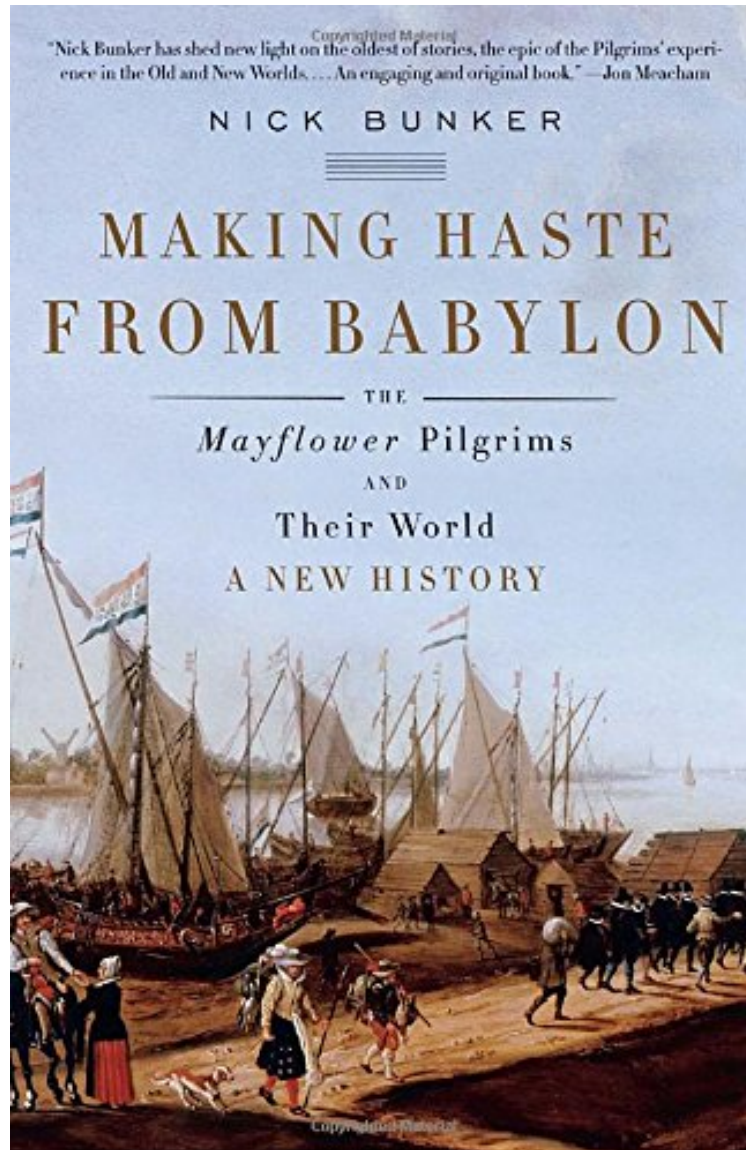


Making Haste from Babylon: The Mayflower Pilgrims and Their World: A New History

Nick Bunker

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Nick Bunker : Making Haste from Babylon: The Mayflower Pilgrims and Their World: A New History before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Making Haste from Babylon: The Mayflower Pilgrims and Their World: A New History:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. More than Squanto and a Turkey Dinner By C. Henig I think we all

knew that the arrival of the Pilgrims in Massachusetts was more than Puritans eking out an existence on Plymouth Rock, nearly starving the first year and celebrating w/ the neighbors when the harvest came in. For instance, no one ever explained how it was that Squanto was able to communicate w/ the Pilgrims. It turns out that he (real name Tisquantum) was captured by an English ship's master in 1614 and taken w/ some twenty-seven Native Americans back to England to be sold as slaves at Malaga, Spain. At Malaga, Spanish monks saved him and his fellow prisoners from slavery. He managed to make his way to England, learned English and found passage back to Massachusetts, arriving just before the Pilgrims. The fact that New England was well explored by English ships looking for cod to take back to England prior to 1620 wasn't covered in my lessons about the founding of an English colony. The fact that the backers who paid for the voyage of the Mayflower hoped to recoup their expenses by opening a lucrative fur trade also wasn't covered. The circumstances that led strict Dissenters who we know as Puritans to the New World is also a more interesting story than the problems w/ King James and temporary refuge in Holland. This book is an extremely well-researched and extremely well-written account of how it was that the Pilgrims came to the New World. It's much more interesting than I ever imagined. The details in this book and the incredible background in this book make it a superb addition to anyone's understanding. I guarantee that you will find out much that you never knew and the truth is much more interesting than the traditional Thanksgiving tale. I recommend this book highly. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. So much detail (3.25*s)By J. GrattanThis verbose, tedious, and often scattershot book attempts to fill in the gaps behind the Puritan, actually Separatist, establishment of a colony at Plymouth in 1620. The author digs deep into many archives, primarily English, to add dimensions to the lives of those connected with this event. Unfortunately, the net result is not entirely successful. Separatism can hardly be discounted as the under riding motivation for establishing a new community in the New World, but many English factors such as geography, locale, demographics, economics, domestic and international politics, etc came into play. The author leaves few stones unturned in the pursuit of the relevancy of these areas, at times to the point of testing the durability of the reader. The amount of detail is both the strength and the weakness of the book. The detail is at times enlightening or overwhelming, often at the same time. The author's approach is a bit uneven, roaming across time and place as his various themes take him. Also, perhaps surprisingly, the actual Plymouth colony becomes only a small part of the author's story. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. God is in these detailsBy Grant M. MenziesIn "Making Haste From Babylon", Nick Bunker begins with an eagle's view of history; and though the eagle transmogrifies, like a Pacific Northwest totem, into a menagerie of other creatures, crowned by the beaver which (who knew?) enabled the flagging New Plymouth colony survive, from first to last this literary trick allows an aerial survey of events and people who shaped them in the covenant of business and religion that became New England that in a very real way unfolds the entire map at once. Theories, like detail, may seem densely packed, but when one steps back (or hovers eagle-like overhead) the bright fretwork of Bunker's logic gleams in recognizable and often beautiful patterns. And he's not afraid of shaking up the hoary Pilgrims more than a little. His portrait of Elder William Brewster is a case in point. Those who envision Brewster as the mild-mannered old greybeard a little lower than Moses will find in Bunker's pages a vibrant and risk-taking man who rose from an upwardly mobile northern English family in which Puritanism's footnotes, like those in the Geneva Bible, sang the praises of success and prosperity, and spent his youth among the nonconformist firebrands of Cambridge University and the dramatic pre-Spanish Armada years on the edge of the court of Queen Elizabeth I, then after fleeing to Holland risked the welfare of himself, his family and his congregation by publishing seditious books that moved King James I to issue arrest warrants and sputter vituperatives. Brewster brought to New England not only a cracking library rich with both searching religious texts and books about exploration, courtly manners, tables of nobility, and silk worms, but also his dangerous refusal to be told by any monarch how to worship or how to live as a citizen and man, and the knowledge and experience to inform a document (the Mayflower Compact) seminal to the American ideal of civic freedoms and responsibilities. That he and the rest of the Pilgrims of 1620 were more colourful than American schoolchildren (of which I was one) were ever taught is clear. But above all, that they were human to a degree anyone living in today's jaded world can still understand, rings like a bell through Bunker's somber, sardonic, illuminating and majestic book.

At the end of 1618, a blazing green star soared across the night sky over the northern hemisphere. From the Philippines to the Arctic, the comet became a sensation and a symbol, a warning of doom or a promise of salvation. Two years later, as the Pilgrims prepared to sail across the Atlantic on board the Mayflower, the atmosphere remained charged with fear and expectation. Men and women readied themselves for war, pestilence, or divine retribution. Against this background, and amid deep economic depression, the Pilgrims conceived their enterprise of exile. Within a decade, despite crisis and catastrophe, they built a thriving settlement at New Plymouth, based on beaver fur, corn, and cattle. In doing so, they laid the foundations for Massachusetts, New England, and a new nation. Using a wealth of new evidence from landscape, archaeology, and hundreds of overlooked or neglected documents, Nick Bunker gives a vivid and strikingly original account of the Mayflower project and the first decade of the Plymouth Colony. From mercantile London and the rural England of Queen Elizabeth I and King James I to the mountains and rivers of Maine, he weaves a rich narrative that combines religion, politics, money, science, and the sea. The Pilgrims were

entrepreneurs as well as evangelicals, political radicals as well as Christian idealists. *Making Haste from Babylon* tells their story in unrivaled depth, from their roots in religious conflict and village strife at home to their final creation of a permanent foothold in America.

.com A QA with Author Nick Bunker
Question: What made you, as an Englishman, want to tell the story of the Mayflower Pilgrims? Nick Bunker: Before they were American, they were English, and a revolutionary war had to be fought before the two nations separated for good. Long after the Mayflower, the history of England and America remained deeply intertwined. You can't understand one without delving into the other as well. In my case there's also a family reason for my fascination with the American past. I'm called Bunker. For centuries the Bunkers lived lives of total obscurity, as farmhands and farriers and the like in the countryside northwest of London. Except for one Bunker, a yeoman farmer called George, born in about 1600. It seems that George Bunker became a Puritan and in 1632, he sailed to Massachusetts, most likely on the *Lyon*, a ship which also supplied the Plymouth Colony. He settled at Charlestown, where he gave his name to Bunker Hill, but George was a free-thinking man who upset the authorities by supporting the religious radical Anne Hutchinson. So they took away his gun, and banned him from holding public office. Even so, he did well. George Bunker became one of the earliest benefactors of Harvard College. His descendants were still living at Charlestown in 1775, when Bunker Hill became a battlefield. You won't find George Bunker in *Making Haste from Babylon*, but his story wasn't so very different from those of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower. It raises the same kind of questions. Exactly why did they embark on this bold, hazardous project called New England? What did they find when they arrived? How and why did they succeed, so that families like the Bunkers, who'd been unknowns in England, came to be entrepreneurs in America, the kind of people you read about in *Moby Dick*? I find these questions fascinating, but very few Britons have shown any interest in answering them. That's why I decided to write the book. I felt that it was time the story was told from an English perspective, and I guessed that historians had overlooked a mass of relevant material here in the United Kingdom.
Question: You unearthed an extraordinary number of documents relating to the Pilgrims and the early settlement of New England, most of them virtually untouched. How did you find these records? And what do they reveal? Nick Bunker: It's a matter of timing. In the 19th century, when people started to look to the Pilgrim Fathers and the Mayflower as the inventors of America, scholars from New England began to make visits to London in search of archive material that might shed more light upon them. By the time of the tercentenary in 1920, it looked as though every relevant document had been discovered. Since then, many books have appeared about the Plymouth Colony, both academic and popular. But with only one or two exceptions the authors have relied entirely upon sources which were already in print a century ago. Since 1945, record offices in England have made available huge quantities of new material from the Tudor and Stuart period, documents which were previously either hidden away in private hands, unlisted, or too badly damaged for use by scholars. Archivists have sorted out and numbered thousands of loose papers, created new catalogues, undertaken conservation projects, and become far more open and accessible. Of course, only a tiny fraction of their holdings relate to people involved in the settlement of New England. Even so they contain a wealth of relevant detail which simply wasn't available to researchers until quite recently. Let's be clear: by itself, no single document will change our view of the Mayflower or New England. What I've done is to assemble a mosaic of fragments, as carefully as I can, to form a new picture of what happened. I hope it's much clearer than anything exhibited before. I wanted to show exactly how things were: how faith, politics, business and the necessities of physical survival interacted with each other, to produce what we now call Puritan America.
Question: One of the key features of your book is that it places the Mayflower in a new global context, connecting the Pilgrims not only to religion, but to political and economic forces as well. How does this change our understanding of the settlement of North America? Nick Bunker: It makes the story richer and deeper, more adult and more inclusive, and it removes the myths and clichés. The year 1620 was the equivalent, in the seventeenth century, of 1931 in the twentieth. Western Europe was sliding into an economic depression, and the continent was already at war: a war that would last for thirty years and leave millions dead. It was the conflict described by Brecht in his play *Mother Courage*, set in this same period, when New England was being created. Meryl Streep played the title role in *Central Park* a few years ago, as the woman who drags her cart from one grim German battlefield to another, while civilization collapses. Her performance was very accurate. In the early seventeenth century, life was very, very hard and getting harder. From the Baltic to the Mediterranean, millions of people were forced to go on the road, moving back and forth in search of something better: not just Puritans but also gypsies, Jews and Irish exiles, and a vast multitude of anonymous peasants, driven off their soil by war, taxes, and bankruptcy. So the voyage of the Mayflower was simply the most famous of many migrations, in a world of trauma. If we see it like that, suddenly it ceases to be a quaint children's tale. Instead, the Mayflower becomes a symbol of the experience of migrants of all kinds. Because we can find out much more about the Pilgrims than we can about most of the other exiles and refugees whom I mentioned, their story can be told with rare fidelity and accuracy. But I hope that many other kinds of people can see it as something relevant to their own lineage, even if they're not white Anglo-Saxon Protestants like me and like Bradford. (Photo Nick Bunker) From Publishers Weekly Starred . This superb book secures for the Pilgrims their iconic perch among the earliest founders of colonial America. Bunker, a British

investment banker turned journalist, has succeeded in writing a major history, unprecedented in its sweep, of the Plymouth Colony, a history centered on the 1620s but not exclusive to that decade. If short on interpretation and on the drama inherent in the settlers' enterprise, it is long on facts. Bunker takes his history in two directions, downward into some never before used archives (which allows him to add detail and texture), and outward into the entire world context of the Pilgrim settlements. Never before has such a comprehensive and thoroughly researched study of the subject appeared. If sometimes fatiguing by the volume of detail (e.g., in a disquisition on one settlement, directions to the site include turn left at the Dunkin' Donuts), it scoops up every relevant character and links all to the basic tale of indomitable courage, religious faith, commercial ambition, international rivalry, and domestic politics. The results are stunning. Certain to be the dominating work on the Pilgrims for decades. 20 illus., 4 maps. (Apr.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Those we call Pilgrims, some contemporaries called Brownists. The identity of a separatist named Robert Browne, and of numerous obscure historical figures whose influence resulted in the Mayflower voyage of 1620, attracted author Bunker's assiduous attention to British archives. Whether piecing together biographical traces of the ship's captain, grandees of the English counties from which the Pilgrims emigrated, or the Pilgrims' financial supporters in London, Bunker re-creates a dimension that serves as background in more traditional histories (such as Nathaniel Philbrick's *Mayflower*, 2006), which focus on events after the Pilgrims landed. Not that Bunker neglects the precarious first years of the Plymouth colony and its critical alliance with the native sachem Massasoit; he rather expands the narrative to the course, over the 1620s, of transatlantic economic relations between the Pilgrims and the investors in their project. Lest anyone think Bunker reduces the Pilgrims to a business proposition, the author carefully attends to their religious motivation of establishing a purified Christianity in the New World. Including even ripples of international politics, Bunker constructs context that will intrigue history readers. --Gilbert Taylor