

Of Plymouth Plantation: Predicting the Location of the Original Plymouth Village, Its Extent, and Its Houses

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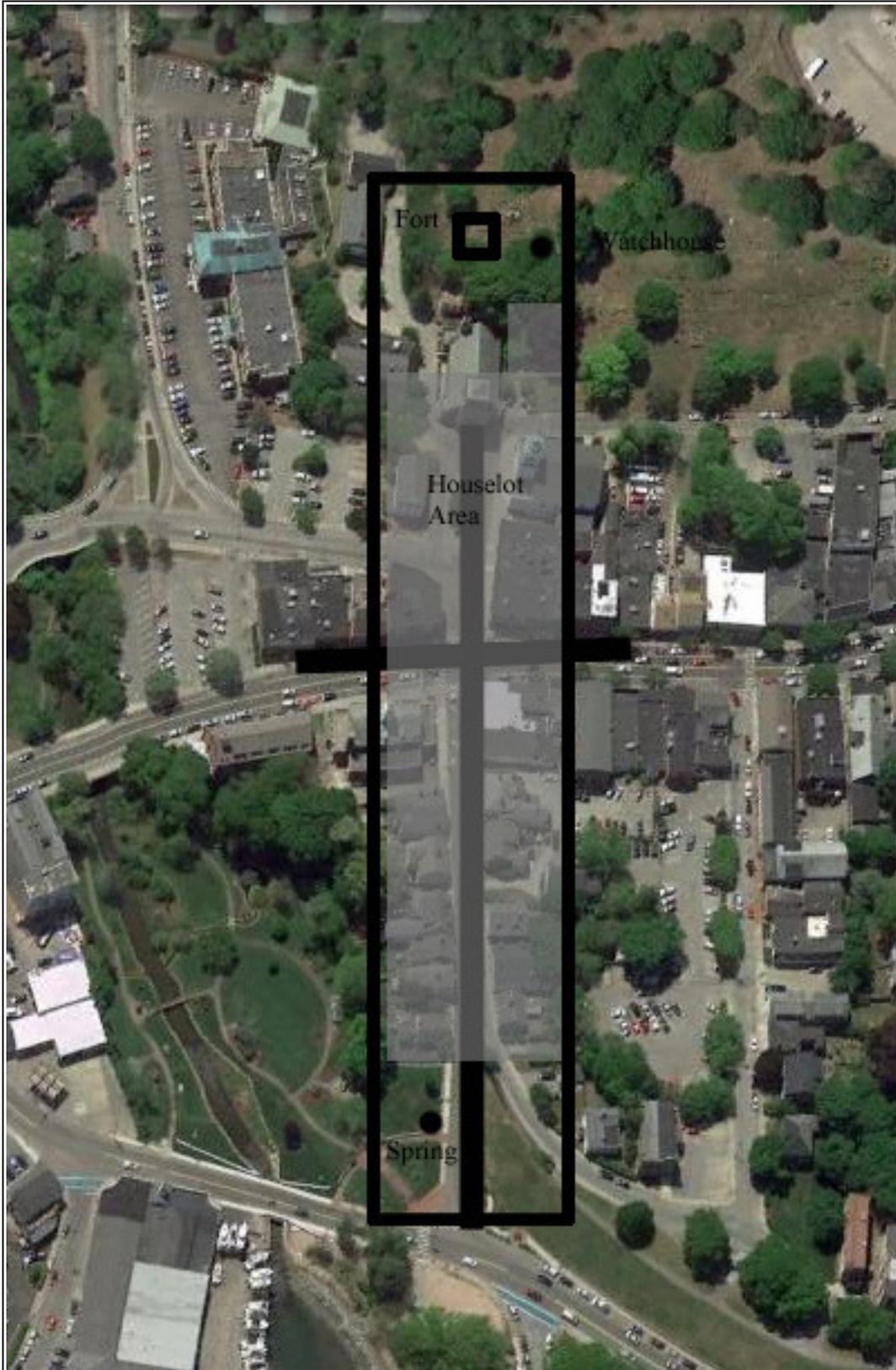
Even before arriving in Plymouth, the colonists must have had a plan, at least in their minds, of what the settlement was to look like and this plan would have influenced where they actually settled. Requirements for their village site would have included enough level space to erect houses, probably within a protective enclosure, and a defensible blockhouse/ meeting house/ court of guard (similar to what we know that the settlers at Wessagussett erected upon their arrival in 1622).

There were two prominent features in the area that became Plymouth: the brook and the hill (also called "The Mount"). They decided that this would be their place of settlement (versus settling on Clark's Island or further north at the Jones River)

"...we came to a conclusion, by most voices, to set on the main land, on the first place, on a high ground, where there is a great deal of land cleared, and hath been planted with corn three or four years ago; and there is a very sweet brook runs under the hill side, and many delicate springs of as good water as can be drunk, and where we may harbour our shallops and boats exceedingly well; and in this brook good fish in their seasons; on the further side of the river there is much corn ground cleared." (Edward Winslow *Mourt's Relations* p. 167).

While a palisade and fort were likely among the original plans for the settlement, the reason that they were not erected first, before anything else, must have had to do with the shortage of labor for the first year (until November 1621 when the ship *Fortune* arrived carrying young single men among its passengers) and the prioritizing of their needs based on the labor at hand. When *Mayflower* arrived, many of the passengers were sick and the company's first desire was to get people of the ship and housed on shore. Once a suitable commonhouse was built, a relatively modest structure with space to store and keep dry goods and people and with a chimney, as many people as possible got off the ship and onto shore. They then set about, on Christmas day, to build their town:

"..we went to labor that day in the building of our town, in two rows of houses, for more safety. We divided by lot the plot of ground whereon to build our town, after the proportion formerly allotted. We agreed that every man should build his own house, thinking by that course men would make more haste than working in common. The common house, in which for the first we made our rendezvous, being near finished, wanted only covering, it being about twenty foot square. Some should make mortar, and some gather thatch; so that in four days half of it was thatched." (Edward Winslow *Mourt's Relations* p. 173)



Possible minimum area of original village and possibly the original village plan prior to the construction of the palisade in 1622

Each person received a plot that was ½ rod (8.3') broad and 3 rods (49.2 feet) long. These plots were large enough for the 19 family groups who were there, so that each could have their houses and gardens with fences around them. By December of the next year there were 7 dwelling houses and four houses for the use of the plantation. By 1623, there were 20 houses with 4 or 5 being fair and pleasant, as reported by Emmanuel Altham. Captain John Smith reported that in 1624 there were

"...about 180 persons, some cattle and goats, but many swine and poultry, 32 dwelling houses, whereof 7 were burnt the last winter, and the value of five hundred pounds in other goods. "

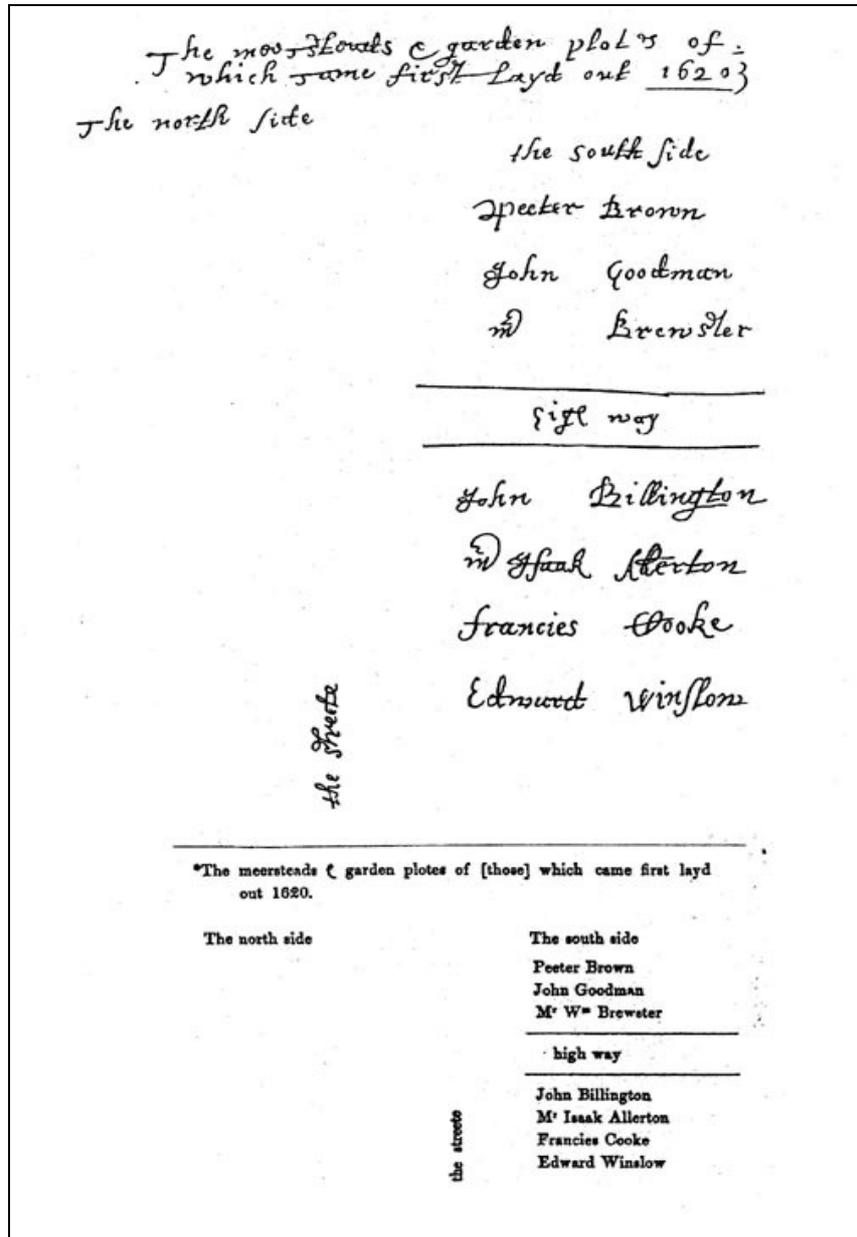
Unfortunately the cramped conditions were probably a breeding ground for contagion and as a result nearly half the company died that first winter of 1620/ 21 winter. This obviously led to a labor shortage in the spring. When spring rolled around, the company had a long list of what needed to be done before the next winter. This would have led to the company sitting down and reassessing their priorities, and while Standish may have favored building a fort/ meetinghouse and palisade before everything else, the decision appears to have been made to lay out a north to south highway, probably following a Native trail, and an east to west street running from the hill to the shore, today's Leyden Street.

The immediate needs for the community would have included:

- individual housing to be built for those who were left
- fields to be hand turned for planting of both English crops and the native maize
- lumber for firewood and house construction to be cut from over a half mile away from the village and hand-hauled back
- the Mayflower to be supplied for the return voyage
- the area around the community to be explored to determine what resources were present

Fortunately, there was no Native presence in the area to worry about and as a result, while a fort and palisade were probably planned from the start, the need for housing and fields took priority.

The earliest evidence we have for the layout of the house lots comes from a plan drawn by William Bradford of the houselots in 1620:



These are probably the same seven houses that Winslow had noted had been built the first winter. Bradford notes the highway (Main Street) and “the streete” (Leyden Street) and shows no houses on the north side of the street. By 1623 there were reported to have been 20 or so houses (4 or 5 being fair and pleasant- probably the colony leaders' and richest people's houses [and possibly of hall and parlor plan as was common in East Anglia at the time]). These would have been the homes of the families that arrived aboard Mayflower and the Fortune in 1620 and 1621 respectively.

The hypothesized family houses are :

Mr. William Brewster
William Bradford
Frances Cooke
Mr Isaak Allerton
John Billington
Peter Browen
Samuell Fuller
John Howland
Steven Hobkins
Edward Winslow
Richard Warren
John Goodman
John Alden
Captain Myles Standish
Francis Eaton
William Hilton
John Adams
William Wright
Robert Hickers
William Palmer
Thomas Flavel & son
Thomas Morton

for a total of up to 22 houses/ families.

Smith reported that there were 32 houses by 1624, with most of thee probably being the result of the passengers that arrived in 1623 on the Anne and Little James. The families that arrived consisted of:

Francis Spragge
Edward Burcher
John Jenney
George Morton
William Hiltons
Cudbard Cudbartsone
Anthony Anable
Thomas Tilden
Richard Waren
Edward Bangs
Robert Rattlife
Ralfe Walen
Stephen Tracy

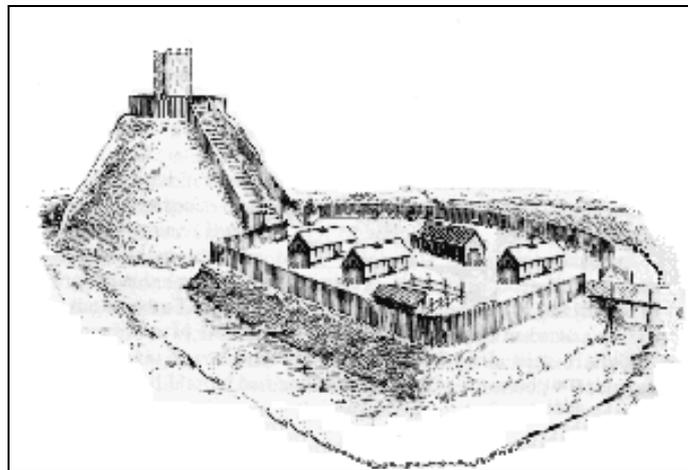
making a maximum of 35 possible houses. Smith also reported that 7 burned the previous winter and we know that several people arrived in 1621 or 1623 who were gone by the 1627 cattle division, possibly as a result of their houses burning down. By 1627, when the cattle division took

place, there were a total of 33 families in the town and presumably, 33 houses (one for each family along with single people who were not allowed to establish their own houses):

1627 Plymouth Households

- 1 Francis Cooke
- 2 Isaac Allerton
- 3 Godber Godberson
- 4 Captain Standish
- 5 Edward Winslow
- 6 John Howland
- 7 John Alden
- 8 William Brewster
- 9 Johnathan Brewster
- 10 Thomas Prence
- 11 John Shaw
- 12 John Adams
- 13 John Winslow
- 14 William Bassett
- 15 Francis Sprague
- 16 Stephen Hopkins
- 17 Nicholas Snow
- 18 William Pallmer
- 19 John Billington
- 20 Samuel Fuller
- 21 Peter Brown
- 22 John Ford
- 23 Anthony Anable
- 24 Richard Warren
- 25 George Soule
- 26 Francis Eaton
- 27 Stephen Tracey
- 28 Ralph Wallen
- 29 William Bradford
- 30 Manases Kempton
- 31 Nathaniel Morton
- 32 John Jenney
- 33 Robert Hicks

My personal theory is that the original settlement was planned as a motte and bailey defensive work with the fort/ meetinghouse forming the motte (the castle or defensive keep) and the bailey (the town) stretching along the two sides of Leyden Street, approximately 130-150' wide.



(from: <http://www.castles-of-britain.com/motteandbaileycastle.htm>)



Google Earth view of Downtown Plymouth with key features identified (north towards top)

When the decision was made to build the palisade in 1622, the population of the community had increased substantially from what it had been in the spring of 1621, as a result, a larger area may have been impaled, an area starting 50' south of Leyden Street (at the edge of the drop to Town Brook), north to what is now Middle Street with what later became Middle Street forming the northern side of the palisade. Subsequently, when the palisade was no longer in use Middle Street was an unimproved, unnamed, passageway that was not officially recognized until 1725. I think that the position of Middle Street as the north side of the palisade makes sense seeing how ancient lots within the village appear to have extended from Leyden to Middle Street (for example, Robert Hicks and Stephen Hopkins). I think that it is likely that when the decision was made to impale the

town in 1622, the leaders saw that there were more families than originally planned, that because of the perceived (and to a degree real) threat of Native attack people would want to be within the palisade, at this point at least, and that with all the open land available it would be just as easy to impale another 200' (four more rows of buildable lots) to the north versus impaling just the original village and then letting anyone who doesn't fit within the village fend for themselves just outside the walls. When the threat of attack failed to materialize in the subsequent years, occupation expanded further north to North Street by the 1630s. People whom we know were living on North Street in the first half of the seventeenth century were:

North Side

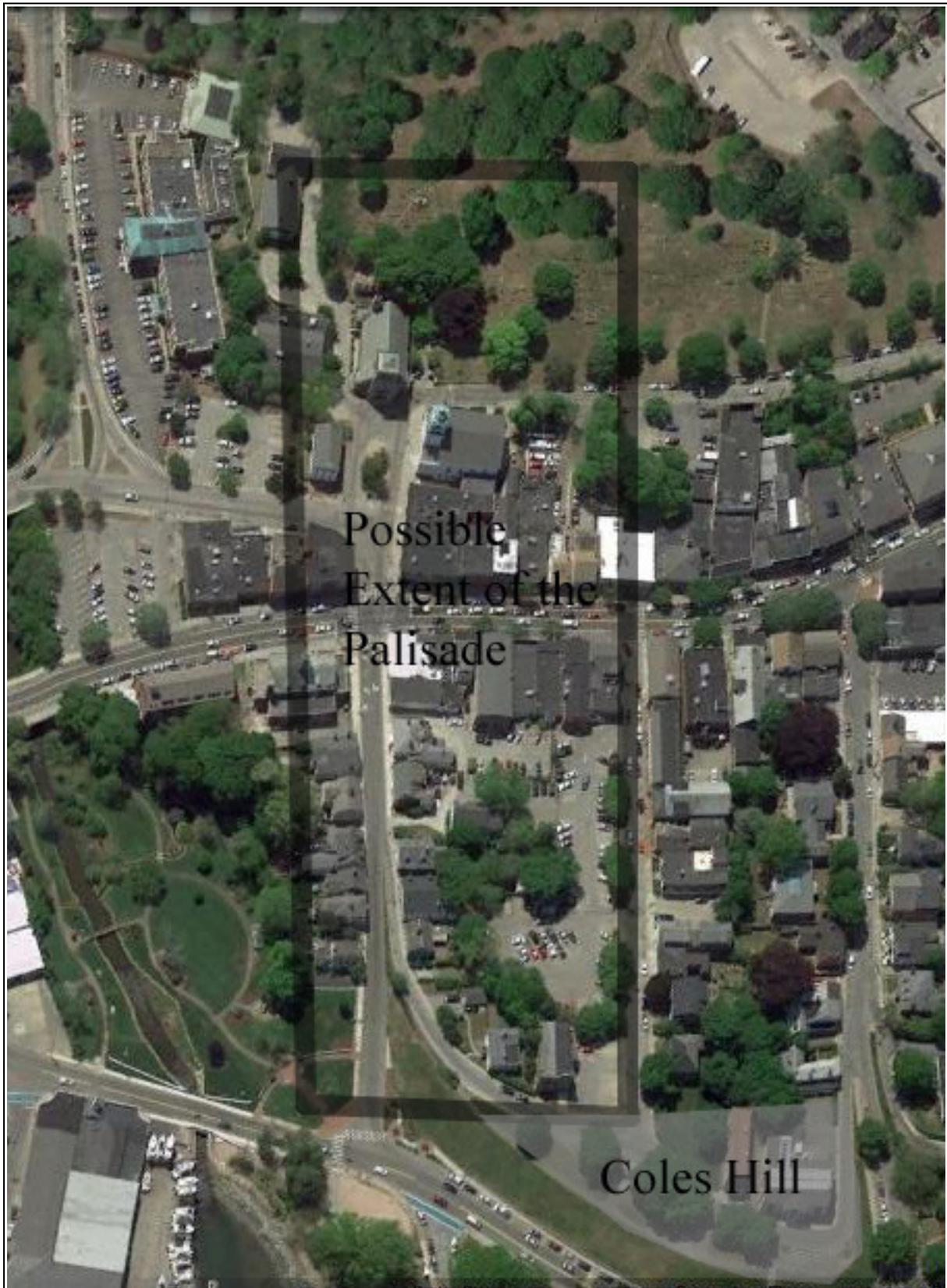
- John Morton at the northeast corner before 1654 (when he sold it to Joseph Green)
- John Smith (who arrived in Plymouth by 1643) owned the next lot and sold the lot in 1665 (to Edward Doty) and who may have built a small house at the southeast corner of the lot
- Doty went on to own a number of lots along the north side of North Street down to the west boundary of the Winslow House (the Society of Mayflower Descendants headquarters), after which the land was owned by Joseph Howland, John Howland's son.
- the remainder of the land after the Winslow House was owned by Thomas Prence by ca. 1634

South Side

- Nathaniel Morton lived on the south side of the corner of Maine and North Street at least until 1675
- the next lot belonged to John Cook, son of mayflower passenger Francis Cook, who sold it in 1653 to Thomas Lettis
- the next lot belonged to Andrew Hallet who arrived in 1637 and was subsequently sold to Thomas Cushman who sold it to Thomas Lettis in 1641
- the next lot (the Spooner House lot) belonged to Edward Holman, who sold it to Robert Waterman in 1639, who sold it to Edward Winslow, who sold it, in 1646, to Thomas Wallis, who sold this lot to William Bradford in 1641, Bradford sold it to early Plymouth resident John Doane in 1642, who sold the lot to William Hanbury in 1645, who sold it in 1647 to William Browne, who sold it in 1657 to Thomas Lettis
- the next lot was homestead of John Doane and was sold with the last lot Hanbury, Brown, and Lettis

So, in 1657 Thomas Lettis owned the whole square between Main Street and Cole's Hill, except the upper lot on Main Street where Nathaniel Morton lived, and the lower one on Cole's Hill, the last measuring about one hundred and sixty-five feet on North Street, two hundred and eighteen feet on Cole's Hill, and running about sixty feet on Middle Street that belonged to James Cole. James Cole's lands included all the lands on Cole's Hill, a strip along Main Street between Leyden and Middle streets and most of the land on the south side of Leyden Street. It appears that the lots on the north side of Leyden Street extended all the way to Middle Street in the 17th century, except the land on Cole's Hill that was granted to James Cole. It is possible that the Cole's Hill land was the original 1620/ 21 burial ground and that is why it was set apart from the other lots to the west. Possibly by the second generation people had forgotten where it was located and new burials were being placed on Burial Hill outside the old Meetinghouse/ Fort.

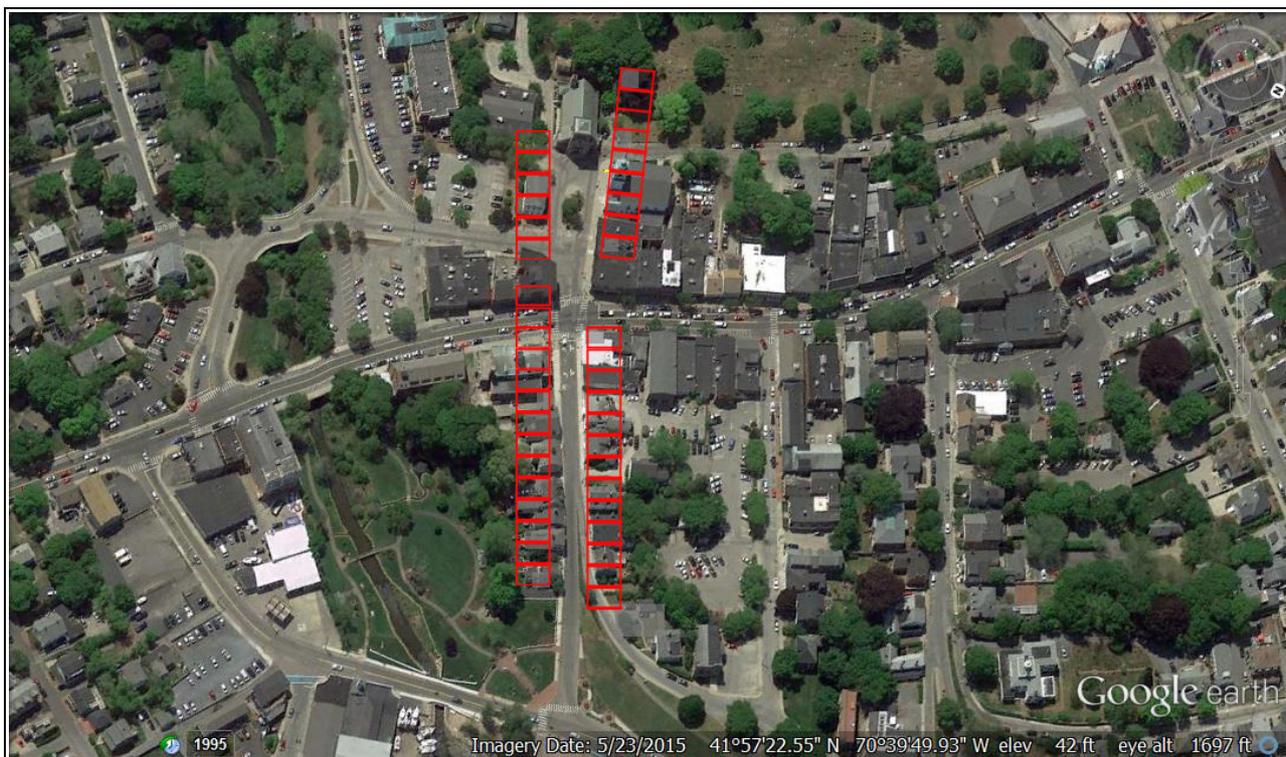
I wonder if maybe the original palisade did not include Coles Hill, and that is why it was granted as a separate piece to James Cole. The last known structure on the south side of Leyden Street was the commonhouse and the last known structure on the north side was Robert Hick's house, these are both west of the same north to south line with Coles Hill being located to the east.



Google Earth view showing my hypothesized extent of the palisade with Coles Hill (the original burial ground?) outside of the palisade

It is possible that early settlers had their original houses within the original plantation and that the next generation to get married in the 1630s (Nathaniel Morton m. 1635; Thomas Prence m. 1624, 1635; John Cook m. 1634; Edward Holman m. Before 1644; and John Doane m. 1625 and possibly 1630s.) were granted lands on North Street as the village began expanding out of the original village area and to the North.

The original community was laid out in two rows along Leyden Street and there is about 50' between the street and where the land drops to Town Brook on the south side of the village. On the north side of the street, the lots would have been three rods (about 50') deep (north to south) as well. There would have been enough room for up to 42 buildable house lots (each 25.5' wide) within the minimum hypothesized extent of the village.

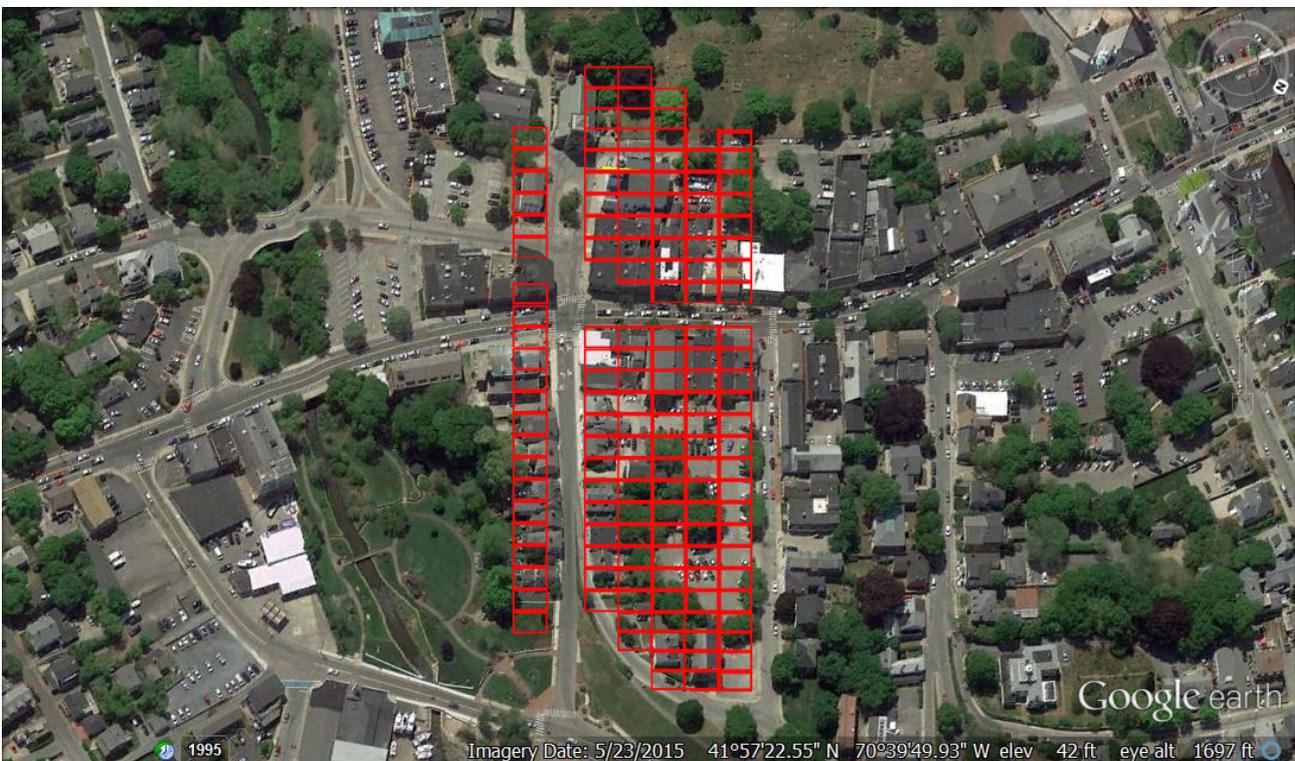


Google earth view of minimum number of lots within a village that extended only one lot width (~50') north on the north side of Leyden Street (Each red rectangle is a buildable lot [1.5 rods wide and 3 rods long])

The last two lots on the south side were where the company built store houses, so those have to be taken out and any lots beyond that to the east were probably not buildable because they were too wet due to the brook. Some of the lots at the west end of the south side may not have been buildable due to the slope to the brook, but all in all, if houses were placed side by side, there would have been plenty of room for the 19 original families who came over, and even more room after about half of the colonists died that first winter. We know that by 1623 there were a total of about 20 houses in the town, houses built before the palisade was erected in 1622, presumably all within the palisade, and in 1624 there were between 25 and 32, again, all still theoretically fit within the palisade. The population had not grown by the time of the 1627 cattle division, so those 33 families could have still fit within the original compass of the village.

The length of the buildable area along the north side of Leyden St is about 855 feet from the possible location of the Standish/ Holmes house to the edge of Cole's hill. The buildable length along the south side is about the same from a point opposite the Standish/ Holmes house to the end of the present house lots. This comes out to about 42 buildable "lots" measuring 1 1/2 pole wide and 3 poles long.

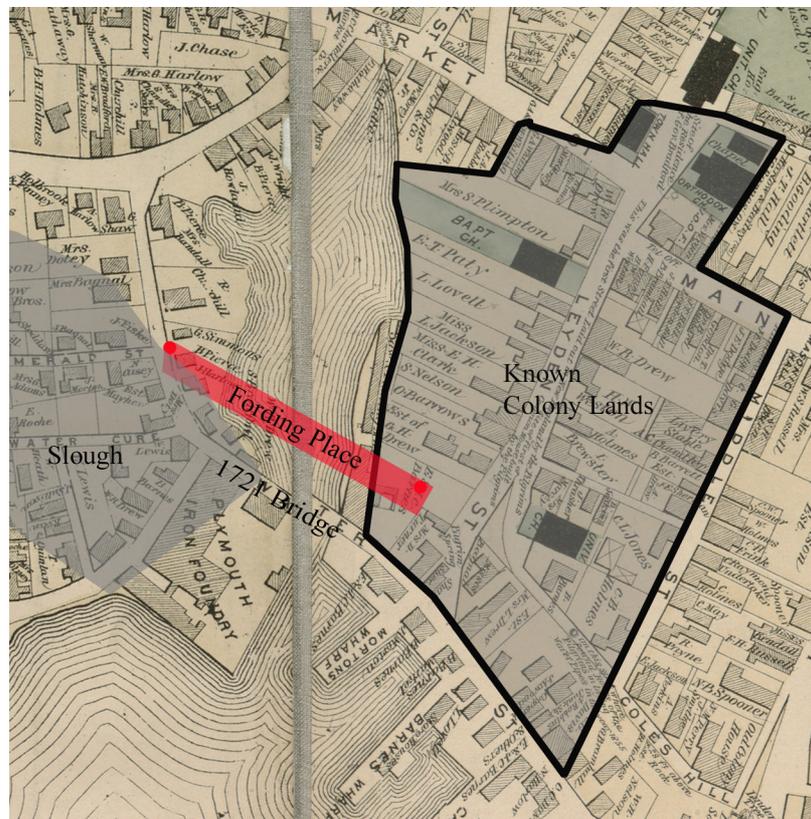
If the town was originally laid out as being 2 rows of houses with a north to south running street, an east to west running street, a fort/ meetinghouse at the top of the hill, and maybe a cemetery and watchhouse, it all could have easily fit within the 2700' perimeter recorded for the palisade. If the community had grown enough that people could not fit within that original community area, it is presumed that they would have spread north towards Middle Street. On the north side there is about 270' between Leyden and Middle streets, which works out to 5.5 lot lengths. It would seem that when the town was growing and new people were building houses within the palisade, they could have built north of Leyden towards Middle Street. A total of 146 buildable lots.



Google Earth view showing buildable lots within the village if it originally extended to Middle Street (Each red rectangle is a buildable lot [1.5 rods wide and 3 rods long])

We know that by the early 1630s people were living on what is now North Street (called New Street in the early records). We know that the perimeter of the palisade was 2700' and if a square is made 50' north of Leyden Street on the north side, 50' south of Leyden Street on the south side with the east and west ends connected, it measures about this distance. If we extend the palisade to Middle Street, the dimensions would not have grown considerably, and would still be within a margin of human error for 2700'/ one half mile in compass as it was reported. The whole village may have been located within a rectangular palisade, no fancy diamond shaped palisades or bulwarks, just strait walls with three gates (two along Main Street and one at the east end of Leyden) and probably firing platforms along the walls to defend the palisade against anyone getting too close to them.

The southern extent of the village may have been defined by the lands held by the colony until the late 17th century. It appears that the Colony's land extended south along what is now Market Street to a point just east of the east end of High Street, what is identified as a lot belonging to Whiting on the 1874 map:



All of the lands north to Leyden Street and east along the south side of Leyden Street were granted to James Cole by the Colony, meaning that they were the Colony's land, probably as a result of the original agreement with the backers in London and the subsequent buying out of those backers in 1627. South along Market Street, the next lot outside of the Colony lands was granted to the Secretary of the Colony Nathaniel Morton and the next lot south of that (identified as the Atwood lot on the 1874 map) was granted to Experience Mitchell, who came in the *Ann* in 1623. He sold it in 1631 for twelve pounds to Samuel Eddy, who came in the *Handmaid* to Plymouth in 1630.

So, Where Did They Live?

Of the 33 houses known to exist in 1627, the locations only a few can be identified with any certainty through the documentary record, and all of these lay on Leyden Street.

The house locations that can be identified with confidence through the documentary record are:

Standish
Alden
Bradford
Hopkins
Howland
Fuller

Hicks
Winslow

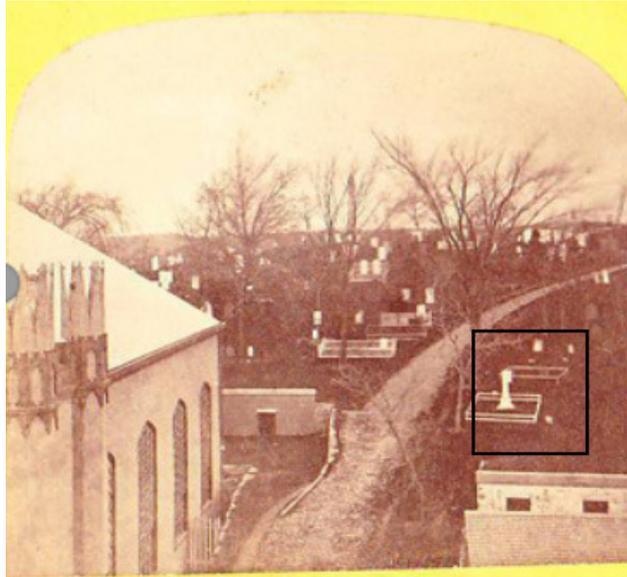
The locations of other houses (Allerton, Billington, Brewster, Browne, Goodman) can be hypothesized because we know the locations of houses around them and because of Bradford's map.

Myles Standish

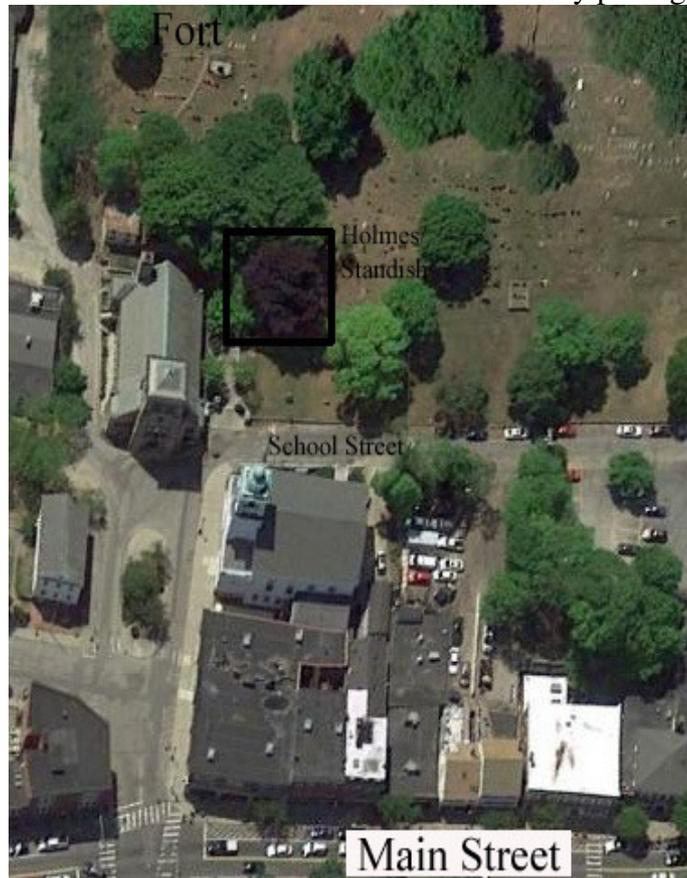
There is no direct documentary record of where Myles Standish's house was, but, we do know that the house of Lt. William Holmes, Standish's military successor in Plymouth, was between John Alden's house and the fort. As there is no documentary record of a purchase by Holmes, the colony may have given him the house, which reverted back to the colony when Standish moved to Duxbury, as part of his agreement to act as the military leader. Holmes had arrived in Plymouth in 1632. He sold his house in 1638 to Nathaniel Souther:

MEMORANÐ the xxvjth day of December 1638 That Leiftennant W^m Holmes of Plymouth doth acknowledg that for and in consideration of the sume of sixteene pound℥ ster℥ to him in hand payd wherewth he is fully satisfied and payd hath freely and absolutely bargained and sould vnto Nathaniel Sowther of the same yeoñ All that house and garden place in Plymouth aforesaid lying on the North side of the heigh street betweene the lands of M^r John Alden and the fort and all the fence about the same wth all ℥ singuler thapp^rteñc℥ thervnto belonging together wth all his right title and interest into the said p^rmiss̄s ℥ euery part ℥ pcell thereof To haue ℥ to hold the s̄d House and garden place and all ℥ singuler thapp^rteñces thervnto

Souther moved to Boston in 1649 and surrendered the house back to the Colony (Davis 1885: 289). Holmes' deed to Souther described the house as being located on the north side of high street between the lands of John Alden and the fort. Having the military leader's house located close to the fort makes strategic sense and this is a good argument that the house was Standish's prior to being Holmes'. It is said that on the north side of the stairway leading up to Burial Hill today there is a depression with a beech tree growing out of it and that is where the Standish/ Holmes house stood (Baker 2008). Walking over Burial Hill after rainstorms, I have found the earliest pieces of 17th century colonial artifacts in this general area- a piece of North Devon gravel free baluster jar and a brass bed curtain ring, suggesting that a house did stand in this area.



Possible Holmes/ Standish Homesite area shown on this 19th century photograph



Possible Holmes/ Standish homesite shown on this Google Earth image

It is not known what happened to the house after Souther's ownership, but no house is ever recorded as being on this spot so the occupation may have ceased after 1649 making the total period of occupation 1620-1649.

John Alden

Davis states that "All land between Burial Hill and Main St. belonged to Alden and Bradford. Alden land covered site of old schoolhouse and school street, probably later surrendered it and it was called Town Commons." (Davis 1885:54). The only record of Alden living here was that 1638 deed from Holmes to Souther. This may indicate that Alden owned the land at least until that date. His was the 13th lot between Russell Street at the north and Leyden/ Court Street on the south and it was vacant until 1765 when the school house was built on it. Since then it eventually became the location of the Plymouth engine house in the 19th century (Davis 1885).



Fire House/ Alden homesite location shown on 1882 lithograph



Possible location of Alden homesite

William Bradford

While Bradford's 1620 map of Plymouth shows the homes on the south side of Leyden Street, the north side is blank. The first clue to the location of William Bradford's house is the report of the Dutch ambassador Isaac de Rasieres who stated that "in the centre on the cross street stands the governor's house.". We know who lived on the south corners so that leaves the north side. By the

time of Bradford's death in 1657, the documentary record indicates that he owned all the land between Main and School streets, an area measuring about 200 feet and encompassing seven lots measuring 25.5' east to west by 49.5' north to south. The land passed to his sons William and Joseph on his death with William being granted the lower part of the lot to a point about 17' east of the Pilgrimage Church lot, and Joseph receiving the upper portion to what is now School Street. A 1701 record of the town regarding a controversy between Major William Bradford and the town, it was stated that Major Bradford owned the land where the First Church meetinghouse (1648-1683) stood, and that this was the same lot where Governor Bradford's house stood. It appears that even though Governor Bradford owned the land, the Colony still had some possible claim to it. This goes back to the fact that all the land in the village belonged to the colony once the village had served its initial purpose. Some of the original settlers (Bradford, Allerton, Winslow, Hopkins, Fuller, Hicks) seem to have purchased or been granted some of these lands with some of them (Bradford, Winslow, and Hicks) amassing larger holdings consisting of several original lots. The lot from Governor Bradford's estate that was granted to his son Major William Bradford had about 40-50' of facing on Town Square (Leyden Street) making it 6 of the original 1/2 rod by 3 rod lots or 2 of the buildable size house lots. The meetinghouse was located at the corner of Main and Market/ Leyden Street and Governor Bradford's house was located to the west of this at the southwest corner of this lot. In 1698 Major William Bradford sold his lot, which measured six rods square, to John Murdoch, with a shop standing thereon, which Mr. Murdock then occupied.



Location of Odd Fellows Hall (First Church meetinghouse) and Bradford homesite on 1874 map and 1882 lithograph.



Google Earth image showing the probable location of Bradford's house today



Early colonial homesites and locations shown on Google Earth image (yellow line near the top represents a 3 rod length)

Stephen Hopkins

Davis' research indicated that Stephen Hopkins owned the strip of land extending from Leyden Street to Middle Street. When he died in 1644 it came into the possession of Edward Gray, who sold it in 1670 to John Cotton, by whom it was sold, in 1680, to inn keeper James Cole. In 1652, after Hopkins' death, the courts authorized Captain Standish to seek out a suitable, possibly empty, home in the center of town that could be used for the purpose:

"The Court have agreed with Captaine Standish about the house that was Mr Hopkinnes, in which hee is to see that a convenient place bee made to keep the common stocke of powder and shott, and the cuntry to make other use therof as they shal have occation for the meetings of the comitties & juryes and other such like uses and it is to bee repaired att the countrys charge, provided, that when the owners doe make use therof, they are to make satisfaction for the repairing therof." (Plymouth Colony Records (PCR) Vol 3: 14: June 29, 1652). The house does not seem to have been chosen though.

While this does not locate Hopkins house, it does show that it was in Plymouth. When combined with Davis' research, there is a strong probability that Hopkins' house was at the northeast corner of the intersection of Main and Leyden streets.

Russell reported that a 1677 deed states that the homestead of Stephen Hopkins was at corner of Main and Leyden Street and John Howland just south on land later owned by Barnabas Hedge (Russell 1866:55).

John Howland

As far as I can tell, the only association of John Howland's house to a particular location is based on the research in the 19th century of William Davis. Davis does not explicitly explain how he determined where John Howland's house was located. He does state that the land passed to Edward Gray, who appears to have purchased much of the west part of the north side of Leyden Street and that he sold it, and the rest of the land he owned to the west, to Reverend John Cotton in 1670. Cotton sold it and the other lands he had purchased from Gray to James Cole in 1680.

Samuel Fuller

Samuel Fuller's homesite is much better documented than most of those in the old village. In 1664 Bridget Fuller, Samuel's widow, and their son Samuel gave a gift to the church, for the use of the minister, of a certain garden plot, being a half acre more or less, bounded south by Leyden Street, easterly by the middle of the alley, and so on in this same range to what is now Middle Street, north by Middle Street, and westerly by a line running in a range of land of William R. Drew. On this plot was what is assumed to be the original Fuller house.

Robert Hicks

Robert Hicks owned all the land between Middle and Leyden Streets on the north and south, and Cole's Hill and LeBaron's Alley on the east and west, covering two original garden plats. He conveyed this to his son Samuel in 1639 who sold it to Edward Gray, who lived there as well. Gray sold it in 1673 to John Rickard and on his death it was occupied by Joseph Allyne and was then split between Rickard's sons James and John, both of whom lived on the property, James in the west and John in the east. The original house was taken down in 1826 and a Universalist Church and its parsonage was built on the site.

Edward Winslow

The location of Edward Winslow's house is intimately tied to the the establishment of Plymouth's Country House. In the seventeenth century, Plymouth was the center of the colonial government with courts being called, hearing held and juries impaneled here. As the colonial population grew and the number of towns represented in the quarterly meeting of the magistrates increased, colonial officials saw the need for a specific court house and place of lodging designated exclusively for the use of the magistrates. For this purpose, a country house was desired by the town as early as 1652. Before this time, court sessions may have been held in the old meeting house or Governor's house. When the location of Stephen Hopkins' house was discussed above, I reported that In 1652, the courts authorized Captain Standish to seek out a suitable location in the center of town that could be used for the purpose.

For some reason, Hopkins' house appears to have been determined not suitable for the purpose, possibly due to its condition, and in 1660, a different house was chosen. This was Captain Willet's house, the southwesternmost house on Leyden Street:

"It is ordered by the Court, that the countrys house, bought of Capt. Willett, shall bee repaired att the charge of the countrey, and the Treasurer to take some speedy course for the doing of it, and likewise to provide some conveniency of beding there for special occations." (PCR Vol 3: 195: June 13, 1660)

Willet's house originally belonged to Edward Winslow. In 1639, when Winslow moved out of Plymouth to settle on his lands in Marshfield, he sold the house and lands to Thomas Wallis, merchant, for 120 pounds:

"All my dwelling house and garden place the backhouse in the end thereof with the fould yard now adjoining as the same is now taken in and the outhouse on the banck side and the land lying between the premises and the waterside as far as the garden and fould yard do extend except liberty of ingress and egress and regress for the said Winslow in the said fould yard to his barne and stable with liberty to lay manure in the said yard and also except the land lying northward from the end of the said barne and stable to streetward and a little parcell of land lying at the south end of said barn and liberty to take away the fruit trees when he pleases now growing in the garden" (PCR Vol 1: December 9 1639)

This document described a fairly large parcel with a house, garden, fould (fold), backhouse (house addition) near his barn and stable. Winslow then bought it back and subsequently sold it to Edmond Freeman as part of the colony's payment to its backers in England (PCR Vol 1: 129 March 7, 1645). Edmond Freeman appears to have worked closely with Thomas Willet in a number of land deals in and around Plymouth. While no specific deed or record exists transferring the land and house from Freeman to Willett, it is believed that at some point Willett acquired the property from Freeman, as he had done on a few other occasions.

The position of the Country house is confirmed in a 1683 court record which granted land for the construction of a meetinghouse. This record stated that " This Court have given and granted unto the towne of Plymouth a smalepeece of upland lying on the southerly side of the Great Street in Plymouth a little above the country house, to erect their new meeting house thereon, viz all that smale psell of land which was the countryses there. " (PCR Vol 5:108-109: June 6 1683). The

meeting house was located at the western end of Leyden Street where the large stone Unitarian church now stands.

The Country House continued to be used throughout the century with modifications, such as the construction of an addition in 1670 "The Treasurer is appointed by the Court to agree with some workmen to build an addition to the country house to entertain the majestrates att Court times and other necessary uses of the countrey. " (PCR Vol 1670, June 7). Other repairs and possibly constructions may have occurred, but they were not recorded. At some time the Country House appears to have become the Court House, as this structure was removed and a new Court House was erected in 1749 on the same site (Records of the Town of Plymouth Vol 3: 29). Russell stated that the the old building that was replaced, the Winslow House, had been erected as the court house in the 1660s and that the entire frame of this old building was removed to the lot owned by William and Thomas Jackson, which was located next to the present Plymouth Savings Bank and was fitted for the use of the courts while the new court house was being constructed (Russell 1866:62). This structure was still in Plymouth in the middle of the nineteenth century, fitted with a new middle eighteenth century facade. Eventually, in the 1850s, a new Court house was constructed at what is now Court Street and remains in use.

Winslow's house is also referred to by Judge Samuel Sewall when he came to Plymouth in 1698. Sewall stated that on March 8:

"Get to Plymouth about Noon, Are entertain'd at Cole's. Send two mile for Mr. Little, who prays at the opening of the Court.. invite him to Dinner: Speak not to Mr. Cotton. I lodge at Cole's, the house was built by Govr Winslow and is the oldest in Plimouth." (Sewall 1698: 388-389).

Cole's tavern was located on the south side of Leyden Street east of the Baptist Church that existed on Leyden Street in the 19th century. This church was replaced by the brick building (the former post office) that stands at the corner of Leyden and Main streets. Most of land from corner of Market Street to the brick ended house at the east end of Leyden Street was eventually in possession of James Cole beginning in 1637. He was licensed for the ordinary in 1645. In 1688 James Cole sold all his lands to his son John, who sold it to William Shurtleff in 1689. It seems fairly certain that Winslow's house was located where the Court House Museum is today. It is probable that Winslow owned a large part of the land on the south side of Leyden Street in the same way that Bradford and Hopkins owned land along Main Street. It seems to have been a trend for individuals to acquire large pieces of contiguous former lots in the former village. The house that became Cole's ordinary may have belonged to Winslow eventually, maybe being William Brewster's or Peter brown's originally, but became associated with Winslow. It also could be a case where the ordinary owner was purposefully making up a good story for his history minded clientele.

Isaac Allerton

The location of Isaac Allerton's house is shown on Bradford's 1620 map. The only other reference to his house is a 1645 record when the Plymouth Company sold his house in 1645 to John Beachamp (one of the Colony's backer's representatives):

"MEMORAND the same day That Mr Thomas Prence doth acknowledg That for & in consideracon of the sum of one hundred fourty £ fiue pound£ allowed him in payment to Mr John Beachamp vpon the said account Hath freely and absolutely bargained and sold vnto m' Edmond ffreeman All that his house and garden place and barne in Plymouth wth the doores locks glasse and all the

shelues in each roome as now they are...." (PCR Vol. 1, 1645: 130).

Prence had been given the house by his father-in-law to help settle the Colony's debts.

Common House

The lot on which the brick-end house stands at the southeast end of Leyden Street, was conveyed to John Dyer in 1698 by Major William Bradford, son of Governor Bradford. The deed from William Bradford describes the lot as running on the street northeasterly "as far as the northeasterly corner of the old storehouse, which formerly stood on the lot." Russell reported that in 1801 some men digging a cellar on the site found several tools and a plate of iron 7 feet below the surface. These were carefully preserved and valued by Isaac Lathrop Esq. who died in 1808 (Russell 1866: 55). The workers may have actually found a deposit of bog iron versus real iron tools since iron deposits are common along Town Brook.

The common house, the first house built in the colony was believed by Davis to have been built on the lots occupied by the houses of Mr. Nelson and Mr. Barrows in the nineteenth century (an identification that rested on oral tradition). These lots are located just east of the brick end house lot.

The construction of this first house began on Monday, 25 December/4 January when some of the men went ashore to fell timber, saw, and to rive. This may indicate that they expected the first house to be timber framed with clapboards on the exterior. By January 9/ 19 the common house, measuring 20' square, was nearly completed and only lacked the thatch roof. The common house was filled with beds so that people could leave the ship and a chimney. On Sunday, 14/24 January a spark from the fire flew up and caught the thatch on fire. On Friday, 19/29 January it was decided that a shed in which to keep the common provisions should be built on the end of the storehouse. This was completed by Saturday, 20/30 January and on Monday afternoon they began the task of moving supplies from the ship, a task that lasted several days, began. On Friday, 9/19 February, a spark again kindled the thatch on the common house. Another fire broke out in the common house in 1623 when some sailors being housed there were probably celebrating Guy Fox Day by making a bonfire in the chimney. Bradford reported that it "broke out of the chimney into the thatch, and burnte downe 3. or 4. houses, and consumed all the goods and provisions in them. The house in which it begane was right against their store-house, which they had much adoe to save, in which were their commone store and all their provisions; the which if it had been lost, the plantation had been overthrowne." (Bradford 1908: 253). Bradford also noted that soon after, smoke was seen rising from the shed joined to the end of the storehouse (the shed built in 1621) "which was wasted up with bowes, in the withered leaves wherof the fire was kindled, which some, running to quench, found a longe firebrand of an ell longe lying under the wale on the inside, which could not possibly come their by cassualtie, but must be laid ther by some hand, in the judgmente of all that saw it." (Bradford 1908: 255). It appears that the wall of the shed was made of wattle with no daub- "wasted up with bowes".

Cooke, Billington, Brown and Goodman

The locations of these homesites are based only on Bradford's 1620 map. No other documentation exists for their positions.

What are the Chances of Finding any Traces of the Original Village?

Plymouth has been very built up since 1620 with some of the most noticeable changes probably happening in preparation for the 1920 celebration and in the 1960s when numerous 17th and 18th century buildings were destroyed in the name of progress. Overall, it would have to be said that the town has a horrible record for attempting to preserve any traces of its Pilgrim past. There is

probably no hope of ever finding any archaeological traces of any of the actual architectural portions of any of the original homes with the exception of the Standish/ Holmes house up on Burial Hill. If early occupation extended to Middle Street, if this was the north side of the palisade, then traces of buildings and that palisade have the best chance of being identified in the town parking lot and along Carver Street. This is especially true if Coles Hill itself was outside the palisade, meaning that it may have run approximately where the west side walk is bordering Carver Street. This does not mean that evidence of the 17th century occupation of Plymouth does not exist. Traces of early buildings, buildings that represent the first phase of post-1627 expansion outside of the palisade may be present along North Street. The potential of this area was realized when PARP conducted an investigation behind 11 North Street and found colonial evidence going back to the 1630s. Unfortunately, most of the early buildings along this street probably fronted on the road, meaning that there is, again a high likelihood that most of the architectural traces are gone, but more yards exist in this area making it more likely that some of the backyards from the first half of the 17th century still exist here. To a lesser degree, the same may be said of the lots on Leyden Street. Traces of the palisade may be preserved in the back lots bordering Town Brook on the south side of the street and domestic and architectural refuse may be scattered about in any open space along Leyden Street. It would just take a lot of keyhole excavations to try to determine where any intact deposits were located. Any grassy spot or even any paved spot, could hold evidence of the first colonial settlement in town.

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