

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE MAYFLOWER PILGRIMS' PHOTO-ESSAY

- All quotes in this photo-essay, unless otherwise noted, are from William Bradford's work "*Of Plimoth Plantation*."
- **SPELLING:** At the time William Bradford was writing, standardized spelling did not exist. It wasn't until Samuel Johnson published his *Dictionary of the English Language* in 1755 that spelling began to become widely standardized.
- **CALENDAR:** On January 1, 45 BC, Julius Caesar introduced the Julian calendar to the world but the calculation of the length of the year was off by 11 minutes.

Over the course of 15 centuries, the 11-minute-per-year error caused a shift of 10 days. In other words, by 1582, the vernal equinox on the Julian calendar fell on March 11th rather than on March 21st when the sun is directly over the equator.

The remedy was to reset the calendar. October 4, 1582 (Old Style)

was followed by October 15, 1582 (New Style).

Because this reform was instigated by Pope Gregory, the new calendar was rapidly adopted by Catholic countries but Protestant countries were slower to make the change. England adopted the Gregorian Calendar in 1752.

This photo-essay uses the Gregorian calendar to reflect the actual date. For example, understanding that the Pilgrims arrived at Cape Cod on November 21, rather than on November 11 (Julian or "Old Style"), conveys to us the pressure they were under to find a place to settle as quickly as possible before winter set in.

- **"PILGRIMS:"** William Bradford used the term "pilgrimes" once in his writings, when he and others were leaving Leiden on the *Speedwell*.

Bradford and his comrades called themselves "Separatists" or "Dissenters." The term "Pilgrims" to describe the community at Plymouth came into use in the late 18th century and was popularized by orator Daniel Webster in the 19th century.