

The **Mayflower Compact** was the first governing document of Plymouth Colony. It was written by separatist Congregationalists who called themselves "saints". Later they were referred to as Pilgrims or Pilgrim Fathers. They were fleeing from religious persecution in Europe. They traveled aboard the Mayflower in 1620 along with adventurers, tradesmen, and servants, most of whom were referred to, by the Separatists as "strangers".

Gov. William Bradford's handwritten manuscript is kept in a vault at the State Library of Massachusetts.

### Modern version

In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord King James, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, defender of the Faith, etc.

Having undertaken, for (1) the Glory of God, and (2) advancements of the Christian faith and (3) honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia, do by these presents, solemnly and mutually, in the presence of God, and one another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic; for our better ordering, and preservation and furtherance of the ends aforesaid; and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

In witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape Cod the 11th of November, in the year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King James, of England, France, and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth, 1620.

The 'dread sovereign' referred to in the document is the archaic definition of dread — meaning awe and reverence (for the King), not fear.

Note : the covenant's signers promised "due submission and obedience".

A philosophical justification for the American Revolution can be traced to a violation of this mutual responsibility.

Dr. William Grady