" Internal controversy was just as spirited, and a number of older employees declined to return to work in the Village.

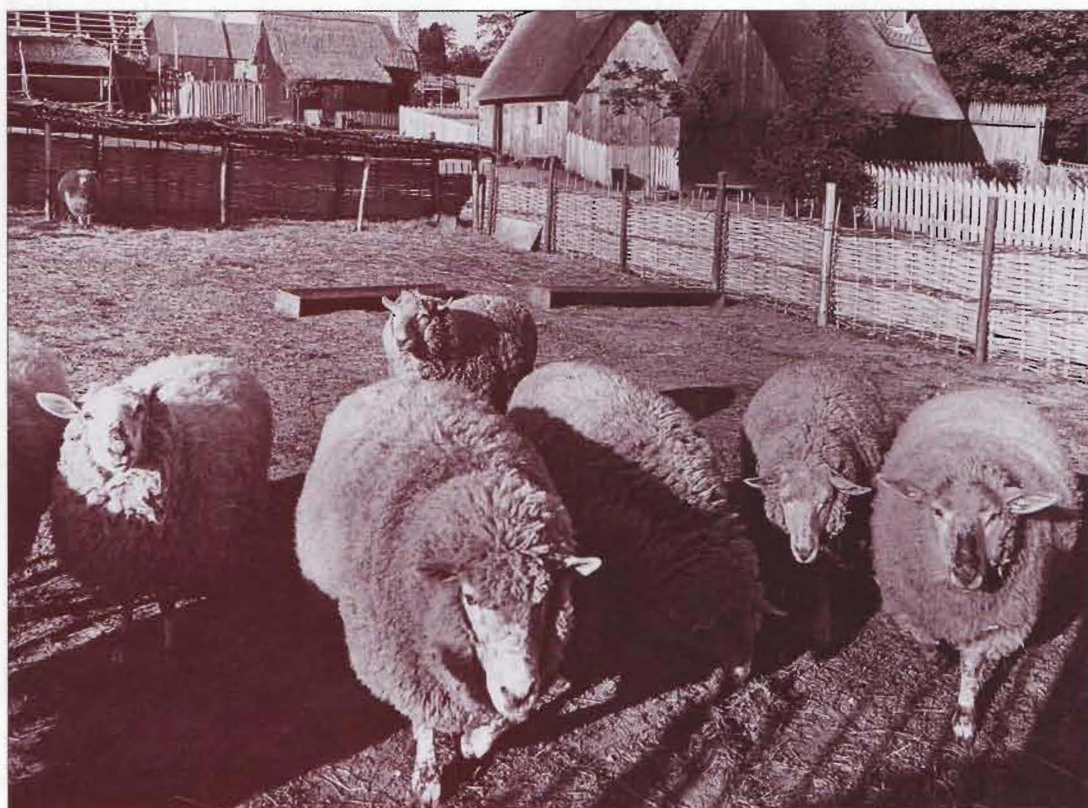


The Diamond-shaped Palisade Design, 1974.
The palisade was redesigned by Curator Richard Humphries to reflect 17th-century defensive theories.

In the spirit of the rebellious '60s, Plimoth Plantation took a prominent position as a player in America's "culture war." The museum's course had abruptly turned from the veneration of early Pilgrim ancestors to an unadorned, unromanticized representation of the social history of the infant colony and its struggling, stalwart inhabitants. At many museums, the ensuing public relations problems would immediately result in a reassessment of the decision, a restoration of non-controversial exhibits, and staff dismissals. At Plimoth Plantation, however, this did not occur. While the changes aroused emotional outbursts, they had no perceptible effect on income or attendance, and, for an institution that depended heavily on the gate, steadily-increasing attendance took much of the sting out of the criticism. Further, the museum's position was supported by many scholars and museum professionals who found Plimoth Plantation's efforts towards historical integrity highly commendable. Soon other museums began to emulate the Plantation's example.

The driving force behind supporting principle over expediency was the president of the institution, Harry Hornblower. Although an investment counselor by profession, Harry was a scholar by training and temperament, and he wholeheartedly endorsed the argument for accuracy of historical interpretation. At the same time, he was not happy about the ill-feelings provoked. He was a peaceable man, and it had been his dream to have the inspirational and historic sides of the Pilgrim story co-exist in harmony. When the choice came down to romance or history, however, Harry stood firm for history.

Plimoth Plantation's First Livestock, 1969.
The Plantation's flock of sheep explore their new wattle-fenced pen. Livestock such as fowl, sheep goats and swine greatly improved the Village's agricultural aspect.



FIFTY YEARS

The changing face of Plimoth Plantation

1997

The cluster of 15 homes that comprises the small colonial village known as "Plimoth Plantation" clings tenaciously to the sides of a gently sloping hillside as if seeking protection in the contours of the land. It is bounded by a wooden palisade constructed to shield the houses from external dangers. At their head stands a foreboding fort which also serves as the meetinghouse. Just to the east lies the vast Atlantic, serene in the summer, violent and destructive in winter. This same ocean was the highway that brought the Pilgrim immigrants to Plymouth on the 106-foot *Mayflower* in the disastrous winter of 1620.

The scene shown above is not the original "Plimoth Plantation" of 1627. It is a thoroughly researched re-creation of the first settlement in Plymouth, Massachusetts, where the original village has been lost to time. The village that stands today has evolved over the last fifty years as the staff of the museum has continuously striven, as new research comes to light, to present the village and its inhabitants in the most historically accurate manner possible.

above: The new Pilgrim Village is laid out and construction begun on the Brewster, Howland, Bradford and Warren Houses. Plymouth's distant Gurnet Point can be seen: a green patch on the horizon.

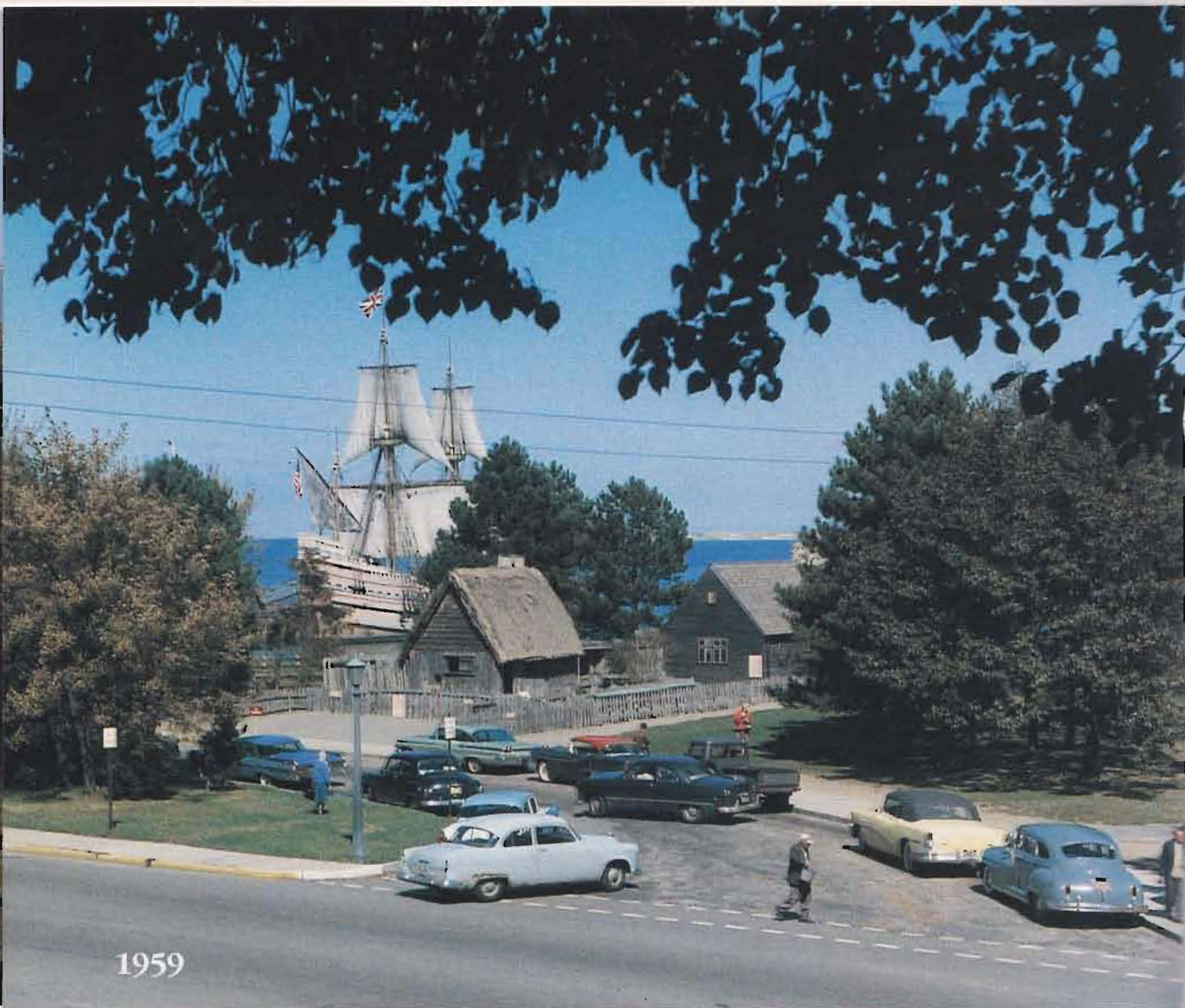
center right: The early houses such as the Brewster House were built by contractors using modern tools and metal scaffolding. Today the Village staff does all the construction entirely in period fashion.

below right: Three of the children in this bucolic scene are daughters of Plantation Director David Freeman. Plimoth Plantation in its early days was very much a family affair.

Remembering The Early Years

Ground was broken in 1957 for a modest museum founded to "tell the Pilgrim Story" in terms to which all America could relate. Aside from the initial dusty days while "First Street," (above) was being constructed, all was pleasant and light, with every house, fence, garden and path designed to be attractive and well-kept — as well as historically appropriate. Every villager was clean and neatly dressed. It was the museum's goal — initially — to perpetuate the romantic image of the Pilgrims, stressing the popular, pious image of them as hard-working, ingenious and reverent pioneers whose stalwart ways and collective courage made them the inspiration for all that was good in America.

above: Much use was made of mannequins in the Village to illustrate domestic scenes or moments of historical importance. Here Doctor Samuel Fuller is shown lancing a patient's "carbuncle."



above: The masts of *Mayflower II* tower over the Pilgrim houses while finned-tailed automobiles of the '50s, like cars today, seek out parking places on the crowded waterfront.

On the Waterfront

The first exhibits erected by the young museum were located on the waterfront in downtown Plymouth, near Plymouth Rock. The thatched-roofed "First House" was built in 1948 and the more elaborate "1627 House" seven years later. Both served as models for subsequent Pilgrim Village houses. Ten cents would buy a visitor a viewing of the "First House" interior: a small, single chamber with sparse furnishings and a children's sleeping loft. The "1627 House" had a shingled roof, stone fireplace, clapboard exterior – and glass windows; it also housed a museum shop, which sold such items as plastic Plymouth Rocks and postcards. Close by, the Fort/Meetinghouse (opposite right) served a dual purpose. It featured a continuous church service, attended by wooden mannequins in pious poses listening to recorded music, while in a corner early weaponry was displayed.

Mayflower II's momentous arrival in June, 1957, was climaxed by the landing of the crew at Plymouth Rock, who disembarked from the Mayflower Shallop onto a temporary pier built for the ceremony. The ship assumed her permanent mooring at the State Pier just north of the "First House" a year later.

Normally, Plimoth Plantation did not dress either white or Native American people as "Indians" but during this filming of the "First Thanksgiving," local residents and students were made up to represent Massasoit's men. Without Massasoit, a caring and compassionate presence from Pokanoket (today, Warren, R. I.), the Pilgrims might not have survived the first few years.

1960

Whither The Wampanoag ?

A Native American exhibit in the Pilgrim Village was of particular concern to the leaders of Plimoth Plantation. In 1959, a bark wigwam was positioned at the top of the village. Dissatisfied, the museum moved it the following season behind the Brewster House where the exhibit was expanded to include six house frames, one or two canoes, a protective workplace or "arbor," and a massive corn mortar. The buildings were unmanned except for the occasional presence of a costumed Pilgrim or Donald Viera, a master artisan who enthralled visitors with his dexterity at fashioning arrowheads.

In 1969, the exhibit was moved south to its present location on the banks of Eel River. Many years before the youthful Harry Hornblower, budding archeologist and future founder of Plimoth Plantation, had discovered plentiful evidence that Native Peoples actually lived there thousands of years earlier. Soon after, Plimoth Plantation asked the local Wampanoag community to help create an "Algonquian Summer Camp." That exhibit was replaced in 1990 by "Hobbamock's Homesite," a representation of an actual Native American farm of the same date as the recreated Pilgrim Village.

above: Visitors coming to the Pilgrim Village during the 1960s could visit the "Indian Wigwam" as well as inspect the colonists' clapboard cottages.

right: By the early 70s, the Plantation's representation of the Algonquin Summer Camp had become more authentic with *wetus*, or native houses, covered in reed mats.

below: Hobbamock's Homesite —the current Wampanoag Program living history exhibit.

above: Suburban lawns and neat beds of herbs and flowers provide an orderly and comfortable view of the colonial past in the early Plantation village. The path of small logs set on end was not a Pilgrim practice.

All Gardens Grow

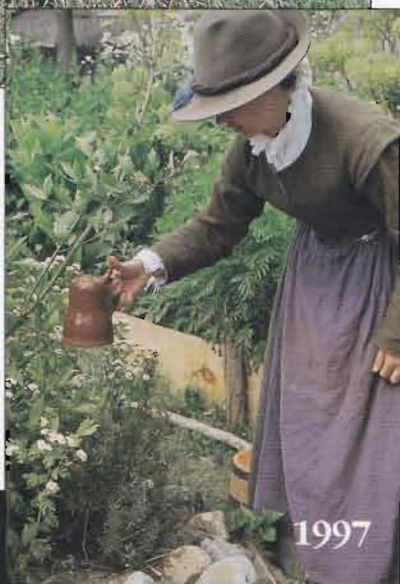
The evolution of the Pilgrim Village has never halted. Typical are the Pilgrim Village back yards which, in the early years, were more decorative than practical — or historical. Tidy gardens, full of pretty flowers and aromatic herbs, were enhanced by plant identification labels, crushed shell paths and neatly mowed lawns. But research revealed their implausibility, and, when the transformation to "living history" occurred in 1969, all previous concepts were swept away. Now herbs share space with sturdy vegetables in the raised beds of kitchen gardens. Chickens range freely and farm animals abound, evoking the sights, sounds and aromas of a rustic farmyard.

Field crops, once represented by a specimen patch of corn and pumpkins, are presently either sown in English fashion or planted in traditional corn hills. The Wampanoag Indian Program cultivates native crops using the same methods as the original inhabitants. The Plantation livestock includes not only chickens and sheep, but also cattle, goats and pigs. Today, nothing is just for show — the gardens and fields yield plants and grain crops, and the animals provide meat and milk.

above: These small San Clemente goats from an island off the California coast are similar to the English breeds common in Pilgrim times.

right: The most appropriate garden for growing herbs in the "living history museum" is that of Plymouth physician Samuel Fuller. Note the use of stones and boards for raised beds.

below: The bound sheaves of harvested rye are gathered together into heaps called "shocks" in a manner typical of 17th-century English husbandry.



The impressive Hornblower Visitor Center, on tranquil Eel River, has two theaters, a restaurant, three museum shops including one devoted to Native American crafts, a major exhibit gallery and, upstairs, rooms for special educational classes.

Welcome to Plimoth Plantation

Living museums such as Plimoth Plantation — where signage is minimal and the land and the buildings are, in effect, the exhibits — need orientation programs and special exhibits to help prepare visitors for the events ahead. An added bonus is the consumption of a tempting regional meal and, perhaps, the purchase of the perfect gift from the museum shop.

Exhibits and collections, food and gifts, which cannot be proffered in the "living history" setting, require accommodation in buildings such as Plimoth Plantation's Visitor Center – now appropriately named after Henry Hornblower II, the museum's founder. Visitor services at Plimoth Plantation went through a long evolution from a carriage house to a more efficient Reception Center, and finally in 1987, the building pictured above.

The old Reception Center now houses the institution's library and the Accomack function room. In addition, the Nye Barn was erected in 1995 near the Visitor Center to give the public the opportunity to see more of the Plantation's livestock collection.

above: Over 500,000 people a year begin their experience at Plimoth Plantation in the Henry Hornblower II Visitor Center.

right: Following the calamitous fire in the Reception Center in 1972, the building is being made ready for visitors the following spring.

below: Breeding stock inappropriate for display in the Pilgrim Village but necessary for the Plantation's Rare Breeds Program can be seen in the Alfred and Grace Nye Exhibit Barn.

Into the Future

Plimoth Plantation's structures and artifacts are the stage on which the Plymouth Colony story is presented to the public. Compare the photograph of colonial family life, above, which was intentionally modeled after a period genre painting, with the first Plimoth Plantation family in 1948 on page 9. Note the realism in the colored picture and the change in dress and demeanor.

Half a century has transformed Plimoth Plantation from a dream into one of the most outstanding evocations of our colonial past that can be experienced anywhere in the United States today. Its success can only be attributed to the dedication and accomplishments of the *people* of Plimoth Plantation — the trustees, executives, members and staff — who alone are responsible for the museum's extraordinary standards of excellence.

The Plimoth Plantation Family is confident that these same high standards will endure. It looks ahead confident of a similar commitment by those who follow in its footsteps over the next fifty years.

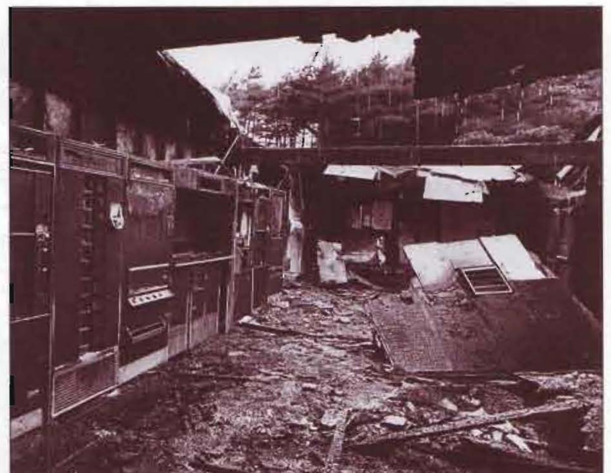
The Allerton Site Excavation, Kingston, MA, 1971.
President Harry Hornblower points out features of the influential Allerton dig to Plantation members George and Joumana Damon.

Pilgrim Village Reborn

Public enthusiasm for the "new" Plantation continued and, with it, came record attendance and income, although expenses for the many new projects sometimes outstripped earnings. In 1971, the museum became involved in several of the 350th Pilgrim Anniversary events, including the sailing of the Mayflower Shallop (a 30-foot 17th-century coastal sailing craft constructed in 1957 to complement *Mayflower II*) with a crew of "Pilgrims" to Provincetown and a re-creation of the "First Thanksgiving" involving members of the local Native American community. That same year, experimentation with historical role-playing began with a re-enactment of the 1623 Lyford-Oldham incident, when a challenge to the colony's leadership was defeated by Governor Bradford and his Assistants.

On December 7, 1972, the Reception Center suffered from a disastrous fire which destroyed a large portion of the upper floor. Fortunately it was possible to repair the surviving segment in time for the April opening of the 1973 season.

The early 1970s were a time of excitement and discovery. Of primary importance was the excavation of the 1630 Allerton homestead site in the neighboring town of Kingston undertaken by James Deetz and some of the Plantation staff. It revealed a unique North American example of "post-hole" construction. Instead of the box-framed construction found in surviving houses, the Allerton house was supported by four great corner posts set deep in the ground on which the rest of the frame was hung. This form of impermanent architecture is also known as "earthfast" construction from the "rooted" nature of its posts as opposed to later framed buildings that sit on foundations. Although known in England, no example of this rapidly constructed, short-lasting style of architecture had been previously found in New England. Challenged by the archaeological evidence, architectural historian Henry Glassie in 1973 designed an experimental structure for the Plantation, the Billington House. This small 15 x 15-foot post-hole house with its split-clapboard exterior, tiny windows and daub-walled



The Reception Center Fire, 1972.
The fire caused considerable damage, but the building was repaired in time for the 1973 season.

Drawing for the Billington House, 1972.
left: Henry Glassie's conception of the Billington House based on data from the Allerton dig.

Billington House Interior, ca. 1973.
below left: The small and crowded interior (under artificial light) of the Billington House.

interior was dark and primitive but far more evocative of the past than the light and airy Strickland houses. Not long after the Billington House came Plimoth Plantation's version of the Allerton House, built on the same principles. This method of construction was used for most subsequent Pilgrim Village dwellings.

Another important change in the orientation of Plimoth Plantation was the establishment of the Wampanoag Indian Program. Previously, Plymouth museums — including the Plantation — had largely relegated the Wampanoag to a walk-on role in the Pilgrim Story. In 1973, the Plantation invited members of the Wampanoag community to oversee the creation and management of a new Native American Studies Program. (The earlier Indian Village had been dismantled in 1969 because of its inauthentic proximity to the Pilgrim Village.) A new location was selected where archaeological digs had revealed the former existence of an actual Native settlement occupied up to ten thousand years earlier. Sachem Lorenzo Jeffers of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and Lavinia Underwood, Vice President of the Boston Indian Council, became Plantation trustees, and a number of other Native people were employed to work in the new "Coastal Algonquian Summer Camp."

Striving for accuracy also had an impact on Plymouth's second most famous historic symbol after Plymouth Rock: the First Thanksgiving. The Thanksgiving holiday had always been a major, heavily promoted event at Plimoth Plantation. All the costumed interpreters, when they were hired, were warned that they would be expected to work on Thanksgiving Day when that famous feast with its many related activities and games were re-enacted for the public. But things changed dramatically in 1973 when research determined that the November date had actually been established in the 18th century and had no bearing at all on the fabled "First Thanksgiving" of 1621 fame. Also, portraying the 1621 event in the much larger, fortified Village of 1627 was felt to be historically incongruous. As a consequence, the old familiar November Thanksgiving observance was entirely eliminated. Instead, six weeks earlier on Columbus Day weekend, a "Harvest Home Festival" was celebrated similar to traditional English harvest celebration (which is what the famous "First Thanksgiving" really was) near Michaelmas, or September 29, as is customary in England.

Harvest Festival, 1976.
Plimoth Plantation moves the observation of the famous 1621 harvest from Thanksgiving Day to Columbus Day weekend.

It took corporate courage to risk disappointing the three-to-four thousand people who descended on the Plantation to partake in the familiar Thanksgiving Day festivities. But the staff felt that accuracy and truth in interpretation was their paramount responsibility to their audience. Fortunately, no one, or very few, were upset by the change. Not only did the new, more folksy harvest celebration become a major draw, but there was no decline in the visitation at Thanksgiving, even though special activities were no longer presented on that day.

The Harvest Festival was modified in 1982 to focus on the 1627 visit of Isaac de Rasieres, the Dutch representative from New Amsterdam who had arrived in Plymouth in early October that year. His surviving description of New Plymouth and its activities became the basic evidence for the physical layout of the Pilgrim Village, and the source for the traditional "Pilgrim Progress" procession which has been staged in downtown Plymouth every year since 1921. The re-enactment of de Rasieres' visitation furnished the best historical justification for Plimoth Plantation's most important fall event.

In the ensuing years, the museum emphasized the material culture of Plymouth Colony rather than the historical narrative. The new format of the Pilgrim Village and Algonquian Summer Camp structures were matched by impressive improvements in the house furnishings and the "interpreters' " costumes as well as re-designed agricultural exhibits. The term "interpreters" was substituted for "guides and hostesses" implying that they "interpreted" — analysed and explained — historical information rather than simply reciting it. Additional curators and researchers were hired for these projects. Deetz, as Assistant Director, taught anthropology at Brown University in addition to his work at Plimoth Plantation. He strove to integrate the resources of both institutions so that Plimoth Plantation became the venue for the University's very active historical archaeology program and the Plantation the beneficiary of the anthropological perspective of the Brown students – a fortuitous marriage contributing to the museum's growing reputation. *History News* complimented the "exemplary operation" of the Plantation in 1975 as a source of 'vicarious historical experience.' *"The idea of Plimoth,"* the article concluded, *"should be the ideal of all of us who seek to impart the legacies of history to future generations. We must provide more than a window on the past; we must offer an open door through which people can explore and appreciate other times and other places."*

Media Coverage in the Pilgrim Village, 1977.
Director David Case and his family (in costume) talk to visitors with WBZ radio personality Carl De Suze (center).

It was anticipated that 1976, the Bicentennial year, would inspire greater public interest in history and bring increased attendance. Unfortunately, despite a busy spring, the season proved disappointing. Tragedy struck twice that fall. In October, the Alden House burned down. The real loss was not the house, which was one of the older Strickland buildings, but the antique cooper's tools and military accouterments which had been in its rear shed. But, infinitely more devastating, Director David Freeman died very unexpectedly less than two weeks later, leaving the Plantation without his intelligent guidance and diplomatic leadership. Governor George Olsson was appointed Acting Director during the grueling search for a new leader and, thanks to him, the day to day routine of running a major museum remained stable.

New Faces & Old Identities

Within six months, the Plantation found, and hired, David K. Case as its new Director. His expertise included a background in marketing and fund-raising, and he brought to Plimoth Plantation a new, non-academic business perspective. Immediately he set about to

First-person Interpretation at the Plantation, 1980.
Robert Marten (right) and other interpreters use role-playing to inform visitors about period military affairs.

better publicize the Plantation while simultaneously actively initiating fund raising programs, both areas which had received little attention since the 1960s. Under his direction a variety of special events were instituted, including "revolving" indoor exhibits and the addition of several novel attractions such colonial baking in a new clay oven, the preparation of timbers for a colonial barn and the reenactment of period weddings – as well as funerals – all designed to boost attendance revenues and raise public awareness of the institution.

June, 1977, saw a joyous event celebrated at Plimoth Plantation: the twentieth anniversary of *Mayflower II*'s arrival in Plymouth. To honor the occasion, from May 31 to June 7, the museum hosted a 20th reunion for the crew, with excursions, cook-outs, formal dinners and many a sentimental toast. Guests included *Mayflower II's* architect William A. Baker as well as Project Mayflower founder Warwick Charlton, her builder, Stuart Upham, the ship's captain, Alan Villiers, and nineteen other members of the 1957 crew. The final festivity was an elaborate 17th-century dinner served in the middle of the Pilgrim Village, marking the initiation of an innovative and expanded "foodways" program (i.e., not only period cookery but the broader spectrum of the raising and processing of foodstuffs in colonial times).

The most far-reaching development in the '70s was the introduction of "first-person" role playing in which the costumed staff assumed historic identities and spoke in the first person about the past. Before first-person, visitors entering the Pilgrim Village were confronted by an exhibit which looked, sounded, felt and smelled very much like an evocation of the past. Visually, the staff working at their period tasks were integral to the over-all impression. Unfortunately, though, just as soon as those people opened their mouths, the spell of the past was broken. They were simply 20th-century employees dressed up in "funny clothes." As this procedure was customary in many museums across the country, no one thought much about it. However, following experiments

with staged re-enactments, several of the staff were struck by the possibility of including the costumed interpreters into a more comprehensive re-creation of the past. Could the "interpreter" be recast as an animated exhibit element, contributing not just to the visual impression but bringing social verisimilitude to the exhibit as well?

It had evolved when Robert Marten, a research associate and interpreter, began adopting a historical persona from time to time in the village, and encouraged others to do so as well. After several years of experimentation, he formulated Plimoth Plantation's unique method of character impersonation. His goal was to provide accurate historical information about "Pilgrim life" in the same way that an anthropological "cultural informant" does for a foreign culture. The method is analogous to imposture, as when a spy or con-man assumes the identity of another person. To do this effectively, the impostor has to learn as much as possible about his model, and adopt every appropriate mannerism, idiosyncrasy and opinion to maintain the illusion.

"First-person" at Plimoth Plantation requires a detailed historical and biographical knowledge of the character being assumed, mastery of the contemporary 17th-century world view, and the adoption of an appropriate period regional dialect. The technique made the costumed staff part of the overall re-creation and shifted the effort of "interpreting" the past to the visitor, who was no longer the passive recipient of rote presentations or lectures. Almost immediately, the program proved successful, and visitor response was overwhelmingly positive. Even the Mayflower Descendants, who had stood aloof from the museum since the fateful changes of 1969 were won over by being able to converse with knowledgeable and engaging representations of their ancestors.

Another innovation was initiated in November of '77. The Winter Education program was the first organized effort to bring Plantation programs into schools, or to use the Pilgrim

Winter Education, 1978.
An interpreter presents one of the early Winter Education programs which combined a classroom visit with time in the 1627 Pilgrim Village.

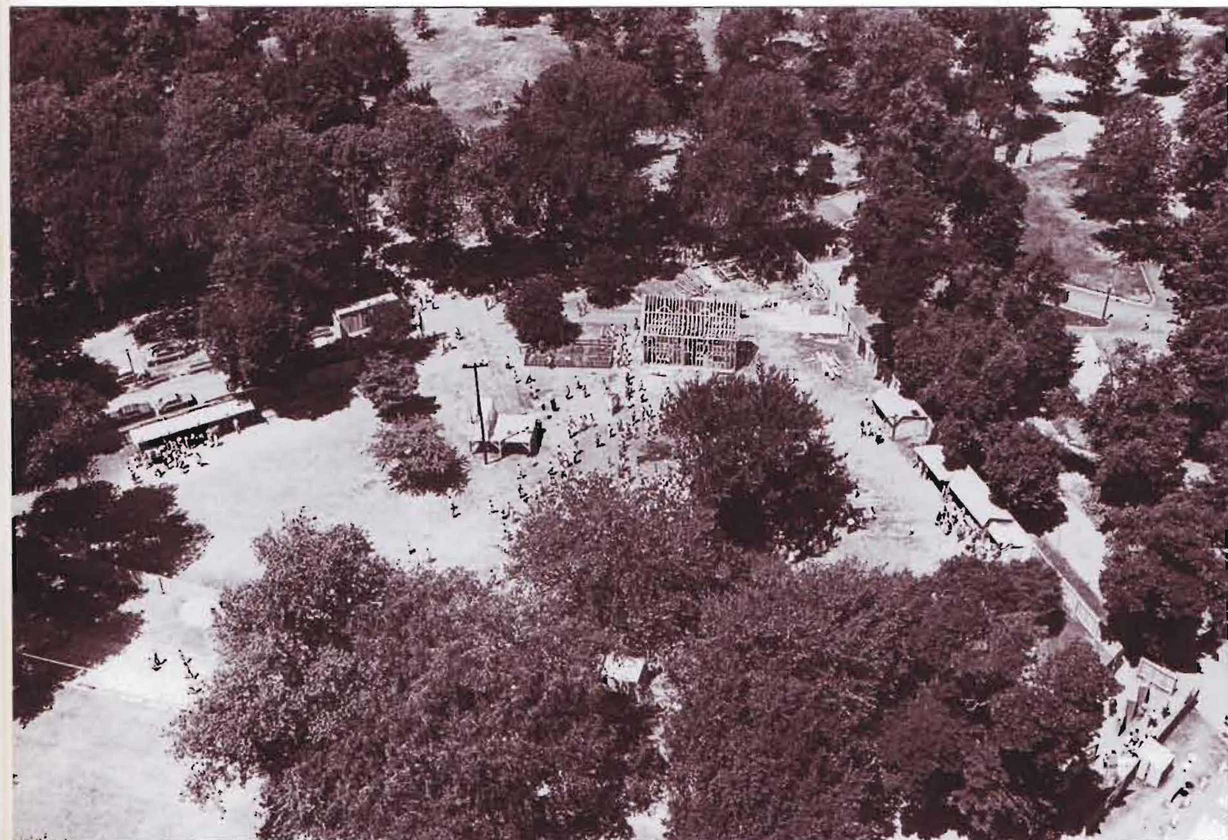
Educational Outreach in the Classroom, 1978. The new education programs which brought Plimoth Plantation staff into the classroom were funded by a series of public and private grants.

Village for scheduled field trips during the winter. "Winter Ed" provided off-season employment for seasonal staff and made use of a few Village houses during the closed season. Beginning with temporarily-assigned members of the research and interpretive staffs, the program sent instructors to school classrooms to prepare students for a hands-on experience in the Pilgrim Village — barring temperatures below 20° or a blizzard!

Dubbed "Education Outreach," the program became an independent department in 1982, and expanded its offerings to include dramas, curriculum development and teacher workshops and training. In the first season, 1680 students took part in the Plantation's programs. Today the Education Department hosts about 25,000 students and other groups — not only at Plimoth Plantation, but throughout the New England region and as far away as California and Brazil!

While education was booming during the late '70s, the primary curatorial project during that period was the construction of a large colonial barn in the pasture just east of the Pilgrim Village. The largest period building ever undertaken by Plimoth Plantation, its mammoth 72-foot by 26-foot timber frame was raised in 1978. In the end, unfortunately, its size proved its downfall; it was simply too big and too expensive to cover with thatch. Because it also had a somewhat doubtful historical justification in the historical Village, the huge frame was later dismantled and discarded.

As is inevitable with a new Director, the staff gradually changed. In 1979, Dr. Richard L. Ehrlich became the Plantation's Director of Education and Research, overseeing the museum's growing educational and interpretive functions. Long-time employee James Deetz, who had been so instrumental in engineering the living history revolution, resigned in August, 1978, lured by the University of California at Berkeley to head the Lowie Museum of Anthropology. Others to leave were the two managers of the Native American Studies Program. As a consequence, the Coastal Algonquian Summer Camp was closed to the public during 1979 and 1980, and an indoor exhibit, "The Timeless Past," was exhibited in its place until the Camp was able to re-open in 1981.



The Market Fair on Boston Common, 1980.
Plimoth Plantation's considerable contribution to Boston's 350th anniversary celebrations.

Jubilee 350 and After

New staff, however, imbued the institution with new vigor, new ideas and new impetus. In 1980, Plimoth Plantation undertook an unprecedented step that led it away from the familiar grounds of Plymouth to the city of Boston itself. The project was the "Seventeenth Century Market Fair" designed to be a part of Boston's *Jubilee 350* celebration. The Jubilee organizers had requested that Plimoth Plantation provide an interpretive exhibit of its own choice to be located on the Boston Common, which would complement the contributions of the Museum of Fine Arts and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. The other organizations agreed to re-construct a timber-framed replica of the 1636 Fairbanks House from Dedham and to conduct a variety of on-site 17th-century craft demonstrations organized by Peter Cook. The Plantation saw the occasion as an opportunity to bring the Plymouth program to the attention of the Boston market and demonstrate the strengths of the new living history and first-person techniques. It was David Case's hope that this exposure would also serve as a vehicle for further development opportunities in the metropolitan community.

The Plantation essentially developed a far more ambitious and impressive exhibit than had originally been proposed. Instead of just a framed building with a few adjacent craftsmen's tents, Plimoth Plantation built a wooden palisade around a large segment of the Common near Tremont Street and erected a substantial exhibit with 13 wooden shops, several stages, gardens and livestock pens. Open to the public without charge, the events were well attended all during the week of July 19 - 25 despite tem-

peratures in the upper nineties. While the Market Fair was a critical success, and clearly demonstrated Plimoth Plantation's great potential, the downside was that it virtually swamped the museum's staff-time resources, and, in hindsight, the results in terms of time and effort invested, appeared negligible.

One dividend of the Market Fair was the hiring in 1981 of the Crafts organizer, Peter Cook, and the Fairbanks House framer, Rob Tarule. Cook became Director of Exhibits, and Tarule his assistant. They devoted their time to renovations of those old Strickland houses still standing in the Pilgrim Village by employing a series of cosmetic adjustments which, until they could be replaced, would make the older houses appear more historically accurate. Several of the anachronistic field stone chimneys were removed or masked, and the vertical planking hidden behind panels of "Portland daub" a cement mixture that was whitewashed to mimic true daub (which is made of clay, straw and manure with a protective coat of lime whitewash). This was paid for by the descendant societies who had originally funded the construction of the houses.

The early '80s remained busy years at the Plantation. "First-person" interpretation was initiated aboard *Mayflower II* in 1980, and efforts to return the vessel to mint sailing condition were inaugurated. In August, 1981, the Mayflower Shallop sailed across Cape Cod Bay to Provincetown, First Encounter Beach in Eastham and Barnstable harbor to commemorate the exploration undertaken along the shore in 1620. This was the shallop's first venture at sea manned by the staff, although a similar trip had been sailed by cadets from the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis during Plymouth's 350th celebration in 1971. The new voyage helped stimulate interest in the museum's maritime program — not just for the shallop, but for *Mayflower II*, which had been relatively ignored at Plimoth Plantation during the preceding decade. Marine consultant Captain Gifford Full made a full survey of *Mayflower II*'s general condition and, as a result, the ship was sent off to the Billings Yard in Stonington, Maine from December to March

The Mayflower Shallop Under Way, 1981.
The Mayflower Shallop, having sailed across Massachusetts Bay for the first time in twenty years, approaches the dock at Provincetown.

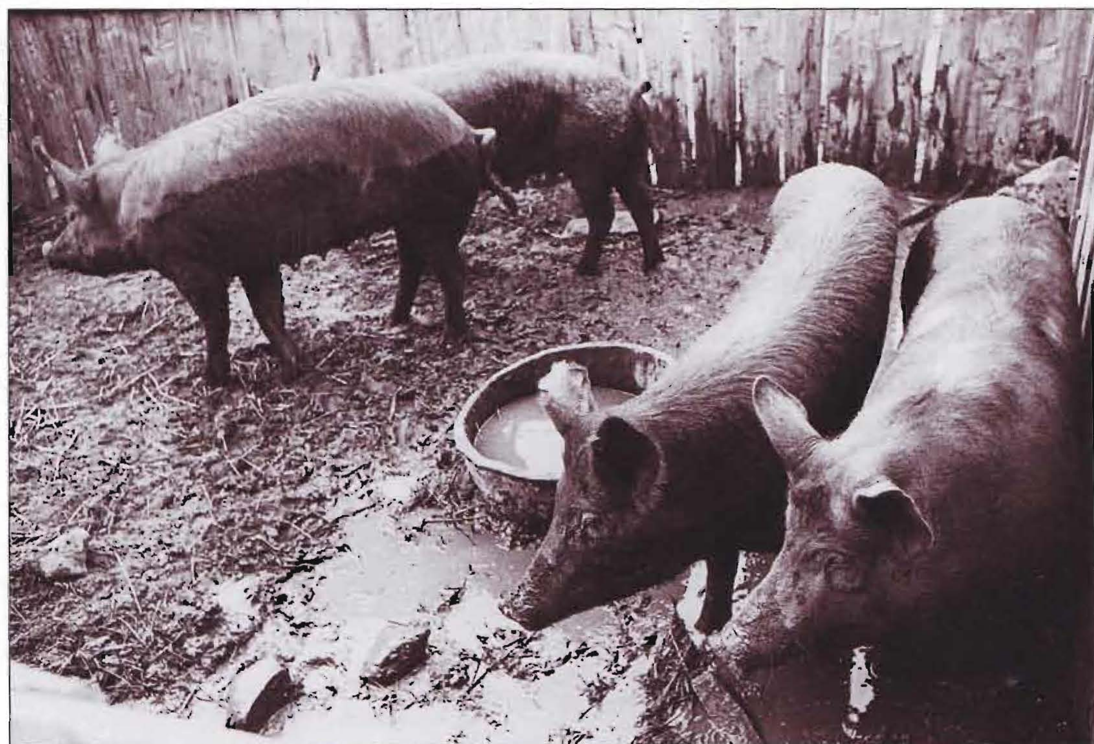
to begin the lengthy process of restoration, which wasn't actually completed until the following winter. Over $655,000 was eventually raised to cover cost of the repairs. Meanwhile, the ship's dockside exhibits on the State Pier were not ignored. A $220,000 orientation exhibit was installed in 1983, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and designed by Krent-Paffet Associates of Boston.

At the Plantation itself, a new "Rare Breeds" program was initiated in 1981 to acquire closer approximations of 17th-century English stock. Animals such as Dorset sheep, wild boar, and Tamworth pigs were acquired for "back breeding," an on-going exhibit which through the years has generated great visitor interest. The Plantation's earlier livestock were ordinary "garden-variety" sheep, pigs and cows, but the new breeds were selected for their specific historical characteristics. The Dorset are an old English horned, white-faced sheep which was notably rugged while the long legged russet-bristled Tamworths are one of the oldest breeds of swine in England today.

1981, however, saw a new controversy develop. It centered on the identity of one Abraham Pierce, who was believed by some to

***Mayflower II* Dockside Exhibit, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, 1983.**
left: Richard Ehrlich talks with Arthur Pyle at the opening of the new orientation exhibit designed by Krent-Paffett of Boston.

New Livestock, 1981.
below: Plimoth Plantation's new Tamworth pigs.



have been a "Black Pilgrim." The dispute arose when a black man was hired to be an interpreter in the Pilgrim Village. At that time, Plantation research had indicated, with a certain degree of historic plausability, that a West Indian might have arrived in New Plymouth on a ship such as the *Sparrowhawk* in 1626 and settled in the colony. When some objected to the theory, the pro-black advocates pointed to the apparent description in a 1642 militia list of 1627 colonist Abraham Pierce as a "blackamore." Subsequently, however, it was pointed out by the Historian General of the Mayflower Descendants that the printed entry did not agree with the hand-written original, and was in fact an error in transcription. Lacking any other convincing evidence that Pierce had indeed been black, the Plantation chose to drop the role — particularly after the second employee to play Pierce resigned.

As staff experience with the "first-person" technique evolved, the need for better support materials became evident. In 1984, a NEH grant underwrote a major research initiative to upgrade the first-person training materials. Six Plantation staff members went to England to consult with such experts in the field as Dr. Martyn Wakelin, who helped develop improved regional dialect materials; Sir Keith Thomas, who advised and critiqued the Plantation's Research Director James Baker's 17th-century world view report (which became an important chapter in the revised Interpretation Manual); and Dr. Jeremy Bangs of Holland's Leiden Archives, who helped upgrade information concerning the Pilgrims' 12-year sojourn in Holland. In addition to other historical and documentary materials gathered on the trip, files were amassed filled with pertinent information on each of the 30-odd towns the Pilgrims had come from or passed through in leaving England. Dr. Bangs continued his relationship with the Plantation, initially as a consultant and then, in 1985, he was hired as its Chief Curator and moved to Massachusetts.

Plimoth Plantation's Long Range Plan, 1985. Chairman Henry Atkins presents the plans for the new Visitor Center to a group of trustees.

Planning for the Future

Continued growth in attendance and successful development efforts in the early 1980s encouraged the museum to revive its long range planning process. A Long Range Planning Committee was created by the Board of Governors and given the task of reviewing the Plantation's position. Although the Committee agreed that there was a serious need to define a plan for the Plantation's future, it found some of the staff's optimism misplaced. The Committee observed that "*the very progress which we all find so satisfying has itself spawned numerous problems as well as opportunities.*" Instead, the Committee focused on the Plantation's immediate needs during the period between 1985 and 1990, while endorsing a continued emphasis on "living history." Conservatively, the Committee recommended incremental rather than grand improvements, and called for the stabilization of the Plantation's financial status which relied on income from visitor admissions, food service and the gift shop for over 90% of its operating costs. They determined that, while "earned" income was still of paramount importance, it

Planting Trees in the Courtyard of the Hornblower Visitor Center, 1987.
The Plantation's Visitor Center opened on October 5, 1987 and averages 500,000 visitors a year.

was imperative to inaugurate a drive for a general endowment fund in order to give the museum the financial independence and stability it so desperately lacked.

Another area which the Committee felt required immediate attention was the physical plant itself, which they termed "woefully inadequate" to handle the growing volume of visitors. It was decided to conduct a major capital campaign with a $10 million goal for the construction of a new and comprehensive Visitor/Education Center, create endowments for the Plantation and *Mayflower II,* and fund such other capital projects as the acquisition of an adjacent property and the replacement of the old Fort/Meetinghouse and palisade. This, the most ambitious fund-raising project ever undertaken by Plimoth Plantation, was initiated in 1985 and brought in over $2.5 million the first year alone.

Heady with its success, the Plantation decided to proceed immediately with the construction of the Visitor Center, estimated at a cost of $6.5 million. The prestigious Boston architect Graham Gund was selected to design the building, which was envisioned by management as the flagship for an equally ambitious expansion plan. The selection of an architect of Gund's stature and the hiring of the up-scale caterers, Creative Gourmets, for the Visitor Center restaurant and fast food facilities, was part of a conscious decision to enhance the corporate image. Case wanted Plimoth Plantation to achieve greater national and international recognition, and become a leader in the cultural community as well as the museum field. That year he hired the museum's first professional development officer, and eventually increased the year-round staff from 83 to 102.

Just as the Visitor Center project got under way, with all its attendant excitement, the Plantation suffered a shattering loss on October 20, 1985, with the death of its founder and

leader, Harry Hornblower. Those who knew Harry intimately realized that it was far more than the passing of a prime mover in the Plantation "dream," as he called it; it was a blow to the very soul of the museum. Never a remote chairman whose presence was limited to ceremonial occasions, Harry was constantly party to the internal workings of the Plantation. Humorous and warm, full of enthusiasm and available at all times, Harry enjoyed the honest affection and respect of all who were touched by him and the institution he had inspired and built. It was the end of an epoch.

Building Anew

The groundbreaking ceremony for the new Visitor Center took place in April, 1986. During the seventeen months the Visitor Center was under construction, the museum hired an outside professional firm to build a replacement for the Fort/Meetinghouse. The Strickland building had suffered from structural flaws inherent in the open deck design (for which there was no known English precedent) resulting in serious problems with rot and leakage. The new plans by English historical architect Richard Harris combined several elements of English timber construction, using the strength of granary wall construction, the open nature of hunting lodge observation decks and other specialized usages to approximate the original 17th-century building. Like the earlier Strickland design, the new fort plan was speculative in nature, but, most importantly, it didn't leak. The replacement of the Fort/Meetinghouse and the Cooke House, one of the older dwellings in the Village, brought a heightened morale to the Curatorial staff which had been overshadowed by Interpretation for almost a decade.

To explain to the public the methodology behind the creation and execution of "living history," an indoor exhibit funded by NEH, "Re-creating the Past," was set up in the old

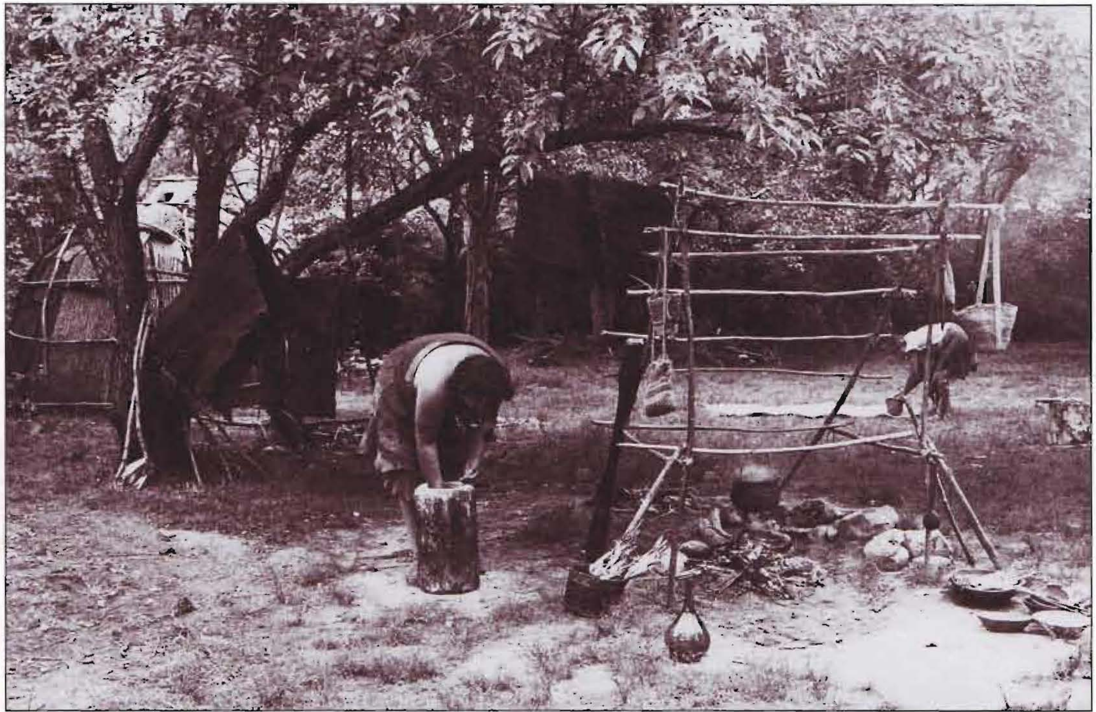
The Second Fort/Meetinghouse, 1988.
Constructed by Dovetail Woodworking of Winchester, N.H., the new Fort/Meetinghouse was dedicated on September 4, 1986.

Carriage House "Movie Building" and then moved to the newly opened Visitor Center in 1987 to illustrate how historians and researchers make use of documentary and material evidence to recreate the "living" past. It served an important function in that it answered those questions which could not be asked directly of the "first-person" staff in the Village.

Wetu III, 1981.
The Wampanoag Indian Program's dedicated educational exhibit site. It was located in an area isolated from regular visitor travel.

Not to be outdone, the Wampanoag Summer Campsite was enlarged by the construction of a round, bark-covered house or *wetu* next to the existing mat-covered Native house. An additional *wetu* was built at some distance from the public site for use in Education Outreach programs. Behind the scenes, the Education Outreach Department was expanded and six full-time Museum Teachers hired in addition to off-season interpreters.

The highlight of the 1987 season was the official opening of the 50,000 square feet Visitor Center on September 19. The building had been put to use even before completion, however, when a colloquium on 17th-century religion brought together a number of eminent religious historians. Their meetings were held amid a less than spiritual buzz of saws and clatter of hammers finishing up last minute construction details.



Plimoth Plantation took advantage of the aggressive enthusiasm of the 1980s to greatly expand its horizons. The museum's unprecedented fund raising campaign and the impressive "post-modern" Visitor Center redeemed the promise of the museum's potential. The number of interpretive personnel was increased in anticipation of future attendance and revenue growth from the operation of the Visitor Center. Support departments such as Agriculture or Interpretive Artisans, who were responsible for the period maintenance of the site, were gradually integrated into the overall "first-person" program.

Visitor attendance at the Plantation rose steadily during 1987 and 1988. Interest in the new building and the museum's well-publicized living history program kept Plimoth Plantation's figures up even as they began omi-

nously to decline at sister institutions with the downturn in the nation's economy. The Visitor Center, after some shakedown problems, was well received by the public; visitation was at new highs and the museum shop enjoyed impressive sales.

All appeared deceptively golden. The Capital Campaign was completed a year early in 1989 with the announced achievement of its $10 million goal. However, it soon became apparent that the Visitor Center's construction costs had gone far over budget, and the unexpected expenses demanded extreme cut-backs and curtailment of capital expenditures. The Board reorganized top management so that Case became Chief Executive Officer with the emphatic directive to devote more of his time to development and Trustee involvement, while transferring the operation of the museum to Ehrlich as Chief Operations Officer.

Almost without warning, the budgetary problems appeared overwhelming. With the over-spending on the Visitor Center and the resultant fiscal dilemma, management was forced to eliminate jobs and defer raises. Moreover, the monetary problems underscored the extreme limitations posed by the seasonal nature of the Plantation's "year" and the resultant income flow, or lack thereof. For four months of every year, when the museum was closed to visitors, its only income came from the Education Outreach programs, which was relatively insignificant. Stunned by the magnitude of the "luxurious" Visitor Center as contrasted with their own impoverished state, the employees began to lose their trust in the Plantation leadership, and corporate morale plunged. To compensate, management considered expanding Plimoth Plantation's nine-month season into a year-round operation. As it was apparent that winter weather and low tourist visitation to Plymouth during this period would make it impractical to keep the entire museum open, alternative winter programs were considered. These included such solutions as keeping the Visitor Center operating year round with changing exhibits in its Davis Galleries, heated late-17th century houses to be constructed close by, an indoor crafts center and a new Wampanoag Orientation and Winter Program Center.

Stocking Up

Before embarking on more capital expenditures, however, priority was given to improving attendance and existing programs and exhibits, as the Plantation still derived its principal financial support from public visitation. New audiences were targeted. An appearance by the Crown Prince of Japan, for example, was followed by an increased interest in the Plantation by Japanese travelers, and the establishment of ties with Shichigahama, Plymouth's sister city in Japan. Plantation representatives went to Europe and Asia on trade missions for the specific purpose of cultivating foreign visitation.

17th-Century Dining in the Visitor Center, 1988. The Plantation's catering service, Creative Gourmet, serves 17th-century cuisine at a dinner "hosted" by characters from 1650s Plymouth.

A 17th-century dining program was introduced by the Plantation caterers offering a period bill of fare served in a modern setting and attended by role-playing musicians and role-playing "hosts." The meals proved very popu-

lar, although visitors on Thanksgiving Day were disappointed that "Pilgrim" cookery was quite different from the anticipated traditional Thanksgiving dinner. Subsequently, a 19th-century style Thanksgiving dinner was added in recognition of the essentially Victorian nature of the holiday meal.

Changes were made in the Wampanoag Indian Program as well. The open air site was redesigned by Program Director, Nanepashemet, to represent a historically specific re-creation of the residence of the Wampanoag *pniese,* or warrior/counsellor, Hobbamock, who, with his family, had lived just south of the Plymouth settlement in 1627. A *pniese* was an important man among the Wampanoag, and rated a more substantial *wetu,* or dwelling, such as a *neesquttow* , a "house with two fires," or a *puttuckakaun,* or "round house." The Plantation hired consultant Jeff Kalin to construct a bark-covered *neesquttow* placing it next to the existing round *wetu*. In succeeding years, the accuracy and effectiveness of the new "Hobbamock's Homesite" enabled a far better presentation of an actual historical Native presence in colonial Plymouth.

Back in the Village, efforts were made to improve the livestock program. Specific historic breeds — or breeds whose lineage and characteristics extend largely unchanged back to Pilgrim times or earlier — that best represented

Agricultural Center Fire, 1992.
above: The aftermath of the calamitous February 18th fire.

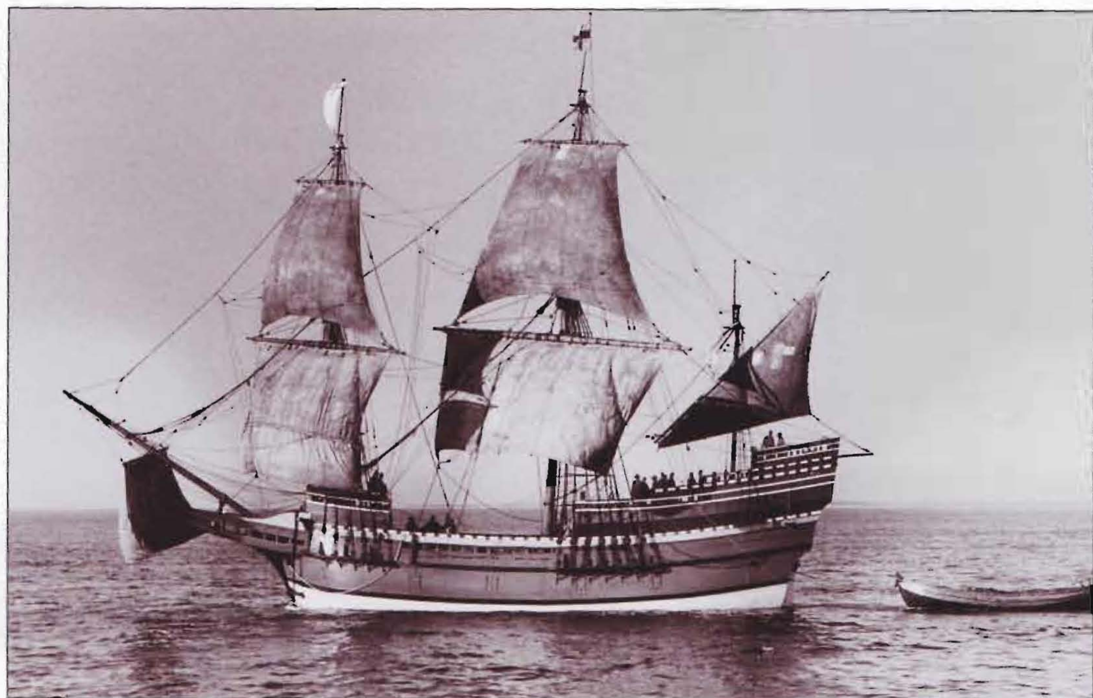
San Clemente Goats Come to Plymouth, 1992.
right: Chief Curator Elizabeth Lodge holding one of the San Clemente kids that was acquired to rebuild the herd following the fire.

Dedication of the Harriet K.Maxwell Barn, 1992.
below: Public response to the disaster was immediate and generous, and the new barn was built and ready to shelter the new animals by winter, 1992.

the original colonial livestock were sought out, and an impressive collection of rare animals was acquired. As their numbers grew so did their need for adequate shelter. Thanks to Mrs. Harriet Maxwell, one of the Plantation's most generous donors, a $250,000 Agricultural Center was erected in 1990 to replace the makeshift garage and sheds formerly used to house the livestock. Recognizing the Plantation's contribution to back-breeding, both the American Minor Breeds Conservancy and the Association for Living History Farms and Agricultural Museums selected the museum that year as the site at which to host their annual meetings, a singular honor for Plimoth Plantation.

Then in one tragic stroke on February 18, 1992, the Rare Breeds program was virtually wiped out. The new barn was destroyed in yet another disastrous fire. The Plantation lost over seventy-seven animals including cattle, goats, sheep and swine — only one small rooster escaped the inferno — and the work of many years literally went up in flames. Public response to the catastrophe was immediate and overwhelming. Trying to recoup some of the financial loss, the Plantation launched "A Chance to Survive" appeal and the public, particularly young children, touchingly sent in monetary contributions, some in small coins, in an overwhelming effort to help rebuild the Agricultural program. Again, thanks to the largesse of the same benefactor, the new seventy-two foot Harriet K. Maxwell Barn was erected just before winter of the same year.

The funds raised enabled the Plantation to acquire a variety of new stock. From Ohio came the only available Kerry (a small black old Irish breed) cattle in the country, and from distant Arapawa Island off New Zealand came a particularly appropriate breed of goat left there by Captain Cook in the 18th century. These are perhaps the closest relations to a variety of goat called "Old English goats" which became extinct in England in the 1950s. Thanks to the public's concern, the Plantation was able to send Chief Curator Elizabeth Lodge to New Zealand to bring back a number of these rare animals in 1994. The most recent addition to the Rare and Minor Breeds program has been the erection of the Nye Exhibit Barn in 1995. Located close to the Visitor Center, the barn permits visitors to see several breeds of animals close at hand which are not on view in the Village itself.



Plimoth at Sea

Much attention recently has been paid to Plimoth Plantation's maritime exhibits. The completed restoration of *Mayflower II* has made it possible for her to sail once again under her own power. In September 1990, her first time under sail since 1964, she was towed down the narrow Plymouth harbor channel and, just beyond Beach Point, spread her sails in the wind to the great delight of her volunteer crew and an excited fleet of onlooker-mariners. One of the purposes of the sail was to collect footage and photos of the ship in action to use in advertising and future film productions. However, public enthusiasm was so great that the vessel was continuously surrounded by all manner of admiring pleasure craft. While their curiosity and enthusiasm were flattering, it made it impractical to get historically appropriate shots of *Mayflower II*, although it resulted in a gratifying amount of free publicity. On December 19, 1991, President George Bush signed legislation giving the ship U. S. flag status allowing greater latitude for her future use as a functioning vessel.

While *Mayflower II* was, in a sense, being "reborn," and used, the small "First House," the Plantation's first exhibit built in 1948, was nearing its end. Located close to the ship's berth on the Plymouth waterfront, it was discovered to have such serious structural decay that it necessitated demolishment. A new re-creation, the "J. Barnes Bake Shop" — a 1650s Plymouth facility for the production of ship's biscuit (hardtack) managed by John Barnes — was erected in its place for the sale of baked goods and other period foodstuffs.

In June, 1991, *Mayflower II* went to sea once again, traversing Cape Cod Bay to Provincetown and back. Meanwhile, at the Plantation, boat builder Peter Arenstam had been hired to construct the *Mayflower II's* "Ship's Boat" using William A. Baker's original designs for guidance. This boat, smaller than the shallop, had been part of the original *Mayflower II* construction plans but never actually executed. By October, the Ship's Boat, a replica of the third vessel that had accompanied the Pilgrims to the New World, was added to the Plantation's "floating" exhibits.

Mayflower II continued her peripatetic sailing career the following year. In July she left Plymouth harbor to rendezvous with the *Sir Francis Drake* and the *H.M.S. Rose*, "Tall Ships" which visited Plymouth following the 1992 "Sail Boston" event celebrating Columbus' 500th anniversary. And, in December, on what was to prove her most futile voyage and venture, the ship departed Plymouth harbor again, this time under tow, to winter in St. Augustine, Florida. Motivated by the financial strain of three years of declining attendance at the Plantation, the sojourn in Florida was a romantic dream, a get-rich-quick scheme, to find a large, winter audience and, by exhibiting *Mayflower II* during Plymouth's off-season, albeit in Florida, to bring in some much needed revenue.

***Mayflower II* Under Sail, 1990.**
left: Following a thorough restoration, the ship sails under her own power for the first time since 1964.

***Mayflower II* in St. Augustine, Florida, 1993.**
below: Mayflower II was visited by 40,000 people in Florida, but not enough to make the trip profitable.

St. Augustine, with its historical appeal and impressive visitation figures, appeared to be a good location. Unfortunately, too few visitors to the city were interested in *Mayflower II* so it failed to attract sufficient numbers to pay for the venture, let alone make a profit. To compound the problem, shortly before *Mayflower II* was due to return to Plymouth, a gust of wind from a small hurricane hit the vessel in the early morning hours of March 13, 1993, snapping some twenty wooden pilings to which the ship had been tied. *Mayflower II* barely escaped complete disaster.

Back at the Plantation

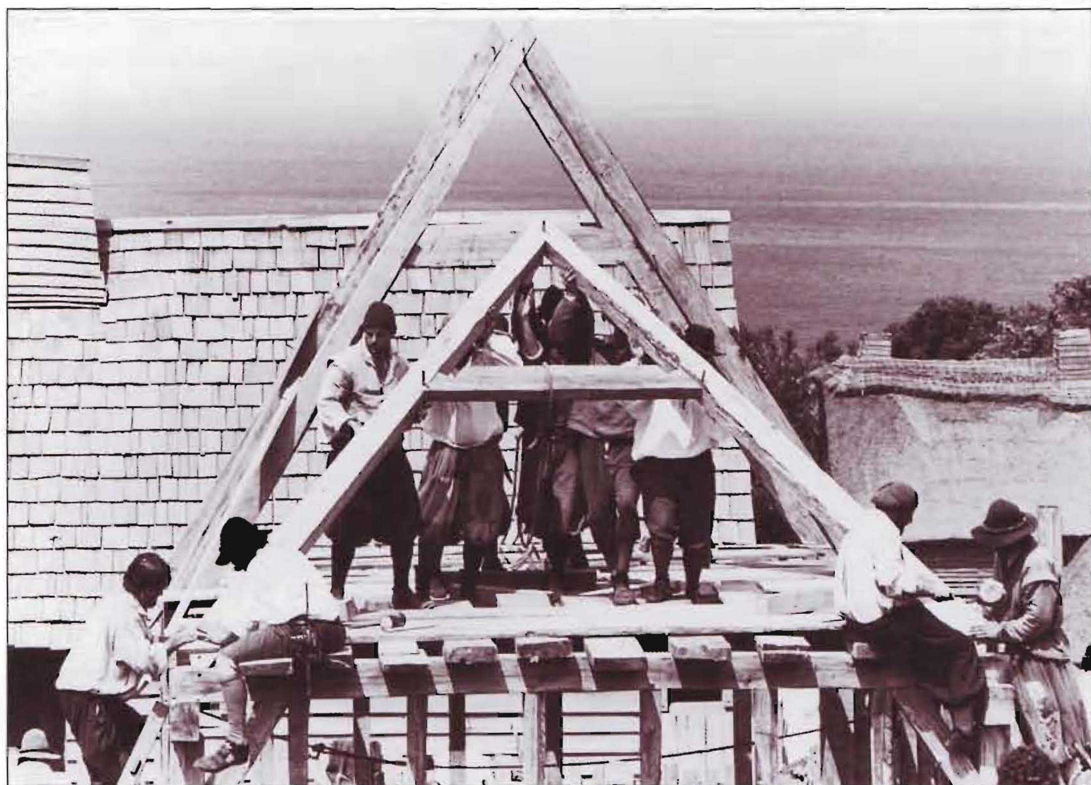
Despite its financial problems, the Plantation never stopped experimenting with new ideas and programs. During the winter of 1992 a group of women from Mt. Holyoke College immersed themselves in the snowy Pilgrim environment for a "first-person" 17th-century "experience." The students, trained in

much the same fashion as the Plantation's regular interpreters, spent several days in the Village, never abandoning the roles which they and their hosts had adopted. Although the program was too labor-intensive to institute as a regular event, this intense cultural experience proved particularly effective in teaching about the past, and made a permanent mark on the lives of several of the participants.

In the spring of the same year, the former Hornblower carriage house was refurbished and made into a Crafts Center. Because 1627 Plymouth had practiced few trades except husbandry, it was historically inaccurate to show any crafts in the village setting besides cooperage and black-smithing. As a result, the exhibit in the Crafts Center focused on trade and commerce in the 17th-century North Atlantic region, and rotating crafts people practiced their skills before the public, making reproductions of various objects in pottery, basketry, cloth, and wood for use in the Plantation's open air exhibits or for sale in the Crafts Center's adjoining shop.

The Mt. Holyoke Program in the Village, 1992.
Students from Mt. Holyoke College brave the elements during their immersion in a first-person experience of Pilgrim life.

The Second Standish House, 1993.
The new Standish frame is raised by Plimoth Plantation's Interpretive Artisans under the direction of master builder, Pret Woodburn.



The Carriage House Crafts Center, 1997.
The Crafts Center fulfills the role that Europe played for Plymouth Colony as a source for otherwise unobtainable manufactured goods. Visitors can watch reproductions being crafted.

When the tourist economy slumped badly in 1993, Plimoth Plantation was obliged to impose even more budgetary reductions and restrictions. This resulted in the departure of a number of staff, including Dr. Ehrlich. Hoping to attract visitors from among Cape Cod's many summer residents, the Mayflower Shallop made a tour of the coastal Inner Cape Cod in 1993. A more ambitious shallop voyage to Cape Anne, on Boston's North Shore, was also undertaken with great success in June, 1994, and brought good will and substantial publicity to the museum. Looking to profit in quite a different sphere, the Plantation also launched its own historically accurate microbrew, "Plimoth Rock Ale." While the venture didn't break financial records, the beer was well received locally.

The replacement of the older and less accurate Pilgrim Village houses continued with a new Standish House raised in mid-August, 1993. What set this house apart from its predecessors was that it was constructed entirely in first-person in front of the public by Interpretive Artisans using period tools and "scribe-rule" construction techniques. Scribe-rule building is the traditional method of erecting house frames where the pieces are marked and place-fitted together by eye and individual adjustment rather than being cut to specific and interchangeable measurements. Not only did the Pilgrim Village get a newer and more accurate house, but the on-going process added another dimension to the ever-popular "living history" program. So great was the public response that, since then, one of the older houses is demolished each winter and its replacement built as part of the village scene the following year. In 1994, the Allerton House was replaced. As was the case with the Billington House, the primary reason for replacement was condition rather than inaccuracy. The red oak posts had rotted in the ground, rendering the structure unstable. The Fuller House was chosen for replacement in 1995, and in 1996, the Hopkins House. Winslow House is the project for 1997.

The Mayflower Shallop During the 375th Anniversary of the Pilgrims' Landing, 1995.
above: Following the return of *Mayflower II* from Provincetown, Plantation interpreters reenact a landing in front of Plymouth Rock.

A *Mishoon* Constructed on the Plymouth Waterfront, 1995.
below: Plimoth Plantation' chief contribution to the 375th anniversary was to coordinate Native activities such as this dugout canoe, or *mishoon,* exhibit.

Looking to the Past and Future

Plimoth Plantation enthusiastically joined with the towns of Plymouth and Provincetown — and Plymouth, England, and Rotterdam, The Netherlands, as well — in commemorating the 375th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims in 1995 . *Mayflower II* sailed to Provincetown in July for a short stay, and upon her return on July 23, the Mayflower Shallop re-enacted a landing scene near Plymouth Rock. A large part of the Plantation's contribution to the anniversary was to assure the participation of the local Wampanoag community in a series of events and demonstrations coordinated by the Wampanoag Indian Program's Education Manager Linda Coombs.

The 375th was also a fitting time to re-assess the place of the Plymouth colonists and Native Peoples in American history. Plimoth Plantation's founding mission was "*the historical education of the public with respect to the struggles of the early Settlers in the Town of Plymouth, the expansion of that settlement and the influences of the Pilgrim Fathers throughout the world.*" As is true of the popular story of the Pilgrims, the Plantation has concentrated most of its efforts on the famous first decade. In

1995, the Plantation broke the 'twenties barrier' with a new interactive exhibit, *Irreconcilable Differences, 1620-1692*, funded largely by NEH. The exhibit traced the momentous events of the 17th century through the experiences of two women, one English, one Native American, whose lives spanned the duration of the colony. To do this, it employed both traditional exhibits and the latest computer and video technology. When equal attention was given to both Mary Allerton Cushman (English) and Awashonks (Wampanoag), some visitors received the erroneous impression that it was an "Indian" exhibit. Such parity in treatment of English and Native histories, like the unfamiliar period of history, was an unexpected and innovative departure from the norm, and the exhibit received nation-wide recognition and reviews.

Native Figures from the *Irreconcilable Differences* Exhibit, 1995.
Wampanoag Indian Program Director Nanepashemet, who was responsible for the Native interpretation in the exhibit, also posed for the image on the left.

Shortly thereafter, the Plantation suffered the loss of two of its principle leaders: Wampanoag Indian Program Director and historian Nanepashemet and longtime President David Case. Nanepashemet, who had been afflicted with a life-long illness, died tragically in December, 1995 at the age of 41 after twenty years at Plimoth Plantation. A year later in December, 1996, David Case resigned from Plimoth Plantation after almost nineteen years at the helm, feeling it was time to move on to pursue new opportunities as a consultant. He left behind a legacy of growth. The modest regional institution he first came to lead has grown into one of the country's major historical museums. As Plimoth Plantation Chairman Dr. Samuel K. Stewart eloquently put it, "*On David's watch the institution has developed a reputation nationally and internationally as a major living history museum, inspiring imitations both in the United States and abroad.*"

Whither the Plantation?

Following the loss of two such pivotal figures in the museum's hierarchy, the Plantation's Board decided to hire a museum consulting firm to determine the museum's mission, its strategic direction and goals. Fiscal restraints and funding opportunities, the changing role of history museums in American culture, and the shifting emphasis in the significance of our colonial past make change inevitable. Throughout its fifty-year career, Plimoth Plantation has always successfully responded to change in the pursuit of excellence — and there is every indication it will continue to do so in the future.

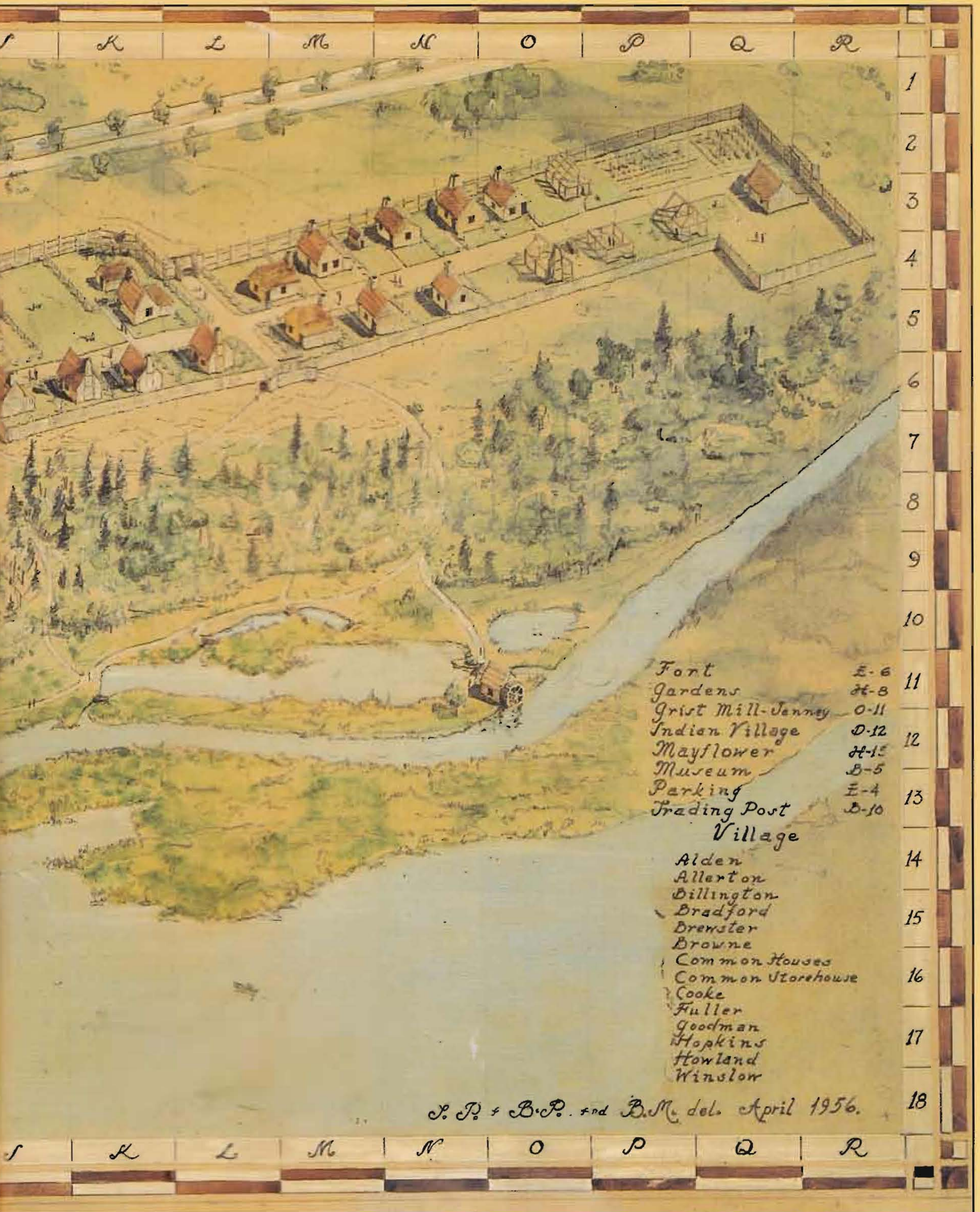
There is, as usual, no shortage of challenging paths to chose from. The immediate task facing the Plantation is to develop a set of priorities for the museum's current program initiatives and to decide their comparative degree of centrality to the museum's future. A whole century of historical development could be pursued if the museum takes on the 1630 - 1692 time-span as a priority. The growth of Plymouth Colony from a single small village perched on the Atlantic coast to a partner in the greater New England society has the potential to put the Pilgrim venture into a new and vibrant context.

In the past, Plimoth Plantation has flourished thanks to its meticulous living history program and engaging first-person interpretation. What future innovation will the Plantation make to

jump ahead in historical interpretation? Public interest in the history of the Native Peoples of America has been increasing dramatically. The Plantation is ideally positioned to expand its Wampanoag Indian Program, meeting the new enthusiasm for the other side of the Plymouth Colony story.

The 1997 anniversary season opens with a new exhibit and third-person program installed at *Mayflower II.* At the same time, despite the many alterations over the years, the 1627 Pilgrim Village, Hobbamock's Homesite and the newly named Henry Hornblower II Visitor Center will greet and educate visitors in much the same spirit it did that first public season in 1947. The smell of woodsmoke and the diverse sounds of a living community heralding the vision of the village and the homesite live on, as before. Old and new, familiar patterns and radical innovations, blend together in a seamless pattern that characterizes the magic of Plimoth Plantation.

There is no question that the combined commitment, knowledge and experience of the Plantation community will effectively harness the museum's potential in the next century. The underlying importance of the institution to the nation itself, and the universal appeal of its mission, is so great that an adequate endowment — so vital to its stability — is only a matter of time and effort. A museum which is able to attract over 500,000 visitors a year and offer them a compelling and enriching educational experience will inevitably achieve this goal.



Charles Strickland's 1956 plans for Plimoth Plantation

Plimoth Plantation
P.O. Box 1620
Plymouth, MA 02362