

## Plymouth Rock

Plymouth Rock is the traditional site of disembarkation of William Bradford and the *Mayflower* Pilgrims who founded Plymouth Colony in 1620. It is an important symbol in American history. The first written reference to the Pilgrims landing on a rock is found 121 years after they landed. The Rock, or one traditionally identified as it, has long been memorialized on the shore of Plymouth Harbor in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

The location of the *Plymouth Rock*, at the foot of Cole's Hill allegedly passed from generation to generation in the first century after the Pilgrims' landing in 1620. When plans were afoot to build a wharf at the Pilgrim's landing site in 1741, a 94-year-old Elder of the church named Thomas Faunce (who was the town record keeper for most of his adult life) identified the precise rock his father had told him was the first solid land the Pilgrims set foot upon. (The Pilgrims first landed, however, near the site of modern Provincetown on the tip of Cape Cod in November 1620 before moving to Plymouth). The rock is located about 650 feet from where it is generally accepted that the initial settlement was built, on nearby Leyden Street leading up toward Burial Hill.

When Col. Theophilus Cotton and the townspeople of Plymouth decided to move the rock in 1774, the rock was split into two halves, and it was decided to leave the bottom portion behind at the wharf and the top half was relocated to the town's meetinghouse.

Captain William Coit wrote in the *Pennsylvania Journal* of November 29, 1775, of a story of how he brought captive British sailors ashore "upon the same rock our ancestors first trod." [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plymouth\\_Rock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plymouth_Rock)]

Today, Plymouth Rock has become an icon, symbolizing the beginnings of the United States of America. It's used in movies, literature, allusions, cartoons, plays, etc. It's kind of nice to see that we can still identify it, although it should be noted that there is no reference to it in any of the original writings of the Pilgrims.

*Plymouth Rock now rests at sea level*

