



Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War

By Nathaniel Philbrick

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From the perilous ocean crossing to the shared bounty of the first Thanksgiving, the Pilgrim settlement of New England has become enshrined as our most sacred national myth. Yet, as bestselling author Nathaniel Philbrick reveals in his spellbinding new book, the true story of the Pilgrims is much more than the well-known tale of piety and sacrifice; it is a fifty-five-year epic that is at once tragic, heroic, exhilarating, and profound.

The Mayflower's religious refugees arrived in Plymouth Harbor during a period of crisis for Native Americans as disease spread by European fishermen devastated their populations. Initially the two groups—the Wampanoags, under the charismatic and calculating chief Massasoit, and the Pilgrims, whose pugnacious military officer Miles Standish was barely five feet tall—maintained a fragile working relationship. But within decades, New England would erupt into King Philip's War, a savagely bloody conflict that nearly wiped out English colonists and natives alike and forever altered the face of the fledgling colonies and the country that would grow from them.

With towering figures like William Bradford and the distinctly American hero Benjamin Church at the center of his narrative, Philbrick has fashioned a fresh and compelling portrait of the dawn of American history—a history dominated right from the start by issues of race, violence, and religion.

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Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War By Nathaniel Philbrick Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In this remarkable effort, National Book Award-winner Philbrick (*In the Heart of the Sea*) examines the history of Plymouth Colony. In the early 17th century, a small group of devout English Christians fled their villages to escape persecution, going first to Holland, then making the now infamous 10-week voyage to the New World. Rather than arriving in the summer months as planned, they landed in November, low on supplies. Luckily, they were met by the Wampanoag Indians and their wizened chief, Massasoit. In economical, well-paced prose, Philbrick masterfully recounts the desperate circumstances of both the settlers and their would-be hosts, and how the Wampanoags saved the colony from certain destruction. Indeed, there was a first Thanksgiving, the author notes, and for over 50 years the Wampanoags and the Pilgrims lived in peace, becoming increasingly interdependent. But in 1675, 56 years after the colonists' landing, Massasoit's heir, Philip, launched a confusing war on the English that, over 14 horrifying months, claimed 5,000 lives, a huge percentage of the colonies' population. Impeccably researched and expertly rendered, Philbrick's account brings the Plymouth Colony and its leaders, including William Bradford, Benjamin Church and the bellicose, dwarfish Miles Standish, vividly to life. More importantly, he brings into focus a gruesome period in early American history. For Philbrick, this is yet another award-worthy story of survival. (*May 9*)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Mayflower rethinks the events and players that gave rise to a national mythology about Pilgrims living harmoniously with their Indian neighbors. Instead, Philbrick tells a story of ethnic cleansing, bloody wars, environmental ruin, and the deterioration of English-Indian relations. While he introduces familiar elements, Philbrick also recasts well-known characters like Miles Standish ("Captain Shrimp"), William Bradford, and Benjamin Church. Most critics agree that he provides a well-researched, unbiased revisionist history (though we should note that for years many people have been reading about the environmental devastation of New England, the bloody Indian-English wars, and the less-than-pious Pilgrims). If not as gripping as the National Book Award-winning *In the Heart of the Sea* (2000), particularly the second half, *Mayflower* nonetheless provides a harrowing account of survival and, despite its grim themes, a celebration of courage.

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Departing from his customary nautical stories, including the phenomenally popular *In the Heart of the Sea* (2000), Philbrick makes landfall with the saga of the Pilgrims. By necessity, all modern writing about the founding colonists relies on William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*, interpreting it through modern historical sensibilities that incorporate native perspectives on the newcomers from across the ocean. Long gone is the once inculcated version of friendly Indians helping starving English religious refugees through hard times. The scholarly thesis now has the Pilgrims arriving amid coastal Indian societies that had been decimated by a pandemic. The Pilgrims appeared in 1620 as a potential ally to the weakened Pokanokets and their sachem Massasoit against neighboring enemies: the Massachusetts and the Narragansetts. Philbrick essentially recounts this reigning interpretation with sensitivity to landscape description, narrative suspense, and understanding of motivations: piety, wrath, gratitude, duplicity--a panorama of human character and historical portent is on display in Philbrick's skillful rendering. Chronologically tracking the fortunes of the alliance struck by Massasoit with Bradford, Philbrick carries events through the second generation, in whose collective hands the alliance exploded into King Philip's War

of 1675-76. A sterling synthesis of sources, Philbrick's epic seems poised to become a critical and commercial hit. *Gilbert Taylor*

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Users Review

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Ella Butler:

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Raymond Levine:

The reason why? Because this *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War* is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap it but latter it will distress you with the secret that inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who write the book in such wonderful way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining method but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This phenomenal book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book have got such as help improving your talent and your critical thinking technique. So , still want to hold up having that book? If I were you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

Thomas Hayden:

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