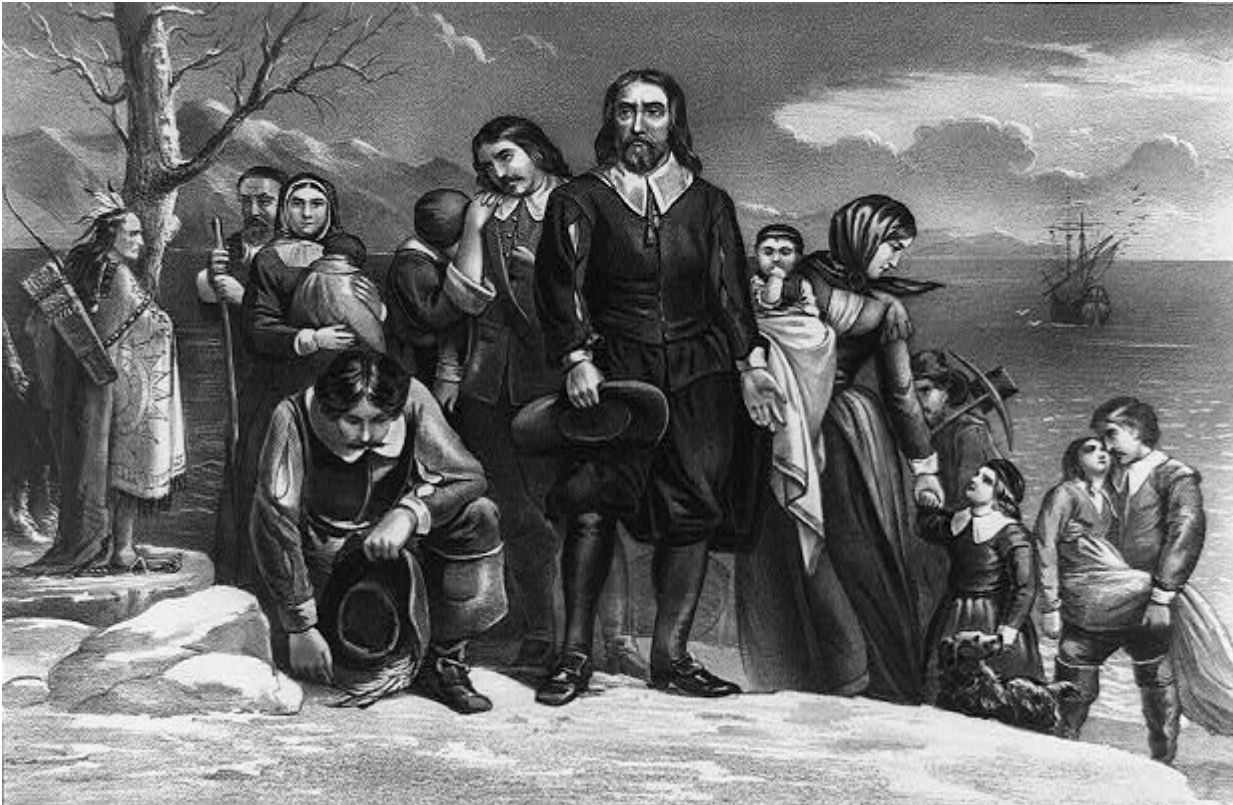


Pilgrimage



This Thanksgiving is going to be especially significant for our family. Our genealogy research has just uncovered a member of our family that was part of the Plymouth colony some 400 years ago.

Experience Mitchell (how's that for a name?) sailed across the Atlantic aboard the ship *Ann*, the third vessel to bring colonists to the new world. The first, as all know, was the *Mayflower*. It was followed by the ships *Fortune*, *Ann*, and *St. James*. When Experience arrived at Plymouth as an unmarried man, he found himself in a strange position. Due to the many illnesses and deaths of the original *Mayflower* colonists, there was a considerable shortage of eligible women. At that time, there was a ratio of just one single woman for every six single males. Despite those odds, Experience managed to wed Jane, the daughter of one of the colony's leaders, Francis Cooke, who had arrived on the *Mayflower* a couple of years earlier.

After Jane passed, Experience remarried a Mary Prior. While the maternal parentage of their resulting children continues to be debatable, it is clear that, from his two wives, Experience fathered a total of thirteen children. One of whom was Jacob Mitchell, my wife's 9th great grandfather... which makes Experience her great grandfather number 10.

Eventually, Experience joined with 53 other colonists, among them Miles Standish and John Forbes (who had married his sister, Constant Mitchell), to purchase from the native Americans "the Bridgewaters," which was originally a part of Duxbury. Bridgewater, Massachusetts now has a population of over 27,000 people.

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