

The Pilgrims' Voyage

[Photo: Dr. Farmer.jpg] **11/18/19** — The year 2020 will be the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims' voyage to America. The 102 passengers and 30 crew members set sail on the Mayflower from Plymouth, England in September of 1620. Following their 66-day sea voyage, they arrived in Cape Cod, Massachusetts in November of 1620. While still onboard the ship, 41 male passengers signed a governance document known as the Mayflower Compact. Those who signed the Mayflower Compact agreed to adhere to majority rule for the "general Good of the Colony."

After thoroughly exploring the Cape Cod area, the Pilgrims decided to settle in a place they would name Plymouth, and they began building their first permanent structures. The first brutal winter in Plymouth claimed the lives of more than half of the colonists. Over two thirds of the women did not survive the first winter. Fortunately for the surviving colonists, Native Americans came to the rescue with lifesaving local advice on how to hunt and farm the area. After the colonists gathered their first successful summer harvest in 1621, they decided to celebrate with a feast of Thanksgiving and invited their Native American friends. This celebration was the beginning of our modern-day Thanksgiving holiday.

The year 2019 has been a special anniversary year for Weatherford College. The sesquicentennial year brought out the very best in our students, our faculty and staff, and in our community stakeholders. Like the Pilgrims who sailed on the Mayflower and settled in Plymouth, Weatherford College endured many hardships in the early years. In fact, the mere continued existence of the college was in question on multiple occasions. However, like the Pilgrims, early Weatherford College benefited and survived because of the timely assistance of good people. Additionally, just as the Pilgrims would later flourish and populate America with literally millions of direct descendants, Weatherford College would later produce countless students who would collectively build our area businesses and institutions, and enhance the cultural richness of our society. As we approach this Thanksgiving, I find myself exceedingly thankful for both the early contributors who ensured the survival of our college, and for the current supporters who are collectively catapulting Weatherford College to new heights.

This Thanksgiving, as I sit down to feast on turkey and dressing with family and friends, I will remember and give thanks for the survival of the Plymouth Colony, and for the survival of Weatherford College. As I ponder the many early hardships that were overcome by both groups, I will give thanks for the freedom and stability that we now enjoy.

I will also give thanks for prized human relationships. It was successful relationships that saved both the Plymouth Colony and Weatherford College. It will also be successful relationships and collaborations that create the future successes of our storied institution. This Thanksgiving, I will give thanks for the privilege to live and work in this amazing place that we call home, and I will give thanks for our people. Perhaps 150 years from now, future generations will look back and give thanks for the contributions that the current Weatherford College community is collaboratively making. Perhaps our college will become an even greater institution, and our community will become an even greater place to work and raise a family... one for which future generations will be exceedingly thankful.

Tod Allen Farmer

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