

## Division of Cattle

After two harvests the colony itself had decided that the task of raising food for the settlers would prosper only if it was separated from that of earning profits for London.

Having tried what Bradford called the “common course and condition” - the communal stewardship of the land demanded of them by their investors - Bradford reports that the community was afflicted by an unwillingness to work, by confusion and discontent, by a loss of mutual respect, and by a prevailing sense of slavery and injustice. And this among “godly and sober men.” In short, the arrangement of communal living was a failure that was endangering the health of the colony.

In 1623 a parcel of land was allotted to each man to till for his family and to maintain those who were exempt from agricultural employment because of other duties. Each family was given one acre per family member.

As noted by Bradford,

“All this while no supply was heard of, neither knew they when they might expecte any. So they begane to thinke how they might raise as much corne as they could, and obtaine a betere croupe then they had done, that they might not still thus languish in miserie.”

“At length, after much debate of things, the Govr (with ye advise of ye cheefest amongst them) gave way that they should set corne every man for his owne perticuler, and in that regard trust to them selves; in all other things to goe on in ye generall way as before.”

“And so assigned to every family a parcell of land, according to the proportion of their number for that end, only for present use (but made no devission for inheritance), and ranged all boys & youth under some familie.”

“This had very good success; for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corne was planted then other wise would have bene by any means ye Govr or any other could use, and saved him a great deall of trouble, and gave farr better contente.”

“The women now wente willingly into ye feild, and tooke their litle-ones with them to set corne, which before would aledg weaknes, and inability; whom to have compelled would have bene thought great tiranie and oppression.”

“The experience that was had in this comone course and condition, tried sundrie years, and that amongst godly and sober men, may well evince the vanitie of that conceite of Platos & other ancients, applauded by some of later times; that ye taking away of propertie, and bringing in comunitie into a comone wealth, would make them happy and flourishing; as if they were wiser then God. For this comunitie (so farr as it was) was found to breed much confusion & discontent, and retard much imploymet that would have been to their benefite and comforte.”

“For ye yong-men that were most able and fitte for labour & service did repine that they should spend their time & streingth to worke for other mens wives and children, with out any recompence. The strong, or man of parts, had no more in devission of victails & cloaths, then he

that was weake and not able to doe a quarter ye other could; this was thought in iustice. The aged and graver men to be ranked and equalised in labours, and victails, cloaths, &c., with ye meaner & yonger sorte, thought it some indignite & disrespect unto them.”

“And for mens wives to be commanded to doe servise for other men, as dresing their meate, washing their cloaths, &c., they deemed it a kind of slaverie, neither could many husbands well brooke it.”

“Upon ye poynte all being to have alike, and all to doe alike, they thought them selves in ye like condition, and one as good as another; and so, if it did not cut of those relations that God hath set amongst men, yet it did at least much diminish and take of ye mutuall respects that should be preserved amongst them.” (Bradford)

In abandoning the “common course and condition” everyone worked harder and more willingly. After the first abundant harvest under individual cultivation, the Pilgrims did not have to endure the meager rations of the first years. The plots assigned them permanently in 1624 became privately owned in 1627.

## **Livestock**

The Pilgrims did not bring any large livestock animals with them on the Mayflower. In fact, the only animals known with certainty to have come on the Mayflower were two dogs, an English mastiff and an English spaniel, who are mentioned on a couple of occasions in the Pilgrims' journals.

Although not specifically mentioned, it seems likely that they had with them some chickens, because chicken broth was given by Mayflower passenger Edward Winslow to the Wampanoag sachem Massasoit when he was sick in early 1623; and it is also likely they brought some pigs. In 1623, Emmanuel Altham visited Plymouth and reported there were six goats, fifty pigs, and many chickens.

In 1624, Bradford reports that “Mr. Winslow came over, and brought a prety good supply, and the ship came on fishing, a thing fatall to this plantation. He brought 3. Heifers & a bull, the first beginning of any catle of that kind in ye land”. Other cattle came, some nicknamed the “Great Black Cow”, the “Lesser Black Cow”, and the “Great White-Backed Cow”. By 1627, both the “Lesser Black Cow” and the “Great White-backed Cow” had calves.

Onboard the Jacob in 1624 were four black heifers (a heifer is a young female cow that has not yet had a calf.) The four black heifers were nicknamed “Least”, “Raghorn”, “Blind”, and “Smooth-Horned”. There was also a “Red Cow” that belonged to the poor of the colony, which had a red female calf around 1625, and a male calf in 1627.

By May 1627, there were 16 head of cattle and at least 22 goats living in Plymouth. The exact arrival of the first sheep in the colony is uncertain (likely some time before 1629). The first horses and oxen did not begin arriving until the 1630s, most being brought to the Massachusetts Bay Colony to the north. (Caleb Johnson’s MayflowerHistory)

Like the distribution of land in 1623 and 1627, the Pilgrims divided their livestock (cattle, goats, etc) into separate ‘lots’ in 1627.



Records of the Colony of New Plymouth, in New England: Deeds, &c., 1620-1651 Vol 1 tells of the 1627 Division of Cattle:

At a publique court held the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May [1627] it was concluded by the whole Companie, that the cattell wch were the Companies, to wit, the Cowes & the Goates should be equally deuided to all the psonts of the same company & soe kept vntill the expiration of ten yeares after the date aboue written. & that euery one should well and sufficiently puid for there owne pt vnder penalty of forfeiting the same.

That the old stock with halfe th increase should remaine for comon vse to be deuided at thend of the said terme or otherwise as ocation falleth out, & the other halfe to be their owne for euer.

Vppon wch agreement they were equally deuided by lotts soe as the burthen of the keeping the males then beeing should be borne for common vse by those to whose lot the best Cowes should fall & so the lotts fell as followeth./

thirteene psonts being pportioned to one lot.

i. The first lot fell to ffrancis Cooke & his Companie Joyned to him his wife Hester Cooke.

- 3 John Cooke
- 4 Jacob Cooke
- 5 Jane Cooke
- 6 Hester Cooke
- 7 Mary Cooke
- 8 Moses Simonson
- 9 Phillip Delanoy
- 10 Experience Michael
- 11 John ffance
- 12 Joshua Pratt
- 13 Phinihas Pratt

(To this lot fell the least of the 4 black Heyfers Came in the Jacob, and two shee goats.)

2 The second lot fel to Mr Isaac Allerton & his Companie ioyned to him his wife ffeare Allerton.

- 3 Bartholomew Allerton
- 4 Remember Allerton
- 5 Mary Allerton
- 6 Sarah Allerton
- 7 Godber Godberson
- 8 Sarah Godberson
- 9 Samuell Godberson
- 10 Marra Priest
- 11 Sarah Priest
- 12 Edward Bumpasse
- 13 John Crakstone

(To this lot fell the Greate Black cow came in the Ann to which they must keepe the lesser of the two steers, and two shee goats.)

3 The third lot fell to Capt Standish & his companie Joyned to him

- 2 his wife Barbara Standish
- 3 Charles Standish

- 4 Allexander Standish
- 5 John Standish
- 6 Edward Winslow
- 7 Susanna Winslow
- 8 Edward Winslow
- 9 John Winslow
- 10 Resolued White
- 11 Perigrine White
- 12 Abraham Peirce
- 13 Thomas Clarke

(To this lot fell the Ked Cow wch belongeth to the poore of the Colonye to wch they must keepe her Calfe of this yeare being a Bull for the Companie. Also to this lott Came too she goats.)

4 The fourth lot fell to John Howland & his company Joyned to him

- 2 his wife Elizabeth Howland
- 3 John Howland Junor
- 4 Desire Howland
- 5 William Wright
- 6 Thomas Morton Junor
- 7 John Alden
- 8 Prissilla Alden
- 9 Elizabeth Alden
- 10 Clement Briggs
- 11 Edward Dolton
- 13 Edward Holdman
- 13 Joh. Alden

(To this lot fell one of the 4 heyfers Came in the Jacob Called Raghorne.)

5 The fift lot fell to Mr Willm Brewster & his companie Joyned to him

- 2 Loue Brewster
- 3 Wrestling Brewster
- 4 Richard More
- 5 Henri Samson
- 6 Johnathan Brewster
- 7 Lucrecia Brewster
- 8 Willm Brewster
- 9 Mary Brewster
- 10 Thomas Prince
- 11 Pacience Prince
- 12 Rebecka Prince
- 13 Humillyty Cooper

(To this lot ffell one of the fower Heyfers Came in the Jacob Caled the Blind Hcyfer & 2 shee goats.)

6 The sixt lott fell to John Shaw & his companie Joyned

- 1 to him
- 2 John Adams
- 3 Eliner Adams
- 4 James Adams
- 5 John Winslow
- 6 Mary Winslow
- 7 Willm Basset
- 8 Elizabeth Bassett

(To this lot fell the lesser of the black Cowes Came at first in the Ann wth which they must keepe the biggest of the 2 steers. Also to this lott was two shee goats.)

- 9 Willyam Basset Junor
- 10 Elyzabeth Basset Junor
- 11 ffrancis Sprage
- 12 Anna Sprage
- 13 Mercye Sprage

7 The seauenth lott fell to Stephen Hopkins & his companie Joyned to  
2 him his wife Elizabeth Hopkins

- 3 Gyles Hopkins
- 4 Caleb Hopkins
- 5 Debora Hopkins
- 6 Nickolas Snow
- 7 Constance Snow
- 8 Willam Ballmer
- 9 ffrances Ballmer
- 10 Willm Ballmer Jnor
- 11 John Billington Senor
- 12 Hellen Billington
- 13 ffrancis Billington

(To this lott fell A black weining Calfe to wch was aded the Calfe of this yeare to come of the black Cow, wch fell to John Shaw & and his Companie, wch pueing a bull they were to keepe it vngelt 5 yeares for common vse & after to make there best of it. Nothing belongeth of thes too, for ye copanye of ye first stock: but only half ye Increase. To this lott ther fell two shee goats: which goats they posses on the like terms which others doe their cattell.)

8 The eaight lot fell to Samuell ffuller & his company Joyned to him his wife

- 2 Bridgett ffuller
- 3 Samuell ffuller Junior
- 4 Peeter Browne
- 5 Martha Browne
- 6 Mary Browne
- 7 John fford
- 8 Martha fford
- 9 Anthony Anable
- 10 Jane Auablc
- 11 Sara Anable
- 12 Hanah Anable
- ~~13 Thorn Morton Senor~~
- 13 Damaris Hopkins

(To this lott fell A Red Heyfer Came of the Cow wch belongeth to the poore of the Colony & so is of that Consideration, (viz) thes psonts nominated, to haue halfe the Increase, the other halfe, with the ould stock, to remain for the vsc of the poore./ To this lott also two shoe goats.)

9 The ninth lot fell to Richard Warren & his companie Joyned with

- 2 him his wife Elizabeth "Warren
- 3 Nathaniel! Warren
- 4 Joseph Warren
- 5 Mary Warren
- 6 Anna Warren
- 7 Sara Warren
- 8 Elizabeth Warren
- 9 Abigail Warren
- 10 John Billington
- 11 George Sowle
- 12 Mary Sowle
- 13 Zakariah Sowle

(To this lott fell one of the 4 black Heyfers that came in the Jacob caled the smooth horned Heyfer and two shee goats.)

- 10 The tenth lot fell to Francis Eaton & those Joyned wth him his
  - 2 wife Christian Eaton
  - 3 Samuell Eaton
  - 4 Rahell Eaton
  - 5 Stephen Tracie
  - 6 Triphosa Tracie
  - 7 Sarah Tracie
  - 8 Rebecka Tracie
  - 9 Ralph Wallen
  - 10 Joyce Wallen
  - 11 Sarah Morton
  - 12 Edward Fludd
  - 12 Robert Hilton Bartlet
  - 13 Tho: Prence.

(To this lott ffell an heyfer of the last yeare called the white belyd heyfer & two shee goats.)

- 11 The eleuenth lott ffell to the Gouvernr Mr William Bradford and
  - 2 those with him, to wit, his wife Alls Bradford and
  - 3 William Bradford, Junior
  - 4 Mercy Bradford
  - 5 Joseph Rogers
  - 6 Thomas Cushman
  - 7 William Latham
  - 8 Manases Kempton
  - 9 Julian Kempton
  - 10 Nathaniell Morton
  - 11 John Morton
  - 12 Ephraim Morton
  - 13 Patience Morton

(To this lott fell An heyfer of the last yeare wch was of the Greate white back cow that was brought ouer in the Ann, & two shee goats.)

12. The twelueth lott fell to John Jene & his companie joyned to him,
  - 2 his wife Sarah Jene
  - 3 Samuell Jene
  - 4 Abigail Jene
  - 5 Sara Jene Robert
  - 6 Robert Hickes
  - 7 Margret Hickes
  - 8 Samuell Hickes
  - 9 Ephraim Hickes
  - 10 Lidya Hickes
  - 11 Phebe Hickes
  - 12 Stephen Deane
  - 13 Edward Banges

(To this lott fell the greate white backt cow wch was brought ouer with the first in the Ann, to wch cow the keepinge of the bull was joyned for thes psonts to guide for. heere also two shee goats.)

1627, May the 22. It was farther agreed at the same Court/:

That if anie of the cattell should by accident miscarie or be lost or Hurt: that the same should be taken knowledg of by Indifferent men: and Judged whether the losse came by the negligence or default of those betrusted and if they were found faulty, that then such should be forced to make satisfaction for the companies, as also their partners damage/:



Information here is from Bradford, Records of the Colony of New Plymouth, in New England: Deeds, &c., 1620-1651 Vol 1, Pilgrim Hall Museum, Plimoth Patuxet, Caleb Johnson's MayflowerHistory.

In an effort to provide a brief, informal background summary of various people, places and events related to the Mayflower, I made this informal compilation from a variety of sources. This is not intended to be a technical reference document, nor an exhaustive review of the subject. Rather, it is an assemblage of information and images from various sources on basic background information. For ease in informal reading, in many cases, specific quotations and citations and attributions are often not included – however, sources are noted in the summary. The images and text are from various sources and are presented for personal, noncommercial and/or educational purposes. Thanks, Peter T. Young