

The Mayflower Compact

The Mayflower Compact, a written agreement, was composed by a consensus of the new Settlers arriving at New Plymouth in November of 1620. They had traveled across the ocean on the ship *Mayflower* which was anchored in what is now Provincetown Harbor near Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The Mayflower Compact was drawn up with fair and equal laws, for the general good of the settlement and with the will of the majority. Knowing that earlier settlers to the New World had failed due to a lack of government, the *Mayflower's* passengers hashed out the content and eventually composed the Compact for the sake of their own survival.

All 41 of the adult male members on the *Mayflower* signed the Compact. Being the first written laws for the new land, the Compact determined authority within the settlement and was observed as such until 1691. This established that the colony (mostly persecuted Separatists), was to be free of English law. It was devised to set up a government from within themselves and was written by those to be governed.

The original document is said to have been lost, but the writings of William Bradford's journal *Of Plymouth Plantation* and in Edward Winslow's *Mourt's Relation: A Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth* are in agreement and accepted as accurate. The Mayflower Compact reads:

"In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord, King James, by the Grace of God, of England, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, e&. Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia; do by these presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid; And by Virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the General good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In Witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape Cod the eleventh of November, in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord, King James of England, France and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini, 1620."

When creating the Mayflower Compact, the signers believed that covenants were not only to be honored between God and man, but also between each other. They had always honored covenants as part of their righteous integrity and agreed to be bound by this same principle with the Compact. John Adams and many historians have referred to the Mayflower Compact as the foundation of the U.S. Constitution written more than 150 later.

The Signers of the Mayflower Compact

John Carver	Edward Tilley	Degory Priest
William Bradford	John Tilley	Thomas Williams
Edward Winslow	Francis Cooke	Gilbert Winslow
William Brewster	Thomas Rogers	Edmund Margesson
Isaac Allerton	Thomas Tinker	Peter Brown
Myles Standish	John Rigsdale	Richard Britteridge
John Alden	Edward Fuller	George Soule
Samuel Fuller	John Turner	Richard Clarke
Christopher Martin	Francis Eaton	Richard Gardinar
William Mullins	James Chilton	John Allerton
William White	John Crackstone	Thomas English
Richard Warren	John Billington	Edward Doty
John Howland	Moses Fletcher	Edward Leister
Stephen Hopkins	John Goodman	