Massachusetts's *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. There are no contemporaneous references to the Pilgrims' landing on a rock at Plymouth. 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.
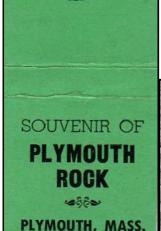
When plans were afoot to build a wharf at the Pilgrims' landing site in 1741, a 94-year-old elder of the church named Thomas Faunce, then living 3 miles from the spot, declared that he knew the precise boulder on which the Mayflower pilgrims first stepped when disembarking. Faunce's father had arrived at the colony aboard the Anne in 1623, more than 2 years after the Mayflower landing, and Elder Faunce himself had been born in 1647, but Faunce insisted that not only his father but several of the original Mayflower passengers had, when he was a youth, identified the precise rock to him. Faunce was brought in a chair to the shore, in the presence of most of the town, and he reportedly began weeping at what he was sure would be his last sight of the rock, which he identified.

Although Faunce identified the rock in 1741, it was not moved from the shore until 1774. There have been doubts hinted about the accuracy of Faunce's identification, but there is no doubt that he grew up in Plymouth at a time when many of the original passengers were still there. (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.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plymouth_Rock]