The Pilgrims, whose backers had forced them to take a large number of skilled colonists who were not Puritans, quickly sent back reports to their friends in England, which were published in 1622. These excerpts, in the first document, describe the Mayflower Compact, by which they and the non-Puritan "strangers" agreed to live, and the first Thanksgiving, celebrated in an early spirit of peace with their Wampanoag Indian neighbors. William Bradford, Plymouth's governor, kept a journal of events. In the excerpt reprinted as the second document, Bradford describes the Pilgrims' increasingly tense relationship with their Indian neighbors and their growing suspicion of even their interpreters, Squanto and Hobomok.

John Winthrop, governor of Massachusetts Bay, gave a famous sermon on board the Arbella, the ship carrying the first Puritan contingent. In the excerpts featured in the third selection, he outlines the distinctive characteristics of his colony, bound together as it was by a common purpose. Winthrop's images have been re-shaped many times in American history. In the fourth selection John Pond, a far humbler member of the Arbella fleet, writes to his father for help, as Richard Fethorne had done from Virginia (see Chapter 3), in facing the rigors of the new plantation. Both New England colonies experienced a high death rate in their first years. In the fifth document minister Thomas Weld writes to his former parishioners in England, certifying that after two years the colony was firmly established. The Summons to New England, the sixth selection, is a ballad ridiculing the Puritans' claims of both the bounty of their land and the purity of their religious life; it affords insight into the opposition they faced. In the seventh selection William Wood offers up a "true, lively, and experimental description" of New England in which he views the colonists' Indian neighbors with sympathy and interest and analyzes the changes wrought in the native people's gender roles by the coming of the English. Mantonomo, chief of the Narragansetts, presents a much darker picture of the Indians' changed situation in the final selection.

Plymouth's Pilgrims on the Mayflower Compact and the First Thanksgiving, 1620, 1621

The Mayflower Compact, 1620

This day before we came to harbor, observing some not well affected to unity and concord, but gave some appearance of faction, it was thought good there should be an association and agreement, that we should combine together in one body, and to submit to such government and governors, as we should by common consent agree to make and choose, and set our hands to this that follows word for word.

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 Great Britain, France, and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, etc.

Having under-taken for the glory of God, and advancement of the Chris-
are worth the noting. Yea it hath pleased God so to possess the Indians with a fear of us, and love unto us, that not only the greatest King amongst them called Massasoit, but also all the Princes and people round about us, have either made suit unto us, or been glad of any occasion to make peace with us, so that seven of them at once have sent their messengers to us to that end ... willingly to be under the protection, and subjects to our sovereign Lord King James, so that there is now great peace amongst the Indians themselves, which was not formerly, neither would have been but for us. And we for our parts walk as peaceably and safely in the wood, as in the highways in England, we entertain them familiarly in our houses, and they as friendly bestowing their venison on us. They are a people without any Religion, or knowledge of any God, yet very trusty, quick of apprehension, ripe witted, just.

Governor William Bradford on the Plymouth Colonists' Relations with the Indians, Early 1620s

Anno. 1621

... But about the 16. of March a certain Indian came boldly amongst them, and spoke to them in broken English, which they could understand, but marvelled at it. At length they understood by discourse with him, that he was not of those parts, but belonged to the eastern parts, where some English-ships came to fish, with whom he was acquainted, & could name sundry of them by their names, amongst whom he had got his language. He became profitable to them in acquainting them with many things concerning the state of the country in the east-parts where he lived, which was afterwards profitable unto them; as also of the people near, of their names, number, & strength; of their situation & distance from this place, and who was chief amongst them. His name was Samasek; he told them also of another Indian whose name was Squanto, a native of this place, who had been in England & could speak better English than himself. Being, after some time of entertainment & gifts, dismissed, a while after he came again, & 5 more with him, & they brought again all the tools that were stolen away before, and made way for the coming of their great Sachem, called Massasoit; who, about 4 or 5 days after, came with the chief of his friends & other attendence, with the aforesaid Squanto. With whom, after friendly entertainment, & some gifts given him, they made a peace with him (which hath now continued this 24 years) in these terms.

1. That neither he nor any of his, should injure or do hurt to any of their people.
2. That if any of his did any hurt to any of theirs, he should send the offender, that they might punish him.
3. That if anything were taken away from any of theirs, he should cause it to be restored; and they should do the like to his.

Some of the spelling in this document has been modernized.

4. If any did unjustly war against him, they would aid him; if any did war against them, he should aid them.
5. He should send to his neighbours confederates, to certify them of this, that they might not wrong them, but might be likewise comprised in the conditions of peace.
6. That when their men came to them, they should leave their bows & arrows behind them.

After these things he returned to his place called Squams, some 40 mile from this place, but Squanto continued with them, and was their interpreter, and was a special instrument sent of God for their good beyond their expectation. He directed them how to set their corn, where to take fish, and to procure other commodities, and was also their pilot to bring them to unknown places for their profit, and never left them till he died. He was a native of this place, & scarce any left alive besides himself. He was carried away with diverse others by one Hunt, a master of a ship, who thought to sell them for slaves in Spain; but he got away for England, and was entertained by a merchant in London, & employed to New-found-land & other parts, & lastly brought hither into these parts by one Mr. Dermer, a gentle-man employed by Sir Ferdinando Gorges & others, for discovery, & other designs in these parts. . . .

... Then the sickness began to fall sore amongst them, and the weather so bad as they could not make much sooner any dispatch. Againe, the Govr. & chief of them, seeing so many die, and fall down sick daily, thought it no wisdom to send away the ship, their condition considered, and the danger they stood in from the Indians, till they could procure some shelter; and therefore thought it better to draw some more charge upon themselves & friends, than hazard all. . . .

Afterwards they (as many as were able) began to plant their corn, in which service Squanto stood them in great stead, showing them both the manner how to set it, and after how to dress & tend it. Also he told them except they got fish & set with it (in these old grounds) it would come to nothing, and he showed them that in the middle of April they should have store enough come up the brook, by which they began to build, and taught them how to take it, and where to get other provisions necessary for them; all which they found true by trial & experience. Some English seed they sow, as wheat & peas, but it came not to good, either by the badness of the seed, or lateness of the season, or both, or some other defect.

In this month of April whilst they were busy about their seed, their Govr. (Mr. John Carver) came out of the field very sick, it being a hot day; he complained greatly of his head, and lay down, and within a few hours his senses failed, so as he never spoke more till he died, which was within a few days after. Whose death was much lamented, and caused great heaviness amongst them, as there was cause. He was buried in the best manner they could, with some volleys of shot by all that bore arms; and his wife, being a weak woman, died within 5 or 6 weeks after him.

Shortly after William Bradford was chosen Govr. in his stead, and being