

Pilgrim Village Families Sketch: William Bradford

By Robert Charles Anderson

Birth: William Bradford was baptized in Austerfield, Yorkshire March 19, 1589/90, the son of William and Alice (Hanson) Bradford.

Death: He died in Plymouth May 9, 1657, and was buried at Burial Hill.

Ship: *Mayflower*, 1620

Life in England: Orphaned young, Bradford was raised first by his grandfather, then by uncles. At the age of twelve, he became an avid reader of the Bible, and began attending Separatist services in Scrooby. Against the wishes of his family he joined the Separatist church at sixteen and went with the congregation to Holland two years later.

Life in Holland: The Scrooby congregation, lived first in Amsterdam, then in Leiden. He worked as a weaver, and in 1612 became a citizen of Leiden. In 1617, he was appointed one of the organizers of the voyage to “Virginia” (America).

Life in New England: Appointed governor after the death of John Carver in the summer of 1621, Bradford held the office from 1621 to 1656, except for five years service as Governor’s Assistant. The colony’s most prolific author, he wrote the journal known as *Mourt’s Relation* with Edward Winslow, three “Dialogues,” and the colony’s history.

Family: William Bradford married Dorothy May (1) in Amsterdam on December 10, 1613. They had one son. She drowned in Cape Cod harbor on December 7, 1620. On August 14, 1623, he married (2) Alice (Carpenter) Southworth in Plymouth and had three children. She died in Plymouth on March 26, 1670.

Child of William and Dorothy Bradford:

- John was born in Leiden about 1617. He married Martha Bourne by 1650, but had no known children. He died in Norwich, Connecticut before September 21, 1676.

Children of William and Alice Bradford:

- William was born on June 17, 1624, in Plymouth. He married (1) Alice Richards after April 23, 1650, and had ten children. She died in Plymouth on December 12, 1671. He married (2) Sarah (____) Griswold about 1674, and had one son. He married (3) Mary (Wood) Holmes about 1676 and had four children. He died in Plymouth February 20, 1703/4.
- Mercy was born before May 22, 1627. She married Benjamin Vermayes on December 21, 1648, in Plymouth, but had no known children. She was not mentioned in her father’s 1657 will and was probably dead by then.
- Joseph was born about 1630. He married Jael Hobart on May 25, 1664, in Hingham and had three children. He died in Plymouth on July 10, 1715.